

April 24, 2007
Regional Bus Subcommittee

DRAFT Example of Roles and Responsibilities

PURPOSE

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulation, published at 23 CFR §450.314(a), requires that

The [Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”)], the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in a written agreement among the MPO, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) serving the [Metropolitan Planning Area (“MPA”)].

This agreement provides an understanding between the parties for recognizing and describing the responsibilities in conducting transportation planning in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. This agreement also identifies the procedures used in the planning process and identifies the decision-making bodies.

This transportation planning agreement does not abrogate, infringe upon or modify any current memoranda of understanding, agreements, policies or procedures by and between the MPO, the State(s) and the public transportation operator(s).

PARTIES

Regional

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

District of Columbia

District of Columbia Department of Transportation Mass Transit Administration

Virginia

Virginia Department of Transportation
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission
City of Alexandria
Alexandria Transit Company
Arlington County
Fairfax County
City of Fairfax
Loudoun County

Maryland

Maryland Department of Transportation
Maryland Transit Administration
Washington Suburban Transit Commission
Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Frederick County

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The region's current transportation network includes approximately 16,000 lane miles of highway, nearly 200 miles of carpool lanes, 106 miles of Metrorail and 162 additional miles of commuter rail. In addition to rail, the Washington region has an extensive bus network of local and commuter services. Three major airports—Reagan National, Dulles International, and Thurgood Marshall Baltimore/Washington International (BWI)—serve the metropolitan area. The region has one of the most extensive bicycle/pedestrian trail systems in the country, stretching from the outer suburbs to the National Mall in the heart of Washington.

PARTICIPANT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

The TPB is the federally designated MPO for the region, and plays an important role as the regional forum for transportation planning. The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region.

Members of the TPB include representatives of local governments; state transportation agencies; the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies; the WMATA; and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies. The TPB has an extensive public involvement process, and provides a 30-day public comment period before taking action on plans and programs.

The TPB's planning area covers the District of Columbia and surround jurisdictions. In Maryland these jurisdictions include Frederick County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County and the St. Charles urbanized area of Charles County, plus the cities of Bladensburg, Bowie, College Park, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt, Rockville and Takoma Park. In Virginia, the planning area includes Alexandria, Arlington County, the City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Falls Church, Loudoun County, Manassas, and Prince William County.

The TPB does not exercise direct control over funding and does not implement projects, but it does perform a range of activities that promote an integrated approach to transportation development. The requirements of federal law compel the key transportation players in the region to work through the TPB process. The TPB exercises its basic role as a coordinating agency in several ways:

1. The TPB ensures compliance with federal laws and requirements. Federal requirements inject consistency and coordination into regional transportation decision-making. The federally mandated metropolitan planning process requires all MPOs across the country to produce two basic documents – a long-range plan, which in the Washington region is called the Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRPP), and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which lists projects and programs that will be funded in the next six years. Since 2000, the CLRPP has used a planning horizon of 25 years. In order to receive federal funding, transportation projects must be included in the CLRPP and the TIP. Federal law also requires the TPB to show that the region will have adequate funds to build the projects listed in these two main planning documents. The funding for the CLRPP and TIP must be “reasonably expected to be available,” according to federal transportation law enacted in 1991. This financial constraint is intended to make sure the different partners in the region’s transportation system are realistically planning for the future.

In addition, the TPB must make sure that the projects in its CLRPP and the TIP, taken collectively, contribute to air quality improvement goals for the region. This is a requirement of the federal Clean Air Act. The TPB must also comply with federal laws, regulations and policies stipulating that regional transportation plans must not disproportionately affect low-income or minority communities in an adverse way.

2. The TPB provides a regional transportation policy framework and a forum for coordination. While federal law and regulations drive much of the region’s regular transportation planning activities, the TPB has also developed a policy framework—known as the Vision—that is intended to guide the region’s transportation investments in the new century.

