

Minutes of the Board Planning and Development Committee

Open Session - April 6, 2006

Mr. Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. Present were:

Committee Members:

Mr. Christopher Zimmerman (Chairman)
Mr. Marcell Solomon
Mr. Charles Deegan
Mr. Jim Graham
Mr. Dana Kauffman
Mrs. Gladys W. Mack
Mr. Robert Smith

Other Board Members:

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Zimmerman requested that the minutes of the March 2, 2006, Planning and Development Committee meeting be revised and resubmitted. He did not believe that the first three full paragraphs on page 4 regarding the WMATA Inputs to the 2007-2030 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP) adequately reflected the essence of the meeting. Mr. Zimmerman commented that he and Mrs. Mack can not request an action, rather the minutes should state "*the Board requested*" an action. Mr. Zimmerman also referenced the discussion of what line goes into the CLRP; and whether it can be assumed that a \$415M increase will be locally funded, because the funds are not identified and the local jurisdictions may not be able to agree to that increase. Mr. Zimmerman also requested a change to the second to last paragraph on page 7 of the Increase Rail Service to the Mid City Green Line Stations, i.e., "Mr. Zimmerman motioned that the Real Estate Committee" be revised to state "*Mr. Zimmerman moved that the Real Estate Committee.*"

II. ACTION ITEM:

Vienna Station Access Program

Mr. Dittmeier and Mr. Haggins sought to obtain the concurrence of the Planning and Development Committee and Board approval for authorization of the General Manager to:

- , Negotiate and execute agreements and leases with Fairfax County and Fairfax County Economic Development Authority; and
- , Submit land use applications to Fairfax County for Vienna Station improvements.

Mr. Zimmerman asked about the potential air rights over the new structure to be built. Mr. Dittmeier stated the project does not include any foundation design in construction for future air rights. Mr. Zimmerman noted that WMATA should consider this type of air rights development; in Arlington County, above the Ballston public parking garage, there will be

constructed two ice skating rinks and corporate offices for the Washington Capitals. Mr. Kauffman related that the site of the third park-and-ride structure has restraints on land use and height.

Mr. Kauffman requested the item be moved. Mr. Zimmerman seconded the request.

Motion was unanimously carried.

III. Information Items:

A. Semi-Annual Status Report on Bus Improvement Program

Mr. Golden, Mr. Pak, and Mr. Bottigheimer briefed the Planning and Development Committee on the current status of the Metrobus Capital Improvement Program, an \$830M near-term investment, to achieve the full potential of the public's Metrobus system.

The General Manager acknowledged staff members Walter Burduski, Antonio Fernandez, Bernard Bower, Gerald Parker and their supervisor, Gary Cox, who completed the 1000 bus rehabilitation on January 13, 2006. The bus was featured at WMATA's 30th Anniversary Celebration at the Carmen Turner Facility.

Mr. Zimmerman asked what is Fleetwatch. Mr. Tangherlini stated that Fleetwatch is a system that monitors the performance of the vehicle, e.g., fuel consumption, as it operates. Fleetwatch allows the maintenance staff to have a good sense of the status of the vehicle while the vehicle is operating.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that he believed NextBus (without a space between the words) is a trademark and he asked if WMATA planned to use that term. Mr. Pak stated that WMATA planned to call the program Next Bus (with a space between the words). Mr. Zimmerman asked if WMATA is confident that the name Next Bus is not trademarked. Mr. Pak stated it is not a trademark.

Mr. Zimmermann asked how customers would know real-time arrival of the next incoming bus. Mr. Pak stated that at each bus stop a sign will indicate a phone number for customers to call for Next Bus information. Mr. Zimmerman asked if the telephone system will use the existing Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) that has been recently implemented in some software in-house or if it will be contracted. Mr. Pak said that the contractor is currently working on the Next Bus signs and as far as the data interface is concerned, the Next Bus will get the data feed including the scheduling from the AVL system.

