

ITEM 13 - Information

March 18, 2015

Briefing on Regional Bus Staging, Layover, and Parking Location Study

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing on the final report of the study to determine locations for staging, layover and parking of buses within the District of Columbia and Arlington County.

Issues: None

Background: The planning study examined the best potential locations for on-street staging for commuter buses and off-street layover and parking of buses (tour/charter, intercity, commuter, sightseeing, and shuttle) within the District of Columbia and Arlington County.



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Richard I. Roisman, AICP
Principal Transportation Planner

DATE: March 11, 2015

RE: Briefing on Regional Bus Staging, Layover, and Parking Location Study
Agenda Item #13

At its March 18th meeting, the Board will receive a briefing on the Regional Bus Staging, Layover, and Parking Location Study. Staff will present the findings of a recently completed consultant report for this study; a link to the full report (121 pages / 9.2MB PDF) may be found at the following URL: <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/meetings/20150318/item13report.asp>

This study convened regional stakeholders to analyze the need for bus staging, layover, and parking locations in the District of Columbia and Arlington County. The study includes a discussion of bus services, a review of existing conditions, and planning-level estimates of future growth and demand. It separately considered on-street and off-street locations for bus staging, layover, and parking. Potential sites were evaluated using five criteria for on-street staging and six weighted criteria for off-street parking. The study identifies 14 on-street locations and 15 off-street locations for further, more detailed study. While cost was not explicitly considered in the evaluation criteria, planning-level annual operating cost estimates were provided for the on-street staging locations, and capital cost estimates for the off-street parking locations. The report includes several post-study actions and next steps to advance the bus staging, layover and parking locations.

Background

Staff was first approached about conducting a regional bus staging, layover and parking location study during summer 2013 and worked with stakeholder agencies to prepare a scope of work and budget for the project, which was finalized in November 2013. Consultant support was required to perform the technical analysis, and, following a competitive bid process, a team of Cambridge Systematics and Sabra, Wang & Associates was selected and began work in March 2014. A study Steering Committee provided oversight to the project and met on a monthly basis; the committee included representatives from the following stakeholder agencies:

- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT)
- District of Columbia Office of Planning
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
- Loudoun County Transit
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Maryland Transit Administration
- Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
- Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission
- ART – Arlington Transit

Staff and the consultant also provided periodic briefings to the Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee (RPTS, formerly Regional Bus Subcommittee) of the TPB Technical Committee. A draft final report was issued on December 31st, 2014 and was circulated to the Steering Committee for comment. Staff and the consultant briefed the TPB Technical Committee on the draft final report at their meeting on January 9th and the RPTS at their meeting on January 27th and requested comments from both groups. The consultant issued the final study report (available at the link earlier in this memorandum) on March 7th, and it reflects all the comments received up to that date. Staff will provide the briefing to the Board on March 18th, and a representative from the consultant team is expected to be present.

Study Purpose

The need to provide improved accommodations for buses in the regional core has been previously identified but not subject to a recent technical study looking specifically at potential on-street and off-street solutions. Each weekday morning hundreds of commuter buses carry thousands of residents of the regional outer jurisdictions to jobs in the regional core jurisdictions of the District of Columbia and Arlington County. Most of the routes have multiple morning trips; after these trips are completed, the buses either return to their storage and maintenance facilities outside the core, operate mid-day service on the same routes or elsewhere in their transit systems, or operate charter service (for those private operators that serve under contract to public transit systems) until they need to position themselves at boarding locations to begin operating afternoon / evening service from the District and Arlington to take the workers back to their jurisdiction of residence.

