

MEETING SUMMARY

Subject: I-495 Southside Transit/TDM Study, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting #1

Date/Time: May 25, 2022, 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Participants:

Ciara Williams, DRPT	Vic Weissberg, Prince George's County
Todd Horsley, DRPT	Efon Epanty, Prince George's County
Amy Garbarini, DRPT	Nima Upadhyay, Prince George's County
Beth Gossett, DRPT	Crystal Hancock, M-NCPPC
Clinton Edwards, DRPT	Debra Borden, M-NCPPC
Katy Miller, DRPT	Jordan Baucum Colbert, M-NCPPC
Tim Roseboom, DRPT	Maria Martin, M-NCPPC
Abi Lerner, VDOT	Charlie Scott, WMATA
Nick Nies, VDOT	Al Himes, WMATA
Bryan Campbell, VDOT	Jonathan Parker, WMATA
Fatemeh Allahdoust, VDOT	Joe Stainsby, OmniRide
Kari Snyder, MDOT	Holly Morello, OmniRide
Gladys Hurwitz, MDOT	Christine Hoeffner, Virginia Rail Express
Stephen Miller, MDOT	Ben Owen, NVTC
Michelle Martin, MDOT	Adam Hager, NVTC
Megan Oleynik, City of Alexandria	Xavier Harmony, NVTC
Sean Schweitzer, Fairfax County	Nick Ramfos, MWCOG
Stuart Boggs, Fairfax County	Keith Jasper, NVTA
Noelle Dominguez, Fairfax County	Sree Nampoothiri, NVTA
Martha Coello, Fairfax County	Tyler Beduhn, Kimley-Horn
Michael Felschow, Fairfax County	Lucas Muller, Kimley-Horn
Greg Fuller, Fairfax County	Kate Widness, Kimley-Horn
Jeff Hermann, Fairfax County	Alex Jasper, Kimley-Horn
Marcus Moore, Fairfax County	Liv Neeley, Kimley-Horn
Yuqing Xiong, Fairfax County	

Key Takeaways

- The DRPT study team provided an overview of the study, purpose of the TAC, and facilitated introductions.
- The purpose of the study being conducted by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is to identify a range of current and future multimodal solutions for the I-495 Southside corridor between the I-95/I-395/I-495 (Springfield) interchange and MD-210 interchange. Solutions could be implemented to reduce congestion, improve reliability and regional connections, and enhance mobility.
- This TAC will continue to be engaged throughout the study and will meet four times. It is formed by partnering transit and planning staff from local jurisdictions, transit agencies, planning and regional bodies along the study corridor.
- The DRPT transit/transportation demand management (TDM) study is being conducted in parallel and in close coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study.

- VDOT representatives provided a brief presentation on the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study.
 - VDOT is conducting a study to potentially extend the Express Lanes system on the southern section of I-95/I-495.
 - VDOT will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to satisfy requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.
 - Outcomes of the DRPT study will feed into the range of alternatives considered in the VDOT study.
- The DRPT study team provided background of the transit/TDM study process.
 - Currently conducting baseline conditions and needs assessment, which includes an analysis of travel patterns to identify potential for new or enhanced services along the study corridor
 - Will have two rounds of public survey, community pop-up events to promote public input, and virtual public meeting
 - Will identify preliminary recommendations, test, refine, evaluate, and prioritize recommendations throughout Summer 2022
 - Final report in December 2022
- The DRPT study team highlighted existing transit services and key plans that are being referenced in the study.
 - Examples of potential future services that have been included in other recent or ongoing plans are: OmniRide commuter service to Alexandria and St. Elizabeth's, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) and Amtrak service increases, alternatives from the WMATA Blue-Orange-Silver Capacity & Reliability Study, bus network redesigns, and the Richmond Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.
- TAC members were asked to provide input on existing plans around the study area that could affect recommendations in this study, and observations of current services compared to pre-COVID conditions.
 - **VDOT:** Coordination is needed with park and ride lots
 - **MDOT:** If park and ride lot is MD owned, count data is also available
 - **City of Alexandria:** The City is conducting the Duke Street in Motion Study, which is looking at transitway and possible BRT. DASH implemented a new bus network and is zero-fare.
 - **Fairfax County:** Routes along Richmond Hwy retained ridership and recovered faster than other routes, especially in the off-peak. Express routes in the I-95 corridor, especially to the Pentagon, are growing ridership again.
 - **OmniRide:** This corridor would be a boom to the Vanpool Alliance. The Patent and Trademark office in Alexandria should be considered in the study. Slugging has been back within the last 90 days.
 - **Prince George's County:** The County has been conducting a study on BRT, which should be available next month. Five corridors have been identified, including one in this study area. A 2011 MTA transit study was also conducted and should be referenced. A connection from Virginia to Census at Suitland Metro or DHS at Branch Ave should be considered. The County is conducting a study for a new transit facility, which could affect this transit/TDM study. An update of the County's transit plan will start later this year. Park and Planning is currently conducting a master plan for Prince George's County.
 - **WMATA:** The Woodrow Wilson Bridge is a very strategic river crossing because it is really the only crossing within about 50 miles from 14th Street bridges to the south. The study should focus on increasing person-throughput capacity. Metrobus ridership has recovered well, especially on weekends and outside of peak periods. Parking mode is struggling the most. Recent changes to the NH2 route were planned prior to COVID, and ridership is about 700-800 passengers per day.

