



# Meeting Minutes of the Smart Cities & Innovation Committee

Monday, December 9, 2019 ▪ 12:00 PM  
Conference Room 203 ▪ 509 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Norfolk, VA

The Smart Cities and Innovations Committee (SCIC) convened at 12:08 pm on Monday, December 9, 2019.

## Commissioners in attendance

Chairperson, Commissioner Andria McClellan (Norfolk)

## Hampton Roads Transit Staff in attendance

Erin Glenn, Interim Chief Information Officer & Chief Technology Officer  
Ray Amoruso, Chief Planning & Development Officer  
Kamlesh Chowdhary, Director of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)  
Chandler Motley, Transit Operations  
Shelia Gullede, Technology Project Manager, SCIC Secretary

## Additional Attendees

Janice Taylor, PAC  
Mecit Cetin, Old Dominion University  
Paul Atkinson, Eggleston/PAC  
Kevin Curry, Code for Hampton Roads  
Denise Johnson, TRAC  
Matthew Monteyne, RideCo  
Stephen Kuban, RideCo

The SCIC meeting package contained the Agenda and October 2019 Meeting Minutes. It was distributed electronically to all Commissioners in advance of the meeting and posted to Hampton Roads Transit's [SCIC website](#). The Action Items were distributed at the meeting.

## AGENDA – December 9, 2019

The standard agenda was modified for this meeting as noted below:

1. Old Business
  - a. Updates on Local Smart Cities Initiatives
2. New Business
  - a. IT Governance/Costs
  - b. On-demand Transit Solutions
3. Adjournment

## Opening Remarks

Commissioner McClellan convened the meeting requesting updates for ongoing initiatives, noting the community interest in real-time data on buses and how this technology will positively impact and increase ridership when it becomes available.

The Committee's discussions focused on four topics that were determined to be the top SCIC technology priorities, as noted below.

## 1. Old Business

### a. Updates on Local Smart Cities Initiatives

#### **GTFS/Real-Time Transit**

- Kamlesh Chowdhary discussed the timeline, data and process of reinstalling the real-time system and its integration, acceptance and publication with Google. He noted that when the real-time system is available (expected next year), it will only be for the bus fleet and not yet on light rail or ferries. Current plans are for this to be available on fixed route schedules.
- Commissioner McClellan discussed upcoming large events, like "Something in the Water" wherein the transit system will be supplemented with school buses and other vehicles. She reiterated the need for HRT to challenge itself to develop flexibility of real-time and dynamic scheduling during large or special (high visibility) events that require modification from fixed routes.
- Erin Glenn added that Virginia Beach requested a single line of contact for the SITW festival which will be HRT's Operations Department. She has spoken with Tara Reel (TDCHR VB) and it's been noted that next year's festival is going to be bigger than the first.
  - Janice Taylor advised that with shortened bus routes, including for special events like this, the disabled community still wants/needs safe and convenient access. She inquired about vendors that may be able to offer rickshaw taxis, mopeds or other transit modes and mentioned that there are a lot of paratransit customers may not have easy access to internet for published routes and rely heavily upon organizations like HRT to keep them informed. Commissioner McClellan agreed, advising that HRT Operations should ensure the disabled community's needs are addressed. Ms. Taylor added that she has contact with the VB Police Chief and could assist in discussions requesting his assistance if needed.
- Discussion continued with Chandler Motley discussing Google apps which are already used on cellphones would enable users to access [GTFS](#) information without downloading anything further. Ms. Glenn noted that there are other companies that uses Google's GTFS feed to incorporate with other tools; and Mr. Chowdhary added that Google's acquisition of Waze some time ago allows that data to be integrated with that type of application.
- Mr. Chowdhary clarified that after new routes are defined, changes scheduled and installed, Google verifies/approves the GTFS data, the upload and availability of new data is immediate.

#### **Journey Planning**

- Commissioner McClellan encouraged having conversations showcasing a "new HRT" that uses innovative technology and prioritizing multi-modal approaches/systems to include light rail and ferry. She asked about message dissemination when weather events (i.e., high tides, other conditions) or technology outages occur that may impact services.
- Mr. Chowdhary advised that intermodal journey planning is available now on the Internet as it includes options for walking, bus, ferry and train. He noted that some solutions like signage and real-time messaging at all stops is possible but would be a significant investment that requires additional resources so it may be more feasible to execute on the ferries.

