



TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Summary: June 27, 2017

ATTENDEES

- Kyle Nembhard, MTA
- Allison Davis, WMATA
- Ramona Burns, WMATA
- David Koch, DDOT
- Randy White, Fairfax County
- Efon Epanty, Fairfax County
- Ryan Jones, Fairfax County
- Pierre Holloman, City of Alexandria
- Deanna Archey, Montgomery County
- Tim Roseboom, DRPT
- Steve Yaffe, Arlington County
- Malcolm Watson, Fairfax Co. (phone)
- Meredith Hill, MDOT (phone)
- Andy Meese, TPB
- Arianna Koudounas, TPB
- Rich Roisman, TPB
- Kenneth Joh, TPB
- Bill Orleans, Public

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, *Kyle Nembhard, Chair*

Call to order and introductions.

2. MONTGOMERY COUNTY RIDE ON EXTRA OVERVIEW, *Deanna Archey, Montgomery County*

- Deanna Archey, speaking to a presentation, provided an overview of Ride On as an organization, operating bus and capital bikeshare.
- She then spoke to the Ride On extRa bus service, between Lakeforest Transit Center and Medical Center, that will start operation in October. It will be a limited stop service, buses with special livery, USB ports and wi-fi onboard, special branded shelters, every 10 minutes during peak hours only.
- Lakeforest Transit Center is current a park and ride lot with bus service, though the County has plans to build a proper transit center there in a P3 proposal. Travelers can drive down I-270, park there, and take the bus the rest of the way, either to Metro stations or one of the select stops at major activity centers that the extRa service will serve. She spoke to the stops and the route diversions required for each.
- The bus will use the median travel lanes, pulling over to the right-hand lane only for stops. Transit Signal Priority is being implemented.
- New shelters in a silver color are being built with branding for the service. These stops will also have unique public art projects.

Questions:

- Pierre Holloman: Has there been consideration given to expanding the hours of service? The service will be evaluated following its initial period and this could be a future option depending upon its performance.
- Randy White: is the service peak-direction only or bi-directional? Bi-directional.
- Kyle Nembhard: How were the hours of service determined? Based on highest use of Ride On.
- Steve Yaffe: Will the shelter graphic be translucent? Yes. Will the artists' designs be different at each stop? That's the plan; there's a meeting later this week on the subject.
- Pierre Holloman: Will these be new buses or converted? New buses specific to the service: 17 in total, with 14 required for service
- David Koch: What is in the infotainment system on the buses? DC Circulator is looking at this, but the requirements are lengthy. This is a new effort for this service. The content has been in development for over a year, and is now in lab testing.
- Kyle Nembhard: Has there been any coordination with police on security for real-time displays? This is an issue elsewhere. No, not particularly. Don't expect vandalism to be an issue; such displays are already installed in various places.
- Pierre Holloman; Who is the provider of the infotainment system? Will there be audio? Nextbus is providing the real-time info and the displays. There will be an audio component at stops to meet ADA requirements.
- Will extRa still be the base fare? Or extra? The fare will be the base fare of the system; however, cash will not be accepted and so there will not be onboard loading of SmarTrip cards. CPOS devices will be put at stops and advertised on shelters. There was then a general discussion of the issue of fare evasion.
- Kyle Nembhard: Rockville Metro his already overwhelmed with buses; how did the extRa get a stop there? Took some rearrangement, including building a new shelter and bay. This was used for the first time just recently for SafeTrack by the Q-line buses.
- Ryan Jones: How many USB ports will be installed on the buses? Don't know for sure.

3. FAIRFAX CONNECTOR BUS TRACKER IMPLEMENTATION, Efon Epanty and Ryan Jones, Fairfax County

- Efon Epanty spoke to a presentation on ITS deployment on the Fairfax Connector. Ryan Jones also chimed in with various additions or elaborations throughout the agenda item.
- The Bus Tracker is only the public-facing component of the implementation of the ITS system for the operation as a whole.
- He covered the timeline of the project and indicated the website has FAQs, customer advertisements about to be distributed, and other supporting information.
- The Bus Operations Control Center (BOCC) was started in 2016, a significant change for the system. It was modeled on the WMATA system, and was implemented over the course of a year. Monitors the operation of the three divisions: Herndon, Huntington, and West Ox. The BOCC is located at West Ox, close to both the County emergency operations center and the VDOT / Virginia State Policy emergency operations center..
- Other ITS elements include Automated Passenger Counting (APC), a technology which is rapidly developing. The Connector is going with the level beam, but the newer systems with overhead optical sensors are extremely accurate. The APC procured is still very good, and can screen out wheelie bags and other sensor readings.