With traffic congestion at high levels in the core creating uncertainty and variability in travel times, commuter buses arrive well ahead of their scheduled departure times to navigate through congestion to reach their boarding locations, frequently getting to the area 20 or 30 minutes early for their afternoon pick-ups. Often the afternoon pick-up location positioning process consists of driving around the block or blocks near the afternoon boarding locations to use up this early time, which increases operating costs, contributes to roadway congestion (which buses are supposed to relieve), increases emissions, driver fatigue, fuel use, and increases the potential for crashes. As an alternative to circling, buses may attempt to temporarily park in an unauthorized location in order to position themselves for afternoon service, which displaces authorized users of that space (parking, loading, etc.) and also creates

additional congestion on core area streets. These practices are necessary because there are no formal dedicated staging, layover, and parking locations for these buses near their afternoon pick-up locations. In addition, these issues are not only isolated to commuter buses but also impact the operations of tour and charter buses trying to access destinations in the core, such as attractions near the National Mall.

Study Methodology and Findings

The study convened regional stakeholders to analyze the need for bus staging, layover, and parking locations in the District and Arlington, and considered the need for such locations for the five distinct bus (motorcoach) services identified in DDOT's 2011 Motorcoach Action Plan: Commuter, Tour Bus, Shuttle, Sightseeing, and Intercity. For each of these regional bus services, the study includes a discussion of the service(s), a review of existing conditions, and planning-level estimates of future growth and demand. The goal of the study is to establish short-term solutions as well as a longer-term regional vision for motorcoach operations.

The study separately considered on-street and off-street locations for bus staging, layover, and parking. As the study progressed, it became clear based on feedback from the Steering Committee that on-street staging for commuter buses is the greatest near-term need (particularly in Foggy Bottom, NoMa, and the L'Enfant Plaza areas) and that off-street parking for commuter buses is not of interest at this time; however, given the forecast growth in commuter bus volumes in the core areas, there will be a need in the future for off-street parking. For tour and charter bus services, although the DDOT Motorcoach Action Plan identifies over 900 bus parking spaces within the core, most of those spaces are not near the major destination served by tour and charter buses – the National Mall. For example, 500 of the available spaces are at Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Stadium.

Potential sites were evaluated using five weighted criteria for on-street staging (site size, site land use, site availability, travel time to first stop, site connectivity / ease of access) and six weighted criteria for off-street parking (site size, site land use, adjacent land use, site availability, planned development, travel time to National Mall). Each site was scored between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest) for each criterion and weights applied for a composite score for the site. The study identifies 14 on-street locations and 15 off-street locations for further, more detailed study. While cost was not explicitly considered in the evaluation criteria, planning-level annual operating cost estimates were provided for the on-street staging locations, and capital cost estimates for the off-street parking locations. For on-street staging, the annual operating cost estimates range from around \$30,000 to about \$375,000, depending on the size of the site and number of hours per day it would be used for bus staging instead of metered parking. For off-street parking, the cost estimates (which include land acquisition cost and construction) range from just under \$1 Million to over \$200 Million, depending on the amount of land to be acquired and type of parking constructed (surface or structure / underground).

Post-Study Actions

The report includes several post-study actions and next steps to advance the bus staging, layover and parking locations. For the on-street locations, there must be review and discussion with DDOT on specific actions to allow buses to stage at the identified locations, such as the permit process, parking revenue impacts, and shared use locations such as mobile vending (food truck) zones. At least one regional commuter bus operator has already identified money in its budget to reimburse DDOT for lost parking revenue at staging locations. There will also need to be discussions with adjacent landowners and businesses in the proposed on-street staging locations, since the removal of parking will impact their accessibility. For locations adjacent to the National Mall and in East Potomac Park, the above actions must include the National Park Service in addition to DDOT. For off-street parking locations, both a detailed real estate scan of the most promising sites to review site ownership and development status, as well as further investigation of the financing and management options of the parking facilities would be required.

