



Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

## CTB Rail Subcommittee Meeting

### Minutes

June 20, 2017

Meeting began at 9:01 am.

CTB Rail Subcommittee Members Present: Jennifer Mitchell, Scott Kasprovicz, Shannon Valentine, Mary Hughes-Hynes, and Court Rosen (arrived at 9:47 am).

DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell introduces the agenda for the day. The two agenda items will be an update to the Rail Plan and a discussion of the Station Stop policy.

#### 1. Rail Plan Presentation-Mike Todd

Mike Todd began his presentation to update the CTB members on the Rail Plan's policies and goals. The following discussion points were made.

- a. Scott Kasprovicz noted that DRPT does not have any mechanism in place to provide operational oversight on Class 1's, but it would be a worthy goal to help ensure preservation of our Capital Investment
- b. Shannon Valentine pointed out that Item 2 on the Rail Program Goals and Objectives list (Ensure Safety, Security and Resiliency) only addresses short lines and she thinks that should be broadened to include Class 1 railroads. Mike Todd indicated that the Rail Preservation Fund targets safety on the short lines only; and other DRPT funding programs have imitations written into the code regarding safety improvements.
- c. Mary Hughes- Hynes said that she thinks that the word "promote" under Item 7 of the Rail Plan Programs Goals and Objectives list is not strong enough.
- d. Mary Hughes Hynes asked if the VTrans plan included DRPT's objectives. Mike Todd replied that the Rail Plan adopts the Guiding Principles from VTrans to create symmetry between the two statewide planning documents; however the VTrans does not include the Rail Plan objectives because VTrans was developed prior to the Rail Plan and VTrans goals and objectives are less specific than the objectives included in the Rail Plan. Mary Hughes Hynes noted that she thinks we are shortchanging ourselves by not having these objectives included in VTrans. Mike Todd added that VTrans does include information on Freight and Passenger Rail so there is a lot of overlap between the two plans. Shannon Valentine said that the rail plan shows the interplay between the modes. Mary said that the rail plan is more complex and harder to explain than what is in

VTrans. Jennifer Mitchell said that VTrans is important for screening plans for Smart Scale.

- e. Shannon Valentine said that in regards to Item 1 on the list of Rail Program Goals and Objectives that says the focus is to enhance existing services where the largest populations will benefit may not be the best measure. There are many small urban areas like Lexington that are densely populated that could benefit from increased service. Population density may be the better measure for this.
  - f. Scott Kasprowicz asked about the benefits of interstate highway cooperation and asked if outreach to other states had happened. Jennifer Mitchell said that coordination is happening through the Southeast High Speed Rail compact. Scott Kasprowicz asked about freight coordination with other states as a way of improving investment. He said that coordinated efforts with other state needs to be part of the mission. This should be an active engagement and not data collection.
  - g. Mary Hughes-Hynes asked when this will go to the full CTB. Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT would like this to go to the July CTB. There is a strategic planning conference in August and she proposed a meeting on the plan during that planning conference.
2. Station Stop Policy-Jeremy Latimer

Jeremy Latimer began his presentation on the needs for a uniform Station Stop policy. He discussed the issues involved in the policy decisions. The following discussion points were made.

- a. Mary Hughes-Hynes asked how Amtrak determines potential ridership and asked if it was by looking at residential density.
- b. Jennifer Mitchell said that historically the state has said that they will improve the networks and platforms if the locality will build the station. This line has been blurred with expansion services. There are also questions about who is responsible for improvements at a station. So far that has been left up to the city but some will ask the state for funding.
- c. Scott Kasprowicz agreed that policies in regards to these questions need to be developed. Jennifer Mitchell agreed that the state needs a consistent policy to fall back on.
- d. Shannon Valentine said that a formalized policy would be appreciated. The localities need a policy so they understand decisions that are made. She asked if there are tourist areas that could draw ridership into Virginia and increase the economic development in that area. Bedford is a specific example of this that she mentions. She said that bringing riders into destinations in Virginia as opposed to riders leaving the state should be considered.
- e. Mary Hughes Hynes asked what a locality like Bedford would be willing to do to get service. Are they willing to provide last mile transit and partner with rental car companies? She said that areas that want the economic development need to be willing to put something on the table. A commitment to connectivity is important and it is on the town to develop this.

- f. Jennifer Mitchell asked committee members if they think there is a difference between new service and improving or adding service to an existing line. Scott Kasprowicz said that every stop on a line increases travel time and cost. Mary Hughes-Hynes said that the policy should determine how many stops there could be in an “X” mile increment. Scott Kasprowicz said that the time and distance between stations should be looked at. Mary Hughes- Hynes said adding station capacity should go through SMART Scale.
  - g. Shannon Valentine said that VTrans has specific rail plans and asked if station policy is ever discussed or if it needs to be added.
  - h. Jennifer Mitchell said that with expansion, there is funding in that corridor programed into the SYIP. She asked if it was better to expand geographically or to improve investment in existing routes.
  - i. Scott Kasprowicz asked for a quantitative analysis of the startup and operational cost of routes. Mary Hughes-Hynes suggested setting up a minimum time frame service must run on a new line before localities can approach the state for a new station.
  - j. Pete said that Bristol has to be included with Tennessee and other states input and coordination.
  - k. Jennifer Mitchell said that the feedback from today’s meeting will be summarized and put into a policy. DRPT will pull together quantitative metrics and policies for improving existing stations and adding stations and expanding service. This will be put into a policy for review by the committee in July.
3. Public Comment-No one was signed up for public comment.
  4. The meeting adjourned at 9:58 am.