

**Minutes**  
**Planning and Development Committee**  
**September 21, 2006**  
**9 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Present were:

**Committee Members**

Mr. Christopher Zimmerman, Chair  
Mr. Marion Barry, Vice Chair  
Mrs. Gladys W. Mack  
Mr. Charles Deegan  
Mr. Jim Graham  
Mr. Ray Briscuso  
Ms. Catherine Hudgins

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes from the June 1, 2006 meeting were approved as submitted.

**Action Items**

**A. Glenmont III Parking Garage: Approval of Supplemental Public Hearing Staff Report and Staff Recommendations**

Mr. John Thomas and Mr. Jim Ashe sought to obtain Committee concurrence and forward to the Board for approval the Public Hearing Staff Report and Supplement, including staff recommendations for the Glenmont III Parking Garage.

Motion was carried.

**B. IT Strategic Business Plan**

Mr. Rod Burfield sought to obtain Committee concurrence and forwarding to the Board for approval of the IT Strategic Business Plan.

Mr. Zimmerman requested that staff review the format of proposed Board resolutions so that it is clear that what the Committee is approving is a "proposed" action and they are not viewing an information item.

Mr. Zimmerman asked for clarification on the budget impact of the proposed action. The executive summary states the funding impact is zero. However, according to page 44 of the presentation, WMATA would need to increase the total annual IT investment by at least \$8 million in order to be consistent with the industry best practice of allocating 2% to 4% of the overall operating budget to IT.

Mr. Burfield explained that the chart on page 44 is to illustrate WMATA's investment in IT over the last five years.

Mr. Tangherlini added that approval of the IT Strategic Plan does not provide budget authority, but guidance on how WMATA should proceed with future IT investments. Requests for additional budget authority will be brought before the Budget Committee and evaluated against other needs.

Mr. Zimmerman commented that while he understands that there is no immediate fiscal impact, there are long term budgetary implications if the IT Strategic Plan is approved. Mr. Tangherlini stated that the IT Strategic Plan is similar to the APTA Peer Review on Bus, which contained recommendations for investments in bus. Many of these recommendations have been, and will continue to be, evaluated against other needs.

Mr. Deegan asked what "GOTRS" represents. Mr. Burfield explained that GOTRS is General Order Track Rights, the current methodology used for assigning work crews access in Metrorail during nonrevenue hours. Mr. Burfield added that an automated system to manage GOTRS efficiently is critically needed.

Mr. Tangherlini stated that substantial savings, in the area of mobilization costs, may be realized if an automated GOTRS system is implemented.

Mr. Deegan asked when will WMATA see an improvement in telecommunications. Mr. Tangherlini stated that bids are currently being sought for the telephone switch replacement project. Mr. Tangherlini added that WMATA is currently in discussions with cellular providers to test different technologies that will better serve WMATA customers.

Mr. Zimmerman asked when cellular providers other than Verizon Wireless will work in the Metrorail system. Mr. Tangherlini responded that this is an area that WMATA is currently pursuing. Mr. Tangherlini added that one concern going forward is that WMATA does not get into an agreement that limits service to only the four major cellular providers. WMATA

will continue to test different technologies to find a solution that is flexible, expandable and provides decent service.

Mr. Zimmerman acknowledged the difficulty in determining the optimal time to go with a certain technology, since technology changes rapidly.

Mr. Zimmerman asked why Verizon Wireless, which is supported by WMATA, does not work at the Pentagon City Metrorail station. Mr. Tangherlini explained that a higher level of service is a concern that is being expressed as WMATA meets with various cellular providers.

Ms. Hudgins stated that WMATA's investment in IT is measured over time.

Mrs. Mack stated that it is important that future IT investments are funded and conveyed that she was pleased with the clarity of the IT Strategic Plan presentation.

Motion was carried.

### **C. Regional Bus Conference Update**

Mr. Nat Bottigheimer and Mr. Jim Hamre provided the Committee with a status report on the planning and preparations for the Regional Bus Conference as requested by the Board of Directors. The conference is scheduled for November 30, 2006.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if dedicated bus lanes will be discussed during the conference. Mr. Bottigheimer stated that dedicated bus lanes will be discussed during the Traffic Management section of the Conference.

Mr. Zimmerman asked how the Service Integration and Corridor Planning differs from the Management portion of the Conference. Mr. Hamre explained that the Service Integration and Corridor Planning will focus on service, the recommendations of the Regional Bus Study and ongoing network evaluations.

Mr. Zimmerman asked how far the venue, the Marriott Bethesda North Hotel and Conference Center, was from the Bethesda Metrorail Station. Mr. Briscuso stated that the facility was within walking distance of the White Flint Metrorail Station. Mr. Briscuso commended WMATA for emphasizing that this is a Regional Bus Conference by choosing a venue other than the Jackson Graham Building.

Mr. Tangherlini added that the idea to use a venue other than the Jackson Graham Building started with Mr. Linton, who helped WMATA gain access to this facility. Mr. Tangherlini

added that the Marriott Bethesda is one of many facilities accessible throughout the Metrorail system suitable for this conference.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that bus service in the region has become much better over the last several years. He conveyed that bus service has started to shift for those with no other means of transportation to a desirable mode of transportation. Mr. Zimmerman did note that many improvements can be made in regional bus service.

