

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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Meeting Summary

Regional Bus Subcommittee
CHAIR: Steve Yaffe, Arlington County

Tuesday April 22, 2008
Noon – 2 PM

Meeting Attendees:

Carrie Anderson-Watters, Frederick Transit	Valerie Pardo, VDOT
Deanna Archey, Montgomery County	Sharmila Samarasinghe, DRPT
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County DPWT	Bobby Snead, TPB
David Erion, WMATA	Joseph Swartz, PRTC
Harold Foster, M-NCPPC	Kevin Thornton, Prince George's County
Scott Gross, LC Transit	Circe Torruellas, DDOT-MTA
James Hamre, WMATA	Alexis Verzosa, City of Fairfax
Al Himes, Alexandria Transit Company	Randall White, Fairfax County Dept of Transportation
Pierre Holloman, City of Alexandria	Steve Yaffe, Arlington County
Robin Marlin, TPB CAC	

TPB Staff in Attendance:

Michael Eichler	Don McAuslan
Robert Griffiths	Jerry Miller
James Hogan	Dusan Vuksan

Agenda Items:

Welcome and Introductions
Chair Steve Yaffe, Arlington County

Mr. Yaffe called the meeting to order, and attendees introduced themselves to the subcommittee.

Mr. Eichler took this opportunity to remind the subcommittee members that meeting materials and lunch are provided only to attendees who submit RSVPs by 3 PM the Friday before the meeting. In an effort to reduce waste, staff is ordering lunches and duplicating handouts according to the number of RSVPs received.

Update on the Scenario Study “CLRP Aspirations Scenario” Development
Michael Eichler, TPB Staff

Mr. Eichler provided an update on the development of the two new scenarios being developed as part of the next phase of the TPB scenario study. He focused on the "CLRP Aspirations Scenario" which is intended to contain projects and land use changes that could be reasonably "within reach." Transit projects for this scenario will be drawn from many sources, including the previous 5 Regional Mobility and Accessibility Study (RMAS) scenarios. Pricing projects will be drawn from the Regional Variably Priced Lanes scenario study recently completed under the oversight of the TPB Task Force for Value Pricing. It is hoped that toll projects could raise revenue to fund the studied transit improvements, and that the transit could provide alternatives to those unwilling to pay tolls on the priced existing lanes.

Mr. Eichler presented a map and table describing the transit lines studied in the RMAS scenarios. Many of these transit lines were coded as "Transitway" projects, which could be implemented as either BRT or light rail.

Mr. Erenrich and Mr. Himes each suggested a few transit routes which could be included in the next phase of the scenario study.

Mr. Hamre requested that a series of maps be created to assist with the selection of projects for the scenario study: 1) Existing service; 2) Planned service improvements; 3) Line extensions; and 4) new fixed route services

Mr. White expressed concern that transit services would be unable to provide adequate substitutes for many trips in the region that may be impacted by tolls on existing lanes, especially for suburb-to-suburb trips. Mr. Eichler clarified that the value pricing study did not evaluate placing tolls on existing lanes outside of the Beltway, and that pricing of existing lanes would be focused on facilities in or to the urban core where employment densities are high enough to support high quality transit.

Mr. Erenrich inquired whether this study could include an analysis of where transit travel times are competitive with that private auto travel.

Many of the subcommittee members expressed concern that the scenario study assumes that the current financial needs of the region's transit systems will be met by 2010. Among these needs is the purchase of rolling stock for the Metrorail system to reach its capacity of 8-car trains. These outstanding needs place constraints on the future capacity of the region's transit systems. Mr. Miller responded that the subcommittee can communicate this concern to the TPB Scenario Study Task Force, which is overseeing the study, in an attempt to bring further attention to the current and short-term needs of the region's transit providers.

Mr. Hamre suggested that these constraints be identified, including the Potomac River crossings and the lack of connectivity from the Maryland suburbs into the

urban core. He proposed identifying corridors that are at or nearing capacity, in an effort to move forward with addressing these problems.

Subcommittee members also expressed concerns about capacity constraints that would appear once new transit projects are implemented. For example, the Orange Line tunnel at Rosslyn will be over capacity if/when the Dulles corridor Metrorail line is implemented. One possible solution would be to add another river crossing at Rosslyn. Such a solution had been proposed by WMATA staff: separating the Orange and Blue Lines, rerouting the Blue Line down M Street NW from Georgetown to Mt. Vernon Square then down to Stadium-Armory where it will continue on its existing track.

Mr. Eichler suggested that the subcommittee form a working group that would report back to the subcommittee at its next meeting in June with a list of constrained corridors as well as suggestions for new high quality transit projects that could be studied under the next phase of the scenario study. Subcommittee members agreed, and the following members volunteered to be part of this effort: Jim Hamre, WMATA; Gary Erenrich, RideOn; Randal White, Fairfax County; Harold Foster, M-NCPPC.

Mr. Snead informed the subcommittee that enhanced bus services were also included in the development of the RMAS scenarios. Ms. Archey inquired as to what those transit enhancements were. A list will be developed and distributed to the subcommittee.

Update on the Regional On-Board Bus Survey
Robert Griffiths, TPB Staff

Mr. Griffiths gave a status report on the on-going regional bus survey. The survey is currently under way and will be completed before school ends in June.

Transit Operator Presentation: WMATA
Topic of General Interest – Service Provision
Jim Hamre, WMATA

Mr. Hamre provided a presentation on WMATA's recent service improvement process for the MetroBus 30s lines. The process included public workshops, rider surveys, and innovative service changes.

Ms. Archey inquired as to how the process was marketed to the public. Mr. Hamre replied that a variety of media were used, including neighborhood email lists, surveys, on-board posters, the WMATA website, etc.

