



TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting Summary: October 24, 2017

ATTENDEES

- Kyle Nembhard, MTA
- Nancy Norris, Frederick Translt
- Nick Perfili, WMATA
- Megan Kanagy, DDOT
- Erik Belmont, DDOT
- Randy White, Fairfax County
- Pierre Holloman, City of Alexandria
- Deanne Archey, Montgomery County (phone)
- Malcolm Watson, Fairfax County (phone)
- Patricia Happ, NVTC
- Matt Cheng, NVTC
- Andrea Lasker, Prince George's County
- Tim Roseboom, DRPT
- Todd Horsley, DRPT
- Steve Yaffe, Arlington County
- Andy Meese, TPB
- Jane Posey, TPB
- Rich Roisman, TPB
- Patrick Zilliacus, TPB
- Eric Randall, TPB
- Ken Joh, TPB
- Jeff King, COG
- Leah Boggs, COG
- Bill Orleans, Public

AGENDA

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**, *Kyle Nembhard, Chair*
Call to order and introductions.
 2. **FUTURE YEAR TRANSIT ASSUMPTIONS IN VISUALIZE 2045**, *Jane Posey, TPB Transportation Engineer*
 - Jane Posey spoke to a memorandum and a table on the needed conformity inputs on transit services needed for the air quality analysis model that will be part of the Visualize 2045 long range plan.
 - Inputs are due by January 5. She then went through examples in the memo, including Metrorail service, BRT on US-1 in Virginia, and bus service changes.
 - There was discussion on financial reasonability and how to put longer-term planned bus service improvements that have been included in Transit Development Plans into the analysis, though currently unfunded in six-year plans.
- Questions:
- Tim Roseboom: Are the third and fourth track for rail in Virginia included in the current plan? No. To clarify the track itself would not be included in the model; rather the more frequent service and any travel time improvements would be inputs to the model. Tim noted that some \$55 million for Preliminary Engineering for the Long Bridge would be authorized soon.

3. FREDERICK TRANSIT ELECTRIC BUS OVERVIEW, *Nancy Norris, Frederick County*

- Nancy Norris spoke to a presentation. Planning for electric buses in Frederick County began in 2014 with an electrical load study by Potomac Edison. Five buses then arrived in May 2016 and were put into service on local routes during peak periods.
- She spoke to the charging issue. The buses can stretch to about 8 hours, but are normally only used for shorter peak periods. It takes about 6 hours to charge the bus back up, which is done at night. New batteries have about a 25% improvement, but are still only good for about 8 hours of operation, though the technology continues to improve
- Frederick has 10 chargers installed, with conduit run for another 10 spots. There is also a generator to cover any power outages. This also powers the Trapeze Mobile data system, which runs the operations schedule.
- Originally the manufacturer did not provide charging stations; it was assumed these would be provided by the electric company. Frederick insisted the manufacturer provide, and it appears this has now become standard practice. She noted the chargers should be under cover, a recommended item Frederick is now correcting.
- The manufacturer Complete Coach Works (CCW) continues to provide remote monitoring of the buses, and in the winter time cycles the heat vs. charging to keep the cabin warm.
- She spoke to an incident at which one of the buses caught fire, when it was away to be displayed at a conference. Pictures were included in the presentation. What happened is that an indicator failed and provided only a straight line reading, with no variation. Now better indicators have been installed.
- CCW had trained emergency response personnel on what to do in the event of an electrical fire. It is important to note the fire was external to the cabin, which was not affected at all. The bus was repaired and back in service in 30 days.
- CCW also trained all drivers, and provided on-site staff support for one year. Drivers received operational training on the buses, to learn how to optimize charge: learning to drive in a different way.
- The bus life is twelve years, with a mid-life battery change. The current batteries are lithium-phosphate. New batteries will be lithium-ion, and should last for the 12-year lifetime of the bus.
- She spoke to the cost savings from electricity use instead of fuel, as well as savings in maintenance costs. CCW continues real-time monitoring of the buses, and every day an e-mail is sent to the maintenance staff with any trends or issues.

Questions:

- Steve Yaffe: Asked about the draw on charge for peak direction and loads vs. off-peak direction and loads. The response was that this is not tracked closely, but the buses are only operated during the peak-periods, not all day long. Or, if assigned to a longer shift, the one driver takes the bus out and brings it back, rather than turning it over to the relief driver. The charge will last longer in warmer weather as well.
- Patrick Zilliacus: Are any of the routes on the freeway? No, all local roads.
- Kyle Nembhard: Is there any use of solar power? No, but this is being assessed for the future. The battery maker has also suggested that older batteries can be kept on site for power storage, which would enable local solar or wind charging.
- Kyle Nembhard: Is there a pattern to the bus deployment, for instance are they all on one route? No, they are used across all five local routes and mixed in with other buses. The only restriction is keeping them to peak hour or single shift service.

- Erik Belmont: Has there been any examination of a global charging option using inductive chargers? No. As far as she is aware, there is only one inductive charger in the region, installed for RTACM at Columbia Mall. It cost something like \$418 thousand. Frederick's ten chargers are much cheaper, and don't require special route/schedule planning so that buses can recharge at a specific site/time.
- Randy White: Fairfax County is looking at inductive charger. She responded there are only two manufacturers in the market place right now, and costs are high. She also mentioned that Frederick's hybrid-electric buses offered no savings over regular buses, and they don't plan to order more. Steve Yaffe stated Arlington's experience was similar.
- There was general discussion on electric buses in the region. Besides Frederick's five in service, they are lining up funding for two more, in a joint contact with Martha Vineyard Transit and some other Massachusetts properties. Montgomery County has won a NoFo grant for some electric buses. DDOT has 14 buses from ProTerra on order. WMATA has one electric bus.
- Erik Belmont: Is there anyway COG could facilitate a joint procurement of electric buses? Leah Boggs spoke to the challenge of cooperative procurement for the region. Dealing with FTA rules makes such very complicated. However, COG might assist with the purchase of charging stations and associated infrastructure. Jeff King added that the VW settlement will produce some funds that can be used for this, and stated it would be great if everyone could collaborate.

