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[00:00:04] All right, let's go ahead and get started. We have about 45, 50 minutes for this committee. It's actually shortened. So call to order the Board of Supervisors Transportation Committee meeting. We do have minutes or summary of the March 14th meeting.

[00:00:24] Are there any changes for that summary? All right, seeing none, those will stand approved. Okay, we have item three and four on the agenda. I would ask the committee members if they would indulge in back-to-back presentations before questions, and I think this is going to make sense because WMATA is going to talk about the bus network redesign, and then DOT staff will talk about their comments and the staff context for how that applies.

[00:00:59] Then I think that will be at the right time to open it up for questions. So at this point, we do have, we have Allison Davis and Peter Caffiero from WMATA who are here, those of us active in NVTC, they may look familiar, but go ahead and go ahead and do your presentation and welcome.

[00:01:23] All right. Thank you. And thank you for indulging us to hear us again. But we're, on behalf of the Better Bus Network redesign team, Peter and I are thrilled to be here to brief you on our draft visionary network that we launched back in August.

[00:01:39] And before we start, I want to give a huge shout out to your DOT staff sitting here with Brent and Michael and Heijun, who've been partners in helping us work through what that redesign means in the county, and then connections, obviously, to the jurisdictions that are adjacent.

[00:01:57] So just to be clear, the Visionary Network is for Metrobus. We are also redesigning Q for the city of Fairfax and Prince George's County, the bus. So we started back in the fall. We launched the Better Bus Initiative because we know that bus can be serving customers much better and customers in this region much better.

[00:02:18] So that's anything from zero-emission vehicles to bus priority to better stops, better shelters, all of that sort of thing. But we also know that really, when it comes to bus, it really starts with bus service. And so that's why we're really leaning into redesigning the network.

[00:02:37] So every time we've gone out and surveyed customers, and I'm sure everyone who works for Connector as well will talk and tell you that the first thing that customers talk about is frequency and reliability, right? Like you want to know that the bus is going to, well, and it's going to serve where you want to go, right?

[00:02:53] But so it's getting you where you want to go, at times you want to travel, and at a consistent time period. And so we know we need that level of convenience. We need that level of reliability for customers to leave their cars at home.

[00:03:12] That reduces congestion, reduces emissions, and then it also expands that access to economic opportunity. And we know that we're not doing it as well as we should. and that's a collective we across all bus operators. But I will say the data tells us there's a lot of opportunity for improvement, which is why I think we all do what we do, right?

[00:03:30] We know that trips in the region that use transit on average workday, it's about 5%. So we know there's, from a bus perspective, there is a lot of opportunity to improve. And so strengthening that bus network and that service plan will really help in that regard.

[00:03:47] So we're about halfway through the project. Like I said, we launched internally last summer and then publicly last fall. And we're out really talking to you and your colleagues across the region, but we're also doing 50 events over 50 days to hear from customers and potential customers across the region and everyone in between.

[00:04:09] And the data that we use to create this visionary network is threefold. A, what we've heard from the public in the fall, right, letting us know what works, what doesn't, what their priorities are, How well our service is doing, from a performance, from an effectiveness perspective, and then also the region's travel patterns.

[00:04:27] Where are people going that bus could actually serve? Absolutely, there are places that transit is not going to, you know, is not really the most efficient way to get from A to B, but there are those opportunities that we can be doing better. And so while we're focused today on the visionary network, that is, additional resources would be needed to make this possible.

[00:04:47] We wanted to be clear that the outreach that we're doing now, hearing from you, from customers, everyone in between, it is going to help us refine the visionary network and then help us get to

a constrained network, right? So it's kind of setting the table large and saying what the opportunities are and then constraining it.

[00:05:05] It's very similar to what Connector does for the transit strategic plans that have been done over the years. And that near-term network starts us on that path to get to that frequent direct connections. So I'm going to turn it over to Peter, and he's going to talk about some of the highlights, especially here in the county.

[00:05:24] Thank you, Allison. So, again, I want to thank my colleagues to the right from Fairfax who have been really helpful in this as we've worked through a lot of the potential things we could do and issues, and really we all put aside in this first phase our, I would say, our hats about who's running what to really look at it from a customer perspective.

[00:05:50] Customers don't care particularly who's operating the bus. They want the bus, as Allison mentioned, to be reliable, frequent, ideally, and to get where they want to go. So we've looked at regional connectivity. We've spent time not just in terms of our customers, but also our drivers, our operators, who know the routes well, but also know some of those problem areas, the difficult turns, the safety concerns, things like that, that we can work with the local jurisdictions to try to address.

