

DRAFT MINUTES
CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting

VDOT Central Office – HR Training Room
1221 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Tuesday, September 28, 2021 · 8:00 am

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Board held a regular meeting on October 20, 2021. The primary location was VDOT HR Training Room, located at 1221 East Broad Street, Richmond Virginia 23219.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Jennifer Mitchell (Chair), Mary Hynes, and Ray Smoot.

OTHER CTB MEMBERS PRESENT

Frederick Stant, E. Scott Kasprovicz and W. Sheppard Miller.

GUESTS/OTHERS PRESENT

DJ Stadtler (VPRA), Michael McLaughlin (VPRA), Jeremy Latimer (VPRA), Jennifer DeBruhl (VDRPT), Tanyea Darrisaw (VDRPT), Emily Stock (VDRPT), Linda Balderson (VDRPT) and Bridget Davis (VDRPT) and Julie Whitlock (Office of the Attorney General).

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 MINUTES

On motion by Ms. Hynes and seconded by Mr. Smoot, the minutes of the September 14, 2021 CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee meeting were approved

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Presented by Chair Jennifer Mitchell

Chair Mitchell shared that the committee would receive presentations concerning the State Rail Plan Policies and Railbanking 101. Chair Mitchell shared the following updates:

- **DC2RVA, Section 106 Process:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) was reopening the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation process for the DC to Richmond High Speed Rail (DC2RVA) due to inclusion of additional federal agencies and other groups taking the lead on a few small project segments and presence of a new National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible resources in the area of potential effects (APE), the Shockoe Hill Burying Ground Historic District (127-7231), and one resource with expanded boundaries, the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground (44HE1203). DRPT will be sending out notices of consulting party meetings and potential public meetings to discuss the changes.

- Mr. Kasprowicz suggested conducting an inspection trip in spring 2022 to visualize and understand the interlocking of the third and fourth tracks for the CSX I-95 Corridor. Mr. Miller concurred with Mr. Kasprowicz's suggestion and noted that a research team conducted a similar inspection tour from Norfolk to Petersburg for Norfolk Southern.
- **Amtrak Ridership:** Chair Mitchell noted that ridership had declined in comparison to 2019. The totals varied from 15-38% percent depending on the routes. Mr. Smoot noted that the Baltimore Tunnel had been a source of bottleneck issues for rail traffic in the Northeast Corridor. He requested that the committee is informed of any potential issues that may arise with the Long Bridge project. Mr. Stadtler noted that Amtrak had identified Baltimore Tunnel as a huge bottleneck and had a process underway to address the issue.

VIRGINIA STATEWIDE RAIL PLAN: RAIL PLAN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Presented by Emily Stock, Chief of Rail Transportation, DRPT

Ms. Stock discussed the background and purpose of the rail plan policy, which included updating existing policies, developing new policies, aligning policies with new initiatives and existing guardrails and guiding future decision on rail in Virginia. The goal for today's discussion was to focus on the existing conditions, guiding documents and industry trends and impetus for change for the Climate Change Policy, Station Policy, Equity Policy and Service Policy. The following points from the discussion were noted:

- Mr. Kasprowicz desired to know if the rail policy should address how the Commonwealth collaborated with Class I carriers to expand freight and passenger rail service. He commented the need to have a stronger emphasis on partnership with railroads and to consider funding to improve its reliability.
- Mr. Smoot desired to know if there was a policy in the rail plan regarding the on-time performance standards.
- Ms. Hynes suggested the need to be proactive with our partners to facilitate mode shift. Mr. Smoot concurred with Ms. Hynes's suggestion. Ms. Stock noted that the rail plan considered the industry clusters to focus on efforts with regional economic development groups.
- Ms. Hynes desired to know if VDRPT had access to GIS data that revealed the low-income communities in the state. She noted that there were many people who may benefit from riding rail, but did not have access to reduced fares.
- Chair Mitchell noted that the station policy would address the comprehensive multimodal improvements and station needs to determine how to bifurcate the responsibility between the Commonwealth and localities to ensure the needs were being addressed.
- In response to Ms. Hynes's inquiry, Chair Mitchell noted that DRPT provided policy direction in the state rail plan and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority would be responsible for implementation. Ms. Hynes noted that it would be beneficial to receive discernment of the policy in future budget presentations. Chair Mitchell proposed that the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority present their budget principles to the CTB in January 2022.
- In response to Mr. Smoot's inquiry regarding the absence of east-west service in the Commonwealth, Chair Mitchell noted that the Commonwealth Corridor study would consider the utilization of Buckingham Branch for east-west service.

- Mr. Kasproicz voiced his concern regarding expanding service that would be counter to Norfolk Southern and CSX's trends. He suggested a more robust conversation, outreach and collaboration with Class I carriers.

Due to time limitations, the Rail Banking 101 presentation was deferred to the December 2021 Subcommittee meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments presented or received.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m. All presentations to the Board and meeting video can be found at www.drpt.virginia.gov/rail/ctb-rail-transit-subcommittee/

Respectfully Submitted: Bridget Davis, Executive Assistant

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