



TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting Summary: January 26, 2021

ATTENDEES, total: 23

Deanna Archey, MCDOT (Chair)	Jordan Holt, WMATA	Andrew Meese, TPB
Gary Erenrich, MCDOT	Scarlett Cook, WMATA	Lyn Erickson, TPB
Jim Maslanka, Alexandria	Charley Dingboom, WMATA	Eric Randall, TPB
Malcolm Watson, Fairfax County	Ben Malnor, WMATA	Joe Davis, TPB
Lori Zeller, Foursquare ITP	Michael Eichler, WMATA	Antonio Castañeda, TPB
Carrie Waters, Frederick County	Kyle Nembhard, MTA	
Kari Snyder, MDOT		
Ria Kulkarni, NVTA		
Dan Goldfarb, NVTC		
Clinton Edwards, VDRPT		
Cindy King, VRE		
Sonali Soneji, VRE		

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, Deanna Archey, Chair**
 - The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM and a roll of online attendees was called.
- 2. UPDATE ON REGIONAL INFORMATION GATHERING REGARDING TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND COVID-19, Eric Randall, Andrew Meese, TPB Systems Performance Planning Director**
 - Eric updated the subcommittee on the data questionnaire shared with Greater Washington Partnership (round 2). An email was sent to the RPTS mailing list including a link to the GWP survey findings in early January.
 - Andrew reported that TPB and its members are very interested in these findings, noting the 20 minutes extra spent on the topic at the last TPB meeting.
- 3. DRAFT REGIONAL ELECTRIC BUS OVERVIEW, Antonio Castañeda, TPB**
 - Tony reported on the recent growth in e-bus procurement nationally as well regional BEB procurement.

Discussion:

 - In addition to DASH's 3 Proterra e-bus scheduled for delivery, an additional 8 are scheduled to arrive by the end of 2021 or beginning of 2022.
 - Will Buy America become a constraint for e-bus procurement? Some e-bus providers currently have plants in the US (e.g., BYD at Lordstown, Ohio). This topic will need to be further analyzed before we know for certain.
 - Performance of e-buses is still a concern in replacing fleets. WMATA says we (regionally)

are moving out of initial stage of piloting now (where performance is tested), and now need an increased level of coordination and effort between jurisdictions and agencies focusing on infrastructure and energy rate structures.

- E-buses need to be considered in parallel with bus priority policies
- RPTS expects to have another e-bus roundtable / conversation in June or July

4. **BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT RECOMMENDATION B: REGIONAL DATA SHARING**

DISCUSSION, *Jordan Holt, WMATA*

- Jordan briefly reviewed the Bus Transformation Project, focusing on recommendation B: the data to be shared and options for facilitating data sharing regionally.
- Jordan shared possible data formats as GTFS, GTFS-RT and NTD, most of which she stated could be updated annually.
- Data facilitator options included WMATA, a regional body, academic institution, or consultant.
- Estimated labor costs included a database developer for \$250K a year and a performance analyst for \$150K a year, Jordan mentioned that these prices are likely on the low side.

Discussion:

- Has the region accepted and adopted this particular recommendation? If MetroHero is already doing this, why do we have to be involved? WMATA prioritized 10 recommendations, however, still continuing to work on the remaining 16. In several of the recommendations TPB was referenced with some level of involvement.
- COG could be a regional data organizer, TPB has its own data clearinghouse but this does not currently have the infrastructure in place for real time data.
- The current data warehouses with MATOC and RITIS would be considered academic institutions here. It would be difficult to fully understand the costs associated with this infrastructure without knowing what data is to be collected first.
- It would be good to hear agencies' interest in this project and to think on the recommendation some more, this conversation will likely pick up again in March.

5. **OVERVIEW OF WMATA REAL TIME CROWDING INFORMATION APP**, *Jordan Holt, Michael Eichler and Ben Malnor, WMATA*

- Jordan began with the 5Ws of real time crowding predictions for buses. The project took approximately 4.5 months to make definitions, develop methodology, include APC into the data stream, incorporate and launch the project.
- Benjamin reported that the APC metrics need to be adjusted for accuracy before being incorporated. A new algorithm was developed to improve raw APC count reliability from 53% to 73%. Existing Hella raw APCs are currently reliable 77% of the time.
- Michael spoke to incorporation of bus crowding information into GTFS-RT and BusETA. The data went live on 12/20/20 and WMATA continues to verify and refine this data. Coordination for this effort went across IT/planning/operations/ and customer service teams.

Discussion:

- Are any other agencies are doing similar work? MCDOT recently procured an FTA grant which is expected to be used for a similar project.
- Has WMATA considered using RT bus cameras as an additional validation method? Yes, however this is technically intensive process (for both offloading and validating) at the moment. Current use of the cameras is for crime prevention and safety and is not set up for a RT feed to be monitored.



6. OVERVIEW OF VRE MOBILE APP, *Cindy King, VRE*

- Cindy reported that VREs former contractor's (Moovel) parent company was ending contracts in North America and that a new RFP was issued early. VRE also considered how to make the app more flexible (including trip planning, parking, GTFS, APC Integration, Push Notifications and Web Portal).
- A three phase approach was planned; Phase 1 included initial rollout with a customer-friendly transition (via a forced update). Phase 2 will focus on trip planning, APC information, customer web portals, and more. Phase 3 will work towards regional integration.
- American Eagle is the new provider. Fare purchasing is live and next steps include expanding their existing partnerships with respect to ticketing.

Discussion:

- When is the launch? A soft launch has already begun.

7. 2021 AGENDA TOPICS: DISCUSSION, *Deanna Archey, Chair*

- Eric asked those in the meeting to share what their interests / topics for the coming year
 - Gary Erenrich – Analysis of fare charging regionally looking at propensity to pay vs ride on free service.
 - Jordan shared that a group within WMATA is working on an equity analysis beyond title 6 called the 'equity toolkit'. Jordan mentioned the findings could be shared in the spring time after the work is concluded (late March).
- Eric reported on Transit Development Plan compilation for TPB's LRTP and asked if other agencies have recently started or will soon start their TDP.
 - Jim from Alexandria stated they have received funds from DRPT to make a TDP, they will be selecting a consultant to help with this over the next few months.
 - Deanna shared that Montgomery County has submitted a budget for their TDP.

8. OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURN, *Deanna Archey, Chair*

- The meeting was adjourned at 1:59 PM.
- The next meeting is scheduled for February 23, 2021

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee's website:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2020/11/24/tpb-regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/>

