



**Policy, Program Development & Intergovernmental Relations
Committee**

Item III-A

October 14, 2010

Regional Transit System Plan

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

<input type="radio"/> Action <input checked="" type="radio"/> Information	MEAD Number:	Resolution: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
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TITLE:

Regional Transit System Plan

PURPOSE:

To provide the Board with an overview of the purpose and status of the Regional Transit System Plan.

DESCRIPTION:

This project supports Metro`s goals of delivering quality service, using resources wisely, and maintaining and enhancing Metro`s image by developing a system plan for improving and integrating regional transit service.

Over the past three years, Metro`s principal focus has been on safety, state-of-good-repair, and budget issues. At the same time, though, persistent growth trends in the Washington, DC region continue to dictate that Metro keep part of its attention on its long-term ability to serve transit demand in the region. With timelines of 10-20 years to plan, design, fund, and construct major system improvements, Metro needs to begin work now on system-wide planning to address capacity constraints that are expected to emerge between 2020 and 2030.

This is not the first time that Metro has worked to develop a regional transit plan. Article VI of the WMATA Compact defines Metro`s responsibilities to develop and revise a Mass Transit Plan for the regional system. In 1999, Metro adopted a Transit Service Expansion Plan, aimed at doubling transit ridership over a 25-year period and increasing the region`s fixed-guideway miles by 50%. Now, more than 10 years later, it is time for a fresh look at the future of the region`s transit system, recognizing that an up-to-date regional framework for transit system expansion and integration is needed. Metro can play an important role to advocate for connections and projects that promote seamless travel across the region, and to identify the most promising projects that provide the greatest regional benefit.

The Regional Transit System Plan (RTSP) will address future growth and options for improving and expanding transit service. The plan will be a 30+year vision for an integrated high-capacity, multi-modal transit network tied to achievement of the region`s sustainability goals. Some of the key long-term issues that will be addressed in the RTSP include:

Core Capacity	Transit capacity to serve the regional employment core
Access	Adequate pedestrian, bicycle, automobile and bus access to high-quality transit
Surface Transit Corridors	Priority for surface transit including Metrobus routes, express bus on HOV, rapid bus on arterials, and the integration of light rail and streetcar projects
New & Emerging Markets	New connections between regional activity centers

The RTSP planning study has been underway for the past year with staff currently analyzing future transit strategies, in concert with a multi-jurisdictional Technical Advisory Group. During Fall 2010, the project team will complete evaluation of transit improvement strategies. Additionally, public outreach will be initiated through a project website and public workshops. In 2011, the more-promising strategies will be assembled into several scenarios that will be analyzed. By summer 2011, staff will prepare preliminary recommendations and a draft plan.

In addition to this presentation on the RTSP, some of the long-term planning issues will be addressed in a series of separate presentations to the Board on specific related sub-elements of the plan, including bike and pedestrian access, streetcar interoperability, and bus service strategy.

FUNDING IMPACT:

No impact on funding for this information item. However, this plan will help identify future capital projects to meet ridership growth and improve the quality of service.

Office of Long Range Planning
Project Manager: Mark Kellogg

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff will return to the Board in Summer 2011 and request Board endorsement of draft recommended plan.



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Purpose

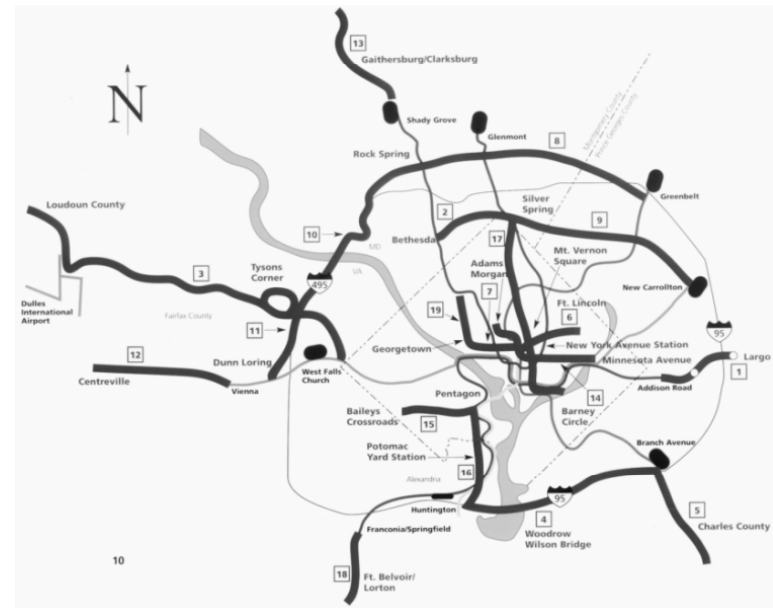
- Describe key issues and challenges shaping future expansion of the regional transit system
- Provide an overview and status of the Regional Transit System Plan project





Background

- Article VI of the WMATA Compact defines Metro's responsibilities to develop and revise a Mass Transit Plan for the regional system
- In 1999, the Board endorsed a new expansion plan that would add 50% more fixed-guideway miles and support the goal to double ridership by 2025
- In 2000, Board policy on expansion projects put the funding responsibility with the sponsoring jurisdiction



