

# Updating the *Moving Forward* Brochure

Regional Bus  
Subcommittee  
October 23, 2012

## The Regional Bus Subcommittee

The subcommittee was formed by resolution of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) on January 17, 2007. Its mission is to provide a permanent process for the coordination of bus planning throughout the Washington region, and for incorporating regional bus plans into the long-range transportation plan.

Membership includes representatives from all transit bus transit operators in the region as well as the departments of transportation and other regional transportation agencies.

### What is the TPB?

Transportation planning at the regional level is coordinated in the Washington area by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB). The TPB is staffed by the Department of Transportation Planning of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

Members of the TPB include representatives of the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia, and the District of Columbia, local governments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, and nonvoting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies.

The TPB was created in 1965 by local and state governments in the Washington region to respond to a requirement of 1962 highway legislation for establishment of official Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in 1966, serving as COG's transportation policy committee. In consultation with its technical committee, the TPB is responsible for directing the continuing transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by the states and local communities in the region.

### Subcommittee Members

#### Transit Operators

Alexandria Dash  
Arlington Transit (ART)  
City of Fairfax CUE  
DC Circulator  
DC Streetcar  
Fairfax Connector  
Falls Church George  
Frederick County TransIT  
Laurel Connect-a-Ride  
Loudoun Commuter Transit  
Maryland Commuter Rail  
Montgomery County Ride On  
MTA Commuter Bus  
Prince George's County TheBus  
PRTC Omni Ride  
Virginia Railway Express  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

#### Other Agencies


District of Columbia DOT  
Maryland DOT  
Maryland Transit Administration  
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission  
Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC)  
Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation  
Virginia DOT

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This brochure was made possible by a collaborative effort of Regional Bus Subcommittee members and TPB staff.

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Design: Carla Badaracco Design

- RBS
  - “public” transit bus operators? (i.e., no university shuttles)
- Membership list
  - ~~Falls Church GEORGE~~
- Mention first brochure?
- Other changes?



## Introduction

**B**us services are an important component of the region's transportation system.

The 13 bus operators in the region serve approximately 45% of the region's transit trips, and account for 45% of the region's transit operating costs. Bus services complement the Metrorail system by providing feeder service to stations, as well as additional capacity in highly congested rail corridors. Bus systems have a much greater reach than Metrorail, and provide a lower-cost, flexible service that can be implemented quickly. Similar to the Metrorail system, the region's bus operators are experiencing financial challenges. Also like the Metrorail system, the ridership and operating costs of the region's bus systems are steadily increasing, and will continue to rise.



- Update numbers and facts
- What are we doing for customers?
  - SmarTrip<sup>®</sup> integrated fare system
  - Real Time Passenger Information
    - Nextbus
    - RideOn Real Time





## Why is Transit Important?



### **Transit provides opportunities.**

Public transportation provides access to job opportunities for million of Americans as well as a transportation option to get to work, go to school, visit friends, or go to a doctor's office.



### **Transit reduces energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.**

Transit is part of the region's strategy to reduce energy use and lower the emissions of gases linked with global climate change.



### **Transit creates healthy communities.**

Public transportation revitalizes neighborhoods, increases social interaction and pedestrian activity, enhances safety, and helps create a sense of "place" that will help make a community unique and special.



### **Transit reduces traffic congestion.**

Public transit provides alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles, removing vehicles from the region's roadways.

- Accessibility and mobility for all?
  - Children, seniors,
- More on alternate fuels?
  - Types