[00:06:21] We have tried to look at equity and address issues in that regard, as well as making sure we outreach across all of our residents of our service area. We think if we do all of this, and as Allison mentioned, this is initially an expansive vision, looking at what we need to do ideally, it could have a significant increase in ridership.

[00:06:46] close to 50,000 people on a weekday, a little bit less on the weekends, and most of those coming out of private single occupancy vehicles that could have a significant environmental benefit. We, in particular, have focused on continuing what have been our successes in the last few years.

[00:07:08] Coming out of pandemic in September of 2021, we implemented a frequent service network throughout the region of 36 routes in total that were either every 12 minutes all day, seven days a week as a floor really of service, or that was 20 routes and then 16 routes every 20 minutes.

[00:07:28] Those were some of our most successful routes coming out of pandemic in terms of attracting back riders and particularly on weekends where a lot of parts of the region had very infrequent service, even on key routes, and those have been very successful. We made a decision on the visionary level that if we were operating a route, that it should be at least every 30 minutes, that it wasn't really fair to riders who absolutely had no other choice to wait 60 minutes to take a bus for a local trip.

[00:08:00] and it wasn't going to attract people if they had another choice. And we did look at developing a 24-hour network given that, you know, this is a large region that doesn't have currently 24-hour service of any mode.

[00:08:16] We looked at some new connections, and I know some of them are ones that have been talked about in this county as well, but one of the ones that I think so far has been the most popular one from the comments we've seen of the new connections is going from Tyson's across the river to Bethesda.

[00:08:33] We're viewing this, at least in the long-term visionary, as a 24-hour connection. Really, it is more than just a commuter route. There's a lot of connections in that region. Some other ones include

extending a route that currently goes from the district out as far as Boston, the 38B, out further to Seven Corners.

[00:08:56] So we've looked at strengthening transit hubs and areas that aren't necessarily as well-served as they could be today. Another one is the new Inova Hospital in Western Alexandria and George Mason University as potential hubs.

[00:09:13] And we have a lot of success with the opening of the Silver Line to Dulles, but we've had continuous requests for service when the rail is not running for employees. so we are going to meet separately with EMWA and talk about both airports and what kind of overnight services are needed there.

[00:09:32] As just an example of some of the changes, I'll show you a before and after map. Just to orient you, this is Fairfax County, the part of it that particularly has Metrobus service in it, so we're not showing the whole county. Color-wise, a red route is a route that is at least every 12 minutes, seven days a week from 6A to 9P at least, so that's the 28A you see cutting across there in red. The darker blue is at least every 20 minutes, lighter blue is at least every 30, and there's probably some roots here that are even black or grayed out that are less

[00:10:10] frequent than that. You see a lot of different varieties of roots coming down the Shirley Highway that, you know, very thick line, but each root very relatively infrequent, so those are some of the things we try to target and so if I go to the proposed I'll just back and forth a couple times to appreciate that we do have more red here some more frequent services that are all day seven days a week a little less of the confusing variety of different services we try to consolidate some where we could we've improved service and connections into the city of Fairfax as

[00:10:50] as well, and worked with them, as was mentioned, on reshaping the Q network as part of this. We have used data that Allison was talking about, not just for riders of our buses, maybe Metrobus, as well as Fairfax Connector and the other operators, but also with cell phone data and other available data looking at people who are not riding transit right now and figuring out where there are markets where we could potentially attract some of those riders into

[00:11:22] bus services or bus rail services i will this visionary network is a 30 35% increase in overall operating hours across the region so clearly it's something that we now need to once we get comments look to something that would be more immediately implementable we have not yet worried about who operates what in this again it was what what needs to happen and that discussion of the operators is going to happen in the next phase. And we know on Metrobus in particular, our route numbering

[00:11:59] system is very confusing. It dates back to our predecessor companies 50 years ago, some cases back to the streetcars in D.C. in 1936. And very confusing our customers. This is a time to look at changing that. We are in the visionary network. We have a placeholder numbering system because we couldn't use existing numbers we don't we're market testing some options for numbering afterwards so that will happen in the next phase as well turn it back to Allison about our engagement okay so like I said we we launched in mid a mid-April and we have been doing in honor of Metro buses 50th birthday 50

[00:12:38] events over 50 days and it does say upcoming because when we sent this over it was actually upcoming to be out of the Seven Corners Transit Center but last week we were at the Seven Corners Transit Center with a pop-up. We also did, last week, had a workshop at the Arlington County Central Library to kind of be slightly more centrally located to talk to customers and potential customers where they are.

