National Capital Region
**Transportation Planning Board**

# TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

## Virtual Meeting Summary: November 28, 2023

**ATTENDEES**, *total: 32*

Nick Ruiz, VRE (Chair)
Silas Sullivan, City of Alexandria
Andrew Diehl, Anne Arundel Co.
Kirk Dand, ARL
Paul Mounier, ARL
Martin Barna, DASH
Eric Voight, DASH
Sarah Husain, DRPT
Michael Felschow, Fairfax Co.
Malcolm Watson, Fairfax Co.
Charles L. Koonce Jr., Fairfax CUE
Jaime McKay, Frederick Co
Gladys Hurwitz, Loudoun Co.
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery Co.
Stephen Miller, MTA
Hannah Pajewski, NVTA
NVTC Office
Joe Davis,TPB
Pierre Gaunaurd, TPB
Charlene Howard, TPB
James Li, TPB
Andrew Meese, TPB
Janie Nham, TPB
Katherine Rainone, TPB
Eric Randall, TPB
Jeff Barnett, VanGO
William Jones, WMATA
Melissa Kim, WMATA
Andre Stafford, WMATA
Cody Christensen, RK&K
Kyle Hearing, Foursquare ITP
Walker Freer, ICF

## AGENDA

### 1. WELCOME

Nick Ruiz opened the meeting by asking that new attendees introduce themselves, as well as posing the question: when has transit come to your rescue (seriously or figuratively). Several participants shared their anecdotes.

### 2. REGIONAL HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT ANALYSIS APPLICATION

*Kyle Hearing, Foursquare ITP Senior Transportation Planner*
*Eric Randall, TPB Transportation Engineer*

Eric Randall explained that earlier this year, TPB commissioned this study into regional high-capacity transit (HCT) and development of a corresponding web map and application that would benefit regional planning. It is related to previous HCT work at TPB. This study was meant to show how people can get from one place to the other via HCT, who these individuals are, where they are going, etc. The final application will be shared with the group.

Kyle Hearing from Foursquare ITP that the study contextualizes HCT within the region by looking at accessibility, connectivity, transit service, population/employment density, and projected growth. The results are predicated on a multimodal transit model using OpenStreetMap and GTFS data. Transit, multimodal (composite), walking, and bicycling priorities within each HCT station area are scored as low, medium, or high. K. Hearing showed two case studies demonstrating this analysis focusing on

Clarendon (VA) and Muirkirk (MD). He then demonstrated the various layers and types of information for HCT stations and surrounding areas available to users in the HCT Local Transit Analysis Web App.

*Discussion*

- Gary Erenrich asked if a user could aggregate hexagons into an area, like a station area. K. Hearing said yes and that that's been done for the EEAs. Each hexagon is a collection of seven subset hexagons. Hexagons were chosen because they're more flexible and easier to index up and down. Centroids will be included so that the user could index them as they wish.
- Paul Mounier inquired whether the existing bike/ped network of sidewalks was considered when creating the buffer around the HCT stops. K. Hearing said the R5 routing engine has been controlled for traffic stress, a model which is embedded in OpenStreetMap, which includes infrastructure surrounding the HCTs, therefore existing paths in relation to traffic stress are reflected in each station's accessibility score.
- Gladys Hurwitz asked how often the data in the application would be updated once initially published. K. Hearing replied the model uses GTFS feeds from March 2023 and is static, but the application is designed in such a way that more recent GTFS feeds could be uploaded manually in the future for updates. G. Hurwitz followed up regarding how local jurisdictions are expected to respond to the data and if it will be useful for jurisdictions to analyze relevant HCT stations and study how to address multimodal priorities. K. Hearing says yes, the application is comprehensive and meant to be used as a planning tool, even if OpenStreetMap may have some data missing. E. Randall added that this type of work is what the app is intended for.
- N. Ruiz asked whether there is a generally accepted methodology for transit potential methodology and what did Foursquare use. K. Hearing answered that for this model, transit potential is just jobs and population density, but the application includes Foursquare's Transit-oriented Population Index which is based on their own professional judgment and could be modified depending on context. N. Ruiz followed up about whether the GTFS data pull for March 2023 was after the pause in Metrorail Yellow Line service to which K. Hearing said he would have to check. However, he mentioned that the team did search for a day's worth of GTFS data reflecting as standard, unmodified an experience on transit as possible.

## 3. TRANSIT TRANSFORMATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

*Semia Hackett, Prince George's County Associate Director of Public Works and Transportation*

Semia Hackett was unable to attend the meeting. The slides for her presentation are still available at the meeting webpage linked to at the end of this summary.

## 4. STRATEGIC AND SERVICE PLANNING UPDATES AT FAIRFAX CONNECTOR

*Michael Felschow, Fairfax County Section Chief, Planning Services*

Michael Felschow, Fairfax County, presented on the county's recent update to its Transit Strategic Plan, focusing on how the final plan was developed. He described the plan's goals and explained how service changes shown in draft service maps reflect these goals. The plan is set for approval by the county Board of Supervisors in December 2023. It is a ten-year plan but is required by DRPT to get updated every five years.

