



MEETING MATERIALS

**For NVTC WMATA Committee Meeting
DECEMBER 18, 2019**



**NVTC WMATA COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019
NVTC Conference Room – Suite #230
2300 Wilson Blvd. – Arlington, VA 22201**

8:30 A.M. – 10:00 A.M.

AGENDA

1. Approval of the September 18, 2019 NVTC WMATA Committee Meeting Summary
2. WMATA FY2021 Budget Comments
3. Bus Transformation Project Update
4. 2020 Meeting Schedule and Workplan
5. Other Items of Jurisdictional Importance

Members

Cathy Hudgins (Chairman)
Matt Letourneau
Paul Smedberg
David Meyer
David Snyder
Christian Dorsey
Canek Aguirre



**NVTC WMATA COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY
NVTC Conference Room, Suite #230
2300 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, Virginia
September 18, 2019**

NVTC WMATA Committee Members Present:

Cathy Hudgins, Chair
Canek Aguirre
Christian Dorsey
Matt Letourneau
David Meyer
Paul Smedberg
David Snyder

Others Present:

Kate Mattice, Executive Director
Matt Cheng
Andrew D'huyvetter
Allan Fye
Zach Smith
Bob Brown

Todd Horsley
Penny Newquist
Greg Potts
Chloe Ritter
Tim Roseboom
Jen Slesinger

Chair Hudgins called the WMATA Committee meeting to order at 8:37 A.M.

The committee accepted the minutes of the previous meeting.

Chair Hudgins provided an overview on the development of the *Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA*. Since the June WMATA Committee meeting and the September Commission meeting, NVTC staff have incorporated Commissioner and jurisdictional staff comments to produce a full draft of the report.

Mr. D'huyvetter presented the Data Chapter and the Strategies to Reduce Cost and Improve Efficiencies Chapter to the committee. He discussed the differences in how WMATA calculates Metrorail on-time performance (OTP), the availability and accuracy of Metrobus OTP data and how reporting OTP data for both modes will be managed in the Annual Report. Mr. D'huyvetter also provided an update on safety and reliability metrics but mentioned that much of the data in these sections of the report will need to be updated when FY2018 data from the National Transit Database is available.

Ms. Mattice added that NVTC's proposed Legislative and Policy Agenda includes a technical fix to change the due date of the *Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA* from November 1st to December 15th in order for the committee and the Commission to review the NTD data before the report is sent to the General Assembly.

Mr. Aguirre arrived at 8:51 A.M.

Mr. Smedberg asked if NVTC staff had asked if there was anything that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) would like to include in the report. Ms. Mattice responded that any information that CTB or other stakeholders requested was integrated into the report.

Mr. Meyer arrived at 8:53 A.M.

Mr. D'huyvetter presented the Uses of the Funds Chapter to the committee. Mr. Smedberg asked if the report would highlight the Platform Improvement Project. Mr. D'huyvetter asked the committee if the narrative for the Uses of the Fund Chapter should include a more detailed narrative. The committee agreed. Mr. Dorsey added that the committee should be cautious about making a direct link between Virginia's dedicated capital funding and specific projects because the dedicated funding can be used across the system on any capital project.

Mr. Snyder included weekend rail service, first and last-mile issues, and bus fare evasion as items that the report should be prepared to address. Mr. D'huyvetter responded that sections of the report address those concerns including the appendices, but the points that are not explicitly address in this year's report can be considered for next year's Annual Report.

Mr. Letourneau identified the fatality measure as potentially misleading because suicides could be a significant factor in the increase. Mr. D'huyvetter agreed to provide context to that metric.

Mr. Snyder suggested including lessons learned from the Platform Improvement Project and how they will be applied to future station closures. Mr. Dorsey added that the committee should think about a product that clarifies what the challenges were and how to address them in the future. Ms. Mattice responded that NVTC staff have been involved in discussions with jurisdictions and WMATA on what was learned from closing the stations in the summer and that there may be a few strategic places to include this in the report. However, NVTC staff is thinking of ways to address lessons learned in a more comprehensive way outside of this report and how best to present that information to the Commission.

Mr. Smedberg asked how the report will be presented to CTB. Ms. Mattice responded that she presented to CTB last year and this year either she or lead staff will brief the CTB on the report in early December.

