

Arlington Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

September 10, 2019

7:00 p.m.

Ellen M. Bozman Government Center

2100 Clarendon Boulevard

“Cherry” and “Dogwood” Conference Room

TAC Members Present:

John Carten
Erika Chiang
Herschel Kanter
Richard Price
Harvey Berlin
Carlota Cobo
Alexa Mavroidis

Attendees Present:

Lynn Rivers (staff)
Pierre Holloman (staff)
William Jones (staff)
Tim Roseboom (staff)
Nelson Cross (First Group)

Call to Order

- John Carten opened the meeting at 7:04 pm.

Introductions

- John Carten led roll call of TAC members present, Arlington staff, and others present within the room.

Public Comment

- No public comments submitted, no speakers from the public.

Approval of Meeting Notes from May 14, 2019

- The meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Recap of Annual Transit Tour – Pierre Holloman

- John Carten requested that Pierre Holloman provide a recap of the July 16, 2019 annual TAC transit tour. Mr. Holloman noted the TAC visited several project sites including Ballston, Shirlington, and Pentagon City. During the tour, the TAC was briefed on the Ballston Multimodal Project which is slated to begin construction in the spring of 2020, the Ballston West Entrance Project which is slated to have its previously developed 35% design updated between October 2019 – late spring/early summer 2020, proposed the Arlington Transit (ART) Operations and Maintenance Facility in Shirlington which is currently under design, the Pentagon City Metrorail Station Second Elevator project which is slated to go to construction in the summer of 2020, and the recently completed sawtooth bus bays and bus shelters on northbound S Hayes Street in Pentagon City.

Columbia Pike Transit Stations Construction Update – Pierre Holloman

- Pierre Holloman noted that in July 2019, the County Board approved a \$1.6 million contract which includes contingencies with Sagres Construction Corporation to build the first four of twenty-three transit stations planned for Columbia Pike. A project kickoff meeting was held with Sagres Construction Corporation at the end of August 2019. Mr. Holloman also noted that in June 2019, the County entered into a contract with Future Systems to provide the shelter structures for the transit stations. Mr. Holloman stated that construction is expected to begin sometime in the middle to later end of the fall of 2019 and is expected to be completed before the fall of 2020.
- The TAC inquired about temporary bus stops as a result of construction. Mr. Holloman noted that County is working with WMATA in terms of providing temporary stops and stated that the County will install signage at stops in both English and Spanish prior to the start of construction to alert bus patrons on where temporary stops will be. Temporary stops will not be placed within the construction zone and will be utilized until all construction has been completed at each transit station.

FY2021-FY2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Update – Pierre Holloman

- Mr. Holloman noted that the County has started the process of updating the FY2021-FY2030 CIP. Regarding transit projects, at this time it is anticipated that there will not be any new additions as the County already has a robust number of transit projects which will be proposed to carry over from the last CIP into the FY2021-FY2030. Mr. Holloman noted that the process will continue throughout the year, and there will be opportunities for the public to comment on the County's FY21 budget and CIP in the coming months.
- Lynn Rivers noted that the County is currently considering review of a proposal submitted by JBG Smith under the Public-Private Education and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) process for the design and construction of the Crystal City Metrorail Station east entrance. The County did not receive any additional proposals during the forty-five-day open proposal request window. Mr. Rivers noted that a review evaluation committee is being appointed by the County Manager.
- Ms. Rivers noted that ART has ordered fourteen new 35-foot replacement buses from New Flyer, and the first bus was placed online for production in August. It was noted that the County expects to receive all fourteen new replacement buses before the end of calendar year 2019. These buses will replace 14 ARBOC vehicles which have been plagued with maintenance issues and are beyond their useful life.

WMATA Update – Tim Roseboom

- Tim Roseboom noted that WMATA will reveal their capital program strategy within a few weeks and such is slated to include project level details, schedule of projects and phases, and estimated expenditures. WMATA's ten-year capital plan is not constrained.
- WMATA has completed the summer platform work at Braddock Road, King Street, Eisenhower Ave, Van Dorn, Huntington, and the Franconia-Springfield Metrorail stations. WMATA plans to perform summer platform work along the Orange Line in the late spring/early summer of 2020 and there may be an impact to the East Falls Church Metrorail Station. Mr. Roseboom mentioned that 60% of WMATA's typical

Metrorail ridership stayed with WMATA during the WMATA summer of 2019 platform improvement project which closed several stations along the Yellow and Blue line south of Reagan National Airport. WMATA will once again prep the public regarding summer 2020 Orange Line platform improvements and shuttles.

