

ITEM 9 - Information

October 15, 2008

Briefing on a Proposed Metrobus Priority Corridor Network

Staff

Recommendation: Receive briefing on a proposal under consideration by the WMATA Board of Directors for a regional network of priority bus corridors aimed at improving services in the next five years for Metrobus riders.

Issues: None

Background: Over the past five years, WMATA has developed a process for studying and improving bus service along high-ridership corridors. During this period, services in six corridors have experienced significant enhancements. More recently, WMATA has formalized this effort, combining these and 18 additional corridors into a regional Bus Priority Corridor Plan. This plan reflects a strategy for improving bus service travel times, reliability, capacity, productivity and system access, and is consistent with the TPB vision and other regional transit studies.

M E M O R A N D U M



TO: National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Jim Hamre, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

SUBJECT: WMATA Bus Priority Corridor Plan

DATE: October 15, 2008

Introduction

Over the past five years, WMATA has developed a process for studying and improving bus service along high-ridership corridors. In this time, services in six corridors have experienced significant enhancements. More recently, WMATA has formalized this effort, combining these and 18 additional corridors into a comprehensive regional Bus Priority Corridor Plan. This plan reflects a strategy for improving bus service travel times, reliability, capacity, productivity and system access, and is consistent with the TPB vision and other regional transit studies. In total, the service and capital improvements will be applied to 24 corridors across the region by 2012, enhancing service to over half of all bus riders on the current Metrobus system.

Overview of the Bus Priority Corridor Plan

The Bus Priority Corridor Plan consists of a network of 24 corridors of high-ridership arterial services. These corridors were selected by evaluating the performance, ridership, and service levels of bus routes, the corridor land use, and the availability of jurisdictional support. The plan will roll out service improvements to three or four additional corridors per year, and should be complete by 2012. See the attached table for details on routes and timing.

Strategies being investigated to provide priority to buses include running-way improvements and intelligent transportation systems and technologies. Running-way improvements could include dedicated bus lanes and queue-jump lanes. Technological strategies could include transit signal priority (TSP). Bus stop improvements, enhanced customer information and redesigned/improved bus services are also to be included along these corridors. Non-WMATA bus services along the selected corridors will also experience performance improvements. The plan also includes the purchase of new buses and the expansion of maintenance and storage facilities.

Benefits

The Priority Corridor Network Plan will provide many benefits to over half of the Metrobus ridership. These benefits include improved customer service, reliability, quality and performance. The plan will also expand the transit market, and help influence development patterns in the region. Working with the jurisdictions to implement the plan will help coordinate investments in bus stops, roadway improvements, and safety and security strategies.

Costs

To implement the plan, WMATA will require additional buses, facilities, and staffing. As such, operating subsidies and capital investments will need to increase for the plan to be implemented. Stakeholder jurisdictions will actively participate in the planning of individual

corridors, and will need to dedicate staffing and other resources to support the implementation of the priority corridors.

Continued implementation of the plan will require additional financial resources, including an increase of \$4 million in annual operating costs, which represents a 1% increase in the Metrobus budget. The total capital cost of the priority corridor network is projected to be around \$325 million, with approximately half implemented in the Metrobus budget and the remainder being actions that are the responsibility of state and local DOTs.

Regional Policy Initiatives

In order for this plan to be successful, jurisdictions throughout the region will need to adopt policies that would assist WMATA in prioritizing bus transit services, including:

- Adoption of policies, strategies and practices by stakeholder jurisdictions reflecting their role as providers of transit service running way, including consideration of: prioritization of person throughput over vehicle throughput, mode-shift incentives on major arterials, and the adoption of “Transit First” policies.
- Incorporation of bus transit implementation requirements into plans for transportation and land-use projects.
- Provision for strategic reservation of right-of-way and maintenance facilities by local land use plans.

The TPB can provide support of this Bus Priority Corridor Plan through the following:

- 1) Ensuring that related policy considerations are discussed in various committees and forums available to the TPB, in particular the Regional Bus Subcommittee of the Technical Committee established by the TPB in January 2007 and the Management and Operations Intelligent Transportation Systems (MOITS) Task Force.
- 2) Exploring strategies for acquiring additional funding support for the capital improvements included in the plan. Possible funding sources include existing and future federal programs as well as regional pricing initiatives as explored in the recent TPB variably priced lanes study.
- 3) Partnering with stakeholders in the region to develop implementation strategies. This could include convening meetings of regional stakeholders to discuss policy considerations and develop regional consensus on strategies needed to insure success of the plan.

Timeline

The Bus Priority Corridor Plan is a formalization of an ongoing bus transit enhancement process that began in 2003. The WMATA Board approves these enhancements on a project-by-project basis. With continued funding, jurisdictional support and regional strategy consensus, the full plan will be implemented by 2012. (See attached table.)

Corridor Description	Line/Route Description	Status	State	Study Year	Average	Annual
					Weekday Ridership	Platform Hours
1 Columbia Pike (Pike Ride)	16ABDEFJ 16GHW 16L 16Y	Implemented	V	2003	12,469	99,473
2 Richmond Highway Express (REX)	REX	Implemented	V	2004	3,305	33,783
3 Georgia Ave./7th Street	70 71 79	Implemented	D	2006	15,377	99,509
4 Crystal City-Potomac Yard	9A 9E 9S	Implemented	V	2006	2,708	33,364
5 Southern Ave. Metro - National Harbor	NH-1	Implement Mar-08	M	2007	New	New
6 Wisconsin Ave./Pennsylvania Ave.	30 32 34 35 36	Implement Jun-08	D	2007	18,664	162,032
7 University Blvd/East-West Highway	J1 J2 J3 J4	Recommended	M	2007	7,709	67,967
8 Sixteenth Street	S1 S2 S4	Recommended	D	2008	14,594	111,857
9 Veirs Mill Road	O2	Recommended	M	2008	10,859	75,425
10 Leesburg Pike	28AB 28FG 28T	Recommended	V	2008	6,230	52,486
11 New Hampshire Avenue	K6	Recommended	M	2009	6,637	40,536
12 H Street/Benning Road	X2	Recommended	D	2009	15,068	65,304
13 Eastover - Addison Road Metro	P12	Recommended	M	2009	5,632	44,645
14 Little River Turnpike/Duke Street	29KN 29CEGHX	Recommended	V	2009	3,243	40,792
15 East-West Highway (Prince George's)	F4 F6	Recommended	M	2010	7,847	52,040
16 Greenbelt-Twinbrook	C2 C4	Recommended	M	2010	13,614	99,690
17 Mass Ave/U St./Florida Ave./8th St./MLK Ave.	90 92 93	Recommended	D	2010	15,604	106,401
18 Fourteenth Street	52 53 54	Recommended	D	2010	14,061	98,171
19 Colesville Rd./Columbia Pike - MD US 29	Z2 Z6 Z8 Z9,Z9 Z11,13	Recommended	M	2011	9,844	97,062
20 Anacostia-Congress Heights	A2-8, A42-48	Recommended	D	2011	11,242	77,530
21 Georgia Ave. (MD)	Y5 Y7 Y8 Y9	Recommended	M	2011	7,625	57,633
22 North Capitol Street	80	Recommended	D	2012	8,515	60,808
23 Rhode Island Avenue	G8	Recommended	D	2012	3,923	34,182
24 Rhode Island Avenue Metro to Laurel	81 82 83 86 87 88 89 89M	Recommended	M	2012	5,407	57,509
Total Priority Corridor Network					220,177	1,668,199

Preliminary schedule, May 22. Revised schedule to be presented to the WMATA Board on October 16.