

## Evaluation Significant Projects that May Ease Congestion in Northern Virginia Interim Progress Report #3

January 1, 2014

### **Legislative Background**

Chapters 768 and 825 of the 2012 Acts of Assembly amended the *Code of Virginia* by adding § 33.1-13.03:1, directing the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in ongoing coordination with the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA), to evaluate and develop a quantitative rating system for at least 25 significant transportation projects in and near the Northern Virginia Transportation District, to the extent funds are available for such a purpose. (The effort to develop the rating system and evaluate and rate the projects is hereinafter collectively referred to as the “Rating Study” or “study.”)

The enacting legislation directs that the project evaluation and rating be based on the project’s expected effectiveness at easing congestion and, to the extent possible, the rating should also be based on the project’s expected improvement in regional mobility in the event of a homeland security emergency. The evaluation and ratings are to be completed and published on VDOT’s website every four years. Interim progress reports are to be published on VDOT’s website every six months. VDOT posted its first two reports on its website on January 1, 2013 and July 1, 2013, respectively. The interim reports are available at:

[http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/evaluating\\_significant\\_projects.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/evaluating_significant_projects.asp).

The full text of the *Code of Virginia* §33.1-13.03:1 can be found at:

<https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?000+cod+33.1-13.03C1>.

VDOT’s Northern Virginia District Office and DRPT are leading the Rating Study. In September 2013, VDOT procured the services of a professional consultant, AECOM Technical Services, Inc., to develop the rating system, evaluate candidate projects’ effectiveness in reducing congestion and improving mobility during a homeland security emergency, and assign the ratings.

This Interim Report #3 serves as an update on tasks already in progress as well as new activities commenced since the Rating Study’s initiation with the consultant. The following tasks were outlined in the July 2013 Report and are now either complete or in progress.

## **Update on Tasks Noted in Interim Progress Report #2, July 2013**

**1. Develop Structure for Project Management and Oversight:** The following components comprise the project management and oversight structure.

- The Rating Study is led by the VDOT Northern Virginia District Planning and Investment Management Unit (PIM) with DRPT.
- An executive team composed of senior managers at VDOT and DRPT serve as liaisons to the General Assembly, the CTB, and the NVTA.

**Status** – Selection of members for the executive team is complete. The executive team includes Ms. Helen Cuervo, VDOT Northern Virginia (NoVA) District Administrator, Ms. Rene’e Hamilton, VDOT NoVA Deputy District Administrator, and Mr. Kevin Page, DRPT Chief Operating Officer.

- A Peer Review Group (PRG) consisting of independent subject matter experts will review the technical components of the study.

**Status** – VDOT finalized negotiations with the PRG and procured their services in September 2013. The PRG includes representatives from the Texas Transportation Institute and the Center for Urban Transportation Research located within the University of Southern Florida. As noted and further described hereinafter, the PRG began its work in November 2013.

**2. Develop Request for Proposal (RFP) and Scope of Work:** VDOT completed the procurement process and issued a Notice to Proceed in September 2013.

**Status** – VDOT contracted with AECOM Technical Services, Inc., a professional technical consulting firm, and developed a comprehensive scope of work for the Rating Study. As the prime consultant, AECOM is supported by several subconsultants: Decision Lens, Travesky & Associates, and Belcher Consultants. A rating will be provided for each project by June 2014 for use by the NVTA. More detailed information on the extent of the ultimate congestion reduction and rating will be available by Dec 2014 for additional consideration and use by the NVTA, the CTB and others.

**Initiate Preliminary Research and Congestion Assessment:** The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization, has completed a draft congestion assessment for the study based on existing conditions and the Constrained Long Range Plan forecasts. The congestion assessment will be completed in late 2013, and will serve as a baseline for the study. Results of the assessment will be available prior to projects being solicited for evaluation.

**The following are new tasks that VDOT/DRPT has initiated** since the July 2013 Interim Report.

### **Tasks Undertaken Since Interim Progress Report #2, July 2013**

- 1. Conduct Ongoing Coordination with the CTB and the NVTA:** VDOT will coordinate with the Northern Virginia representatives of the CTB and with the NVTA.

