

## MEETING SUMMARY

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Participants

Project Team

DRPT:

Jennifer Debruhl  
Grant Sparks  
Todd Horsley  
Ciara Williams

MDOT/MTA:

Zachary Chissell  
Elizabeth Kreider  
James Ritchey

Consultant Team:

Melissa DuMond  
Paul Elman  
Erin Murphy  
Lucas Muller  
Grace Daigle  
Amanda Bahrij  
Andrew Wainwright  
David Miller

Project Stakeholders

Arlington County, VA:

Jim Larsen  
Kirk Dand  
Pierre Holloman

Arlington Transportation Partners:

Wendy Duren

Bethesda Transportation Solutions:

Kristen Blackmon

City of Alexandria:

Jennifer Slesinger

Dulles Area Transportation

Association:

Doug Pickford

Fairfax County, VA:

Elizabeth Mann  
Malcolm Watson  
Martha Coello  
Michael Felschow  
Zach Khromal  
Stuart Boggs  
Walter Daniel  
Yuqing Xiong  
Marcus Moore

Frederick County, MD:

Mark Mishler  
Ron Burns

Loudoun County, VA:

Penny Newquist

MDOT:

Heather Murphy  
Michelle Martin  
Gladys Hurwitz  
Kari Snyder

Montgomery County, MD:

Chris Conklin  
Dan Hibberd  
Gary Erenrich  
Sandra Brecher

MWCOG:

Eric Randall  
Nicholas Ramfos

NVTA:

Keith Jasper  
Ria Kulkarni

NVTC:

Dan Goldfarb  
Dinah Girma  
Jae Watkins

OmniRide:

Holly Morello  
Perrin Palistrant

Tyson's Partnership:

Ronit Dancis

Vanpool Alliance:

Joe Stainsby

VDOT:

Abraham Lerner  
Fatemeh Allahdoust

WMATA:

Charlie Scott  
Jonathan Parker

Date/Time: July 16, 2020, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Subject: Stakeholder Meeting #1

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## Key Takeaways

The meeting began with a round of introductions followed by a description of the project and an update on ongoing corridor efforts from MDOT SHA's consultant and VDOT. Stakeholders were then given an opportunity to respond with current/ongoing initiatives relating to travel over the Bridge. After a quick break, the project team

presented the needs assessment and gaps analysis that was conducted as a part of Tech Memo I. Breakout groups (two transit and a TDM group) were assigned to stakeholders for discussion on potential routes and services. The groups reconvened to discuss takeaways and project next steps.

## Stakeholder Input: Current/Ongoing Initiatives relating to travel over the American Legion Bridge

Each stakeholder group was given space to provide initial input. The stakeholders that commented during this time are summarized below:

- Bethesda Transportation Solutions stated that their reduced carpool parking program in downtown Bethesda is popular.
- Fairfax County, VA commented on the different funding structures of transit providers and how that could affect potential improvements.
- Frederick County, MD stated that there is Leesburg and Reston travel from Frederick County that utilizes the Bridge. They also mentioned the importance of express (rapid) bus service from Frederick along the I-270 corridor.
- Montgomery County, MD stated the need for park-and-ride facilities in both Virginia and Maryland. They commented that there is an opportunity to incorporate the BRT plans in Montgomery County with this effort. They also mentioned looking at ways to connect/integrate with existing local transit services such as the BRT and Purple Line and stressed the importance of connections to bikeways on the Maryland side of the bridge. Additionally, they stated that Montgomery Mall is a key location as it was envisioned to support transit service into Virginia over the Bridge.
- MWCOG stated that commuter incentives programs are already in place and they are expanding the program to include employer-based module in app (over the next 3 years). The program includes ride matching, carpool and vanpool incentives, flextime incentive program.
- NVTA is looking to incorporate this project into its Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan to make it eligible for funding.
- NVTC has a two-year commuter choice ongoing program that can be extended. Their ride matching assistance for Prince William County receives request for service across the bridge.
- Omni Ride stated that they have existing services that go to Tysons and could utilize transit/TDM improvements across the bridge.
- Vanpool Alliance already has vanpool routes that travel across the bridge. This project will incentivize more vanpools.
- VDOT commented that they are developing a TMP for I-495 NEXT, and the I-66 TMP is ongoing.
- WMATA brought up the SmartMover service that was discontinued in 2003 because of congestion over the bridge.