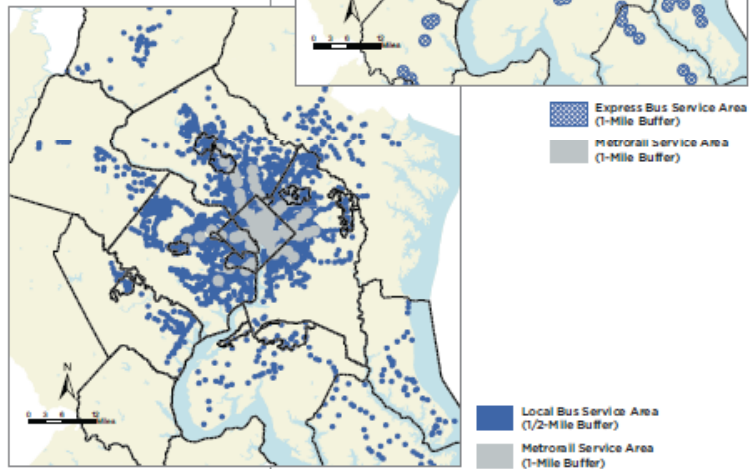
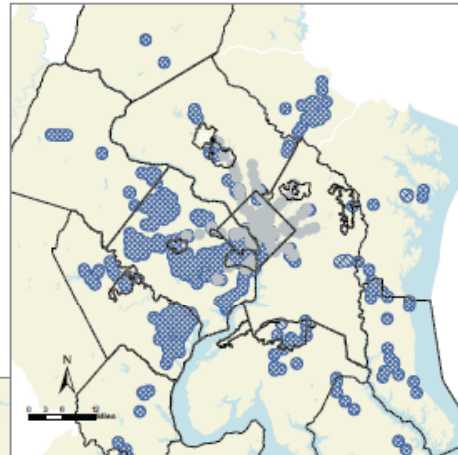
## Why Bus Transit?



Bus services complement as well as provide alternatives to the MetroRail system.

### Bus services:

- Respond to market needs
- Provide a range of services over a wide area of coverage
- Can be quickly implemented
- Have lower capital costs relative to rail projects
- Support rail services by providing feeder service or by providing alternatives to rail along congested corridors.



- Compare to auto use?
  - More people for less highway room
  - Reduce congestion

## Bus Systems of the National Capital Region

### Feeder/Circulator bus

provides access to rail transit stations and local destinations



### Local bus

provides medium-distance trips with frequent service

### Commuter/Express bus

provides long-distance rush-hour services



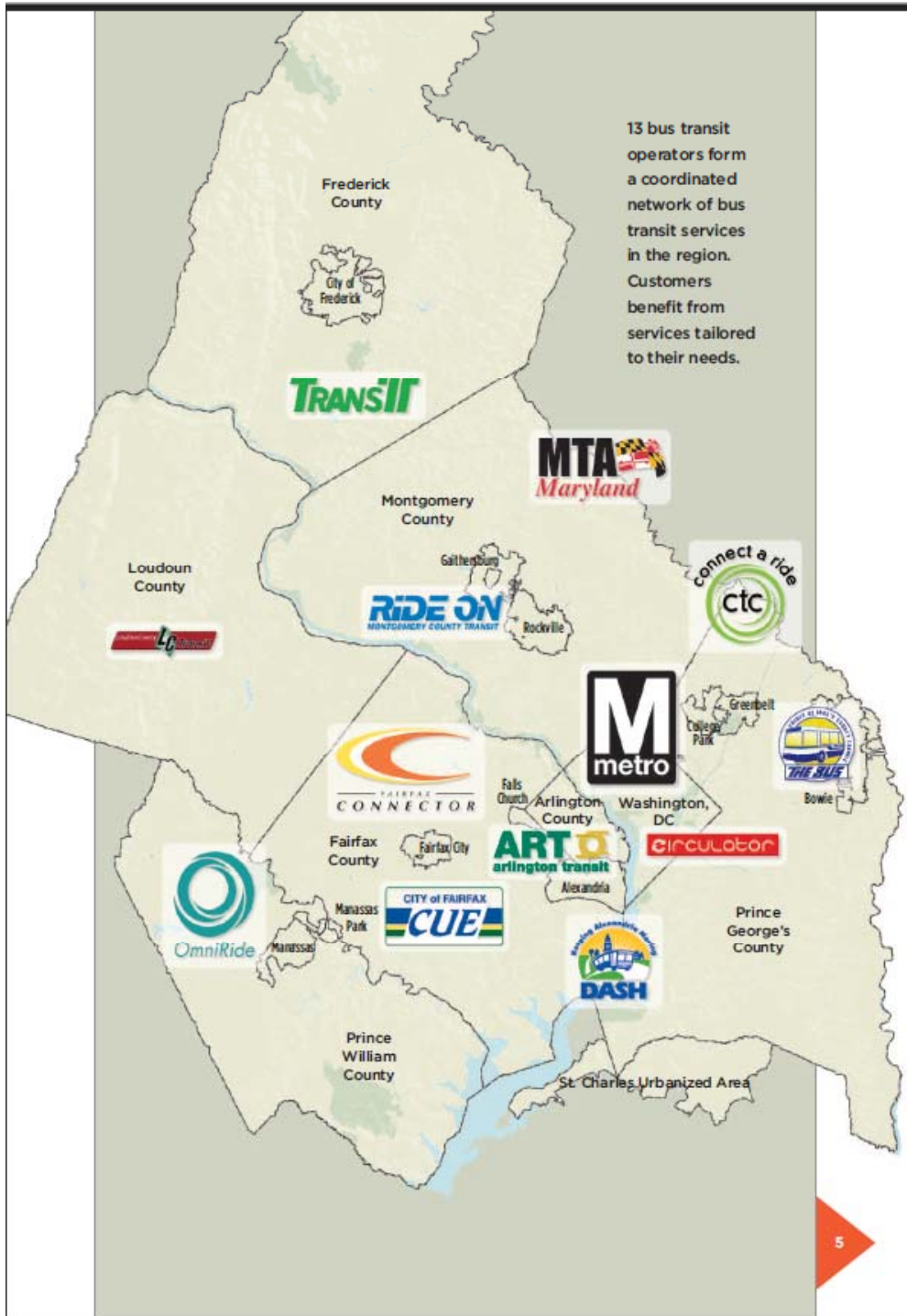
### Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

