



**WSTC**  
WASHINGTON SUBURBAN  
TRANSIT COMMISSION

**THOMAS GRAHAM**  
CHAIR

**TOM HUCKER**  
VICE CHAIR

**MICHAEL GOLDMAN**  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Tuesday, March 18, 2025  
2:30 PM  
WSTC Semi-Annual  
Commissioners Meeting Minutes**

Commissioners in Attendance	
Mr. Thomas Graham, Chair	
Hon. Tom Hucker, Vice-Chair	
Mr. Michael Goldman, Secretary-Treasurer	
Hon. Eric Olson	
Mr. Don Drummer	
Mr. Raymond J. Briscuso, Jr	
Mr. Joe McAndrew MDOT as Secretary's Designee	
Staff in Attendance	
Mr. Jonathan Rogers-Director, Washington Area Transit Office	
Ms. Sara Murdoch	
Mr. Ryan Traher	
County Representatives in Attendance	
Mr. Efon Epany, Prince George's County	
Ms. Semia Hackett, Prince George's County	
Ms. Oluseyi Olugbenle, Prince George's County	
Mr. Michael Johnson, Prince George's County	
Mr. Victor Weissberg, Prince George's County	
Mr. Christopher Conklin, Montgomery County	
Ms. Haley Peckett, Montgomery County, Deputy Director	
Mr. Corey Pitts, Montgomery County	
Other Officials in Attendance	
Mr. Ray Biggs, MTA, Purple Line Project Director	
Mr. Doran Bosso, Purple Line Transit Partners, CEO	
Mr. Chris Scruggs, Purple Line Transit Partners, Outreach Manager	
Mr. Charlie Scott, WMATA, Senior Government Relations Officer	
Public in Attendance	
Ms. Tammy Cooper	
Mr. Bill Orleans	

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Graham called the meeting to order at 2:31 PM and a quorum was met.

**II. Consent Calendar**

A motion to approve items A (Approval of the Agenda) and D (Auditor Procurement) was presented by Chair Graham and approved unanimously by attending commissioners.

Mr. Goldman notes that his request recorded in the September 2024 commissioners meeting minutes that WSTC develop a written position on DMV Moves has not yet happened. He requested more discussion and expressed a desire for WSTC to reach a conclusion on the Task Force pending issues so WSTC can make recommendations.

Mr. Goldman questioned whether Non-Operating Revenue and Expenses should be included in WSTC's budget in the 2024 Audit prepared by Key and Associates if they are line items that don't run through WSTC's accounts. Approval of the audit is tabled until after staff can provide direction on the Non-Operating Revenue and Expenses portion of the budget.

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2024, Semi-Annual Business Meeting with the additional note concerning DMV Moves position was presented by Chair Graham and approved unanimously by attending commissioners.

**III. Public Comment**

Mr. Orleans stated that WSTC has no intent of meeting with community members on the Paratransit Strategy Study until after its study and feels it is important to meet with relevant stakeholders earlier in the process.

He also requested information on when there would be opportunities for the community to provide input on Prince George's County's Transit Vision Plan and expressed a desire to see coordination between DPW&T and the Planning Department's Master Plan.

**IV. Purple Line and Metrorail Coordination**

Mr. Biggs of MDOT MTA began his presentation by providing an overview of the Purple Line's public-private partnership (P3) model between MTA and Purple Line Transit Partners. The timeline of the project shows that the Purple Line is about to start dynamic testing and expects to complete track installation in 2026, with end-to-end system testing in Spring 2027. They are on schedule to begin passenger service in Winter 2027.

Metro SmarTrip cards will be accepted on the Purple Line, as will Charm Pass and Charm Cards. Mr. Goldman had questions about the availability of SmarTrip fare

vending machines outside of the Purple Line station stops that would allow people to reload their cards if they did not have access to a smartphone. Mr Biggs agreed to take this back to his superiors and provide a response to WSTC in the near future. The exact fare structure has not been determined yet, but MTA is currently evaluating its options, whether it is flat fares, zone fares, or some other approach.

