

**MEETING SUMMARY
NVTC WMATA COMMITTEE
NVTC Main Conference Room, First Floor – Arlington, Virginia
Public Streaming via YouTube
October 21, 2021**

NVTC WMATA Committee Members Present:

Canek Aguirre, Chair
Matt de Ferranti
David Meyer
David Snyder

NVTC WMATA Committee Members Not Present:

Walter Alcorn
Matt Letourneau
Paul Smedberg

Staff and Others Present:

Kate Mattice, Executive Director
Andrew D’huyvetter
Matthew Friedman
Allan Fye
Tenley O’Hara
Melissa Walker
Ronnetta Zack-Williams
Greg Potts (WMATA)
Shyam Kannan (WMATA)
Mark Phillips (WMATA)

Chairman Aguirre called the WMATA Committee meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. He explained that NVTC is back to regular in-person committee meetings with a few modifications due to the rise of the delta variant. He began the meeting by acknowledging the Blue Line derailment that occurred between Rosslyn and Arlington Cemetery on October 12, 2021. Ms. Mattice read a statement from the Virginia WMATA Board members on the incident and the current investigation underway by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The WMATA Board has regularly met this week and is closely monitoring the investigation of the Blue Line derailment. We are respecting the NTSB investigation process and understand our riders, stakeholders and the public want answers that will come from a full and thorough examination of the incident. The Board advocates sharing as much information as possible, but is bound by the NTSB’s rules on this, as the NSTB is the lead during this investigation.

As a result of the NTSB's Blue Line derailment investigation, the WMATA Board of Directors announced yesterday (October 20) that it is taking immediate action to retain outside consultants to serve as safety advisors to the Board. These independent advisors will provide the Board with expert opinions, analysis, and recommendations on a full range of issues concerning the safety, operations and organizational accountability of Metro. Areas of focus will include, but are not limited to: safety reporting, communications, inspections, roles and responsibilities, regulatory requirements, hazard identification, employee training, safety performance indicators/targets and procurement. This action is consistent with the Board's safety oversight role to ensure WMATA develops, implements, and constantly improves processes to ensure the highest levels of safety for our customers and employees.

Mr. Snyder mentioned that enterprise risk management must be a priority at WMATA to keep these types of incidents from reoccurring and he would like this committee to monitor this incident as new information is provided.

Chairman Aguirre asked for any changes to the September 16, 2021 WMATA Committee Meeting Summary. Committee members accepted the summary of the September 16, 2021 meeting with no changes.

WMATA Briefing on the Blue/Orange/Silver Capacity & Reliability Study

Chairman Aguirre introduced the Blue/Orange/Silver Capacity & Reliability Study, which was presented to WMATA Board members in September. He welcomed Shyam Kannan and Mark Phillips from WMATA to present this study to the committee. Mr. Kannan and Mr. Phillips reviewed the study's history, scope, purpose, goals and outreach. Mr. Phillips reviewed each of the following project alternatives which will inform the WMATA Board's selection of a locally preferred alternative (LPA). The alternatives include:

- No-Build Scenario – do nothing
- Lower Capital Cost Alternative – heavily focused on bus service
- New Metrorail Line: Blue to Greenbelt
- New Metrorail Line: Blue to National Harbor
- New Metrorail Line: Silver Express in VA
- New Metrorail Line: Silver to New Carrollton

Mr. Phillips discussed the results of the cost-benefit analysis. He stated that the Blue Line to National Harbor alternative performed the best in terms of net benefits while the lower capital cost alternative performed the worst.

Committee members raised a number of discussion topics to WMATA staff which included the limitations of a two-track system, the study's ridership assumptions and projections in light of the ongoing pandemic's uncertain long-term impacts on travel behavior, the long-range planning timeline, and reliability issues in the corridor.

Mr. Snyder asked for additional analysis on growth patterns assumed in the study, a deeper analysis of the low-cost solution, and potential cost implications at the jurisdictional funding level.

Update on the 2021 Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA

Chair Aguirre reminded the committee of the 2018 dedicated funding legislation and the legislative requirement for NVTC to produce an annual report on the state of WMATA to the governor. Mr. D’huyvetter provided a brief overview of the structure of the annual report and changes made to the strategies chapter of the report based on comments from the committee at the last meeting. Mr. D’huyvetter highlighted the use of the dedicated capital fund, FY 2021 major capital accomplishments and reliability data for Metrorail and Metrobus.

Mr. Snyder asked that the annual report include the Blue Line derailment and he reiterated prioritizing enterprise risk management at WMATA. Mr. D’huyvetter responded that the Blue Line derailment can be included in the introduction, cover letter and/or in the strategies chapter. Ms. Mattice added that NVTC staff will work on an appropriate place to include the incident and have the most up to date context and information as the investigation continues. Mr. Ferranti and Mr. Meyers agreed with Mr. Snyder’s comments on mentioning the Blue Line derailment and accountability around safety culture.

WMATA Fare Policy and Structure Discussion

Mr. D’huyvetter provided an overview of WMATA’s recent fare policy discussion, potential fare structures and a summary of Virginia feedback to date.

Mr. Snyder asked how the committee wants to support low-income/essential workers and what was happening to attract riders back to Metro. Mr. D’huyvetter mentioned that there is a preference among the Virginia jurisdictions for each interested jurisdiction to sponsor and fund low-income rider discounts in partnership with WMATA.

Mr. Meyer asked about an update on fare evasion to which Mr. D’huyvetter responded that according to WMATA, when comparing current occurrences and rates of fare evasion to comparable pre-pandemic time periods, the number of fare evasion occurrences has decreased because there is less overall ridership but the percentage share of all trips that are evade fares has significantly increased. Mr. Meyer noted that fare evasion should be acknowledged due to its budgetary impacts.

Mr. Meyer asked about parking rate differentiation from station to station to which Mr. D’huyvetter responded that some of the variations in parking rates across the region is due to some local jurisdictions having local parking surcharges. In Northern Virginia, all parking structures have the same rate with the exception of West Falls Church which has a lower rate to encourage better utilization of excess parking capacity.

Mr. Meyer encouraged continued dialogue and coordination with WMATA on parking fees because different prices structures influence ridership. Mr. Meyer and Mr. Snyder asked if WMATA could look into installing electric vehicle chargers at stations to encourage ridership.

Chair Aguirre adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.