

ITEM 12 - Information

June 15, 2011

Briefing on WMATA's Regional Transit System Plan (RTSP)

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing on the Regional Transit System Plan.

Issues: None

Background: WMATA is developing a Regional Transit System Plan for 2040 which builds upon the region's CLRP to address the core capacity of the Metrorail system; integrate regular bus, streetcar, LRT, BRT, express bus, and HOV/HOT services; and examine new and emerging markets in order to provide multimodal mobility options and facilitate transit-oriented development.

M E M O R A N D U M



SUBJECT: Regional Transit System Plan

DATE: June 15, 2011

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TO: Transportation Planning Board

Background

Over the past three years, Metro's principal focus has been on safety, state-of-good-repair, and budget issues. At the same time, persistent growth trends in the Washington DC region continue to dictate that Metro keep part of its attention on its long-term ability to serve transit demand in the region. With timelines of 10-20 years to plan, design, fund, and construct major system improvements, Metro needs to begin work now on system-wide planning to address capacity constraints that are expected to emerge between 2020 and 2030.

This is not the first time that Metro has worked to develop a regional transit plan. Article VI of the WMATA Compact defines the Authority's responsibilities to develop and revise a Mass Transit Plan for the regional system. In 1999, WMATA adopted a Transit Service Expansion Plan aimed at doubling transit ridership over a 25-year period and increasing the region's fixed-guideway miles by 50%. Some elements of the TSEP have advanced to implementation such as the Largo extension, New York Avenue station, Dulles Corridor extension, and rail fleet expansion to run longer trains.

Now, more than 10 years later, it is time for a fresh look at the future of the region's transit system, recognizing that an up-to-date regional framework for transit system expansion and integration is needed. Metro can play an important role to advocate for connections and projects that promote seamless travel across the region, and to identify the most promising projects that provide the greatest regional benefit.

Purpose

The Regional Transit System Plan (RTSP) will evaluate future growth trends and options for improving and expanding transit service. The plan will be a 30+year vision for an integrated high-capacity, multi-modal transit network tied to the achievement of the region's sustainability goals.

The RTSP will address four key issues:

- *Core Capacity:* Providing transit capacity to serve the regional employment core.
- *System Access:* Providing adequate pedestrian, bicycle, automobile and bus access to high-quality transit.
- *Surface Transit Corridor Development:* Addressing the need for providing priority to the surface transit network to support multiple corridors around the region. Transit modes include express bus on HOV, rapid bus on arterials, light rail, and streetcar projects.

- *New & Emerging Markets:* Connecting regional activity centers. Identifying any markets or corridors where the transit system needs to be expanded.

The timing of this effort is critical. Large capital transit improvement projects needed to alleviate future capacity constraints could take at least 10 years to design and construct. That means the region needs to reach consensus on a strategy for transit expansion over the next few years to begin to address implementation issues and funding.

Next Steps

The RTSP planning study has been underway since 2010 with Metro staff working closely with a multi-jurisdictional Technical Advisory Group (TAG). TAG members have been reviewing the work products, data and recommendations developed by the RTSP study team during the planning process. To date, several strategies designed to address the four key areas highlighted above have been modeled and results presented to the RTSP TAG.

The project schedule includes the following major phases:

Spring 2010: Goal and Strategy Development

Summer 2010-Spring 2011: Strategy Modeling & Evaluation

Summer 2011-Fall 2011: Scenario Development & Evaluation

Winter-Spring 2012: Selection of Preferred Scenario & Development of Final Plan

The next phase of the process includes presenting the project to the public in a series of public workshops scheduled for late July. The intent of the first round of public workshops is to inform the public of Metro's long-range planning effort, to give an overview of the projects and strategies examined so far, and most importantly, to get input from the public on the most promising strategies. Input received from these meetings, as well as review of strategy results in collaboration with the TAG will inform the development of scenarios that combine different strategies. Scenarios will be analyzed and measured by their overall effectiveness in meeting the project goals and objectives. This analysis will help identify the most promising transit system plan elements with a focus on developing the case for significantly increased investment in transit for the Washington, DC region.