

Chronology of the Transit Planning Process

- 1948-52 The Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation study, a cooperative effort of area highway departments, published several reports projecting severe traffic congestion in the Washington area. These catalyzed plans for rapid transit.
- 1952 Congress created the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the National Capital Regional Planning Council (NCRPC) to prepare comprehensive plans, including regional transportation plans.
- 1955 Congress granted funding to NCPC and NCRPC for a Mass Transportation Survey to study present and future mass transportation needs.
- 1959 In July, the Joint Steering Committee of the Mass Transportation Survey submitted to Congress the *Transportation Plan—National Capital Region*, which called for 248 miles of freeways and 33 miles of rail. The report spurred controversy over the relative roles of freeways and transit.
- 1960 The National Capital Planning Act created the National Capital Transportation Agency (NCTA), an interstate organization charged with coordinating transit regulatory functions.
- 1961 The NCPC and the NCRPC published a regional comprehensive plan, *The Plan /or the Year 2000*, popularly called the “Wedges and Corridors” plan. It presented new population, employment, and growth data and called for an organized radial network of growth corridors separated by low-growth green “wedges.”
- 1962 The NCTA’s November 1 *Report 10 the President* proposed a regional transportation plan, based on data from the “Wedges and Corridors” plan, that called for an **83-mile** seven-line rapid rail system along with 174 miles of new freeways.
- 1963 Congress rejected the NCTA proposal. Its chief complaint was that the NCTA bill threatened private transit enterprise and failed to guarantee labor protection.
- 1965 Congress authorized a basic 25-mile rapid rail system for the District of Columbia. Dissenters were chiefly concerned with what they considered to be an excessive Federal commitment to a local system.
- 1966 The authorization of the basic rail system boosted ongoing efforts to create an interstate compact agency to plan suburban extensions to the system. In December the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) was ratified by all area governments. In October, WMATA officially replaced NCTA.
- 1967 In December, WMATA published the “Bronze Report.” The report presented the Proposed Regional System (PRS), which extended the authorized basic system into the suburbs.
- 1968 On March 31, following a round of public hearings, WMATA adopted the 98-mile, \$2.5 billion Regional Metro System. In November, the transit issue was supported by 71.4 percent of the voters in the five suburban jurisdictions that held referenda.
- 1969 After a six-month delay, Metro construction began on December 9. The entire **98-mile** Regional Metro System was authorized by Congress the same day.
- 1970 By late 1970, estimates of the cost of building Metro escalated from the original \$2.5 billion to \$2.98 billion.

1972 WMATA took over operation of several privately owned D.C. bus companies.

1974 In late fall, WMATA announced a revised Metro construction cost estimate of \$4.5 billion.

1975 Controversy continued over how continuing construction of Metro is to be financed.