Chair Hudgins asked Mr. D'huyvetter to share the next steps for the report. Mr. D'huyvetter responded that a full draft of the report, with a placeholder for the data from the National Transit Database, will be available at the October Commission meeting. The Commission will be asked to authorize the executive director to send the *Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA* to the Governor and the General Assembly and on sending an update if needed.

Chair Hudgins introduced a discussion on the recent release of the Bus Transformation Team's final Bus Transportation Strategy and asked the committee for comments. Mr. Snyder suggested that the committee should use the project to address current issues with bus, creating and expanding options like Bus Rapid Transit, and make long-term improvements in bus. Mr. Fye responded that this was a discussion item at the Management Advisory Committee (MAC)

meeting and asked the committee what option would be best to address the Bus Transformation Strategy.

The committee agreed that it is important to focus on bus and that Northern Virginia should have a role in decisions on any changes to the current structure moving forward. The committee agreed to address the Bus Transformation Strategy in a letter to the Bus Transformation Project Team to be reviewed at the October Commission meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 A.M.

DRAFT



January XX, 2020

Chairman
Hon. Matthew F. Letourneau

Vice Chairman
Hon. Katie Cristol

Secretary/Treasurer
Hon. Sharon Bulova

City of Alexandria
Hon. Canek Aguirre
Hon. Elizabeth B. Bennett-Parker

Arlington County
Hon. Katie Cristol
Hon. Christian Dorsey
Hon. Libby Garvey

Fairfax County
Hon. Sharon Bulova
Hon. John C. Cook
Hon. John W. Foust
Hon. Catherine M. Hudgins
Hon. Jeffrey C. McKay

City of Fairfax
Hon. David Meyer

City of Falls Church
Hon. David F. Snyder

Loudoun County
Hon. Matthew F. Letourneau
Hon. Ron A. Meyer

Commonwealth of Virginia
Hon. Paul C. Smedberg

Virginia General Assembly

Senate
Sen. Richard H. Black
Sen. Adam Ebbin

House of Delegates
Del. David LaRock
Hon. James M. LeMunyon
Mr. M. David Skiles
Mr. Raul "Danny" Vargas

Executive Director
Katherine A. Mattice

Ms. Jennifer Ellison
Board Corporate Secretary
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Comments on Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 WMATA Budget

Dear Ms. Ellison:

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), I write to convey comments and concerns regarding the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA's) proposed FY2021 budget as part of its public comment period. Overall, NVTC supports the operating budget's aim to increase ridership, improve service, and enhance the customer experience within the mandated three percent subsidy growth cap. However, we are concerned that the proposed budget does not strike the right balance of fare increases, Metrobus service cuts, and new initiatives to drive ridership.

Proposed FY2021 Operating Budget

NVTC appreciates WMATA's commitment to implementing additional customer-focused improvements in the FY2021 budget while remaining within the legislatively mandated three percent operating growth cap. While we appreciate WMATA's efforts to keep jurisdictional operating subsidies affordable, the combination of proposed fare increases and service reductions balances the budget on the backs of long-distance riders and Metrobus riders. We urge WMATA to take a more incremental approach to service initiatives it wishes to fund in such a constrained fiscal environment. Given the magnitude of the proposed changes to fares, rail, and bus service, we encourage WMATA to thoroughly engage with its Board, jurisdictional staff, and other stakeholders to ensure these proposals are sufficiently scrutinized for their impacts to ridership, revenue, and local budgets.

Fare Increases and Fare Policy

The proposed budget would increase the base rail fare by 10 cents to \$2.35 and the max fare by \$1.00 to \$7.00. We are concerned that the proposed Metrorail fare increase places a disproportionate burden on long distance Metrorail riders. We are pleased to see that WMATA's pass products will not see a fare increase and recommend that WMATA integrate local providers into pass products, increase the availability and usage of pass products (especially the unlimited monthly pass), and improve integration with Smartbenefits. In addition, we are supportive of efforts to increase the speed of Metrobus, but we remain concerned about the equity impacts

of the proposal to implement a surcharge for cash payments or cash loading of SmarTrip on metrobus.