The Purple Line staff confirmed that its train operators will not be required to have MTA bus operation experience like WMATA does for its Metrorail operators.

Project milestones include 35% of track completion, 12 station canopies installed, and all 21 stations being under construction.

Purple Line teams regularly meet with WMATA staff for the Bethesda, Silver Spring, College Park, and New Carrollton stops, in addition to quality control meetings, and project-level coordination.

Mr. Biggs provided details on the Bethesda Station that entails creating a new elevator shaft and mezzanine level for the Purple Line stop that is between the Metrorail station and street level. He also gave updates on the Silver Spring Transit Center, College Park stops, and the New Carrollton Station.

Light Rail Vehicle Testing begins in the next few weeks, which will ensure trains operate safely, operator proficiency, and looking for any potential issues.

Purple Line Transit Partners awarded eight Beyond the Rails grants in January and MDOT launched its Small Business Grants Program in February to support businesses and community organizations impacted by construction.

A request was made for a follow up from MTA on expected ridership at each of the stops along the Purple Line with updated numbers from the 2016 estimates.

**V. Resolution 01-2025 (Recognition of Service—Tammy Cooper)**

Chair Graham read the resolution into the record and asked for a motion to approve the resolution, which was approved unanimously by attending commissioners.

Director Rogers added that Ms. Cooper received a Secretary's Citation from Secretary Wiedefeld for her service.

**VI. WSTC Update**

**a. Update on WSTC Internal Matters**

The current staffing plan is to maintain our current staffing levels and later evaluate needs. WSTC is using this as an opportunity to modernize and find other ways to increase efficiency.

**b. Paratransit Strategy Study**

Mr. Traher began the presentation by explaining how Maryland accounts for 62% of Metro access program costs in the region. The goal of the study is to understand why that is, and how the state can maintain service while addressing the long-term costs of paratransit. WSTC contracted with KFH Group for the study, which has extensive experience in transit planning, and paratransit specifically.

The three tasks of the study entail an analysis of the paratransit landscape in the region, peer agency analysis, both locally and nationally, and finally, providing a strategy roadmap that can inform future policy conversations.

Task one is finished, Task two is approximately 40 percent complete, and Task three is in its preliminary stages. The study is on time, on budget, and staff will provide a summary of the project at the September commissioner's meeting.

Chair Graham asked how national peer agencies were determined for evaluation. Mr. Traher explained that KFH chose other cities that match the region's demographics or have strategies that are applicable to the same paratransit policy issues facing Maryland.

Mr. McAndrew reiterated the value of the study as a cost-savings endeavor due to all the trips originating in Maryland being a financial obligation of the state.

**c. Interest-bearing Account**

At the Commission's request following a presentation on the topic at the September 27, 2024 Semi-Annual Commissioners Meeting, Ms. Murdoch solicited revenue-producing account information from five (5) banks including Eagle Bank, Wesbanco, Sandy Spring, Truist and M&T Bank.

The top two (2) candidates with the most competitive options that met the needs of WSTC were Eagle Bank and M&T Bank. Revenue projections were conducted on multiple scenarios for interest-bearing checking accounts and Certificate of Deposit (CD) accounts. The highest revenue producing option was M&T Bank's sweep account with potential annual net revenue of \$30,677.

The Commission unanimously approved the enrollment in M&T Bank's sweep account.

**VII. FY2026 Joint Study Fund Discussion**

Mr. Rogers provided background on the fund, explaining its purpose to provide unique policy evaluations that can improve transit in the region. He then transitioned to explaining the next WSTC study recommended by the Washington Area Transit Office focuses on transit-oriented development (TOD) in each county.

The Prince George's County study would follow up on MDOT's *Unlocking the TOD Potential of the MARC Penn Line Corridor* study published in October 2024, with a focus on the Seabrook station and essential pre-development topics. The Montgomery County study is still under consideration, but potential ideas include TOD studies around planned Bus Rapid Transit corridors, a TOD plan at the Germantown MARC station, status of TOD projects at Red Line stations such as Twinbrook, Forest Glen, and Shady Grove, or site planning and right-of-way analysis to support development on county-owned land near Shady Grove Metro Station. Mr. Rogers proposed continued engagement with Montgomery County to identify a specific TOD study topic. One-hundred fifty thousand dollars is requested for each study for a total of \$300,000. New state and contributions would provide \$21,000 in funding with the remainder of the costs funded with reserves.

