

**Arlington Transit Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**March 8, 2022**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**TAC Members Present:**

John Carten  
James Davenport  
Alexa Mavroidis  
Richard Price  
Harvey Berlin  
Herschel Kanter

**Attendees Present:**

Lynn Rivers (staff)  
Pierre Holloman (staff)  
Lauren Breyer (staff)  
Kirk Dand (staff)  
Robin McElhenny (staff)  
Paul Mounier (staff)  
Andy Wexler (staff)  
Alexander Cumana  
Sue Gutierrez

**Call to Order**

- John Carten opened the meeting at 7:06 pm.

**Introductions**

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

**Public Comment**

- Derrick Santos submitted the following comments:
  - “I applaud the student free fare pilot as a start, but it falls short because it leaves students left out such as my son and create some tension at school among some students. It should be free for all students since many teens travel around beyond school time and on weekends and these students are potential customers.”
  - “We heard in 2016 that the transit stops on Columbia Pike would be completed in 2017, then 2018, then 2020 and now 2022 and many of us wonder why it is taking so long especially hearing rumors that the stations in Crystal City are going under construction soon and that project started years later according to our civic association president so why has it taken so long for Columbia Pike?”
  - I support many of the projects on your list and hope to see more lights at bus stops in the future and quicker service for buses in the future.

**Approval of Meeting Notes from January 18, 2022, TAC Meeting**

- The amended meeting notes were approved unanimously.

## **WMATA Budget & Service Update**

- Kirk Dand noted WMATA has completed the public comment period for their proposed FY2023 budget and comments are being reviewed by WMATA staff. A press release was sent out on March 8 which noted service on the Metrorail Yellow Line between Pentagon and L'Enfant Plaza will close for eight months beginning September 10, 2022. During this shutdown period, WMATA will make repairs to the Yellow Line bridge and tunnel areas to include but not be limited to rehabbing steel-lined tunnel near L'Enfant Plaza and replacing communication lines. It was also stated that due to construction of the Potomac Yard Metrorail station, there will be a six-week closure of stops south of the National Airport Metrorail station.
- Mr. Dand mentioned that WMATA received a grant award from the American Relief Act for \$120 million which will be applied to WMATA's FY2024 budget. The FY2023 budget is expected to go to WMATA's Finance Committee on 3/10/22, and it is expected that the WMATA Board will vote on the FY2023 budget at their March 24, 2022, meeting. It was also noted that as of today, WMATA is looking at a deficit in FY2024.
- The TAC inquired about Arlington's share in the FY2023 budget. It was noted that Arlington's subsidy in the FY2023 budget is about \$79 million, and there is a 3% cap for Northern Virginia localities; moreover, Arlington cannot pay more than a 3% over the prior year's budget each year. The TAC also asked if the Yellow Line closure press release was a surprise to Arlington staff. Mr. Dand noted this issue was brought to the attention of compact members over a year ago. The TAC asked if there will be bus shuttles during the shutdown. It was stated that it is believed at such time that WMATA may plan to utilize bus bridges from Blue/Yellow Line stations in Arlington as well as from stations in Alexandria and Fairfax County.

## **FY2023 – FY2032 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

- Robin McElhenny provided an overview of the proposed FY2023 – FY2032 Transit Capital Improvement Plan. Regarding process, the TAC was encouraged to share their thoughts on the proposed CIP utilizing the Engage Arlington online portal. It is anticipated that the Arlington County Board will hold work sessions on the proposed CIP in the June timeframe; and is expected to adopt the FY2023 – FY2032 CIP at the Board's July meeting. Highlights include funding plans to complete several key transit capacity enhancement projects including but not limited to new facilities for bus and Metrorail stations, bus stop accessibility improvements, and fleet replacement and expansion for Arlington Transit. It was stated that some projects in the proposed CIP are expected to be completed by the end of calendar year 2022 including but not limited to the Pentagon City Second Elevator project and the Ballston Multimodal Improvements project. To address the public comment received, it was mentioned it is expected that the first 8 stations for the Columbia Pike Transit Stations project are expected to be completed by the spring/summer of 2022.
- The TAC asked what were the largest sources of outside funds that were either currently allocated to or anticipated for transit projects in the proposed CIP. It was noted that a significant amount of existing funding comes from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) as

well as some funding from the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The proposed CIP assumes potential future funding requests to NVTA, DRPT, NVTC and FTA depending on the project.

- The TAC asked about Arlington Transit's fleet replacement and expansion schedule and how such will tie in with Zero-Emission-Bus (ZEB) technology as well as if additional buses will be needed to accommodate ZEB. It was noted that the proposed CIP assumes Battery-Electric-Buses (BEB) as a ZEB solution for future fleet replacements and fleet expansion. It was also noted there is an on-going ZEB study to help determine which ZEB technology would work best for Arlington Transit's future. Regarding ZEB, the TAC also inquired when Arlington Transit would consider federal funding. It was noted that Arlington Transit would consider and potentially seek federal funding once a fleet transition plan is completed. Also, regarding funding, the TAC noted that BEBs and BEB infrastructure is expensive and asked if such program was funded by the Commonwealth, would a match be required. It was stated that a local match would be required if funding from the Commonwealth was received.