And then we are also, we also have been doing ride-alongs. So some of the routes that we really, that had more targeted changes, we've been out talking and, you know, riding along to really

[00:13:15] engage customers who are on the bus to understand their impacts. We also have a virtual online. You know, it's 2023. We need that now. So we've got a couple of different ways, like Google Maps. You can type in where you start and where you end, and it gives you both what you would do today and then what the visionary network does. So you can understand kind of time savings, different routings, and be able to engage that way. And then we've also got a way for customers to drop a pin in and leave comments about difference, you know, whether they like it, whether they don't like it, whether, you know, somewhere in between.

[00:13:53] And like Peter said, we've had a ton of comments about that Bethesda-Tysons connection that I think a lot of people are really keen to see. And then finally, we do have a survey to try to really collect some very targeted pieces of information from people.

[00:14:09] So, we worked strongly with Fairfax County staff, as well as Arlington, Alexandria, and across the board. Had a number of work sessions, half day, full day, to really -- I mean, I'm a planner.

[00:14:25] I see a map. I love to draw some fat lines on the map and really start to engage, and we really tried to start there without any assumptions as to who operates, what's there, like what are the places we need to be connecting, and start from there. So I think it was a pretty, I may be biased, but I think it was a pretty good process to start with.

[00:14:43] And then we also were out talking to our operations staff. So next stop on this, we are wrapping up the engagement of customers. It should wrap up the first week of June. And from that, we'll be refining the Visionary Network and then bringing that into a more near-term discussion.

[00:15:02] So we will be back as long as we are welcome back. But we're looking forward to moving on to the near-term network as well. So I'll turn this over. Yeah, Allison, thank you very much, Peter. Great job. I know that was a little bit abbreviated.

[00:15:19] I appreciate that. Let's jump right into our Fairfax County Department of Transportation folks. Brent and Michael, I think you guys have a presentation. Go ahead, and then we'll open it up for questions. Yeah, Supervisor Gordon. This is Brent Riddle, Fairfax County Department of Transportation.

[00:15:34] Yeah, we have a very brief presentation, and we'll try to tie into what you just heard from WMATA staff. So turn the floor over to Mike Felshaw. Thank you, Brent. Thank you, everyone, for being here today. I'm going to go over a very brief presentation. Go to the first side, please.

[00:15:51] We have been working with our partners at WMATA since the beginning of the process. Our focus is to make sure our plans coordinate well with their plans. Our first thing that we're doing is we're a part of the technical team, and we've gone to several meetings with that.

[00:16:08] We provided UMATA with our data, which included ridership information, our future plans, our existing system, the levels of service that we provide right out there today, and where we're going over the next 10 years. And we're also looking at their plans, as Allison was mentioning, about their system and how they're developing their system.

[00:16:31] And we're in the process of reviewing that now. We're going to be using our own transit strategic plan, which is based on a gap analysis and travel demand patterns. So let me go backwards to go

forwards a little bit. Our transit strategic plan, I believe we went to every single board member here.

[00:16:49] We did one-on-one meetings with you, and we showed you where we were going with our plan in both a constrained and unconstrained manner. This is based on a quantitative and qualitative approach, very similar to what WMATA has been doing with their plan. It's also based on roughly around 13,000 public comments that we've received over a series of years.

[00:17:09] So we've taken all that information and we've created our transit strategic plan, which we're hoping to bring to this board sometime in the early part of FY24 for approval. So we're taking that plan and looking at how does it link with what WMATA is doing so that individuals can transfer between our two systems regardless of the color of the bus, and I believe WMATA had just mentioned that.

[00:17:33] So that's what we're looking for. We're making sure there are no gaps or duplications in service and that the service is appropriate for that corridor, improving access and mobility, all within the lens and through the lens of equity, all to do the key thing, improve mobility, improve access.

[00:17:54] So we're also going to continue this process until the end through Phase 3. We're going to be defining the level of service and priority routes, which WAMATA has just mentioned. We're going to be looking at corridors like US 50, Highway 7, which was one of the examples that they provided, Braddock Road, which is a very key corridor, Columbia Pike, Springfield, Oaking Mill Road area, and Little River Turnpike.