Mr. Goldman expressed some concern that WSTC may not possess the internal expertise to conduct this study, but Mr. Rogers clarified that his previous positions met the criteria necessary to support the project. He added that MDOT's Office of Real Estate and Economic Development would be engaged in the study as well. Combined, these staff-level resources would provide sound strategic guidance to a consultant that would be hired to complete the studies.

In response to another question from Mr. Goldman, Mr. Rogers explained that the Seabrook site would likely continue to go undeveloped if it does not have an organization moving it forward and maintaining momentum. Mr. Olson added his support to the study, which was followed by Mr. Drummer echoing his support as well.

Mr. Hucker asked about avoiding duplicative efforts and replicating studies already conducted. Mr. Rogers ensured these sights had passed initial screening but lack next steps and direction on where to go next. Mr. Hucker wanted to be sure WSTC will be engaging with the planning departments and recommends connecting with county council staff and executive branch staff as they could add thought leadership to the study.

Chair Graham called for a motion to approve the next WSTC study and it was approved unanimously by attending members.

## **VIII. WSTC Budget**

### **a. FY2025 Budget Forecast**

Ms. Murdoch explained the FY2025 forecast, which included the actual expenditures for the first and second quarters and forecasted amounts for the third and fourth quarters.

As a result of changes to the employee benefit selections, the personnel expenses

will fall below the approved budget amount by approximately (\$100,000) an estimated 26% decrease. The Commissioner compensation increased by \$2,500, a 4% increase. As Vice-Chair Hucker is no longer an elected official, the Commissioners' compensation needed to be adjusted accordingly. The operating expense category is estimated to fall approximately 1% below the approved budget.

The total approved amount of the joint study fund of \$27,000 will be expended in addition to the amount of \$103,893 funded by WSTC reserves for a total of \$124,893.

Overall, the forecast is set to come under budget by approximately (\$100,000), 18% below the approved budget.

**b. FY2026 Proposed Budget**

Ms. Murdoch stated the total proposed FY2026 budget is \$536,923, which is 1% lower than the approved FY2025 budget.

The personnel expenses decreased by 14% due to a change in employee benefit selections. The Commissioner compensation increased by 13% due to an increase of \$2,500 for the Vice-Chair. The operating expenses also increased by 13% mainly due to the upcoming conference and travel expenses for the Conference Attendance Fund. Lastly, the portion of the joint study fund that is funded by MDOT, Montgomery County and Prince George's County remains unchanged at \$21,000. The amount of the joint study funded by reserves increase to \$279,000, a 168% increase.

The total administrative expenditure including the WSTC reserves increased by 26% from FY2025 to FY2026. Without the inclusion of the joint study fund reserves the proposed FY2026 administrative budget decreased by 1% compared to FY2025.

The Commission unanimously approved the WSTC FY2026 Administrative Budget.

**IX. WMATA Update**

Mr. Scott began the presentation by showing Metrorail ridership is up in Maryland since the end of the pandemic. Mr. Drummer asked if these types of presentations are shared with the counties and Mr. Scott said that they regularly provide updates to the county councils. Chair Graham recalled "State of the Metro" presentations from the General Manager in the past and thought those were helpful. Mr. Olson pointed out that they received a presentation recently and feels the county representatives get consistent presentations and updates from the metro.

Mr. Scott then provided an overview of legislation in Maryland relevant to

WMATA, including the Metro Funding Modification Act of 2025, Land Use – Transit Oriented Development – Alterations, Vehicle Laws – Bus Obstruction Monitoring Systems & Bus Stop Zones, and State Public Transit Service & Stations – Exclusion for Assault & Bodily Injury. There was some discussion around bus lane enforcement and how WMATA does not see the ticket revenue from the bus cameras.