Metrobus Service Cuts

The proposed Metrobus service changes cut heavily into Northern Virginia, where Metrobus already has a disproportionately lower level of service given the expansive service provided by local transit systems. We encourage WMATA to minimize the decrease in regional Metrobus service, ensure that route changes reflect public comment, and work directly with local jurisdictions to determine reductions in non-regional Metrobus service. Fundamentally, this budget proposal asks our jurisdictions to pay more operating subsidy while receiving less service. We do not view annual cuts in metrobus service as a sustainable solution for WMATA to meet the legislatively mandated three percent cap.

Considering the aforementioned fiscal constraints and budget trade-offs, we are compelled to note the increasing impact that fare evasion has on WMATA's operating budget. The estimated \$40 million in annual revenue losses due to fare evasion could fund the proposed Metrobus service reductions in Virginia, D.C., and Maryland.

New Service and Ridership Initiatives

We are pleased to see WMATA advance its preventive maintenance program and find efficiencies to reduce the maintenance window where practicable. We look forward to hearing the Metrorail Safety Commission's (WSMC) review of the General Manager's proposal for additional Metrorail service hours and the impact on the preventive maintenance program. Additional Metrorail service during late night hours must not compromise the safety and reliability of the system. Upon resolution of the aforementioned concerns and additional vetting by the WMATA Board regarding the fiscal cost and ridership benefits, we recommend that WMATA make any service hour changes permanent and resolve the late-night service issue.

While increasing the transfer discount for Metrobus from 50 cents to \$2 would provide a significant benefit to riders and increase ridership, it is a costly new initiative that favors jurisdictions which do not have extensive local transit systems. To avoid confusion with riders, our local jurisdictions have indicated a desire to avoid extremely disparate transfer policies. A transfer discount currently exists and increasing it four-fold in one year would introduce a shock to local transit operating budgets. We encourage WMATA to consider implementing incremental changes to the transfer discount to minimize the fiscal impact to our jurisdictions and to work closely with local transit providers and funding jurisdictions to ensure all parties understand the fiscal impact of this proposed change to fare policy.

In its *2019 Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA*, NVTC recommended WMATA deploy eight-car trains in a phased approach to lines with the most demand during peak hours to achieve operating efficiencies and grow ridership in a cost-effective manner in the short-term. We are happy to see that WMATA has included running all 8-car trains in public hearing docket as a way to increase system ridership and address crowding. We look forward to the completion of Silver Line Phase II and the Dulles Railyard that will expand WMATA's capacity to run eight-car trains and benefit riders systemwide by connecting to Dulles International Airport and Loudoun County.

Proposed FY2021 Capital Budget

NVTC supports the priorities of the FY2021 Capital Budget and FY2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to deliver capital investments that focus on safety, system preservation, and a state of good repair. In FY2019, WMATA invested a record \$1.525 billion in capital funding to address significant state of good repair needs. While necessarily disruptive, we note the success the recent Platform Improvement Project work on the Blue and Yellow Lines which has replaced or rehabilitated six Metrorail Station Platforms and allowed WMATA to complete other capital work. We also strongly support WMATA's recent direction to improve transparency and accountability to its funding partners by committing to provide a capital program strategy that outlines the vision and goals for capital investments, a 10-year capital plan that outlines major projects, and a six-year capital improvement plan and one-year capital budget that provides project level detail.

While WMATA has made significant improvements in capital project planning and delivery, there are a few areas of the capital budget and CIP we wish to emphasize. Given the recent decline in Metrobus fleet reliability, we encourage WMATA to ensure that it is devoting adequate capital funds to bus replacement and maintenance. Our jurisdictions have also been concerned for some time about regional fragmentation in fare payment technology and mobile applications. We are relieved to hear that WMATA has completed a significant milestone in the development of a mobile ap. This promises to enhance the user experience and provide a platform to buy and communicate pass products. We urge WMATA to accelerate its efforts in the development of a mobile ap and next generation fare payment technology, ensure that they are adequately funded in the CIP, and to continue engaging regional stakeholders.

