Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Transit Service Delivery Advisory Committee (TSDAC)
Conducted via Webinar
April 11, 2018
9:00 to 10:00 am

Minutes

Members Present:

John McGlennon, Chair   Hap Connors
Brad Sheffield   Jim Dyke
Brian Smith   Cindy Mester
Tom Fox   Kate Mattice (Participated from the DRPT office)

Members Absent:

Jim Dyke

1. Call to Order / Introductions (9:00 AM) – Jen DeBruhl, DRPT's Chief of Transit, opened the meeting. She let TSDAC members know that their mics were open so that they could comment. She let the members of the public know that their mics would be open during the public comment period. Chairman John McGlennon called the meeting to order and asked members present to introduce themselves.

2. Update on Project Scoring using the Revenue Advisory Board Methodology-Tom Harrington, Cambridge Systematics

   Tom gave his presentation on the FY18 Capital Project Prioritized list that was developed using the RAB methodology. The following discussion ensued.

   A. Chairman John McGlennon said that he understood how useful life on vehicles was calculated but did not understand how useful life was determined with other assets. Tom Harrington said that other asset's useful lives were determined using FTA guidelines. That information is stored in the TransAM data base and used for comparison.

   B. Brian Smith asked how the scores of low, medium and high were differentiated from one another. Tom Harrington said that those are qualitative scores. He said there is currently research being done on the operating efficiency side that would make those measures more quantitative in the future.

   C. Kate Mattice asked how ridership is counted in the service impact score. Tom Harrington said that there had been discussions on this because of the service differences in different geographic areas. He said that at this point there is no quantitative measure for ridership.

D. Brian Smith asked for clarification on whether or not buses were disaggregated. He also asked if paratransit vehicles were disaggregated. Tom Harrington replied that they were. He said that they have VIN numbers for vehicles in the database. The data on equipment, technology, and facilities is a little mixed with some areas having better data than others. Tom said that DRPT's applications can be modified to request information on assets that would lead to better data sets and scoring.

E. Brian Smith asked if mileage or age was responsible for a better score. Chairman John McGlennon said that it looked like age was the trigger. Tom Harrington said that there was a mix but that age may be a little more common.

F. An example of a GRTC request for bus replacement was discussed. Tom Harrington said that in this example buses were triggered by age even though they were not quite there for mileage. Some of the buses were well below the mileage threshold. (NOTE: further review indicated that there are data quality issues with the mileage data, but age data has been verified. Data quality will be discussed on the May 10 webinar.)

G. Tom Harrington said that even with objective scoring there will still be other factors and other checks that are considered.

H. Chairman John McGlennon asked about the different pots of funding that were previously discussed and asked if we were starting off with 2 separate pots of funding. He said that the way the prioritization broke out it looks like we are comparing minor enhancement projects to state of good repair projects.

I. Jen DeBruhl said that the program structure the Revenue Advisory Board developed had a split in the program to balance out the overwhelming SGR needs. WSP is working to apply funding to the scored list to see how far down the list we can go. Jen said that a portion of the program could be set aside to fund minor enhancement projects. She said that things flagged as minor enhancement have been moved into SGR for this scoring effort. The number may be so small that there is no need to split the program.

J. Jennifer Mitchell said that there may be an instance when a minor enhancement project rises above an SGR need so we may not always want to fund all SGR needs first. She said that this is a policy decision that needs to be made. She said there may need to be two separate pots of funding to put them on more even scoring since minor enhancement projects are not scored on asset condition, they are missing a whole part of the score.

K. Jen DeBruhl said that if you change the scoring approach, there is the potential of making more subjective scoring have more weight. At the end of April we will have the WSP data and will be able to move pieces around with funding. The April 30th meeting will be dedicated to program structure and funding.

L. Jennifer Mitchell asked if there were ways in the meantime to play around with the scoring so that minor enhancement projects can compete. Cambridge Systematics is evaluating additional approaches.

M. Cindy Mester said that a minor enhancement project could have a lot of value, so this issue needs a policy discussion after the TSDAC receives the next round of data. She suggested comparing this to the tiers.