Mr. Zimmerman shared feedback from a public meeting held in Arlington County on Monday, September 18 at which bus route changes were discussed. Mr. Zimmerman stated that the participants generally thought the changes would improve the bus service in Arlington County. Mr. Zimmerman added that there were many other issues, such as buses arriving early and confusion about when buses leave certain locations, that were expressed during the meeting. These issues were not part of the immediate agenda, but are relevant to the rider and are issues on which WMATA should focus.

Mr. Zimmerman stated he hopes staff from other transit properties who have implemented bus service ideas are participating in the conference.

Ms. Hudgins noted that regional integration of bus service is critical for providing a seamless experience for passengers. Ms. Hudgins also encouraged staff to examine efficiencies and costs of the bus service that WMATA delivers to customers.

Mr. Deegan stated that more emphasis needs to be placed on changing bus routes, as many of these routes are more than 30 years old.

Mr. Bottigheimer noted that the Authority did conduct the Regional Bus Study, which examined the regional bus network. An update of the study is currently underway. Mr. Bottigheimer plans on providing the Committee with recommendations on bus route changes no later than this winter.

#### **D. Station Signage Upgrade**

Mr. Dave Couch and Mr. Joe Triolo provided the Committee with an update on the status of upgrading existing Station Signage in the Metrorail System.

Mr. Zimmerman inquired if funding exists for the Station Signage upgrade. Mr. Couch stated that there is the possibility of using advertising revenue for signage upgrades at the Metro Center Metrorail station. The signage upgrades at the Navy Yard Metrorail station may be done as part of the Navy Yard Metrorail station expansion project; however there is currently no budget allocated within the Infrastructure Renewal Program to fund signage upgrades.

Mr. Zimmerman specifically directed that advertising revenue be used to fund programs such as the signage upgrades. Mr. Zimmerman added that he hopes advertising revenue will be sufficient to fund the signage upgrade program.

Mr. Tangherlini noted that there are additional activities within the FY07 budget that are to be funded using advertising revenue. These activities include upgrading customer service centers, upgrading signage at the L'Enfant Plaza Metrorail station and installing additional bomb-proof trash cans.

Mr. Zimmerman asked about the length of time needed to install the upgraded signage throughout the Metrorail system. Mr. Triolo stated signage upgrades take over six years to complete.

Mr. Zimmerman asked if the project were fully funded would it still take six years to upgrade signage. Mr. Couch explained that the phasing plan being presented assumes that signage upgrades would take place four stations at a time.

Mr. Zimmerman stated he found it unusual that it would take six years to complete signage upgrades. Mr. Zimmerman added that he assumed that the six year phasing plan was being presented because this program is unfunded. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he would expect for the project to be completed within a fiscal year if the project was fully funded. Mr. Couch explained that the factors taken into consideration when developing the phasing plan were system access, signage production and installation time. Mr. Couch added that WMATA may be able to accelerate the phasing by using several contractors instead of one contractor. Mr. Couch did note if more concurrent signage upgrade activities were to take place, more nonrevenue track access would be required and that track access is currently in high demand.

Mr. Zimmerman requested staff look into upgrading signage that is easily accessible first and then upgrading signage that requires access during nonrevenue hours.

Mr. Tangherlini stated that staff should explore a faster and more cost effective alternative. He added that any alternative must be weighed against other projects such as the fire safety system, tunnel cabling and communications upgrades.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that he understands the signage upgrades will always have a lower priority than a safety project, but that a dedicated funding source would help improve information in the system. Additionally, Mr. Zimmerman was hoping to see a limited capital plan associated with the advertising revenue.

Mr. Tangherlini agrees that a financing plan for the station signage program is appropriate. He suggested staff explore borrowing specific resources as well.

Mr. Zimmerman suggested that WMATA associate revenue from specific advertising activities to specific projects. Mr. Zimmerman would also like to see the associated costs for certain activities to better prioritize these activities. This strategy may also serve as a tool in explaining to customers the priority of certain initiatives.

Mrs. Mack stated she would also like to see a more aggressive signage upgrade plan.

Mr. Zimmerman requested staff come back to the committee with a plan, similar to the IT Strategic Business Plan, which would give guidance on how WMATA should proceed in signage upgrades.

Mr. Tangherlini agreed that it is useful to compare the Station Signage Plan to the IT Strategic Business Plan. He added the IT Strategic Business Plan initially consisted of a peer review that focused on exposures and made recommendations. The IT Strategic Plan was brought back to the Committee for approval. The Station Signage Program will also be brought back to the Committee with a financing strategy.

Mr. Deegan asked if farecard machine signage is included in the signage upgrades. Mr. Couch stated that the signage upgrade program does not include farecard machine signage. This signage upgrade program covers directional and way-finder signs in Metrorail stations and does not include farecard machine signage.

Mr. Murray Bond stated that farecard machine signs are currently in production and will be installed by October 12, 2006. Mr. Bond added these signs are temporary and will be replaced by the end of the year when service on the Yellow Line is extended.

Ms. Hudgins asked if the prioritization of the phasing plan took into account the crowding at certain stations. Mr. Couch explained that continuity of installation and anticipated system changes, such as the Blue Line split, were taken into account.

Mr. Briscuso asked if the destination signs on the wall adjacent to the right-of-way will contain language that states "Via Metro Center" or "Via L'Enfant Plaza" in order to let infrequent users know that the train is traveling toward downtown. Mr. Couch answered that most signs will have the terminal station displayed, but inclusion of transfer stations will be taken into account as designs are finalized.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.