- Signal priority will give riders consistency and let them know when the vehicle will arrive and leverage technology to integrate service with TNCs (Transportation Network Companies).
- Responding to questions on the usage statistics on the ferries, Shelia Gullede advised that this information is currently maintained and published online at: <https://gohrt.com/agency/accountability-center/ridership/>. Data can be isolated by mode and year.

Ridership Data

		Total	Ferry
2019	January	31,296	31,296
	February	10,257	10,257
	March	16,882	16,882
	April	22,960	22,960
	May	33,208	33,208
	June	46,332	46,332
	July	42,245	42,245
	August	35,786	35,786
	September	25,409	25,409
	October	21,049	21,049

- Mode
- (All)
  - Ferry
  - Light Rail
  - Paratransit
  - Transit Bus
- Year
- (All)
  - 2018
  - 2019

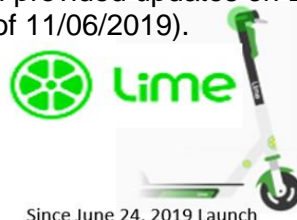
Graphic to the right reflects ferry ridership for 2019.

### **Mobile First / Mobile Payments**

- Kevin Curry initiated discussion on “Mobile First,” an IT strategy that allows real-time information, which differs from mobile payments that provides multiple ways of paying for services – not just cash, but on apps, phones or replenishable cards.
- Mr. Curry added that given technology and ridership, a priority would be ensuring that the mobile environment provides an awesome experience, which may need to happen in developmental phases.
- Commissioner McClellan stressed the importance of making the ability to have mobile payment one of the priorities within the IT map, just behind journey planning and real-time data.

### **Microtransit**

- Commissioner McClellan spoke of microtransit’s on-demand approach offering flexible routing/scheduling with routes to match demand, may extend not only efficiency but improve ridership in providing greater accessibility to transit services. Microtransit is typically vans, small buses or other vehicles that operate on a rideshare model. She noted an informative article – “[Microtransit: Right-sizing Transportation](#)” as recommended reading.
- Microtransit services were compared to TNCs (transportation network companies), sometimes referred to as mobility service providers that match passengers with vehicles via websites and mobile apps. Consensus was rideshare would likely yield more riders.
- Dr. Cetin mentioned ODU project expected to start in late January or February 2020 that will explore different technologies and options for collecting transit ridership data.
- Mr. Motley added that microtransit is a large part of the background of HRT’s incoming paratransit provider.
- Commissioner McClellan provided updates on Lime and Pace data previously discussed as microtransit options (as of 11/06/2019).



Since June 24, 2019 Launch

# Trips: 424,857  
 # Riders: 66,233  
 Total Distance: 486,780.7 miles  
 CO2 Saved: 433,176.5 lbs.  
 Median Distance/Trip: 0.7 miles  
 Median Time/Trip: 7 minutes



Since April 20, 2018 Launch

# Trips: 62,888  
 # Avg. Trips/Month: 3,339  
 Median Trip Duration: 20 minutes  
 Q1-Q2 2019: 2,500 bikers

## 2. New Business

### a. IT Governance/Costs

Discussion ensued on leveraging SCIC to help IT prioritize investments for smart city technology and innovation. Project funding and grants were mentioned, noting the systemic challenges of not having enough staffing required for execution and that many software products are “software as a service” SAAS, which is “real” money required every year that may not be included in funding sources.

Ms. Glenn announced that the Technology Department is on track to execute the current 22 grants due in June 2020; although standing up a governance board at the Agency level to analyze IT and help prioritize investments might be helpful. She added that HRT is working with DRPT to review projects and grants to determine if the projects are feasible; can be executed and align with the timelines of the grants. Commissioner McClellan added that priority should be given to soliciting feedback from user interface groups and other internal committees with whom we are already associated, such as TRAC (Transit Riders Advisory Committee) and looking at best practices of other transit organizations.

### b. On-Demand Transit Solutions

Representatives from a microtransit provider, RideCo, provided an impromptu overview and background of their work in the public and private sector On-Demand Transit services, offering to schedule follow-on meetings with SCIC and others. Their [microtransit presentation](#) is published on the SCIC website.

## **Adjournment**

The October 2019 Meeting Minutes were not reviewed for approval and will be added to the agenda at an upcoming meeting.

The SCIC portion of the meeting adjourned at 1:18 pm; immediately followed by a brief, impromptu presentation by microtransit provider, [RideCo](#) which concluded at 1:49 pm.

**The January SCIC meeting is rescheduled to Friday, January 17, 2020  
at HRT’s Hampton Office, 3400 Victoria Boulevard, Board Room**