

Arlington Transit Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
January 17, 2023
7:00 PM
Microsoft Teams Meeting

TAC Members Present:

John Carten	James Davenport	Ronald Decker
Herschel Kanter	Patrick Thompson	Frank Krol
Richard Price	Harvey Berlin	Laura MacNeil
Andrew McAllister	Alexander Cumana	

Attendees Present:

Hui Wang (staff)	Mike Moon (staff)	Lynn Rivers (staff)
Pierre Holloman (staff)	Kirk Dand (staff)	Robin McElhenny (staff)
Lauren Breyer (staff)	Demetra McBride (staff)	Diana Isaza (staff)
Edwin Montano (staff)	Paul Mounier (staff)	Ryan Jones (staff)
Carly Macias	Mike Shindledecker	Andre Stafford
Matt Edwards	Jiaxin Tong	Sue Gutierrez
J. Mayer	Dana	

Call to Order

- John Carten opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Introductions

- John Carten led roll call of TAC members present, Arlington staff, and others present. Hui Wang was introduced as the new Department of Environmental Services' Deputy Director, overseeing Transportation and Development.

Public Comment

- There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes from the November 15, 2022, Meeting

- The amended meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Arlington Transit Zero Emissions Bus (ZEB) Study Update

- Carly Macias with HDR provided an update on the ongoing work with Kimley Horn for the Arlington Transit Zero Emissions Bus Study. It was noted that the TAC received a briefing on the study at their November 15, 2022, meeting. Since that meeting, there was one modification on the project timeline to include the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) application for capital assistance deadline of February 1, 2023. It was stated that during the November 15, 2022, meeting, an overview of ZEB was provided noting the benefits and

challenges of Battery Electric Buses (BEBs) and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Buses (FCEBs), types of BEB charging, potential hydrogen fuel sources, emissions comparison by vehicle fuel type and ZEB route modeling and facility assessment. It was mentioned that the ZEB transition plan is cut up into three different stages:

- Phase 1 – replace 15 Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses with 15 new CNG buses in 2023
 - 2010 – 2011 North American Bus Industries (NABI) buses will not make it until 2025
 - Staff is researching to identify interim source for Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) for all new natural gas buses
 - Arlington’s Water Pollution Control Plan upgrades for RNG are anticipated by 2029
- Phase 2 – conduct a BEB pilot starting in 2025 when the Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance facility opens and conduct a FCEB pilot in 2026
 - Many transit agencies are moving forward with this model including early BEB adopters of exploring both BEB and FCEB
 - Pilot four BEBs in 2025
 - Pilot two-four FCEBs in 2026
 - Conduct side-by-side evaluation to perform an “implementation pilot” as getting real world experience is important due to various operating conditions and environments
- Phase 3 – Determine long-term strategy based on results of pilot programs
 - Builds off the work conducted in the pilots
 - Scenarios developed based off route modeling; moreover in 2028, Arlington Transit would begin to replace all vehicles with ZEBs:
 - 2:1 replacement ratio for BEBs with the purpose to maintain ultimate flexibility of the fleet to avoid tailoring all bus assignments and tailoring certain buses to routes to fit the technology and be able to use buses on any route at any time. It was noted that this ratio could be reduced with technological advancements, and it is expected that this ratio will come down with such advancements.
 - 1:1 replacement ratio for FCEB
- A BEB and FCEB scenario were provided which included the following assumptions (it was noted that advancement in BEB technology could reduce the 2:1 replacement ratio in the future):
 - Starting in 2023, all replacement CNG buses would be fueled with RNG
 - Four BEBs deployed as part of fleet expansion in 2025 and two to four FCEBs deployed as part of fleet expansion in 2026
 - In 2028, Arlington Transit will no longer purchase natural gas buses
 - In 2029, all remaining CNG buses in the fleet would be fueled with RNGs
 - In 2038, the entire Arlington Transit bus fleet would be 100% zero emissions
- Regarding Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, by using RNG, 50% GHG emissions reduction achieved by 2026. RNG buses are considered to produce “negative emissions”, but tailpipe emissions are the same as CNG buses. CO and VOC emissions are essentially equal between FCEB and BEB scenarios. CO, NOx, VOC, and SOx emissions are eliminated with a 100% ZEB transition. PM10 and PM2.5 emissions will remain after 100% ZEB transition.
- In terms of next steps, Arlington Transit will apply to DRPT by February 1, 2023, for 15 CNG replacement buses and for four BEBs. This approach allows Arlington Transit to maintain reliable operations and begin the ZEB pilot program in 2025. It was noted that C2E2 will be briefed on this topic on January 23, 2023, and the Transportation Commission will be briefed on February 2, 2023.