WMATA has updated its draft FY2026 budget with increased revenue expectations based on ridership, which continue to grow. The presentation also highlighted service changes on Metrorail proposed in the current FY26 budget. It also provided information on the current state of the Better Bus Network Redesign (BBNR) rollout starting June 29, 2025, transit-oriented development taking place in Maryland, automatic train operation on the Red Line, and open fare payment. The presentation concluded with an update on DMVMoves and the subjects focused on by the task force.

After the presentation, there was some discussion about Metrobus fare evasion and the new fare gates installed at the Metrorail stations.

#### **X. County Conversation**

##### **a. Montgomery County (MCDOT)**

MCDOT's own bus system update, Ride On Reimagined, will coincide with WMATA's BBNR at the end of June. Mr. Pitts also provided progress updates on Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects.

The current FY26 proposed budget includes a zero-fare trial for Ride On. Prior to COVID, Ride On experienced 30-35% fare evasion, but now it is closer to 70%. MCDOT conducted a Fare Equity Study in 2021 and the results of continuing fare free were inconclusive at the time. Despite dropping fares to half price, fare compliance and revenue have not returned at the same levels as ridership. The cost to collect fares is approximately \$563,000, the capital outlay needed to update the fareboxes is \$19.4 million, and the enforcement costs are considerable with unclear efficacy.

The FY26 proposed budget also includes funding for automated enforcement of the bus lanes, specifically on Georgia Avenue. MCDOT is working with WMATA on logistics. Mr. Briscuso had a question about revenue from the bus lane enforcement and Mr. Pitts clarified that ideally, revenue would be close to zero due to 100% compliance. Eventually, what little revenue the automatic enforcement would bring in would go back into running the system.

##### **b. Prince George's County (DPW&T)**

DPW&T's Transit Vision Plan is underway and the final draft is expected May 31. County staff regularly meet with WMATA on BBNR implementation, including bus stop updates and establishing new routes. DPW&T is acquiring 12 new diesel buses, transferring five hybrid buses from MTA, and transferring 10

hybrid buses from WMATA. The new route DPW&T will run as part of the BBNR rollout is the P37, which takes over the discontinued C8, maintaining service to National Archives II, while also serving the University of Maryland.

Chair Graham asked if DPW&T is satisfied with the buses they received. Ms. Hacket says their team has met with the WMATA maintenance crews and deemed them satisfactory for their needs.

Mr. Olson said he is glad the P37 is being implemented and asked if this is diverted from somewhere else, or a brand new route. Ms. Hacket clarified that it is a brand-new route for DPW&T to replace the lost Metrobus service. It mirrors most of the previous route but is slightly shorter. If the line is productive, they intend to expand it and add additional buses. Mr. Olson asked if it intersects with Ride On as it is only a Prince George's bus. Ms. Hacket said there were conversations with Montgomery County about having a stop right over the county line but will have to follow up with Mr. Olson on the decision.

#### **XI. Good of the Order**

Chair Graham announced that Governor Moore appointed Deborah Jarvis as a new member of WSTC. Chair Graham added that he worked with "Debbie" at Pepco and served on the board with her at Goodwill Greater Washington. Pending confirmation, she will become a Principle WMATA Director July 1, 2025 and Mr. Briscuso's term on the commission will end. Chair Graham acknowledged Mr. Briscuso's service to the commission.

Mr. Drummer requested WSTC meet with the WMATA's Accessibility Advisory Committee's Metro Access Subcommittee to share the Paratransit Strategy Study preliminary findings and receive feedback prior to the final report.

#### **XII. Closing Remarks**

Chair Graham asked if WSTC staff have anything to add prior to the meeting's conclusion. Mr. Rogers clarified how to pronounce Deborah's name (Deh-BOR-ah), but added she goes by Debbie. He also reminded commissioners to submit their ethics reporting if they have not already completed it. The next meeting will be in September. Meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

**Note:** The commission will vote prior to the end of FY25 to select officers for FY26.

*These meeting minutes are in draft form and will be on the agenda for approval at the Fall semi-annual commissioners meeting.*