



TPB REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting Summary: June 23, 2020

ATTENDEES

Charley Dingboom, WMATA (Chair)	David Koch, DDOT	Andrew Meese, TPB
Martin Barna, DASH (Phone)	Ria Kulkarni, NVTA	Eric Randall, TPB
Kyle Nembhard, MTA	Jamall Schooby, FITP	Nicole McCall, TPB
Clinton Edwards, DRPT	Sonali Soneji, VRE	James Li, TPB
Wendy Klancher, DFHV	Deanna Archey, MCDOT	Joe Davis, TPB
Charles, Davis, DFHV	Gary Erenrich, MCDOT	
Dan Goldfarb, NVTC	Hannah Henn, MCDOT	
Dan Malouff, ART	Michael Tietjen, DFHV	

AGENDA

- WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**, *Charley Dingboom, Chair*
 - Call to order and introductions.
- UPDATE ON THE DISTRICT'S DC NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECT PROGRAM**, *Wendy Klancher & Michael Tietjen, DC-DFHV*
 - The purpose of this presentation was to provide an update on the District's Neighborhood Connect Program.
 - Initial notes included that the Mayor is about to issue new guidance on shared rides during the pandemic and that DFHV is operating a hospital workers transportation program, available through app or by phone.
 - Connect accepts credit cards and cash (for the unbanked). Origins and destinations have to be in a zone. Zone 2 in Ward 8 was only introduced less than two weeks before the pandemic started.
 - Fare policy is Free or Three, if curb to curb required.
 - Service in Zone 1 meets East - West travel needs, when most fixed route transit is North - South. And Zone 2 applies to Ward 8.

Questions:

- Did the cash policy change during the pandemic?* They are reviewing this policy, there is concern that the unbanked have access to the service.
- Are there plans for expansion?* Yes, but the constraint is what funds will be available post-pandemic.

3. UPDATE ON MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S FLEX TRANSIT SERVICES, *Deanna Archey, MCDOT*

- The purpose of this presentation was to provide a project update on the Flex services, which are suspended during the pandemic.
- Service is operated with 11-passenger vehicles. There are currently seven vehicles; four are generally in operation with one spare. Transportation is provided curb to curb, at “virtual bus stops”.
- There are the two geographic zones, on weekdays only.
 - The G-W zone has two metro stations, including Glenmont station, and major activity sites, and mostly attracts commuters.
 - The R Zone has just one metro station, but also major activity sites including apartment buildings and hi-rises as well as Richard Montgomery High School. It mostly attracted daily life trips as well as students.
- A TLC report is due in July which will summarize the findings of the pilot program.
- Performance measures include wait time, which typically was about 7-8 minutes; and rides completed, with a daily average of about 80. A destination heat map, provided by Via, shows where folks get on or off.
- A survey was conducted. Notable factors include the large number of cancelled trips, but this includes users who were outside of the zone and not eligible, as well as people experimenting their way through the app.
- For the pandemic, driver partitions are being considered.
- An update on the Ride On Flash was also provided. The County is looking at restructuring ten current bus routes as well as implementing a new Flex service zone in the Four Corners areas
- Flex is a new concept to replace low performing fixed routes and underserved areas with a more flexible service that will attract new riders.

Questions:

- *Has the service attracted new riders?* It appears to have, but the TLC report should provide a more detailed answer.
- *Has the service been used by special mobility needs customers?* Surprisingly, there have not been many mobility device customers. The TLC report will review what use there has been.
- *What lessons have been learned? What information do you now wish you had known at the beginning?*
 - Make the app as easy as possible.
 - Micro transit zones do not show up in Google apps.
 - Be careful of where you draw the zone boundaries and how these are applied. In one case there was a library on the other side of the street from the zone boundary. Riders could easily have accessed the library via Flex, but the app said out of boundary.
 - New communication strategies are required. Staff did a lot of national review and listening.
 - Do lots of testing, including app locations and directions.
 - Ensure operator interest and training. They must learn to follow the app directions, even when counter-intuitive or contradictory to previous experience.
 - One other recommendation is to start small, particularly with the zone sizes, and then grow.
 - Marketing the service is challenging and needs a lot of thinking through.



4. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: UPCOMING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES IN THE COMING YEAR

- Montgomery County noted that they are interested in having a RPTS session on electric buses. Would like to share information on route structures, operating procedures, servicing and operations, the public image and response.
- DDOT offered the following:
 - Bus lane implementation is moving forward, with 14th Street NW to be installed in next 60-90 days, which will benefit the Metrobus 50 routes. 16th Street NW construction should begin soon as well.
 - DDOT is also considering more quick wins for bus lanes. There is a citywide plan for bus lanes, queue jumps, and transit priority. Three locations will be fast tracked, and these locations will be announced soon.
 - DC Circulator is also working on a Transit Development Plan. One challenge is to define a process for bus priority projects, less about individual projects and more as overall guidance.
 - DDOT is also working with WMATA, Alexandria, and Montgomery County on electric buses, including COG EV events. A technical report is in process.
- There is interest on closed and shared street experiences during the pandemic. How are transit access and use handled during these efforts?

5. UPDATE ON 2019 STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT REPORT, *Eric Randall, TPB*

- Speaking to a presentation, the purpose and organization of report were reviewing, following by summaries of the 2018 National Transit Database (NTD) data used in the report. Over 415 million unlinked passenger trips were taken in the reported year. Metrorail is the dominant transit service in the region, carrying 55% of all public transportation trips, followed by Metrobus with another 29%. Local bus systems and the DC streetcar carried over 51 million of the trips.
- Three slides then presented some of the major accomplishments by each of the region's transit systems in 2019. Next steps include completing the draft report the report, running it by the Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee for review, and then publication of the final report online.

6. OTHER ITEMS/ADJOURN

- Andy Meese brought up a request by the Greater Washington Partnership for surveying transit providers on service in order to coordinate with worksite reopenings. It was asked if MATOC TTF does not already do this. The response is that GWP is looking for more detail, including numbers and information for customers, such as Chicago Transit Authority provides with its heat map by time of day of bus crowding. This request will also be discussed at the next MATOC TFF meeting.
- Charley Dingboom adjourned the meeting at 1:30 PM
- The next meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2020

All meeting materials are available for download from the subcommittee's website:
<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2020/6/23/tpb-regional-public-transportation-subcommittee/>

