

**Arlington Transit Advisory Committee  
Meeting Notes  
January 16, 2024  
7:00 PM  
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**YouTube Meeting Video Link:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JwoT7hIU\\_A&list=PLG4RcwV9VbMTkc\\_ROPC9O30NIUkWitXLt&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JwoT7hIU_A&list=PLG4RcwV9VbMTkc_ROPC9O30NIUkWitXLt&index=6)

**TAC Members Present:**

John Carten	Frank Krol	David Sisson
James Davenport	Herschel Kanter	Alexa Mavroidis
Mariela Garcia-Colberg	Alexander Cumana	

**Attendees Present:**

Lynn Rivers (staff)	Pierre Holloman (staff)	Robin McElhenny (staff)
Clinton Edwards (staff)	Kirk Dand (staff)	Diana Isaza (staff)
Rocco Visconti (staff)	Lauren Breyer (staff)	Paul Mounier (staff)
Steven Frazier (staff)	Ritesh Parikh (staff)	Edwin Montano (staff)
Diane Trent (staff)	Kenex Sevilla (staff)	Tim Brulle (staff)
Andre Stafford (WMATA)	Jiixin Tong	Maria Martinez
RoseAnn Ashby	Kent Keyser	Sue Gutiérrez
Doris Ray		

**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**

- RoseAnn Ashby noted the following, “I also use Metrobus [and] ART buses when in familiar areas and where I can cross the streets, and I use Metrorail. I've been on this committee, in fact, a number of years ago, but anyway, I wanted to commend you for your proposed business rules for the Accessibility Subcommittee. Many of us in the disability community want to see this subcommittee strengthened. We want it to be representative of a wide variety of folks with disabilities. We think that will help the committee the Subcommittee be effective and representative of our needs. So, I do want to thank you for those of you who worked on those proposed business rules. And I'm sorry you don't have a quorum because I was hoping that they would be passed tonight. But thank you so much.”

- Doris Ray noted the following after the public comment period had closed, “I work at the Independence Center of Northern Virginia and as director of advocacy, and I’m also a member of the Arlington County Disability Advisory Commission. I wanted to mention something that is happening right now that I think it is extremely important. I would hope to this committee as well as the Transportation Commission and that is that we as a region are facing. The potential loss of uh Metro bus, Metro Rail and metro access services. Through drastic cuts in their budget and this will affect bus and rail service and station openings, and if it goes into effect and it’s very important for us as Virginia residents to be in contact with our state legislators right now. Because there are, there’s a need to increase the Northern Virginia Regional Transportation Commissions budget. From the state and regarding it, it’s a fund for maintenance and operation of all three of those services operated by WMATA and it will affect uh art and especially star residents in the services that they get if these drastic cuts go into effect. And one thing that could help it is if we could increase the percentage beyond the 3% cap for increases to that fund and bills are in the General Assembly now and we should be contacting Arlington and Northern Virginia legislators, particularly on the transportation committees in the House and Senate as well as on the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee and the House Appropriations Committee and its Subcommittee on Transportation to ask them to increase the 3% to whatever is necessary to meet the short foreign budget. For WMATA of \$750,000,000, so the whole region is working on this. Thank you for your support for this.”

#### **Approval of Minutes from the November 14, 2023, Meeting**

- The amended meeting notes were approved unanimously after quorum was reached.

#### **Review and approval of Draft Business Rules for TAC Accessibility Subcommittee**

- Item entered discussion prior to obtaining a quorum, additional discussion and a motion was passed after the TAC reached a quorum. John Carten noted that since December, staff has worked on drafting business rules and he, the Chair of the Accessibility Subcommittee, Alexa Mavroidis and Vice Chair of the TAC, James Davenport reviewed the draft and felt it was the right thing to do. It was noted that the draft business rules were sent to the TAC and TAC Accessibility Subcommittee ahead of both meetings. Herschel Kanter noted that the business rules were discussed during the TAC Accessibility Subcommittee meeting and there was some exception taken to the wording that an Accessibility Subcommittee member could be dismissed / removed from the Subcommittee by the TAC Chair. It was suggested that language be added to note, “with cause.” Alexa Mavroidis noted that the hope is to get 7 members due to the lack of attendance. It was noted that the comments from the public have been supportive and positive for the draft business rules. Motion was made to include “with cause,” into the draft Business Rules after, “All members will serve at the pleasure of and can be removed from the Subcommittee by the TAC Chair and to adopt the draft business rules with this addition. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### **Update on Transit Capital Projects: Crystal City Metro East Entrance, Ballston-MU Metro West Entrance, East Falls Church Metro Bus Bay Expansion, Shirlington Bus Station Expansion, Floating Bus Stops**

- Robin McElhenny provided an overview of projects in the Transit Capital Program which would be highlighted including East Falls Church Bus Bay Expansion, the Crystal City Metro Station East Entrance project, Ballston Metro Station West Entrance, the Shirlington Transit Center Expansion, and Floating Bus Stops.