### **Transit Capital Projects Update**

- Robin McElhenny provided an update on three projects: Ballston Multimodal Improvement, Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance, and East Falls Church Bus Bay Expansion. For the Ballston Multimodal Improvement project, the following was noted:
  - Phase 1: Fairfax Dr – substantially complete with bus bays in service
  - Phase 2: N Stuart St – bus bays built and planter installation underway expected completion summer 2022
  - Phase 3: N Stuart St – plaza work to start in spring 2022
  - Phase 4: Fairfax Dr – plaza work underway
- Regarding Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance, the County submitted funding applications in the amount of \$80M requested via NVTA's 70% regional funding program and \$4.5M requested through NVTC's I-66 Commuter Choice Program. Regarding the project, Arlington's on-call consultant, STV, is advancing the 35% design of the new entrance. The design must comply with WMATA's current design criteria and standards which offers several challenges as such has changed since the initial plans were developed in the early to mid-2000s. Additional changes to the plans include additional elevators, the size of mechanical equipment (increased), additional emergency egress stairs, and the approach for opening the station's vault wall.
- On the East Falls Church Bus Bay Expansion project, Arlington issued a task order to STV for design and engineering services in October 2021. The 30% design is underway and the 60% design is expected to be completed by the end of May 2022. In the current schedule, the 100% design is expected to be completed by August 2022. It was noted that the goal is to issue an Invitation to Bid (ITB) by the fall of 2022 with construction beginning in calendar year 2023. Regarding public outreach, there was a virtual community meeting on March 1, 2022, a WMATA Compact Public Hearing is expected in the spring/summer of 2022, and there are station pop-up events planned for this spring.

### **Proposed STAR Policy Changes**

- Andy Wexler noted the goals for proposed changes include:
  - Review policies considering transportation changes during pandemic
  - Clarify passenger expectations in using STAR service

- Streamline and improve STAR service and operations
- As part of this process, staff reviewed peer agency policies in specific policy areas including: WMATA's MetroAccess, Go Triangle (Raleigh-Durham, NC), Gwinnett County (Lawrenceville, Georgia), and SamTrans (San Mateo, CA). These systems were chosen based on their operational characteristics and performance as compared to STAR. The following proposed changes were noted:
  - *Reasonable Accommodations*
    - Current policy: Doctor's note required
    - Proposed policy: Follow FTA rules; Customers cannot choose vehicle type
  - *Will-Call Return Trips*
    - Current policy: Allowed for medical appointments, return from travel, etc.
    - Proposed policy: Not allowed – all trips must be booked in advance; Call Center will try to re-book, when possible, but wait times will be longer
  - *Where Is My Ride?*
    - Current policy: Customers may call 5 minutes after scheduled arrival time
    - Proposed policy: Customers may call 10 minutes after scheduled arrival time
  - *Trip Service Times and Locations*
    - Current policy: Limited Zone 2 trips completely outside Arlington; Service within 3/4 mile of fixed route transit during STAR operating hours
    - Proposed policy: All trips must start or end in Arlington; Service within 3/4 miles of fixed route transit when route operates
  - *Pick-Up Window*
    - Current policy: Driver will ask for call-out 5 minutes after arrival; No-show after 10 minutes
    - Proposed policy: 30-minute window for drivers: 0-30 min after scheduled pick-up time; Customers ready and visible at scheduled pick-up time; Driver will ask for call-out upon arrival if customer not visible; and No-show after 5 minutes
  - *Cancellation Advance Notice*
    - Current policy: Poorly worded – 45 or 60 minutes; No penalty for repeat on-time cancellations
    - Proposed policy: Late cancellations less than 60 min before scheduled pick-up; Repeat On-Time Cancellation: 4+ on-time cancels in 30-day period; and Both are subject to discipline under Suspension policy
- Next Steps include a public meeting in April/May 2022, public feedback during the spring/summer 2022 as well as another public meeting in the summer 2022 with an anticipated recommendation for final approval in late summer 2022 with the proposed or revised (based on public feedback) policies being implemented in the fall of 2022.
- The TAC requested an update on the process as well as feedback received as part of the public feedback sessions. Staff noted that feedback will be shared with the TAC and an update is expected in the May – July timeframe. The TAC also raised questions regarding the policy changes and if there was support from the Accessibility Subcommittee as well as

TAC users. The TAC also asked for more clarity in explaining why these policy changes are being made and how this would fit with MetroAccess as this may impact some STAR users.

### **Report from Accessibility Subcommittee**

- Alexa Mavroidis noted staff provided a presentation on the proposed STAR policy changes just before the TAC meeting. It was noted that from a rider's perspective, the proposed policy changes are of great concern. There are concerns about medical will calls using STAR as an individual does not know how long it may take during an appointment. There were also questions on how and if the proposed policy changes are comparable to Arlington Transit's fix route service and would such impact STAR's role as a demand response/paratransit service. Last, it was stated that more time is needed to have open discussions and to obtain feedback from STAR users and the public prior to implementing these proposed policy changes as there is a feeling staff is rushing to push this through.

### **Additional Items from Committee Members and Staff**

- Pierre Holloman noted upcoming agenda items include Floating Bus Stop Islands, updates on the proposed STAR policy changes, and Transit Signal Priority. Mr. Holloman asked TAC members to contact him if there were any items of interest for future agendas.

### **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 pm.

### **Next Meeting**

- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10, 2022.