Approved in 1998, the Vision is a long-range document laying out key goals and strategies that will help the region to develop the transportation system it needs to sustain economic development, environmental quality and a high quality of life. The agencies that implement transportation projects—the states, the District of Columbia, the regional transit authority and others—must show that the goals of their projects are consistent with the Vision.

3. The TPB provides technical resources for decision-making. Finally, the TPB is a technical resource. The TPB staff is continually working in close coordination with the staffs from the local and state jurisdictions and WMATA, as well as with outside consultants, to produce numerous studies and analyses, including but not limited to corridor level analysis and scenario studies. This technical information is essential for the decisions made by the TPB itself and for the decisions of the jurisdictions comprising the region.

Technical information and analysis are prepared on a variety of topics, most of which fit into a few broad categories. Travel monitoring activities gather

information on current travel patterns and conditions. For example, data is collected on transportation facilities throughout the region to assess the performance of highway and transit facilities. Congestion levels are calculated based upon measures of the average number of cars per lane-mile of highway. Personal travel patterns are also surveyed to determine how people are traveling, for what purpose and how far.

Travel forecasting develops predictions about future travel conditions. The TPB staff develops these forecasts using computer programs (“models”) whose inputs include assumptions about the future, including projected population and job growth, data about planned or potential improvements in the transportation system, and assumptions about future travel demand. The model’s outputs produce travel forecasts that inform a variety of decisions, such as helping to determine how various transportation investments will affect mobility in the region. Information about current and future travel conditions is used for a number of purposes—especially for the regional air quality analysis required by the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, as amended. Technical data produced by the TPB staff are also used by other jurisdictions and agencies. The states, the District of Columbia and WMATA (the regional transit authority) use TPB data on a regular basis to plan and operate their services and facilities.

Numerous committees support the three major roles of the TPB:

1. Regional Bus Subcommittee - The mission of the Regional Bus Subcommittee is to provide a permanent process for the coordination of bus planning throughout the Washington region, and for incorporating regional bus plans into the CLRP and TIP. High quality bus service in the region depends upon successfully linking vehicles, services, stops and stations, running ways, operating facilities, maintenance shops, storage yards, and passenger and operating support systems to produce a service that is easy to use, provides rider information where and when needed, and facilitates intra- and inter-agency service transfers. Increased customer satisfaction can broaden the appeal of transit in the transportation market place and generate increased ridership. Considerable cooperation among the agencies responsible for bus service and transportation in the region is required to implement these high quality bus services, owing to the complex nature of transit service provision and transportation facility ownership in this multi-state region.
2. Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee - The Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee provides advice and assistance to the Technical Committee and is responsible for the update and evaluation of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The group also provides public information, including a bicycle route map that is produced jointly by the subcommittee and a local map publisher. The group oversees the Street Smart Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Campaign. Lastly, the group facilitates technology transfer and information sharing, as it relates to state and local programs.

3. TPB Access for All Advisory Committee - The Access for All (AFA) Advisory Committee advises the TPB on transportation issues, programs, policies, and services that are important to low-income communities, minority communities and people with disabilities. The mission of this committee is to identify concerns of low-income and minority populations and persons with disabilities, and to determine whether and how these issues might be addressed within the TPB process.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

WMATA is an interstate compact agency and, by the terms of its enabling legislation, is an agency and instrumentality of the District of Columbia, State of Maryland, and Commonwealth of Virginia. This agency was created by the aforementioned states and the District of Columbia to plan, finance, construct, and operate a comprehensive mass transit system for the Washington Metropolitan Area.

The Authority shall be governed by a Board of six Directors consisting of two Directors from the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the State of Maryland. For Virginia, the Directors shall be appointed by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission; for the District of Columbia, by the Council of the District of Columbia; and for Maryland, by the Washington Suburban Transit Commission.

The WMATA planning Zone covers the District of Columbia, the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun and political subdivisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia located within those counties, and the counties of Montgomery and Prince George's in the State of Maryland and political subdivisions of the State of Maryland located in said counties.