- One big change for the Fairfax was that every report previously was an incident; now they have incidents and events. Incidents were and still are made by staff. Events are generated by the ITS system due to some condition. This event data is all available on a web-based system.
- Bus Tracker is a web-based system, not an app. The same product as used by CTA (Chicago).
- Fairfax Connector had to go out and inventory and designate all bus stops, some 2,600 of which are served only by the County (as opposed to WMATA served stops that may also be used by the Connector). These had to be mapped and tagged with an identifier. Instead of new flags, Fairfax went with high quality, retroreflective stickers installed on the current flags.
- Bus stop IDs are for customer information but also for inventory control. Stickers were a big savings versus new metal flags. The stickers or decals are high quality and durable.
- The stop ID system is separate from the Trapeze system stops.
- Clever Devices provided the software. Once placed in contact with Google Transit techs, the info was available within a day on Google Transit.
- Fairfax Connector is working with GMU on data analysis, using students there. In one sense, bus organizations are always conducting research, usually known as service changes.
- Fairfax County just implemented an ATT PTT communication system, for other vehicles, but the Connector is evaluating this versus a VOIP system.
- There was discussion over the role of MV, the contracted operator, in defining who does what. MV was much better at doing the bus stop designations that a previous contractor hired to do the job.

Questions:

- Steve Yaffe: How often are the buses polled for location? Every 30 seconds.
- Andy Meese: How involved in this process was the County IT department? There was general discussion about the challenges of working with security-conscious IT bureaucracies to get new technology procured and implemented.

4. TPB UPWP STUDY: REGIONAL BUS PROVISION, *Rich Roisman, TPB Planner*

- Rich Roisman spoke to a presentation, recapping the organization of the UPWP Technical Assistance program and then the study developed for FY2018 on an evaluation of the cost and factors affecting provision of bus service in the region.
- Phase one of the study would be an assessment of how local and regional bus services are provided and an accounting of the costs of operation: classifying the types of service, including operational characteristics; contractor or agency-operated; how management and overhead services are provided; staffing, back-end office, information technology, policing, etc.; and other factors that affect service provision.
- Phase two of the study would seek opportunities for regional efficiencies in bus provision, examining current regional arrangements as well as applicable national examples to align limited resources; and assess factors that offer scope for improvement, including service area rationalization, de-duplication of services, and garage co-location.
- He then spoke to the budget and timeline for the study and asked for volunteers for a technical advisory committee

Questions:

- Pierre Holloman: will the output from the study be sent to the TPB with recommendations? Doubtful this study will go to the TPB; meant to provide information for technical staff to use in briefing decision-makers. Will not produce recommendations, but rather findings and maybe some options.
- Ryan Jones: The VDOT ICM study on I-66 may be applicable, with the research it did for transit improvements in that specific corridor. One result was a recommendation and funding for Fairfax Connector bus route to the State Department, the first route of the system to operate into DC.
- Steve Yaffe: This study should produce a common accounting system, which could be used to compare TDPs throughout the region. Phase two of the study should look at union agreements, including work duty distribution and the use of contractors. It should also look at regional travel patterns, as affected by land use and peak directions of travel.

5. FEDERAL RULEMAKING AND WORK PROGRAM UPDATE, *Eric Randall, TPB*

- Eric Randall spoke to a presentation. There were no comments.

6. ADJOURN

- Future agenda items were discussed, and whether the next meeting should be on July 25 or August 22. Participants preferred the July date. Suggested presentations include DRPT on the Revenue Advisory Board final report and MTA on ESMS info. Operator hiring was also mentioned.
- The meeting adjourned at 1:55 PM.

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