

**Silver Spring  
Transportation Management District  
Advisory Committee  
March 11, 2021**

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**Item 1 & 2 -Introductions/Minute review:** Member and guest introductions.

The Committee approved January's meeting minutes.

**Item 3 - Metro Update:** Gary Erenrich discussed Metro's budget and operations, explaining that the system was on track to deplete its funds come January 2022; however, new Federal funding passed by Congress will allow for continued operations and halting employee layoffs and to increase ridership.

Also reported:

- Bus ridership is back to 30% - 40% higher than rail
- The efforts to market transit emphasize comfort & safety
- Ride On is currently not charging fares (charging starting in April) although Metro is – how is fare differential affecting travel
- Our area received \$25 million from the Cares Act; however, Ride On requires \$125 million for operating

Committee discussion included:

- The adjustments planned for Metro due to Covid - surveys to capture riders & business comments
- Telecommunicating was at 10 percent pre-Covid and are currently at 30 percent during the pandemic, with people returning to work two days a week and teleworking the remaining days - predictions of a year before ridership returns
- Customizing service to maximize transit system efficiency; however, the data available for restructuring routes is pre-Covid
- The perceived funding issues for transit if teleworking reduces ridership, as driving and paying for parking becomes cheaper, and as commuters are not commuting a full work week
- Discussion regarding dropping fares to incentivize commuters to take transit – Metro has not raised fares in two years, and there are issues in charging peak fares when not giving peak service

**Item 4 – Presentation Personal Rapid Transit:** Sande Brecher introduced the presentation, commenting that personal rapid transit is not a substitute for the 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project as the funds for that project have been secured but another alternative. Peter James from Crystal Clear Robotics Company explained that Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) provides a point-to-point transit option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and vehicles are equipped with UV light disinfection. Managing lanes is important for smart growth as traffic congestion will become worse in the future. Unlike conventional transit that stops at every stop along the route, which is time consuming, especially when transferring is factored in, PRT offers an even faster solution than cars. Also discussed:

- PRT is in line with Vision Zero principals of zero traffic deaths or serious injuries since it is computerized with laser sensors
- Baltimore study found that commuters have difficulty in employment access, many living in “transit deserts” and the need to provide equity

- Pods are battery operated and can travel two kilometers in five minutes – battery size depends on vehicle travel miles, as these make up the majority of costs
- PRT is 120<sup>th</sup> the cost of light rail systems -1,000 miles of PRT system will carry 120 times the traffic volume
- Low environmental impact and cost effective in carrying freight
- Eliminates need of bridge widening or hanging guideways off bridges
- Six stations operate in midtown Dallas – modular infrastructure with no transit time loss
- Pods cost range is \$1,000-\$15,000 per vehicle

**Mr. James** reported that his company was able to convince MTA on the value of PRT compared to the monorail system, explaining how it can be elevated without moving utility lines or going off-route for transfers. Other Q & A from the Committee included:

- The addition of bikes and wheelchair access can be added to the system based on demand

**Item 5 - Employer TDM Plans:** **Jim Carlson** presented Companies TDM plans to be recommended for approval.

The Committee recommended the Transportation Director approve TDM Plans.

**Item 6 – Employer Outreach Update:**

- The results of the COG Employer Recognition nominees soon to be announced
- Discussion regarding the closing and new openings of business in the downtown Silver Spring area
- Helping Employers to complete the TDM Plans
- Upcoming BTWD on May 21<sup>st</sup> -virtual event, t-shirt pick up at participating bikes shops and fitness centers

**Item 7 – Updates:**

- **Sandra Brecher** provided an update on the Climate Action Plan draft
- The County Exec’s FY21 Operating Budget- County Council reviewing
- A Covid Committee to get people vaccinated- targeting low income & people of color
- The Planning Board will give community presentations on the Silver Spring Master Plan- Tuesdays @7pm
- Business Improvement District – holding off on efforts to move forward with plan

**Around the Room:** The Committee discussed noise complaints in the DTSS to be directed to 3<sup>rd</sup> District police department.

**Adjourn**

**Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee Attendance Sheet**

**March 11, 2021**

<b>Voting Members (12)</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Chamber Members (3)</b>			
Chris Kabatt	Wells + Associates		X
Julie Statland	Statland & Katz, Ltd.		X
Vacant			
<b>Citizens Advisory Board Members (3)</b>			
Harriet Quinn	Kemp Mill, Four Corners, East SS	X	
Vacant	North & West Sector Plan Area		
Chris Perry	CBD Resident	X	
<b>Employers less than 50 employees (3)</b>			
Valerie Spencer	MayaTech	X	
Dar Maxwell	Panagora Group	X	
Vacant			
<b>Employers with 50 or more employees (3)</b>			
G. Michael Price	Discovery Communications	X	
Vacant			
Vacant			
<b>Non-Voting Members (3)</b>			
Sandra Brecher, DOT-Commuter Services	MCDOT Director or Designee	X	
Iftin Thompson	M-NCPPC	X	
Reemberto Rodriguez	Silver Spring Regional Center	X	
Sgt. Kerry Moore	Montgomery County Police	X	
<b>Staff</b>			
Nakengi Byrd	MCDOT-Commuter Services	X	
Jim Carlson	MCDOT-Commuter Services	X	
<b>Guests</b>			
Jennifer Bolick	Van Eperen & Co.	X	
Jay Elvove	SS Citizens Advisory Board	X	
Gary Erenrich	MCDOT	X	
Peter James	Crystal Clear Robotics	X	
Mel Tull	Lee Development	X	