

## Status Report on the Bus Systems in the National Capital Region

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Report of the Regional Bus Subcommittee to the  
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
February 20, 2008

## The Regional Bus Subcommittee

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- Formed by TPB Resolution R13-2007 on January 17, 2007
- Mission: 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.
- Membership includes representatives from all transit bus transit operators in the region as well as the DOTs and other regional transportation agencies.
- Subcommittee recommends actions in this presentation to increase the profile of bus transit in TPB projects and deliberations and expand its contribution to meeting regional needs.

### Bus Services Are Versatile

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- The Region has many different types of bus systems serving different needs:
  - Commuter/Express bus
  - Local bus
  - Feeder/Circulator bus



### Bus Services Are Effective

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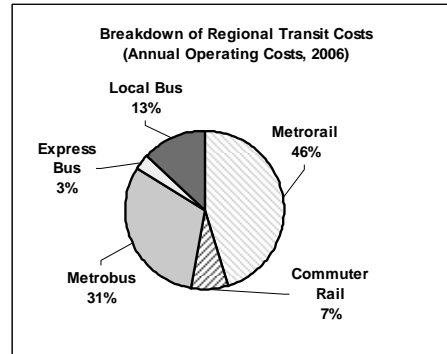
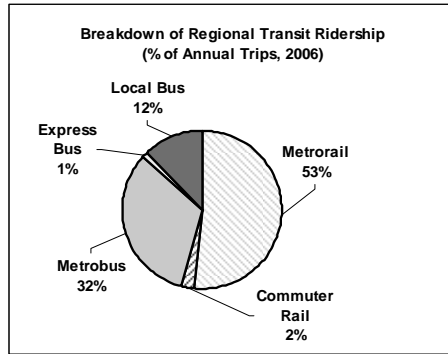
- Different bus systems perform different roles
- 13 bus transit operators form a coordinated network of bus transit services in the region
- Customers benefit from services tailored to their needs.



## Bus Services Are Important to the Region

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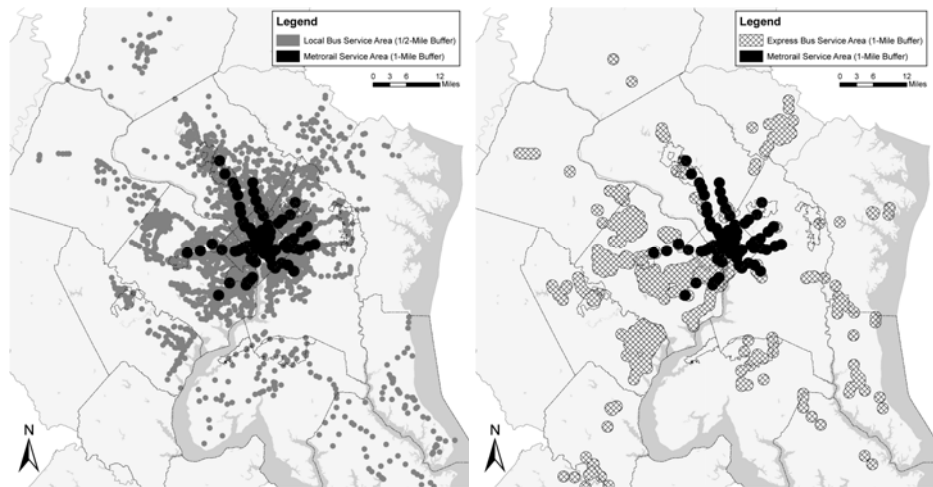
- Coordinated bus network represent a significant share of transit in the region.



*Bus systems in the region account for 45% of transit trips and 45% of transit operating costs.*

## Bus Services Provide Extensive Regional Coverage

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## Bus Services Offer Many Benefits

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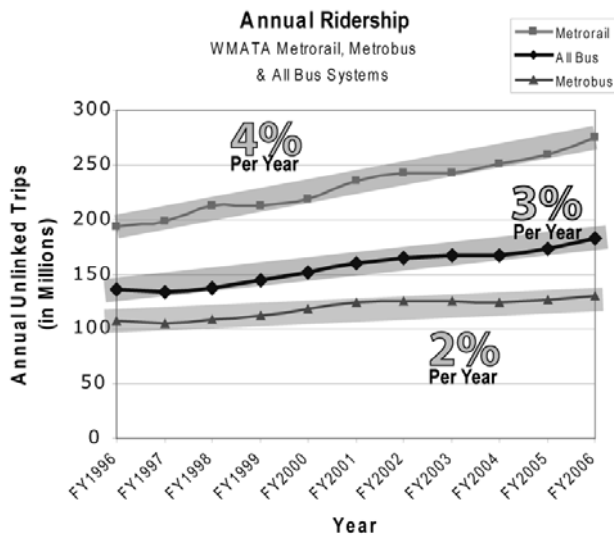
### Bus Services:

