

Arlington Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

7:00 PM

Microsoft Teams Meeting

+1 347-973-6905,,86130951# Phone Conference ID: 861 309 51#

TAC Members Present:

John Carten
Laura MacNeil
Deidre Grant
Richard Price
Alexa Mavroidis
Herschel Kanter
Harvey Berlin
Andrew McAllister
James Davenport

Attendees Present:

Lynn Rivers (staff)
Pierre Holloman (staff)
William Jones (staff)
Robin McElhenny (staff)
Kirk Dand (staff)
Paul Mounier (staff)
Cala Fils (staff)
June Locker (staff)
Andre Stafford (WMATA)
Greg Shipley
Jiaxin Tong
Gordon Chaffin
Rodney Thomas
Ellen Kelly
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 January 12, 2021 TAC Meeting

- The meeting notes were amended to correct the spelling of Laura MacNeil's last name. The amended meeting notes were approved unanimously.

Proposed TAC Charter Amendments (cont. from 1/12/21 meeting)

- Pierre Holloman provided an overview of the prior TAC discussion on TAC amendment changes held on January 12, 2021. Mr. Holloman noted the following **proposed changes**:
 - Membership Section
 - All members will serve at the pleasure of and can be removed from the Committee by the County Manager. **Committee 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 Committee will designate a member to serve as Chair **and Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be responsible for reviewing meeting agendas, overseeing Transit Advisory Committee meetings and facilitating any official correspondence.**
- The TAC inquired about if there is language regarding the dismissal of a TAC member. Mr. Holloman noted the existing TAC Charter includes language which state, “All members will serve at the pleasure of and can be removed from the Committee by the County Manager.”
- A motion was made by Mr. Price and seconded by Mr. McAllister to recommend the noted **changes to the Membership section of the TAC Charter** to the County Manager for final approval. The **noted changes** were approved unanimously.
- Mr. Holloman noted such changes will be forwarded to the County Manager for final approval in July 2021 as there may be additional changes to the TAC charter to include language or a statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I). Mr. Holloman provided ***draft D.E.I language for the TAC’s consideration:***
- ***Mission Section***
 - ***The Committee will help with Arlington County’s ongoing efforts to maintain and build an inclusive, open, and engaged environment where differences of beliefs, opinions, and values are integral to success.***
- The TAC noted that it supports Arlington’s ongoing efforts for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It was noted that D.E.I is an important element of the County’s transportation network and should be a focal point in connecting communities to make the County’s transportation system work better. It was mentioned that Arlington is densely populated and bridging neighborhoods through transit is essential to improvements in the quality of life of those who live, work, and visit Arlington. Mr. Holloman stated that further discussion on the proposed D.E.I language can be held during the May 11, 2021 TAC meeting. Mr. Carten requested that TAC members send any ideas or thoughts on the proposed language to Mr. Holloman prior to the May 11, 2021 TAC meeting.

Presentation on Arlington Transit’s Shirlington Road Administration, Operations & Maintenance Facility Project

- Pierre Holloman provided an overview of the Arlington Transit Shirlington Road Administration, Operations, and Maintenance Facility project. Mr. Holloman introduced Greg Shipley from Stantec (the lead design consultant).

- Mr. Shipley provided an overview of the project's scope and goals as well as an update on the current status of the project. The project site includes two parcels of land along Shirlington Road (major and minor) which are divided by an existing stream channel. The preliminary concept of the project includes a common campus identity, an inviting pedestrian environment while supporting site access control, visibility promoting sustainable initiatives and workspace environments as well as many other elements. Preliminary site design includes a 3-story operations and maintenance building, parking for 60 buses not including spaces inside the maintenance bays on the larger parcel of land adjacent to I-395 and Shirlington Road (minor) and an administrative building and parking facility on the smaller parcel of land adjacent to Shirlington Road (major/minor).
- It was noted that as part of the design dialogue, there was a public outreach process which sought opinions on various design options. Mr. Shipley stated there was a public meeting held on February 16, 2021 and there was a Public Facilities Review Committee (PFRC) held on February 17, 2021 to go over the design options. Information on the design options as well as a recording of the presentations were posted on the project's webpage and public comments were sought on 4 design options. Over 200 comments had been received as of March 9, 2021.
- Mr. Shipley briefed the TAC on comments received from prior public meetings and PFRC meetings on the project. During prior public and PFRC meetings, there were questions regarding flooding along Shirlington Road (minor) and public access to the stream channel. There were also question on how the project will address stormwater management, what improvements will be made to the stream channel, and questions raised about sustainability and creating an energy efficient facility. Electric bus charging was also a focal point made during both the prior public and PRFC meetings. Traffic study, pedestrian circulation, pedestrian safety, fencing, the heights of proposed buildings, and the need to have a structured parking facility were also topics which came up during the prior public and PFRC meetings.
- Mr. Shipley provided an overview of the project schedule. It was noted that one goal for the project is to have the schematic design completed by the end of summer 2021. Overall, the goal is to move the project into construction by the spring of 2022 with a completion date of fall 2024. It was noted that there will be additional public engagement opportunities in the spring of 2021 as the project team will work to incorporate the feedback received from the public meetings, PFRC, and public comment period into a revised design.
- The TAC inquired about pedestrian safety along Shirlington Road (major) and if there will be pedestrian improvements made as part of this project. Mr. Shipley noted that there will be improvements made to the sidewalk and curb ramps adjacent to the project site along Shirlington Road major and minor to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and guidelines are met.
- The TAC expressed some concern regarding prior public comments regarding providing public access to the stream channel and wanted to ensure that this project is not making the stream channel more than it is. It was noted that there is no where to go or walk if there was public access as there is limited space and the stream channel in that location does not lead to anywhere.

