Approved on April 20, 2016

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
The Authority for Transportation in Northern Virginia

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 16, 2015, 7:00pm
NVTA Office
3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200
Fairfax, Virginia 22031

SUMMARY NOTES

I. Call to Order/Welcome Ms. Judy

- Ms. Meredith Judy called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.
- Attendees:
  - Members: Armand Ciccarelli; Kathy Ichter; Meredith Judy; Pat Turner; Shanjiang Zhu.
  - NVTA Staff: Monica Backmon (Executive Director); Keith Jasper (Program Coordinator); Sree Nampoothiri (Program Coordinator).
  - Other: James Davenport (Prince William County); Noelle Dominguez (Fairfax County); Dalia Leven (AECOM), Karina Ricks (Nelson-Nygaard).

II. Meeting Summary of February 17, 2016 Meeting Ms. Judy

- Ms. Turner moved to approve the minutes of February 17, 2016 meeting; seconded by Mr. Ciccarelli. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Information

III. NVTA Update Ms. Backmon

- Ms. Backmon provided a summary of the March 10th NVTA meeting.
  - The Authority approved, via consent, the local distribution fund (30%) budget, regional revenue fund (70%) budget, and FY2017 NVTA operating budget.
  - The Authority approved the FY2022 CMAQ/RSTP programming allocations.
- Ms. Backmon informed that the work session for the Authority's 5-Year Strategic Plan is scheduled for April 11th.

IV. TransAction Update: Future Scenario Building Mr. Jasper

- Mr. Jasper introduced the scenario building for TransAction as way to understand the different future possibilities rather than predicting one future condition.

- Ms. Leven presented the TransAction process as a series of steps including identification of projects, organization of projects into themes, testing of themes against future scenarios, and recommendation of corridor themes.
- Ms. Leven mentioned that theme does not necessarily mean one mode but more of a set of solutions to address a need or set of needs in a corridor.
- In response to Dr. Zhu's question, Ms. Ricks explained that projects or themes will not be thrown out if analysis showed that that theme did not work the best. A set of projects will be assembled that will give the best result.
- Dr. Zhu cautioned that one big project can influence the total score if all projects in one package are assigned one score while analyzing.
- Ms. Leven mentioned that the definition of likely future scenarios will lead to identification of needs for those scenarios. This could further lead to testing of solution packages that are effective across scenarios.
- In response to Ms. Ichter's request for differentiation among corridor, theme, and solution packages, Ms. Leven explained that corridors are physical set of streets/highways/transit routes; themes include freeway, transit, ITS, or bike-ped treatments; and solution packages include set of projects that can address the potential needs arising from future scenarios under different themes on particular corridors.
- Mr. Ciccarelli cautioned that keeping a number of moving parts in the analysis could result in difficulty to measure the impact of solutions.
- Ms. Leven mentioned that the solutions will be evaluated theme by theme before considering a mix-match to enable better impact measurement.
- Ms. Leven agreed with Dr. Zhu that this is similar to sensitivity tests where the scenarios will be based on a range of potential changes in travel behavior, technology, and fuel price among others.
- Dr. Zhu pointed out that the elements mentioned include system-wide (e.g. demographic changes) and localized (e.g. activity pattern) and needs to be addressed carefully in the modeling process.
- In response to Ms. Backmon's question, Ms. Ricks mentioned that similar scenario testing has been carried out by other agencies in the country including Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), the MPO for the Philadelphia region.
- In response to Mr. Ciccarelli's question, Ms. Leven mentioned that the main criticism of scenario approach are that it is time consuming and costly. Such exercises might introduce discussion on induced demand/behavior and can be construed as social engineering.
- Ms. Leven agreed with Ms. Judy that multiple iterations of the analysis might be needed.
- Ms. Leven mentioned that the future scenarios will be compared to a baseline scenario that will be based on current forecasts and continuation of current travel and activity trends.
- Ms. Leven presented draft Scenario A (increased vehicle travel) and Scenario B (reduced vehicle travel).

- Ms. Ricks affirmed to Mr. Ciccarelli that Scenario A assumes the demographic and land use factors to remain the same as baseline.
- Dr. Zhu suggested that the impact of technological changes on transit will be different from that on road travel and therefore, need to be considered carefully.
- Ms. Leven agreed with Mr. Ciccarelli that Scenario C could be a combination of Scenarios A and B or something that might have a catastrophic impact on travel.
- In response to Dr. Zhu's suggestion of comparing technological changes with the Smart City proposals shortlisted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Ms. Ricks mentioned that the team is looking into smart city concepts in its literature research.
- Ms. Judy suggested to explain to the public the reasoning for scenario building, preferably through graphics, as a way to make public presentations easier to understand.
- Ms. Turner suggested to make the idea of themes and packages simpler.
- Ms. Ichter suggested to start at a bracketing stage (e.g. sensitivity test) rather than concept level.
- Dr. Zhu mentioned that scenario planning goes beyond the common practice of high or low forecasts to look at different behavioral patterns.
- Mr. Ciccarelli suggested to have a better storytelling at a high level.

Adjournment

V. Adjourn Ms. Judy

- Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.