Connecting Key Activity Centers with High Quality Bus Service

Lessons Learned from the DC Circulator Transit Development Plan

April 15, 2011
DC Circulator Transit Development Plan

- Ten-year plan for development of the existing DC Circulator bus system
- Six-month effort, draft to be presented to DC City Council
- Study performed under contract to DC Surface Transit, Inc. (DCST) with direction from DDOT, with significant input from key players

Evolution of the Existing DC Circulator System
Key Elements of Circulator-Type Bus Service

- All day high-frequency (ten minute headways or less)
- Limited stops
- Addresses multiple trip purposes—employment, school, shopping, entertainment
- Connects Activity Centers—not the internal “last mile” shuttle
- Complements existing transit options
- Simple, understandable routes and fares
Planning Process

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Define Goals and Objectives
- Review Existing Land Use, Transit, and Other Plans
- Define “Activity Center”
- Develop Characteristics of Activity Centers
- Develop Potential Connections
- Review Existing Transit Infrastructure
- Develop List of Proposed Corridors
- Evaluate Proposed Corridors
Initiating the Process

- Stakeholder Interviews: One-on-one interviews with key senior staff at stakeholder agencies and organizations
  - Provided input on original objectives for Circulator, understanding of its role
  - Provided input on needs and vision for future development of the Circulator

- Define Goals and Objectives:
  - Developed with core technical team
  - Vetted with broader group including outside agencies

- Review Existing Land Use, Transit, and Other Plans
Goals and Select Objectives

GOAL 1: Provide a high quality transit network
  1.1 Provide efficient, reliable, limited-stop, and high frequency service.
  1.3 Design and maintain the system so that it is easy to use and understand.

GOAL 2: Maximize financial and operational return on investment.
  2.2 Maximize the level of service that can be provided with the financial resources available

GOAL 3: Promote economic activity in existing and developing activity centers and support a transit-oriented lifestyle.
  3.1 Connect multi-use activity centers that demonstrate significant demand for transit throughout the day.
  3.2 Complement existing transit options and link to other non-auto transportation modes.

GOAL 4: Improve mobility within and access to and from the monumental core.
  4.1 Provide transit options between the monumental core and existing activity centers throughout the District.
  4.2 Provide transit choices between key visitor destinations.
Define “Activity Center”

- Center City Action Agenda “Priority Places”
- Comprehensive Plan designations
  - Regional Centers
  - Existing and Enhanced/New Multi-Neighborhood Centers
  - Land Use Change Areas with timely and sizable change
    - Built out by 2020, ≥ 1 million sq. ft., & a mix of uses
  - Main Street Mixed-Use Corridors
    - Connected to another intense land use and/or a large, mixed-use, and all-hours center
Develop Characteristics of Activity Centers

- Primary Land Use
- Population and Employment
  - 2010
  - 2015
  - 2020
- Retail/entertainment/dining uses
- Institutional uses
- Planned development
  - Type
  - Square footage

Activity Center Size by 2020 Numbers
Central Washington: 414,000
Large: 40,000 and above
Medium: 20,000 to 39,999
Small: 5,000 to 19,999

Estimated Timing of Development at Activity Center
Near-term: Existing or by 2013
Mid-term: 2014 to 2016
Long-term: 2017 to 2020
Develop Potential Connections

- Input from Technical Advisory Committee
- Concepts from previous studies and stakeholder interviews
- On-line survey input
- Conceptual corridors presented in public workshops
- Input from Community Advisory Panel

Corridor Development Exercise with Community Advisory Panel
## Review Existing Transit Infrastructure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Mall</th>
<th>NoMa/FL-NY Ave Gateway</th>
<th>Shaw/Howard U Town Ctr/14th &amp; U</th>
<th>Adams Morgan</th>
<th>Columbia Heights</th>
<th>Mt. Vernon Square</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Washington</strong></td>
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**KEY**

- Circulator Connections: Only shown for connections with no transfer required.
- Metro Connections: Only shown for connections with no transfer required.
- Buses: only all-day bus routes with no transfer included.
- †: Walkable for some parts of the Activity Centers (up to approximately ½ mile)
- †: Connection shown on other axis.
- X: No direct Circulator connection, direct Metrorail connection, all-day bus service available.
Develop List of Proposed Corridors

- Remove redundant corridors (eliminate corridors with existing high-frequency service)

- Consolidate similar corridor concepts

- Evaluate in terms of connectivity (between Circulator corridors and other transit)

- Evaluate against Goals and Objectives
# Evaluate Proposed Corridors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2.1: Connect multi-use activity centers</th>
<th>2.2: Complement existing transit options</th>
<th>2.3: Provide connections to ease Metrorail core capacity constraints</th>
<th>2.6: Provide service that addresses multiple trip purposes</th>
<th>3.1: Provide transit options between the monumental core and existing activity</th>
<th>3.2: Provide transit choices between key visitor destinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adams Morgan – U Street/Howard U/Shaw – NoMa (and Union Station) – H St/Starburst Dupont – National Mall (WWII Memorial) – SW Waterfront</td>
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<td>Eastern Market (Pennsylvania Ave SE) – Capitol Riverfront – Anacostia – Skyland – possible extension to Minnesota Ave Metro</td>
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<td>NPS Route, North Mall: Union Station – Smithsonian (via Madison Dr) – Lincoln Memorial – Foggy Bottom-Georgetown</td>
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<td>St. Elizabeths/Congress Heights – Poplar Point – Anacostia – PA Ave SE/Barracks Row- H St. NE</td>
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<td>Navy Yard to SW Waterfront (as an extension to another corridor)**</td>
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<td>Extend Rosslyn-Georgetown-Dupont route to U Street</td>
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Key: ![Supports](image.png) Supports  ![Mostly Supports](image.png) Mostly Supports  ![Only Partially Supports](image.png) Only Partially Supports  ![Does Not Support](image.png) Does Not Support
Final
Recommended
Corridors
Prioritization/Phasing of Corridors

Based on DDOT priorities (NPS Mall routes) and scoring from corridor analysis, where corridors were reviewed against Circulator objectives.
Lessons Learned (about the Process)

- Obtain buy-in from all stakeholders on objectives early in the process
- Get elected officials involved early and often
- Not all corridors need this type of bus service
  - Everyone wants a Circulator - Good planning process explains recommendations and helps justify decisions
- Two-way communication important with extensive public outreach process
Applicability in a Suburban Environment

- Differences in terms of distances between Activity Centers
- Fewer locations have all-day intensity of activities
- Pedestrian access—greater distances, limited connections
- Smaller size activity centers

As suburban land use planning increasingly supports development of larger and more intensive activity centers, this shift would be supported by development of Circulator-type bus service.