Approved 05/27/2020
B. Ridership Trend Analysis – Todd Beutler, CEO/General Manager: COVID-19 has given the District good data to examine and an opportunity to do some ridership analysis. Other tools to analyze this data include the voter survey (last conducted in September 2019), as well as data from factors that affect ridership such as unemployment rates and fuel prices. COVID-19 has allowed the District to see usage from different segments of the population. It has also allowed the District to see the baseline usage of the system. Passengers have been encouraged not to ride unless it is for essential trips; those in the risk category have been encouraged to stay home. Only those who are transit dependent are using the system during the pandemic. So, the total of transit dependent trips have been about 1,000 trips. Building out a bell curve of ridership (with the transit dependent at the top of the curve), there are about 3,000 trips that originate from USU and schools. Following this, there are about 1,000 trips from those that are environmentally conscious or want to save some money on transportation costs. Following this on the bell curve, there are a variable number of trips by those who ride because they’ve been affected by external factors, such as unemployment or high fuel prices. At the bottom of the curve are those who are not likely to use public transportation. Individuals at the top of the curve have less transportation choices; those further down on the curve have more transportation choices. The investment to pull people out of their car gets higher with fewer results as you go down the curve. Additionally, with how much COVID-19 is changing society, the question becomes how does transit look in the future after the pandemic. There are indications that teleworking will continue to grow and other factors that indicate that demand for transit might be different in the future. Because of this, the District is looking at other service delivery methods besides fixed-route service, in other words how to adjust for future service. Because of the new service backbone provided by the LOOP, it gives the District the opportunity to design service a little differently. The LOOP provides service within .25 miles of 10,000 jobs. The service has the potential to become more of a demand type service that connects riders to the backbone service. Because of how much smartphone technology has advanced, running smaller buses where people can schedule their ride becomes more viable.

C. Transit Apps and Website – Colton Fulmer, Network Administrator: Apps are created by third-party developers using the District’s data; all of the available apps are shown on the website on the Bus Tracker page. With the Transit app, the District partnered more closely with the developers. The developers did not make it for the District; the app works for multiple transit systems nationwide. It’s strongest feature is planning a trip. It predicts how long trips will take, pinpoints where you’re at, lists multiple options for a trip, provides notifications, and breaks down the steps in the trip. Another tool available for passengers through the
District website is the Ride Planner, which is powered by google maps. There is also Next Bus, where a passenger at a bus stop can put in the route number and the stop to find out when the next bus is coming. Discussion about passenger tools. The District has advertised these tools on the website, on signs with a QR code on all bus stops, on the printed maps, and on ads in the buses. The Transit app and Google are faster for things like pulling detour information, but directions from a passenger who knows the transit system really well can possibly find short cuts that aren’t apparent to these tools. The Transit app helps passengers catch the bus on the fly and gives the passenger instructions on where to go.

6. General Manager/Staff Reports:
   A. Update on Covid-19 – Todd Beutler, CEO/General Manager: The District received 5.3 million dollars in CARES funding for costs related to COVID-19 and lost revenue from the economy on pause. The District is working with the FTA on using those funds. The COVID-19 situation is fluid and with the health order in place, service is still reduced. Discussion about the CARES funding. The CARES funding was given to transit across the country (the District did not apply for the funding). It’s almost a year’s worth of operating funds. Funds do not have to be paid back because it was part of the stimulus package.

   B. Update on Facility Grant Application – Todd Beutler, CEO/General Manager: The District submitted a grant application to ask for funds for a new facility. The current facility is beyond capacity; whatever the service looks like in the future, the District is going to need more space to deliver new service. Property for a new facility was purchased in 2010 as part of a board strategy for a new facility. The Board has been setting aside match for this project for the last ten years (there is 20 percent match required to get 80 percent federal funding). The grant is competed for nationally; the funds total 450 million dollars in bus and bus facility money. The deadline for the application was extended because of COVID-19. It’s uncertain when the District will be notified about the funding. Discussion about a new facility. The District has gotten great letters of support from multiple local agencies and elected leaders. The grant is for federal funds that can only be used for transit (so it’s not taking money away from other parts of the community). There’s also local precedence for storing vehicles inside to improve reliability.

7. Board Chair Report:
   A. No report.

8. Adjourn: Board Chair Holly Broome-Hyer adjourned the meeting.