



July 2017

OmniNews

Passenger Newsletter

Survey: Region needs better transit connections

More than half of the people who responded to a recent PRTC survey believe that public transportation services in the Prince William area would be improved by better connections to other regional transportation providers and by adding more direct service to additional metropolitan Washington destinations.

The findings are part of PRTC's efforts to update its Strategic Plan—a document that will provide a vision for area transportation services and transit funding for the next 10 years.



Perrin Palistrant, Director of Operations and Operations Planning, addressed members of the Woodbridge Civic Association in May to share information about PRTC's services and future plans.

PRTC began the process of updating its Strategic Plan last summer and expects to complete the work this fall.

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PRTC receives award for projects that led to better and safer passenger trips

PRTC recently received an Outstanding Implementation Project Award for the TIGER Bus Priority Program from the American Planning Association (APA).

Thanks to this program, PRTC was able to make capital improvements that ultimately resulted in better and safer trips for riders.

TIGER, which stands for Transportation Investment Generating Eco-

nommic Recovery, is a grant program through the U.S. Department of Transportation that provides federal funding for capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure projects.

“Through DOT's TIGER program and our regional partners, PRTC was able to fund capital improvements that otherwise would have

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PRTC Spotlight

Department of Strategic Planning

Behind the scenes, PRTC staff members are dedicated to improving the lives of area citizens by providing and promoting safe and reliable mobility services. Here's a quick look at our Department of Strategic Planning.

PRTC is primarily known in the community for its commuter and local bus services, but we're actually much more than a bus company!

The Department of Strategic Planning has the dual task of promoting various transportation alternatives to today's commuters and analyzing trends to see what types of services PRTC should focus on to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles in future years.

Among the transportation alter-

natives we promote to commuters today are:

- **OmniMatch**—a free program to help potential carpoolers and vanpoolers find others who also want to share their ride.
- **Vanpool Alliance**—a regional public-private partnership to encourage vanpooling and gather data about vanpooler commutes.
- **Employer services**—a variety of incentives that employers can consider to encourage their employees to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles on the roads.

In addition to these programs, the Strategic Planning Depart-



ment has focused for the past year on updating PRTC's Strategic Plan—the document that will help to guide our transportation services and identify potential funding sources for the next 10 years.

The staff members in the Department of Strategic Planning are always looking for ways to help you improve your commute!

Survey results

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To gather public input from the general community, PRTC conducted a survey of riders, non-riders and area employers earlier this year.

Not surprisingly, traffic congestion was a significant concern for the majority of survey respondents, and it was the primary topic of discussion by businesses.

The updated Strategic Plan will

include strategies for addressing the concerns and opinions expressed by survey respondents.

The recommendations also will factor in population and employment projections, planned infrastructure changes, and advances in technology.

Recommendations may include options such as building new partnerships, emphasizing PRTC's ridesharing services, and incorporating private ride-

hailing services to help customers connect more easily with public transportation.

And although it's not specifically tied to the Strategic Plan, PRTC expects to begin offering new commuter bus services in the I-66 corridor to new destinations over the next several years and enhance existing services in that area. Several new state-funded routes are planned to give commuters another transit alternative as Express Lanes are added to I-66.

Outstanding Employees

First Transit, PRTC's contract service provider, recognizes one outstanding operator each month and one outstanding technician each quarter. Additionally, an Operator of the Year is named annually. If you have a compliment about First Transit personnel, please tell us!

Operator of the Year 2016-2017

Zinash Grbru

The Operator of the Year is Ms. Grbru, who says the best part of her job is safely getting her passengers where they need to go. She has operated buses at PRTC since November 2014 and is currently assigned to trips on the Dale City and Manassas OmniRide routes. She is originally from Ethiopia but now lives in Woodbridge. She is married, has two sons and says she enjoys spending time with her family.



Operator of the Month

Belen Aranzana - April 2017

Ms. Aranzana was recognized as Operator of the Month in April. She recently resigned to pursue other opportunities, and we wish her well. Ms. Aranzana asked that her photo not be included.

Emory Large - May 2017

Meeting his passengers is the thing that Mr. Large most enjoys about his job. He has been operating buses at PRTC since 2011 and is currently assigned to trips on the Dale City, Gainesville, and Manassas OmniRide routes. The Woodbridge native now lives in Triangle, and in his spare time he enjoys fishing, basketball and golf. He's married and has one son.



Planning Association award

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been very difficult to pay for – items that play a large role in helping riders feel safe and comfortable choosing to ride with us,” said Cynthia Porter-Johnson, PRTC Transportation Project Manager.

“We are thankful that the APA saw the importance of the bus priority projects in the National Capital Region,” Porter-Johnson said.

PRTC worked with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) and regional transit partners from 2010 through 2016 to implement projects funded by TIGER grants in the National Capital Region.

PRTC was awarded \$9.65 million for three projects:

- Purchase and installation of 75 bus security cameras for 15 buses;
- Purchase of 13 new, 40-foot, clean-diesel replacement buses; and
- Purchase and implementation of a Computer Aided Dispatch/Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) system for the entire bus fleet. To implement the full system, PRTC also received funding from the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.





Potomac and Rappahannock
Transportation Commission

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MyLink Teen Pass is a summer bargain

Teens who are striving for independence but lack a driver's license or access to a vehicle need the MyLink Teen Summer Bus Pass! With the pass, teens can travel around the Prince William County area without relying on their parents for a ride! Here's a MyLink teen testimonial:

"I have used [a MyLink pass] for the past several years, and there is no way I would have been as successful in my academics, job, or even in my athletics" without it, one teen told PRTC in 2016. "My dedication to the various aspects of my busy lifestyle has undoubtedly been made possible thanks to the Teen Summer Pass."

Now in its 10th year, the MyLink program is offered by the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC). The pass enables those ages 13-19 to get unlimited local bus rides all summer long for \$30. In addition, teens who use a MyLink pass get credit for the

local fare when traveling on PRTC buses to nearby Metro stations and destinations including Washington, D.C.!

In a 2016 survey, 69% of teens who used a 2016 MyLink pass said they bought it because they didn't have a driver's license. Half said they used their pass to spend time with friends and get to summer school or other school-related activities.

"There is no way I would have been as successful in my academics, job, or even in my athletics" without it.

—a comment from a teen with a 2016 MyLink pass

MyLink passes are loaded onto SmarTrip cards, making it easy for teens to transfer to Metro trains or other regional transit providers. If the teen doesn't already have a SmarTrip card, there is an additional \$2 fee to purchase one.

PRTC's one-way local fare is \$1.55. At

that rate, a teen who takes more than 10 local round-trips over the summer will save money with a MyLink

pass. The pass is valid through Saturday, September 2, 2017.



All OmniLink buses run Monday through Friday, and some routes offer Saturday service. Local routes serve Dale City, Dumfries, Manassas, Manassas Park, the Route 1 Corridor, and Woodbridge/Lake Ridge. There is also Cross County Connector bus service connecting eastern Prince William with the Manassas area.

Learn more about MyLink and all PRTC services at PRTCtransit.org, or speak with a friendly Customer Service Agent at (703) 730-6664.