The WMATA Board shall develop and adopt, and may from time to time review and revise, a mass transit plan for the immediate and long-range needs of the Zone. The mass transit plan shall include one or more plans designating (1) the transit facilities to be provided by the Authority; (2) the design and location of such facilities; (3) whether such facilities are to be constructed or acquired by lease, purchase, or condemnation; (4) a timetable for the provision of such facilities; (5) the anticipated capital costs; (6) estimated operating expenses and revenues relating thereto; and (7) the various other factors and considerations, which, in the opinion of the Board, justify and require the projects therein proposed. Such plan shall specify the type of equipment to be utilized, the areas to be served, the routes and schedules of service expected to be provided and the probable fares and charges thereof.

WMATA's needs typically are categorized into three programs: 1) the Infrastructure Renewal Program (IRP), which addresses maintenance and rehabilitation needs; 2) the System Access/Capacity Program (SAP), which includes funding to purchase trains and buses and make other improvements needed to handle new riders; and 3) the System Expansion Program (SEP), which includes new lines and services.

In preparing the mass transit plan, and any revisions thereof, the Board shall make full utilization of all data, studies, reports and information available from the TPB and from any other agencies of the federal government, and from signatories and the political subdivisions thereof.

The Metro system is funded through a variety of sources including state and local government payments. The system receives federal funds directly through formula grants, through indirect state payments, and through special programs designed for new construction projects, preservation or other specially designated purposes. Farebox and other revenues from the system, such as advertising, provide roughly half of Metro's funding.

District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT)

DDOT is currently in the process of updating its Strategic Transportation Plan. The new plan, which has a horizon year of 2030, maintains the prior plan's transit recommendations with an emphasis on surface transit, including light rail. In addition, it focuses on maximizing travel efficiency, safety, and public space quality in major transportation corridors.

District of Columbia Mass Transit Administration (MTA)

The mission of the MTA of DDOT is to provide the public with efficient, affordable and diverse means of travel within the District of Columbia. MTA pursues its mission by providing funding, policy recommendations and coordinating transit services with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). The staff at MTA continuously works to develop signature transportation services that offer excellent internal mobility to all city residents and visitors.

The Mass Transit Administration is currently working on various local projects with WMATA to supplement their regional rail and bus services. Some of these projects include the DC Circulator bus service, the DC Streetcar and the new Metro Extra Rapid Bus service. In addition, MTA also supports and manages various special programs for District residents such as the District's School Transit Subsidy Program and the capital grant assistance program for non profit organizations to provide transportation services for the elderly and disabled.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

VDOT has unusually far-reaching responsibility for public roads, bridges and tunnels. Covering more than 55,000 lane-miles, VDOT has the third largest state-maintained highway system in the country. The VDOT system includes most local and country roads in the state.

VDOT is guided by the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The Virginia Secretary of Transportation serves as chairman of the 17-member CTB, which also includes the commissioner of VDOT, the director of VDRPT and 14 citizens

appointed by the governor. The CTB is responsible for developing the Six-Year Improvement Program for transportation.

Virginia has a number of long-range planning efforts that serve as the basis for project development. A 20-year statewide transportation plan, called VTrans2025, provides policy guidance for all transportation modes. VTrans2025, along with the State Highway Plan, serves as the basis for project prioritization and submission into the TPB CLRP.

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT)

VDRPT is an agency under the Virginia Secretary of Transportation that provides technical and financial assistance to Virginia's public transit, ridesharing and railroad operations.

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)

The NVTA is charged, under Virginia legislation, with developing a long-range transportation plan for Northern Virginia, developing transportation priorities and serving as an advocate for Northern Virginia's transportation needs. The most recent version of this long-range plan, called TransAction 2030, was adopted in 2005 and serves as a basis for some of Virginia's project submissions to the TPB CLRP. The NVTA has 16 members, including local elected officials and state legislators. VDOT and VDRPT are non-voting members. The staff for NVTA is provided by the NVTC.