- Tim Brulle provided an update on the Crystal City Metro Station East Entrance project and noted the Comprehensive Agreement for East Entrance, LLC to perform Final Design and Construction was approved in July 2023. This included a contract award of \$117.2M which brings the project budget to \$141.6M. In September 2023, Arlington approved a Project Coordination Agreement with WMATA for the cost of \$9.4M which sets the requirements for the Project to be designed and constructed in accordance with WMATA's standards, guidelines, and policies. In January 2024, Arlington issued Notice-to-Proceed to Gannett Fleming for Construction Management and Quality Assurance Services. Contract award \$8.2M. Final design started in August 2023 and construction is expected to start in fall 2024. Construction is anticipated to last 2.5 years with the new entrance opening in April 2027.
- For the East Falls Church Bus Bay Expansion project, Robin McElhenny mentioned that Arlington will be replacing the existing shelters and the existing signal at the bus loop entrance as well as adding three new bus bays at the East Falls Church Metro. This project will also make improvements for pedestrians going to and from the Park and Ride lot and improvements to the accessible parking at the station. All improvements as part of the project will make the station ADA compliant. The total project budget is \$12.7M. The project is wrapping up 100% design and it is anticipated that the invitation to bid will be issued in March 2024 with a notice to proceed to the selected contractor in May 2024.
- For the Ballston West Entrance project, Robin McElhenny noted the project's goals of designing and constructing a second entrance at Fairfax Drive at N Vermont Street. This project will enhance the connectivity within the Ballston area by extending the walkshed where pedestrians can access the station by nearly one-quarter of a mile. This project will also provide additional egress for evacuations during emergencies and will relieve congestion along both platforms by providing more distribution. The adopted FY23-32 CIP anticipated cost is \$150M. STV is finalizing the 35% design plans with an anticipated completion in the spring 2024. Staff is currently working on developing procurement documents including scope of work and evaluation criteria for issuance of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) followed by Request for Proposal (RFP) for Design-Build services.
- Diana Isaza provided an overview of the Shirlington Transit Center Expansion project. This project will expand the station's capacity to improve integration between various transit providers and increase capacity to accommodate future service increases from Arlington Transit, WMATA Metrobus, and the West End Transitway BRT. Right now, staff is looking into how the existing facility can be expanded including looking at the parking lot adjacent to the existing station as a potential area of expansion. In July 2023, staff submitted this project for consideration of regional funding to the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA). In January 2024, a task order was issued for a feasibility study for the site. This feasibility study and a preliminary concept design is expected to be completed by the fall of 2024.
- Edwin Montano gave an overview of floating bus stops which are being designed and implemented in Arlington. Floating bus stops provide dedicated waiting and boarding areas for passenger and a boarding island to allow creation of accessible in-lane stops. The boarding island is separated from sidewalks by bike channels/lanes. Safety metal railing provides a separation barrier between cyclists and pedestrians. There are designs underway for 25 floating bus stops. Several have been included including but not limited to one on Wilson Blvd at N Pierce Street and several in Pentagon City near Amazon's HQ2 building.

- Robin McElhenny noted that Arlington's FY25-FY32 Transit CIP is currently in the process of development. The CIP includes many of the prior projects in the last CIP which was adopted in 2022, but also includes new projects such as Arlington Transit's transition to zero emissions. Arlington Transit will be seeking funding from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation as part of FY25 Capital Assistance grant request for battery electric bus infrastructure at the Arlington Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility, which is under construction, the replacement of 8 CNG buses with 8 battery electric buses, bus stop accessibility improvements, bus stop and bus shelter state of good repair, and transit signal priority.
- John Carten noted enhancing safety at floating bus stops is good to see including but not limited to the railings to keep the pedestrians crossing and the crosswalk so that they are not surprised by cyclist. It was noted that the focus should be on the pedestrian. John Carten also inquired about the impact the number of parking spaces that are there at East Falls Church? Kenex Sevilla noted that the project would only reduce parking by one space. TAC Member David Sisson asked about benchmarking on projects particularly related to cost compared to similar projects which have been completed in Arlington and/or by other agencies. Robin McElhenny stated that the cost of the WMATA projects fall in line with cost of other WMATA projects in the region mainly due to their complexity. For non-WMATA projects, the costs have been going up due to inflation, supply chain, and other challenges; moreover, it is difficult to compare prior projects and easier to compare other concurrent projects.