1999 WMATA Board-Endorsed Service Expansion Plan



Project Objectives

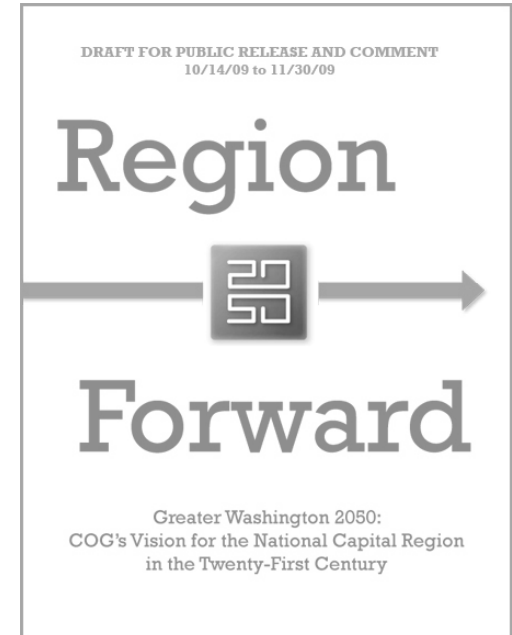
- Provide 30+ year vision for an integrated high-capacity, regional transit network
- Integrate multiple transit modes - “family of service” concept - into seamless system for the customer





Need for a New Regional Transit Vision

- Achievement of region's sustainability goals will depend on transit service improvement and expansion
- Combined impact of regional growth and extensions of the system will strain Metrorail core capacity
- Assuming at least 10 years to construct major core capacity projects, we must identify a preferred expansion strategy and begin to secure funding in the next 5 years
- Partnerships are needed to give priority to surface transit on roadways





Regional Growth Trends

- 2010 to 2040 regional growth:
 - 31% population growth
 - 35% household growth
 - 39% employment growth

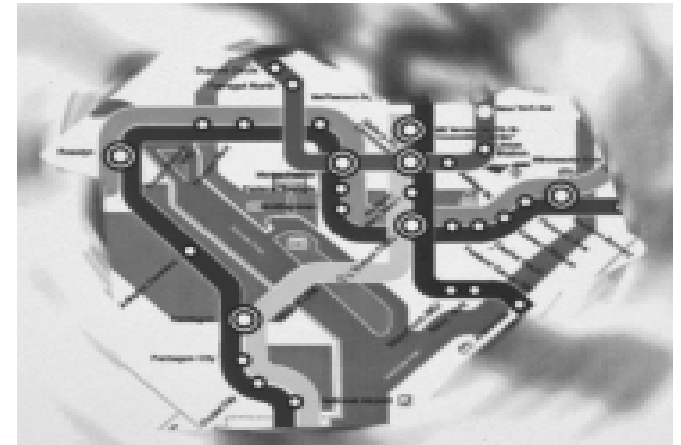


- Implications for transportation of different growth rates across region:
 - Traditional commute to core growing by 12% over 30 years
 - Suburban-to-suburban trip market growing by 45%; serving these trips will be challenging



Key Long-Range Issues to Address

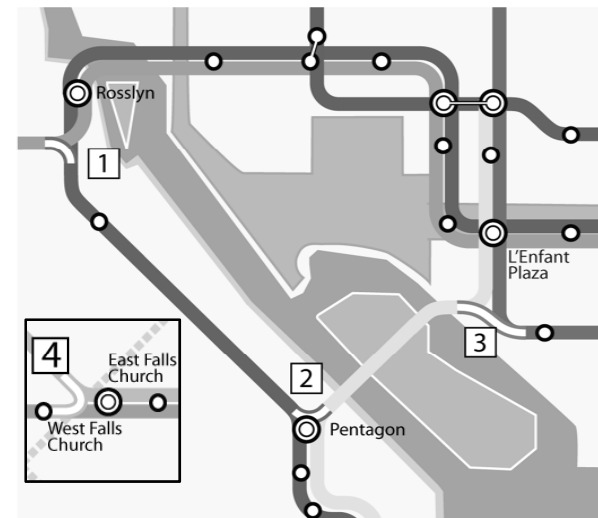
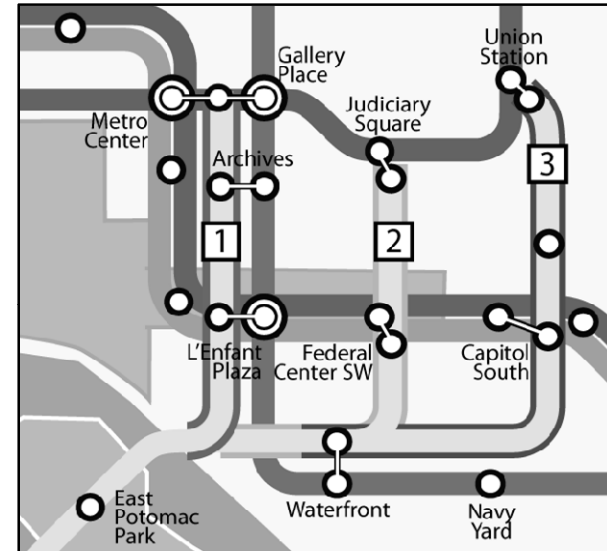
- **Core Capacity** - Transit capacity to serve the regional employment core
- **Access** - Adequate pedestrian, bicycle, automobile and bus access to high-quality transit
- **Surface Transit Corridors**
 - Priority for local and express bus service
 - Streetcar and light rail integration
- **New & Emerging Markets** - New connections between regional activity centers