When asked about the manpower and cost of the process, Mr. Hamre reported that it involved 3 WMATA staff, other team members, and \$396,000. He stated that a similar process will be rolled out for the other top 24 bus lines in each of the WMATA compact jurisdictions.

Ms. Torrellas offered that this new process for redeveloping the bus line was very successful at getting to the core needs of the community.

Mr. Foster suggested that these major bus lines should, like Metrorail lines, have line managers. Mr. Hamre replied that the 30s lines will receive a line manager similar to WMATA's rail lines.

Mr. Thornton inquired as to how the surveys were distributed. Mr. Hamre replied that the surveys were printed on thicker paper stock and had a paper "hook" at the top similar to a "do not disturb" sign, such that the surveys could be hung from hand rails of the buses. Surveys were also handed out at high-ridership stops and were available on the WMATA website.

Update on the Outline of the Regional List of Priority Projects

Michael Eichler, TPB Staff

Mr. Eichler provided a brief verbal overview of the recent long range planning efforts of the subcommittee, including the release of the Status Report of the Region's Bus Systems and the subsequent presentations to the TPB and the Tech Committee. He then passed around draft mock-up versions of a public-friendly brochure intended to spotlight the needs of the region's bus systems. He then updated the subcommittee on the status of the development of the Regional List of Priority Projects. He distributed a draft outline for the priority project list, and briefly discussed the different categories of projects that the list will contain, including: new or expanded bus services, bus stops, other customer facilities, bus priority treatments, capacity constraints and customer information systems. The handout also included lists of transit projects listed in the CLRP and the TransAction 2030 plan that can be used as candidates for the regional priority project list.

Ms. Samarasinghe noted that many jurisdictions maintain their own priority lists and are actively moving forward with those projects. Mr. Eichler noted that those individual lists could be the basis for creating a list of candidate projects for the regional priority list. Mr. Miller reminded the subcommittee that this list will not be a bottom-up collection of jurisdiction's priority lists, but instead a top-down, focused listing of projects with regional significance. He encouraged the subcommittee members to think about the criteria for regional significance, and cited an analogy to the TPB Bike-Ped subcommittee's priority project list which spotlights projects that can fill in gaps in a regional bicycle and pedestrian network, projects that would not be a priority for any particular jurisdiction. Mr. White suggested looking for projects that would increase connectivity between local and regional bus services.

Mr. Erenrich suggested that the priority list should put emphasis on park-and-ride lots, transit centers, service coordination, and pedestrian access and safety. Mr. Eichler noted that most of those items were included in the draft outline, but that special emphasis would be placed on them.

Mr. Yaffe suggested that emphasis be placed on the regional importance, and that projects could be rated “hot”, “medium”, or “back-burner”. He also suggested that transit centers should be the focus and that bus stops belong to the local jurisdictions and might not be regionally significant. Mr. Miller added that bus stops require special attention because they can often be the subject of conflict between transit operators and municipalities, neither of whom wish to take responsibility for them. Additionally, many bus stops are used by multiple transit operators and therefore may have regional significance.

Mr. Erenrich suggested that emphasis be placed on policies for joint development and provision for facilities for bus services. Mr. Miller noted that the priority list could include successful examples of such policies and request “more of this.” The subcommittee could include an emphasis on successes during the annual presentation to the TPB. Mr. Erenrich provided an example of the Montgomery Mall transit center, which provided developer-funded, enhanced facilities for use by RideOn and MetroBus. Mr. Yaffe mentioned other successful transit center examples, including the Silver Spring Transit Center, Tysons Westpark and the Pentagon.

Mr. Yaffe then requested that staff develop an electronic form which transit operators could fill out to submit candidates for regional priority projects.

New Business

No new business was raised.

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 PM.

The next meeting of the TPB’s Regional Bus Subcommittee will be held on June 24.

The TPB will be hosting its 19th Annual Public Transit Forum on May 27, 2008. All transit providers in the region are strongly encouraged to attend. An agenda for this meeting is attached.

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

Regional Bus Subcommittee: Transit Operator Presentations Schedule

In an effort to better share information between operators, the Regional Bus Subcommittee will have representatives from transit operators throughout the region present at the monthly subcommittee meetings. Operator representatives will describe their transit system (vehicles, routes, fare structures, etc.), current challenges, recent successes and prospect for long-range plans. Additionally, each operator will be assigned one of the "Eight Building Blocks" of transit service. Transit operators will come prepared to discuss their experience with the given topic. Additional topics can be added

Below is a working schedule of topics, last updated 3/12/2008:

#	Date	Topic	Operator	Presenter
1	March 25	Customer Information	Arlington	Steve Yaffe
2	April 22	Service	WMATA	James Hamre
	May 27*	(no meeting)		
3	June 24	Operations	DASH	Sandy Modell
4	July 22	Vehicles	CUE	AlexisVerzosa
5	September 23	Bus Stops	RideOn	Jeff Dunkel
6	October 28	Traffic Management	Circulator	Terry Belamy
7	November 25	Safety & Security	Fairfax Connector	Al Hillman
8	December 30	Fare Payment	WMATA/ Loudoun Transit	Greg Garback/??
A	January 27	TOD Guidelines	TransIT	Carrie Anderson-Watters
B	February 24			
C	March 24			

Other transit operators currently not scheduled: Loudoun County, PRTC, MTA, TheBus.

This proposed schedule was discussed and revised at the upcoming Regional Bus Subcommittee meeting on February 26.

- TPB Annual Transit Forum is scheduled for May 27, 2008. The Regional Bus Subcommittee will not meet separately from this forum.