In order to provide funding of transportation projects in Northern Virginia, the NVTA can impose regional fees and taxes for transportation in their respective area and authority to each locality embraced by the NVTA to impose an additional real property tax on commercial property with the revenues to be used for transportation.

Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)

NVTC was created by the Virginia General Assembly in 1964. Member jurisdictions include Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church. Among its responsibilities are the appointment of Virginia's Metro Board members, co-ownership of the Virginia Railway Express commuter rail system, applying and serving as trustee for state and federal transit funding and receiving the proceeds of a two percent regional sales tax on motor fuels dedicated to Metro.

NVTC's board consists of 13 local elected officials, 6 General Assembly members and the director of the Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The board sets regional policy in Northern Virginia on transit and ridesharing issues and works closely with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and Transportation Planning Board.

NVTC frequently conducts major transit studies emphasizing coordination. Recent examples include an ongoing senior mobility study and a study of the Route 1 corridor. A complete list of NVTC's studies and reports is available at

www.thinkoutsidethecar.org. NVTC also manages regional transit projects, including initiating Falls Church's GEORGE bus system as a demonstration project, managing the \$6 million procurement of 475 SmarTrip fareboxes, and overseeing a program of free bus fares on forecast Bad Air Days.

NVTC convenes a task force of transit representatives and first responders to plan for emergencies at key Virginia Metrorail stations. It also hosts a monthly coordination meeting of Northern Virginia transportation and financial staff and regularly updates its database of regional transit performance statistics. NVTC staff assists its member jurisdictions in legislative advocacy and takes the lead in public outreach on such major regional projects as the 2030 transportation plan update.

Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)

PRTC is a multi-jurisdictional agency representing Prince William and Stafford Counties and the cities of Manassas, Manassas Park and Fredericksburg. PRTC provides three levels of public transit. OmniRide provides commuter bus service along the I-95 and I-66 corridors to points north. OmniLink provides local bus service in Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. And Metro Direct provides feeder service to the Franconia-Springfield and West Falls Church Metro stations. PRTC's Department of Operations and Planning staff provide operations planning analysis for the multi-tiered bus system. In addition, they play a significant role in the creation and update of short-term (usually 5-year) strategic plans for the growth of the system. PRTC's Department of Grants and Project Management planning staff oversee the creation and update of a Long-Range (25-year) Plan. The planning staff from both departments works closely with transportation and land-use planners of member jurisdictions to ensure coordination. The PRTC Board of Commissioners, made up of 15 commissioners representing the member jurisdictions, the Virginia General Assembly and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, approve a non-fiscally constrained plan allowing Prince William County, the overwhelming provider of bus service subsidy and primary recipient of service, to revise the plan based on how consistent it is with the county's own fiscal planning for the same time period. The Board then annually approves a budget designating funding for all or part of the previously identified service.

City of Alexandria

The City of Alexandria is actively involved in all aspects of transit planning, through its Office of Transit Services and Programs in the Transportation and Environmental Services Department. The City, as a member of the WMATA compact, provides subsidies for WMATA rail, bus, and paratransit services in the City. The City also fully participates in all regional transit forums, including the WMATA Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee and the Regional Partners, concerned with implementing SMARTCards regionally. The City continues to work with WMATA in developing service plans which will provide transit more effective in the City.

In addition to the City's role in subsidizing and supporting WMATA its also subsidizes and promotes other transit services which primarily serve City residents. It provides a

substantial subsidy for DASH, or the Alexandria Transit Company, a non-profit service corporation that is wholly owned by the City, but not part of City government, which provides fixed-route transit within the City. It also cooperatively works on service planning projects for DASH and submits necessary forms for Commonwealth capital and operating funds. It is also allocating its State Urban funds to a project to build a new operating terminal for DASH. It also gathers necessary information about DASH performance to submit to the National Transit Database.

