

September 17, 2014

**Memorandum #2014-125**

**TO: Passenger Rail Task Force**

**BY: Camelia Ravanbakht, Interim Executive Director**

**RE: Passenger Rail Task Force Meeting, September 25, 2014**

The **Passenger Rail Task Force** will hold its next meeting on **Thursday, September 25, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in The Regional Building Board Room, 723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake, VA.**

/kg

**Passenger Rail Task Force – Members**

Keisha L. Branch, HRT  
W. Keith Cannady, HA  
Timothy C. Cross, YK  
Garrey Currey, GL  
Kevan Danker, WATA  
Paul Fraim, NO  
John Friedmann, NSCorp  
Leroy Hansen, SU  
Marc Hoecker, NSCorp  
Amy Inman, DRPT  
Jackie Kassel, NN  
Jay McArthur, AMTRAK  
Allen Murphy, Jr., JC

Reed T. Nester, WM  
Jamie Oliver, IW  
Kevin B. Page, DRPT  
Jeff Raliski, NO  
Bryan Rhode, CSX  
Thomas G. Shepperd, Jr. YK  
Brian Solis, VB  
Earl Sorey, CH  
Jackson C. Tuttle II, WM  
Susan Wilson, PO  
Kenneth I. Wright, PO  
Kevin Wyne, PQ

**Passenger Rail Task Force – Copy Group**

Dan Bell, FHR  
Brian Chenault, HRTPO  
Anne Ducey-Ortiz, GL  
Sherry Earley, SU  
Tyrone Franklin, SY  
Jamie Jackson, WATA  
Theresa Jones, HRTPO  
Brian Lewis, GL

Christopher Lowie, FWS  
Kendall Miller, HRTPO  
Dawn Odom, VDOT  
Bryan Pennington, NO  
Don Schwab, FWS  
Mark Shea, VB  
Eric Stringfield, VDOT  
Chris Wichman, HRTPO

**Agenda**  
**HRTPO Passenger Rail Task Force**  
**September 25, 2014**

**Call to Order 10:00 a.m.**

The Regional Board Room, 723 Woodlake Drive  
Chesapeake, Virginia

1. Call to Order
  2. Public Comment Period (Limit 3 minutes per individual)
  3. Submitted Public Comments
  4. Approval of Agenda
  5. Approval of Minutes
  6. Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation: Virginia's Rail Development Program
  7. Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Vision Plan – Draft Report
  8. HRTPO Passenger Rail Planning Program– Next Steps
  9. Old/New Business
- Adjournment

**AGENDA ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting will be called to order by the Passenger Rail Task Force Chair at approximately 10:00 a.m.

**AGENDA ITEM #2: PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Members of the public are invited to address the Passenger Rail Task Force. Each speaker is limited to three minutes.

**AGENDA ITEM #3: SUBMITTED PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no written public comments. Any new written public comments will be distributed as a handout at the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM #4: APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Members are provided an opportunity to add or delete items from the agenda. Any item for which a member desires an action from the Passenger Rail Task Force should be submitted at this time, as opposed to under "Old/New Business".

**AGENDA ITEM #5: APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**SUBJECT:**

Minutes of the previous Passenger Rail Task Force meeting.

**BACKGROUND:**

Minutes from the Passenger Rail Task Force meeting held on May 8, 2014.

Attachment 5

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Approve the minutes.

**Summary Minutes of the  
HRTPO Passenger Rail Task Force Meeting  
May 8, 2014**

The HRTPO Passenger Rail Task Force Meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. in the James Room at City Center, 700 Town Center Drive, Newport News, Virginia, with the following in attendance:

**Members:**

Timothy C. Cross, YK  
LJ Hansen, SU  
Michael King, NN  
Alexander Metcalf, TEMS

Jeff Raliski, NO  
Julie Timm, HRT  
Jackson C. Tuttle II, WM

**Members Absent:**

W. Keith Cannady, HA  
Garrey Curry, GL  
Kevan Danker, WATA  
Paul Fraim, NO  
John Friedmann, NSCorp  
Marc Hoecker, NSCorp  
Jay McArthur, AMTRAK  
Allen Murphy, Jr., JC  
Reed Nester, WM  
Jamie Oliver, IW