- The TAC inquired about the cost of CNG buses, if there were various manufacturers who make CNG buses, and if Arlington Transit would pursue a cooperative purchasing agreement to get cheaper buses. The cost of CNG buses was noted to be about \$550,000, there are several US bus manufacturers which make CNG buses, and Arlington Transit has utilized and will continue to utilize riders from other contracts such as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Commonwealth of Virginia’s statewide bus contract to purchase buses as the economies of scale allow for better pricing.
- The TAC also inquired about the cost of retrofitting facilities for BEB and ZEB. It was noted that what has been proposed for the pilots include utilizing tractor trailer fueling rigs at the ART Light Maintenance Facility to minimize the cost for the FCEB pilot. If Arlington decides to go with that technology after the pilots, then the cost may be significant. For BEB, the pilot will be for 4 buses at the ART Operations and Maintenance Facility which is currently under construction. The estimated cost to include BEB infrastructure at such facility is about \$10 million dollars.
- A member of the public provided the following comment, “To whom it may concern, this sounds expensive. Please consider improving your routes and schedules and additional ART service on Saturdays and middle of the day as a higher priority than buying these buses. It is better to get more people on the bus to help the environment. Make ART free to help get more people on ART. Follow DC and Alexandria with free bus service.”

Arlington Transit Strategic Plan Update

- Paul Mounier provided an overview of the vision and mission of Arlington Transit. It was noted that the TAC will receive additional updates as the plan moved forward and there would be upcoming meetings with C2E2 and the Transportation Commission. It was noted that feedback on the draft goals, objectives, challenges, concerns, and priorities for improving transit was conducted at 7 pop-up events held throughout Arlington in October and November as well as an online feedback survey which was conducted between October – November 2022. Based on the feedback, some of the most important factors for why people choose transit include:
 - Buses/Trains that come frequently
 - Buses/Trains that come close to where I live and where I am going
 - Real-time arrival information so that I know when my bus/train is coming
- The biggest challenges when using transit were:
 - The bus doesn’t come often enough
 - The bus/train doesn’t come at the time I need to travel
 - I have other options that are more convenient
- An overview of ART service was provided with the following notations:
 - Premium Transit Network (PrTN)
 - Premium Transit Infrastructure (dedicated ROW; transit stations)
 - Higher frequency transit service (10-minute peak frequency/12 minute off peak frequency)
 - Longer span of service (18 hours/day; 7-days a week)
 - Examples: Metroway; Columbia Pike
 - Primary Transit Network (PTN)
 - Higher frequency transit service (15-minute frequency)
 - Longer span of service (18 hours/day; 7-days a week)
 - Examples: Langston Boulevard
 - Secondary Transit network (STN)

- Lower frequency transit service (30-minutes frequency)
- Less span of service (7 hours/day; 5 days a week)
- Examples: coverage routes (Route 75, Route 53) commuter routes (Route 84, Route 52)
- During the fall public engagement process, several items were identified as a priority:
 - Improved Frequency
 - Based on an operations assessment, only four ART routes (41, 51, 52, and 62) were noted to not meet service standard requirements, particularly during peak service. One of the systemwide gaps and needs which was identified included a desire for additional weekend, midday, and late-night service. Based on analysis nationwide, this trend is not unique and has been seen with other transit systems due to the increasing importance of off-peak services due to new work flexibility and travel patterns.
 - Improve Reliability
 - Analysis shows the standards for On Time Performance (OTP) defined as 95% on-time is not being met; systemwide OTP is 85.2%
 - Create a More Efficient Transit Network Route Design
 - Public engagement identified gaps in connectivity to and from destinations.
 - Analysis identified areas transit demand has shifts due to increased working from home, new mode choices like scooters and micro transit, and emerging activity centers such as Amazon HQ2.
 - Performance measures such as Farebox Recovery and Passengers per Revenue Hour standards are not being met.
 - Improve Rider Experience On-Board and at Waiting Areas
 - Public engagement identified a desire for improved on-board experience and comfortable and accessible bus stop waiting areas, particularly older adults.
 - Related to the rider's experience is safety; there are two major initiatives to consider:
 - zero major transit injuries and 100% ADA accessible bus stops.
 - Increase Attractiveness of Transit to Achieve Agency Goals & Objectives
 - Public engagement responses showed believe more people should ride transit to help reduce traffic and provide a positive environmental impact.
 - High transit mode share capture increases sustainability.
 - Consider More Affordable/Free Transit Service
 - Public engagement identified a desire for more affordable or free transit service.
 - Many transit agencies have piloted fare suspensions to eliminate handling of money or to address lack of demand of service.
 - Enhance Bus/Roadway Infrastructure for Provision of Service
 - Dedicated transit ROW increases reliability and speed of transit trips.
- Analysis revealed gaps in service related to:
 - Ridership
 - Population Growth
 - Employment Growth
 - Focus Areas
 - Crystal City
 - Arlington Mill
 - Long Branch Creek
 - Buckingham
 - Waverly Hills

