

**Arlington Transit Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**January 18, 2022**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**TAC Members Present:**

John Carten  
Harvey Berlin  
Erika Chiang  
James Davenport  
Deidre Grant  
Herschel Kanter  
Andrew McAllister  
Richard Price

**Attendees Present:**

Pierre Holloman (staff)  
Lauren Breyer (staff)  
Kirk Dand (staff)  
William Jones (staff)  
Robin McElhenny (staff)  
Paul Mounier (staff)  
Andre Stafford (WMATA)  
Jiaxin Tong  
Sue Gutierrez

**Call to Order**

- John Carten opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

**Introductions**

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

**Public Comment**

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

**Approval of Meeting Notes from November 9, 2021 TAC Meeting**

- The amended meeting notes were approved unanimously.

**TAC Vice Chair Vote**

- John Carten noted there were two nominations received for the TAC Vice Chair: James Davenport and Richard Price. It was also noted that Pierre Holloman sent out the poll link to all TAC members at 6:45 pm and the poll would close after the Overview of Arlington's Mobility Hub Concept agenda item to give TAC members more time to vote. James Davenport was elected as Vice Chair by a vote of 5 to 3.

## **Overview of Arlington's Mobility Hub Concept**

- Pierre Holloman provided an overview of Arlington's Mobility Hub guidebook and pilot concept design. The concept of a mobility hub is a place where people can connect to multiple modes of transportation to make their trip safe, convenient, and reliable. Overall, mobility hubs help with promoting economic development, enhancing public spaces, improve pedestrian experience, and advance goals to create a connected urban transportation environment. In terms of placemaking, mobility hubs can combine various elements of different modes of transportation as well as public art, street furniture, parklets, lighting, landscaping, street trees, wayfinding, and digital kiosks. It was noted that the Court House neighborhood was selected as the initial pilot location as it met several key metrics in terms of being on a highly traveled corridor and connections among many modes of transportation.
- Mr. Holloman stated staff is seeking funding through Capital Improvement Plan for FY2023 to initiate a concept design for a hub in the Court House neighborhood. If funding is provided, the pilot hub would be constructed in calendar year 2023 and staff will analyze the usage to develop lessons learned. If the pilot is successful, staff will seek to install similar hubs throughout Arlington with a focus on equity.
- The TAC inquired if a location on Columbia Pike was considered and what would be the most ideal place to have a hub on Columbia Pike. Mr. Holloman noted that Columbia Pike was considered as part of the pilot; specifically, Columbia Pike @ Dinwiddie and Columbia Pike @ S Four Mile Run. However, due to various factors including on-going construction, those locations were not selected to be part of the initial pilot. Mr. Holloman also noted that locations in Pentagon City, Green Valley, Ballston, Shirlington, along Langston Blvd, and Rosslyn were considered.
- The TAC noted that leveraging development opportunities as well as public private partnerships will be a help to push these hubs forward in the future.

## **WMATA Budget & Service Update**

- Kirk Dand provided an update on WMATA's proposed FY2023 budget which totals \$2.282B. The proposed budget is using federal relief funds at the sum of \$715.8 million to balance the FY2023 budget. This leaves \$151.3M in federal relief funds remaining for use towards the FY2024 budget. This budget assumes that systemwide ridership is restored to 53% of pre-pandemic ridership. The proposed FY2023 budget also includes recommendations for fare initiatives and discounts including a \$2 flat fare for late night rail, discount monthly passes, discount 7-day unlimited pass, and an add value bonus.
- Personnel costs make up majority of the proposed operating budget, about 68%. The proposed FY2023 budget also seeks to obtain additional resources need to respond to the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) requirements and includes additional positions to provide 24/7 coverage at the Rail Operator Control Center and to train first responders across the DMV. Risks and considerations to the proposed FY2023 budget include Covid-19 variants and long-term vaccine effectiveness, inflation, uncertainty and/or changes with federal funding, Silver Line Phase 2 acceptance and readiness, and additional WMSC operating and maintenance requirements. Regarding the Silver Line Phase 2, WMATA is currently undertaking testing and related activities towards determining

operational readiness. It was noted that WMATA is taking a pause on reintroducing the 7000 series railcars back into service and it may be months before the 7000s return to service.

