

**MINUTES OF
MEETING OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ROUTE 29 (approved 8/27/2010)**

Culpeper District Office – Auditorium
1601 Orange Road
Culpeper, Virginia

July 9, 2010 – 10:00a.m.

The meeting of the Route 29 Subcommittee of Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) was held in the auditorium of the Culpeper District Office at 1601 Orange Road in Culpeper, Virginia on July 9, 2010, at 10:00a.m.

Attendees: CTB Members: J. Douglas Koelemay, John J. “Butch” Davies III, Peter B. Schwartz, Mark Peake and Sharon Pandak, VDOT staff: Marsha Fiol, Rob Cary, Jeff Kessler, Marshall Barron, Charles Proctor. John Giometti, Randy Hodgson and Charlie Rasnick, Amy Inman, (DRPT), Lori L. Pound (OAG), and Joe Springer - Parsons Transportation Group (PTG).

1. & 2. Welcome and Public Comment

Chairman Koelemay welcomed everyone including new CTB member Mark Peake as a member of the Subcommittee and asked if there anyone from the public that may want to speak to the Committee. No one from the general public was present.

3. Minutes of the May 26, 2010

Minutes of the May 26, 2010 meeting were briefly discussed and approved as presented.

4. Status of the Committee’s work on the CTB Directives of December 17, 2009

Mr. Peake stated that since Route 29 has been studied many times and this study had shown a Bypass during the public meeting and asked why the Route 29 Bypass of Charlottesville could not be put back into the plan? The State should set the plan since the Localities will not agree on the Bypass.

Mr. Koelemay indicated that the Committee is working towards a course of action that both the State and Localities can follow to manage and improve the Corridor. The State has few ways to “make” the Localities carry out a (Corridor plan). There needs to be agreement with Localities on the solution if it is a Bypass.

Charlie Rasnick gave the background on the study. Alternatives were shown along the “Western Bypass” alignment as well as an eastern alignment. Early in the study, these alignments had some support from members of the local leaders in Albemarle County, but not in Louisa or Orange Counties. After the public meetings there was such

opposition to the alternatives that the administration had the team remove the alternatives.

The CTB members accepted the study at their meeting on December 17, 2009, and directed VDOT and DRPT to work with a Subcommittee to address several issues. The first directive the Committee addressed is the Process for Studying the CoSS. The process has been developed and accepted by the CTB. The list of intersections to be considered for grade separations has also been completed for reporting to the CTB.

The Committee and staff are working on remaining directives: A plan to minimize the number of intersections on Route 29 and the CoSS, A plan to improve mobility and accessibility in the Charlottesville area and A plan to improve mobility and accessibility in the Gainesville, Buckland and Haymarket areas.

He informed the Committee that the Secretary's is scheduling a meeting with local leaders from the Charlottesville and Lynchburg areas to discuss issues on the Route 29 Corridor. The meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2010.

The Committee members discussed the issues and challenges that need to be addressed in the Charlottesville area. Mr. Davies indicated that there may be some consensus areas on a plan. Mr. Davies explained that there has been many options explored in the past, the bypass right of way could be used for part of the internal road system and serve the west side of Route 29 much as the Hillsdale connection will help on the east side. He said that the local leaders will first say that they don't have current data on the Charlottesville area to evaluate any new solutions. A meeting with local leaders will need to be planned so there is meaningful dialog rather than position statements.

5. Plan to minimize the number of traffic control signals on Route 29 and the CoSS

Charlie Rasnick began the review of this draft document with the Committee. He stated that this plan is to set the framework for VDOT and the Localities to develop a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) to protect the corridor by identifying the location and limiting the number of new access points and traffic signals.

Ms. Pandak said that to be effective, VDOT, DRPT and the Localities will need training on the requirements and the mandate to protect the Corridors of Statewide Significance. The Legislature has not given VDOT the power to veto land use decisions. She asked Lori Pound if the policy is within current authority and Ms. Pound said that the CTB has the legal authority to establish the policy.

Mr. Schwartz stated that developing the CMP is a partnering process between VDOT and the Localities. Changing the signal warrant study so there are other options will help.

To help the Committee better understand the magnitude of the potential signals on Route 29, Marshall Barron distributed a listing of the existing traffic signal and those that had been requested or proffered as part of new development proposals. Staff pointed out that

there may be a need to install a traffic signal if there is an immediate and critical safety problem at a specific location. The signal could be temporary and the Commissioner should have the authority to remove the signal an appropriate time.

Ms. Pandak said that we need to define what is an approved CMP, and by whom is it approved. Marsha Fiol indicated that approval should be by the CTB and by the Locality by inclusion in their Comprehensive Plan.

Amy Inman said that DRPT is supportive of this, but it does call for staffing support which her agency does not have at this time.

For the next meeting staff was directed to rework the draft by including a flow chart in the policy to show the steps of the process for developing the CMP and using item #5 as the base policy for limiting the number of traffic signals. Staff also indicated that the policy should be reviewed within VDOT and DRPT before it is approved by the CTB. It was noted that developing the CMP in each locality may take years to accomplish, in the interim, the CTB should direct VDOT and DRPT to implement the policy statement under #5 *“Intersections or new access points that meet VDOT’s warrants for traffic signals shall not have a new traffic signal installed until alternatives such as grade separations, parallel service roads, round-abouts and other possible options have been evaluated and determined not to be appropriate for the location. This evaluation also applies to previously proffered traffic signals.”*

The revisions to the plan and the flow chart and

6. Improve Mobility/Accessibility – Charlottesville (Proposed Plan to initiate cross-jurisdictional discussions

Much of the earlier discussion covered this item. Charlie Rasnick indicated that he had received an email from Commissioner regarding the Secretary’s meeting on August 5th and that he had called Matt Strader to offer assistance or any information that may be needed for the meeting. The Committee members asked the Chairman to contact the Secretary share the work of the Committee and offer assistance.

Mr. Peake asked how Senator Newman’s Bill of 2004 which requires reimbursement of funds expended on the Route 29 Western Bypass of Charlottesville, if it is not built. Charlie Rasnick said that the legislation would not be invoked unless the facility is not built and the payback of the expenditures on the rights of way is still several years away. The first parcels of right of way were purchased in 1991 and the 20 year payback required by state law must be extended by the number of years that the project was in litigation. This means that the payback is not required before the year 2016.

7. Improve Mobility/Accessibility – initiate discussions on the Gainesville, Buckland and Haymarket areas

Mr. Schwartz stated that he felt that a meeting between the four supervisors that represent these areas would need a good facilitator and suggested that Mr. Koelemay chair that meeting. The supervisors would include Mr. Covington and Stirrup of Prince William County and Mr. Trumbo and Schwartz of Fauquier County.

4. Next Meeting – Mr. Koelemay and Charlie Rasnick will work on the date possibly in late August or early September

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40pm.