

AGENDA ITEM #10: HIGH-SPEED AND INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL: STATUS REPORT

SUBJECT:

TEMS (Transportation Economics & Management Systems, Inc.), the consultant specializing in passenger rail planning, was secured for the HRTPO and its partner DRPT to evaluate the potential passenger rail service alternative defined by the October 30, 2009 HRTPO Board resolution with respect to both the CSX/I-64 and Norfolk Southern/Route 460 rail corridors.

BACKGROUND:

Phase I of the consultant six-month contract is from January 28, 2010 to July 31, 2010. In Phase I, the TEMS team will evaluate the base case 79-mph/90-mph concept, and establish if there is a case for high-speed rail. In Phase II, if there is a case for high-speed rail service, the consultant will refine the base case and complete sensitivity and risk analysis for the Vision Plan. Phase II will depend on successful completion of Phase I with respect to the potential for the HRTPO options, the availability of HRTPO funding, and HRTPO Board approval. In undertaking this work, the consultant will work closely throughout the course of the study with the HRTPO and DRPT staff to assess the potential of higher- and high-speed rail as determined by the HRTPO Board resolution.

The resulting product of Phase I by the consultant will be an Implementation Plan and a preliminary Vision Plan:

1. The Implementation Plan will be developed that sets goals, timetables, and arrangements for implementing passenger rail service in the Richmond/Hampton Roads corridors. The Implementation Plan will recommend an action program that sets out the steps that need to be followed to ensure the successful implementation of passenger rail in the Richmond/Hampton Roads corridors.
2. An extensive Vision Plan document will be prepared in Phase I that can be used to make the case for the development of higher-speed passenger rail service on the CSX/I-64 and Norfolk Southern/Route 460 rail corridors.

A High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Steering Committee has been established to assist HRTPO staff and TEMS on this project. The Steering Committee consists of technical staff from the HRTPO, local governments, transit agencies, DRPT, CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Amtrak. Additionally, TEMS will participate at HRTPO Board meetings during the course of the study by attending and making presentations to the HRTPO Board. The meetings have been scheduled at key decision-making points to ensure the HRTPO Board fully understands and approves the work underway before the TEMS team proceeds to the next task.

Dr. Alexander E. Metcalf, TEMS, will brief the HRTPO Board on the work currently accomplished and next steps.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Per discussion.