Kevin Page, DRPT  
Bryan Rhode, CSX  
Mark Shea, VB  
Thomas G. Shepperd, YK  
C. Earl Sorey, Jr., CH  
Emily Stock, DRPT  
Susan Wilson, PO  
Kenneth I. Wright, PO  
Kevin Wyne, PQ

**HRTPO Staff:**

Dwight Farmer  
Camelia Ravanbakht

Chris Wichman

**Other Participants:**

Tyrone Franklin, SY  
Paul Fillion, NO  
Robbyn Gayer, FHR  
Amy Inman, DRPT  
Chip Kraft, TEMS  
Derek J. Piper, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Sam Sink, HRT  
Douglas Smith, K&C Consulting  
Brian Solis, VB  
Ed Tombari, NN  
Eric Stringfield, VDOT

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Tuttle at 10:09 a.m.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no public comments.

**3. SUBMITTED PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no submitted public comments.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Tuttle asked for additions or deletions to the agenda. Mr. King Moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Timm. The Motion Carried.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Tuttle indicated the Summary Minutes of the February 13, 2014 meeting of the HRTPO Passenger Rail Task Force were included in the agenda. He asked for corrections or amendments to the minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Cross Moved to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. King. The Motion Carried.

**6. VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: MAJOR PASSENGER RAIL INITIATIVES**

Chair Tuttle indicated that Ms. Inman, DRPT, was running late and suggested that the DRPT briefing be delayed until her arrival. Hearing no objections, Agenda Item 6 was moved to Agenda Item 9.

**7. CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS – MULTIMODAL STATION DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Derek Piper, Parsons Brinckerhoff, briefed the Task Force on the status of an Alternatives Analysis study for the City of Newport News' proposed Multimodal Station at Bland Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue. Mr. Piper stated that site alternatives development and screening are underway. He presented a basic station facilities site plan and a "full build-out" scenario of mixed-use development surrounding the station area.

Mr. Piper stated that a new project estimate of \$37 million exceeds the total of CMAQ and RSTP allocations previously received by the City. He stated that the City is currently pursuing alternative funding mechanisms to fully fund the project. He explained that the increase in cost estimate was primarily related to infrastructure for the Y-turnaround facility and track improvements. He stated that public monies would be used only for utilities and infrastructure work and that the "full build-out" scenario would be determined by market conditions and private investment.

## **8. HAMPTON ROADS PASSENGER RAIL STUDY – PHASE 2B SUPPLEMENT: NEWPORT NEWS-RICHMOND PASSENGER RAIL ROUTE ANALYSIS**

Dr. Metcalf briefed the Task Force on preliminary results from the Hampton Roads Vision Plan: Phase 2B Supplement for the Newport News to Richmond corridor.

He explained the purpose of the Phase 2B Supplement is to develop a solution for the Peninsula, compatible with the October 2009 HRTPO Board resolution which endorsed designation of a high speed rail route along the Norfolk Southern/US 460 corridor and called for enhanced intercity passenger rail service for the CSX/ I-64 corridor.

Dr. Metcalf stated that the supplement study builds on the previously completed evaluation of the Norfolk-Richmond corridor. He displayed a slide with *Option 4 Richmond Direct Improved*, a route option added late in the Phase 2B study as it became apparent that a relatively low-cost high speed rail link to the existing Peninsula passenger rail service would increase ridership/revenue, strengthen financial and economic results, and meet the HRTPO Board objectives for both the Peninsula and the Southside.

Dr. Metcalf explained that this *Option 4 Richmond Direct Improved* had not been studied to the same degree as the Southside options in Phase 2B. The need for a more detailed environmental/engineering analysis of *Option 4 Richmond Direct Improved* was the impetus for the Phase 2B Supplement.

Dr. Kraft summarized the preliminary results of the “Environmental Scan” study task. He explained that a number of route options were developed for initial screening using different combinations of existing rail, Greenfield, interstate highway and existing utility power line rights of way. The TEMS study team selected a ‘representative route’ for the purposes of modeling travel times and ridership; however, the determination of exact routing will require a more thorough analysis in a TIER I EIS.