#### **Data on Arlington Transit's Fall 2023 Fare Free Rush Program**

- Paul Mounier stated funding for Arlington Transit's Fall 2023 fare free rush program was provided by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's I-66 Commuter Choice program. Compared to October-November 2022 to October-November 2023, Arlington Transit saw a 22.8% increase in ridership during the am peak and a 36.3% increase during the pm peak. The biggest gains between October – November 2022 to the same time period in 2023 were on the ART 45 (52.5%), the ART 62 (82.1%), the ART 74 (96.5%) and the ART 84 (57.9%). Overall, in terms of ridership in general, November 2023 saw big gains on the ART 45 (50.4% increase compared to November 2022), the ART 52 (53.9% increase compared to November 2022), the ART 62 (48.9% increase compared to November 2022), the ART 74 (57.1% increase compared to November 2022), the ART 75 (44.8% increase compared to November 2022), and the ART 84 (31.7% increase compared to November 2022).
- The TAC noted that the fare free rush program seems to be a success with the ridership increases and hopefully ART gained some new riders. Paul Mounier noted that ART's ridership growth has been consistent over the past two years, 2 1/2 years, ridership has been trending up at between 11.5% to about 13 to 14% year over year. The TAC asked about the Monumental Sports announcement regarding a proposed new arena in the City of Alexandria, right across the boarder from Arlington and how such may play a role with future ART service. Paul Mounier commented that staff is following this very closely and more discussion will be had internally with ART as well as with WMATA if the arena moves forward.

#### **WMATA Deficit Update**

- Kirk Dand mentioned that the FY25 proposed operating budget excluding reimbursables and debt service stands at \$1.8 billion. That reflects a 23% decrease from the FY24 budget due to substantial service cuts that are projected. The projections indicated 23% reduction in passenger revenue to \$310.7 million and a 12.2% decrease in non-passenger revenue. Despite these challenges, the budget incorporates the remaining \$95 million in federal relief funding available in FY25 and stays within the 3% cap for the jurisdictional subsidy to address the FY25 operating

deficit and fulfill the balanced budget requirement outlined in the WMATA Compact, the FY25 proposed budget utilizes all accessible in all accessible internal measures to close the \$750 million operating deficit. For robust fiscal management and oversight, metro has identified a substantial \$95 million in one time savings, surpassing the initial This enables the extension of federal relief funding into early FY25. Additional savings of \$50 million have been realized through reductions in consulting services, digital transformation, enhanced asset management and administrative efficiencies. Acknowledging the fiscal reality, the FY25 proposed budget implements as a freeze on salaries and wages, contributing an additional \$38 million in savings on personnel expenses.

- Due to the anticipated reduction in ridership due to the substantial service cuts, the revenue forecast has been adjusted by \$67 million. That, paired with the anticipated rate of inflation, offsets the savings by \$59 million by flexing preventive maintenance costs from operating to capital, another \$193 million in savings can be realized. That reduces the \$750 million deficit to \$433 million through service cuts and fare increases so that the budget can be balanced. The FY25 proposed budget introduces significant measures to tackle financial challenges, including unprecedented service cuts to Metrorail and Metrobus and universal fare increase. Metro Bus service is set to undergo an approximate 33% reduction, resulting in the elimination of 67 lines and reduced service on 41 lines. Metrorail service cuts include extending headways, turn backs, and reddened turn backs on the red and red line and silver line closing 10 stations and the system wide closing time of 10:00 PM. Additionally, Metro access service will be adjusted to align with the reduced levels of Metro Rail and Metrobus. The budget also suggests a 20% general increase in fares and parking fees. The Finance Committee authorized the WMATA General Manager proposed FY25 budget to move forward for full board approval for public comment and public hearings at last.

### **Report from the Accessibly Subcommittee**

- Alexa Mavroidis stated that the Accessibility Subcommittee talked about the draft business rules and there was overall support for such additions. There was also discussion regarding an upcoming public engagement opportunity at the end of January for STAR service end STAR policy changes at the Arlington Central Library; however, there is not much additional information which could be provided.

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

- John Carten noted that Arlington Transit will be holding a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on January 24, 2024 from 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm at the Bozman Government Center. John Carten called on Steven Frazier to provide more information. Steven Frazier noted that the event will host different speakers including John Carten. The speakers will talk about what ART has meant to the community over the last 25 years. There will also be extra things at the celebration including live music from a former Arlington County Board member.

### **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.

### **Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be online on Tuesday, March 12, 2024.