

**Friendship Heights  
Transportation Management District  
Advisory Committee  
November 9, 2021**

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**Voting Members**

Robert Banach	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Barbara Condos (Chair)	Town of Somerset
Afua Ofori	Polinger Co./Large Employer
Ahkeeia Payne	GEICO
Elizabeth Demetra Harris	Friendship Heights Village

**Non-Voting Members**

Sandra L. Brecher	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Peter Fosselman	B-CC Services Center
Iftin Thompson	M-NCPPC

**TMD Staff**

Jim Carlson	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services
Nakengi Byrd	MCDOT/Transportation Policy-Commuter Services

**Absent**

Chief John Fitzgerald	Chevy Chase Village Police
John Mertens (Vice Chair)	Friendship Heights Village

**Guests**

Deanna Archey	MCDOT Ride On
Gary Erenrich	MCDOT
Bob Joiner	The Agenda News
Julia Vaughn	TMD Outreach
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village
David Proctor	TMD Outreach
Jason Wynans	Chevy Chase Land Company

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**Item 1 & 2 – Introductions/ Minutes:** Chair **Barbra Condos** called meeting to order. Members and guest introduced themselves and minutes were reviewed from July’s meeting and the Joint TMD meeting on September 20th.

**Vote: The Committee approved July and September’s meeting minutes.**

**Item 3 – Ride On Reimagined Study:** **Deanna Archey** reported on the Ride On Reimagined Study that will look at Ride On bus routes to make service more efficient. An implementation plan will be established after a review of 200 public comments received from the study. **Ms. Archey** described Ride On bus service history, stating that the system of 40+ years started as local neighborhood feeder service and has grown to include the Ride On Extra express service along the 355 corridor, the Flex bus on demand service which uses an app to request a trip, and the Flash articulated buses that operate along the

Route 29 corridor and features level boarding. All are equipped with USB ports and other amenities. **Ms. Archey** also reported that the plan will cover:

- Using previous studies to determine the Bus Reimagined Plan's Market Analysis & Land Use Development. Market Analysis looks at origin and destination patterns to strategically place transit.
- Infrastructure is the backbone of Ride On service as the plan will give direction on housing vehicles such as garages & charging stations.
- The Plan will cover technology such as vehicle locators, functionality of Real Time system and the transfer of the bus fleet to zero emissions and studying autonomous vehicles.
- Fleet & Operations will cover safety & training and best practices in solving issues such as recruitment and maintaining staff to combat the bus operator shortage.
- Public engagement includes meetings and other outreach activities seeking community comment on wayfinding signs, branding, maps & timetables.

**Ms. Archey** discussed the next steps of the study, which included posting the scope of the plan online for comment through November 1<sup>st</sup>. In the next 18-24 months, the 200 public comments received from the draft scope will be incorporated into the plan for a FY24 implementation. Also discussed:

- The draft study was conducted by an outside agency chosen from a pre-qualified list of experienced planners.
- Metro is also conducting a similar study and deferring the portion of its service in Montgomery County to be spearheaded by MCDOT – Metro is part of Ride On's study as well.
- Remarks on the good coordination and timing of MCDOT & Metro's studies – Metro has not yet selected a consultant.
- Covid pandemic will be included in the plan's analysis as the 'new normal'.

**Ms. Archey** provided the presentation slides to **Mr. Carlson** to distribute to the Committee.

**Item 4 – Metro Update:** **Gary Erenrich** reported on Metro operations. The Blue Line derailment resulted in removal of two thirds of its fleet of the 7000 series cars, meaning a loss of 740-750 cars. This deficit required the 2000, 3000 & 6000 series to be pulled from cold storage at the Shady Grove station, which is currently closed due to the Rockville canopy replacement project construction. The removal of cars from Shady Grove has delayed construction to mid-January due to removing the tracks protective covering. Also reported:

- A service plan was developed to move trains from Shady Grove storage to increase runtimes to 12-15 minutes – trains are 90% on time and running until 1AM on Fri. & Sat.
- Shuttle buses to replace trains traveling between Twinbrook & Shady Grove stations - 5,000 trips a day.
- FY23 budget will not have fare increases; however, there will be no reduction of the \$2 bus fare to \$1- rail to bus \$2 transfer will be free.
- Ride On is free until January. MCDOT will decide to extend at later date - may implement a half-fare policy.
- Discussion regarding the demand for more Metro bus operators and the issues with substituting rail operators to fill in the gap as bus driver recertification is difficult.
- Metro received union approval to hire rail operators without promotion from bus drivers.
- Metro Rail operators are needed for Silver Line.

- Three Federal funding bills have benefited the transit system, which have maintained service and employment.
- Bus ridership is good at 70% pre-Covid status; midday & weekend ridership has also increased.
- Discussion regarding the rail inspections of the wheel & axels from the Washington Suburban Transit Commission, as they decide what kind of inspections to conduct and the frequency- WSTC is Federally mandated to oversee Metro's safety.
- The FY23 budget projections are based on 55%-60% of ridership returning, relying on the infrastructure bill for transit funding.
- Discussion regarding the White Flint name change to be decided at the December Board meeting.

**Item 5 – Marketing Outreach: Sharp & Co. reported:**

- 3 pop ups for Car Free Day
- Walk & Ride participation -same participation maintained as last year
- E-blast on Commuter news, contacting Employers urging them to participate in events also share their transportation concerns
- CID's – visits at Marriott
- Employer outreach and Commuter Information Days held at Roti, Amazon Fresh and Courtyard Marriott

**Item 6 – Around the Room: Julian Mansfield** reported that the tree boxes on Willard Avenue are full of weeds and have received complaints from residents in the Community. A 311 call was placed; however, there has been no movement on the issue. **Jim Carlson** will contact the County Arborist to resolve.

**Bob Banach** reported that escooters from the District have been making their way into Bookdale and, in some cases, are being parked in a way that blocks pedestrian access. Scooter companies are supposed to have GPS tracking to locate errant scooters, but scooters have been in the neighborhood for days in many cases. **Jim Carlson** will follow up with the County's vendor contact to rectify.

**Adjourn: Next meeting: January 11, 2022**