- **VRE:** VRE System Plan is the currently adopted long-range plan, but VRE is updating the plan in the next 12-18 months. The updated plan will identify markets, service improvements, and ridership. VRE is seeing ridership recovery and has been operating full pre-COVID service for almost a year
- **NVTA:** NVTA is conducting BRT planning for TransAction, looking at high-capacity transit connection opportunities, and has a BRT planning working group. The Woodrow Wilson Bridge connection is very important to NVTA's BRT analysis. All analysis results and the TransAction project list will be out late summer. If I-495 managed lanes need funding from NVTA, it must be included in TransAction. NVTA is working with DRPT and VDOT on the Regional Multimodal Mobility Program, which should be considered in the study.
- TAC members were asked to provide their opinions on a successful outcomes of this study.
 - **VDOT:** Guide alternatives development (e.g., what are short-, mid-, long-term recommendations); provide information that is valuable for TMP once in construction; very important to identify short-term and low hanging fruit
 - **MDOT:** Consistent information being shared with state and local partners; managed lanes have been paused in this area of MD, but coordination between agencies is still crucial
 - **City of Alexandria:** Emphasize how VDOT Express Lanes would support and complement transit/TDM and non-SOV travel
 - **Fairfax County:** See how bus service is recovering outside of traditional hours; provide a cohesive transportation network for mass transit in activity centers in southern Fairfax County (Fort Belvoir, Springfield, Huntington); identification of resources and mechanisms for funding improvements
 - **OmniRide:** New or improved connections (e.g., DHS) and timelines for implementation
 - **Prince George's County:** Better connections to VA; advance recommendations using Woodrow Wilson Bridge; connecting National Harbor and other activity centers like Suitland and Branch Avenue
 - **M-NCPPC:** Understanding property impacts near the study area (through VDOT study); understanding of how various transit studies will be incorporated, including potentially using bridge for heavy rail; not just moving the I-495 bottleneck but getting rid of it
 - **WMATA:** Phased recommendations; need to identify funding needs and opportunities; focus on person throughput
 - **VRE:** Understanding complementary nature of Express Lanes with other transit options in the area and timelines about when the Express Lanes may come online
 - **NVTC:** Potential ties to NVTC's I-395/I-95 Commuter Choice programs; strategies for regional transit network and resiliency in the area
 - **MWCOG:** Most interested in carpool/vanpool component; incentives for making the trip more reliable and safer
 - **NVTA:** Learn more about travel demand through this corridor; collaboration on implementing preferred solutions

Action Items

1. Meeting slides and summary will be emailed to all participants.
2. Participants will be contacted by the DRPT study team, as needed, for additional data and information on the plans/studies brought up during the meeting.
3. Additional information about public involvement will be shared with participants.

Lookahead

- Public outreach and participation in early July
- Completion of baseline conditions and needs assessment
- Next TAC meeting will be mid-summer to review needs and discuss preliminary strategies