

WMATA and Arlington County

Date of Meeting: June 10, 2010 **Location:** Ballston Metrorail Station and
NRECA Building
4301 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA

Subject: Ballston Station Multimodal Study
Stakeholder Meeting #1

Summary:

This first stakeholder meeting, on June 10, 2010, was held to introduce stakeholders to the study, and to obtain input about transportation and circulation issues from daily users and operators of the Ballston station and station area. The information gathered during the meeting will help the project team identify, analyze, and recommend enhancements that will encourage safer and smoother pedestrian and transit circulation and will improve the design of the plaza for all users.

The stakeholder meeting took place as a two-part program. The first part was a walking tour of the study area. After the walking tour, the meeting regrouped at the NRECA Building for a presentation and discussion session.

Comments received during the walking tour are listed by location in the section that follows.

N. Stuart Street

- Poor lighting:
 - Cannot read schedules at night
 - Street lights mismatched and inadequate
- No seating while waiting for buses:
 - Planters and other streetscapes are used as seating areas
- Dark and obstructed areas around the Metrorail entrance
- Vendors pay individuals to save spots
- Old bus stop shelters (not meeting standards)
- Need for digital/real time travel information
- Tinted windows on store fronts
- What is the width of the public access easement on Stuart?
- Possible lane width changes, lanes are currently very wide

Metro Entrance/ Fairfax Drive

- Outdated canopy style and poorly maintained
- Jay-walking across Fairfax Drive
- Bike lane does not continue in front of the station
- Shuttles and “Kiss & Ride” cars blocking the buses
 - Idea of redirecting some shuttles to other stations
- Upgrade existing audible pedestrian signals

N. Stafford Street

- Buses idle
- Taxis making dangerous u-turns to avoid circumventing around N. Stuart Street

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- One incident this year of a pedestrian hit by a taxi
- Need to delineate the taxi area better
- Sink holes and uneven brick pavements on sidewalks
- Curb cut treatments are needed to help delineate between the sidewalk and the driveways
- Possible lane width changes, lanes are currently very wide

9th Street N.

- Concentrations of people with disabilities living in the Ballston area
- Lack of delineation between driveways and sidewalks (same pavers and lack of markings) make drivers and pedestrians less aware of the shared space
 - Driveways are too wide
- Poor pavement conditions
- Inadequate lighting
- Buses wait and block sight of pedestrians
 - Also dangerous during emergency evacuations of building because you can't see the meeting spot from across the street
- Pedestrian crosswalk across 9th Street sticks out into N. Stuart Street due to misalignment of sidewalk and crosswalk

The discussion held during the presentation and meeting at the NRECA Building is briefly summarized in the section that follows.

Proposed Kiosk

- Stakeholders were concerned with the availability of computers and access to online commuter services at the new kiosk.
- The kiosk will be ADA compliant.
- The commuter kiosk service hours will be the same as the hours of the existing store.

How do you arrive at the station area?

- All modes represented except shuttle buses
 - Walk
 - Sidewalk
 - Overpass
 - Bus
 - Rail
 - Car

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- Bike
- Taxi
- Paratransit
- Paratransit drop-off occurring at Hilton hotel due to its location and accessibility.
- From the Ballston mall by way of the pedestrian bridges and through the building.

What issues have you faced as a user of the plaza and/or transit at the station?

- Need something to slow buses down on N. Stuart Street.
- The metal grates on the sidewalks are really slippery, especially in poor weather conditions.
- Ramps connecting sidewalks and the roadway:
 - Too narrow, making it hard for people to pass in opposite directions.
 - Grades are too steep.
 - Bad drainage (at the bottom) in the streets is hard for wheel chair users and hazardous for battery powered wheelchairs.
 - Cross slopes are not ADA compliant.
- Need traction on bus ramps (wheelchairs).
- N. Stuart Street frontage has a 4-6% cross slope, which is too steep to be ADA compliant.
- Dips in the sidewalk bricks and uneven pavement are dangerous for elderly and visually impaired individuals.
- Crosswalks are poorly marked.
 - Consider zebra paint for visibility but use textured treatment to reduce the slipperiness during wet conditions.
- Need a place for the WMATA service vehicles to park because currently they stop on the plaza and block pedestrian traffic.
- More shelters/better bus waiting areas (especially for bad weather).
 - Shelters with sides and back.
- Clearance around bus schedule poles is inadequate, especially for wheelchairs.
- More trash receptacles (current trash cans are always overflowing).
- The lack of patterns that brick pavement can provide makes it hard to create designated areas.
 - Other alternative- rubberized brick or asphalt.
- At night the signs with the bus schedule are not visible.

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- Need electronic signs with real time information.
- It is too dark at night.
 - Not so much unsafe as hard to maneuver.
- Need a place for wheelchairs to wait for the bus.
- Market, remind, and educate users on transit users' etiquette.
- Ground lights for footpath; similar to those installed in the streets that cars can drive over.
- Need queue markings for the bus lines on at the bus stops at N. Stuart Street.
 - 25A, 25B, and 38B have long queues for boarding, block through paths. Perhaps include some sort of demarcation of passenger waiting areas to prevent pedestrian congestion.
- Buses should be grouped by destination when allocating bus stop spaces.
- N. Stuart Street has a lot of parking spaces that crowds the roadway.
- Narrow walkway on the north side of Fairfax Drive.
- Need a larger and designated Kiss & Ride area.
- Location of stop signs on N. Stuart Street, at 9th Street, is too far back allowing buses to accelerate too much as they approach the bus bays.

What do you like about the station area?

- Trees and landscape.
- Proximity of buses to Metrorail.
- Accommodating bus drivers.
 - Metrobus will wait for transfers from other buses, even when running behind schedule.
- Fruit vendors.
- LED lights on plants and canopy.

How do you see the area changing over time?

- Becoming a small city itself
 - Urban landscape (N. Glebe)
- Increased foot traffic/ pedestrian zone
- Increase in all transit modes
- Changing bus routes and stops; possibly to the Virginia Square area