[00:18:22] Our system doesn't really provide a lot of service in these corridors, but we want to make sure that we're linking to these corridors at key terminals. So we're going to be looking at the bus routes, the transfer points, and where the bus stops actually are going to be. Once we're at that point, we're also going to make sure that they link to, and we link to, our two new multimodal facilities.

[00:18:47] One in Monument Drive, which is right around the corner here, and one down in Old King Mill Road. We are in the present process of shifting routes to these two new facilities. we want to make sure that in this new butter better butter that that's a good one you guys did a finger tied on me there okay i practiced this and it didn't work out so so the bbn how about that one the bbn we want to make sure that it links to our network not only at the um wamata metro rail stations but at these two new facilities will have significant parking

[00:19:25] ride lock capabilities. I believe the Monument Drive facility will have eight bus bays and the Old King Mill Road will have seven bus bays. So the next thing is we're going to be looking at the level of service based on the funding categories and the funding level that are going to be anticipated. And then at the end, we want to make sure that the goals and objectives of our Transit Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan are actually achieved through this plan.

[00:19:58] So my last comment to everybody here today is to make sure that the two systems function efficiently and effectively without gaps or duplication of service with appropriate level of service. And thank you. All right. Very good. Well, I'll open it up here for questions. I guess One thing that's important to underscore in the WMATA presentation, this is a visionary network.

[00:20:24] This is still very much high level, and it also assumes, I believe, a 35% increase in resources going to bus. Bus in the region, not just WMATA, yes. In the region. So, yeah, this is, again, a visionary starting point for discussion.

[00:20:42] So, with that, I would turn it over to Chairman McIntyre. Yeah, I think you actually you just touched on the most important part to me, which is I and I appreciate the county staff working on this, but I know that there likely will be some conflicts, maybe not in route, but who operates route and for how long.

[00:21:01] And obviously, you're 100 percent right that our customers don't care what bus it is as long as it gets there, but we care how much it costs to operate that bus. And so I just want to make sure that, you know, this is a visionary document, but that our own county transit strategic plan is the driver operationally for us of the decisions they could make, maybe with a check to this strategic plan.

[00:21:29] And I do think it is appropriate for WMATA to do this for the region and to look at this, and this is enormously helpful to us. I just want to make sure that if there's a conflict or an opportunity where we can be providing a layer of service here and maybe even more aggressively in the future providing that in lieu of Metro bus operating it, that we're not precluding anything operationally like that from happening here and that this is, in fact, a visionary document.

[00:21:56] And I just really want to get that clarification. Do you want to answer that for a minute? Yes, I think we all agree on that. As I said, initially it was like, what are our customers, our collective customers, your constituents, our customers need?

[00:22:16] And then we will sort out who is best able to provide that. And obviously there's a lot higher level discussions on the funding of all that. But without the guidance of where we should be headed over the next five years or so and what the needs are, we'd be down in the weeds fighting over a tree and ignoring the forest, right?

[00:22:40] So that was the point of all this? Yeah, and I appreciate that because I do think the vision of where these routes are and how we can make sure there's no gaps in service and other things is absolutely an essential thing to do. I think when it gets to who operates those, we just want that flexibility working with you to make that determination because at the end of the day, if we can do it more efficiently from a cost standpoint, then we can provide even more service.

[00:23:05] That should be, you know, a huge driver and incentive for all of us as we go to implement some of the recommendations that are in here. So thank you. And I'll just add one thing to that, which is this is super helpful. I know the footprint is generally the current Metro bus routes and service area.

[00:23:27] I mean, in Fairfax County, about 60 percent of our service is provided by connectors. So for those of you that maybe don't see as much here, that's okay. It's, you know, being covered in the transit strategic plan that we're doing. So the combination should provide the opportunity to get the input that I think we're all looking for in terms of a visionary network.

[00:23:49] Okay, start with Supervisor Walkinshaw, and then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and really great work on this. And I've seen it a few times from WMATA, but thank you all for the work and the presentations.

[00:24:07] One just parochial thing, really excited to see the improved service, especially to the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus, which I think is, if there's a better vehicle for economic mobility in Northern Virginia or in the region than the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus, I'd be hard-pressed to find it.

