

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Meeting Summary

Regional Bus Subcommittee

CHAIR: Aaron Overman, District of Columbia DOT

Tuesday November 23, 2010

Noon – 2 PM

Meeting Attendees:

Aaron Overman, DDOT
Julie Hershorn, WMATA
Harold Foster, MNCPPC
Randy White, Fairfax County

Valerie Pardo, VDOT/NOVA
Steve Yaffe, Arlington County
Greg McFarland, NVTC
Taran Hutchinson, MATOC

TPB Staff in Attendance:

Eric Randall
Jerry Miller

Andy Meese

Agenda Items:

Welcome and Introductions

Aaron Overman, DDOT

The chair welcomed the meeting participants and called the meeting to order. He asked the members in attendance to introduce themselves, and thanked everyone for their promptness to facilitate getting the meeting started on time.

Transit and the Metropolitan Area Transportation Operations Coordination (MATOC) Program

Taran Hutchinson, MATOC

Mr. Hutchinson gave a presentation on MATOC, the center established to promote regional coordination of transportation information. Established in 2008, MATOC is a joint program supported by DDOT, MDOT (SHA), VDOT and WMATA to provide regional situational awareness of transportation conditions and incidents, with the goals of improving traveler safety and reduce transportation delays. Mr. Hutchinson discussed the capabilities of the center, technologies in use, and plans for the future, including improved collection and dissemination of transit information. Attendee questions included:

- What is the definition of transit incident? Mr. Hutchinson responded that criteria are still being developed, and to date have been focused on commuter rail and Metrorail. Once better real-time bus information becomes available, whether through NextBus or some other source, criteria will have to be defined.
- Who would define these criteria? MATOC is overseen by an operations committee, primarily composed of members from the State DOTs. Attendees suggested that the Regional Transit Operators Group, led by Eric Marx, should

be involved in development of any criteria defining a transit incident for the region.

- Where does MATOC get its transit information? Some information is available through Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS), but much better data is needed for bus, from county and local bus systems, and best if Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) data.
- Aaron Overman asked about the status of data at local agencies? Attendees reported that RideOn just implemented AVL, that MTA is in the process of purchasing AVL for Frederick and Montgomery commuter buses, that Loudoun County is procuring an AVL system, and that DASH should complete installation in the next six months. Fairfax County is evaluating an AVL acquisition of \$2.3 million.
- Mr. Overman followed up this question by asking what are the roadblocks or steps needed to get this data provided to RITIS? What is needed is an arterial or local picture of traffic conditions. Metrobus has some data fields on this, as does DDOT. But other systems do not, and thus it is challenging to compare bus conditions versus traffic to determine if there is a bus-specific delay.
- Mr. Hershorn noted that Metrorail data is available, and is used for these purposes, comparing schedule versus real-time conditions to identify delays. The same needs to be done for bus.
- Mr. White noted that as Fairfax County is in the process of procurement and is drafting an RFP, that it would be very useful to identify needed interface language and technical specifications to ensure RITIS compatibility. It was noted that Alexandria included such language in its procurement.

Regional Light Rail and Streetcar Overview

Eric Randall, TPB Staff

Mr. Randall gave a presentation on light rail and streetcar projects and proposals, summarizing a memorandum that was distributed to attendees. Project covered included: DC Streetcar, Purple Line, Corridor Cities Transitway, Columbia Pike Streetcar, and Crystal City Streetcar. Implementation considerations were then reviewed, including: funding requirements, roadway impacts, integration with bus services, and connectivity issues: vehicle, track/station, and technological.

- Members suggested the following additions or clarifications to the presentation and the draft memorandum distributed: fare payment plans, local financing means, defining light rail vs. streetcar, what is the purpose of these systems, how would they integrate with Metrorail and bus services.
- It was also suggested that the material should focus more heavily on the opportunities and benefits of light rail/streetcar and less heavily on the challenges and concerns.

Regional Bus Subcommittee 2011 Work Program

Eric Randall, TPB Staff

Mr. Randall discussed the planned work program for the first part of 2011. Specifically, the first activity will be to distribute questionnaires on transit needs, as previously done in 2008. He presented some of the results of the Regional Bus Priority Projects Summary

that was done that year. Other activities will be to update the *Moving Forward* Brochure (2008) and to host a technical session on real-time passenger information.

- Attendees suggested that the 2008 Regional Bus Priority Projects Summary be reviewed to determine progress and changes. For instance, some of these projects are being funded by the TIGER Grant. Other priorities may have changed, especially given tighter budgets.
- The 2011 list can then be developed using the same regional criteria. This will provide a sense of what had been accomplished, and leverage work done during the previous round.

Other Business

- Mr. Overman reported that DC Circulator is now providing a dashboard on its website that enables the public to determine how the system is performing. He suggested that some sort of regional criteria might be considered to provide the public with data comparable across the various bus operators.
- The chairmanship of the RBS for 2011 rotates to WMATA. To general acclaim, Ms. Julie Hershorn was elected chairman for the upcoming year.
- Finally, due to the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting falling during the week of the next RBS meeting, it was agreed to postpone the meeting from Tuesday to Thursday, given many participants expected attendance at the TRB meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM. The next meeting of the TPB's Regional Bus Subcommittee will be held on **Thursday, January 27, 2011**.

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee's website:

<http://www.mwcog.org/TPB/RBS/docs/>