

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3315 Fax: (202) 962-3202

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Regional Bus Subcommittee
CHAIR: Howard Benn, Montgomery County

Tuesday November 24, 2009
Noon – 2 PM

Meeting Attendees:

Carrie Anderson-Watters, Frederick County Transit Services	Tomika Hughey, DDOT
David Awbrey, VA DRPT	Ryan Jones, PRTC
Frank Bell, Prince George's	Girum Meseret, WMATA
Howard Benn, Montgomery County RideOn	Valerie Pardo, VDOT
Lynn Everett, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission	Carl Schuettler, Prince George's
Harold Foster, MNCPPC	Ronald Skotz, Corridor Transportation Corp.
Al Himes, Alexandria Transit Company	Charles Steigerwald, PRTC
Pierre Holloman, City of Alexandria	Randall White, Fairfax County Dept. of Transportation
	Steve Yaffe, Arlington County

TPB Staff in Attendance:

Michael Eichler	Andrew Meese
Michael Farrell	Gerald Miller
Robert Griffiths	

Agenda Items:

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Howard Benn, Montgomery County

The chair welcomed the meeting participants and called the meeting to order. He asked the members in attendance to introduce themselves.

Update on the TPB Scenario Study, Transit Component

Michael Eichler, TPB Staff

Mr. Eichler presented the subcommittee with three handouts and an oral update on the scenario study. He reminded the group of the purpose of the study and the rules and assumptions that lead to the development of the scenario, including land use goals and transit operating assumptions. He then solicited the subcommittee for feedback on the process.

Mr. Bell inquired as to the ramping up to this full network. Mr. Eichler replied that it is a study for the year 2030, which will assume that all land use shifts and transportation facilities are in place.

Mr. Holloman asked about the seating capacity on the BRT vehicles, suggesting that with the assumed headways and vehicles, only a limited number of trips can be provided. Mr. Eichler replied that the model doesn't constrain transit trips by transit capacity, and assigns the transit mode to all trips for which it is the best option.

Mr. Yaffe inquired about changing of parking policies that could accompany the changing of urban form in the region's activity centers, impacting mode choice. Mr. Eichler replied that this study only evaluates the direct impact of land use shifts and supportive transportation services.

Mr. Orleans inquired about the different BRT lines and stations displayed on the maps. Mr. Eichler directed the group to review a stylized version of the map included in the packet that labeled the stations and provided some context for the location of the transit lines being evaluated.

Mr. Foster asked which zone system was being used for the study. Mr. Eichler replied that the study is using version 2.2 of the TPB Transportation Demand Model, which still uses the older, coarser-grained zones.

Mr. Benn encouraged Mr. Eichler to perform a sensitivity analysis on the frequency of the transit service being provided, suggesting that headways lower than 12 minutes in the rush, and 20 minutes instead of 30 minutes in the off-peak, might have a noticeably greater impact on mode choice than otherwise (proportionately) expected. As well, the addition of stations/stops between terminals will encourage intermediate trips that are not bound for the terminals.

Presentation of the Final Report and Study Findings of the WMATA PCN Evaluation

Sean Kennedy, WMATA

Mr. Kennedy was unable to attend the meeting. In his stead, Mr. Eichler and Ms. Hughey provided the group with a verbal update on the WMATA PCN Evaluation. The final analysis has been completed, and the consultant team is working with WMATA staff to craft the "story" that will be portrayed by the analysis results. In general, the study results in an additional 110,000 daily transit trips in the region as a result of prioritizing buses and providing overlay service along the 23 priority

corridors in the network. Ms. Hughey noted that the consultant team provided a presentation at the most recent technical advisor committee meeting that needed refinement, turning it from a summary of study results to a crafted story that accurately portrays the impacts that the PCN would have on both the transit and roadway networks.

Review of Draft Scope of Work for a Consultant Study to Develop Implementation Guidelines for Prioritizing Bus Transit on Arterials in The Washington Region.

Michael Eichler, TPB Staff

Mr. Eichler presented a draft work plan for a consultant study to develop implementation guidelines for bus priority along arterials in the Washington region. Via an amendment to the UPWP, a consultant will be retained to perform an assessment of bus prioritization practices around the US and evaluate their feasibility for the Washington region, identifying cost, benefits and barriers.

Ms. Pardo asked whether the impact on private vehicular traffic would be considered and evaluated, noting that it wasn't explicitly mentioned in the work plan. Mr. Eichler said that the plan can be updated to more directly state that such an evaluation should take place.

Mr. Yaffe suggested that the financing structure for transit in the Washington region should also be evaluated by the consultants, as the "Metro Compact" may or may not be adequate to facilitate prioritization of bus transit.

Ms. Hughey suggested that the best practices being researched should also include creative funding mechanisms, since there are currently very few resources available for funding bus priority services due to the state of the regional economy.

Mr. Benn suggested that this study seemed to be a continuation of the current WMATA PCN Evaluation, and suggested that staff evaluate whether this study could be completed more efficiently if the same consultant team were used as part of a contract amendment.

Update on TPB Surveys

Bob Griffiths, TPB Staff

Mr. Griffiths presented an update to the subcommittee on the break-down of weekday transit trips by sub-mode from the latest Household Travel Survey, providing an additional break-down of bus-related trips. He asked the subcommittee whether the shares seemed to match their understanding of bus ridership in their jurisdictions. Mr. Benn responded that the shares match Montgomery County's experience with Ride On. Mr. Eichler suggested that an

oft-quoted statistic in the Washington region is that 45% of transit trips are by bus. Mr. Griffiths confirmed that his data also suggested the same ratio. Mr. Griffiths then provided other trends observed in the Household Travel Survey. He noted that trip rates are decreasing for older and younger groups, as well as for the beltway jurisdictions in general. It was suggested that the “baby boomers” are beginning to retire and change their travel patterns. Also, younger groups may be making fewer trips due to the advancement of information technology and video games. Mr. Benn noted that new urban centers are also facilitating a decrease in auto trips. Ms. Pardo inquired how these trip rate decreases could be the result of congestion. Mr. Griffiths stated that when congestion increases, trips shorten and combine.

New Business

Mr. Benn asked the subcommittee if they would like to update the group on any changes or concerns in their agencies. Mr. Steigerwald noted that PRTC has begun direct service from Prince William County to Tysons Corner. Mr. Yaffe noted that Arlington Transit has extended the hours of its most popular bus route. Mr. Benn noted updates to Metro’s and the ‘Regional partners’ fareboxes in anticipation of passes in 2010.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 PM.

The next meeting of the TPB’s Regional Bus Subcommittee will be held on December 22, 2009.

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee’s website: <http://www.mwcog.org/TPB/RBS/docs/>