

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ROUTE 29 - May 26, 2010 - 2:00PM (approved 7/9/2010)

Virginia Department of Transportation
Northern Virginia District
10228 Residency Road
Manassas, Virginia 20457

May 26, 2010 – 2:00p.m.

The meeting of the Route 29 Subcommittee of Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) was held in the conference room of Manassas Residency Office of the Virginia Department of Transportation at 10228 Residency Road in Manassas, Virginia. The meeting began at 2:20p.m.

Attendees: CTB Members: Douglas Koelemay, John J. “Butch” Davies III, Peter B. Schwartz, and Sharon Pandak, VDOT staff: Jim Utterback, Charlie Rasnick, Mohammad Mirshahi, Helen Cuervo, and Randy Hodgson, Amy Inman, (DRPT), Joe Springer - Parsons Transportation Group (PTG) and Liz Kiernan

1. Welcome and
2. Public Comment

Chairman Koelemay welcomed everyone and asked if anyone from the public would like to speak to the Committee. No one from the public asked to speak to the Committee.

3. Approval - Minutes of the April 28, 2010 Meeting

Chairman Koelemay asked for any corrections to the minutes of the April 7, 2010 meeting. Corrections to Items 4, 5 and 6 were recommended by Mr. Schwartz. The Committee then approved the minutes to include the corrections.

4. Status of the Committee’s Work

Chairman Koelemay said that the CTB approved the Process for Studying Corridors of Statewide Significance and he asked other members of their reaction on the Secretary’s comments that the “Process” now be applied to the Route 29 Corridor. Mr. Schwartz indicated that this is a good study process, but had reservations about now using the formal steps on the Charlottesville and Buckland areas. These areas will require an informal approach to start discussions. Mr. Davies indicated that the Secretary is under pressure politically (from down State) to respond to their calls for a Bypass of Charlottesville.

Mr. Koelemay said the whole purpose of the CTB action of December 2009 was to finish up the Route 29 Corridor Study and the Committee needs to follow through. He asked the staff felt could be achieved by the next (June 2010) CTB meeting. Charlie Rasnick said

that in addition to the Process for Studying the Corridors of Statewide Significance (CoSS), there are four CTB directives to complete.

1. The Prioritized Intersections based on Safety and Congestions Concerns is completed and with the Committee's approval it can be reported to the CTB.
2. The plan or policy for minimizing the number on new entrances on Route 29 could be applied to all facilities with the designation of CoSS. With the Committee's help in drafting the policy, it could be completed for the June CTB meeting.
3. Improving Mobility/Accessibility in the Gainesville- Buckland area.
4. Improving Mobility/Accessibility in the Charlottesville area. Regarding these two directives, the Committee could outline a plan for someone or group to follow to initiate the cross jurisdictional discussions that are the first step.

5. Context Sensitive Solutions – Note: this was the last item in the agenda.

6. Proposed Next Steps

Directives of the CTB's December 17, 2009 Resolution.

a. Prioritized Intersections Based on Safety and Congestion Concerns –

Chairman Kolemay initiated the discussion on the directives and asked if anyone on the Committee had any further comments on the prioritized list and reiterated that he will simply be reporting the Prioritized Intersections Based on Safety and Congestion Concerns to the CTB at their June 16th 2010 meeting.

b. Plan to minimize the number of traffic control signals –

Charlie Rasnick presented a proposed policy outline that could reduce the number of new entrances and the number of new traffic control signals. He indicated that the DRPT revisions were included in this version.

Members of the Committee pointed out several areas that should be changed. After the initial discussion it became obvious that the policy outline presented was an earlier draft and did not contain the Committee's comments from the previous meeting. The Committee offered several comments including:

- The traffic signal warrants should not be the only evaluation for installing a traffic signal on the Corridors of Statewide Significance. Other alternatives such as parallel roads, grade separations, roundabouts and possibly flyovers should also be explored.
- The traffic signal warrants are not the best way to justify a signal, in many rural areas the signal may be needed in the morning and afternoon peak hours, but for the remainder of the day, there is little need for it. Often the locality when considering access for new developments will accept a proffer for a new traffic signals when it really should be the last option to consider for serving the site.
- The traffic signal often becomes the path of least resistance since neither the County or VDOT has the funds for grade separations and the development may not be financially feasible with the added cost. Given the current economic

problems in Virginia, traffic signals will continue to be the primary means for access control for new development sites.

- The Committee members felt that need to develop the Corridor plans to show how to control the number new traffic signals, but the most important thing that will be needed is an educational component. By spending \$10 – 20 thousand on DVDs and sharing them with Localities and developers, we may be able to educate them on the benefits of using alternative means of access.

Mr. Koelemay asked Charlie Rasnick to incorporate the Committee's comments in the draft policy and send it back to the Committee for review. We need to move on this for it to be ready for reporting at the next CTB meeting. The Attorney General's Office must also review the draft.

c. Improve Mobility/Accessibility – Gainesville/Buckland/Haymarket

Note: The discussion of the mobility/ accessibility plans centered on the plan for the Charlottesville area.

d. Improve Mobility/Accessibility – Charlottesville

Charlie Rasnick shared the draft outline for the Committee to consider. Since the last meeting this draft was discussed with Mr. Davies and his views had been incorporated in section 5. of the draft. Section 5. Next Steps to Develop a Plan for the Route 29 Corridor in the Charlottesville Area describes the steps for initiating discussions between local officials. The Committee offered several comments:

- The facilitator should be retained as the first step in the process. The facilitator can then help with the selection of the participants and layout an agenda for the first meeting.
- There should be a series of meetings – the first meeting will be with a small of elected officials and those participants would suggest others to be invited to the next meeting.
- Section 5 should be the plan outline and moved to the front of the draft document. The other sections of the document will serve as background for the facilitator and others who will be involved in setting up the discussions.

Mr. Koelemay asked Charlie Rasnick to make the changes in the outline and forward the draft plan to the Committee for review. He said that with the Committee's help the draft could be ready for reporting to the CTB at the June meeting.

Context Sensitive Solutions – Since the Route 29 Corridor Plan recommends the use of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) in the future design, the Committee invited Mohammad Mirshahi VDOT's Location and Design Engineer to present how these design standards are being used within VDOT.

Following Mr. Mirshahi's presentation, he was asked if he had pictures showing how the CSS designs are being used in Virginia, and how widely the Context Sensitive Solutions are use within the Department. Mr. Marshahi said that he did have pictures of projects showing the results of using the CSS designs, he show the Committee the full report on the use of CSS that he had compiled for the Commissioner last year. He said that we are making progress in educating the designer on the use of CSS in the design of projects, but it is not as wide spread as he would like. The Committee asked if Mr. Mirshahi would be willing to make this presentation to full CTB and

should the CTB take action to ensure the Context Sensitive Solutions are used throughout VDOT. Mr. Mirshahi said that he would be glad to make the presentation but the current design process requires the designers to employ CSS in the design process and over time it will become the first option. Mr Schwartz said that use the CSS was a fiscal svings citing the Gilbert's roundabouts as costing some \$15 million while an interchange would have cost at \$65 million. The Committee shared their appreciation for Mr. Mirshahi's presentation.

7. To-Do/Assignments

Chairman Koelemay stated that the Committee's work needs to proceed so he could report the status at the next CTB meeting. Charlie Rasnick indicated that while he will be out of town for the next two weeks, but will be able to rework the drafts and send them to the Chairman and Committee via email.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CTB Subcommittee is to be scheduled.

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.