[00:24:30] And the service now, someone coming from Bailey's or Culmore to get there has a very lengthy and difficult trip to to do it um so we want to make that as easy as possible on a kind of broader level something that has that struck me about this is that um throughout this process um the improved kind of north south south north service in fairfax county or in northern virginia doesn't

[00:25:05] seem to really bubble up. And I would think that, you know, as we're looking out with a 10 to 20 to 30 year vision, that helping people get from central Annandale to Tyson's, the largest growing job center in the region, would have been a bigger part of that. And maybe the answer is it's going to be as part of the connector process. But that just really struck me. It seems like WMATA's vision is to improve the kind of traditional hub and spoke model of getting

[00:25:44] people to and from the core. And at least what we're seeing here, it's not really a significant change in terms of people's commuting patterns and how they'll be different 10 to 20 years from now, and maybe the answer is that that's not what you have heard from customers or the community, and I know we've tried a little bit of those kind of beltway routes with the connector, and the ridership hasn't panned out, but I have to think that 20 years from now, more and more people are going to be trying to get to and from Tyson's and Reston

[00:26:20] from Annandale, Lorton, Burke, et cetera, and this doesn't seem to capture that. So a couple of thoughts. First of all, regionally, well, first, your community college comment, absolutely. Those are, from my experience in looking at a number of places, that they are huge draws for transit and growth, both students and employees.

[00:26:45] So that's certainly something we looked at. Hospitals, some other key drivers as well. Regionally, what we call cross-town or cross-county connectors are something that we think is really important, particularly as the region, as work becomes more decentralized post-pandemic, as we recognize more the essential workers who are always doing those trips, and as development continues to happen further out.

[00:27:13] So we have strengthened those throughout the region. I think the 28A is a key route that we want to continue to strengthen, and it is part of a big BRT corridor study that we're participating in as well, and so we continue to try to strengthen that route. We do have a route, although the Tyson's Bethesda route is part of what's essentially a continuation of Maryland's Purple Line in bus form around the region.

[00:27:40] That ultimately, you know, is a corridor that's growing. We have another proposal in here for a George Mason Fairfax City up to Tyson's route. That was a route that operated a number of years ago and was discontinued for low ridership, but we think the evidence is showing that that is, as you were saying, an important one to develop.

[00:28:03] We will certainly take your comments back about looking even further afield from Tyson's as potential and incorporate that. Yeah, I mean, the big thing that just jumps out at me is the beltway. I mean, it seems like that would be a logical route. Yes, thank you, Bakinshaw.

[00:28:21] We at Transit Connector, we are looking at several routes for the future. Route 313, which will connect directly from the Burke area directly up to the new monument facility. We also are looking at Route 400X, a limited stop route along Gallows Road starting down in Franconia and going up to Tyson's improvements, hopefully on Route 401, 402 that go riding along Gallows Road.

[00:28:51] So we'll have a stack of routes there, Route 315 that also serves the Braddock Road corridor up to Vienna. So we noticed the demand along these corridors, especially Braddock, and we've been taking special interest in trying to connect north-south, understanding that WMATA would probably mostly go with east-west.

[00:29:14] Okay, all right, so that's the answer. You all are looking north-south, and you've been kind of, okay. All right, thank you. Let's actually start down back here. Supervisor Palachuk. Sorry, thank you. And I'll be very brief. And I was really going along some of the similar lines as Supervisor Walkinshaw, following these routes very closely.

[00:29:33] I think there's both kind of an opportunity, but also the challenge that we're hearing, right? We have our study, Connector, WMATA, NVTC, and NVTA, I believe, are both looking at this. And I think we're all pretty aware, having lived in D.C., knowing that network's there.

[00:29:49] How do we both address the current need as well as getting people who are using their cars or having to find other ways to get around to do that? I think this map, I think you have the draft as well as the current on, I don't see page numbers, but the maps you have here really show that in smaller areas like the city of Fairfax, you really have that there is that network, right?

[00:30:14] that makes it easier to have those connections and being able to get around every place you might need to go. I think in theory, this all sounds really good. But when we get down to it, I think is where we all have a lot of interest of how we look at those connections and making those feasible for more people on the bus while not taking away those critical ones that are there.

[00:30:37] So I think adding to that, kind of my question as to where we're going, between the existing map, and again, I don't see a page number, and the proposed map, they're pretty high level. But from what I'm looking at, it seems that rather than adding, we're taking away lines.

[00:30:58] If this is just a WMATA map, obviously it would be helpful to overlay that with what the connector is looking at as well. Because it is a network, and so I think the more we're able to overlay and show that we're looking at the full network and understand that we probably know our activity centers and schools, everything better than probably someone looking at it more regionally, we want to make sure that those connections that aren't currently there are there.

