

**MEETING SUMMARY
NVTC WMATA COMMITTEE
NVTC Suite #230 Conference Room
2300 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia
Public Livestreaming via You Tube
January 20, 2022**

NVTC WMATA Committee Members Present:

Walter Alcorn, Chair
Canek Aguirre (*via electronic participation*)
Matt de Ferranti
Matt Letourneau (*via electronic participation*)
David Meyer
David Snyder

NVTC WMATA Committee Members Absent:

Paul Smedberg

Staff and Others Present:

Andrew D’huyvetter
Allan Fye
Melissa Walker
Scott Kalkwarf (*via electronic participation*)
Ronnetta Zack-Williams (*via electronic participation*)
Greg Potts (WMATA) (*via electronic participation*)

NVTC WMATA Committee Chair Alcorn called the WMATA Committee meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He explained that NVTC is back to in-person committee meetings with a few modifications due to the rise of the omicron variant. The meeting is being livestreamed for the public via You Tube. Chair Alcorn reviewed the procedures and instructions for electronic meetings based on the updated NVTC Electronic Participation Policy. He noted that Mr. Letourneau and Mr. Aguirre were participating electronically due to medical reasons. Mr. D’huyvetter confirmed a quorum was present.

Chair Alcorn asked for any changes to the October 21, 2021 WMATA Committee meeting summary. Committee members accepted the summary of the October 21, 2021 meeting with no changes.

NVTC WMATA Committee Overview and 2022 Workplan

Chair Alcorn introduced the NVTC WMATA committee overview and workplan for 2022, which was presented by Mr. D’huyvetter. Mr. D’huyvetter provided an overview of the scope and

responsibilities for the calendar year. The NVTC WMATA committee holds two primary responsibilities:

- Provides a forum for consensus-based recommendations to the Commission on WMATA policy
- Provides strategic guidance to staff on WMATA related policy matters and NVTC's responsibilities from legislation

Mr. D'huyvetter provided the NVTC WMATA committee schedule which includes the following action items:

- Comments on the WMATA FY 2023 budget
- Work sessions on the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA
- Comments on the Blue/Orange/Silver Corridor Capacity & Reliability Study
- Review draft of the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA
- Develop comments on the WMATA FY 2024 budget

The committee calendar includes items that are not scheduled but will come up during the year such as the FY 2024 operating funding gap, bus priority program, bus network redesign and fare policy and structure.

Mr. Snyder recommended the discussion of the FY 2023 budget take place in conjunction with the FY 2024 budget. Mr. Snyder asked about the comment period timeline for delivering budget comments to which Mr. D'huyvetter responded that the public comment period is mid-January to mid-February, that there is an opportunity to make verbal comments to WMATA Board members and the General Manager at the March Commission meeting, and that the WMATA Board anticipates adopting the budget in March.

Mr. Letourneau mentioned the retirement of the WMATA General Manager. He noted that while there is no formal update yet on the recruitment process, the Board will be soliciting input from stakeholders. He also mentioned that following the budget period, there will be an opportunity for feedback on the future of WMATA and the funding gap to which Mr. D'huyvetter added that the funding gap conversation will take place frequently throughout the year.

Discussion and Comments on WMATA's Proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget & FY 2023-2028 CIP

Mr. D'huyvetter provided an overview of key matters in the Proposed FY 2023 Operating Budget & FY 2023–2028 CIP, as well as staff recommended themes to include in the letter of comment.

Chair Alcorn asked if the ridership projections for FY 2023 were calculated before the omicron variant and if there would be an update. Mr. Letourneau responded that the projects were pre-omicron but that ridership was above what was budgeted for FY 2022 and although the omicron effect is unclear, the numbers may balance out for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Meyer remarked that improving safety culture should be embedded into every initiative at WMATA and wanted to ensure that WMATA was taking all necessary steps to ensure the safety

of elevated structures. Mr. Snyder encouraged further discussion on the FY 2024 operating deficit, a new business model for the system and right-sizing service to meet demand. Mr. D’huyvetter noted that the federal funding relief prohibits layoffs and about 70% of WMATA’s operating budget is personnel, but there is an opportunity in the letter of comment to advocate for finding savings in the FY 2023 budget to roll over to FY 2024.

Mr. Snyder asked if federal relief funding being contingent on no layoffs has been legally reviewed. Mr. Letourneau stated that layoffs would be against the spirit and intent of Congress when they passed the federal covid relief funding and that it was something the WMATA Board had discussed and was not willing to pursue. Mr. Letourneau noted that there are still opportunities to find savings and noted the recent proposal by WMATA management to reduce proposed spending on filling vacant positions from \$20 million to \$10 million. Mr. Letourneau also noted that WMATA is hiring to fill positions related to the opening of the Silver Line Phase 2. Mr. de Ferranti asked about WMATA’s guidelines for employees not vaccinated to which Mr. Potts responded that WMATA has a high vaccination rate and weekly covid tests are administered for those not vaccinated. Employees who don’t comply with the guidelines are placed on paid suspension. Mr. Letourneau added that the General Manager and union representatives negotiate issues related to the workforce like vaccination for employees and that this is typically not an area that the WMATA Board takes a position.

Mr. Snyder advocated for returning to pre-pandemic level expenses in order to reduce the projected operating deficit. Mr. D’huyvetter responded that the figure showing projected expenses in FY 2024 includes new service due to the Silver Line Phase 2 and Potomac Yard openings, although Metrobus service is expected to be the same, and includes increases due to inflation and collective bargaining agreements.

Mr. D’huyvetter provided the review schedule of the draft letter of comment for WMATA Committee and Commission members. NVTC will produce a draft letter and review it with Chair Alcorn in early February. Following that review, the Chair and staff will take feedback from individual Committee members and then share the letter with the Commission prior to its submission in the public comment period. The WMATA budget is anticipated to be approved in late March, so Commissioners can still convey comments verbally to Virginia WMATA Board members at the March Commission meeting if desired.

Chair Alcorn adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.