The City provides ADA compatible paratransit through its DOT program, through its work with three contractors. The City also provides facilities for all transit operators through a shelter construction program which is funded by local, private, state, and federal funds, and allocates money to regularly clean these shelters.

The City actively encourages the use of non-single occupancy vehicles in commuting through a Commonwealth funded Ridesharing program, and through requiring transit inducements in the City's Transportation Management Plans, required of developers building major developments in the City.

The City also contracts with consultants to determine such issues as the role of different transit operators in the community, the possibility of building dedicated transit lanes in the City, and other issues.

Alexandria Transit Company (ATC)

ATC is a non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of providing mass transportation services as a public service corporation. The ATC operates transit services (DASH) within the City of Alexandria and between the City and the Pentagon Metrorail Station. Its purpose is to supplement the regional rail and bus service provided by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and to provide a safe, reliable and efficient local bus service. The ATC Board of Directors, elected by the Alexandria City Council, approves changes to DASH routes and schedules. ATC staff also coordinates with WMATA staff when proposing changes especially in corridors with service shared by both agencies, though each agency's board has the final say on their particular service. The ATC updates the Transit Development Program yearly which includes both short-term improvements as well as a more general seven year bus plan.

Arlington County

Fairfax County

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), under the leadership of the County Executive and the policy direction of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, oversees public transit service provided in the County. The Board of Supervisors appropriates general funds, as part of the annual County budget process, to pay for Fairfax Connector service and non-regional Metrobus service within the County, as well as a designated share of regional Metrobus and Metrorail capital and operating expenses under the WMATA Compact and other agreements (e.g., Metro Matters). The Northern

Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) also provides additional operating and capital funding.

Fairfax Connector service is primarily non-regional (intra-county) bus service. Some Connector routes are modified versions of service formerly operated by Metrobus. The Fairfax Connector Section (FCS) of the Transit Services Division (TSD) of FCDOT, with assistance from TSD staff and from the contract service provider(s) of the bus service, performs short-range (0-1 year horizon) planning. TSD staff, with support from FCS and from the Transportation Planning Section (TPS) of the Transportation Planning Division (TPD) of FCDOT, is responsible for medium-range (1-5 year horizon) planning. TPS staff, supported by FCS and TSD, performs long-range (5-20 year horizon) planning.

Metrobus service in Fairfax County is a mix of non-regional and regional service. Short-range Metrobus planning is performed by the WMATA Office of Operations Planning and Administrative Support (OPAS), with input from, and review by, both TSD and the Coordination and Funding Division (CFD) of FCDOT. Medium- and long-range Metrobus planning is performed by the WMATA Office of Planning and Project Development (PPD), with support as needed from OPAS and input from, and review by, TSD and TPS as appropriate.

City of Fairfax

Transit Planning in the City of Fairfax is generally done by the Transportation Director in coordination with the Transit Superintendent if bus related. Otherwise, if any other mode then just the Transportation Director. After a plan is crafted, this is forwarded up the chain to the public Works Director then to the City Manager. If a significant cost is involved, anything above \$25,000, then this needs City Council approval.

Loudoun County

Planning is currently done by the staff of this office. All decisions related to funding and new service(s) are approved by the Board of Supervisors. We are in the process of preparing an RFP to have a 20 year Countywide Transit Plan prepared by a consultant. This document would be included in the Countywide Transportation Plan as an addendum, and would cover the period from now till Metrorail to Loudoun and beyond.

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

MDOT has an unusual system for funding transportation. The state's Transportation Trust Fund is a unified pot of money that provides MDOT flexibility to fund priority projects across the state regardless of transportation mode—including roads, public transit, aviation and ports.

The Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP) establishes policy goals for state transportation services and infrastructure over the next 20 years. The MTP is a starting point for the development of strategic plans, programs and projects by MDOT's different agencies. Every year, MDOT submits the MTP to the state General Assembly, along with the six-year Consolidated Transportation Program.

Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)

The MTA, a modal agency of MDOT, is the designated recipient of federal transit grants with oversight responsibility for transit operations in all areas in Maryland except the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area where the State participates as a managing and funding partner through its participation on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board of Directors. MTA owns, operates and manages transit services in the Baltimore region while overseeing contracted commuter bus, commuter rail and paratransit services. In addition to being home to two major urbanized transit systems, Maryland is the grant recipient and overseer of 24 locally operated transit systems providing traditional bus services, paratransit and other specialized services targeting specific transit customers.

Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC)

The WSTC was created in 1965 (Chapter 870, Acts of 1965). The Commission administers the Washington Suburban Transit District and has powers to develop, on a bi-county basis, a transportation system, including mass transit facilities, for Montgomery and Prince George's counties, Maryland.

Within Montgomery and Prince George's counties, the Commission acts as the financial conduit for funding of mass transportation projects. It coordinates mass transit programs with the two county governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the Maryland Department of Transportation.

The Commission consists of seven members appointed to three-year terms. Two are chosen by the Montgomery County Executive, and two by the Prince George's County Executive. With Senate advice and consent, the Governor appoints one member from Montgomery County and one from Prince George's County. One member serves ex officio. Annually, the position of chair alternates between Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

Prince George's County

The basis for transit planning evolves around our Transit Services Operation Plan (TSOP). This 5-Year planning document has the approval of our County Executive and County Council. The document examines "need assessment" and "growth areas" within the County. Where County "The Bus" and "Metrobus" services currently exist and where new route services should be implemented to address service requirements are evaluated on the most recent census data modeling. Both operational and capital costs are calculated and priorities are established for current policies or objectives. Particular route/service requirements, such as the National Harbor complex, are analyzed by the DPW&T Transit Planning staff and recommendations are forwarded to the DPW&T Director for discussion with the appropriate State/County personnel. In most cases, budgeting for new services, including bus procurement must be made at least one year in advance. Transit planning activities outside the TSOP are held to a need/emergency basis because they have not had our elected officials' approval.

Significant route service improvements/deletions/changes must have proper advertising notice and a public hearing to gather citizen input.

A report of the public hearing is sent to the Director for final determination and enactment. New route schedules and maps are made available to the public as needed.

Bus transit operational and capital funding comes through MDOT and must be incorporated into the State's transportation budget. An exception may be private/grant funding for shuttles to subdivisions or employment centers where proffers can be put forth by the developers.

Montgomery County

Montgomery County is a political subdivision of the State of Maryland, created in 1776. There are only three incorporated cities in the County (plus another dozen or so villages). Schools, libraries, police, fire are County responsibilities. For these reasons, this County of nearly 1 million residents, covering approximately 500 square miles, functions much like City.

The planning process, covering transportation and general land use, starts with the County's master plan. It may be viewed at:

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dirtmpl.asp?url=/content/dpwt/dir/master_plan2.asp The plan is initially put together for the County by the MNCPPC, Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission, a special purpose agency created by the State of Maryland. Master Plan preparation incorporates significant public participation in its development. It is reviewed, revised and adopted by the County Council with assistance from the Executive branch, notably, though not exclusively, the County's Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPWT). It is from the master plan that proposals for new alignments, e.g., the CCT (Corridor Cities Transitway) emanate. DPWT is the County department that does much of the planning work, with significant public participation, when a project advances.

Montgomery County supports shorter range planning and operations of existing public transport in numerous ways. Relations with WMATA are formally and officially conducted through the conduit of the WSTC (Washington Suburban Transit Commission) in addition to routine, daily staff contacts. Through such contacts, working relations are also kept with MARC (commuter rail) and MTA (commuter bus).

