



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee

September 10, 2019
Government Center, Conference Room 11

Board of Supervisors Members Present:

Sharon Bulova, Chairman
John Foust, Dranesville District (Committee Chair)
Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman)
John Cook, Braddock District
Pat Herrity, Springfield District
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District
Jeff McKay, Lee District
Kathy Smith, Sully District
Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District

Board Members Absent:

Linda Smyth, Providence District

County Leadership:

Bryan Hill, County Executive
Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
Beth Teare, County Attorney

Transportation Advisory Commission:

Jeffrey M. Parnes (Chair)

Link to agenda and presentation materials:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/board-supervisors-transportation-committee-meeting-sept-10-2019>

Supervisor Foust called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 26, 2019, meeting were accepted with no changes.

2. Metro Blue and Yellow Lines Summer Shutdown

Joe Leader, Chief Operating Officer, and Regina Sullivan, Vice President, Government Relations, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), updated the Committee

on the progress of the WMATA Platform Improvement Project (PIP). The presentation is available [online](#).

The PIP is a three-year project that will completely reconstruct outdoor platforms at 20 Metrorail stations. The first phase began on May 25, 2019, to address the six Blue and Yellow Line stations south of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport for full platform reconstruction and major station improvements. Those Metrorail stations were Braddock Road, King Street-Old Town, Eisenhower Avenue, Huntington, Van Dorn Street and Franconia-Springfield. WMATA partnered with key stakeholders to provide service alternatives for customers during summer 2019. Regular construction updates provided were at: <https://www.wmata.com/service/rail/PlatformProject/>

All six Blue and Yellow Line stations re-opened on September 9, 2019. Construction will continue into the fall, but customers will experience normal Metrorail service at those six stations. The remaining Virginia stations (Vienna, Dunn Loring, West Falls Church, East Falls Church) will be next on the list for reconstruction in 2020. Arlington Cemetery and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Station are scheduled for reconstruction in 2021. WMATA will coordinate with the region and plan to hold a kickoff meeting in the fall with stakeholders.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) began a 12-week post-shutdown regional marketing campaign encouraging people to ride Metrorail, as well as the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), Fairfax Connector, Arlington Transit (ART), Alexandria Transit Company (DASH), Fairfax City City-University-Energysaver (CUE), Loudoun County Transit and OmniRide. Fairfax County also began a 12-week campaign via media outreach, social media, and stakeholder outreach offering a \$50 commuter incentive (SmartTrip card) to be used for trip costs and/or parking at the re-opened Metrorail stations in Fairfax County. The presentation is available [online](#).

Chairman Bulova commended WMATA for outstanding outreach efforts keeping the public informed. She stated that the region's bus systems needs to work together when WMATA shuts down the Orange Line for the next phase. Proper maintenance is important to keep the Metrorail system running. She was concerned about the effects of the next shutdown to the ridership level for the Silver Line. Mr. Leader stated that WMATA is working on the details of the next shutdown and will update the Committee in the fall on the progress and schedule for 2020. Supervisor Hudgins stated that both the improvements and providing customers with alternative choices were successful. Supervisor McKay stated that the shuttle service was a success during the shutdown. He asked WMATA to consider continuing the shuttle service. He stated that NVTC is requesting that WMATA examine the parking rates and parking utilization, especially at the Huntington and Franconia/Springfield Metrorail Stations. Parking utilization at these two stations are chronically below other stations. WMATA should consider continuing the incentive to bring customers back to the stations. Mr. Leader stated that his staff will need to conduct a lesson learned discussion regarding these issues. Supervisor McKay stated that his constituents were impressed with the way WMATA and the region's transit agencies operated to lessen the impacts on commuters during the shutdown.

Supervisor Storck stated that his office would assist with any future surveys. He asked how long the platforms are expected to last. Mr. Leader responded that the concrete should last about 50 years or more. Regarding the general time frame for the next shutdown, Mr. Leader stated that it

is probably after Memorial Day of next year. They will try to stagger both the Green Line and Orange Line, and begin two weeks earlier than this year's shutdown. For the reconstruction work at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Station, Mr. Leader stated that they will work on one track at a time and allow the contractors to work on half of the platform. Supervisor Herrity stated that he is in supportive of the express bus routes.

3. Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit Alternatives in Tysons

Sean Schweitzer and Nanditha Paradkar, FCDOT, briefed the Committee on the alternatives for bus rapid transit (BRT) in the Tysons area. Fairfax County Route 7 BRT study is a detailed study within Tysons (west of I-66) to determine the multimodal cross-section and develop alignment with terminal station location for BRT operation. The study was initiated in October 2018 to conduct a qualitative and quantitative, assessment of alternatives. The study developed several measures of effectiveness (MOEs) and corridor alternatives separated by segments. Segment 1 is from Spring Hill Metrorail Station to International Drive; Segment 2 is from International Drive to I-495; and Segment 3 is from I-495 to I-66. The study evaluated three alternatives for Segment 1, and one alternative for Segments 2 and 3. Public outreach is planned for late 2019 to early 2020, and documentation by early summer 2020. A preliminary timeline for the project was presented; however, the actual schedule will depend on available funding. The presentation is available [online](#).

Supervisor Foust asked if normal buses could use BRT lanes in these alternatives. Tom Biesiadny, FCDOT Director, replied that at some locations such as turn lanes, BRT buses and normal buses probably will share the lanes. At locations where BRT buses run in the median, the median would be reserved exclusive for BRT buses. However, there are still many decisions to be made regarding the interaction between BRT and normal buses.

