



# Meeting of the Planning and New Starts Development Committee

Thursday, March 28, 2019 • 12:00 p.m.

2nd Floor Board Room • 3400 Victoria Blvd, Hampton VA 23661

## MEETING MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER:

Committee Chair Amelia Ross-Hammond called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

### IN ATTENDANCE:

#### Committee Members:

Commissioner Ross-Hammond, Virginia Beach – **Committee Chair**

Commissioner Fuller, Chesapeake

#### Other Commissioners:

Commissioner Charles B. Hunter, Portsmouth **Vice-Chair TDCHR**

Honorable Patricia P. Woodbury, Newport News - **Past-Chair TDCHR**

Commissioner Carl Jackson, Portsmouth, Alternate for Honorable John Rowe

Commissioner Brian DeProfio, Hampton, Alternate

Commissioner Lisa J. Cipriano, Newport News, Alternate

Tara Reel – Virginia Beach, Alternate

#### Hampton Roads Transit Staff:

William Harrell, President and CEO

Conner Burns, Chief Financial Officer

Ray Amoruso, Chief Planning & Development Officer

Jamie Jackson, Director of Transit Development

Samantha Sink, Transit Development Planner

Carleen Muncy, Executive Assistant to Planning & Development

Luis Ramos, Sr. Executive Assistant to the President and CEO

Amy Braziel, Sr. Executive Assistant to the Officer of Operations

Robert Travers, HRT Attorney

Jim Price, Chief Operations Officer

Alesia Cain, Chief Information Technology Officer

Sibyl Pappas, Chief Environmental and Facilities Officer

Gene Cavasos, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer

Brian Smith, Chief of Staff

Joe Dillard, Government Relations Liaison

Tom Holden, Media Relations Specialist

Shanti Mullen, Auditor 1

Sheri Dixon, Manager of Revenue

Erin Burzynski, Revenue Attendant

**Other Attendees**

David C. Burton, Williams Mullen

Wynter Bender, City of Norfolk

Roy Kienitz, WSP

Andrew Ennis, VDRPT

Dr. Sandra Cherry, Councilwoman, City of Newport News

Janice Taylor, Paratransit Advisory Committee

The April 26, 2018 Planning and New Starts Committee meeting minutes and agenda were distributed electronically to committee members in advance of the meeting and hard copies of packets were distributed at the meeting. The meeting package consisted of:

- Agenda
- Minutes from the April 26, 2018 Meeting
- Peninsula Bus Rapid Transit Categorical Exclusion Presentation
- Naval Station Norfolk DEIS Presentation

**Approval of the April 26, 2018 Minutes**

A motion was made and properly seconded to approve the April 26, 2018 Planning and New Starts Committee Meeting Minutes. The April 26, 2018 minutes were voted on and approved by committee members present.

Committee Chair Amelia Ross-Hammond requested Mr. Ray Amoruso, Chief Planning and Development Officer give a quick overview of the Planning and New Starts committee and its responsibility areas, since there are new members to the committee for the 2019 term.

Mr. Amoruso gave a brief history of the committee. It has met infrequently since the completion of the Tide the light rail project. It was chaired for many years by Councilman Randy Wright. The purpose of the committee is for staff to bring this committee information pertaining to High Capacity/Fixed Guideway projects that are seeking funding through the Federal Capital Investment Grant program (formally New Starts Program). Presently HRT staff is working on two projects that are eligible for funding in the Capital Investment Grant Program. These are the Peninsula Bus Rapid Transit Project and the potential extension of high capacity transit to Naval Station Norfolk on the east side of Norfolk. Since they are active projects, it is anticipated that this committee will meet more frequently.

Ms. Sam Sink, Project Manager for the Peninsula Bus Rapid Transit Project provided a PowerPoint presentation about the Peninsula Bus Rapid Transit Categorical Exclusion Project and Ms. Jamie Jackson, Director of Transit Development, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the upcoming Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the extension of High Capacity Transit to the Naval Station Norfolk Project.

**Peninsula Bus Rapid Transit Categorical Exclusion**

Ms. Sam Sink, Principal Transit Planner for the Planning & Development Department of HRT, gave the presentation regarding the Peninsula Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Categorical Exclusion (CE).

Ms. Sink explained the Peninsula BRT project is a 12-month project that was initiated in October and it would evaluate the best alternatives from the previous Peninsula Corridor Study. The purpose has been to define a locally preferred alternative (LPA); obtain National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance and prepare the project for entrance into FTA Project Development Phase; gather a detailed evaluation of traffic impacts; engage the public and stakeholders to build excitement and support; and lastly to refine design and cost.

Ms. Sink described the study process and the Project Organization. In the Traffic Analysis area of the Study, the information will be used to develop conceptual designs used for modeling and will analyze 84 signalized intersections.

