

*Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC)
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2023
9:00 am*

Members Participating:

Chair John McGlennon
Vice Chair Cindy Mester
Raymond Smoot (virtual)
Jamie Jackson
Jim Dyke
Sam Sink
Brian Booth
Kate Mattice
Director Debruhl (DRPT)

I. Call to Order/Introductions

II. Recap: 2022 TSDAC Recommendation

- a. Grant Sparks, Director of Transit Planning, provided a brief overview of the 2022 recommendations from TSDAC, all of which were approved by the CTB.

III. 2023 General Assembly Update

- a. Andy Wright, Chief of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives, provided an overview of HB1496/SB1079, which creates a separate funding category for VRE under the Commonwealth Mass Transit Fund (CMTF), as well as provides additional CTB oversight requirements for both VRE and WMATA. Andy also provided an update on HB2338/SB1326, which adds additional project eligibility to the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP).
- b. Ms. Mattice: Is the TRIP legislation specific to electric buses?
- c. Mr. Wright (correction): The bill language is for zero emission buses, which can also include hydrogen fuel cell buses. It can also be the bus, charging infrastructure, or planning.
- d. Director DeBruhl: Our intent is to take VRE, WMATA, and TRIP policy changes to the CTB in July for workshop and seek action on those policies in September.
- e. Dr. Smoot: How is VRE ridership doing compared to pre-pandemic?
- f. Director DeBruhl: Roughly 40% of what it was pre-pandemic.
- g. Dr. Smoot: I'm very supportive of VRE but I'm also supportive of providing funding where it's most needed. We may be headed for a budget issue in the

future if ridership doesn't improve soon.

- h. Director DeBruhl: We're actively working with VRE on ridership recovery efforts, including all the work done around Long Bridge and the I-95 corridor.

IV. FY24 MERIT Operating Assistance Projections

- a. Dan Sonenklar, Statewide Transit Planning Manager, provided an update on projected FY24 Operating Assistance funding. He stressed that the data presented was preliminary and still uses certain assumptions.
- b. Director DeBruhl: We will get one more revenue forecast at some point between draft SYIP and final SYIP. Please take all of this with a grain of salt.
- c. Mr. Sparks: The expenses for sizing and performance really drive the formula, so it's important to understand that these projections are using FY21 expenses, not FY22.
- d. Chair McGlennon: What was the source of the revenue increase?
- e. Director DeBruhl: It was mostly attributed to an overall increase from the transportation revenues across the Commonwealth.
- f. Mr. Sparks: Another reason is that we had some carryover operating assistance funding from FY22 and FY23. In FY25 the overall program revenues will likely go back down a bit.
- g. Ms. Mattice: We had a complete funding restructuring in 2020 due to the Omnibus bill and we're finally seeing the results of that legislation.
- h. Vice Chair Mester: How has the half-cent loss in the grocery tax impacted revenues?
- i. Director DeBruhl: Despite that, we're still seeing growth in revenues.
- j. Vice Chair Mester: What would be the projected revenues without the carryover funding included?
- k. Mr. Sonenklar: \$121 million
- l. Chair McGlennon: Looking forward, it's important to remember that the proposed legislation will take 2.5% out of the operating program for VRE and I believe if any funding is withheld from VRE it's dumped into the capital program, not operating program.
- m. Director DeBruhl: Correct and we did that because we're seeing the greatest increase in demand for funding within the capital program.
- n. Vice Chair Mester: You mentioned the TRIP grant for Loudoun County. Does that equate to a wash in operating funds?

- o. Mr. Sonenklar: It actually ends up working out well for Loudoun County – they should be in the positive.
- p. Vice Chair Mester: That works out well because the other agencies projected to see a loss are almost at their 30% cap, and then the legislation should take care of the VRE issue.
- q. Ms. Mattuce: What is the process for developing the VRE performance measures?
- r. Director DeBruhl: DRPT staff will work cooperatively with VRE to develop those performance measures and will present them to the CTB to include in policy.
- s. Vice Chair Mester: Does TSDAC have a role in the new VRE carve out?
- t. Director DeBruhl: By code, TSDAC is responsible for the Capital and Operating program but we will certainly brief TSDAC on VRE, as well.

V. Open Discussion

- a. Ms. Mattice: When do we need to meet again?
- b. Director DeBruhl: Code requires the group to meet once a year and we typically try to meet as a group after the draft SYIP has been posted.
- c. Mr. Dyke: Can you give us an update on WMATA and how that plays into this?
- d. Director DeBruhl: No additional funding to WMATA through this legislation. There are other budget and operating issues with WMATA but the state doesn't play a major role in that. Kate may have better information.
- e. Ms. Mattice: We have a standing WMATA committee at NVTC and we plan on doing a deep dive on revenue options for WMATA. We also plan on updating our economic value of transit report.

VI. Public Hearing

- a. No public comments

VII. Next Steps

- a. Grant Sparks, Director of Transit Planning, provided a brief overview of the FY24 applications received under the various transit grant programs.
- b. Director DeBruhl: For the next meeting it's really up to the group on timing. Could be in May or June, which would be a review of the draft SYIP, but it can also be in July, where we'd review the final SYIP.
- c. Mr. Sparks: The next meeting can also be virtual. We'll poll the group on dates in the late spring/early summer for our next meeting.

VIII. Adjourned