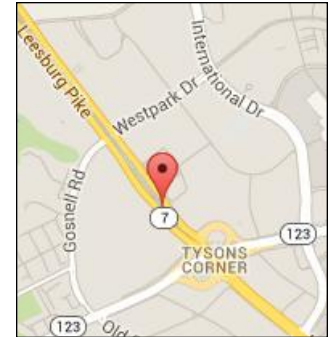




OmniNews

August 2014

Passenger Newsletter



Silver Line Bus Service Begins

It's official! After many years of planning and construction, Metro's Silver Line started operating service on Saturday, July 26, and PRTC started serving the Silver Line's Tysons Corner Metro Station on Monday, July 28. The new Metro station is being served by Manassas Metro Direct and Linton Hall Metro Direct buses, offering passengers a one-seat ride to the popular employment and shopping destination. As a result of the change, PRTC no longer offers trips to or

continued on page 2

Task Force Working Toward Funding Solution



By Al Harf, PRTC Executive Director

As you may know, PRTC is facing a funding challenge beginning in FY 2017, and a transit task force is to offer recommendations to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors this fall.

The funding challenge is a consequence of the fact that the annual yield of the County's principal funding source for publicly supporting PRTC and VRE – a 2.1% motor fuels tax – is less than the County's current annual transit expenditure. While the motor fuels tax has for many years amounted to less than the County's transit expenditure, the shortfall has been covered by either a general fund supplement or the use of fuel tax

reserves that built up during the years when there was a general fund supplement. Those fuel tax reserves will be depleted by FY 2017, giving rise to this funding challenge.

PRTC projected in January 2014 that a supplement of about \$31 million would be needed over the FY 2017—FY 2020 period to sustain current service levels and confine fare increases to an average of 10% every other year beginning in FY 2016.

Since then, the projected funding shortfall for that period has shrunk to about \$25 million because of savings PRTC anticipates from fuel conservation initiatives and service changes that were already being planned independent of the task force process. These planned routing changes and reduced trip frequency

continued on page 4

Inside this issue

- Tysons Service Notice.... 2
- PRTC Wins Employer Services Award 2
- Outstanding Staff..... 3
- I Want to Know 4

PRTC Wins Service Award

PRTC has been recognized for its work to develop and expand commuting options for those employed in the Prince William County area.

In addition to providing bus services, PRTC promotes ridesharing via vanpools and carpools, and works with area employers to devise incentives for workers to leave their vehicles at home.

A range of popular incentives include: ridematching assistance, preferred parking spots for carpoolers, installing showers to encourage biking, and offering telecommute options.

During the past year, more than 1,200 contacts were made with employers within Prince William and 13 meetings were held. As a result, PRTC added 35 new clients to its list of employers participating in one or more transportation



Accepting the award are: Alfred Harf, PRTC Executive Director; Chuck Steigerwald, PRTC Manager of Service Planning and Quality Assurance; Holly Morello, PRTC Transportation Demand Management Specialist; and Peter Paz, Urban Trans Manager for Program Development and Management.

demand management programs.

The Employer Services Sales Team Achievement Award was presented in June by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Commuter Connections program.

continued from page 1

from the West Falls Church or Vienna Metro Stations. Schedules for the new routes are available in print or online at PRTCtransit.org.

PRTC Metro Direct fares remain the same. To determine the cost of the Metro portion of a trip, passengers may use the fare calculator at www.wmata.com.

PRTC opted to start serving the Tysons Corner Metro Station instead of West Falls Church and Vienna for several reasons:

- Other regional transit agencies have shifted their routing

to serve the Tysons Corner Metro Station, so PRTC needed to do so in order to best serve our passengers who are making connections;

- Tysons is a prime employment center, and by offering direct service we are meeting the needs of many customers who work nearby; and
- Because Silver and Orange line trains will use the same tracks from East Falls Church and eastward, Metro is now operating less frequent Orange Line service.

Tysons Route May Cease

PRTC will hold a public hearing at 7 p.m. September 10, 2014 regarding the proposed elimination of the Tysons OmniRide commuter bus route.

PRTC has operated the route since November 2009 with 100% of the required subsidy paid by *Virginia Megaprojects*, a partnership of the state DOT and the state Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The route, featuring half-priced fares, was started in an effort to reduce traffic congestion during construction of the I-495 and I-95 Express Lanes.

Now that Express Lane construction is nearing an end, the state subsidy will also end. PRTC proposes to cease the route in November 2014 because ridership is insufficient to justify it as a locally subsidized service. Also, riders have other public transportation options with more frequent service and lower fares.

With these factors in mind, PRTC decided not to seek a local subsidy in its FY 2015 budget to continue the route.

