

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIORITY BUS TRANSIT IN THE WASHINGTON REGION
A One-Day Conference on Providing New Transportation Choices through Transit
Prioritization Strategies
Sponsored by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
with support from the Federal Transit Administration

Washington Plaza Hotel, Washington, DC
Wednesday June 24, 2009

Purpose

This workshop is designed to support the region's transportation planning efforts by bringing together key stakeholders to learn about options for prioritizing bus transit and building consensus for a regional priority bus network.

Background

The Washington region has a very successful public transit network, consisting of the world-class Metrorail system complemented by commuter rail systems and by regional and local bus systems which combine to support the regional core and dense activity centers.

To ensure continued success and provide greater levels of transit service, challenges to existing bus service must be addressed. These challenges include traffic congestion, overcrowding, schedule adherence, and reliability. Priority bus treatments can improve the capacity and efficiency of bus service.

The Washington region currently has numerous high performance bus projects under development or implementation. These include WMATA's proposed Priority Corridor Network, the District of Columbia's K Street Busway, express bus enhancements as part of the Shirley Highway HOT Lanes project, the ICC Enhanced Transit Plan and a series of existing and planned intermodal transit centers. Funding for many of these projects is uncertain, as state and county budgets have been tightened due to the current economic situation.

At the same time, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will provide the region with hundreds of millions of dollars in formula funding, as well as the opportunity to seek discretionary funding under a new multimodal program. The members and staff of the Scenario Study Task Force of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) are developing a plan for the first phase of a regional enhanced bus network, with the intention of seeking funding for this plan through the new discretionary multimodal program.

Organization

The workshop will be one full day. First, participants will learn about plans and prospects for priority bus transit in the region and examples of where similar projects have been implemented around the country. Then, stakeholder groups, transportation agency heads and local officials will discuss strategies and potential challenges related to providing priority bus transit in the Washington region.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIORITY BUS TRANSIT IN THE WASHINGTON REGION
A One-Day Conference on Providing New Transportation Choices through Transit
Prioritization Strategies
Sponsored by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
with support from the Federal Transit Administration

Washington Plaza Hotel, Washington, DC
Wednesday June 24, 2009

1 Registration and Continental Breakfast 8:00 AM

2 Welcome and Introduction 8:30 AM

- Charles Jenkins, Frederick County Commissioner and Chair, Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
- Harriet Tregoning, Director, DC Office of Planning and Chair, TPB Scenario Study Task Force

Conference participants will be welcomed by the current chair of the TPB and learn about the scenario planning efforts at the TPB, including the evaluation of a regional priority bus transit network.

3 The Role of Bus Transit in the Regional Transportation System 8:45 AM

- Howard Benn, Montgomery County RideOn and Chair, TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee

This session will review the present role of bus transit in the regional transportation system, and explore potential future roles that buses can play in increasing regional mobility and shaping urban spaces.

4 Examples of Priority Bus Transit in the United States 9:15 AM

- William Vincent, Breakthrough Technologies Institute, Moderator
- Metro Rapid/ Metro Rapid Express: Chun Wong, PE, Transportation Engineer, City of Los Angeles
- Busways: David E. Wohlwill, AICP, Manager of Extended Range Planning, Port Authority, Pittsburgh
- Bus Rapid Transit: Mike Schipper, Deputy General Manager for Engineering/Planning and Project Management, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
- Bus On Shoulder (BOS) Operations: Craig A. Lamothe, AICP Senior Project Manager, Urban Partnership Agreement; Manager, Facilities Planning, Metro Transit, Minneapolis
- Buses on Managed Lanes: Richard J. Lobron, Consultant, Director for Strategic Technologies, METRO (Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Houston, Texas)

This session will provide a survey of different priority bus strategies currently employed in different locations across the United States. Questions to be explored include: Which prioritization strategies are appropriate for different facilities and different land uses? What successes and challenges have other cities experienced when implementing high-quality bus transit services?

Break**10:45 AM****5 Perspectives from Stakeholder Groups****11:00 AM**

- Ronald F. Kirby, Transportation Planning Board, Moderator
- Robert Grow, Greater Washington Board of Trade
- Stuart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth
- Robert Dunphy, Urban Land Institute
- David Alpert, WMATA Riders' Advisory Council, GreaterGreaterWashington.org
- Larry Martin, TPB Citizens Advisory Committee, Sierra Club
- Rod Lawrence, Managing Director, The JBG Companies

This session will explore different stakeholder groups' perspectives on prioritizing bus transit. Questions to be explored include: Can buses be perceived as providing high-quality, environmentally friendly transit? Can investments in bus transit facilities encourage transit-oriented development around station areas? How does the construction of bus lanes affect service levels for other roadway users? Will the benefits of prioritizing bus transit outweigh the perceived costs?

Lunch, Keynote Speaker**12:00 PM**

Roy Kienitz, Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy, US Department of Transportation

6 Prioritizing Bus Transit in the Washington Region**1:30 PM**

- Nat Bottigheimer, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Moderator
- John Catoe, General Manager, WMATA
- Gabe Klein, Director, District Department of Transportation
- Neil Pedersen, Administrator, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Michael Harris, Transit Project Coordinator, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

This session will engage state agency officials in a discussion about the practical realities of implementing running-way improvements and other priority treatments for buses. Questions to be explored include: Can currently planned road improvements provide benefits to buses as well as private vehicles? Can funding from existing highway programs be used to implement priority bus transit projects? How would DOT and transit agency staff manage planning for bus prioritization projects?

Break

2:45 PM

7 Achieving Regional Consensus for Priority Bus Transit

3:00 PM

- Chris Zimmerman, Arlington County Board, Moderator
- Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Council
- Phil Mendelson, DC City Council
- Catherine M. Hudgins, Fairfax County Board
- Vic Weissberg, Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation

This session will provide opportunities for TPB members to discuss the political realities of prioritizing bus transit in their jurisdictions. Questions to be explored include: Will priority transit reduce operating costs for agencies? How will be benefits and burdens of prioritizing bus transit be distributed? What indirect benefits would result from prioritizing bus transit? How can these benefits best be communicated to the public?

8 Adjourn

4:15 PM