



TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Summary: November 27, 2018

ATTENDEES

David Koch, DDOT (Chair)
Martin Barna, DASH
Kyle Nembhard, MTA
Kim Dunham, GNHTD
Christine Wells, WSTC
Clinton Edwards, DRPT
Dan Goldfarb, NVTC

Michael Farrell, TPB
Matthew Gaskin, TPB
Arianna Koudounas, TPB
Cody Christensen, STVI
Brandon Brown, TPB
Eric Randall, TPB
Raymond Mui, DASH

Andrew Meese, TPB
Jessica Shen, WMATA
Abdul Mohammed, TPB
Melissa Kim, WMATA
Bill Orleans, Citizen

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, David Koch, Chair

- Call to order and introductions.

2. DDOT: DC CIRCULATOR UPDATE, David Koch, DDOT

- The purpose of this presentation was to provide an update on the DC Circulator as well as a summary of the changes that have occurred to the public transportation agency over the years.
- To date DC Circulator is now the fourth largest regional public transportation provider, with a fleet of 67 buses, six routes, over 136 bus stops, and moving approximately 5 million passengers annually.
- Some distinctive features include free onboard Wi-Fi and USB ports. DC Circulator also offers high frequency service (10 mins headways) all day, and a simple fare structure (\$1 per ride).
- In years past both DDOT and WMATA shared a complicated contractor relationship in respect to functions of the DC Circulator. DDOT was the source of funding and ownership, WMATA was responsible for soliciting and overseeing contractors, and the selected contractor was responsible for operating the service.
- Significant changes were made in FY15 – FY16.
 - New buses were purchased
 - The National Mall route was added
 - System technology improvements were made
- FY17 – FY18 marked a year of transformation for DC Circulator
 - The Transit Development Plan was updated
 - New buses were delivered, including 14 electric buses
 - WMATA was removed from the contractor relationship simplifying the process
- After several years of declining ridership, 2017 also marked a stabilization
- Looking ahead to FY19 DC Circulator has several improvements
 - Further assessment of BEB tech. through multi-phase pilot
 - Intelligent transportation systems strategy

- Explore strategies to increase ridership

Questions:

- How many electric buses are in operation? *There are 14 electric buses out of a total fleet of 72.*
- How satisfied are you with the electric buses? *It is a work in progress. Before the buses were built we visited Foothill Transit in southern California, they were an early adopter of this model of buses, and they provided very positive reviews. However, during our delivery of the buses, there were several issues that were discovered, a mix of internal issues and minor things. Some of these could have been avoided with a better acceptance process. This was noted and will be followed more closely in the future for other deliveries. Now that these issues have been resolved, we can do a more extensive performance assessment against our current diesel buses. The summer season yielded good performance, now we will assess the winter season performance. A full report is forthcoming.*
- What is the battery capacity you expect from these buses? *Mr. Koch could not recall, however Eric Belmont, would have the answer to that question.*
- Have buses schedules needed special accommodations with the introduction of these electric buses? *The buses have been applicable to the runs of the bus schedule. However, we did alter the schedule during the pilot runs. For instance, normally a bus will be in service for half of the day and then return to the yard for shift changes or changing of drivers. However, with the electric this is not the case, mainly because earlier in the program, electric buses that returned to the yard during the day were plugged back in for charging, and this affected the data.*
- Metro (WMATA) has an electric bus, correct? *Yes, they have one and they do not appear pleased with the bus.*
- The two recently restructured routes, how are they doing? *The Congress Heights – Union Station route has done well. It is popular with commuters who normally would have taken Metrobus 94. The Eastern Market – L’Enfant Plaza hasn’t done as well; however, we are investigating ways to improve ridership given there is a lot of new development on the route (M Street and The Wharf). However, this may be a challenge with the private shuttle that operates in The Wharf area and the talk about the deployment of AV.*
- Where does The Wharf shuttle go? *It is a very small loop that goes to L’Enfant Plaza. And the shuttle is free.*