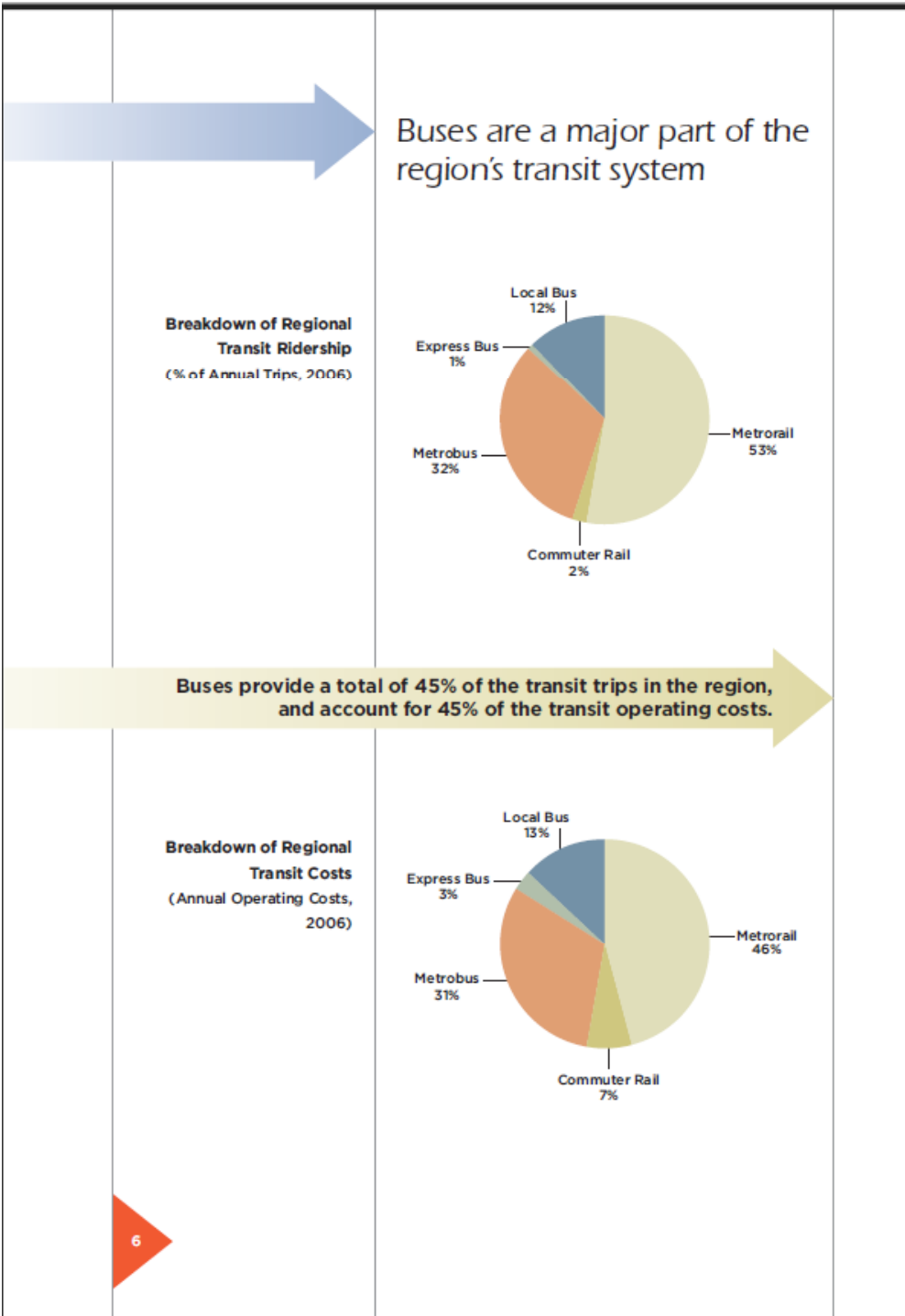
can provide high quality transit service similar to MetroRail