[00:31:27] I think the Gatlow's route is awesome. I'm very excited about it. We can't put everything on Gatlow's also, right? So we do need to make sure whether it's Beltway or other. So I guess the question is really that, what is the next step as we're looking at essentially four different bus studies happening concurrently and how we really get the granular, how do we ensure that we're improving the network for everyone needing to get around, and we're Fairfax, so in Fairfax County.

[00:31:57] Yeah, I would say that that's four studies just within this area, and there's, to the side of the Potomac, there's a number of other studies going on that we're trying to coordinate with, right? That's our challenge. We're up for it, but it is something we're trying to make sure we're not getting into conflict with any of the jurisdictions. I would just say that developing graphics for presentation and PowerPoint are challenging and just focused in a particular area. I would urge you and your staff and your constituents

[00:32:35] to go online to WMATA slash better bus where there's a number of tools we can look at at the proposed map compared to existing and see in the other the non-metro operators are also shown there those those routes which we've in much much of the region presumed to be fixed that we're working

around although again incorporating plans that Fairfax has for for new services as well so those are all there. We're still taking comments, and we anticipate significant revisions as we move forward with this. So this is not a plan where even if we have the money, this

[00:33:14] is not what we're anticipating implementing right away. We want these comments. It's hard for people to respond to just, you know, a concept without something. So this is the something that we're -- our best first shot, but we are looking for -- MS. Yeah, and I think at the high level, at least you're not in conflict with each other but I guess on the more granular level I don't know Michael if you have more on the active level on that yeah let me just add in that what our teams when working on is making sure that we don't have gaps because we started with the equity concept where do people need to go and who needs to go so we started

[00:33:51] with that and we started with those 13,000 comments and we started to fill in the gaps one of the things that we're trying to work on in terms of developing our transit strategic plan is not making a predetermined determination of where people want to go have them tell us where they want to go and design the system so that they have the opportunity to transfer to wherever they want to go and link to whatever system they want to try to do so that's what we're looking at we're looking at local routes and more regional routes we just implemented a route 660 in february and i believe it was back in february the traveling from uh centerville to right here at the government center it will be

[00:34:30] be moved over to hopefully to the monument facility when that's opened up it then goes on to Vienna and then to Tyson's one of the major employment centers thereby linking not only all our transit routes together but WMATA routes the metro system and linking major employment centers together for $2 trip and it operates at 10 minute frequencies we're We're going to be hopefully implementing more of those up and down 495, linking, trying to link all our local routes with regional routes,

[00:35:06] and at the same time having our more express routes still operate to D.C. So people have the opportunity to link wherever they want to go and however they want to go. It's a layering process. So we want to make sure that our layering process also works with the WMATA system also.

[00:35:23] Hopefully that helps. It does. I think, practically speaking, that's where I would like to see. I think we would like to see it, I think, as we're in these design phases. While we're saying we're all supporting the same constituents, it doesn't feel that way in these presentations.

[00:35:38] So my ask is just anything we can do. I mean, you all have excellent design and graphic people for us to be able to, if you're at a community meeting, say this is what we're looking at. So that we don't say there's a huge gap here, but we know someone else is fulfilling that. That would be my request right now as we continue.

[00:35:54] Thank you so much. And, Mr. Steverson, did you have something to add? No, I was just going to sort of say what Michael was saying in terms of that's something that we're doing, going into the system and actually looking at where our routes and their routes overlap. And I think that's something that we'll work together with Ramada to try and give to you all.

[00:36:10] I appreciate it. I think it's an awesome opportunity we have right now. So I'm grateful that we're all looking at it. Thank you. Okay. Let's try to get through the questions. Supervisor Lussin and Supervisor Gross. Yeah, I'll go quickly. I just wanted to say I really appreciate the presentation. And the thing that's kind of resonating with me is this box where you say regional 24-hour network to key jobs.

[00:36:31] That's really, really critical. But you also put in nightlife areas. So I'd just be a little curious, because thinking about the creative class and thinking about how we can attract young people to our community, where did you envision these nightlife areas, I guess?

[00:36:49] Just trying to get a sense of what's the thought. What's the thought around that? Where are the parties from? No, no, this is not for me. This is not for me. Party time. He's going to track his daughters down. I'm thinking about those that are a lot younger than myself. Because Walsh and I are about to go to our 35th college reunion in a couple of weeks.