- Several TAC members were shocked by the announcement of WMATA's CEO Paul Wiedefeld's retirement and inquired when will the 8000 series railcars come online. Mr. Dand noted the 8000 series railcars have yet to be procured and it will be a few years before they are in service. The TAC noted the changes in trip patterns on Metrorail with seeing more people ride outside of the rush hour period and on weekends and inquired if the region is moving towards a 24/7 economy as travel may be less important during the peak periods but more important during the off-peak times. The TAC asked what the impacts to Arlington's contribution for the proposed FY2023 budget are. Mr. Dand noted there is not a major impact due to the 3% cap; however, FY2024 will be a different story.

### **Arlington Public Schools (APS) Student Fare-less Transit Pilot**

- William Jones provided an overview of the APS Student Fare-less pilot. The goal for APS pilot includes having approximately 2,400 middle and high school students participating using a pre-load Arlington Transit iRide card. The 18-month pilot is supported by the federal American Rescue Plan. The pilot will inform Arlington Transit's operation decisions regarding free APS student public transit and support evaluation of the Arlington Transit's fare study in the fall of 2022. The target start date for this pilot is February 1, 2022 and will run through the 2022-2023 school year. Approximately \$479,000 (FY2022) and \$878,000 (FY2023) was set aside by the Arlington Board for this pilot. Staff will track usage as well as ridership on board Arlington Transit buses and trip patterns. Next steps include:
  - Coordination with Arlington Commuter Services, the Convention Store, and marketing teams
  - Prepare cards for distribution
  - Send invitation letters and information to pilot participants
  - Schedule Arlington Commuter Services staff at participating schools for card distribution
- Distribution to begin February 1: Once received, card usage can begin immediately
- William Jones also noted that all 16 Arlington Transit bus routes are in operation, ridership in December 2021 saw a 36% increase from December 2020 and year-to-date, ridership is up about 28% compared to the fiscal year 2021. STAR ridership has been trending up and Red Top Cab has seen an increase of trips as a result of pandemic challenges with Diamond Transportation. It was stated that staff is working on the Transit Strategic Plan and is currently looking to bring a consultant on board to help and staff will be seeking feedback from the public through surveys and other tools through the Strategic Plan process. An initial survey will hopefully be sent out by the March TAC meeting.
- The TAC asked which APS students are eligible for the pilot and will other students be able to participate in the future. It was noted that students at Washington & Liberty High School, Wakefield High School, HB Woodlawn and the Arlington Career Center are eligible. It was also noted that staff will work with APS through this process to help determine how to move forward in the future. The TAC noted it will be important to get younger people motivated to use transit as such will help gain momentum and turn individuals into future transit riders.

### **Report from Accessibility Subcommittee**

- William Jones stated the subcommittee will now take place on the same day as TAC. The subcommittee will meet from 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm. It was noted that staff will provide

suggested policy changes to the subcommittee and the TAC at the March meetings. These proposed policy changes will seek engage both the TAC and the subcommittee as well as STAR users on how STAR will move forward.

- The TAC asked if the suggested policy changes will be marked as a draft? It was noted that yes, staff will mark it as a draft. The TAC also asked if staff will take and consider public feedback before there is a final decision regarding the policy changes. Mr. Jones stated, yes staff will take and consider public feedback and outlined an approach where public feedback will be provided, staff will analyze and note which elements are able to be changed in the policy and which elements are not including the reasons why. The TAC also asked if there was ever a policy for STAR which would only allow for people to use MetroAccess to get to points into the District and Maryland. Mr. Jones noted that he will look into such but was not aware of such prior policy.

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

- Pierre Holloman noted upcoming agenda items include the proposed FY23-FY32 Capital Improvement Plan and Floating Bus Stop Islands. Mr. Holloman asked TAC members to contact him if there are any items which they would like to be on a future agenda.

#### **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

#### **Next Meeting**

- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 8, 2022.