

**MEETING SUMMARY
NVTC WMATA COMMITTEE
NVTC Suite #230 Conference Room
2300 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Virginia
July 21, 2022**

NVTC WMATA Committee Members Present:

Walter Alcorn, Chair
David Meyer
David Snyder

NVTC WMATA Committee Members Absent:

Canek Aguirre
Matt de Ferranti
Matt Letourneau
Paul Smedberg

Staff and Others Present:

Kate Mattice, Executive Director (*via electronic participation*)
Andrew D’huyvetter
Mathew Friedman
Allan Fye
Sophie Spiliotopoulos (*via electronic participation*)
Melissa Walker
Ronnetta Zack-Williams
Jonathan Bonilla
Daniel Segura
Kirk Dand (Arlington County)
Shyam Kannan (HDR)
Greg Potts (WMATA)
Brent Riddle (Fairfax County)
Tim Roseboom (DRPT)

WMATA Committee Chair Alcorn called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. He noted that the meeting was being live streamed for the public.

Chair Alcorn asked for any changes to the June 16, 2022 WMATA Committee Meeting Summary. Committee members accepted the summary of the June 16, 2022 meeting with no changes.

Chair Alcorn asked Ms. Mattice to provide an update on her attendance at the Commonwealth Transportation Board meeting this past week. Ms. Mattice explained that she testified at the meeting on NVTC’s mission, the priorities for the NVTC WMATA Committee and the importance

of Metro in the Northern Virginia region. She also extended an invitation for collaboration with the Commonwealth to build solutions to the challenges facing WMATA. Ms. Mattice communicated to the committee that Virginia's Secretary of Transportation shared similar sentiments about the value of Metro and reciprocated the call to work together to solve the issues facing WMATA.

2022 Update of the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA

Chair Alcorn introduced the second work session for the Annual Report on the Performance and Condition of WMATA, which is a legislative requirement for NVTC to produce annually. NVTC's By-Laws charge the NVTC WMATA Committee with providing staff with guidance on updates to the Annual Report. This will be the fifth annual report produced by NVTC.

Mr. D'huyvetter reviewed the staff recommended approach to developing the 2022 Annual Report which will focus on controlling expenses and increasing revenues. Mr. D'huyvetter mentioned that staff included feedback from the WMATA Committee at the previous work session which included providing background for the FY 2024 operating gap, highlighting new services, and adding two additional strategies to reduce the growth in costs and improve efficiencies. He presented the following updated list of strategies:

- Rider Confidence
- Labor Costs
- Fare Evasion
- Fare Structure
- Non-Fare Revenue
- Role of Metrobus and Local Transit Operators
- New Financial Operating Model

Mr. D'huyvetter shared a new component of the 2022 report which directs actions not only to WMATA but also to NVTC. The New Financial Operating Model and the Role of Metrobus and Local Transit Operators strategies are directed at NVTC to act on by conducting a study and convening a working group. Mr. D'huyvetter shared that staff will continue to work on these strategies and have a draft available for the committee to review in the fall.

Mr. Alcorn mentioned that the Role of Metrobus and Local Transit Operators strategy will be part of a larger discussion in the future. Mr. Meyer added that when speaking on the Role of Metrobus and Local Transit Operators strategy, it is important to note fare evasion as an increasing issue on the system.

Mr. Meyer and Mr. Snyder agreed with the recommended strategies. Mr. Snyder added his concern about physical safety on Metro and mentioned the Rider Confidence recommendation should focus on safety in and around the Metro.

Metrobus Service and Subsidy Update

Mr. D’huyvetter presented NVTC’s recent findings on Metrobus service and subsidy trends. Staff found that the biggest shift in Metrobus service was pandemic related disruptions and the subsequent restoration of service to the 12- and 20-minute Metrobus frequent service network. Furthermore, the way the Metrobus subsidy is currently allocated does not adequately reflect changes in service to changes in subsidy as Virginia is still paying for a higher pre-pandemic level of service.

Mr. D’huyvetter highlighted three key points:

- Virginia is unique in the region where additions to bus service are mostly accomplished with local transit service.
- Historically, the amount of Metrobus service provided across the region has been largely stable, but the distribution of this service has shifted away from Virginia over time with the pandemic.
- The way Metrobus subsidies are currently calculated does not adequately reflect how service has changed. Virginia is paying more for less service.

Mr. D’huyvetter stated that the next steps with these findings are to incorporate them into future NVTC studies, work with jurisdictional staff, WMATA Committee and WMATA Board members to explore and understand these Metrobus subsidy and service trends and engage with WMATA on the Bus Network Redesign study set to take place this fall.

Chair Alcorn asked for more details on the change in ridership pre/post-pandemic to which Mr. D’huyvetter responded there are fewer peak hour and commute-oriented trips and more weekend and off-peak trips. Mr. Fye added that telework changed commute patterns and individuals that continued to use the Metro were usually transit dependent. He also shared that bus service changed more rapidly because it is easier to modify.

Chair Alcorn asked where people are going during the weekend and during rush hour to which Mr. Fye responded that individuals are still using the system to commute to work during those times, just with more flexible schedules, as well as for recreation and to access necessities.

Chair Alcorn asked about the number of riders using local buses in Northern Virginia as opposed to Metrobus to which Mr. D’huyvetter responded that based on mileage 62% of service is locally provided and 38% of service is Metrobus; however, the ridership may weigh more towards Metrobus due to the service profile. Chair Alcorn inquired about bus travel within Northern Virginia compared to bus travel from Virginia into the District of Columbia to which Mr. D’huyvetter mentioned that based on total vehicle hours about 3% of Metrobus routes or 6 buses travel from Virginia into the District of Columbia and Maryland.

Mr. Snyder asked about the cost Virginia should be paying based on these findings. Mr. D’huyvetter stated that calculation will be a part of the next steps. Mr. Snyder also asked how the City of Falls Church fits into this scenario as they don’t have local bus service and rely on Metrobus and Mr. D’huyvetter responded that staff is looking at all the payees in Virginia and will work through such considerations.

Chair Alcorn asked about the role of zero-emission bus capital costs in looking at Metrobus and local bus service. Mr. D’huyvetter added that if WMATA intends to apply for discretionary federal funds for zero-emission bus capital expenses and for Virginia local transit agencies it depends on if they are open to applying for federal grants. Chair Alcorn also advised looking at the average trip time for a Virginia bus rider.

Mr. Snyder recommended looking at on-demand transit service to which Mr. Fye mentioned one of NVTC’s transit fellows is working on a microtransit report, which includes Falls Church as a case study. The report will be available later this summer.

Other Items

In reference to the Silver Line Phase 2, Mr. Potts mentioned the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce will be conducting outreach with over 200 events scheduled. Mr. Potts also added that the Interim General Manager has mentioned the goal is to get the Silver Line extension open in the fall.

Chair Alcorn mentioned the next two WMATA Committee meetings are scheduled for September 29 and October 20 both at 6:00 p.m.

Chair Alcorn adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.