N. Brian Smith said that these are important policy discussions. He said that in looking at the disaggregated project list there are several hundred SGR projects and that bus

replacement takes up most of the program. He said that minor enhancement projects have a good impact, but don't appear to score higher than even the lowest SGR need. He suggested a variable match rate as one option to consider in ongoing analysis.looking to prioritize SGR. Brian suggested that buses could get the highest match rate and that other SGR projects get funded, but possibly at lower rates. He said that this would make way for the funding of some minor expansion projects.

O. Brad Sheffield asked a question about scoring for age and mileage. He asked if there was a range of existing assets that could be used to establish criteria within that range. Tom Harrington said that based on existing data there are some vehicles that are very old but that there was an even spread of points. He said that usage of assets varies by year but that 25,000 is the average. Brad Sheffield asked if it was possible to add a column to the ranking for age and mileage to get a sense of this. Tom Harrington noted that he would add that.

P. Brian Smith thanked Tom Harrington for all of his work and asked if there were things he struggled with as he wrestled with this information. Tom Harrington said that data availability was his biggest challenge. He said that there was great data available for vehicles. Data availability should improve through changes to the application process. He said that if you read the applications there are lots of inconsistencies. He said that applications don't usually talk about usefulness or functionality.

3. Updated Work Plan/Schedule/Wrap Up and Next Steps - Jen DeBruhl, DRPT

Jen DeBruhl shared that DRPT was working to develop similar branding to what was developed for SMART SCALE for the new prioritization, but that it was not ready for this webinar. She said that there are lots of moving parts with the schedule. She said that there would be an update to CTB at the April meeting on the work plan.

She said that DRPT is lining up transit agencies to pilot the strategic planning. Jen said that the May 10th webinar will be a behind the scenes look at the TransAM system and be focused on data. Kate Mattice asked if TransAM accounted for every asset purchased with Commonwealth money. Jen said that it does. There is some confusion between TransAM and Transit Asset Management plans required by FTA. TAM is a Federal requirement for agencies using federal funds, with the larger agencies preparing their own plans but that smaller entities participate in the state group plan. TransAM is a statewide asset database which informs the group TAM plan, but is much broader than just that. She said that it is a good platform for SGR information and analysis.

Jen said that the June meeting will focus on policy and putting structure behind some of the policy decisions the group is making. The draft prioritization policy will be presented at the CTB workshop in September and for action at the CTB meeting October. The agency is doing ongoing outreach about the reform package to VTA, CTAV and MPO's. The following discussion points were made about the schedule and work plan.

A. Chairman John McGlennon asked Jen if she had what she needed from the committee to move forward. She said that she did and that DRPT would move forward with the approach discussed. DRPT will address the questions brought up during the meeting on April 30th.

B. Kate Mattice said she was looking forward to the April 30th meeting where funding would be applied to the prioritization. She pointed out that some are using state money to match the Federal money. She asked what that means for how far the funding can be stretched.

C. Cindy Mester thanked DRPT for conducting the meeting by webinar and asked if the money can be cross checked again the tiers at the April meeting. Cindy also asked if TSDAC members need to be present at any upcoming CTB meetings. Jennifer Mitchell said that CTB members did not need to be present in April, that this meeting was just to orient the CTB members on the work since they will be making decisions on it in the future.

D. Brian Smith asked if the prioritization was looking at applications or funded projects. Jen DeBruhl said that the list was looking at everything that was applied for and not necessarily things that were funded. Brian Smith said that he was looking forward to the April meeting and asked that Tom follow up with an updated spreadsheet with the additional columns that were requested. He would like to see which applications were funded and which were not. Jen DeBruhl said the logic behind some assets or applications not being funded had nothing to do with the technical score. She said that there is an eligibility evaluation that you won't be able to see on a funded/not funded list. She said that any application that is deemed eligible gets some funding. The eligibility evaluation would still occur once prioritization is implemented.

E. Chairman John McGlennon reminded the group that the process of prioritization had been mandated by the General Assembly and that group should determine the best practices for providing the Commonwealth with the best use of limited funds.

F. Chairman John McGlennon asked if the TSDAC had any additional comments. Hap Connors asked the group to look into how technology is being measured and how it can be funded.

4. Public Comment-No one was signed up for public comment.

5. Adjourn-Chairman John McGlennon adjourned the meeting at 10:01 am.