

CTB Rail and Transit Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
VDOT Central Office-HR Training Room  
1221 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
8:30 am  
January 14, 2020

The Meeting began at 8:34 am

CTB Rail Subcommittee Members Present: DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell, Ray Smoot, Mary Hynes and Stephen Johnsen.

1. Approval of December 10th Minutes-Stephen Johnsen moved to approve the minutes, Ray Smoot seconded, and the minutes were unanimously approved.
2. Director's Update/2020 Look Ahead-Director Jennifer Mitchell

Director Mitchell gave her report and mentioned that the content for the day's meeting would be shared during the CTB Workshop. The following highlights were shared:

**Virginia and CSX Rail Agreement**

- Next steps will involve finalizing agreements, implementing a financial plan with local partners and conducting environmental survey and title work for the project.

**Virginia Future Rail Study**

- A new long-range vision plan for service and performance under the new Virginia ownership. There is pending legislation and DRPT has been asked to conduct a study. The sub-committee will hear more about this as the study moves forward.

**Station Construction and Improvement Projects**

- There are a several projects in place, which includes various VRE station improvement projects and groundbreaking for Quantico and Newport News.

**Ridership Study**

- The New River Valley ridership study was completed.

**Virginia Breeze Intercity Bus**

- Implement the expansion of an intercity bus service to include two new routes.
- Complete evaluation of potential I-81 corridor expansion.

**Advance Transit Expansion Projects**

- Start of revenue service on Metrorail Silver Line Phase II

### **Virginia Passenger Rail Authority**

Jennifer Mitchell said the sub-committee would hear more details at the CTB workshop, however she explained that the Transportation Omnibus bill would restructure the Transportation Trust Fund, increase fuel tax and introduce the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority would be an independent sub-division of the Commonwealth, with strong ties to DRPT and CTB. It would have some additional authority and powers, but would not be an operating entity. It would own the assets acquired through the CSX agreement. The following comments were noted:

- Stephen Johnsen asked if independent revenues would be required to support the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. Jennifer Mitchell said it would have some financing authority but it would not be able to bond against any state tax supported revenues.
- Mary Hynes asked if any consideration had been given to the relationship between VRE, NVTC and PRTC. Jennifer Mitchell said the rail authority would have the same relationship that DRPT has with VRE. There would not be any changes to VRE's governance, operation and authority structure. VRE would be able to apply for grants through DRPT and maintain the funding and oversight relationship with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority. The Commonwealth Transportation Board would be responsible for the annual review of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's capital budget. CTB would play a role in policy setting for the rail authority while DRPT would continue to be the planning agency for the state, which would require the rail authority's plans to be in accordance with the state's rail plans.
- Mary Hynes asked if the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority would have the capacity to demand funding. Jennifer Mitchell commented that it would not have the authority to demand funding. Under the Transportation Omnibus bill, a new Commonwealth rail fund would be implemented and split between DRPT and the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.
- Stephen Johnsen asked if any consideration had been given to the proposed amendments to move projects quicker through eVA and how it could potentially impact rail. Jennifer Mitchell noted that DRPT had been following the proposals, however she did not have any specific comments to share.
- Ray Smoot asked about the status of expanding service from Alexandria to Lynchburg with Norfolk Southern. Jennifer Mitchell shared that DRPT was maintaining an on-going conversation with Norfolk Southern to potentially add a train to Roanoke and expand service for the Manassas Line.

### 3. Transit Program Updates-Jennifer DeBruhl

Jennifer DeBruhl mentioned that the full MERIT update regarding public transportation in Virginia would be presented at the CTB workshop. The following comments were noted:

- Stephen Johnsen asked for the estimated cost for a general electric bus. Jennifer DeBruhl said the cost was determined by the size and how the bus is equipped. The cost varied between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000.

- Ray Smoot asked if DRPT had any involvement with the electric school bus program. Jennifer DeBruhl said although DRPT used the same partners and vendors, it was not involved in the electric school bus program.
- Stephen Johnsen inquired about the Volkswagen settlement funding. Jennifer DeBruhl confirmed that a portion of the funding was allocated in FY20. She said DRPT was working with DEQ to determine if more funding would become available.
- Mary Hynes asked if the 172 million annual riders included Metro for the transit ridership in Virginia. Jennifer DeBruhl said the data included Metro for the Virginia portion.
- Ray Smoot asked what determined whether a municipal transit system would be included in the FY19 ridership data. Jennifer DeBruhl said the data she was presenting only reflected 17 out of 41 programs that had an increase in ridership in FY19.
- Ray Smoot asked if the \$42M per year in additional capital revenue should come from local funds to offset the statewide capital fund shortfall. Jennifer DeBruhl said the state transportation capital budget was typically more reliable than local funding.
- Mary Hynes asked if an operating plan was required to be submitted with the application for major expansion projects. Jennifer DeBruhl said DPRT changed their guidance and implemented prioritization to have more structure for major expansion projects.

