

**Silver Spring
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
October 13, 2022**

Item 1 & 2 – Introductions/ Minute Review: Members and guest introduced themselves. July’s minutes were approved.

Item 3 – Tactical Bus Lanes and Queue Jumps Demonstrations Project: **Anikwenze Ogbue** of the Bus Priority group at WMATA, joined by **Judith Howerton** and **Raka Choudhury**, discussed the bus priority demonstration project. The demonstration project is a one-mile two-way bus lane that will use queue jumps and other priority tools to improve bus efficiency, speed and to reduce congestion mainly concentrated near the Silver Spring Transit Center. Once the demo is completed, Metro will evaluate bus service reliability to determine if it will be made permanent. This effort is to provide better and reliable transit connections to correspond with Montgomery and Prince George counties bus priority projects. Also discussed:

- Metro partnered w/ SHA, MCDOT & MTA to choose corridors that provide the best opportunities for bus lanes, as some corridors operate under State jurisdictions
- Tactical bus lanes are quick build bus lanes only using red paint and signage for faster results and adjustments
- The bus priority demonstration project will also help in furthering climate change goals for the County
- Discussion regarding the difference between traditional bus lane projects that have a longer process and tactical lanes that have faster implementation
- DC has seen improvement with the bus lanes project and are looking to increase exponentially by 2029
- Georgia Avenue between 16th & Wayne Avenue is the corridor selected in the downtown Silver Spring area- the curved sign lane will be repurposed as a bus lane
- The more downtown area of the corridor will provide parking and options to mitigate construction impacts
- The corridor connects with the Q bus & BRT lines – also to service low income and people of color to align with equity goals and resources

Mr. Ogbue explained that there were several options to implement the demonstration during the AM/PM rush hour, such as making it operational during AM rush for southbound only and northbound in the PM. The tradeoffs of restrictive parking for 25 spaces will be considered when deciding on an option. Also reported:

- Concept & design plans for the demo started summer 2022 and public information sessions are scheduled for November 1st- Construction starts in fall 2023 w/ an evaluation by early 2024
- Public review of the evaluation will take place in Spring 2024
- WMATA is funding the projects design and MCDOT will fund the managing and implementation

Chris Perry asked about mitigating the signage along the corridor, specifically communicating the lane changes to drivers. Signage will be included as a part of the deliverable of the project, to communicate parking and lane changes to the public. **Mr. Ogbue** indicated that communication to the public is key to the operation of the project, and they will work with SHA, MCDOT and other agencies to obtain viable results. Also discussed:

- Part of the evaluation will consist of bus reliability, speed and reduced congestion by increasing the speeds of the lowest performing buses
- A Public information session is planned Nov. 1st @ 6:30 seeking public input- link will be sent via Eventbrite
- Meeting with the Economic Development Committee on October 17th and planning sessions with other stakeholders:
- Tactical bus lines are easy to implement for quick benefit and low-cost funding is in the operations budget
- MCDOT will be working w/ Metro & SHA for traffic signal changes
- Tactical lanes are currently at the Germantown Transit Center
- The virtual outreach information sessions will be recorded
- The issue of accurate evaluations with only one mile demonstration of a tactical lane- easier to manage, low costs are among some of the reasons
- Maryland 97 / Montgomery Hills project beginning where the tactical lane ends
- Speeding up buses in the area can have a major impact in the downtown Silver Spring area as ridership is almost back to pre-Covid numbers
- The short demonstration area will show results due to clearing the bottleneck area near the Silver Spring Transit Center
- The red paint of the tactical bus lane does deter some drivers; however, enforcement is needed- community engagement is also key- Montgomery County cannot use cameras for bus line enforcement although Baltimore has authorization
- Enforcement to allow right turning traffic on the red paint area- Cross hatching at driveways and intersections to deter vehicles in unauthorized areas
- Traffic analysis are conducted before construction takes place to know the best places to put signage
- Queue jumps will be used during off-peak period at the intersection of Cameron & Georgia Avenue- queue jumps are traffic signals that allow a head start for buses
- Concerns over project planning not being discussed with the police for enforcement

The Committee discussed public engagement with presenters to educate the public about the project and commuter changes. A website will provide FAQs along with other community informative events.

Item 4 – Metro Update: Gary Erenrich -

- Metro's new CEO **Randy Clark** has gotten good reviews
- Metro is working to put more 7000 rail cars in operation- this will hopefully remedy long commuting times for commuters
- **Clark** will present his budget in November-trying to remedy the \$150 million budget gap in lieu of depleted covid Federal funding
- Some routes show their importance due to returning pre-Covid numbers

- Dedicated funding with the capital budget consists of a 50/50 split between the federal government and the three jurisdictions that provide \$50 million each
- The ability to bond on the \$500 million is drying up, thus the funds are going toward paying off Metro's deficit, decreasing the ability for more projects-Metro spends \$2 billion a year on its operational budget
- Fair increase vs ridership is a fairness issue for those jumping the fare- working to develop programs to reduce fares for low income for greater accessibility for all riders
- The Potomac Yards station & the Silver Line phase II are great improvements to the system, however, lack the funds to operate

Item 5 – Updates: Sande Brecher -

- Internal testing underway for the commuter survey before rolling out next week-paper options for those without computer access and mobile friendly options to improve response
- Commuter survey to reach the residential populations
- MCDOT Bike donation drive on Oct. 14th and the ongoing Bike Match MoCo program
- The Walk & Ride challenge starting Oct. 17th
- Thrive 2050 to be adopted by Council this week
- A new climate website roll out- flood management study public meeting coming up
- Micromobility parking corrals for e-scooters & e-bikes- suggestions for finding for corrals needed
- Electric Vehicle initiative- MD state to id EV charging locations within 1 mile of interchanges

Item 6 – Employer Outreach Update:

- Due to the increase in telework, employers are less responsive to information gathering efforts of the outreach team
- Conducting outreach for Car Free Day
- The Ride On Reimagined study is a tool to show transportation options

Adjourn/ Next Meeting: December 8, 2022

**Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee Attendance Sheet
October 13, 2022**

Voting Members (12)			
Name	Affiliation	Present	Absent
Chamber Members (3)			
Chris Kabatt	Wells + Associates	X	
Julie Statland	Statland & Katz, Ltd.		X
Vacant			
Citizens Advisory Board Members (3)			
Harriet Quinn	Kemp Mill, Four Corners, East SS	X	
Vacant	North & West Sector Plan Area		
Chris Perry	CBD Resident	X	
Employers less than 50 employees (3)			
Vacant			
Vacant			
Vacant			
Employers with 50 or more employees (3)			
G. Michael Price	Discovery Communications	X	
Vacant			
Vacant			
Non-Voting Members (3)			
Sandra Brecher, DOT-Commuter Services	MCDOT Director or Designee	X	
Larissa Klevan	M-NCPPC	X	
Jacob Newman	Silver Spring Regional Center	X	
Sgt. Kerry Moore	Montgomery County Police		X
Staff			
Nakengi Byrd	MCDOT-Commuter Services	X	
Jim Carlson	MCDOT-Commuter Services	X	
Guests			
Jennifer Bolick	TMD Outreach Team	X	
Raka Choudhury	WMATA		
Carson Henry	SS Urban District	X	
Leslie Howerton	WMATA	X	

Jay Elvove	SS Citizens Advisory Board	X	
Gary Erenrich	MCDOT	X	
Laura Van Eperen	Van Eperen & Co.	X	
Anikwenze Ogbue	WMATA	X	