



## **Northern Virginia Regional Commission**

### **M495 Regional Policy Committee for the Potomac Fast Ferry**

**June 29, 2017  
10:00 AM to 12 PM**

Hosted at the MGM Corporate Regional Offices:  
120 Waterfront Street, Suite 500  
Oxon Hill, MD 20745

**In attendance:**

1. Peggy Tadej, Military Partners, NVRC
  2. Tim Payne, Consultant, Nelson Nygaard
  3. John Waterhouse, Elliot Bay Design Group
  4. Frank Principi, Prince William County Board of Supervisors
  5. Matt Skobal, Chief of Staff for Principi
  6. John Hawkins, Transportation Supervisor - DHS
  7. Andy May, Maryland Tidal Waters
  8. Kerry Watson, VP Government Affairs - MGM
  9. Laurel Hammig, National Park Service, Regional Planner
  10. Ira Dorfman, Greater Washington Clean Cities Coalition
  11. Willem Pollak, Potomac Riverboat Company
  12. Kathy Anderson, Baltimore Army Corps of Engineers
  13. Amanda Rutherford, Marine Highway Program
  14. Julie Roberts, Planner (State Agency Review)
  15. Eric Schwenke, Lead Environmental Planner Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, Department of Planning
  16. Robert Williams, Analyst, Nelson Nygaard
  17. Dr. Robert Schneider, Potomac And Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)
  18. Robert Iosco, VDOT NOVA, Special Projects
  19. Kathy Graham, VDOT Richmond
  20. Mark Olipant, Joint Base Anacostia/Bolling
  21. Austina Casey, DC Dept. of Transportation
  22. Fred Jones, Logistics Specialist, Office of Ports & Waterways, MARAD
  23. Tim Pickering, Office of MARAD, Ports & Waterways
  24. Julie Roberts, Critical Area Commission, MD
  25. Liz Price, WHARF
- VIA PHONE
26. Will Hansfield, Georgetown BID
  27. Melissa McGill, FTA
  28. Army Corps of Engineers Norfolk
  29. Dan Koenig, FTA

### 30. Travis Black, MARAD, Ports & Waterways



Introductions led by Mr. Principi with an overview of the project. Principi explained that this is the fourth commuter ferry study conducted on the Potomac River since 2000. The concept is to use high speed catamarans between points in Prince William County to points in DC to get people off I-95, and for other considerations such as emergency management and tourism. Ferry is an attempt to improve the commuter experience in the National Capital Region (NCR).

After introductions, Mr. Payne provided a presentation with the following highlights:

- 1) Concepts of Operations
  - a) Historical documents of past projects and evaluations will be available on a website soon. Currently documents are housed on NVRC website.
- 2) Corridors being evaluated
  - a) Routes from Woodbridge, VA to National Harbor, JBAB, and Downtown DC
    - i) Sites being considered:
      - (1) The Yards
      - (2) Diamond Teague Park
      - (3) The Wharf
      - (4) JBAB North and South
      - (5) National Harbor
      - (6) Occoquan Marina
      - (7) Belmont Bay
    - b) Main target are commuters to get them to work sites.
    - c) Many MGM casino employees live in Woodbridge; this new addition adds feasibility to the need for a ferry service.
    - d) The day-to-day operations could possibly be a PPP similar to NYC
    - e) Infrastructure Gap analysis
      - i) Terminal needs to include good walkability to work sites and adequate parking in Woodbridge. This would be a passenger only operation; no vehicles on board the ferry, due to the water depth on the Potomac River.
      - ii) Infrastructure – what is possible to change to become operational within 5 years; must avoid sites that present fatal flaws such as dredging, poor navigability to turn 90 foot



- vessel around, ability to control site to allow the boats to dock year-around, and physical infrastructure in place.
- iii) What are the best sites to apply the federal grant money to? Transit connections (present or needed) are key as this project is aimed at the commuter market.
- 3) Vessel design considerations will be led by Mr. John Waterhouse using examples from Seattle, WA and New York, NY but will factor in implications for operating costs, resistance to shallow water and/or debris.
- a) What is the capacity and frequency needed? NY ferry service can transport 150 passengers and they are not adequate to meet demands.
  - b) Environmental impacts, including emissions, wake impact, and surrounding property owner impact.
  - c) Dock interface and loading operations of passengers
  - d) Security for vessel, terminal, and deployability. This includes climate change resilience. With respect to security, we refer not just to external threats, but also to general occupational safety.
  - e) Accessibility – Both for disabled as well as seniors
- 4) Results of analysis will be shared at the July 24, 2017 in Georgetown
- 5) Other Matters:
- a) Need an eligible grantee for FTA funds
  - b) Waiting responses from FTA on grant process
  - c) FTA Grant potential runs out in September 2019.
  - d) History and scope refinements:
    - i) Scope of this study specifically addresses shore side facilities including identification of what exists, what is required to make certain facilities suitable for ferry operation, and whether federal funds can be applied.
    - ii) Southern JBAB docking location listed in original grant application (Alexandria to JBAB)
    - iii) Since the application was filed, Maryland passed legislation allowing for the creation of the MGM facility along with the DHS facility starting to fill in 2018.
    - iv) National Harbor currently possesses three different loading facilities, two already served by the Water Taxi.
    - v) The consultant team will help MWCOCG add ferry transit into their regional travel demand model
    - vi) The consultant team will lead public involvement in terminal site communities.
    - vii) The consultant team will prepare initial NEPA applications for the FTA
    - viii) The consultant team will develop a project description to be added to local transportation improvement plans (TIPs)
- 6) Open forum
- a) Boat builders discussed costs to build, issues with fueling, and maintenance
    - i) Different boats could be employed for different operations, similar to the difference between long-haul and local bus transit
    - ii) East coast production capability and impacts on timeline should be considered
    - iii) Vessel speed impacts the production cost per passenger seat (E.g. 20mph - \$17,000/seat...40mph - \$25,000/seat
    - iv) Fuel costs and supply locations are important. Access must be less than 100 feet from the boat at dock.

- v) In considering maintenance facilities, would they be part of the PPP?
- b) The sooner sites on the MD side have been identified, the more readily these sites can be evaluated for feasibility, particularly with ACOE. Permits may have already been issued to sites at JBAB, but need to be updated.
  - i) The permitting process may be shorter in the DC Area than other locations - ACOE
- c) Objectives of the next series of meetings?
  - i) National environmental transit assessment for FTA to decide what type of class action that will be for the sites selected
  - ii) Have the project included into regional transportation planning in order to have public funds applied to this.
  - iii) Community engagement meeting will be held at selected sites
- d) Decision has not been made on eligible grantee for FTA funds
- e) Two groups have merged to form the policy and technical steering committees, but this is only a part of a larger coalition of 75 organizations; NVRC reports to Maritime Administration, as they have funded this study.
- f) FTA grant needs to be amended and does not cover the scope of the possibility of this project, pending the approval of the amendment; nothing is certain at this point.

The next meeting will be held on July 24th, 2017 from 10:00 AM to Noon. The location is:

Foley & Lardner LLP  
3000 K Street, N.W.  
Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20007  
[202-672-5367](tel:202-672-5367)

Parking below building for \$20 and there is paid parking on the street. Metro stop is Foggy Bottom and shuttle to office bldg. or the walk is about a 4 block walk.