With regard to train technology, Dr. Kraft emphasized that high speed rail technology (speeds, efficiency) has improved dramatically since 2009. The latest development includes hybrid trains (electric and diesel) that allow for speeds up to 220 mph where electrification infrastructure is available and speeds of 130 mph when diesel engines are engaged. He remarked that the hybrid technology allows for some flexibility in constructing tracks and related infrastructure, and may be the appropriate technology in the context of the Newport News-Richmond Corridor.

Dr. Kraft presented the ‘proposed’ train schedule used to evaluate potential ridership and financial/economic feasibility:

	<b>Super Express</b>	<b>Express</b>	<b>Local</b>
<b>Southside Hampton Roads Service</b>	<b>Norfolk to D.C. 220-mph trains 5 stops to D.C.</b>	<b>Norfolk to D.C. 220-mph trains 7 stops to D.C.</b>	<b>Norfolk to D.C. 220-mph trains 10 stops to D.C.</b>
Trains per day	5	10	3
Time D.C. - HR	1 hour 38 minutes	1 hour 43 minutes	1 hour 58 minutes
<b>Peninsula Hampton Roads Service</b>		<b>Newport News to D.C. 130-mph trains 7 stops to D.C.</b>	<b>Newport News to D.C. 130-mph trains 10 stops to D.C.</b>
Trains per day		4	4
Time D.C. - HR		2 hours	2 hours 10 minutes

Ms. Inman questioned the study assumptions for service between Richmond and Washington D.C. that resulted in the timetables as presented. She mentioned that DRPT’s advancement of the *Richmond Area to Potomac Segment TIER II EIS* is based on a different set of assumptions than the TEMS study. She expressed concern that parallel communication of the TEMS “Vision Plan” study results, alongside advancement of the DRPT TIER II for Richmond-Washington D.C., may send mixed messages to the Federal Railroad Administration and the public at-large.

Dr. Metcalf responded that the TEMS study assumes a privately owned and operated system with a new Greenfield route developed between Richmond and Washington. He expressed the opinion that each system, the enhanced passenger rail service being studied by DRPT and the high speed rail service proposed in the Hampton Roads Vision Plan, have independent utility by serving unique travel markets. He stated that it is common practice for a corridor to have concurrent studies, citing the example of the NEC Future Rail Investment Plan and NEC Maglev Study for the Northeast Corridor.

Dr. Metcalf summarized the preliminary results of financial and economic analysis for *Option 4 Richmond Direct Improved*. He concluded that Option 4 is a significant improvement in operating and cost-benefit ratios over the stand-alone Option 3, which called for high-speed rail improvements in only the Norfolk-Richmond Corridor. He stated that Option 4 increased the total project cost by 15%; however, ridership was found to increase by 34% and revenue was found to increase by 53%.

Dr. Metcalf concluded with several “Benchmarking” slides, which compared TEMS study results to ridership forecasts and capital cost estimates from comparable studies of high-speed rail corridors around the country.



## **9. VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: MAJOR PASSENGER RAIL INITIATIVES**

Ms. Inman highlighted the following DRPT initiatives pertaining to Hampton Roads:

- **Southeast High Speed Rail: Tier II Richmond Area to Potomac River Segment**
  - Contract in procurement with a June/July timeframe to begin work.
  - Estimated cost of study is \$54 million with a 3-5 year schedule to completion.
- **Bland Boulevard Station Development in City of Newport News**
  - DRPT is actively engaging the City in discussions of alternatives under consideration and project funding.

Chair Tuttle asked Mr. Farmer if a substantial slot in the June HRTPO Board agenda could be dedicated to a DRPT summary of study scope for the TIER II Richmond Area to Potomac River Segment. Mr. Farmer responded in the affirmative. Ms. Inman stated that DRPT would be open to presenting the study scope at a future HRTPO Board meeting, but would need to work with HRTPO staff to finalize the appropriate date.

Chair Tuttle thereby recommended that DRPT make a presentation to the HRTPO Board prior to consideration of the TEMS Phase 2B Supplemental Draft Report. He stated that this information will allow the HRTPO Board to make a more informed decision on the study's next steps. Hearing no objections, Chair Tuttle instructed Mr. Farmer to work with DRPT to schedule a presentation.

