



TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting Summary: August 23, 2022

ATTENDEES, total: 22

Spring Worth, DDOT (Chair)	Cody Christenson, RKK	Andrew Meese, TPB
Gary Erenrich, MCDOT	Stacy Weisfeld, WMATA	Lyn Erickson, TPB
Sophie Spiliotopoulos, NVTC	Jason Groth, Charles County	Eric Randall, TPB
Genoveva Cutrell, NVTC	Bill Truong, MATOC	Joe Davis, TPB
Allan Fye, NVTC	Jamaal Schoby	Charlene Howard, TPB
Ronnetta Zack-Williams, NVTC	Kevin Chai, Fairfax Co.	
Kate Mattice, NVYC	Nick Ruiz, VRE	Bill Orleans, unaffiliated
Xavier Harmony, NVTC	Timothy Kutz	

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, *Spring Worth, Chair*

- The meeting was called to order and a roll of online attendees was called.
- It was noted to general acclaim that the Xavier Harmony has been included in Mass Transit magazine's list of 40 Under 40 people to watch in the industry

2. NVTC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES UPDATE, *Xavier Harmony, NVTC*

- Xavier Harmony briefed the committee on the research activities being conducted by NVTC.
- One recent publication was on Northern Virginia transit during the pandemic.
 - Paratransit ridership was 50 percent of pre-pandemic, based on data through June. These qualified travelers still need many trips.
 - Focus was on how people are using transit today.
- Recent activities include support of the DASH network redesign.
- NVTC will be putting out an RFP for a regional bus plan. The objective will be to combine the locals' transit strategic plans (TSPs) into one document for the region.
- Documents will be made available in the Transit Resource Center

Discussion:

- VRE is also working on a system plan, and it would be great if the data could be integrated into the regional bus plan. VRE experience post-pandemic is that service was restored from 50 percent to 100 percent mid-2022 to give riders more space. Ridership still at 35-40 percent of pre-pandemic.

3. SOUTHERN MARYLAND RAPID TRANSIT (SMRT) PROJECT UPDATE, *Jason Groth, Charles County*

- Jason Groth provided an overview of the SMRT project to attendees, starting with context. Charles County has about 165,000 population, with Waldorf as the central business district. The transportation problem is the commute
- SMRT has had sixteen years of planning. Would connect to Metrorail at the Branch Avenue station, improving access for up to 450,000 people. Needs to be high-capacity transit, either BRT or light rail. Preference is for light rail
- Official NEPA study about to begin: January 2023. Previous study was NEPA-lite, ended in 2017. Develop a route with 11 stations: 6 in Prince George's County and 5 in Charles. Estimated ridership in 2045 at 24 to 26 thousand a day.
- There has been renewed interest in the project. The county has only two main roads, and most residents commute out of the county to work, about 60 percent. The county is primarily a bedroom county.
- Would connect Waldorf, 85 to 90 thousand population as well as Andrews AFB and South Washington Hospital Center.
- Residents often have a 35-to-90-minute commute on MD 210 to National harbor. A transit option would provide a 30-minute commute to Branch Avenue.
- A bill in the Maryland assembly would provide \$5 million a year for five years to complete a study, pending federal match. An FY 2022 earmark for \$5 million was approved. Need \$10 million to kick-off the study and complete design and PE on the alignment and a preferred mode. An MOA with MDOT and Prince George's County is being developed as well.
- NEPA would take 3-4 years to complete, at a cost of \$27-30 million). If get another \$10 million federal funds, the state will provide the funding to complete the study.

Discussion:

- Is there public support for the project? Is the public aware of the project? Answer: Yes, a lot. Unanimous support from the public.
- What is existing transit like? Answer: Pre-pandemic, the county has the biggest and fastest growing commuter bus ridership in Maryland. People couldn't get onboard the buses due to crowding. Stop and layover issues in Maryland still need to be addressed. Local bus has been restructured, serves the Brandywine area. SMRT would provide transportation for both local and commuter trips.
- Starting the New Starts NEPA process, there is now a two-year time limit to complete. Answer: Have not yet started PE, which is the trigger for that, so technically have not started the New Starts process. Working with local Congress members to preserve that flexibility.
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4. TPB UPDATES: 2022 PBPP TRANSIT SAFETY TARGETS. COMMENTS ON 2021 STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REPORT, 2022 BUS TRANSIT EQUITY ANALYSIS, Eric Randall, TPB Transportation Engineer

- Eric Randall provided updates to the committee on the progress of several activities by the TPB.

4. OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURN, Spring Worth, Chair

- The meeting was adjourned.
- The next meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2022

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee's website:
<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2022/8/23/tpb-regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/>