[00:37:09] So I am not young anymore. Definitely not for me either. So, yeah. So partially it is connecting lots of end-of-line stations, right? So one of the things we've heard, and I've been at Metro for a healthy decade, there's always that push to expand rail, overnight rail service, right?

[00:37:29] And obviously we all know that the challenge is, right, we need to be maintaining the railroad. So a lot of this is how do we take bus and fill in some of those gaps? So, you know, if you look at Central D.C., right, a lot of that is connecting to U Street because those nightlife areas are also the job areas, right?

[00:37:46] Like those two things go hand in hand. But, you know, Peter had flagged the Tysons to Bethesda, right? Like when I moved here more than a few years ago, Tysons was not what it is today, right? And kudos to you and your predecessors for making it what it is.

[00:38:02] But those connections between Tysons and Bethesda, like those are nightlife areas. Those are job areas. Like it's having those connections so that regardless of why you're going there, there is that like good quality service to connect you. Also, being able to reach Union Station, Dulles National, those types of things.

[00:38:24] And then also, finally, the end-of-line station, so at least you can park and ride as well. Yeah, I'll say I think that's going to be a helpful marketing thing for us as well. The second question, and I appreciate this point, is on the new Anova Alexandria Hospital.

[00:38:41] But I just want to be clear in saying there is a new Franconia-Springfield Hospital also coming. So, just want to be clear, I know that you mentioned the garage in Springfield, so clearly that's going to give us some connectivity, I'm assuming, to that facility as well, but it would be helpful if we're going to note the new Alexandria, you might be aware that the old Alexandria is a split between the new and the Frank County of Springfield, just so we're clear on that point.

[00:39:11] And otherwise, I'll say I really appreciate the presentation and what you're attempting to do. so I think this is great. Thank you. Supervisor Gross. Thank you. And thank you for the walk down memory lane. I hadn't thought of the old A, B, and W routes in a long, long, long, long time, but that's how I got around when I first moved here. So in looking at this map that is provided in the county, really envious of all of the red in the District of Columbia, which we recognize.

[00:39:43] So the only way that this is really going to work, I think, is to increase the amount of red on here. I have to chuckle a little bit because red usually indicates a big stoppage on 95 or something. But we really want to see more of that.

[00:40:00] But it's also, there's still a lot of what I would call white space here. So I'm thinking that as you're looking at this and increasing the opportunities, There also has to be a thought given to parking, and I'm not talking about big parking decks somewhere, although that might be some of it, but in the

suburban areas, people are going to walk to, you know, folks who live in Mason District will walk ways to Columbia Pike or to Little River Turnpike to catch a bus, but they're not going to walk, you know, a mile.

[00:40:40] So a lot of times the conflicts that we have are folks are parking in somebody else's neighborhood to catch the bus. It's absolutely legal on VDOT right away, but it is a friction. So we need to be thinking in the future about how we attract the bus riders who may be getting to the bus stop by their own vehicle. I just want to put that out there as a possibility. And then the other thing that I would wonder, um, would be technology, um, wireless availability on buses.

[00:41:19] I know we have improved it on Metro, but, um, on the Metro rail, but what about on buses? Um, that's another, at least at this particular point, people are looking for it. Maybe by the time this is all implemented, there'll be some other technology, but you have to have that built in Because if you're looking for additional riders, they're going to want those kind of opportunities that they get in their vehicle or in their office or at home.

[00:41:48] It needs to be available if they're going to be taking a 30-minute bus trip. So I don't know what you have right now, but you certainly need to put that into the mix. I'll take a couple of those. So thank you. These are all really helpful comments and questions.

[00:42:06] So one of the things when you talked about, you know, seeing more red in a positive way on the map, and a lot of that is just that tradeoff, right? We are balancing the, you know, what you're seeing here is already a 35% increase in resources. So putting more frequent service is then potentially not having as much coverage in some of those less frequent, less high demand areas, right?

[00:42:32] So those are those tradeoffs that we are out talking to customers now to really get that input and would love, you know, we can engage you separately to understand where you – it is a spectrum and it is not the same for everyone. But a lot of the frequency push that we have done throughout here is really looking at all day, all week service, right?

[00:42:52] So pre-pandemic, we were not any different than most other bus operators, but it was like peak period, 6 a.m. to 9 a.m., and then, you know, 4 to 7 in the afternoon, like super high peak, and then like all day was much lower, evening lower still, and Saturday and Sunday also lower.

