

Arlington Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

7:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

+1 347-973-6905, 38838525#

Phone Conference ID: 388 385 25#

TAC Members Present:

John Carten
Herschel Kanter
Laura MacNeil
Richard Price
Kate Garman
Andrew McAllister
Harvey Berlin
Alexa Mavroidis
James Davenport
Erika Chiang

Attendees Present:

Pierre Holloman (staff)
Lynn Rivers (staff)
William Jones (staff)
Robin McElhenny (staff)
Kirk Dand (staff)
Paul Mounier (staff)
Cala Fils (staff)
Jim Larsen (staff)
David Johansson
1 name not provided

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.

Public Comment

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

Approval of Meeting Notes from November 10, 2020 TAC Meeting

- The meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Diversity & Inclusion Discussion & Changes to the TAC Charter

- Pierre Holloman provided an overview of Arlington’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. It was noted that in September 2019, the County Board adopted an Equity Resolution and as a furtherance to this commitment; Arlington County Government and Arlington Public Schools participated in a 10-month racial equity cohort program convened by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, specifically identifying racial equity as a priority. Mr. Holloman also stated that recently, Samia Byrd was named as the Chief Race and Equity Officer for Arlington County. In this role, Ms. Byrd will work to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion both internal and external to the organization. It was also noted on January 31, 2021, there will be an online dialogue on Race and Equity from 10:00 am – noon via challengingracism.org.
- Mr. Holloman stated that other Committees are looking into modifying their charters to include language on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Mr. Holloman also provided proposed additional language to the TAC charter to be in line with the charters of other Committees to include:
 - Consideration of adding a “Vice Chair” to the “Membership” section; and,
 - Consideration of noting that TAC members are expected to participate regularly, and will be subject to dismissal if attendance at regular meetings falls below 50% in one calendar year
- The TAC noted that the proposed additional language were great suggestions. It was asked if the TAC ever a Vice Chair and the overall thought had was that adding a Vice Chair will provide value to the TAC especially if the Chair is unable to attend a meeting. It was noted that the TAC can move forward with concurrence with the proposed additional language at the March 9, 2021 meeting if the TAC chose to do so. If such occurs, the final adoption will be sent to the County Manager’s office for final approval and inclusion.
- Mr. Holloman turned over the discussion of possibly including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion language into the TAC charter to the TAC Chair, John Carten, by asking the TAC the following questions:
 - What does Diversity, Equity and Inclusion mean to you?
 - What does Diversity, Equity and Inclusion mean for the TAC?
- The following is a summary of ideas shared by TAC members regarding what Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) means to each individual:
 - Way of life and a wakeup call to many issues which still exist today
 - Important based on the values we hold
 - Important to understand how others feel and what we can do to ensure fairness
 - A reflection of Arlington and America as a whole
 - Including different individuals and opinions into the conversation, find ways to ensure inclusiveness
 - Fairness among communities which should benefit all equally

- Seek to understand one another better
 - Awareness
 - Necessary for our future and to ensure sustainability and progress
 - Continuing process of understanding the evolution of many different aspects of DEI
 - Stay aware of community and societal trends and shifts
- The following is a summary of ideas shared by TAC members regarding what does Diversity, Equity and Inclusion means to the TAC:
 - Need to understand transit as well as communities which are served by public transportation, important that everyone has access to service as well as to information provided at TAC meetings
 - Finding ways to include more people to participate within the TAC
 - Ensure that Arlington's demographic representation is included in the conversation and try to make sure that the TAC is a fair representation of Arlington on everything from race, ethnic background, income, gender, age, and location
 - Hard to attract people to volunteer for the committee as it has been tough to find people who have interest and willingness to serve, would love to have more diversity as a whole
 - It is very important to understand the community and how transit serves everyone, transit should operate without blinders and so such the TAC
 - Fairness overall in serving on the TAC and looking at transit, staff, and other TAC members without any bias
 - Understanding shifts in where people travel, live, work, and play
 - Be able to make fair and unbiased analysis of plans, proposals, budget items by staff brought before the TAC to better inform the County Manager
 - It was asked by the TAC if staff can overlay existing transit service, stations, and stops with minority and low-income groups within Arlington. It was noted that such would be a useful tool when it comes to looking at service changes and route changes. Staff noted that such is done as part of service change evaluations and analysis as staff follows FTA Title VI guidelines for such. Mr. Holloman noted that TAC members are welcome to send draft language on possible inclusion of DEI statement(s) into the TAC charter. It was noted that the TAC will continue the DEI and additional charter language discussion at the March 9, 2021 TAC meeting.