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March 18, 2015

Rich Roisman

Department of Transportation Planning

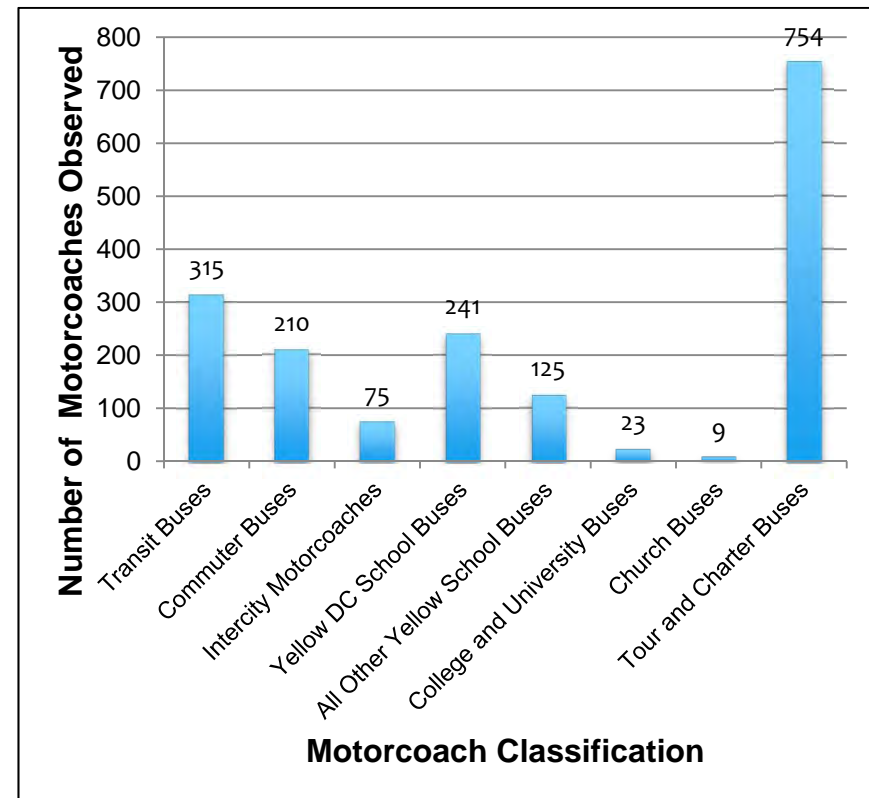
Planning Study Overview

- Develop recommendations for regional bus/motorcoach staging, layover and parking within the core areas of D.C. and Arlington
 - Analyze existing conditions and future demand
 - Screen potential bus facility locations and conduct a suitability analysis and evaluation
 - Develop a list of recommended sites for further investigation and advancement
- Key issues to address:
 - Commuter bus afternoon staging
 - Mid-day and long-term bus parking