Using constrained and unconstrained, peak service maps, M. Felschow explained how the strategic plan works toward a three-layer transit system of local routes, countywide routes, and regional connections, such as Metrorail and Metrobus. This is partially informed by rider survey results which found that about 60% of respondents were seeking to travel within the county, but 40% were looking to connect to the region. New multimodal transfer stations are being developed to facilitate this broader form of mobility. For example, the county is planning bus service in a partially grid-style manner through improving north-south connections on Fairfax Connector in consideration of MetroBus' service largely running east-west. Furthermore, grant funds are received to establish express routes along tolled highways. M. Felschow also detailed how the new Richmond Highway BRT system, already one of the county's busiest transit corridors, will see service frequency of every 3-6 minutes. There is "a balancing act" between establishing coverage around that three-layered structure and increasing route frequencies, which required significant data analysis.

*Discussion*

- Pierre Gaunaurd asked whether in the unconstrained plan there was north-south service via VA-123, which M. Felschow replied there is not. However, he mentioned there is suggested service on the map along Fairfax County Parkway and a new route extending to Manassas which came from public comment. Most of the unconstrained strategic plan focuses on improving non-peak and weekend service, in addition to increasing frequency along route 310.
- P. Gaunaurd followed up asking whether these service changes would complement or supplement Metrobus service where they overlap. M. Felschow noted that there is no goal to create overlapping service, since that would mean Fairfax County (a member of the WMATA Compact) would effectively be paying twice for the same geographic service. The county is working with WMATA on planning a grid-style network where Metrobus and Connector's routes operate closely.
- W. Jones asked which route appeared on the bottom left of the unconstrained map. M. Felschow explained that was the proposed, unfunded route "681" to Manassas.
- P. Gaunaurd asked if the microtransit study area is noted on the constrained map, and M. Felschow replied that it is. However, more work is left to do to plan the microtransit pilot area and get funding, but current planning is to improve existing fixed-route service in the area.
- N. Ruiz asked about the 400 different iterations of route structures mentioned. M. Felschow explained that in developing the TSP, planners underwent a three-bucket analysis and completed TBEST modeling with NVTC and a consulting firm. They arrived at those iterations by breaking up the county into four pieces with each section having different alternatives.

## 5. ARLINGTON TRANSIT'S UPDATED TRANSIT STRATEGIC PLAN

*Paul Mounier, Program Manager, Arlington Transit*

P. Mounier discussed Arlington County's new Transit Strategic Plan (submitted for approval in Fall 2023), including the guiding principles grouped into: 1) safety, quality, and performance, 2) equity and sustainability, and 3) communication and collaboration. Desired outcomes include a simpler transit network, improved service, and transit that is more convenient and reliable, as well as more efficiently and equitably distributed. Implementation of the TSP will be phased over ten years between FY2025 to FY2034. The plan will be revaluated annually per DRPT requirements.

The TSP development process has been ongoing since Summer 2022. Public outreach included feedback forms available in six languages and 35% of the responses at pop-up events were in Spanish. The short-term implementation timeline emphasizes an increase in frequency for certain

routes and elimination of some low-use routes. A proposed microtransit zone is included on the mid-term implementation map for the northwest part of the county if low performing routes do not improve. A follow-up to the 2019 COG-funded study into microtransit in the county is included in the plan, to start within the next six months. Certain long-term projects are noted in the plan for the purpose of tracking.

*Discussion*

- M. Felschow commented that Fairfax County will also have to get their budget approved annually, so projects in the constrained plan may not necessarily get funded through the next ten years.
- P. Gaunaurd asked what the funding plans are for the projects in the TSP. P. Mounier explained that ARL is looking into toll funding for what is eligible and C&I tax funding.

## 6. 2023 RPTS YEAR IN REVIEW AND SURVEY RESULTS

*Pierre Gaunaurd, TPB Transportation Planner*

P. Gaunaurd presented a review of the year's activities at RPTS, including an analysis of what topics were covered at meetings and who presented (geographic/organizational breakdown), Results from the 2023 RPTS Member Survey were also presented. The survey was emailed to representatives from member agencies and received 10 responses. It featured multiple choice, ranking, and short answer questions. One takeaway for planning 2024 meetings was that many responses expressed an interest in learning about transit funding opportunities. Existing plans for RPTS in 2024 include more site visits and interactive programming, potentially through regional forums and a workshop, in addition to topical presentations.

*Discussion*

- N. Ruiz commented that RPTS could be a forum for regional discussions regarding grant opportunities. He suggested taking a survey early next year about what funding sources organizations are planning to apply for and potentially having a meeting focus on the most popular grants/funding opportunities.
- G. Erenrich says it'd be helpful if the January meeting featured presentations by the states about transit legislation being considered by state legislatures.

## 7. INTRODUCTION OF 2024 RPTS CHAIR AND CLOSING REMARKS

*Nick Ruiz, Chair*

N. Ruiz introduced Melissa Kim as the RPTS Chair for 2024. M. Kim expressed her excitement at chairing the subcommittee next year.

M. Kim and P. Gaunaurd shared appreciation to N. Ruiz for the great job he has done and work he's put in this year as RPTS Chair.

## 8. ADJOURN

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee's website:
https://www.mwcog.org/events/2023/11/28/tpb-regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/