Mr. Tangherlini stated that WMATA will be using NextBus the company. The District of Columbia uses NextBus, the company, on their shelters. He also stated that WMATA has an additional function that is not NextBus, in terms of displays that are channeled through the program Next Bus not NextBus. Mr. Zimmerman stressed that WMATA should consider calling the program a different name to avoid confusion.

Mr. Zimmerman questioned how the bus information will be filtered into the telephone system. Mr. Tangherlini stated the information will be generated from the AVL system. He further stated that NextBus, the brand name, uses the AVL system (the orbital radio system) to integrate the technology on the NextBus displays in bus shelters and on the website.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if WMATA intends to put displays at bus shelters. Mr. Pak acknowledged that WMATA will have 50 displays at 5 major transit centers. Mr. Tangherlini noted that the information will then be given to the District of Columbia which will have a hundred bus shelters that will feature the displays of NextBus as well. Mr. Tangherlini also mentioned that at a Council of Government's (COG) Chief Administration Officers (CAO) meeting he attended, he asked CAO members of other jurisdictions to manage their advertisement rules in order for WMATA to have similar display arrangements in other surrounding jurisdictions.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that several years ago when WMATA conducted a demonstration WMATA decided not to implement the concept due to the technology being heavily dependant on cell phone communication which was not suited for a large system like ours. He inquired if this theory is still valid. Mr. Pak said he was not familiar with that particular case, but stated cell phone technology is now more suitable for large data processes, and therefore our system.

Mr. Tangherlini said the information that WMATA will use comes from the radio system and WMATA will partner with NextBus to integrate and provide the system by website and shelter displays.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if the system is cell phone based. Mr. Pak stated that the system relies on both cell phones and radio technology. The data coming from the AVL system to the server is radio system based because the vehicle location has to be sent in real-time. From the server to the specific signs, it is cell phone based; each of the electronic signs must have a cell phone card in them.

Mr. Tangherlini noted that this technology is similar to London's I Bus which communicates back to the operation center by radio and communicates to the individual shelters/users by cell phones or PDAs. This technique allows companies to filter a variety of different sources to determine when the incoming bus is approaching.

Mr. Zimmerman asked what will actually happen this summer. Mr. Tangherlini stated that WMATA is aiming to have a demonstration line(s) available that people can call for certain routes to get information. The next phase will be the shelter displays.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if it will be a demonstration line or a system-wide service. Mr. Pak stated that by June 30, 2006 the website with all the routes and all the buses should be available.

Mr. Zimmerman asked when will the customers be able to use the phone number. Mr. Pak and Mr. Tangherlini explained WMATA is hesitating about this project because staff is working with the communications department to form one central 1-800 number for the customers to call for

WMATA services. This one central number may overwhelm our communications system; therefore, this process is being handled carefully. A website will be available by June 30, 2006 and as far as the demonstration line(s), we are also planning for June 30, 2006. As for a system-wide demonstration line(s), it is unknown at this time.

Mr. Zimmerman asked about the other characteristics, besides the lengths of buses, that will be evaluated in procurement. Mr. Tangherlini stated WMATA needs to have a consistent multi-year procurement of the 30, 40, and 60 ft buses to reduce and maintain the average age of our fleet pursuant to Board requirements as adapted from the APTA Peer Review.

Mr. Zimmerman questioned what type of buses WMATA will purchase and he believed the DC Circulator is WMATA's best quality fleet. He stated WMATA should contract with manufacturers that build quality buses like the buses in Europe. Mr. Tangherlini stated that 28 federal funded DC Circulator buses from Belgium have already had an affect on the industry and the incoming 117 new buses will have a new feature - a back window. He also stated it is his goal to have our region try to combine with other bus agencies to increase buying power. Mr. Golden noted that WMATA does have Federal Transit Administration assignability provisions as well as a COGs agreement in our contracts. Montgomery County bought their CNG buses off of our procurement and other transit properties around the country have profited from our contracts as well.

