

WMATA and Arlington County

Date of Meeting: October 5, 2010 **Location:** Ballston Metrorail Station and NRECA Building
4301 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA

Subject: Ballston Station Multimodal Study Stakeholder Meeting #2

Attendees:*

Name	Organization
Brenda Krieger	Dweck Properties
Megan Susman	
Karen Jennings	Gates Hudson
Laura Koschny	
Matthew Zych	Metro Transportation Commission
Ellen Armbruster	
Krys Ochia	Metro Transit Advisory Committee
Deb Byrwa	
Sandra Lemus	
James Schroll	
Bee Buergler	Arlington County

*This list only includes attendees who signed in.

Summary:

This second stakeholder meeting, on October 5, 2010, was held to introduce stakeholders to the three conceptual alternatives and to obtain input concerning each alternative's transportation and urban design components. The information gathered during the meeting will help the project team refine 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 included a series of poster boards displaying the alternatives as well as a presentation explaining each alternative's components.

Comments, as well as responses, received during and after the presentation are listed below. Comments/questions are listed as the first bullet, while the second, slightly indented bullet is the accompanying response, if provided.

- Will the raised bike pit area have a slope for drainage?
 - Yes, the pit will have a two percent slope across the surface for drainage. The highest point will be the center of the circle.
- Where will the commuter store kiosk be located? How big will it be?
 - The kiosk will be adjacent to the northeast wall of the escalator entrance to the underground Metrorail station, with the kiosk window facing toward Fairfax

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Drive. The kiosk will be slightly smaller than the existing mall commuter store at about 150 square feet. The size is smaller because customers do not enter the kiosk; rather, they wait outside. No service will be lost in the transition.

Employees will be able to exit the kiosk to assist customers, if needed. Schedules and other information will be available on the outside walls.

- Who will maintain the kiosk?
 - Arlington County Commuter Services bureau has a contractor who is responsible for maintaining the kiosk.
- By focusing on the plaza design, this project is losing sight of its purpose, which is to help commuters transfer between buses and trains. The area should not be redesigned for people to have a nice place to sit. It should be redesigned for commuters. The tall grass, as shown in the presentation visuals, in the rain gardens is too high.
- Has the project taken into consideration the vertical distance between the underground parking garage and the street level, particularly on Stuart Street? Attendee believes the trees on Stuart Street are in large planters because there is not enough soil space for tree roots at street level due to the underground garage. Attendee pointed out that the underground garage may preclude the depressed rain gardens shown in the visualizations. Attendee expressed concern that the project may waste money planning and designing alternatives that aren't feasible given this constraint.
 - Comment noted. The project team has not yet looked at the underground garage vertical distance, but they are familiar with Metro's underground facilities and have already taken those into consideration.
- An attendee in a wheelchair said that she has a difficult time hailing a bus because she cannot be around smokers who generally hang out near the shelter or the curb. On top of that, she has difficulty boarding the bus because signage and other obstacles create a situation where the bus ramp either cannot deploy or can deploy but she cannot properly access the ramp. Attendee states that this problem is endemic to most Metro facilities.
- Have you spoken with bus operations staff?
 - Yes, the project team has spoken with bus operations staff, and they have provided input on creating the transportation components of each alternative.
- Does this project include a lighting plan?
 - Yes, lighting is a key issue for the project, so it will be addressed.
- Bus drivers don't have a place to take a proper break, nor do they have enough time. There are no nearby restrooms. Their breaks are so short that drivers often smoke right by their buses. The schedules should allow for a proper break.

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- Comment noted. One of the shortcomings of the proposed bus layover sites is that they are lacking restroom facilities as well, but this is an issue that the study team is aware of and is trying to address.
- Is the project taking safety into consideration, specifically concerning adequate sight lines? Attendee is concerned with her safety in the evening at the Ballston plaza due to poor lighting and sight lines.
 - The success of the plaza depends largely on making it an inviting area for everyone, which will encourage extended use into the evening hours. Part of making the plaza a success is making it feel safer with more transparent sight lines and adequate lighting, as well as providing reasons to use the space (e.g. a café) that will create a situation with more eyes on the street.
- Is the project focused on the plaza or transportation (i.e. commuters/bus operations)?
 - Essentially, the focus of the project is both: they are not mutually exclusive concepts. The idea is to create an urban space that formalizes activities that are already happening at the plaza by making the area more inviting, while at the same time making bus operations and the passenger transfer experience more enjoyable and efficient. The project also provides an excellent opportunity to add environmental touches to the plaza.
- It appears that the plans have not considered the size and location of sidewalk grates.
 - Grates are being taken into consideration, particularly for Metro's underground facilities (e.g. emergency access and ventilation grates). The design will not impede on the function of any of these grates, though the fire marshal has not seen any concept plans yet.
- An attendee expressed concern about wind being an issue with the operation of the commuter store kiosk.
 - Wind should not be an issue as only the bottom portion of the window opens and closes, like a teller window. The kiosk should have two employees during while open, so someone should be able to exit the kiosk and help any customers while the other stays inside.
- What about displaying information about transit etiquette (e.g. standing on the right side of an escalator, etc.) on the sides of the kiosk?
 - We will consider this suggestion.
- An attendee wanted deeper shelters to fit more people and make it easier for those in wheelchairs to stay dry during rain storms. Another attendee wanted to see the dimensions of the shelters on the plans.