Supervisor Foust asked about funding for the project and its status. Mr. Biesiadny stated that there is funding to complete the study and Route 7 widening. Staff can continue to advance the Route 7 widening project to provide center median and areas for the BRT project while collecting revenues for the actual implementation of the BRT project. Supervisor Herrity asked if the study has ridership projections. Ms. Paradkar replied that the alternatives were based on ridership, population and employment forecasts. Mr. Biesiadny stated that NVTC produced ridership forecasts, and BRT was recommended as the most efficient and cost-effective mode of transit. Supervisor Herrity stated that if local buses and circulators could use BRT facilities, it could be the most efficient transit system. He also cautioned against having too many bus stops for the express bus routes. Mr. Biesiadny stated that when the Board of Supervisors adopted the Comprehensive Plan for Tysons in 2010, it was envisioned that there would be high-quality transit lines serving Tysons in addition to the Silver Line. Supervisor Herrity stated that the BRT project should not stop at the Mark Center in Alexandria, but also connect to the Pentagon via the I-395 High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes project. Mr. Biesiadny replied that there is existing service directly from the Mark Center to the Pentagon, and the BRT would complete that connection. Supervisor Herrity noted that people do not like to transfer.

Supervisor Hudgins asked about the plans regarding Route 7 going west from Tysons, and connections to Reston area. Mr. Biesiadny recalled that VDOT studies this about five years ago, and staff could incorporate some of the work into this BRT project.

4. Silver Line Phase 2 Implementation

Mark Canale and Martha Coello, FCDOT, briefed the Committee on the status of the Silver Line project. Regarding Phase 1, the design for Old Meadow Road realignment is complete, and construction completion is scheduled for the end of 2019. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) is working to complete work on the VDOT punchlist. Phase 2 is 96 percent complete. There are several scheduled shutdowns of the Wiehle Reston East Station for testing of Phase 2. WMATA is still evaluating remediation recommendations for ongoing issues with leveling of rail ties on the track work. WMATA accepted the remediation of cracks in precast panels at the rail yard and was working on an escrow account for future reapplication of the coating. However, there have been some issues with the initial application of the coating. The projected completion for the Innovation Center Station Garage is January 2020. The total budget for Phase 2 remains unchanged at \$2.778 billion. The presentation is available [online](#).

Mr. Canale announced that he will retire on September 30, 2019. Pam Rittenhouse, Senior Transportation Planner, who has been working for the Dulles Rail project will retire before Mr. Canale. She has over 31 years of service to the County. Ms. Coello will take over as the project manager. Commissioner Parnes stated that Mr. Canale, Ms. Rittenhouse and Ms. Coello were the recipients of the TAC Transportation Achievement Award in recent years. The Board thanked Mr. Canale and Ms. Rittenhouse for their service to the County and congratulated them on their retirements.

Supervisor Cook stated that the County should demand absolute honesty and transparency from WMATA in this project, even if it could potentially delay the opening. Supervisor Foust stated that he will introduce a Board Matter at the next Board of Supervisors meeting to send a supporting letter to WMATA General Manager Paul Wiedefeld. Chairman Bulova agreed with Supervisors Cook and Foust. She stated that it is critical having the contractors fix deficiencies and carry the costs. It is important for the County to ensure that the system WMATA will accept is safe and will not create problems in the future. Since the Board of Supervisors meeting is after the WMATA Board meeting, Chairman Bulova stated that her intention was to give the WMATA Board advance notice that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, at this Transportation Committee meeting, was in supportive for the positions that Mr. Wiedefeld was heading. Mr. Biesiadny stated that staff will communicate with the Virginia members of the WMATA Board regarding the County's position before the WMATA meeting. Mr. Hill, County Executive, stated that he, Mr. Wiedefeld, and other regional officials have been in constant communication regarding this issue.

Supervisor Gross asked if the design of parking garages include charging stations for electric vehicles. Mr. Canale replied that the design did accommodate those charging stations for future use.

Supervisor McKay stated that he agreed with the WMATA decision to reject the sealant as the solution to fix the vertical concrete panels. It could be a long-term maintenance problem and service disruption for WMATA in the future.

Mr. Biesiadny publicly thanked Mr. Canale for his service to the County and for his work on the Silver Line project.

5. Other Business

Barbara Byron, Director of Department of Planning and Development, briefed the Committee on the status of the Merrifield Site Specific Plan Amendment. The Task Force voted unanimously to recommend the approval of the Plan Amendment. Staff has just one different issue with the Task Force regarding the number of units. Due to the timing issue, there was not enough time to give the Board a full briefing. However, she offered to brief individual Supervisors if requested. There will be a public hearing at the Board meeting on September 24, 2019.

Mr. Biesiadny brought to the Committee's attention that the federal high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) hybrid vehicle exemptions will expire on September 30, 2019. The changes will affect drivers travelling on I-395, I-66 outside the Beltway and the Dulles Toll Road. The hybrid exemption on the HOV lanes on I-395 and I-66 that are being converted to HOT lanes this fall and in 2022 respectively, was due to expire when the conversions occurred. After September 30, most hybrid vehicles will not be allowed to use those HOV lanes, unless they have the required number of people in those vehicles.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next Transportation Committee meeting is scheduled for October 22, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.