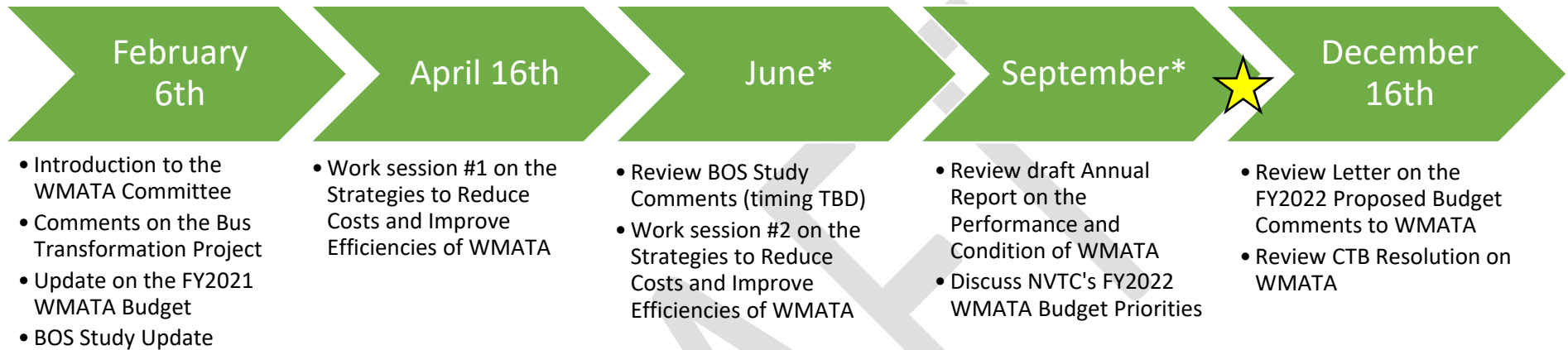
NVTC and its jurisdictions are invested in WMATA's success. We look forward to working with WMATA and other funding jurisdictions to find the right balance of revenue, service, and new initiatives in the FY2021 operating budget.

Sincerely,

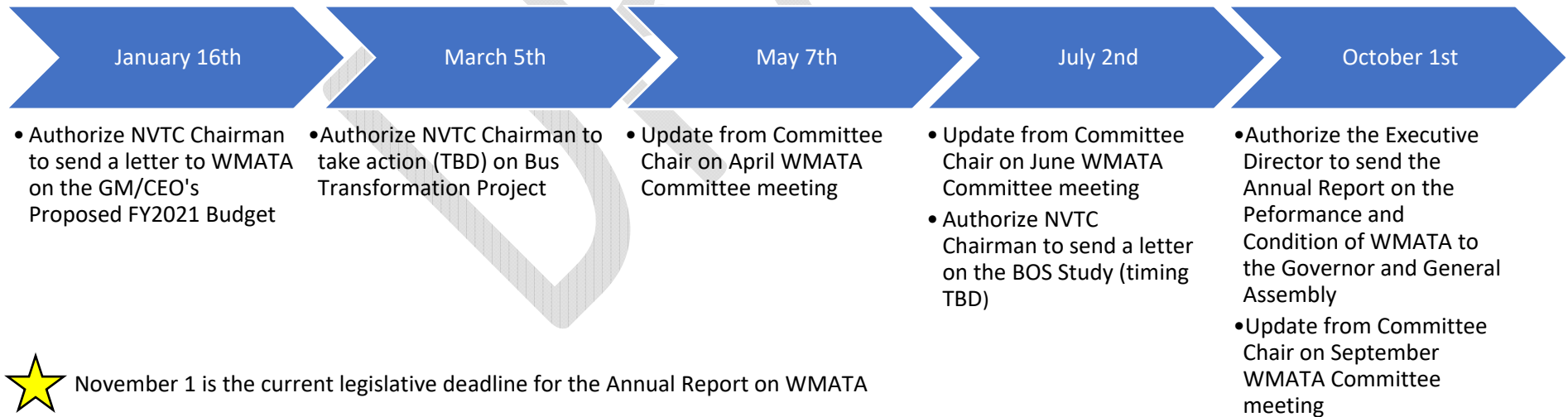
NVTC Chairman

WMATA Committee – DRAFT 2020 Work Plan and Meeting Schedule

NVTC WMATA Committee Meetings



NVTC Commission Meetings with significant updates from WMATA Committee Chair



*Possible conflicts with CTB – Proposed dates TBD
Note: DRPT Director invited to July and December Committee Meetings



