

Evaluating Significant Projects that May Ease Congestion in Northern Virginia Interim Progress Report #7

January 1, 2016

Legislative Background

Chapters 768 and 825 of the 2012 Acts of Assembly amended the *Code of Virginia* by adding § 33.2-257, 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. With the exception of the July 2015 report, VDOT has posted interim reports on its website every six months starting in January, 2013.

The first set of ratings were completed and posted on VDOT’s website in January 2015. These ratings were used by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) to select projects for funding in their FY15-16 Program. The interim reports, a description of the evaluation methodology and the ratings model, and the first set of rated projects are available at:

http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/evaluating_significant_projects.asp.

The projects selected for funding by the NVTA can be found at

<http://www.thenovaauthority.org/wp-content/uploads/FY2014-16-Program-Project-Updates.12.10.15.pdf>

The full text of the *Code of Virginia* § 33.2-257 can be found at:

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+33.2-257>

VDOT’s Northern Virginia District Office and DRPT are leading the Rating Study. This Interim Report #7 serves as an update on tasks in progress and new activities commenced since July 2015.

Update on tasks from Interim Progress Report #6 – July 1, 2015

- 1. Conduct ongoing coordination with the CTB and the NVTA:** VDOT continually coordinates with the Northern Virginia representatives of the CTB and with the NVTA.

Status - Since July 2015, VDOT has coordinated with the following stakeholders regarding the analyses and evaluation of the three transit projects and the I-66 projects.

- Provided updates to the Northern Virginia representatives of the CTB, as well as to the NVTA Chairman.
- Met with local/regional transit stakeholders to review the detailed transit rating results, and responded to their questions/issues in late summer 2015.
- Presented the results of the transit rating and evaluations to the project stakeholders and to the NVTA and their Project Implementation Working Group (PIWG) subcommittee in September and October 2015.
- Presented the approach for the transit evaluations to the Peer Review Group on August 11, 2015. The results were shared with the group on September 28, 2015.

- 2. Assess the performance of TRANSIMS in the evaluation and rating of sample transit projects in Northern Virginia:** With the passage of Chapter 458 of the 2015 Acts of Assembly, the Virginia General Assembly amended *Code of Virginia* § 33.2-2510, having to do with the use of certain revenues by the NVTA. Section 33.2-2510 now requires that mass transit projects submitted for NVTA funding also be evaluated and rated by the Rating Study process beginning on July 1, 2016. In response, the project team has completed the evaluation and rating of three sample transit projects to ensure that the TRANSIMS model accurately represents potential changes in system-wide congestion due to the implementation of transit projects. (Full text of § 33.2-2510 can be found at: <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title33.2/chapter25/section33.2-2510/>.)

Status – The study team has completed and shared the results of the evaluation of three sample transit projects using the TRANSIMS model. The local transit agencies, working with DRPT and the project team, suggested sample transit projects to evaluate and rate. The projects included two Metrorail projects and one Virginia Railway Express project. The analysis was completed in late August, and the results were shared with local agencies and the Peer Review Group in September and October.

- 3. Evaluate and develop a rating for the I-66 outside the Beltway project:** The current I-66 outside the Beltway project was evaluated and rated using the TRANSIMS model, and was compared to the top five previously rated projects. (I-66 extends from the Washington, D.C. line west to I-81.) The proposed I-66

project includes the addition of high-occupancy-toll (HOT) express lanes from the Town of Haymarket to I-495 (the Capital Beltway), with high quality transit services operating on the express lanes, and the construction of new and expanded park and ride lots.

Status - The project team completed the analysis of I-66 outside the Beltway in October/November, and the results, along with ratings for the inside the Beltway project, were shared with the CTB at their December workshop. The presentation can be found at the CTB website at http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/resources/2015/dec/pres/Presentation_I66Inside.pdf .

The following are new tasks that VDOT and DRPT initiated since the July 2015 Interim Report (not published on the VDOT web site):

- 1. Evaluate and develop a rating for the I-66 inside the Beltway project:** The study team evaluated the currently proposed project for I-66 inside the Beltway using the TRANSIMS model. The proposed project is a result of a detailed multi-year study undertaken in 2011 to 2013. The project that was evaluated includes the conversion of the facility between I-495 and the Roosevelt Bridge to dynamic tolling during rush hours in the peak direction, enhanced bus service throughout the corridor, support of carpooling and other transportation demand management strategies and widening of I-66 eastbound between the Dulles Connector Road and Ballston. The results of this analysis were presented to the CTB at their December workshop (presentation can be found at http://www.ctb.virginia.gov/resources/2015/dec/pres/Presentation_I66Inside.pdf)
- 2. Preparation of model networks for next round of analysis:** The consultant team has been updating the model to include the latest version of the Northern Virginia Region's Constrained Long Range Plan, adopted in October 2015. This update is in preparation for the evaluation of projects nominated for NVTAs 2017 funding program, which will be completed in the spring of 2016.

Next steps

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

- Complete the FY2017 project evaluations and share the results with the localities- April 2016
- Present the evaluations and ratings to the NVTAs- May 2016