Update on CIP and DRPT Capital Grant Applications for FY22

- Robin McElhenny provide an overview of the draft FY22 Transit CIP and applications which are being proposed to be submitted to DRPT as part of DRPT FY22 Capital Assistance Grant. It was noted that projects included in the draft FY22 Transit CIP includes projects in design phase such as the Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility, the Transitway Extension to Pentagon City, Crystal City Metro Station East Entrance, and the Ballston-MU Metro Station West Entrance. As well as projects which are under construction and soon to be under construction such as Ballston Multimodal Improvements and Pentagon

City Second Elevator. It was noted that there are not many changes from the prior CIP which was approved in July 2020; however, some the expenditures are being modified for each fiscal year based on a project's/program's current status.

- Regarding the FY22 DRPT Capital Assistance grants, it was noted the County is considering applying for the following projects/programs: Bus Stop Accessibility Improvements; Bus Stops/Shelters & Amenities; Transit Signal Priority; Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility, Ballston West Entrance, Pentagon City Second Elevator, Arlington Transit Buses and Assets. Applications are due on February 1, 2021. It is expected that DRPT will provide its draft list of projects/programs for funding in April 2021 with the Commonwealth Transportation Board voting on such recommended projects at their June 2021 meeting.

Update on Arlington Transit's Shirlington Road Operations & Maintenance Facility Design and Public Outreach

- Pierre Holloman went over the goals of the project to include but not limited to addressing Arlington Transit's need for bus parking as well as facility needs for operations and maintenance; to improve reliability and reduce operating cost; and sustainability for the future. It was noted that Arlington Transit faces many challenges today to include but not limited to: utilizing an existing inadequate maintenance facility in Alexandria, VA, over \$800,000 in annual expenses on deadhead operational cost from taking buses to and from the Alexandria maintenance facility, traffic on I-395 and I-495 creates challenges with reliability, and for a fleet size of under 120 buses (78 to be exact), Arlington Transit operates out of four different facilities, which is not efficient nor sustainable.
- It was noted that the project is being delivered through Construction Management At Risk (CMAR) method. The County entered into A/E Design Contract with Stantec in September 2020. The current Project Team (County & Stantec) met with the Green Valley Civic Association and Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC project specific) in December 2020. It was stated that the CMAR contract expected to be considered for award by the County Board in February 2021 and the next public meeting and PRFC meeting will be held in February 2021. It was also noted that the TAC will receive a detailed presentation provided by the Project Team at the March 9, 2021 TAC meeting. An overview of the site, site restrictions, preliminary concept design and challenges related to such, and the alternate concept plan was provided to the TAC. General feedback received at the prior Green Valley Civic Association meetings and December PFRC meeting was shared with the TAC.
- It was noted that TAC member Richard Price sits on the project specific of the PRFC reviewing this project. It was noted that the PFRC project specific members raised concerns about the side and location of the proposed parking garage on the western parcel of land. It was also noted that the project should add elements based on the feedback of some adjacent Green Valley community members in terms of what they would like to see for the site including but not limited to use of the parking garage and a higher buildout in terms of height of the proposed maintenance and operations building on the eastern parcel. It was also

noted that some PRFC project specific members were looking for more details on how the buildings would look.

- Several TAC members wanted to ensure that the site works for Arlington Transit operations and wanted to sure that Arlington Transit can operate safely on the site. There were questions on if the facility has a significant impact on the adjacent community as it is located within an existing industrial site. There was also questions on why the proposed parking garage would be open for the public due to the location of the site and security required for Arlington Transit as a whole.