- The TAC asked about the community benefits for this project and what opportunities are there for community use. Lynn Rivers noted there has been some consideration; however, a decision has yet to be finalized as the proposed facility will be an active 24/7 operation, and there must be a focus on safety and security.
- The TAC inquired about the potential for green space and trees on the western parcel of land adjacent to Shirlington Road minor and major. Mr. Shipley noted the design of the western parcel will include green space and a tree canopy around the proposed building.
- The TAC asked will buses run non-revenue service through the Green Valley neighborhood once the facility is constructed. Mr. Holloman noted that non-revenue buses will not be routed through the Green Valley neighborhood.
- Rodney Thomas stated [he] used to drive transit buses for Maryland MTA and RideOn in Montgomery County and works in a facility near the project site. Mr. Thomas noted that the project will be a major improvement to the area and for bus operators. Mr. Thomas suggested the addition of security cameras and better lighting in the area along Shirlington Road minor due to individuals drinking by the stream and painting graffiti.
- The TAC asked to be briefed and updated by the project team at future TAC meetings.

WMATA Proposed Budget and Service Changes Update

- Kirk Dand provided an update on WMATA's proposed FY2022 budget. Mr. Dand noted that WMATA's FY'22 budget is currently being calculated using the federal relief funds from Dec 27, 2020. This budget assumes a July 1, 2021 Silver Line phase 2 start of revenue service (reports were published by the Washington Post, WTOP and others stating that the substantial completion should occur around Labor Day instead of July 1, 2021 – the WMATA Board is planning to discuss this at their March 11, 2021 Board Meeting).
- At the February 25, 2021 WMATA Board meeting, it was noted that criteria were developed for the consideration of Metrorail station temporary shut down due to FY2022 budget constraints:
 - Ridership, businesses in the area that are open, other services at station that can be used
- Mr. Dand noted that WMATA was asked to review the results of the criteria again to ensure that the stations listed are currently meeting, or are projected to meet, the criteria listed for temporary closure keeping in mind that a lot can change in the span of the nearly 10 months from March 2021 until January 2022 when the service cuts are scheduled to go into effect. Per WMATA, the length of the shutdown of the station, if necessary, is currently projected to be a period of 6 months (January 1, 2022, until the end of the fiscal budget year (June 30, 2022)). The proposed FY2022 budget also takes a conservative approach to ridership.
- Mr. Dand stated that the Arlington Cemetery Metrorail station will be closed through Sunday, May 23, 2021, to allow for construction. The around the clock closure allow WMATA to minimize service impacts across the regional network and restore normal service faster than would otherwise be possible. Service details, shuttle bus information and other travel alternatives are listed below and available at wmata.com/platforms.

WMATA is offering free shuttle bus service and other travel alternatives during the closure the station.

- The TAC inquired when will operation of the Silver Line phase II likely start. Mr. Dand stated that it is too early to actually say as such is based on substantial completion and WMATA's budget situation.
- The TAC expressed concerns about the potential closure of Metrorail stations especially Metrorail stations in Arlington.

Report from Accessibility Subcommittee

- Alexa Mavroidis noted the Accessibility Subcommittee did have a meeting where people gave public comment. Those who provided comments asked about how to get notices and messages about STAR. It was noted there has been a lot of back and forth from members of the visually impaired community on figuring out how and what is the best way to get information to them. There was also feedback provided about shared rides as based on observations, it looks like individuals are riding by themselves. There was one issue brought up about the Call Center not being open on weekends and what a STAR riders will need to do to attend a vaccination appointment on weekends. William Jones noted that STAR riders can book trips in advance for vaccinations.

Additional Items from Committee Members and Staff

- No additional items provided.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 11, 2021.