



## TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

### Virtual Meeting Summary: September 22, 2020

#### ATTENDEES

Charley Dingboom, WMATA (Chair)	David Koch, DDOT	Andrew Meese, TPB
Megan Kanagy, DDOT	Tom Scherer, Arlington	Eric Randall, TPB
David Miller, FITP	Matt Hardison, WMATA	Nicole McCall, TPB
Ria Kulkarni, NVTA	Raka Choudhury, WMATA	Stacy Cook, TPB
Deanna Archey, MCDOT	Anikwenze Ogbue, WMATA	Joe Davis, TPB
Gary Erenrich, MCDOT	Malcolm Watson, Fairfax Co	Sarah Bond, TPB
Jim Maslanka, Alexandria	Randy White, Fairfax Co.	Tim Canan, TPB
Bob Garbacz, Alexandria	Kyle Nembhard, MTA	
Dan Goldfarb, NVTC		

#### AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS, Charley Dingboom, Chair**
  - The meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM and a roll of online attendees was called.
- 2. UPDATE ON REGIONAL INFORMATION GATHERING REGARDING TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND COVID-19, Andrew Meese, TPB Systems Performance Planning Director**
  - Andy reviewed the recent report on regional information for the pandemic published by the Greater Washington Partnership, in coordination with WMATA, COG, and the MATOC Transit Task Force. The September 14 announcement found that employers are likely to bring staff back to offices slower than previously expected. In addition, transportation and specifically local transit information was provided, along with information about capacity during social distancing. There will be a new survey of transit agencies in October to collect a second round of information.
  - Andy noted that the TPB is interested in information on the pandemic and recovery, an overview of which was presented at the September TPB Technical Committee meeting. COG/TPB staff are working on other relevant information for the impact of the pandemic across multiple sectors, which will be available at a future date.
- 3. UPDATE ON THE DISTRICT'S BUS PRIORITY PROJECTS, Megan Kanagy, DDOT**
  - Megan gave a presentation on current bus priority projects, reported on implementation for ongoing and near-term projects, and planning for future projects. She reviewed the 17 corridors being evaluated by the contractor team, which includes HNTB, Foursquare ITP, and Kittelson, and spoke to an interactive map.

#### Discussion:

- Was any equity measure or indicator used in planning the bus priority project locations? Multiple factors were considered, including minority populations, low-income, people with

disabilities, service job locations, all within a quarter-mile of the corridor and weighted by absolute numbers.

- There will be a public version after this Fall, to provide a baseline understanding to readers.
- The 14<sup>th</sup> Street project should be complete in the next couple of weeks, which will benefit the 50s line through Columbia Heights. It also includes five-foot bike lanes and relocated bus stops.
- There are three Car Free Lanes projects, which will also provide room for bikes. The project will be measured on various outcomes for a year after implementation. The 7<sup>th</sup> Street NW, by the Capitol One Arena is bus, bike, and pedestrian only. The MLK avenue project is bigger and anticipated to be implemented this fall.
- How many buses will use these projects? The 14<sup>th</sup> St corridor sometimes has up to seventy buses an hour though typical is twelve to fifteen an hour, up to twenty or thirty on most corridors. There is no specific threshold used to identify the corridors for projects.
- On H and I Streets NW, adjustments were made after the initial period of operation, including offsets to the bus lanes. Other causes of delay included loading zone conflicts and illegal parking. Some double bus lanes have also been created to allow for layover spots.
- The 16<sup>th</sup> Street project included bus stop relocations and the installation of more queue jumps
- The K Street Transitway project is wrapping up 30% design, with the next step complete Final Design. A key objective has been to make sure that re-routed buses don't get caught up in congestion as well.
- The Pennsylvania Avenue SE project is examining bus and bike needs, with the next step 30% Design.

#### **4. BUS PRIORITY BEST PRACTICES SYNTHESIS FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, David Miller, Foursquare ITP**

- David spoke to a lengthy presentation on the results of a study commissioned by the TPB on the region's experiences in bus priority to date, upcoming projects across the region, and best practices from elsewhere.
- Eric Randall described how the output of this project is to provide resources for transit planners in the region, both a lengthy slide deck from which slides can be taken and a white paper report summarizing key outcomes and elements of bus priority. It is hoped that planners in the region will make use of these products, once they are finalized next month.

#### **5. ALEXANDRIA TSP UPDATE, Bob Garbacz, City of Alexandria**

- The region has been trying out Transit Signal Priority (TSP) since the Seventies. At that time, it was by traffic signal preemption; the driver pushed a button and ideally got a green light. It didn't work very well, due to radio interference among other issues.
- Now, TSP uses satellite GPS to determine the location and schedule status of buses. If the bus is behind schedule, it requests priority according to adjustable parameters. Either the red signal can be shortened or a green signal can be extended for a few seconds. TSP does not offer any benefit if in the middle of the green or red signal.
- The goal of TSP is increased reliability through better schedule adherence.
- In the future microtransit may make use of TSP, with small vehicles serving the major transit trunk lines. TSP would ensure connections are made for transferring travelers.
- Good ITS architecture is key. The region is now locked into the systems provided by Clever Devices and GTT. The benefit is we no longer need to design a new system, just buy and install it.
- But in the future it would likely be beneficial to have more options available, perhaps using other technologies. For instance, a system in Israel is designed so that the bus doesn't need



to stop except for boarding and alighting. In the UK there is the SCOOT adaptive system. And WMATA has investigated some other options.

**6. WMATA TSP UPDATE, Matt Hardison and Raka Choudhury, WMATA**

- Matt reviewed the installation of TSP as part of the TIGER Grant and additional corridors in Alexandria, but WMATA would like even more. The region can do better.
- TSP improves runtime and reliability, offering real benefits to customers. Is there a NextGen opportunity?
- Raka then spoke to the relative effectiveness of TSP. In particular, she noted that street block lengths are critical; short blocks don't offer enough time to react to the bus. In addition, TSP needs to be clustered to be effective; not in isolated locations.
- WMATA is looking at hosting a number of regional meetings on bus priority, including a meeting in October on TSP, in December on NextGen technologies, and in February 2021 on queue jumps.

Discussion:

- TSP talks to the bus, and they both talk to the Traffic Control Center. It seems it would be critical for jurisdictional or agency traffic operations centers to be included. Raka responded that WMATA's Bus Operations Control Center works to maintain bus schedules and headways.
- Matt added that the GTT software tries to maintain intervals. For instance, the 79 bus which runs on a headway basis, not a schedule basis, gets no real benefits from TSP. Need a solution that works for headway based as well as scheduled bus routes.
- It was noted that the results of TSP are different in urban vs suburban locations. More dense areas and road systems often see few results from using TSP.

**7. PBPP UPDATE: DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSIT SAFETY TARGETS, Eric Randall, TPB Engineer**

- Eric reviewed the presentation on the draft regional transit safety targets that was briefed to the Transportation Planning Board the previous week. Approval of the targets is anticipated at the November board meeting. If there are any changes to the draft targets, please inform TPB staff as soon as possible.

**8. OTHER ITEMS/ADJOURN**

- Charley Dingboom adjourned the meeting at 4:00 PM.
- The next meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2020

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

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2020/9/22/tpb-regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/>