Mr. Tangherlini suggested this item should be part of the upcoming regional bus conference. Mr. Zimmerman mentioned WMATA should create a bus specification with input from the Riders Advisory Council and other agencies. The thought is ultimately to get more input from the riding public and to generate better buses for our area. Mr. Tangherlini suggested getting bus employees' input on selecting new buses. He also mentioned buying one type of bus to cut cost in the future. Mr. Zimmerman noted these are good topics for the bus conference.

Mr. Zimmerman asked when would the WMATA bus conference be held. Mr. Tangherlini stated originally it was proposed for November 2006 but he suggested August 2006.

Mr. Smith inquired if SmarTrip® technology would eventually replace the paper transfers on the bus system. Mr. Tangherlini stated this 26-month project referred to as the Next Fare Forward is progressing in increments. In the next few weeks, he will meet with Cubic Technology to discuss the specifics.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that a major problem WMATA has is that customers are not paying enough for services. Mr. Tangherlini stated that only 10-15% of the bus riders use the SmarTrip® cards; by eliminating the paper transfers that would reduce dwell time, transaction time and save fuel. He is working on creating incentives to convince bus riders to use SmarTrip®. One idea he is considering is lowering the cost of the SmarTrip® card and having the open architecture fare readers. Mr. Zimmerman asked what is the cost for WMATA to buy the SmarTrip®. Mr. Tangherlini stated it is \$3.75. He had asked Staff to come back with a fare collection strategy in July 2006 to present to the Board.

B. Bus Improvement Actions (Facility Contract Awards)

Mr. Couch and Mr. Triolo updated the Committee on the following:

- Bus Facility rehabilitation items that resulted from the APTA Bus Peer review and meetings with Bus Division employees;
- Recommended bus painting program in accordance with Peer Review recommendations; and
- Additional funding needed for construction of the CNG Bus Paint and Body Shop at the Carmen Turner Facility.

Mr. Couch stated that this report is an update on the progress since last fall. Mr. Zimmerman inquired what changes have arisen since last fall on page 4 of the presentation. Mr. Couch noted that the Carmen Turner Facility Buildout status is the same but that this presentation is more comprehensive regarding implementing the APTA recommendations of painting buses every 3 to 4 years instead of the current 7-year cycle.

Mr. Zimmerman asked for clarification of painting the buses between the mix of in-house versus outsourcing. Mr. Couch stated that bus repainting is outsourced periodically due to capacity limitations. By replacing the booths at Bladensburg and building two booths at Carmen Turner Facility, WMATA would be able to facilitate mid-life rehabilitation, accident touch-ups, and repaint buses when a complete overhaul is needed.

Mr. Zimmerman inquired what WMATA spends on buses. Mr. Tangherlini stated \$600M. He said it is important to protect our investment, and WMATA will be reviewing the capital budget scrub and looking at all projects historically to come back to the Board this fall for ways to address these issues.

Mr. Deegan asked if the \$12M additional funding needed for the Carmen Turner Facility is on top of the \$10M already funded. Mr. Couch replied in the affirmative. Mr. Couch also stated WMATA had two bids for the contract. The highest bid was \$28M and the lowest bid was \$22M. Originally the scope included five paint booths for \$28M; in adjusting the project down to only two booths, WMATA should be able to reduce the cost to \$22M.

Other Discussion

Mr. Graham inquired about Mr. Tangherlini's remarks that appeared in the Examiner Newspaper with regards to advertising "monopolies." Mr. Tangherlini acknowledged that he was surprised by the headline because it did not fairly represent his views. A discussion ensued between Mr. Tangherlini, Mr. Zimmerman and Mr. Kauffman about the evolving nature of technology and the need to strike the right balance when making technology-based procurement decisions.

Mr. Zimmerman moved that the Policy and Legislative Committee convene immediately after the Planning and Development Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 A.M.