- As for next steps, Task 6: Service Recommendations
 - Review of current performance measures
 - Suitable modes to satisfy identified travel demand needs
 - Service enhancements to meet identified gaps and needs
 - Improvements to (PrTN), (PTN), (STN) network
 - Ridership forecasts and estimation of benefits
 - Remaining unmet needs if investment is not made
 - Resource requirements including capital and O&M costs
 - Capital and O&M required for ZEB fleet transition
 - Warrants for service changes
- Task 7: Funding Plan
- Task 8: Final Recommendations and Arlington Transit Strategic Plan Submission
- There was a comment from the public which noted that the real time system is not working on ART's site nor on the TransitApp. There was an inquiry on why more is not being invested on improving technology rather than on fancy buses.
- The TAC was asked to send questions and comments to Paul Mounier or to Pierre Holloman.

WMATA FY2024 Proposed Budget Update

- Kirk Dand provided an overview of the FY2024 Proposed WMATA budget. The proposed FY2024 operating budget increases bus and rail service, simplifies fares, launches the Better Bus Network Resign and funds Crisis Intervention Specialist. The proposed FY2024 capital budget funds Zero Emission Buses, the electrification of the northern and Bladensburg bus garages, opens the new Potomac Yard Metrorail Station, modernizes customer wayfinding, and funds the creation of the Metro integrated communications center. The proposed FY2024 operating budget includes \$509M in revenues which result in an operating deficit. The FY2024 base operating budget included a funding gap of \$146M which has been reduced to \$139.1M with fare optimization. The \$139.1M gap is proposed to be filled with IIJA Federal Formula Funding for Maintenance. The depletion of Federal funds in FY2024 results in major structural funding gaps for FY2025 of about \$737.5M.
- As part of the proposed FY2024 operating budget, the 16M is include and such would restructure service along Columbia Pike, connecting Skyline to Crystal City with service every 12 minutes all day. The proposed FY2024 operating budget also includes reduced travel times on rail which would result in faster trips for customers and less wait times for transfers. The fare simplification proposal includes standardizing peak and off-peak fares, align rail and bus base fares, and discount fares for low-income customers. The proposed FY2024 budget also includes addressing overdue needs for safety and state of good repair with the replacement of legacy railcars, track rehabilitation and replacing platforms. WMATA will be seeking to gather feedback on budget proposals in mid-February to mid-March via online and in person sessions as well as an online survey which has been about 95% of all public input in prior budget and other proposals. The WMATA Board is expected to adopt the FY2024 budget between April – May 2023 and the fiscal year for WMATA will start on July 1, 2023.
- The TAC inquired about the District's proposal for free fares for Metrobus. It was noted that such should not impact the proposed FY2024 budget. The TAC also asked when will the Potomac Yard Metrorail Station open? It was stated that the station will open in May 2023.

Report from the Accessibly Subcommittee

- Laura MacNeil noted that the Accessibility Subcommittee did not have a report to deliver and will be meeting on January 24, 2023.

Additional Items from Committee Members and Staff

- TAC Charter Changes
 - Pierre Holloman noted work continues to align the charters of the Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. It was noted that the TAC considered some charter changes in September and November 2022 and feedback was provided related to the joint meeting of all three committees.
- Future Hybrid Meetings
 - Pierre Holloman stated that a poll will be sent to the TAC to note preference to hold some future meetings either via a hybrid of being in-person and virtual as well as

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 14, 2023.