HANDOUTS

**For NVTC WMATA Committee Meeting
DECEMBER 18, 2019**

Discussion on WMATA GM/CEO's FY2021 Proposed Budget

NVTC WMATA COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 18, 2019

Proposed FY2021 Operating Budget

(\$ in millions)	FY2020	FY2021	\$ Change	% Change
Expense	\$1,939.9	\$1,978.5	\$38.6	2.0%
Revenue	\$814.4	\$810.8	(\$3.6)	-0.4%
Operating Budget	\$1,125.5	\$1,167.7	\$42.2	3.7%

**3% Capped Operating
Subsidy Increase**

\$33.8 m

**Operating
Budget Gap**

(\$8.4 m)

Proposed FY2021 Operating Budget

	Decreased Subsidy/Revenue Gain + \$\$\$\$	Increased Subsidy/Revenue Loss (\$\$\$)
Rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rail Right-Sizing• Fare Increase (Base + Distance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better Sunday Rail Service• Restore Late Night Rail Service• Weekend Flat Fare
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced Bus Service• Surcharge for Cash + onboard Cash Loading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvements to Bus Service• Full Transfer Discount
Non-Fare/Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Naming Rights• Increased Advertising	

Total Fare and Service Changers are net positive \$8.4 million and close the budget gap

Draft Letter for Committee Review

Letter Highlights

Overall Theme

- This proposal does not strike the right balance of fare increases, Metrobus service cuts, and new initiatives to drive ridership

Draft Letter for Committee Review

Letter Highlights

Fare Policy and Fare Increases

- There is a significant burden to long distance riders.
- Make fare passes more valuable and easier to obtain.

Draft Letter for Committee Review

Letter Highlights

Metrobus Service Cuts

- These Metrobus cuts weigh heavily in Virginia.
- This proposal asks our jurisdictions to pay more operating subsidy while receiving less service.
- Annual cuts in Metrobus service are not a sustainable solution to meeting the three percent cap.

Draft Letter for Committee Review

Letter Highlights

New Service and Ridership Initiatives

- Restoration of late night rail service hours must be safe, continue the Preventive Maintenance Program, and hours should no longer sunset.
- Parity on transfer policy between Metrobus and local transit systems important and revenue impacts are significant; consider incremental changes.

Next Steps

- January 2020
 - WMATA Board Meeting
 - The WMATA Board will vote to authorize advertisement of the public hearing docket.
 - NVTC Commission Meeting
 - The Commission will authorize the Chair to send a letter of comments on the Proposed FY2021 Budget.
- January – February 2020
 - Board Budget Deliberations, Public Outreach and Public Comment Period
- April 2020
 - WMATA Board Budget Adoption

Appendix

NVTC WMATA COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 18, 2019

Proposed Fare Policy Changes

		Current	Proposed
Metrorail	Peak Base Fare	\$2.25	\$2.35
	Simplify Mileage Tiers	Varies	\$0.33
	Peak Max Fare	\$6.00	\$7.00
	Weekend Flat Fare	Varies (\$2.00 - \$3.85)	\$2.00
Metrobus	Fare without SmarTrip	\$2.00	\$2.25
	Onboard Cash Loading	\$0.00	\$0.25
	Lower 7-Day Pass Price	\$15.00	\$12.00
Transfers	Transfer Discount	\$.50	\$2.00*

***If local transit providers were to match this policy, they would incur additional revenue losses**

Service changes and other initiatives

Proposed Metrorail Service Changes

- Restore Some Late Night Rail Hours (midnight M-Thur and 2am Fri. and Sat.)
- Additional Weekend Metrorail Service (Sunday service to match Saturday service)
- Widen Weekday Early Morning (5am-6am) Rail Headways (from 8 to 12 minutes)
- Discontinue Peak Period Tripper Trains (Green and Orange)
- All 8 car trains (not funded in budget)

Proposed Metrobus Service Changes

- Reduce or Eliminate Service
- Improve Weekend Metrobus Service
- Reduce Bus Lifeline Service

Additional potential changes

- 1 and 3 day short trip rail passes marketed for the weekends