

MOTION:

SECOND:

**RE: AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARING(S) ON
 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE MARK CENTER COMMUTER EXPRESS BUS SERVICES**

ACTION:

WHEREAS, in July 2015, the Commission authorized the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) to operate OMNIRIDE commuter bus service between eastern Prince William County and the Mark Center in Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, bus service began in February 2016 with routes from Dale City and Lake Ridge to the Mark Center; and

WHEREAS, ridership on the Lake Ridge route has not grown at the same proportion as the Dale City route; and

WHEREAS, management recommends consolidating the two routes into one restructured route, providing service to the Telegraph and Horner Road commuter lots; and

WHEREAS, the restructured route would provide service to a higher concentration of commuters who travel along the I-95/395 corridor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission does hereby authorize the Executive Director to conduct public hearing(s) on the proposed changes to the Mark Center OMNIRIDE commuter bus service.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent from Vote:


Alternate Present Not Voting:


Absent from Meeting:



June 6, 2019

TO: Madam Chair Anderson and PRTC Commissioners

FROM: Perrin Palistrant 
Director of Grants and Project Management

THROUGH: Robert A. Schneider, PhD 
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Authorize the Executive Director to Conduct Public Hearing(s) on the Proposed Changes to the Mark Center Commuter Express Bus Service

Recommendation:

Authorize the Executive Director to conduct public hearing(s) on the proposed changes to the Mark Center Commuter Express Bus Service.

Background:

In July 2015, the Commission authorized the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), wherein OMNIRIDE would receive funding to operate commuter bus service between eastern Prince William County and Mark Center in Alexandria, VA. Service began in February 2016 with two routes in an effort to support the opening of this new Department of Defense location, while utilizing a new direct-connect High Occupancy Vehicle ramp from I-395 to Seminary Road. One route operates from the Dale City commuter lot via Dale Boulevard, while a second route operates in Lake Ridge, serving the Tackett's Mill, Lake Ridge, Rt. 123 & Old Bridge, and Rt. 123 & I-95 commuter lots, as well as local stops along Old Bridge Road. Both routes offer four (4) morning and evening trips Monday through Thursday and three (3) morning and evening trips on Fridays.

Ridership on the two Mark Center routes has been limited by several factors, including relative proximity to eastern Prince William County and the lack of other large employment sites near the Mark Center facility. In addition, a number of alternative commuting options, including frequent Metrobus and Department of Defense shuttle service that connects with OmniRide at the Pentagon and Franconia-Springfield, as well as, connections to the Virginia Railway Express at Franconia-Springfield and Alexandria, further diffuse the transit market. After three years of

operation and continuous promotion, including direct promotion at frequent events at the facility and coordination with the Mark Center Transportation Demand Management team, management has determined that ridership will continue to be insufficient to support two separate routes, however, there is value in continuing to serve the Mark Center directly. Management's proposal would maintain direct service at more appropriate levels and adjust routing to maintain convenient access for riders.

Of the two existing routes, ridership on the Lake Ridge route has lagged far behind the Dale City route since its inception. While the Dale City route has continued to grow, the Lake Ridge route flattened out rather quickly and never had a significant upward ridership trajectory. The Lake Ridge route averages 5.8 passengers per revenue hour, while the Dale City route averages 11.3 passengers per revenue hour. As depicted below, the average monthly ridership on the Dale City route is close to double the monthly ridership on the Lake Ridge route.

Riders Per Revenue Hour		Monthly Ridership Average	
Lake Ridge	5.8	Lake Ridge	759
Dale City	11.3	Dale City	1,354

Management recommends the following changes to improve performance of the service:

- Consolidate the Prince William County alignment of the Dale City and Lake Ridge routes into one route.
- The new restructured routing would be modified to serve the Dale City, Telegraph Road, and Horner Road commuter lots, using a streamlined routing from Dale City to Telegraph Road. This realignment takes advantage of the proximity to several Lake Ridge area communities and the significant commuting activity that occurs at these lots.

The goal of this change would be to create a viable route that connects to the nucleus of commuters traveling along the I-95/395 corridor and provide connectivity to other employment centers near Mark Center.

Fiscal Impact:

The routes are fully funded through the state and have no impact on the local budget.