## Breakout Group Session Summaries

### *Transit Group A*

Stakeholders stressed that parking in Virginia near Tysons is a major challenge and will require creative solutions. There was a recommendation to extend routes beyond Tysons to the Dulles Corridor. There is also a demand inside the beltway toward DCA. It was also commented that access to the Pentagon is critical. A route was recommended from Montgomery Mall to the Pentagon. NVTA is currently investing in BRT connecting Ft. Belvoir to Alexandria. If this BRT comes to fruition would allow for Alexandria-Tysons (with Route 7 BRT) and into MD. A suggestion was made to extend a route from Maryland to the Vienna Metro station with the improved Express Lane access at Vaden Dr by the on-going I-66 outside the Beltway project.

On the Maryland side, it was stated that Germantown has express services to Shady Grove which could be incorporated into service across the ALB. Lake Forest Mall has a transit center (which as it redevelops, would be good to incorporate). New Cut/Seneca Parkway may be an opportunity to serve Frederick County. There is a need for more park-and-rides and commuter bus routes in Frederick. Silver Spring Transit center is a big hub and connection there is important. Extension of the Purple Line into Virginia is a long-range goal. It was also stated that if Montgomery County was to operate services across the bridge, that bus maintenance facilities in Montgomery County would need to be considered.

Regarding equity, connection to Gaithersburg and Silver Spring/along Route 29 are diverse areas that should be prioritized. Additionally, accommodating for shift workers and mid-day travel is a component of equity.

## *Transit Group B*

Multimodal connections for first and last mile were stressed - not only parking facilities, but also bike facilities and pedestrian accommodations. It is important to coordinate with local bus routes and regional rapid bus connections. Maximizing route frequency, diversifying span of services, identifying optimal access points and considering bi-directional service were features of the potential routes/services that were discussed.

Regarding equity, utilizing toll revenue to fund transit fare policies to benefit low-income riders was discussed. A sustainable funding source is important given the bi-state nature of the potential services. The difference in how tolled facilities are treated between the states (HOV-3) could produce equity issues. Access to technology is also a point of inequality and should be considered in creating new services. Bethesda and Tysons are two high-income areas. Ensuring connection services are provided to lower income areas is important as well.

Added potential connection points discussed were to Reston and Rockville, utilizing the express lanes networks there. Use of the underutilized Park and Ride at Montgomery Mall was discussed as well as incorporating potential service with the US 29 BRT route. Short-term potential routes might have lower frequency and build over time to something more frequent (e.g., 30-minute headway now, 20-minute headway in X years, 15 mins in X years).

## *TDM Group*

Discussion began with a question about how the managed lanes projects could affect carpools and vanpools. The lack of available parking at park-and-ride locations in exurban areas, such as Clarksburg in Maryland, was identified as a key constraint for getting more people to use vanpools. It was recognized that there are generally more park-and-rides in Virginia, but also that park-and-rides should be located near and adjacent to access points to the managed lanes to make carpool and vanpooling more attractive to users. The Westfield Montgomery Mall park-and-ride was identified as a good example of a private agreement park and ride lot that would provide access to managed lanes on I-270 in both directions.

There was also discussion about how COVID-19 and teleworking will affect carpools and vanpools going forward. Several participants noted that employers will not be going back to physical work locations until January and that teleworking will remain in some capacity in the long term. Participants agreed that casual carpooling and vanpools in general will take a long time to recover since commuters are less likely to get in a car with strangers or a group of people who might be infected. Since the managed lanes will be fully constructed in roughly a decade, participants considered how to get commuters to carpool and vanpool in the future as the threat of COVID wanes. There was agreement that strong relationships with employers and residential contacts and robust marketing campaigns are the most effective methods to get people to vanpool and carpool.

Participants discussed the importance of linking TDM improvements to Metrorail Stations and other multimodal connections. There was agreement that parking should not be a focal point in activity centers like Tysons, and that innovative strategies technologies should be utilized at origin and destination points to provide first and last mile connections, such as autonomous shuttles, on-demand microtransit, and ride-hailing services.

## Action Items

1. Stakeholder meeting presentation sent via email to all participants.
2. Link to project survey will be provided by project team to stakeholders for distribution.
3. A project landing page for survey will be developed by project team.

## Lookahead

- August 28: Stakeholder Meeting #2