



# NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

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## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** TPB Technical Committee

**FROM:** Eric Randall  
Department of Transportation Planning

**SUBJECT:** TPB Annual Transit Forum Overview

**DATE:** July 2, 2015

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The 2015 Annual Transit Forum was held on June 9. Convened under the auspices of the TPB's Private Providers Task Force, the purpose of the annual transit forum is to bring together representatives from the private transportation sector and local jurisdictions to discuss mutual regional transportation interests. Over 40 persons attended, including representatives from local jurisdictions, public bus operators, and fifteen private transportation providers or representatives. The agenda featured two keynote addresses, followed by a roundtable discussion among the attendees on regional projects and business opportunities.

The first keynote address was given by Mr. Arthur Guzzetti, Vice President of Policy for the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). His topic was the future of public transportation and its adaptation to the new technology of microtransit. APTA has been around since 1882, pre-dating the internal combustion engine, to represent the interests of the industry. Now the latest mobility technology is leading to rapid change and public transportation providers need to adapt. He noted a recent conference at which pictures of Fifth Avenue in New York City were shown: in 1903, all the vehicles are horse-drawn; in 1913 the vehicles are all automobiles. Revolution can happen that quickly.

Accordingly, Mr. Guzzetti identified the following principles for public transportation providers forward as they adapt to change:

- 1) Ensure accessibility
- 2) Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship
- 3) Promote integration and coordination
- 4) Appropriate public oversight
- 5) Sharing and cooperation, with public agencies working to make data available
- 6) Establish one-stop shopping, with travelers able to pay with any means for their whole trip
- 7) Heightened stability and efficiency
- 8) Develop understanding and best practices
- 9) Identify new business markets and develop partnerships with the private sector to create new markets.

The second keynote address was given by Christian Kent, Assistant General Manager for Access Services at WMATA. Mr. Kent noted that the disruption of technology requires re-imagining of human services transportation. This is a challenge faced by all forms of public transportation, including paratransit. Thought needs to be put in to the requirements and regulation that will keep paratransit effective and efficient, while meeting the customer needs that drive demand for service. New technology offerings, such as smart phone apps and transportation network companies, offer new options for customers and their preferences are changing.

Accordingly, the WMATA Board sponsored a study into the long-term vision and sustainability of MetroAccess and how high quality paratransit could be provided using new technology and within financial constraints. The paratransit business is highly regulated and Metro cannot endorse other options for customers, but other areas of government or non-profits and private providers can. Metro is encouraging the jurisdictions to facilitate these options, which could result in both more flexible and more cost-efficient services. The report on the study should be released in July.

There were three briefings by TPB staff:

- Ms. Wendy Klancher briefed the attendees on the second solicitation for TPB's Enhanced Mobility Grant Solicitation under the revised Section 5310 grant program.
- Mr. Rich Roisman briefed the attendees on the recent TPB study of downtown commuter bus staging and layover studies.
- Mr. Eric Randall spoke to the changes to public transportation involvement at the TPB in response to MAP-21 regulations on the role of public transportation at metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), including the reconstitution of the TPB's Regional Bus Subcommittee as the Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee (RPTS) to include all providers.

The forum concluded with the roundtable discussion of transit plans and prospects. Each jurisdiction and transit operator in turn highlighted recent events and upcoming plans and projects for public transportation. In particular, potential business opportunities for the private sector were discussed.

All documents for the meeting are available on the TPB Private Providers Task Force section of the MWCOG website, available at:

[http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/committee/documents.asp?COMMITTEE\\_ID=101](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/committee/committee/documents.asp?COMMITTEE_ID=101)