



CTB Rail Subcommittee Meeting
Minutes
March 14, 2017

Meeting began at 9:05 am.

CTB Rail Subcommittee Members Present: Jennifer Mitchell, Scott Kasprovicz, Shannon Valentine, Mary Hughes-Hynes

DRPT Director Jennifer Mitchell opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. She said that the day's presentations would help frame up the SYIP discussion.

1. Rail Plan Update-Mike Todd

Mike reviewed the two economic analyses of the rail plan. These will be done at a statewide and regional level. Scott Kasprovicz said he would like to show the cost if rail lines go out of service. He suggested that the plan detail the cost of pavement and lane miles that would have to handle the truck traffic. He wants to show that if critical rail links are lost, there will be more trucks on roads. Mike Todd said that the plan will attribute tonnage to each rail line and that they can convert that number to a number of trucks that have been pulled off of the roads due to rail lines. Scott Kasprovicz said that the next step will be to get a highway number to compare to. Jennifer Mitchell said she was not sure if the avoided costs are included in the Statewide Plan. Scott Kasprovicz said that those numbers need to be shared, the plan has to take an aggressive approach. Mike told members that the push on the plan since the last subcommittee meeting has been to project the baseline and to look at what kind of companies are using rail today and determine how the state can capture more mode share. The plan will look at what our rail network needs to look like in order to handle more rail in the future. Jeremy Latimer shared that after attending the AASHTO conference and learning about the Freight Bottom Line Report, the state rail plan is very much in line with the federal effort to look at the next generation of projects and see what will capture rail traffic in the future.

Mike updated on the outreach effort. He said that survey #2 had been completed and that they had just started survey #3. DRPT will be launching web public meetings and attending the Spring SYIP meetings. There will be stakeholder workshops in April.

Mike shared that chapters 3 and 4 of the rail plan are going to identify unconstrained passenger and freight rail needs. Chapter 5 will look at the needs and prioritize them. Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT will need input from members on the priorities we have used and what program of projects are most financially viable. Mary Hynes asked who would be putting applications in for the bigger corridor projects. Jennifer Mitchell said that it would likely be local governments or MPOS. She said that VRE did very well in the last round of SMART SCALE applications. Scott Kasproicz asked who would help localities put together applications. Jennifer Mitchell said that DRPT staff would be able to help grantees put together competitive applications. Scott Kasproicz asked about the technology component of the plan that he mentioned at the last meeting. Mike said that the goal of VTRANS is to look at operational improvements first. ITS recommendations in the rail plan will be a big part of pursuing that goal. Shannon Valentine asked if there is a huge investment in rail at the federal level if the state will have projects ready to go. Shannon Valentine also pointed out that rail is not looked at as public private partnership and it needs to be. The legislative benefit to the plan will be to show rail as a public private partnership and not a subsidy. Scott Kasproicz agreed and said that the executive summary needs a one pager that highlights the partnership aspect.

2. Roanoke Amtrak Extension Project-Jeremy Latimer

Jeremy Latimer presented an update on the Amtrak Roanoke Agreement. The components of the agreement benefit freight rail, as well as passenger rail, as a result of opening up capacity. He said that the Amtrak service facility is 99% complete. The service facility had to be moved away from the platform due to safety issues. He said that the City of Roanoke is picking up some of the design cost of the platform. Jennifer Mitchell shared that DRPT is working to stay on schedule to start service in October. Some time was lost due to the design issues and level boarding. The City has been a good partner on some issues but needs to make a final decision on the station. They did not want a multimodal train and bus station. Until there is a station tickets will be bought at kiosks. Mary Hynes asked if there was a map that showed all rail investments like this that have been made over the last four year, she would like to create a document that shows a better story.

3. Rail Application and SYIP Discussion-Pete Burrus

Pete Burrus showed a rail program application summary by funding mechanism. He shared that the IPROC fund is spent out through the SYIP. There could be an additional 4 million dollars in the program from the rail enhancement fund. This data demonstrates a gap in funding which could be greater than what is shown. Jennifer Mitchell said that Hampton Roads TPO has requested a 20 million study to look at the feasibility of high speed rail between Richmond and Hampton Roads. A budget amendment has directed DRPT to work on a cost estimate for the study by July 1st. This is not currently reflected

in the SYIP. There is no more federal funding available for high speed rail like DC2RVA so this study could be a significant issue for the CTB. Jennifer Mitchell said that a decision may be posed to the committee on whether or not to use REF funds to supplement the Rail Enhancement fund to meet short line needs. Scott Kasproicz says this makes sense but that they need to see more data. Scott would like to see carload data from short lines at the next meeting. Shannon Valentine asked what would happen to the rail network if the short lines are not preserved. She wants to see examples at the next meeting of how what we do will impact the short lines. Shannon Valentine said that the plan should ask for more investment if the return will warrant it.

4. Public Comment-Donna Coleman from Norfolk Portsmouth Beltline signed up for public comment. She asked what is being done to evaluate rail use other than tonnage. She said that short lines don't move coal, but that they do move car loads that are high in value. Using the value of tonnage, the car count, and the number of trucks off the highway may be a more valuable measure. Scott Kasproicz agreed that tonnage may not be a descriptive enough component. They may need to look at the value of the car itself.
5. Meeting was adjourned at 10 am.