*BRT is currently being evaluated for several corridors in the region.*



- Introduction of priority / limited-stop service
- Expansion of commuter buses





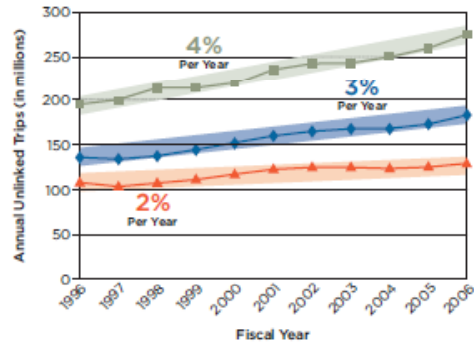
- Updated pie charts with FY12 data?
  - Ridership and costs of each operator?
  - How do we show growth of services over time (i.e., commuter bus)?



Both bus ridership and operating costs are increasing

Annual Ridership  
WMATA Metrorail,  
Metrobus and  
All Bus Systems

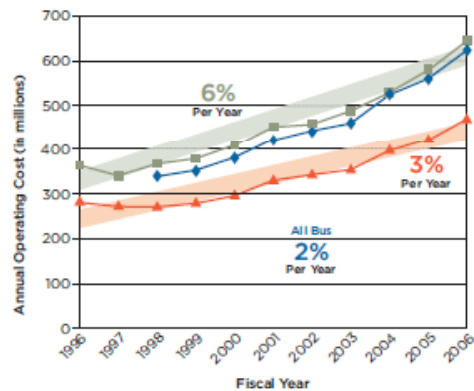
— Metrorail  
— All Bus  
— Metrobus



Regional bus ridership is increasing, as is the cost of operating bus transit service.

Annual Operating Cost  
WMATA Metrorail,  
Metrobus and  
All Bus Systems

— Metrorail  
— All Bus  
— Metrobus



- Cost increases need context
  - Year of expenditure figures
  - Pay for service expansion to meet customer demand

Bus ridership and operating costs will continue to rise



**Factors causing increases in bus operating costs:**

**Increasing traffic congestion**  
Heavy traffic congestion slows buses and results in more buses being needed to maintain published schedules.