WMATA Budget and Service Update

- Kirk Dand provided an update on WMATA's proposed changes to the FY21 budget. The preliminary estimate is that Metro will receive approximately \$610 million from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021, of which \$95.6 million is proposed to be allocated to the FY2021 operating budget. Revisions to the previously approved budget and in response to customer requests and current demand, Metro will restore and increase Metrobus service to ensure service for essential trips and provide extra capacity to maintain social distancing. WMATA's proposed Metrobus solutions include maintaining 78% of pre-pandemic service to serve essential trips with improvements phased in until reaching 82% of pre-pandemic service in May 2021. WMATA has proposed no additional change to Metrorail service. Instead, Metrorail would maintain the FY2021 service levels approved by the Board on November 19, 2020 including retention of: 5:00 am to 11:00 pm daily operating hours; standardize weekday and off-peak rail service frequencies on each line, and open Silver Line Phase 2: July 1, 2021. While the proposed budget amendment would restore more than 1,200 FTE positions to Metro's FY2021 budget that were scheduled to be eliminated in February, WMATA will continue workforce reductions through attrition, voluntary departures, and efficiency-driven non-voluntary reductions.
- Mr. Dand noted that platform reconstruction work at the National Airport Metro Station, which began on August 7, was completed over the weekend on December 13. This was the eleventh station to have undergone platform repairs. As one of the few stations with three tracks, the station remained open during all three phases of construction, with one track taken out of service at a time. Improvements include rebuilding the platform edge, installing new slip-resistant tiles on the platform. Additional improvements such as installing larger Passenger Information Displays and new platform shelters, will be completed later.
- The TAC inquired about if funding from PRIA would be impacted as a result of the budget changes. It was noted that PRIA will not be impacted. The TAC also asked if the lack of dedicated funding impacted the capital side as well as the operating side of WMATA. It was noted by staff that the operating budget is impacted by the lack of dedicated funding.

Arlington Transit & STAR Performance and Service Update

- William Jones provided an overview of Arlington Transit's pandemic response as well as performance updates for both Arlington Transit and STAR. Arlington Transit began front door boarding and fare collection on January 3, 2021 to align with Metrobus fare collection reinstatement. Arlington Transit also installed bus operator/barriers on all buses, provided an updated safety video to announce fare collection and use of the new SmarTrip app, will continue to evaluate ridership trends as well as maintain social distance and mask requirements on all buses.
- For FY21 quarter 2, Arlington Transit's ridership decreased 56.8% compared to FY20 quarter 2. Overall in FY21, Arlington Transit has seen a 55.3% decrease in ridership year to date as compared to FY20 which is a result of reduced travel during the covid-19 pandemic. STAR's FY21 quarter 2 ridership decreased 70.7% compared to FY20 quarter 2. Overall in FY21, STAR's ridership decreased 67.9% year to date as compared to FY20.
- Arlington Transit has seen an increase in on time performance in FY21 and currently stands at 86.8%. The increase is attributed to improvements with on-street supervision and service monitoring activities. Arlington Transit has also seen a 33% decrease in the number of road calls in FY21 as compared to FY20 due to the additional of new buses and improved processes in maintenance. With the transition to a new contract service provider (First Transit) on December 29, 2019, Arlington Transit has seen a 90% decrease in missed trips in FY21 as compared to FY20.
- Mr. Jones noted that the Monthly Reports for FY21 will appear on the Arlington Transit site (<https://arlingtontransit.com>). It was noted that a performance metric dashboard is under development and will initially contain Ridership, On-Time, Performance, Service and Fleet Performance. Mr. Jones noted that this will be shared with the TAC in the spring of 2021.

Report from Accessibility Subcommittee

- Subcommittee Chair Alexa Mavroidis noted that the subcommittee did not meet before the January TAC meeting; moreover, there was not a report.

Additional Items from Committee Members and Staff

- No additional items were reported.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 pm.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021.