#### 4. Rail Industrial Access Application-Phoenix Packaging Operations-Jeremy Latimer

Jennifer Mitchell said the item would be reviewed during the CTB workshop. Jeremy Latimer reviewed the application. The following discussion points were noted:

- Mary Hynes inquired if it was the first time that an applicant had applied more than once. Jeremy Latimer confirmed that it was not the first time.
- Ray Smoot asked if the railroad funded spurs. Jeremy Latimer said he did not have any knowledge of any regular programs being offered; however, the company would need to have a concept design approved by the railroad.

#### 5. Update on Rail in Virginia-Michael McLaughlin

Michael McLaughlin gave an update on the Virginia CSX announcement. He explained that through an agreement with CSX, Virginia would acquire approximately 350 miles of CSX right-of-way and 225 miles of track in the I-95, I-64 and I-85 corridors, and build incrementally over the next 10 years 37 miles of track in the I-95 corridor including a new two-track Long Bridge. Virginia will acquire approximately ½ of the CSX owned railroad right-of-way between Washington, DC and Richmond, VA (RF&P), rights to use the tracks between Richmond, VA and Petersburg, VA, all of the CSX owned but out of service right-of-way between Petersburg, VA and Ridgeway, NC (S-Line), and all of the CSX owned right-of-way between Doswell, VA and Clifton, Forge, VA (Buckingham Branch Railroad). Track within the right-of-way purchased by Virginia also becomes Virginia property. With the acquisition, Virginia has committed to a series of infrastructure improvements to the RF&P right-of-way that will allow for doubling Amtrak state-supported and VRE Fredericksburg Line service, including the addition of VRE weekend service. The following comments were noted:

- Mary Hynes asked if permission had been granted from Norfolk Southern to expand service on the Manassas Line. Michael McLaughlin affirmed that permission had not been granted and discussions were still on-going with Norfolk Southern.
- Stephen Johnsen inquired about the width of the right of way. Michael McLaughlin said the details would be settled in the definitive agreement with CSX. He said it's anticipated to acquire enough right-of-way to build two dedicated passenger tracks from DC to Richmond. Jennifer Mitchell specified that the acquisition would include the stations and platforms currently owned by CSX.
- Ray Smoot asked if there will be a dedicated passenger track from Richmond to the railroad in the next 10, 15, or 20 years. Michael McLaughlin said the project is a very robust 10-year project. There will be a dedicated corridor where the Manassas and Franconia Lines meet together. There will be one track dedicated from Franconia-North to DC at the end of 10 years. The improvement plan includes additional sidings in Phase III and IV to have a dedicated passenger track to Spotsylvania.
- Ray Smoot inquired how the flow of passenger traffic would be controlled and coordinated with CSX. Michael McLaughlin affirmed that an operation, maintenance and transition agreement would outline the dispatching during the 10 year project. Jennifer Mitchell remarked that CSX will continue to control dispatching in the foreseeable future, however specific details would be settled in the agreement. She said it was important to develop a service plan with CSX that considered VRE, Amtrak and freight trains. The service plan was a collaborative effort to develop scheduling, performance improvement and permanence for VRE's slots.
- Mary Hynes asked whether the potential expansion aligned closely with VRE's strategic and long-range plans. Michael McLaughlin affirmed that VRE had a few long-range plans that would allow more trains to be added when more track is built.
- Jennifer Mitchell mentioned that a third track would not be built in Ashland.
- Stephen Johnsen asked if there would be an agreement to determine the maximum length for freight trains. Michael McLaughlin expressed that the topic was under discussion with the freight railroads.
- Ray Smoot asked for clarification regarding Amtrak's nearly hourly service from DC to Richmond. Michael McLaughlin mentioned that there would be negotiations with VRE and Amtrak to provide later departure times at night.
- Stephen Johnsen expressed that London had later departure schedules to accommodate those who work late in the city. Michael McLaughlin mentioned that DRPT would continue to work with Amtrak and VRE to coordinate departure schedules.
- Ray Smoot inquired to know the Commonwealth's capital cost responsibility to add more trains. Jennifer Mitchell said that Amtrak was in their procurement process to re-fleet their equipment. She stated that Virginia would share the cost and a new grant was submitted to assist with the cost. Michael McLaughlin mentioned that allocations in the Congressional Omnibus bill could assist with the cost.
- Mary Hynes asked what was happening at Union Station. Jennifer Mitchell said DRPT was working on allowing dual mode engines for Amtrak. She said there were no plans to electrify the corridor. Mary Hynes asked when additional details regarding the funding plan would be forthcoming. Jennifer Mitchell said DRPT was continuing to work with its regional partners.

- Ray Smoot inquired about the amount CSX received per Amtrak train from Alexandria to Richmond. Michael McLaughlin said he would bring back information on the dollar amount.

#### 6. Public Comment

Peter Voorhees of AECOM signed up for public comment. He inquired about the capacity between L'enfant and Union Station. Michael McLaughlin commented that there would be a two-track dedicated passenger corridor. He said passenger trains would be on the west and freight railroads on the east.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 am.