**Status** – Since July 2013, VDOT has coordinated with the following entities regarding the Rating Study:

- Provided ongoing updates to the Northern Virginia representatives of the CTB, as well as to the NVTA Chairman.
- Presented the study scope and schedule to the NVTA on September 26, 2013
- Coordinated with the NVTA Jurisdiction and Agency Coordination Committee (JACC) and the NVTA Project Implementation Working Group (PIWG) on numerous occasions to obtain feedback on the study scope and activities.
- VDOT briefed the CTB on the study scope and proposed study priorities on October 17, 2013.

- 2. Establish CTB's Priorities for the Study:** The legislation directs that the evaluated projects be "*selected according to priorities determined by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, in on-going coordination with the NVTA.*"

**Status** – On October 17, 2013, the CTB passed a resolution approving six study priorities, derived from the VTrans 2035 Update. The following priorities, previously vetted with the NVTA, will serve as the priorities to be used for and applied in selecting the significant transportation projects to be evaluated and rated:

- Preserve and Enhance Statewide Mobility Through the Region
- Increase Coordinated Safety and Security Planning
- Improve the Interconnectivity of Regions and Activity Centers
- Reduce the Costs of Congestion to Virginia's Residents and Businesses
- Increase System Performance by Making Operational Improvements
- Increase Travel Choices to Improve Quality of Life for Virginians

- 3. Develop an approach to narrow down the number of nominated projects to no more than 30 for evaluation and rating:** After ensuring that the nominated projects meet at least one of the CTB priorities, VDOT will further screen projects to make certain the projects to be evaluated and rated comply with the legislation, namely that they are significant projects with the potential to reduce congestion and improve mobility in the event of a homeland security emergency.

**Status** – VDOT and DRPT have developed a project screening approach called the Project Selection Model (PSM), and have refined it with input from the PRG, the project stakeholders (representatives of the localities in Northern Virginia and the transit agencies/commissions), NVTA, and the CTB.

- VDOT conducted a PRG webinar on the draft PSM on October 31, 2013.
- The draft PSM was distributed to stakeholders on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and many comments were received by the November 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.
- The study team met with the representatives of the NVTA member jurisdictions and transit agencies on November 22, 2013 to review the revised Project Selection Model. In response to comments received from the representatives and the NVTA's PIWG, the proposed PSM was revised on December 2, 2013.
- The study team met with the representatives of the NVTA member jurisdictions and transit agencies on December 3, 2013 to conduct a workshop in which the stakeholder jurisdictions and agencies provided input on the relative importance of criteria established for the PSM.
- The results of the workshop were shared with the NOVA CTB members (December 9, 2013) and the NVTA (Dec. 12, 2013 workshop) for concurrence on the final weighting of the PSM.

### **Next Steps**

The following represents the next key steps and the anticipated schedule:

- Provide baseline regional congestion analysis to the Peer Review Group, the stakeholders, the NVTA and the CTB - January/February 2014
- Project Nominations by NVTA and CTB - February 2014
- Develop Project Evaluation methodology (includes measures of effectiveness (MOE), and project rating using the MOEs) to be used in the project evaluation/rating phase of the study. The development of the project selection methodology will be coordinated with the Peer Review Group, the stakeholders, the NVTA, and the NoVA members of the CTB. The MOEs will be used to assess each project's ability to reduce congestion and, to the extent possible, improve mobility during a homeland security emergency situation, as required by 2012 HB 599.
- CTB Review of Project Selection and Project Evaluation Methodologies and the projects nominated to be evaluated in the study - March 2014
- Develop travel demand model and traffic operational analysis models to analyze the CTB reviewed projects - March 2014
- First set of project ratings for use by the NVTA, CTB and others for each project - June 2014
- Next progress Report - July 2014
- Final detailed congestion reduction assessment and project rating report - December 2014