- The TAC inquired about the bike station which has been under construction for some time at the East Falls Church Metrorail Station. Mr. Roseboom noted that WMATA's plan is to open the bike facility later this calendar year; and, he will confirm such with WMATA staff after the TAC meeting. The TAC also inquired about development at and around as well as parking at the East Falls Church Metrorail Station. Mr. Roseboom noted that the land at the East Falls Church Metrorail Station is owned by WMATA and VDOT. Mr. Roseboom stated that typically WMATA would issue a solicitation for development/joint development on their land which includes a public process. Mr. Roseboom also noted that parking East Falls Church Metrorail Station is over capacity.
- The TAC inquired about where WMATA was with off-vehicle fare collection. Mr. Roseboom stated that the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) is looking at a various way by which Northern Virginia regional partners can work together with WMATA for a solution. WMATA had a cashless pilot in the District which was cancelled due to the lack of data showing that travel times on bus improved as a result of going cashless. The cashless pilot was supposed to roll out in Arlington along Metroway as well as along Columbia Pike. The TAC noted that there are other things which have to work combined with going cashless to speed up a bus including but not limited to dedicated bus lanes, bus priority signals, and stop spacing. The TAC also mentioned that loading cash on board both Metrobuses and ART buses can be annoying due to the number of prompts, not knowing how to do so, and the time to do so which increases dwell time.

Arlington Transit (ART) and STAR Performance and Service Update – William Jones

- William Jones noted that comparing overall FY2018 data to FY2019 data, each ART route experienced some challenges. ART saw an overall 12% decrease in ridership between FY2018 and FY2019. On-time performance between FY2018 to FY2019 for ART decreased from 85% in FY2018 to 77.9% in FY2019. It was noted that ART did experience some issues during the first and second quarter of FY2019 which included several operators leaving as a result of the opening of WMATA's Cinder Bed Road Facility in Fairfax County, and there were maintenance issues including but not limited to issues with HVAC units on buses.
- On a positive note, the number of missed trips on ART actually decreased 15% comparing FY2018 to FY2019. Mr. Jones noted that another positive was that ridership did trend upward from March 2019 to June 2019 and exceeded the ridership at the same time from March 2018 to June 2018.
- The TAC inquired about buses coming early and if operators could sit and wait to stay on schedule. The TAC also noted that at times buses come late or seem to be late at certain times throughout a day due to traffic conditions and signals. Mr. Jones noted that this is something which the Transit Bureau has been trying to work through with the Contract Service Provider (National Express). Mr. Jones noted that National Express looks through travel times monthly and notes problem areas with traffic. The

Transit Bureau has been working with the Transportation Engineering & Operations Bureau (TE&O) to optimize signal timing and to improve running conditions for buses.

- Mr. Jones provide the TAC with an update on the August 6, 2019 and August 8, 2019 ART bus accidents. It was noted that the investigation into August 6, 2019 accident was ongoing, and National Express has been working with the property owner of the damaged truck rental retail location as the County is not involved in this process. Regarding the August 8, 2019 accident, the other vehicle which hit the ART bus was at fault, causing the ART bus operator to crash into a fence and community garden.
- Regarding STAR, Mr. Jones noted that the Accessibility subcommittee had met on August 15, 2019 and many of the same comments and complaints related to Red Top Cab were mentioned. The comments and complaints revolved around people who need wheelchair accessible vehicles on evenings and weekends after the Call Center is closed. Individuals have tried to call Red Top directly; however, in such cases Red Top has had issues in providing wheelchair accessible vehicles to pick people up from their locations. There have been requests asking what actions the County are taking and what can the County do with Red Top. Mr. Jones noted that the County is working to obtain a resolution from Red Top and such is expected in October 2019. Mr. Jones also noted that Red Top has had issues in providing enough operators to bring people traveling to and from Zone 3 home at night and on weekends. Mr. Jones mentioned that individuals shall submit formal complaints so that such complaints can be tracked and receive a formal response from the Call Center and/or the County.
- The TAC inquired about Red Top's customer service, it was noted that text messages noting that a Red Top vehicle arriving for pickup were not being sent. The TAC also wondered about the technology which Red Top has in place and noted that Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) have the ability to provide up to date real time reports on vehicle locations; however, Red Top cannot seem to figure this out.

Report from the Report from Accessibility Subcommittee - Alexa Mavroidis

- Alexa Mavroidis stated that the next Subcommittee meeting will take place in October and such will be an open forum for the public.

Additional Items from Committee Members and Staff

- Pierre Holloman noted County staff member and Transit Capital Program Manager, Bee Buerger will be retiring on September 26, 2019. Lynn Rivers noted that the Transit Bureau has started the process of advertising and filling the Transit Capital Program Manager position.
- Lynn Rivers noted that the Transit Bureau is in the process of hiring a Transit Service Planner and is also recruiting for a Transit Project Manager Coordinator.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, at 7:00 pm.