

Transportation Toll Facility Advisory Committee
June 29, 2012

- 1. Call to Order:** Scott Davis called the meeting to order at approximately 11:33 a.m.
- 2. Roll Call:** Committee members in attendance.

Committee Members in Attendance

W. Scott Davis
Vonda Chappell
George Midgette
Larry Zoeller
Robert Sciacchitano

Ex-officio Members in Attendance

Kelly Lackey

Committee Member not in Attendance

Non-Committee Members in Attendance

Mary Ann Saunders	Jan Proctor
Earl Sorey	Nancy Tracy
Terry Herbert	Betty Meyer
Elizabeth Vaughn	Pam Hardesty
Belinda Malone	Dave Cuneo (Steer, Davies, Gleave)
Jill Mergen	David Miller (Public Financial Management)
Kevin Lundgren	Sean Ekiert (BB&T)

3. Meeting Discussion:

Ms. Chappell made a motion to approve the May 30, 2012 South Norfolk Jordan Bridge Public Hearing minutes, the June 7, 2012 Committee meeting minutes and the June 18, 2012 Chesapeake Transportation System Public Hearing minutes. Mr. Zoeller seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Davis stated that their primary order of business is to discuss the results of the June 18th Chesapeake Transportation System Public Hearing. He opened the floor for feedback and encouraged those in attendance to share what they heard from citizens in order to help prepare a report to City Council. Mr. Sciacchitano stated he heard a suggestion to move the toll on Dominion Boulevard closer to the North Carolina line. He asked if that was feasible. Mr. Sorey informed the Committee that the traffic count at the Carolina line is approximately 12,000 vehicles per day and the traffic count north of the bridge is roughly 33,000 vehicles per day. He also stated that the concept is to only toll what they are improving and to place a toll closer to the North Carolina line is not an option. Mr. Zoeller asked Mr. Cuneo questions about how Steer, Davies, Gleave (SDG) conducted their research in order to produce the results of their study. Mr. Cuneo explained the process that his company uses to survey the public. Mr. Zoeller asked if the data from the surveys had been given to the Committee. Mr. Cuneo and Mr. Sorey replied that it is detailed in SDG report provided to the City. Mr. Zoeller expressed concerns about the area business owners and the citizens that would need to use Dominion frequently. He suggested

the need for a commuter or frequent user toll rate. Mr. Sciacchitano asked if SDG looked into the possibility of a commuter toll. Mr. Cuneo replied that SDG considered many toll rate possibilities, but their focus was on providing the minimum toll that could be used to fund the project. Mr. Zoeller stated that the citizens expressed concerns about living in the vicinity of Dominion Boulevard. They feel that they are being penalized for living in that area and he feels that it is important to consider the effects on them. Mr. Sciacchitano asked if it was possible to do a study on a peak toll rates. Mr. Miller stated that changing the proposed toll rates would require revising the Study. He also informed the Committee that VDOT and VTIB have provided cost effective, low interest loans, which were predicated on the \$1 toll rate. Mr. Sorey asked Mr. Ekiert to explain how the funding works. Mr. Ekiert explained that the loan must close before December 31, 2012 or the City could lose it and the availability for a future loan is unknown. Ms. Meyer added that the City did not look at peak rates for Dominion Boulevard due to the fact that peak rates are geared towards congestion pricing. The City does not want to place the burden of a higher peak toll rate on commuters. Mr. Sciacchitano asked what the peak traffic count is on Dominion Boulevard. Mr. Cuneo stated that about 50% of the total daily traffic is during peak hours. Mr. Zoeller stated that he felt that SDG was looking at the benefits of their study from a financial aspect. He added that he was looking at this situation from the citizen's perspective and has concerns that the effects on the citizens have not been considered. Mr. Zoeller stated that he is very concerned about the lack of a commuter rate and the diversion of traffic due to the lack of a commuter rate. Mr. Cuneo stated that SDG studied diversion to other routes as well and the proposed \$1 toll was only \$0.25 to \$0.30 more than the cost that a citizen would pay for the extra fuel to go around Dominion Boulevard. Mr. Midgette asked Mr. Cuneo what percentage would continue to use Dominion after the tolls began. Mr. Cuneo replied that approximately 80% would continue to use Dominion Boulevard for the first 3 years and the percentage would increase to above 90% after 3 years. Mr. Cuneo stated that there is also the possibility that drivers that are currently avoiding Dominion Boulevard due to the heavy congestion now may be attracted to it because of the improved travel times. Mr. Davis reminded the Committee that they have no authority to make decisions. The Committee's job is to make recommendations to City Council, but the recommendations should be sensitive to the physical needs of the project and the community needs of the citizens. Mr. Miller explained more about the financing process. He stated that the toll rates need to be provided in order to complete the financing process. However, the toll rates can be re-evaluated and revised after construction starts as long as the covenants are met. Mr. Midgette stated that he has concerns that the lower toll rate on Dominion may draw in travelers currently using the Chesapeake Expressway and expressed concerns about how this may affect the Expressway. Mr. Sciacchitano asked if Planning has done a study to see how Dominion Boulevard would affect development in this area. Mr. Sorey replied that a study was done and it yielded positive results for development. Mr. Davis asked if current property values had been evaluated in the study to see how they would be affected. Mr. Sorey stated that the study only looked at new development and he is not aware of any studies done on current property values. Mr. Davis said that they will continue to discuss the possibility of a commuter rate. Mr. Ekiert stated that on July 10, 2012, a toll rate schedule will be adopted, but the toll rate can be adjusted afterwards. Presenting a toll rate schedule now will allow for more favorable financial terms. Ms. Lackey added that once the bridge is completed there will be a toll study conducted for approximately two years by a qualified company. The info will be provided to the Committee. Ms. Chappell asked if SDG looked at a graduated toll or multiple tolling locations. Mr. Cuneo stated that SDG looked at

multiple toll locations, but it was not cost effective. Mr. Midgette asked about the congestion leading to the interstate ramps north of Dominion Boulevard. Mr. Sorey stated that they are doing some minor ramp improvements. Mr. Sorey also informed the Committee of the South of Cedar project, which will improve a 2 mile section of roadway on Dominion to make it four lanes. Ms. Saunders stated that the City has pursued every funding source available at a state level. Ms. Saunders assured the Committee that they will continue to put in requests for “bonus dollars”. Mr. Sciacchitano stated that he felt the City has done a great job with keeping this toll as low as possible. Mr. Davis asked for clarification on how drivers without EZPass transponders will be handled. Mr. Cuneo explained that these customers will be invoiced. These customers will be charged a higher toll rate due to the cost of processing. Mr. Sorey informed the Committee that he will post answers to FAQs in the staff report. Ms. Chappell asked how drivers with plates registered for Farm Use will be handled on Dominion. Ms. Lackey informed the Committee that in general, Farm Use vehicles can travel up to 50 miles. By default, they will be traveling on Dominion without paying. She added that there are other vehicles that will gain free passage, such as school buses and emergency vehicles. Mr. Zoeller stated that he feels that the Committee should request more studies. He feels that the public should have been informed that the toll rate structure presented at the Public Hearing is a proposed toll rate structure and that the City will continue to look for ways to reduce the toll rate. Mr. Sorey added that he felt that having the informal session before the Public Hearing helped inform citizens. Mr. Davis informed the Committee that he would like them to send comments to him electronically. He will prepare a report to City Council with the Committee’s recommendations in regards to the Chesapeake Transportation System.

4. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:35 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for 11:30 a.m., August 2, 2012 at the Chesapeake Expressway.