

**Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Update: SJ 292 Route 1 Transit Study**

Meeting Summary

MEETING SUBJECT: Route 1 Steering Committee
MEETING DATE, TIME: November 16, 2011 - 3:00PM
MEETING LOCATION: **Conference Call** - DRPT Central Office (host)
600 E. Main Street, Suite 2102
Richmond, VA

PARTICIPANTS:	Thelma Drake	DRPT
	Amy Inman	DRPT
	Anthony Foster	DRPT
	Kim Kovac	DRPT
	Senator Toddy Puller	Virginia Senate 36 th District
	Trent Armitage	Virginia Delegate Mark Sickles' office
	Phil Newell	Virginia Delegate Luke Torian's office
	Chairman Sharon Bulova	Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
	Supervisor Gerald Hyland	Mount Vernon District
	Supervisor Jeff McKay	Lee District
	Supervisor Frank Principi	Woodbridge District
	Supervisor John Jenkins	Neabsco District
	Tom Biesiadny and staff	Fairfax County DOT
	Tom Blaser and staff	Prince William County DOT
	Tom Harrington and staff	WMATA
	Tom Fahrney	VDOT
	Collin Davenport	Congressman Gerry Connolly's office
	Al Harf and staff	PRTC
	Christine Hoeffner	VRE
	Claire Gron	NVTC
	Chris Landgraf /Don Carr	Fort Belvoir
	Joe Winterer	Marine Corp. Base Quantico
	Holly Dougherty	Mount Vernon/Lee Chamber of Commerce
	Gregory Tkac	Town of Dumfries

DRPT Update

Thelma Drake, DRPT Director, opened the steering committee meeting with introductions and summarized the Department's efforts to assemble information and to coordinate with jurisdictions on the best approach to advance the study effort on the Route 1 corridor.

Amy Inman, DRPT Manager of Transit Planning, briefed the committee on the Department's efforts to coordinate with WMATA, PRTC, and the Counties of Fairfax, Prince William and Stafford. Ms. Inman informed the committee about recent activities in Fairfax County. Specifically, the County received a BRAC – related grant award in the amount of \$180 Million to widen Route 1 from Telegraph Road and Mount Vernon Highway. Ms. Inman also noted that Prince William County conducted several studies related to transit and land-use development and the information from these studies was going to be referenced in future planning studies.

For the next step in the Department's effort, Ms. Inman indicated that the DRPT would focus on near-term improvements in the 2-5 year timeframe. These improvements would build and expand upon the existing recommendations. Specifically, the study would document existing conditions on Route 1, develop a range of improvements for transit and craft a funding and implementation plan for recommended near-term improvements. Some near term improvements could include the implementation of transit signal priority and queue jumps, dedicating a lane for transit within existing right-of-way, spot improvements, and enhancing transit amenities and pedestrian access. Throughout this "near-term" study process, DRPT would hold technical and policy advisory committee meetings and engage all demographic population segments and provide daytime and evening public involvement opportunities.

With respect to the long-term improvements, Ms. Inman indicated that Fairfax County will initiate a transit alternative analysis to study a range of major capital investments such as Light-Rail and MetroRail. Fairfax County intends to acquire Federal funds and funding assistance from other entities to support this effort.

Ms. Inman also summarized WMATA's Priority Corridor Network plan aimed at improving bus travel through the Metropolitan Washington region, including the Route 1 corridor. With respect to Route 1, WMATA evaluated and proposed improvement concepts for its Richmond Highway Express ("REX") service. Ms. Inman pointed out that WMATA's concepts would serve as an ideal starting point for identifying and evaluating short-term improvements to improve bus service.

Update on Fairfax County Alternative Analysis Effort

Tom Biesiadny, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, provided an overview of the Fairfax County approach to evaluating the Route 1 corridor. The County process will be conducted in a two-part process. The first part is to conduct a County-wide transit network study. This study will identify travel patterns, desired land-uses, prospective station locations and "problem" locations. Fairfax County DOT will seek County Board approval on the project at their December 6th meeting. Assuming approval is granted, the project will be completed in 2012. The second component of this process will include the initiation of an Alternative Analysis to determine which mode of public transit is feasible in the long-term (light-rail, express bus, etc) and how it would qualify for FTA funding assistance.

The County is working to identify potential funding sources to move the project forward. In the meantime, DRPT has offered to provide funding assistance to supplement local-based funding sources.

A Steering Committee member inquired about the role and level of involvement with Prince William County since the short and long-term efforts focused on Fairfax County.

A staff member from Prince William County stated that the County's short-term efforts could center on providing bus pull-offs and implementing roadway improvements as cited in the Route 1 BRT Study. With respect to implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) within Prince William County, the staff member from Prince William County noted that the study concluded that BRT would not be viable due to relatively low densities on the corridor. For the long-term effort, the study could focus on developing a Park and Ride lot adjacent to the Woodbridge VRE station. Ms. Inman suggested that another short-term option could include extending an existing PRTC local bus route from Woodbridge VRE station to Lorton or Fort Belvoir. Subsequent to this discussion, some members suggested that Fairfax County's proposed alternative analysis effort would be expanded north to the City of Alexandria to Prince William County as a way to provide a systematic solution to chronic congestion on Route 1. One committee member suggested that Prince William County needed to determine the appropriate level of involvement with DRPT's short term improvement evaluation and Fairfax County's alternative analysis.

DRPT agreed to convene a meeting with elected officials from Prince William County, PRTC and Prince William County DOT staff to better define its interaction with proposed near and long-term efforts within Fairfax County.

Status of VDOT Projects on Route 1

Mr. Fahrney briefed the steering committee on VDOT's projects affecting the Route 1 corridor. In early 2012, VDOT will complete its preliminary National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for widening Route 1 between Telegraph Road and Mount Vernon Highway. Upon receipt of approvals from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), VDOT will initiate a design-build effort and aim to begin construction at the end of 2013. The project is anticipated to be complete by 2016. VDOT will coordinate with DRPT on the status of the project.

With respect to the portion of Route 1 south of Armistead Road, there are plans to widen the roadway. However, there is no funding source to proceed with preliminary engineering and construction.

In Prince William County, there is an effort to widen portions of Route 1 between Blackburn and Featherstone Roads. At the Route 1 and State Route 123 intersection, VDOT expects to initiate construction in 2014.

VRE related projects

A VRE staff member inquired about the prospect of evaluating VRE service in DRPT's short-term evaluation and through Fairfax County's long-term process. Ms. Inman indicated that DRPT's I-95 Transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan recommendations would be considered and referenced in the near-term evaluation, as it relates to transit connections at the Lorton VRE station and improvements at the Woodbridge VRE station. In addition, Fairfax County's alternative analysis would examine the VRE system improvements and its impact on the Route 1 corridor.

Next Steps

DRPT will convene a meeting with Prince William County stakeholders to determine the level of involvement with DRPT's near-term improvements study.

Between December 2011 and January 2012, DRPT will develop the scope of work for the Route 1 Near-Term Improvements study. Procurement of DRPT's on-call consultants to conduct the study will occur by February 2012. DRPT anticipates initiating a kick-off for the "Near-Term" improvements study by April 2012.