## **10. OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

No old/new business.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no more business before the Passenger Rail Task Force, the meeting was adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

**AGENDA ITEM #6: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION: MAJOR PASSENGER RAIL INITIATIVES**

**SUBJECT:**

As the state agency responsible for supporting passenger rail activities in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) is involved in several major passenger rail initiatives that impact the Hampton Roads region.

**BACKGROUND:**

In October 2010, the Commonwealth of Virginia received \$44.3 million in federal high-speed rail funds to complete the Tier II Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the portion of the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor between Richmond and Washington, D.C.

Ms. Amy Inman, DRPT Planning and Mobility Programs Administrator, will brief the Passenger Rail Task Force on the Virginia Rail Development Program, including a brief overview of the Richmond Area to Potomac Segment (RAPS) and how DRPT expects to advance higher speed rail in the Commonwealth.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

For discussion and informational purposes.

**AGENDA ITEM #7: HAMPTON ROADS PASSENGER RAIL VISION PLAN- DRAFT REPORT**

**SUBJECT:**

The Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Vision Plan Draft Report is now complete and ready for public review and comment.

**BACKGROUND:**

During FY 2011, in the interest of improving the region's potential for passenger rail service, the HRTPO retained the services of Transportation Economics & Management Systems, Inc. (TEMS). The work of TEMS has resulted in the completion of the following: Preliminary Vision Plan (Phase 1), Blueprint Study (Phase 1B), Data Collection (Phase 2A), and Vision Plan Alternatives Analysis (Phase 2B). The focus of the Phase 2B study was to develop the financial and business plan evaluation of the Norfolk-Richmond High-Speed Corridor, in line with the program set out in the Blueprint Study (Phase 1B).

The Draft Phase 2B report was completed by TEMS and presented to the HRTPO Passenger Rail Task Force on February 13, 2014. The Passenger Rail Task Force determined that the Phase 2B Norfolk-Richmond option that included a link to the Newport News-Richmond Corridor was most viable and that a supplement to the Phase 2B report with additional analysis of Peninsula high speed route options should be pursued.

The original Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Vision Plan final report (Phase 2B) was approved by the HRTPO Board on March 20, 2014. The HRTPO Board also approved the Scope of Work for a *Newport News – Richmond Passenger Rail Route Analysis (Phase 2B Supplement)* and authorized the HRTPO Executive Director to execute a contract with TEMS to complete the analysis.

This work has since been completed by TEMS. Preliminary results were presented to the Task Force on May 8, 2014. At this meeting, the Task Force recommended that a representative from DRPT brief the HRTPO Board on the Richmond-Washington Tier II EIS and the future of high-speed rail in Virginia prior to reconvening the Task Force to consider the revised *Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Vision Plan Draft Report*.

Chris Wichman, Transportation Planner, will brief the Passenger Rail Task Force on the revised *Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Vision Plan Draft Report*, which includes the supplemental analysis of Newport News to Richmond routes.

Enclosure 7-A: High Speed Rail Vision Plan Executive Summary Draft  
Enclosure 7-B: High Speed Rail Vision Plan Draft Report  
Enclosure 7-C: High Speed Rail Vision Plan Technical Appendices Draft

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Review the revised Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Vision Plan Draft Report and provide comments to HRTPO staff ([cwichman@hrtpo.org](mailto:cwichman@hrtpo.org)) by Friday, October 10, 2014.

**AGENDA ITEM #8: HRTPO PASSENGER RAIL PLANNING PROGRAM – NEXT STEPS**

**SUBJECT:**

HRTPO staff is seeking direction on next steps to advance passenger rail planning in the Hampton Roads region.

**BACKGROUND:**

As of June 30, 2014, the HRTPO no longer has a consultant under contract for high-speed/intercity passenger rail planning work. After the public review and comment period on the revised *Hampton Roads Passenger Rail Vision Plan Draft Report* has concluded, the report will be finalized by HRTPO staff and recommended for approval by the HRTPO Board. At that time, a statement of Passenger Rail Task Force and HRTPO Board expectations of HRTPO staff involvement in passenger rail planning will be necessary.

Dr. Camelia Ravanbakht, Interim Executive Director, will initiate discussion on this item.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Provide a recommendation of next steps to advance passenger rail planning in the region.

**AGENDA ITEM #9: OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

**ADJOURNMENT**