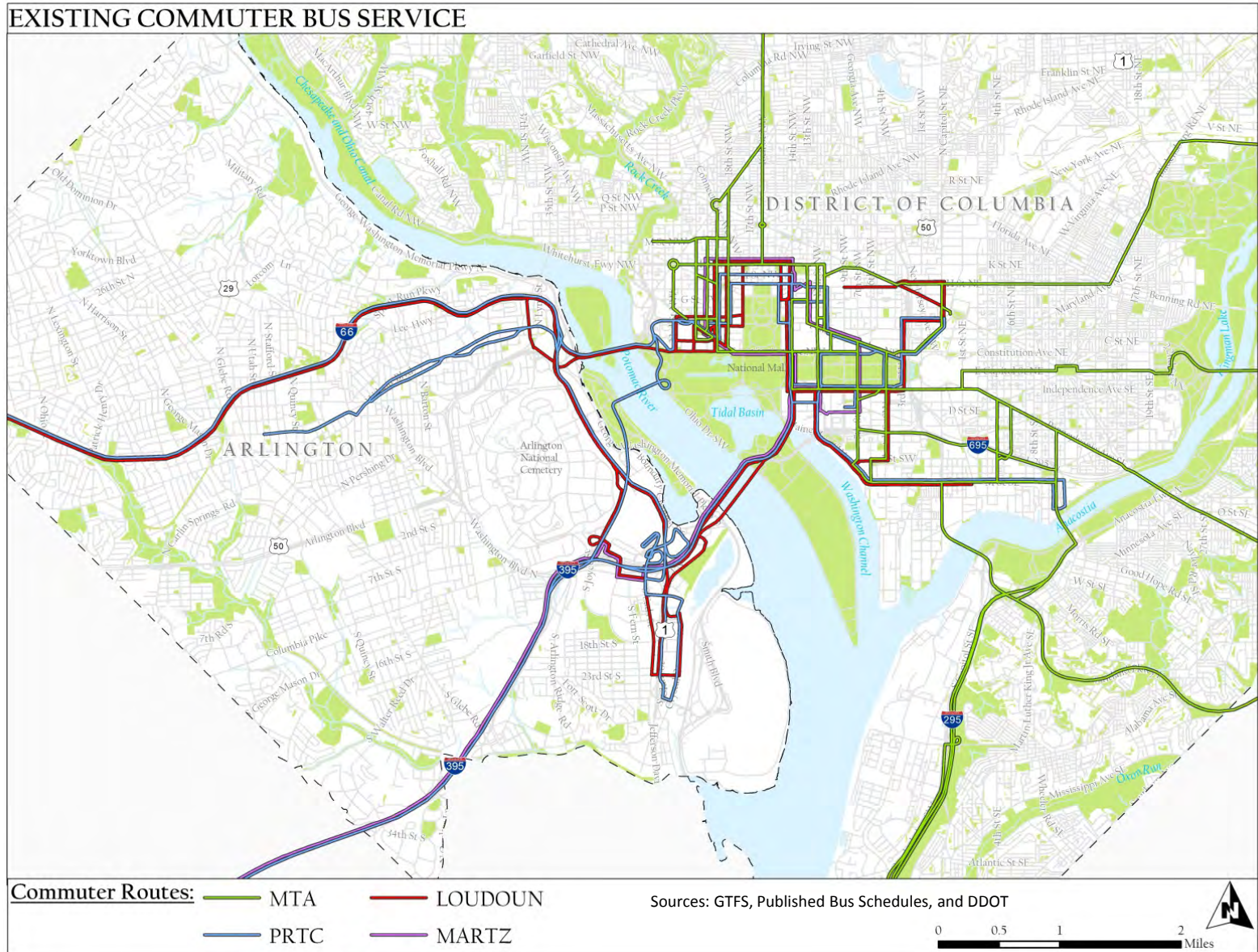
D.C. Motorcoach Counts

- 1,900 motorcoaches observed
 - Approximately 1,100 of the observed motorcoaches require parking
- The three key entry points with the highest volume of motorcoaches
 - Kenilworth Avenue (I-295) (305 motorcoaches),
 - Theodore Roosevelt Bridge (258 motorcoaches), and
 - 14th Street Bridge (245 motorcoaches)



Source: District of Columbia Motorcoach Volume Data, COG for DDOT (2012)

