

Background

While there are other public transportation options to BWI and Dulles Airports (notably MARC train and MTA Commuter Bus service to BWI and Washington Flyer bus service to Dulles), service by Metro, the region's largest transit provider, consists of one line to each airport, running on relatively infrequent headways. The B30 (Greenbelt – BWI) runs every 40 minutes and the 5A (D.C. – Dulles) runs every 30-60 minutes. Recent (2010) fare increases that substantially raised the fares on the 5A and B30 to \$6/trip did not substantially decrease ridership, indicating that demand exists for public transit options to Dulles and BWI. Many guidebooks about Washington, DC do not mention either service, presumably because of their relatively infrequent headways.

Issue

Airport employees and passengers wishing to take public transit to and from BWI and Dulles Airport to the Washington metropolitan area have few options other than the single Metrobus lines to travel to the airport, especially on the weekends and during late evening hours. For the significant number of flights which arrive at BWI and IAD late in the evening, the Metrobus is the only option. Washington Flyer, MARC (on weekdays), end their daily services earlier than Metrobus and taxi rides are expensive (approximately \$60 from Dulles to the District, and \$90 from BWI to the District). While the Silver Line will eventually connect Dulles airport to the Metrorail system, the near-term question is **what can be done to improve public transport links to both Dulles and BWI airports?**

Why might the RAC want to be involved with this issue?

As the representative of Metro riders, the RAC has a role to play in examining notable holes in service. The question of public transport to metropolitan DC airports is bound to be complicated, given the overlapping jurisdictions and vested interests involved. Yet this is an area where the RAC has the potential to make a real impact, lending its voice and its influence to an issue which is likely to require involvement from WMATA, MWAA, and surrounding jurisdictions.

Recent WMATA Initiatives Associated with this Issue

Metro recently conducted a study (<http://www.metrobus-studies.com/MSE%202011/MSE2011.htm>) of the 5A and B30 services, yet it was narrowly focused on existing ridership patterns and scheduling issues rather than the broader concern of providing reliable, comfortable, and timely service to the airports which serve the Washington area. While these studies offer a good baseline, they are not focused on the experience of riders and their needs.

It is proposed that the RAC form a working group to delve further into the issue of public transport access to the region's airports. The working group would gather information from Metro, MWAA, and other stakeholders in an attempt to create a more holistic picture of how the current situation came to be and what might be done to improve it. The working group would create a short summary of its findings for presentation to the RAC. Based on those findings, the RAC would then consider a public presentation to Metro management and other concerned parties recommending specific actions to address the issue.