Alternatives have been defined: Jefferson/Mercury/Hybrid; Running-way (presence and configuration of bus-only lanes; operational characteristics; and maintenance and operations facility locations.

Ms. Sink explained the NEPA Classes of Action. She also discussed the 4-Phase Engagement Program: 1) – Project Launch; 2) – Build Momentum; 3) – Develop Advocates; and 4) Transition to Future Activities.

Some of the BRT community benefits include: Providing travel choices; Promoting new/compact growth; Support economic growth; Better serve existing and attract new riders; and Create great places to live, work, and discover.

Ms. Sink shared the Project Organization with HRT being the Center of all the coordination and organization. The Project Organization included the City Councils of Hampton and Newport News; the Kimley-Horn Team; FTA Region 3; a Leadership Group; a Technical Advisory Committee; a Traffic Committee; as well as Public and Stakeholder engagements.

Ms. Sink shared some exciting new technology that is planned to be available for public meetings. The project team is working on a virtual reality video where at public meetings, people can put on a headset and be instantly transported to being at a BRT station – where they can see a ticket vending machine, informational signs such when the “next bus” is coming and “arrival times”, and where they can step onto the bus and feel the experience of BRT, which is like “light rail on rubber tires.” HRT is teaming with the Cities to be able to bring out a BRT vehicle and potentially set up a Better Block.

Ms. Sink addressed individual questions. She stated that she could send a PDF of the first a Newsletter for the project, to those interested. There has been a web site set up to start enthusiasm for the project.

Mr. Amoruso stated that the money to fund the effort are RSTP funds, that are spread out over a four-year period. He stated that the “shelf life” for a CE document is much longer than an Environmental Impact Statement. Once a formal application is submitted to FTA, there is a two-year time limit to complete design work and establish local funding. The Cities will need to prove availability of funding to move forward.

## **Naval Station Norfolk DEIS**

Ms. Jamie Jackson, Director of Transit Development gave a presentation on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), High Capacity Transit Extension to Naval Station Norfolk (East Side).

Ms. Jackson provided a brief overview of the study's background regarding the 2015 Naval Station Norfolk Transit Extension Study. From this Study, the FTA provided guidance that it needed to identify if there was a reasonable path from the Tide to Naval Stations Norfolk on the West Side of the City. At the end of the West Side study it was determined that a "no-build" would be selected as the preferred alternative for the Norfolk Westside Transit Study. The next phase of the work effort will be a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and would focus on the east side of the City with an estimated project duration of 24-30 months.

Some of the key components of the DEIS are: Purpose and Need for Action; Alternatives & Proposed Action; Affected Environment; Environmental Consequences; Ridership; Schedule; Costs; Public Comment; and Conceptual Engineering (10% Design).

Ms. Jackson explained what would be evaluated as a part of the DEIS effort: No Build Alternative which includes maintenance of the existing bus system and The Tide; Connections from the Tide to Naval Station Norfolk (NSN), alignment(s) starting from The Tide to consider Military Highway, West Little Creek Road, and Upper portions of Hampton Boulevard; and Intermediary destinations to be considered, include connections from the Tide to Naval Station Norfolk (NSN), Military Circle Mall/JANAF Shopping Center, Sentara Leigh Hospital, Ward's Corner Retail Corridor, Norfolk International Airport, and access to IKEA/Norfolk Premium Outlets areas.

Ms. Jackson stated that high capacity transit service to Naval Station Norfolk would make it a regional asset even though the High Capacity Investment would physically lie in Norfolk. She then addressed the chart showing the project schedule for the time period of March 20, 2019 through July 1, 2019.

Mr. Amoruso provided an additional comment regarding the project effort; including information regarding the RFP process, and the funding available for the effort. He addressed concerns from the City of Norfolk regarding how we would access the base and shuttle circulation on base, which would be critical components to this project. Obtaining military support given the fact that there are frequent command changes, is challenging.

There was a discussion regarding another challenge of transporting passengers and vehicles through the base security checkpoints in a timely matter fashion where military personnel would be able to arrive at work on time 100% of the time vs civilian passengers that would not be penalized for a delayed bus. It was suggested to visit other military installations in other states to view how they manage this issue and possibly determine if their solutions might work in our military region.

## **Old Business**

There was no old business discussed.

**New Business**

Planning and New Starts Committee Chair, Ms. Amelia Ross-Hammond Chair, asked for recommendations from the floor to add additional names to the Planning and New Starts Committee. Commissioner Gray was requested to be added to the list.

Mr. Carl Jackson stated that he would like to receive updates on the improvements to the ferry docks in a future committee meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Carleen Kay Muncy*

Carleen Muncy, BA, CAP, OM  
Executive Assistant  
Planning & Development  
Hampton Roads Transit