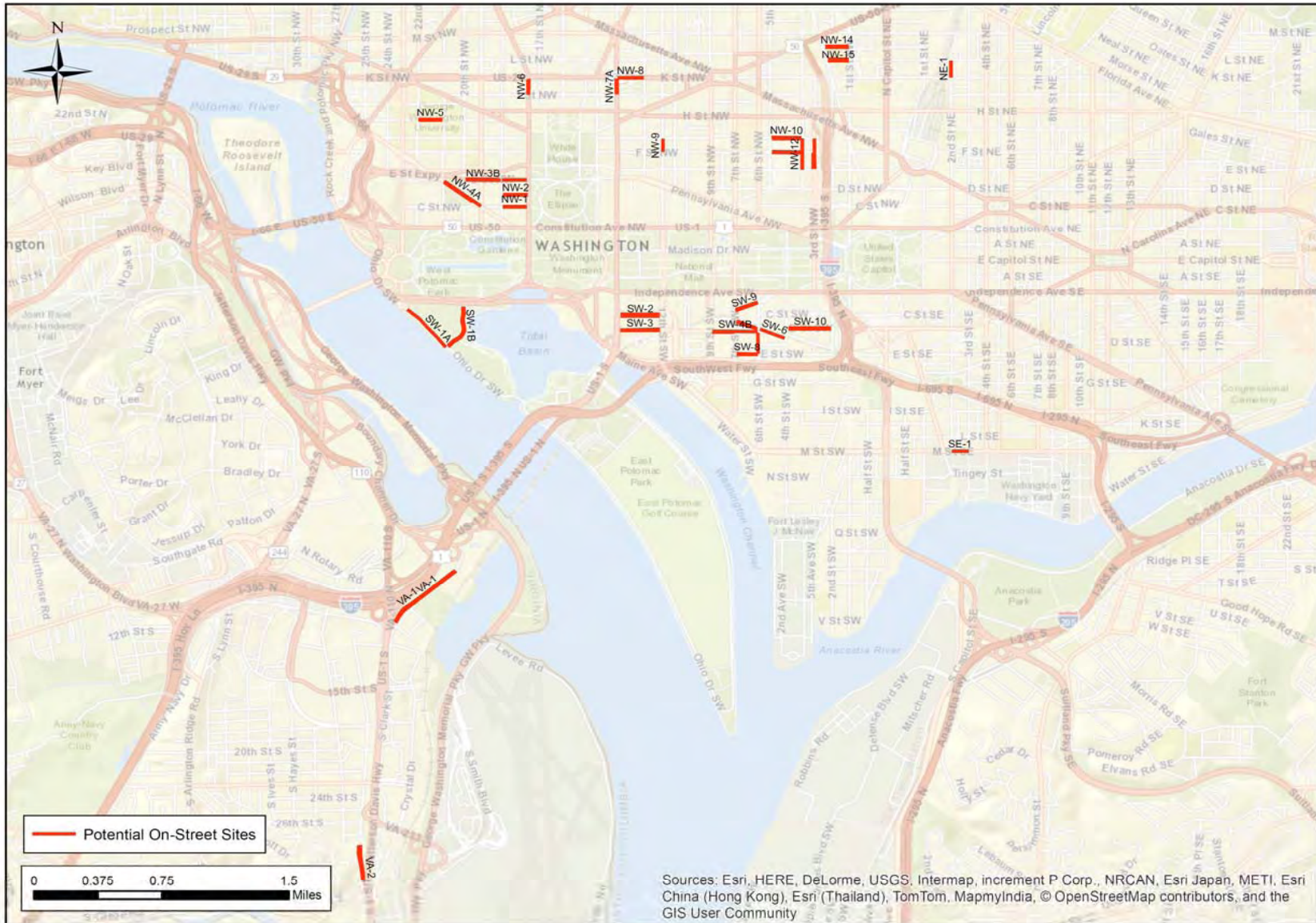
Existing Commuter Bus Routes



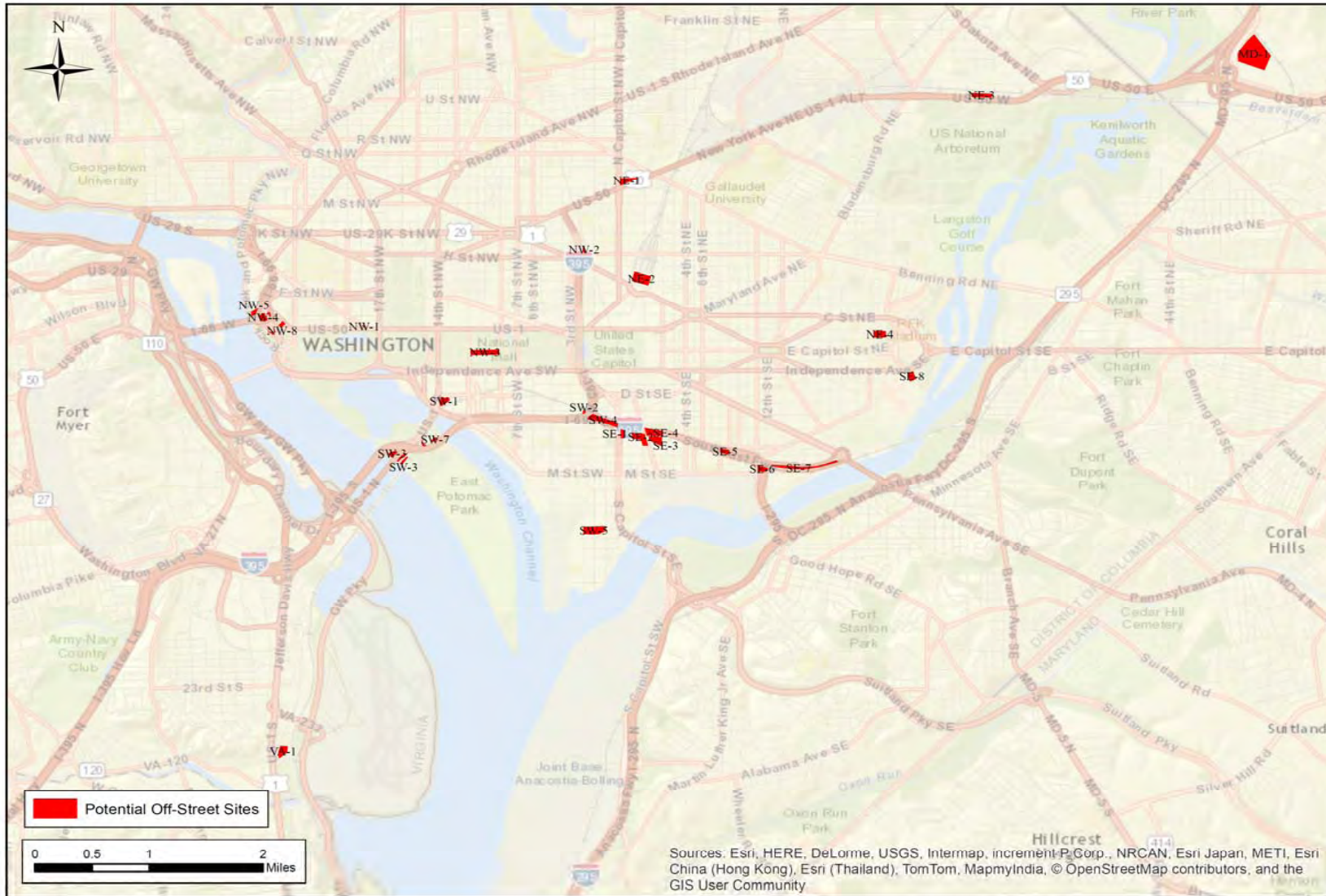
Tour/Charter Bus: Existing Parking



On-Street Sites Considered for Commuter Bus Staging



Off-Street Sites Considered for Mid-Day/Long-Term Parking



Implementation Options

On-Street

- Traditional Street Parking
- Parking in Tour Bus Zones
- Parking in Food Truck Zones
- Parking along National Park Service roadways

Off-Street

- Surface Parking
- Structured Parking
- Underground Parking
- National Park Service lots
- Lots owned by private individuals/companies

Post-Study Actions

- On-Street Staging
 - Further investigation required on feasibility of shared use locations
 - Review and discussion with DDOT and NPS on the permit process and parking revenue impacts for on-street sites
 - Site approvals and potential agreement(s) on revenue subsidy
- Off-Street Parking
 - Detailed real estate scan of the most promising sites to review site ownership and development status
 - Further investigation of the financing and management options for advancing a central bus parking facility



Questions?

Link to final report:

[http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/meetings/
20150318/item13report.asp](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/meetings/20150318/item13report.asp)