Core Capacity Strategies

- Major Issues:
 - Even with 8-car trains, peak capacity for trips to the core will reach capacity before 2040
 - Highest priority stations for capacity improvement are largely in the Core, especially at major transfer stations
- Key strategies being evaluated:
 - New Rail Lines through the core: additional Yellow and Blue Lines
 - Inter-line rail connections and station pedestrian connections





Access Strategies

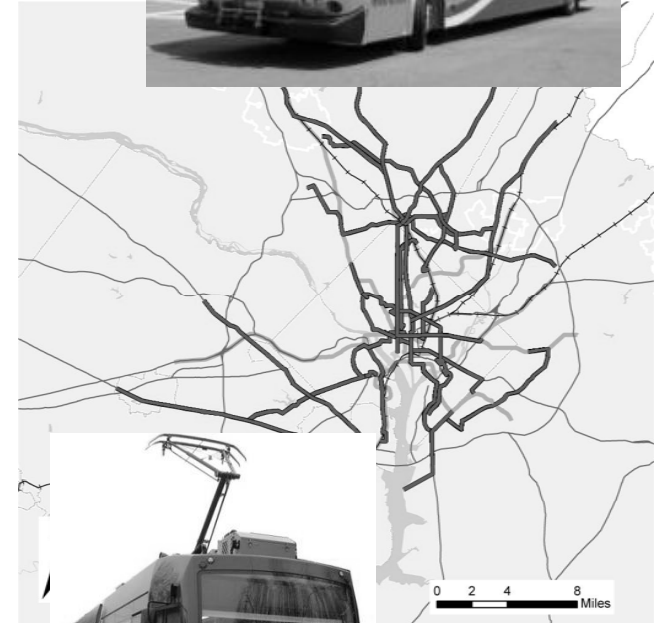
- Major Issues:
 - Very high cost to accommodate unmet parking demand of potentially 40,000 spaces; need to look at most cost-effective ways to provide access
 - At many stations, a significant portion of customers using parking come from less than 3 miles away
- Key strategies being evaluated:
 - Improving pedestrian environment around stations
 - Park-and-Ride with feeder service to rail





Surface Transit Strategies

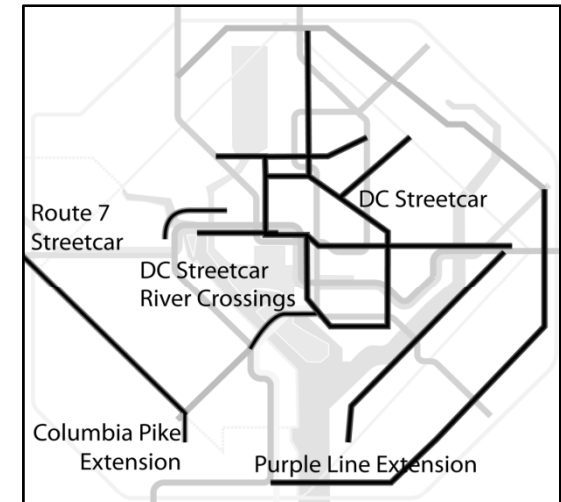
- Major Issues:
 - Traffic congestion is threatening the efficiency of the region's bus network
 - Regional LRT and streetcar proposals are being developed independently
- Key strategies being evaluated:
 - Enhanced existing surface network including running way improvements, high-frequency service, rapid bus and BRT
 - LRT/Streetcar integration





New Connections Strategies

- Major Issues:
 - Traffic congestion is threatening the efficiency of the region's bus network
 - Regional LRT and streetcar proposals are being developed independently
- Key strategies being evaluated:
 - New surface transit connections - LRT, Streetcar, Commuter Rail Services
 - Metrorail extensions to new markets/activity centers





Stakeholder Outreach

- Technical advisory group (TAG) has been providing guidance
- Project website/blog will be used to share information and gather input
- Public workshops planned for winter 2010 will allow opportunities for more input



Next Steps

- Fall 2010/Winter 2011
 - Complete evaluation of transit improvement strategies to increase ridership and address core capacity, and combine best options into scenarios
 - Conduct public outreach to obtain input on 2040 transit options
 - Related presentations to the Board on bike and pedestrian access, streetcar interoperability, and bus service strategy
- Spring/Summer 2011
 - Develop study recommendations and draft plan
 - Request Board action to endorse 2040 regional transit plan and direct staff to forward to reviewing agencies
 - Identify most-promising plan elements that can be advanced through project development and into the TPB Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP)



Upcoming Board Presentations

- November: Metrobus Six-Year Operating Plan
- December: Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements Study
- January: LRT/Streetcar Interoperability Study