



Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC)
600 East Main Street, Richmond
March 14, 2019

Minutes

Members Participating:

John McGlennon, Chair
Brian Smith

Marty Williams
Cindy Mester (T)

Brad Sheffield
Kate Mattice (T)

Members Not Present:

Jim Dyke

Tom Fox

1. Call to Order / Introductions (10:01 am) –Chairman John McGlennon called the meeting to order and asked members to introduce themselves. He let the group know that Hap Connors had accepted a new position and resigned from the TSDAC and the CTB due to a conflict of interest. Chairman McGlennon welcomed Marty Williams to the committee as the new Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) representative.
2. Public Comment-Chairman McGlennon rearranged the agenda to allow for public comment before the presentations. The following public comments were made:
 - a. Bob Schneider, PRTC-Mr. Schneider said that PRTC had looked at the science behind the new methodology for operating costs to find out what the numbers meant. He said that the new metrics represented very important things and that PRTC tried to figure out what made their agency unique. He said that PRTC has a very high cost because it is a commuter service. PRTC wanted to look into an adjustment to the formula that would remedy the issues faced by commuter agencies. He said that PRTC had submitted a very robust 8 page public comment.
 - b. Brian Smith, HRT-Mr. Smith said that HRT is a service that has a 6 city foot print with a population of 1.3 million. He said that there are many ways to evaluate performance and that HRT had hired consultants to evaluate their performance. Labor efficiency was an area where HRT could improve. He said that there should be program guidance around how to treat dead head miles and that any changes to definitions and policies should be considered by the CTB.
 - c. Lisa Guthrie-VTA-Ms. Guthrie said that the TSDAC process would demonstrate to the legislature that the deep dive into the formula had been done and that systems are operating efficiently and need an injection of capital. She said that CTB has heard various updates on the process but that she was not sure if they knew all of the details. She suggested that TSDAC meet more than once a year moving forward.

3. Update on General Assembly Action-Jennifer Mitchell, DRPT

Director Mitchell reviewed the provisions of the legislation and the transition assistance. She said that the agency will run calculations for FY20 on both the old and new formula for comparison. DRPT will then look at who received less, based on the change in formula, and allocate transition assistance accordingly. Jennifer Mitchell said that the six year improvement plan will be approved by the CTB in June for the next fiscal year beginning July 1st. The following comments were noted:

- i. Brian Smith said that the transition assistance was a great result. He asked if it would be truly hold harmless. Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT would not know until they have the revenue collection numbers in late March or early April and compare the allocations using the old and new formula. Jennifer Mitchell said that there may be more money than last year, but either way the agency will still do the comparison.
- ii. In the presentation it was said that \$3 million of the operating reserves had been set aside to help with transition assistance. Marty Williams asked where this number came from. Jennifer Mitchell said that projections showed that \$3 million should cover losses due to the change in formula and still allow enough to be kept in the operating reserves.
- iii. The meeting broke at 10:23 am to resolve technical difficulties. Kate Mattice and Cindy Mester were participating by phone and could not hear the presentation.
- iv. The Meeting reconvened at 10:28.

4. Briefing on Public Comment Period and Draft CTB Policy-Jennifer DeBruhl

Jennifer DeBruhl said that the agency had received 10 comment letters. The public comments received from HRT and Fairfax County had similar themes. Jennifer said that public comment received from the City of Lynchburg and Greater Lynchburg Transit expressed concern about the transition year, because they were hurt by the transition formula. Loudoun was concerned about the impacts to long haul commuter routes. Jennifer reviewed the changes that had been made to the CTB resolution to reflect the public comments the agency received. She noted the new language had been added saying that increases in funding should not be used to offset local contributions, but should be invested in service enhancement or expansion. Jennifer DeBruhl said that the transition year formula had been maintained.

Definitions are not outlined in the policy but are outlined in the performance based operating allocation guidance was posted for the public comment period as well. Jennifer described the change in definitions related to long-haul unidirectional commuter service. She said the rest of the changes to the guidance were editorial in nature.

Jennifer DeBruhl said that she did want to address Lisa Guthrie's comment about the CTB's briefings on the TSDAC recommendations being summarized in the guidance document. She said that a TSDAC summary document had been sent out that compiled all of the materials that the body had reviewed and has been sent out for comments. No comments have been received and Jen said we could send that out again. She said that the intent is to publish that on our website. Jennifer Mitchell added that the CTB will be voting on the policy, not the guidance document. She said that the guidance document was for agency implementation.

- a. Kate asked for clarification on whether or not the CTB recommendation to have a transition year with the formula had been replaced by the transition funding. Jennifer

DeBruhl said that transition assistance would be provided this year, but that that there would still be the transition year with the formula.

- b. Jennifer DeBruhl reminded the group that the CTB had been briefed on the two step formula in December. The CTB was briefed again in January with the understanding that the policy was in the public comment period and legislation was pending. The transition year was kept in the resolution as a recommendation of the board and the only change was what was legislated, which was the transition assistance.
 - c. Brian Smith asked about the policy changes related to dead head miles. Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT did find that agencies that had a high degree of commuter service like PRTC or Loudoun would have increased contributions. She said that she thought HRT would benefit from this but learned that HRT was already calculating dead head miles as revenue miles. She said that from a policy standpoint commuter routes are very unique and have to have dead head miles in order to operate these routes and it is appropriate to make a change to address that. The deadhead miles are critical part of the service. Brian Smith noted that commuter routes are defined in the draft guidance as being 20 miles of more in length. Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT looked at some of the routes that agencies operate and thought that seemed to be an appropriate number. Jen DeBruhl said that GRTC also operates smaller commuter routes that are shorter so that DRPT was looking to identify longer routes where the dead head miles have more significant impacts on cost. Brian Smith expressed concerns.
 - d. Marty Williams advised agencies that will be affected by the new operating formula change to embrace it and learn how to work within the system. He said that the metrics are not going anywhere. He suggested that agencies practice patience and measure the project requests that they are submitting.
5. Wrap Up/Next Steps-Jennifer Mitchell

Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT would schedule a meeting over the summer to evaluate the projects that came out of the SYIP. She said that she appreciated Lisa Guthrie's comments about working together to secure more funding. She said that the TSDAC process has educated many General Assembly members about transit funding and how scarce it is. Jennifer Mitchell said that there will be opportunities to take that message forward. She said that the formula will be phased in so DRPT can see how it works and that it may take a couple of years of experience. Jennifer Mitchell said that the biggest determinate of each agencies funding is revenue collections. She said that she is hopeful that agencies will get more funding next year. Marty Williams said that the Amazon process last year brought a real education to the General Assembly on the importance of transit. Chairman McGlennon closed the meeting by saying that DRPT will poll on potential dates for a summer meeting.

6. Public Comment-No one was signed up for public comment. Director Mitchell thanked everyone in the room for their hard word.
7. The meeting adjourned at 10:53.