

# Transportation Toll Facility Advisory Committee

April 16, 2015

1. **Call to Order:** Ms. Chappell called the meeting to order at approximately 11:35 a.m.

## 2. Roll Call:

### Committee Members in Attendance

Vonda Chappell  
David Todd  
George Midgette  
Matthew Echaniz  
Robert Sciacchitano  
Lenard Myers

### Ex-officio Members in Attendance

Kelly Lackey  
Eric Martin

### Committee Members not in Attendance

Sidney Kellam

### Non-Committee Members in Attendance

Elizabeth Vaughn  
Kevin Crum  
Veronica Latonio  
Leigh Ann Kling

Gary Walton  
Teresa Morgan  
Shalonda Graham

## 3. Meeting Discussion:

Mr. Sciacchitano made a motion to approve the January 15, 2015 Transportation Toll Facilities Advisory Committee (TTFAC) meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Todd and the minutes were approved.

### Chesapeake Transportation System Summary:

Ms. Morgan provided the following update on the Chesapeake Transportation System (CTS):

- Based on the CTS Monthly Disclosure Report for March, year-to-date revenues are up by 6% when compared to the same time last year. This was largely due to a continued increase in EZ Pass revenue.
- Expenses are also up 10.7% compared to last year due to increases in fees, salaries, and increases related to repair and maintenance of Expressway components.
- Overall, the Expressway continues to stay within budget.

#### Dominion Boulevard:

- Dominion Boulevard remains on target having expended 69% of the budget through March of this year.
- Ms. Morgan encouraged everyone to take a look at the City of Chesapeake – Public Works website where the all of the reports may be found under Dominion Boulevard - CTS Monthly Disclosure Reports.

#### **Dominion Blvd. Project Update**

Mr. Martin provided the following updates on Dominion Boulevard:

- Despite work being slowed by the poor weather in January and February the contractor is still ahead of schedule.
- Opening of Veterans Bridge was a key milestone that occurred in December.
- Despite the weather, work continued on the installation of bridge piles in the river.
- Work on the bridge approaches restarted when the weather improved.
- Work continues on the interchange bridges.
- The pink flags sticking out of the ground are wick drains which pull the water out of the ground to create more stability.
- Work will continue and cleanup is being done on approach roads.
- Construction is approximately 50% complete.
- The public hearing that was held on the connector roads went well and is moving forward.
- City Council asked for a reduction in the use of commercial truck air brakes. Signs have been posted on the Veterans Bridge prohibiting the use of air brakes except in the event of an emergency.
- Mr. Martin encouraged all to visit the website that Ms. Morgan mentioned. There are videos of before and after which is a nice tool for the community.
- A contract for the southern portion of Dominion Blvd. from Cedar Road to Route 17 is scheduled to begin construction this summer and completed the same time as the northern portion.
  - The committee inquired about the funding of this portion of the project and Mr. Martin explained there will be a combination of city and state funding.

## Chesapeake Expressway Update

Mr. Walton provided the following update on the Chesapeake Expressway:

- Year to date traffic is up 6% and Revenue is up 6%.
- Cash transactions are down 7.5%, EZ Pass transactions are up 26.1%, and Discount Program transactions are up 4.0%.
- Expressway staff will continue to monitor the distribution of traffic to determine whether a Full Service Lane in each direction should be converted to another EZ Pass only (Express) lane at some point in the future.
- Distribution of traffic between the Expressway and Battlefield Blvd. remains consistent with approx. 65% traveling on Battlefield while the remainder is on the Expressway in the off-peak season.
- Snow and ice events resulted in an 18% reduction in traffic volume on Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, as well as toll suspension for 26.5 hours on February 26-27<sup>th</sup>.
- Very strong traffic demand in early February nearly offset the effects of the storms resulting in only a slight drop in traffic and revenue for the month.
- Revenue breakdown in transactions:
  - 29% cash; 31% full fare EZP; 40% discount program

Renewal and Replacement:

- 2015 inspections are nearly complete and the report is expected shortly.
- 2014 construction contract is currently going through the approval process.
  - Maintenance and repair work will take place on the main building, toll canopy, storm water basins, ditch clearing, and bridge inspections.
- A study by HBA Architecture and Interior Design is being conducted to allow for additional staff. This includes modifications and expansions in the administrative office, control room and collector count room.
- Currently the AVI antennas and cabling are being replaced. The current material is at the end of its lifecycle. We will be upgrading the toll operating system with a Linux based system.
  - The committee asked if there would be a learning curve for the new system. Mr. Walton answered that the upgrade would be transparent to the end users.

YTD expenses through March:

- Payroll and benefits are at 62.7% of budget
- General expenses are at 66.1% of budget
- Overall operating expenses are up 10.7%.

EZ Pass fee changes:

- VDOT will raise the processing rates we currently pay from 1.611% (FY 14/15) to 1.756% (FY15/16).

- The increase is due to the elimination of the \$0.50 monthly fee that was previously charged to EZPass holders.
- The fees we pay to EZPass per transaction are:
  - For a \$3.00 toll we now pay approximately \$0.10. Next year it will be approximately \$0.11.
  - For a \$6.00 toll we now pay approximately \$0.15. Next year it will be approximately \$0.16.