Approximately every five (5) years, DPWT also prepares a Transit Strategic Plan, establishing its forward vision for all transit services – Commuter Rail, Rapid Transit and Bus. Though not route specific (as it regards bus services) it lays out the parameters of what is desired of service, and identifies facilities required to support these desires. It is from the strategic plan that the need for specific new transit centers and depots are identified.

In the mid-1970's, in part due to the oil crisis, in part due to the pending opening of Metrorail in the County, the County created its own bus system, called *RIDE ON*. For

management purposes, it was placed in the Department of Public of Works and Transportation (then called DOT). The Division of Transit Services was created within DOT to house Ride On. Ride On was designed to be a neighborhood circulator as well as a feeder to the new rail system. It has grown from a fleet of 20 buses to 375 buses. Operational contacts are maintained with WMATA Metrobus to ensure coordinated, seamless surface service to the public. Contact is also kept with MTA in their Statewide LOTS (Locally Operated Transit System) oversight role.

The Division of Transit Services has four major sections consisting of: Operations, Customer and Operations Support (COS), Management Services and Commuter Services. Operations is entirely dedicated to Ride On; COS and Management Services are largely devoted to Ride On. The Operations Planning unit operates under the Customer and Operations Support section and is responsible for Ride On service planning and scheduling.

The primary functions of the Operations Planning staff include:

- Data Collection
- Scheduling
- Service Planning
 - Route performance monitoring
 - Feedback monitoring
 - Customer
 - Operations staff
 - Regional & local service coordination

Route performance monitoring– Operations Planning annually reviews each route’s ridership and resources to track trends and to determine if service modifications are warranted. Data is collected throughout the year from the farebox and through traffic checkers.

Feedback monitoring– Over 300 requests for service modifications, enhancements, extensions and safety improvements are received each year. Each request is evaluated, responses are prepared and all are considered throughout the planning process. Bus operator feedback is gathered regularly and considered in the planning process.

Regional & local service coordination– The Ride On planning staff meets monthly with other Maryland transit providers and Metrobus Operations Planning staff to discuss projects and coordination strategies. A larger regional workgroup made of Northern Virginia, Washington D.C, and Maryland transit providers also meets separately on a monthly basis discussing policy and planning issues. Ride On planning staff also meets twice a month with key units within the department, such as, Marketing, Operations (Dispatch & Depot managers) and Fleet Maintenance as an exchange of resources and information.

The decision making process requires the Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation’s authorization before major service changes. This includes additions

and reductions. Upon the Director's approval, the Division Chief will notify Council member(s) and Council staff of the affected district, prior to the proposed service change being announced to the public. If a service change affects more than 25% of the service, a public hearing is held and is advertised 30 days before the hearing date. Individuals have 7 days following the hearing to respond; after which, the docket would be closed. The Division Chief of Transit Services reviews all comments and makes the final recommendation; however, all recommendations are forwarded to the Director's office for approval.

Frederick County

TransIT Services of Frederick County, a division of Frederick County government, provides public transportation, paratransit and commuter services to Frederick County residents. Planning of future services and enhancements is guided by the 5-year Transportation Development Plan (TDP), which is approved by the Frederick County Board of County Commissioners.

The planning process includes:

- An inventory and review of existing transit services;
- A review of demographics and land use;
- An assessment of unmet transportation needs;
- Service alternatives to address identified needs and performance concerns;
- A recommended plan for improvements; and
- Five-year capital and operating budget projections.

The TDP is used for guidance in the development of the annual grant application and transportation plan, which is approved by the Board of County Commissioners and submitted to the Maryland Transit Administration/Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). Operational and capital grant funding comes through MDOT and must be incorporated into the State's transportation budget.

Recommendations for service improvements are reviewed annually by analyzing statistical data and may include the administration of customer surveys. Public input is encouraged and solicited on all service proposals, plans and grant applications. Public comments are considered in the determination of final plans. The Transportation Services Advisory Council (TSAC), an eleven-member committee appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, also provides feedback on the TDP, grant applications, and service proposals.