4. DDOT ON BUS PRIORITY TREATMENTS, *Megan Kanagy, DDOT*

- Megan Kanagy spoke to a presentation. She reviewed DDOT's efforts to implement dedicated bus lanes on H Street NW and on 16th Street NW.
- Starting with the Transportation West study, this included bike lanes on Pennsylvania Avenue and a contra-flow bus lane on H Street. The latter made considerable use of a WMATA 2013 study. However, WMATA did not do any public or affected business outreach, which is what DDOT has done in the quest for a preferred alternative.
- A preferred alternative for H Street has been selected, and the next step would be to proceed to Preliminary Design. There would be one bus lane, 10.5 ft wide, which is not optimal but the only feasible design. The lane would be contra-flow with only a double yellow line separating it from the current one-way traffic, in effect making H Street a two way street again.
- The study looked at shifting Metrobus routes over from K Street, as that road is due to be reconstructed for the streetcar. This also makes turns onto 19th Street to go south easier, which some of the current buses on K Street do. Also looking at some other routing modifications.
- The VISSIM traffic model results show some good savings for these currently very slow route segments.
- There would be a bus every two minutes, which has received some pushback from the adjoining properties. Besides an impression that this will lead to an overwhelming number of buses, there are also concerns about parking and curbside access. Though almost all properties have alleys for off-street loading zones.
- The intersection at 19th/H Street/ Penn is a challenging mess. The recommendation is for a bike-only phase and a bus-only phase. The resulting performance will be LOS F, but this is what must be done for safety.

- Megan then turned to discussing the 16th Street study, bounded by H Street and Arkansas Avenue. Currently the plan is in design. Had hoped to be at 30% Design by this point, but not there yet. The plan study is to produce a recommended alternative.
- One of the challenges was that the road was through to be 50 ft curb to curb, but turned out to only have a 48 ft right of way. This eliminated some five lane options.
- Now in a Section 106 process, looking at the historical viewshed. Currently, the District uses LED signs for use of 2 or 3 lanes to handle peak/non-peak directions. These are not very effective and do not meet MUTCD standards. Looking at mast arms and various road configuration options, including some with reverse lanes.

Questions:

- Pierre Holloman: Will there be Transit Signal Priority or Optimization on H Street? No, the traffic signal arrangement for this falls under the District's general traffic signal optimization. With such levels of congestion and poor levels of service, TSP would not offer much benefit.
- Pierre Holloman: How would re-routing buses from K street affect transfers from the Farragut and McPherson Square metro stations? It would be longer walk distance, but the benefit in bus travel time would still make this a beneficial re-routing patrons.
- Patricia Happ: What is DDOT looking an in regard to offboard fare payment, which several agencies are looking at. There is skepticism over the impact and benefits of mobile ticketing as a substitute. Discussion concluded that these are the same effort.
- Tim Roseboom: Have PRTC or MTA been contacted about their buses on H Street regarding use of the contra-flow lane? The answer was no, and it was not felt they would find it useful, as with a single lane no passing is allowed. Their service is usually just to a few scattered stops.
- Pierre Holloman: What about motorcoach or tourist buses? Loading at Farragut Square is often an issue for them. This will be subject of future evaluation; it is a known issue. Also frequent security closures, TNCs serving patrons, access to the Hampton Inn hotel. All of these have come up and will be the subject of future study.
- Kyle Nembhard: The VISSIM model has an option to produce a display that can be useful for public outreach. This may assuage some concern from the adjoining businesses about what a bus every two minutes would actually look like.

5. COLUMBIA PIKE METROBUS 16-LINE SERVICE EVALUATION STUDY, *Nick Perfili, WMATA*

- Nick Perfili spoke to a presentation on the study of service options for Columbia Pike. The starting point was last year's Arlington County Transit Development Plan, to reduce planner fatigue. The key goal was to provide a one seat ride along the extent of the Pike, as was planned for the cancelled streetcar. Plans in the Fairfax TDP were also considered. .
- Slide 8 shows the primary route: the 16A that would become the priority, limited stop service along the length of the Pike.
- Arlington is already engaged in a stop optimization/relocation plan. Stops at various points would be changed including Columbia Heights West, also known as Arlington Mill.
- He pointed out that 17% of AM riders get off at the Pentagon, 15% are Pentagon City, and 44% continue into DC on the 16Y.
- Currently there are eleven variations in the 16 service family.
- Under the scenario now in consideration, the Crystal City extension is deferred.
- Consultants are finishing the draft report which should go to the review team on Friday.

Questions:

- Tim Roseboom. Does the ridership number refer only to Metrobus? Yes, about 16 thousand Metrobus patrons travel the corridor every day, the busiest bus corridor in Virginia.

6. FEDERAL RULEMAKING AND WORK PROGRAM UPDATE, *Eric Randall, TPB*

- Eric Randall spoke to a presentation. There were no comments.

7. ADJOURN

- Future agenda items were discussed for the next meeting on November 21. Suggested topics include Dan Goldfarb at NVTA on the benefits of Metrorail, Montgomery County with a RideOn Extra update (January), and WMATA on Connecticut/Mt Pleasant service and Abilities Ride (February).
- The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee's website:
<https://www.mwcog.org/committees/regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/>