



TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting Summary: May 25, 2021

ATTENDEES, total: 20

Deanna Archey, MCDOT
(Chair)
Sam Oji, MCDOT
Joana Conklin, MCDOT
Brendan Watts, Prince
George's County
Kevin Thornton, Prince
George's County

Melissa Kim, WMATA
Charley Dingboom, WMATA
James Hamre, WMATA
Christine Hoeffner, VRE
Martin Barna, Alexandria
Jen Slesinger, Alexandria
Clinton Edwards, DRPT
Ria Kulkarni, NVTA

Kyle Nembhard, MTA
Patricia Happ, NVTC
Dan Goldfarb, NVTC
Andrew Meese, TPB
Eric Randall, TPB
Joe Davis, TPB
Antonio Castañeda, TPB

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, Deanna Archey, RPTS 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, TPB**
 - Eric updated the subcommittee on return to office expectations regionally / at TPB and shared that an additional survey may be sent to RPTS members in July to gather return to office expectations across the region for the month of September.
 - Discussion: do we have any idea about the plans of the federal government? Have not heard anything recently.
- 3. TPB TRANSIT ACTIVITIES UPDATE: TRANSIT INFORMATION, STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, TRANSIT EQUITY WHITE PAPER, Eric Randall and Antonio Castañeda, TPB**
 - Eric updated the subcommittee on the Transit Equity White Paper currently being worked on by Foursquare ITP / ICF consultants. The analysis compares stop locations, frequency of service, peak vs off peak and span across demographics factors including low-income, transit dependent populations and TPB's equity emphasis areas among others. The analysis will be converted into a series of interactive GIS maps. The final white paper is expected to be delivered by the end of June.
 - Discussion: When will the 2020 ACS data come out? 2019 is currently out, unsure about whether 2020 will come out as there had been concerns of data reliability during the pandemic. Where can I see the equity slides? MWCOG's RPTS website.
- 4. NEW DASH NETWORK AND FARE FREE TRANSIT, Martin Barna, City of Alexandria - DASH**
 - Martin briefed the subcommittee on the New DASH Network which is scheduled to launch on September 5, 2021. The new plan introduces new frequent, all-day bus service (increase from 40% to 66% on average, with low income and minority residents experiencing levels as

high as 73% and 70% respectively). DASH will launch fare free service with the start of the New DASH Network. The intent is to accelerate economic recovery and provide equitable access to transit. The plan is to extend the free fare program for multiple years; however, funding is not yet secured. Martin also shared considerations for fare free service including: impact on ridership and crowding levels, funding availability for service improvements, fare collection equipment planning, ridership data collection – farebox vs APC, implications for SmarTrip & regional partners, program evaluation criteria & framework, and the timeline for potential return to fare collection. DASH is about 50% equipped with APCs, though currently using fareboxes to count passengers. Staying in SmarTrip and will keep AFC equipment in order, though this is a multi-million effort that could take two years to resume. Lastly Martin reviewed Alexandria’s Low Income Fare Pass Assessment and the recommendations from it. Free fares were deemed the easiest solution, had lower administrative costs and the highest ridership gains compared to other fare models.

- Discussion: were new buses purchased as part of the New DASH Network? No, our analysis showed that there would not be a need for additional buses in the new service plans. Electric Buses? Currently have 6 buses and chargers with plans to procure 8 more by this Fall, including articulated; 14 e-buses in total with plans to expand more in the future and going full electric by 2037. We’re also planning for future facility expansion that will include additional electric charging stations and considering three on-route charging locations.

5. FARE REINSTITUTION & FARE FREE INITIATIVES DISCUSSION, RPTS members

- Discussion: Ria shared information on NVTC fare collection programs.
 - Patricia Happ shared that NVTA is working on a fare free white paper per requests from their commissioners on fare free / low income fare subsidies.
 - Work session Wednesday @ 3:30 on service recovery and fares, with the expectation of impacting fall service
 - WMATA will offer temporary fare waivers for sporting / other events, and is continuing to study other options.
 - DRPT is working on a white paper on low fare roundtable
 - DRPT transit equity and modernization study is nearing the end of procurement
 - Montgomery County is conducting a fare study looking at different low fare options for their Council
 - Will shortly vote on FY 2022 budget which may extend current free fares. When fares resume, people with disabilities will have free fares though.
 - Prince George’s county reinstated fare collection but at a reduced price (\$1.25 to \$1), currently averaging about 70,000 monthly riders where previously it was in the 40,000s.

6. OTHER BUSINESS / ADJOURN, Deanna Archey, Chair

- Kyle Nembhard announced that this was his last week with MTA, and that he would be joining Amtrak to work on the Union Station expansion program.
- The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM.
- The next meeting is scheduled for June 22, 2021

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee’s website:
<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2021/5/25/tpb-regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/>