**Increasing fuel costs**  
Costs for fuel and labor are rising faster than ever before, resulting in increases in operating costs.

**Cost Per Gallon of Gasoline, 1995 to Present**



**Factors causing increases in bus ridership:**

**Rising fuel costs and Metrorail congestion**  
As gas prices increase, commuters turn to transit to find cost-effective transportation options. Many of these riders find faster and more comfortable commutes on the region's buses.

**Regional Development**  
Increased emphasis on transit-friendly growth patterns has increased the number of potential bus riders.

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- Put numbers to impact of congestion?
  - 1 mph slower equals \$X M?
  - Further explanation as reason for bus priority?
- Expand on concepts?
  - transit-oriented development ?
  - Integrated transport & land use planning?



The region's bus systems have immediate funding needs



### Maintaining existing bus fleet in good repair

Buses are heavily used and require frequent and specialized maintenance.



### Investing in clean-fuel technologies

Environmental and health concerns have increased the awareness of the need for clean fuel buses.



### Expanding service offerings

New services are being introduced to increase the number of high-quality transit options in the region.



### Expanding maintenance and storage facilities

The expansion of bus fleets requires larger bus garages and shops.



### Funding to cover operating costs

As both costs and service offerings increase, more money is required to operate the region's bus transit systems.



- Add more context?
  - Priority projects list for bus?
  - Aging garages
  - Limits on commuter buses downtown



The region's bus operators also must consider other needs



### Providing quality bus stops and transfer centers

Many bus stops in the region lack amenities and are inaccessible to persons with disabilities.



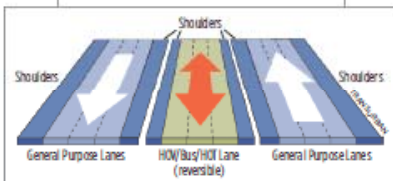
### Implementation of Bus Rapid Transit

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) technologies will increase the speeds and reliability of bus services.



### Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

Federal law requires transit services to be accessible to persons with disabilities.



### Planning for the conversion of HOV lanes to HOT lanes

Conversion of High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to priced toll lanes may raise new revenue for additional bus services.



### Considering bus transit in land-use decisions

Bus transit must be considered early in the land development process in order to ensure transit-friendly neighborhoods.


- Shirlington transit center?
- WMATA PCN?
- TIGER?
- Other studies?
  - MontCo BRT, ICC buses, I-66, etc.



While Metrorail's challenges are well known, the region's bus systems are facing similar issues.



- Metrorail comparison – elaborate?
  - Near/at capacity
  - Requires renewal
  - Investment needs
- Emphasize complementary nature?



## What you can do



### Learn



Learn what bus services are available to you in your neighborhood.



### Ride



Consider taking the bus for work trips, shopping trips, or for other parts of your daily travel routine.



### Participate



Get involved in your community planning process and advocate for high quality transit from your local and regional decisionmakers.

- Add more customer focus issues to brochure
  - Improvements in information
  - Newer buses provides better service quality
  - New services to meet customer needs




## Next Steps

The TPB, through its Regional Bus Subcommittee, is the regional organization planning to address these short- and long-term challenges. These planning efforts include:

- Addressing funding needs
- Providing support for beneficial bus projects
- Raising awareness of the needs of the region's transit operators

The Regional Bus Subcommittee's recently released report, *Status Report on the Bus Systems in the National Capital Region*, documented the successes and challenges currently faced by the region's transit operators.



## Summary

- Bus services are an important part of the region's transportation system
- Bus systems face real monetary and infrastructure needs to maintain existing services and respond to growing demand
- Bus services are one of the solutions to the future growth challenges of the region

Learn more about bus planning in the region at [www.mwcog.org/TPB/RBS](http://www.mwcog.org/TPB/RBS)

- More detail on what bus needs are in future?
- RBS mission?
  - Long-range planning
  - Regional coordination (e.g., info, bus priority)

# Next Steps

- Collect input from stakeholders – December
- Draft for comment – January 2013
- Finalize – February
- Publish – March