Questions:

- The committee asked for clarification with regards to the upcoming construction and the estimated cost. Mr. Walton explained it involves items identified in the Annual Renewal and Replacement Report. It includes the maintenance of drainage structures, ditch clearing, shoulder repairs, embankment repairs. The Expressway takes care of some items and will contract out the larger items such as those listed above. The estimated costs this year is a little over \$200,000.00.
- The committee asked if the Expressway could get an annual contract with a contractor to do the work. Mr. Walton explained the work changes every year and there are two components; the toll system contractor performs required work for the toll system and the remainder is bid via the normal procurement process. It is more cost effective for the Expressway to have contractors compete for the contract annually. Kimley-Horn acts as our construction manager.
- The committee inquired about the toll increase for next year. Mr. Walton explained that City Council approved a \$2.00 (mistakenly said to be \$1.00 in the meeting) increase during peak season weekends only starting next year (Peak Weekends: 2-axle - \$8.00 and 3 or more axles - \$9.00). Off-peak season and Discount toll rates will remain unchanged.
- The committee asked about maintenance costs being up. Ms. Morgan explained the increases were mainly due to maintenance from TransCore. Mr. Walton explained the jump in expenses is a result of end of life items in the toll system components. Maintenance was necessary to avoid potential issues during peak season.
- The committee inquired about the effects of the harsh weather on the new pavement. Mr. Walton explained that the pavement is too new yet. The quality of the pavement will be evident when the pavement is about five years old. Right now the oldest pavement is three years old and still looks good. There have been repairs to small potholes caused by debris in the asphalt. The committee asked if the contractor paid for the repairs. Mr. Walton explained that there was only a one year warranty which has expired but the repair cost was minimal.
- The committee asked if there are people who should be on the discount program who do not know about it. Mr. Walton explained the office always makes sure people are aware of the program. Mr. Martin explained that targeted marketing has taken place for those who use the Expressway on a regular basis.

## **South Norfolk Jordan Bridge Update**

Mr. Crum provided the following update on the South Norfolk Jordan Bridge

- Traffic has been tremendous. The weekend closure of the Elizabeth River Tunnels detours traffic to the SNJB. In addition there are two carriers in the shipyard resulting in an increase in traffic.
- In January the average daily traffic was 9876 cars which is a 146% increase in traffic over the same time frame last year. February totals were up 92% and March totals were up 98% when compared with the same time frame last year.
- Truck volume hit a record number in March (13,000 trucks).
- There have been no closures for the ERC so far in April.
- A food drive was conducted where drivers donated food and received EZ Pass reload cards. Almost 400 pounds of food was collected and donated to the Oasis Ministry in Portsmouth.
- A photo contest was conducted in March where the public submitted their pictures of the bridge and also judged the entries. The winning photos will be used in promotional materials.
- There is an annual bridge inspection currently taking place.
- This summer digital LED signs will be installed on the bridge that will provide safety messages or other messages to communicate with drivers.
- Two cameras will be added to the Va. 511 system.
- Thankful to VDOT for installing new overhead signs on I-464.
- Offered thanks to Mr. Todd and Mr. Sciacchitano for their service to the committee and presented them with framed pictures of the SNJB.

Ms. Latonio provided the following updates on the SNJB:

- The EZ Pass recycle process where rejected transactions were given a 10 day period in the hope that the customer replenished their EZ Pass account or added the plate to their account had a 70% success rate. This accelerates revenue and decreases operating costs. Mr. Crum added that the significance to this program is that the facility receives immediate pay rather than invoicing and waiting for payment.
- SNJB now works with a second tier collection agency through the first tier agency. The process is transparent from a customer standpoint. There is no cost to the facility. Nearly 8% of toll income collected came from this second tier agency.

SNJB employed a second law firm to collect on the post judgment accounts. The initial first months have already shown positive results.

- Upcoming initiatives:

- Vehicle registration renewal hold process with DMV will implement the system to place a hold on vehicle registration due to non-payment of toll. The hope is to get drivers to pay unpaid toll balances before incurring court costs.
  - The final initiative for the SNJB is the Switch and Save Program. This is targeting drivers who have 10 or more trips across the bridge in a month without an EZ Pass. These drivers will be sent an incentive where they will be given an EZ Pass account valued at \$35.00 if they come in and settle their outstanding bills, convert to EZ Pass, and set up with auto replenish. Certain criteria must be met.
- The committee inquired about the facility adding a light system similar to the Expressway to give drivers a visual as to whether their EZ Pass account has funds or is running low. Mr. Walton explained that this is an issue for the All Electronic Tolling (AET) industry. There is a gantry overhead making it impossible to have a visual cue to give a motorist information about their account.
  - The committee asked why EZ Pass doesn't take the payment from an attached credit card with each transaction instead of keeping a balance in the EZ-Pass account. No one in attendance was aware of the exact reason but the consensus among the group seemed to be that the cost of processing fees related to individual transactions would be too expensive. (Note: staff will contact EZ Pass for more information and report back at the next meeting.)

#### 4. **New Business/Discussion**

- Mr. Walton advised the committee that Mr. David Boone was appointed by the City Council, however, he is relocating and subsequently, will not be joining the committee. The committee still needs two replacement members. Applications can be found on the Boards and Commissions page on the city website. He explained that there are certain members of the community needed on the committee. There is a financial position, technical position, attorney, engineering, and two at large community members.
- Ms. Chappell explained that the City Council has retracted the liaison system where there was a specific council member assigned to each committee. Any council member can show up to any committee meeting they desire.
- Ms. Chappell presented certificates of appreciation to Mr. Sciacchitano and Mr. Todd and thanked them for their service.

5. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 16 at 11:30 AM at the Chesapeake Expressway Administration Building. Note, this meeting may be canceled.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at approx. 1:00 PM.