- 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
  - Services are scalable to demand
- Support Rail Services
  - Feeder and circulator systems extend the reach of rail
  - Rail relief bus lines can relieve pressure from congested Metrorail system



## Bus Service Demand Is Growing

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Ridership on the regions bus systems is growing steadily, as is growth of Metrorail ridership.

## Bus Services Have History of Coordinated Plans

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- Regional Bus Study, 2003
  - Service improvements
    - improving existing routes, creating new routes, and establishing high-performance services
  - Capital improvements
    - fleet improvement, passenger amenities, running way treatments and ITS technology
- The challenge has been getting the plan implemented
- Regional Bus Summit, November 2006, intended to encourage implementation
  - One strategy included creating a regional transit planning group



## Regional Bus Subcommittee: 2007 Work Plan

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- 2007 Activities of the Regional Bus Subcommittee
  - Mapping transit service and land use for 2030
  - Establishing regional bus transit LOS standards for planning
  - Facilitating electronic delivery of transit schedules between operators and TPB staff
  - New Greenhouse Emissions exercise, using transit to help reduce carbon footprint of the region
  - Coordinating with other TPB committees and activities, including AFA, MOITS task forces, Congestion Management, etc.
  - Sharing perspectives on common policy issues
  - Regional Bus Survey, Spring 2008
- Other TPB Planning Activities Involve Bus Transit
  - The Scenario Study (RMAS)
    - Examined large increases in regional transit service
  - Regional Value Pricing Study
    - Examining enhanced bus service along a congestion-free network of variably priced lanes

## Regional Bus Subcommittee: 2008 Work Plan <sup>11</sup>

- Support implementation of the Regional Bus Plan
- Develop a list of priority project recommendations
  - Analogous to that of the Bike/Ped Subcommittee
  - Will include regionally significant transit projects and highway projects that will improve bus service
    - Bottlenecks, signals, bus lanes
- Inform upcoming Scenario Study activities
- Address regional planning issues that impact multiple operators/jurisdictions
- Continue to press for increased funding

*The Regional Bus Subcommittee is pursuing long-range planning for the region's bus systems. However, long-range planning is hindered by the short-range challenges of the region's bus systems.*

## Bus Services Face Real Monetary and Infrastructure Needs <sup>12</sup>

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

- Maintaining existing fleet in state of good repair
- Investing in clean fuel technologies
- Providing buses for expanded service and to reduce congestion on existing routes
- Expanding and constructing maintenance and storage facilities
- Funding to cover operating costs



**Bus Services Have Other Regional Considerations**

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- Providing quality bus stops and transit transfer centers
- Implementation of BRT technologies
- Compliance with the ADA
- Planning for the conversion of HOV lanes to HOT-lane facilities
- Inclusion in land-use and transit-oriented development decisions



**Bus Service Needs Can Be Addressed In Various Ways**

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- Planning
  - Land Use forms/ functions/ relations
  - Developer provided improvements
  - Right of Way reservations/ public facility siting requirements
- Operating
  - “Transit First” strategies for traffic system management
  - Safe & adequate roads, stops, layover and transfer facilities
  - Maintaining bus stops and pedestrian systems in good condition
- Funding
  - Local initiatives (i.e. bonds, Fairfax Transit Plan)
  - Regional funding programs (i.e. NVTB bond program)
  - Project generated revenue (i.e. I-95/395 HOT)
  - State and federal grants (i.e. formula and discretionary)

\* Proposed for inclusion in the 2008 CLRP

## Summary

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- 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



## Recommendations from the Regional Bus Subcommittee

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### Continuing Actions for the Subcommittee:

- Ensure that bus transit needs be addressed
- Create a brochure to highlight the major points of this report
- Identify ways to improve fare and service coordination among the regional and local services
- Recommend bus projects in regional plans and strategies
- Advocate bus considerations in TPB UPWP activities

### Requests for the TPB:

- Incorporate bus issues in other committee work plans
- Continue to inquire about the role of bus services when considering project submissions
- Encourage early consideration of role of bus in developing local transportation projects and land-use decisions