3. **NVTC: TBEST SOFTWARE APPLICATION**, Dan Goldfarb, NVTC

- The purpose of this presentation was to provide an update on the regional bus agenda as well as more information on TBEST software application.
- The Northern Virginia Technology Council now exists as the membership and trade association for the technology community in Northern Virginia, the largest technology such council in the nation.
- To date NVTC has completed their Regional Bus Agenda 1.0, which provided a macro level evaluation on the regional operations. Regional in this instance refers to Northern Virginia.
- Some key findings included:
 - Buses are important to the region
 - A variety of different levels of bus service
 - Bus coverage overall is well, providing riders access to jobs, increased mobility, and connections to other transit modes
 - While service gaps are minimal, there is room for future improvements
- Looking to the future NVTC will begin Regional Bus Agenda 2.0, which will build on the work



from 1.0 and address three core initiatives

- Envision Route 7
- Regional BRT
- Transit Database
- Regarding Envision Route 7, this initiative will be broken down into several phases addressing components involving feasibility, mode/alignment refinements, engineering, traffic and environmental impacts, etc.
- Regarding the second initiative, Regional BRT, it will include coordination of regional agencies and jurisdictions, inclusion of TransAction, input from RPTS and the NOVA BRT developing ridership forecasts.
- The third initiative, Transit Database, will compile a regional database of bus routes, ridership, and use of TBEST application tool.
- The conversation then shifted to NVTc's usage of TBEST software. TBEST is a direct modeling tool used for short range forecasting. The inputs it receives are the bus network, land use, and socio-economic data. For this application it is being used to evaluate changes in service regarding ridership, cost, and socio-economic analysis.
- This portion of the presentation touched on the requirements needed to effectively utilize the TBEST Model as well as a summary of the reported findings. An application example was also provided.
- TBEST software was used in several regional agencies and jurisdictions: WMATA 3T Bus Service Extension, the area between West Falls Church and East Falls Church Metro stops, and the Alexandria Transit Vision Plan.

Questions:

- For the parcel level database, did you get that information from WMATA? *No, that information was not retrieved. At our MAC we did have a WMATA representative, there must have been a disconnect on that, but that is something that can be followed up.*

4. TPB: 2017 REGIONAL AIR PASSENGER SURVEY GENERAL FINDINGS, Arianna Koudounas, TPB

- This presentation was used to provide some of the initial findings from the 2017 TPB Regional Air Passenger survey.
- The purpose of the survey was the collection of information to help determine both the airport and groundside needs at the region's three largest airports.
- The survey is conducted every two years and consists of a random sample of both international and domestic flights. Passengers were surveyed at departure gates.
- Survey partners included COG, TPB, and members of the Aviation Technical Subcommittee.
- There were a number of key findings that have already been observed. Namely, that overall participation in this year's survey is down 27.4% compared to 2017.
 - TNC Mode share has shown an increase
 - Ease of use is cited as the dominant user preference
 - Travel Purposes by Airport
 - Business – DCA
 - Family – BWI
 - Vacation – IAD
- Overall enplanements increased across all the regional airports. Connections also saw an increase at BWI and DCA.
- Regarding the actual survey, it consisted of a series of questions determining the mode of transportation to the airport, purpose of trip, check-in or carry-on baggage, origin and destination information, etc.



- The survey was based on a sample of 657 flights, 582 domestic and 75 international.
- Notable results include:
 - Increase of Metrorail use to DCA
 - 14% of responds used a TNC to access the airports
 - 79% do not use airport parking
 - The profile of a typical respondent was between the ages of 50 – 64 and an income over \$200,000.

Questions:

- How much coordination is done with the airports during the course of this survey? *A presentation is conducted prior to the survey deployment with applicable staff at the airports (managers, etc.). We are considering, instead of having the survey done at departure gates, making the survey a part of the check in process. Mr. Koch suggested that the survey be a requirement to access the airports free Wi-Fi. We are looking for innovative alternatives, because the drop-in participation is getting close to becoming statistically significant.*