[00:43:14] And so what we've really tried to do is beef those up, because we know that most people, their trips are not for work, right? Only 20% of trips in the region are work-oriented. So it's all those other things, going to the hospital, going to, you know, social events, going shopping, you know, whatever it is that you do to make trips during the day, we're trying to catch those trips.

[00:43:37] So a lot of it is where we're putting the resources that we have, but that is that major tradeoff. and then second your technology uh yeah question so we are um as we launched kind of the better bus initiative it's looking at zero emission buses it's it is looking at what is on board the bus in terms of technology it is bus priority how do we get more red bus lanes uh transit signal priority how that you know helps speed up the bus and make it more reliable so that is all of what we're doing at metro this is specifically about where the routes go and and where they connect to

[00:44:13] but you're absolutely right, and those are things that we are working through as part of this. And don't forget the parking piece. That's probably – I know we're trying to get people out of their cars, but sometimes getting into your vehicle to go to a hub is the way to do it.

[00:44:29] Thank you. Supervisor Stork and then Supervisor Herity, and we're going to – I'm not sure we're going to be able to get to five, but let's see. Go ahead. You said something I really wasn't conscious of, which is 20% of trips are for work and obviously us are for other things.

[00:44:47] Is there any data that you could share with us? I would be interested in drilling down a little bit more and understanding that a little bit better. That all actually comes out of the Transportation Planning Board, right? So that is, and then we're also seeing that we have, as part of one of the inputs for this is cell phone data, right?

[00:45:04] Because we all have them and it, so you're seeing what all those trips are separate from what's just happening on our system or on connector, so you're able to see when times of day, where people are going, but also TPB, that is data that they have been showing routinely through their studies as well, that it's pretty much an 80-20 breakdown.

[00:45:29] I'd particularly like to see that by area, if possible, for lots of reasons. Thank you very much. Supervisor Herdy. Yeah, I appreciate the chairman's comments up front about the economics, and I think that's important to our residents and the fact that connector service tends to be more cost efficient than than metro railing we certainly need to take that into the balance you know a lot of conversation about um trying to get people who don't have to take the bus into the bus which is which is always the challenge and as i like to always say it's the quicker trip is the thing

[00:46:06] that'll do it and a better service um i'm going to talk about something i haven't talked about probably 10 years but um you know san francisco had something called connected rapid transit where they really upgraded their uh they took bus out of the name put rapid into it put transit into it but it was kind of an interesting thing i think a catchy name can go a long way along with thinking about riders putting things like free wi-fi in the buses which doesn't doesn't cost a whole lot now um improving the the design of the buses i didn't see any of that kind of customer usage

[00:46:42] stuff in here, and hopefully it is both on our side and on their side. But taking advantage of I-66, quicker trip is frequency, but if you do too much frequency, you end up having a negative carpet footprint because you run empty buses. So if you don't have riders, it's a tough equation.

[00:47:06] Speed is key, and you mentioned signal prioritization, but also where you've got Guaranteed speed is I-66, 495 was mentioned earlier. Taking advantage of our network of hot lanes needs to be a key part of it. I saw some of that in here, but again, this isn't the whole picture.

[00:47:22] This is only the Metro bus side. I know Connector has heard that before, but those are my two or three thoughts. But it really is, we've got to look at improving the service and getting the people on the bus because it's actually a quick, good way to get there.

[00:47:41] you can jump on the bus, open your laptop, and work all the way. And these days, in the days of teleworking and tele-nonworking, you can actually probably even count that time. Anyway, that's my comments. Okay, thank you very much. Thank you all very much.

[00:47:59] Appreciate you being here and good discussion from board members. It is 12.03. We have a hard stop, do we not, coming up. So we may need to push the number five cut-through permit program to our next transportation committee meeting.

[00:48:20] Okay, so let's do that. And, Mr. Stevenson, we can coordinate on that agenda and timing. Okay, any final things for the committee? Mr. Chairman, before we end, on the last one, because we now have the presentation, it would be really helpful.

[00:48:38] I know I have a number of questions. We send those questions in the staff and get answers to those before, you know, so that we can make sure, because this has been around for a while, and, you know, if we have questions and make it quicker at the next meeting to, you know, dispense with this item, let's send those questions in the staff and get answers to them in the interim.

[00:48:59] Thank you. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All right. We are adjourned.