The public hearing will be held at the PRTC Transit Center. Those who cannot attend the public hearing may submit written comments by 5 p.m., September 17, 2014, to: publichearing@OmniRide.com or PRTC, Attn: Public Hearing, 14700 Potomac Mills Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192.

Outstanding Employees

First Transit, the contract provider for PRTC's bus services, recognizes one outstanding operator each month and one outstanding technician each quarter. If you have a compliment about First Transit personnel, please let us know!

Operator of the Month

George Berkley - November 2013

Mr. Berkley, who currently operates trips on the Montclair OmniRide and Manassas Metro Direct routes, has worked at PRTC for nearly three years. He is originally from Alexandria and now lives in Manassas. The married father of three also enjoys vehicles in his off-time, saying that his hobbies are drag racing, hot rods and custom cars and trucks.



Raymond Moore - December 2013

Originally from Pittsburgh, Mr. Moore now makes his home in Fredericksburg and has worked at PRTC for more than two years. He currently operates trips on the Dale City and Manassas OmniRide routes. Interacting with customers is what this music-lover and father of three likes best about his job. Mr. Moore asked that his photo not be included.

Milton Laing - Operator of the Year

Mr. Laing was recognized as Operator of the Year for his outstanding performance. Originally from Jamaica, he has worked at PRTC for 10 years and says that one of the best things about his job is the chance to meet people. He currently operates trips on the Montclair and Dale City OmniRide routes. Mr. Laing, who is married and has two children, enjoys cooking as a hobby.



John Fletcher - February 2014

With more than seven years experience as an operator for PRTC buses, Mr. Fletcher says that meeting different people is what he enjoys most about his job. Mr. Fletcher is originally from Alexandria and now lives in Woodbridge, where he enjoys spending time with his family and says computers and video are his hobbies. He currently operates trips on the Dale City OmniRide route. Mr. Fletcher asked that his photo not be included.

Robert Ware - March 2014

When he isn't behind the wheel of an OmniRide bus, Mr. Ware enjoys watching and playing many sports, especially with his five sons, and reading to them. Originally from Alexandria, he has worked at PRTC for nearly five years and lives in Woodbridge. He currently operates trips on the Montclair OmniRide route.



Hector Lopez - April 2014

Mr. Lopez has worked at PRTC for more than nine years and currently operates a trip on the Lake Ridge OmniRide route and also operates the bus that is stationed at Manassas Mall for emergencies. He is originally from Guatamala, and now makes his home in Prince William with his wife and three children. In his free time, he enjoys home improvement projects and traveling with his family.



Cesar Javier - May 2014

Nine years ago, Mr. Javier moved from New York City to Virginia so he and his wife could raise their six children in a better environment. He has worked at PRTC for more than eight years and currently operates trips on the Dale City, Dumfries and Woodbridge/Lake Ridge OmniLink routes and also serves as a stand-by operator for the Saturday Dale City OmniLink route. His hobbies include family time, cooking, music and travel.



Technician of the Quarter

Carlos Barrancos - October-December 2014

After nearly four years at PRTC, Mr. Barrancos says that the best part of his job is the chance to work on every system of the bus. Originally from Bolivia, he now resides in Dumfries with his wife and three boys. In his free time, he enjoys playing soccer with his sons. Mr. Barrancos asked that his photo not be included.

I want to Know...

Try Transit Week is Sept. 15-19

I've heard about Try Transit Week in the past. Will it be held again in 2014?

—S.T. of Manassas Park

Yes, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation is finalizing details for this year's Try Transit Week promotion, which will run from September 15-19, 2014.

Try Transit Week is a statewide effort to give people an incentive to get out of their vehicles and give public transportation a try.

By pledging to use public transportation during Try Transit Week, people can be entered into drawings for prizes including transit passes for their individual region.



PRTC will once again participate in the effort, so look for more information on bus posters and on our website in September.

Although the goal of Try Transit Week is to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles on the roads, those who already use public transportation are eligible to pledge and win!

For the most up-to-date information about Try Transit Week, visit TryTransitWeek.org.

continued from page 1

on routes where ridership has dipped is simply good business practice, not a product of the task force's work.

From the point of view of PRTC's riders, the best case scenario to the budget challenge is for the County to provide a supplement sufficient to cover the full shortfall, averting the need for budget-driven service cuts or higher fare increases than those already envisioned. Alternate scenarios in which the County provides less funding than necessary to sustain existing services would naturally require service cuts, higher-than-currently-contemplated fare increases, and reductions in force.

The task force aims to wrap up its work in time for the County Board's public work session in mid-to-late September, though no date has been set. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the ongoing analysis in the fall.

We are naturally hoping for a good outcome and we will keep you informed as the task force effort progresses.