



Meeting Minutes of the Smart Cities & Innovation Committee

Thursday, September 10, 2020 ▪ 12:00 PM
HRT-sponsored Zoom Webinar

The Smart Cities and Innovations Committee (SCIC) convened at 12:03 pm on Thursday, September 10, 2020.

Commissioners in attendance

Chairperson, Commissioner Andria McClellan (Norfolk)
Commissioner Dr. Patricia Woodbury (Newport News)
Commissioner Jimmy Gray, TDCHR (Hampton)
Alt. Commissioner Carl Jackson, TDCHR (Portsmouth)

Hampton Roads Transit Staff in attendance

William Harrell, President & Chief Executive Officer
Brian Smith, Chief of Staff
Michael A. Price, Sr. Chief Information Officer & Chief Technology Officer
Ray Amoruso, Chief Planning & Development Officer
Kamlesh Chowdhary, Director of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
Alex Touzov, Director of Technology Services (TIOS)
Erin Glenn, Director of Enterprise Technology Solutions (ETS)
Shelia Gullede, Technology Project Manager, SCIC Administrative Liaison

Additional Attendees

Janice Taylor, PAC
Denise Johnson, TRAC
Paul Atkinson, Eggleston Services
Cole S. Fisher, City of Virginia Beach Planning & Community Development

AGENDA – September 10, 2020

1. Call to Order
 - a. Review and Approval of SCIC Meeting Minutes (if quorum established)
2. Updates and New Business
 - a. GTFS-RT Status
 - b. Mobile Ticketing
 - c. Microtransit Pilot
3. Open Discussion
4. Adjournment

Opening Remarks

Commissioner McClellan convened the meeting with introduction of Agenda to include updates on Real-Time Data, Mobile Ticketing and Microtransit services from HRT.

Updates & New Business

1. Michael A. Price, Sr. led a presentation and discussion on HRT's GTFS-Real Time Data and Mobile Ticketing progress
 - Mobile ticketing fleetwide implementation across all modes with steps and timeline estimates beginning first quarter 2021 were discussed. Mr. Price noted the complexity of the full project scope requires a thorough assessment and execution structure
 - Mr. William Harrell added that the pilot project previously undertaken was not meant to be a full roll-out, but to demonstrate the capability and feasibility of the service. He noted that the second stage of the pilot was canceled due to COVID restrictions
 - Questions were also addressed on the expectation of the procurement process and evaluation criteria as this project moves forward
 - Alt. Commissioner Carl Jackson mentioned that the current HRT mobile ticketing app used for the Oceanfront Trolley that is sometimes mistakenly used for buses and light rail and that there needs to be clear communications to ensure the utilization of which mode can use the application. Mr. Harrell agreed and noted that HRT will review our public-facing communications to ensure that is corrected
 - Comm. McClellan suggested that there is a method for TRAC and Paratransit user interface in the data phase so the program can be reviewed from that lens as well; Mr. Price concurred
 - Comm. Woodbury suggested that HRT learn from other transit agencies' experiences in implementing this type of program; Mr. Price advised that is part of the full structure
 - Comm. McClellan stated that having trip planning, mobile ticketing and real-time data as part of a single app would be ideal; Mr. Price noted that we will explore and evaluate
 - Real-time data soft launch has begun on Google Maps
 - How we utilize usage of real-time data has also been launched (for trip planning) on the HRT website that renders on all devices
 - Infoweb app being evaluated to consider all-in-one approach, an intuitive, easy-to-use customer interface is ideal
 - Ms. Janice Taylor asked how frequently this data will be updated and how will HRT dispense inclement weather announcements on any real-time app. Kamlesh Chowdhary responded that real-time service alerts will be pushed out on Google Maps and be immediately available. Mr. Harrell added that traffic pattern changes that may impact routes and boarding will also be pushed out via Customer Service. Ray Amoruso noted that the Call Center and a Customer Service Liaison that sits in Dispatch to provide up-to-the minute emergency detours
 - Data on customer-facing real-time information, ridership, metrics, etc. is available on HRT's website: <https://gohrt.com/agency/accountability-center/>

- Comm. McClellan mentioned that this work should be very well received and noted that the Ferries and Light Rail do not have the same potential delays due to traffic patterns. She suggested that the next inclination would be for the customer to ask after these features are available, that the next step is when they may be able to purchase tickets to the modes on their phones as well. Comm. Jimmy Gray agreed that after the launch of mobile ticketing and real-time data, paying online for tickets should be pursued
- Ms. Taylor noted that the disabled community often do not the added expense for Internet access, so an active phone line information and ordering capability will still be needed. Mr. Price agreed, stating that there will be no elimination of that service to provide accessibility to all. Mr. Harrell added that we are also looking at strategies to continue to address the unbanked as well
- Comm. McClellan asked if the VIA paratransit app has been launched; Paul Atkinson advised that it has and seems to be going well thus far

2. Dr. Brian Smith provided an update on on-demand microtransit service

- Referenced the [Transit Strategic Plan](#) as a good information source that captures work that has been done to date; now looking at ways to innovate and explore ways to navigate microtransit's shared rides concept in follow-up planning
 - Flex zones identified through the Transit Transformation project and pilot zones were finalized (Newport News, Virginia Beach)
- Actively reassessing potential to deploy microtransit in different ways given the realities of COVID which have put the microtransit program in a holding pattern
- Ms. Taylor inquired about the ADA accessibility of any microtransit services when it becomes available (i.e., stepstools, service animals, etc.); Mr. Amoruso assured her that when this service begins, it will be ADA compliant

New Business

1. Electric Bus Fleet

- Commissioner McClellan noted the upcoming visit by Governor Northam announcing HRT's new electric bus fleet
- Ms. Taylor asked how populations that do not have a fixed route will be canvassed for use. Mr. Amoruso responded that each city (in this case, City of Chesapeake) holds discussions on services and geographic gaps in the system during annual budgeting process. HRT recommends fixed route services based on density per acre; ultimately the city council funds these services and new routes. HRT also solicits feedback from various city leagues, groups such as Paratransit, etc.

2. New schedule for SCIC meetings

- It was determined that the SCIC meetings would convert to a quarterly vs. monthly basis unless/until there is a driving issue that warrants an earlier meeting. The next meeting for SCIC will be on Thursday, December 10th
- Alt. Comm. Jackson suggested that an SCIC report by an HRT staff member, when feasible, is represented during the monthly Board meetings and a more detailed update provided quarterly

Meeting Minute Review

After a quorum was confirmed, Comm. McClellan conducted a review of the March, May and June 2020 meeting minutes. Having no changes to the minutes, a motion to approve was offered by Commissioner Woodbury and properly seconded by Commissioner Gray. The Meeting Minutes were subsequently approved by a unanimous vote

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:08 pm

The next SCIC meeting will be held on Thursday, December 10th