5. ALEXANDRIA TRANSIT VISION UPDATE, Martin Barna, DASH

- This presentation provided an update of the Alexandria Transit Vision. It gave an overview of the update, a look at the transit choices report, highlights from the network design workshop, and insights on the planned next steps.
- A number of factors were discussed to place this update in context; including declining ridership, a dated transit network design, shifts not only in traffic patterns but also in demographics and land usage, uncertain funding, and emerging technology.
- The Alexandria Transit Vision is an unbiased, data-driven effort by DASH and the City of Alexandria to redesign the city’s transit network to more accurately reflect community transit priorities and current/future transit demand.
- The goals include a high level of stakeholder engagement, identifying existing and future transit needs, addressing emerging technologies, and developing the Future Network Vision.
- The Vision is currently in the developing and analyzing data bus networks concepts phase.
- A draft of Alexandria’s Transit Choices Report was released earlier in August. This document provided a framework for stakeholder outreach and discussion. Topics identified included:
 - An existing network review
 - Transit market/needs analysis
 - Technology trends
 - Key choices/Trade-Offs
- Mr. Barna later went into more detail about the Transit Choices Report. Information can be found in the posted presentation, or the posted audio recording of the meeting.

Questions:

- Going back to the conversation about ridership, and riding frequency, particularly on the weekends, what do you think you are going to see in terms of this? *Mr. Barna stated that he felt there is some latent demand. Running hourly service alone will not show what the actual demand is, it is hard to say without putting the actual service on the streets. Houston is often cited to support this, where they were able to increase weekend service by 20% by making service level the same for all days. Latent demand does exist, particular with you look at retail and service industry workers where the weekends are their busiest days.*
- Who would you identify as a “stakeholder” for this study? Are DASH drivers included? *A very wide net was cast in terms of identifying stakeholders, it did include DASH drivers. There was a 4-hour stakeholder workshop, on a Saturday, which had a great turnout.*



- A much broader question, posed to both DASH, NVTC, and DDOT, how will these plans be impacted by the larger Regional Bus Transformation project which is currently underway? *We are working closely with this project, their (WMATA's) project is on a higher level (policy changes, etc.) than ours dealing with network design.*

6. WMATA: HOT SPOT INTERSECTION PRESENTATION, *Jessica Shen, WMATA*

- The purpose of this presentation was to provide a sense of where Metrobus incurs the greatest delay or travel time for regional prioritization and future analysis.
- This project is a follow-up to an older report created by the TRB, the 2012 study on Multimodal Coordination for Bus Priority Hot Spots.
- The presentation outlined the top ten slowest bus routes within the jurisdictions of VA, MD, and DC.
- Those slow routes were then overlaid by the 2012 Hot Spots to determine alignment and for the most part, the slow routes do align with the 2012 Hot Spots.
- Several action items were discussed during the presentation:
 - What information would be useful to DOTs in aiding in addressing slow corridors.
 - The establishment of priority projects for study to determine the sources of delay.
 - Development of a series of milestones for implementing recommendations
- Next steps include creating a bus transit travel speed (BTTS) monitoring protocol for TPB. And assigning a monitoring and mitigation task(s) for a TPB committee.

Questions/Comments:

- It would be interesting to see a separate column that stated the average speed per that particular section of roadway. *A sectional analysis is something that could be investigated.*
- Do you have a way to show the performance of the routes, while taking into consideration the schedule variability? *All of these numbers being provided are the average during the entire period data was collected. During analysis, outliers were thrown out. For the purposes of this presentation, short on time, that information is not included. However, there is a longer presentation that might provide some of that information. I can come back to this subcommittee and provide that presentation.*
- Is there a way to do an average speed for a particular time period? *Yes, that can be shown in the longer version of this presentation.*
- It would be interesting to see the causes of these slow speeds? Different areas/examples provide examples of slow speed being caused not directly to congestion but other factors, such as slow onboarding and alighting.

7. FEDERAL RULEMAKING AND WORK PROGRAM UPDATE, *Eric Randall, TPB*

- An update on the status of 2019 TAM Targets was discussed.
 - All agencies have provided targets, now TPB staff will work to develop a regional TAM Target for 2019.
 - Agencies will be asked in the coming days to provide more detailed information concerning their rolling stock, service vehicles, and maintenance/administrative facilities.
- The SoPTR was also discussed.
 - 2017 NTD data has been made available and ridership and expense graphs have been updated accordingly.

8. ADJOURN



- David Koch, who's term as RPTS Chairman came to an end at this meeting, announced a new chairman for the 2019 calendar year. Clinton Edwards of DPRT will serve as the next chairman
- David Koch adjourned the meeting at 2:00 PM
- The next meeting is scheduled for January 29, 2019

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee's website:
<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2018/11/27/tpb-regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/>

