

DASH Overview

- ▶ Local Bus System for the City of Alexandria
- ▶ Governed by Alexandria Transit Company Board of Directors, Directly Operated
- ▶ Founded in 1984, Fully Local and State funded
- ▶ Services the City of Alexandria, with some service to the Pentagon, Shirlington, and Fairfax County
- ▶ Operates a fleet of 100 fixed route buses



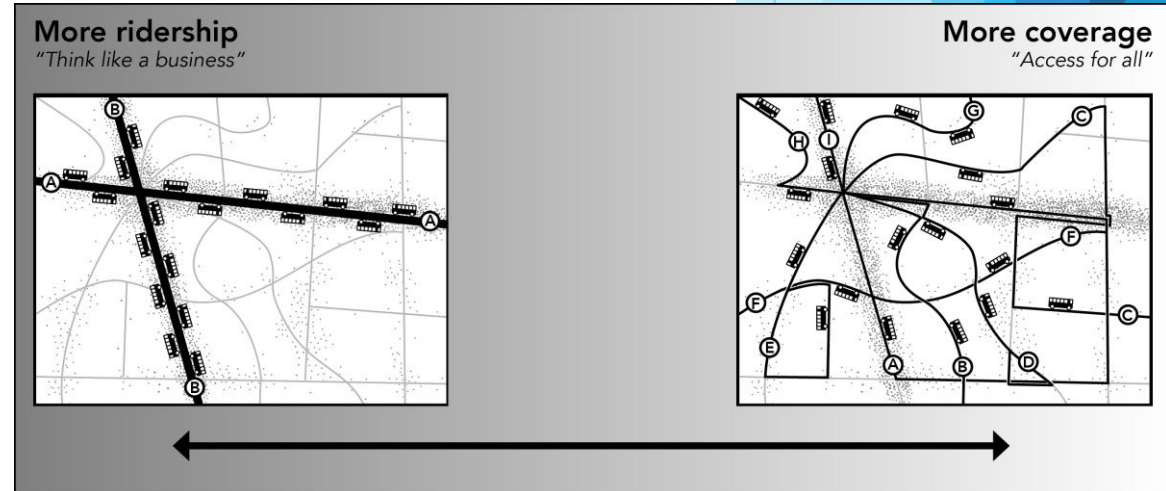
DASH Service (circa 2019)

- ▶ 10 Bus Routes
- ▶ Heavily Oriented to Commuter Travel Patterns
- ▶ Low levels of weekend, evening, and off peak services
- ▶ Many routes designed in the 1980s and have not been revisited since
- ▶ Ridership slowly eroding since 2015



A Fresh Look: The Alexandria Transit Vision

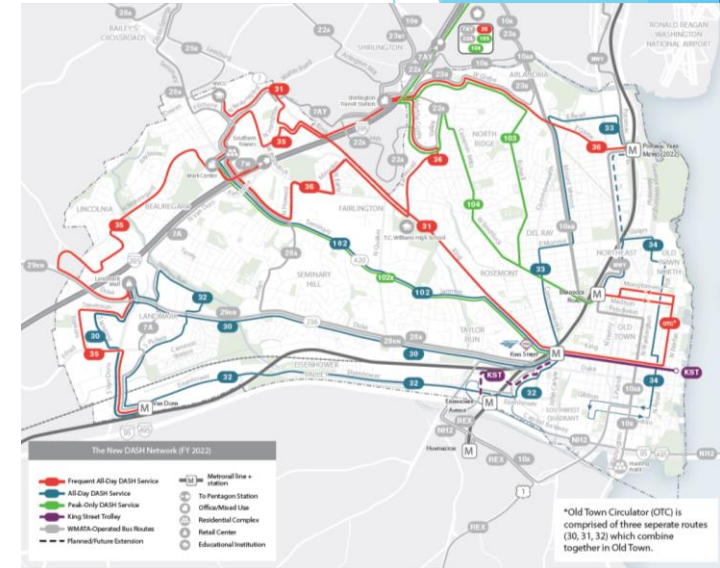
- ▶ Clean Slate Approach - What would Network look like today if designed from scratch?
- ▶ Data Driven - Where are people traveling today? How are they using transit?
- ▶ Revisiting Our Purpose - Do we still want to cater to commuters only? Or do we want to make transit a public infrastructure for all?
- ▶ Ridership vs. Coverage?



The Direction: New DASH Network (NDN)

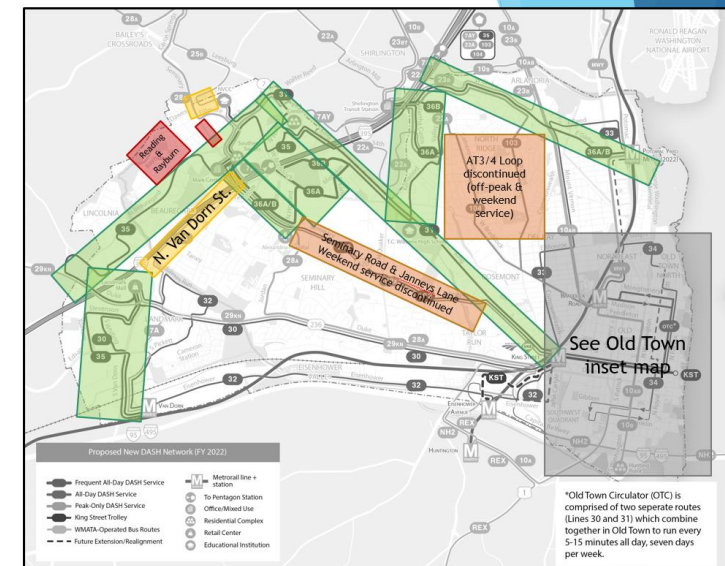
- ▶ 85% Ridership, 15% Coverage Service
- ▶ All Week, All Day, High Frequency Service
- ▶ Less Routes, but Better Routes
- ▶ Better access/travel times for over 99% of ridership

=MORE Service



NEW DASH NETWORK (PROPOSED FY22)

- DASH Service Improvement
- DASH service removed but Metrobus service maintained.
- DASH service removed, no Metrobus alternative.



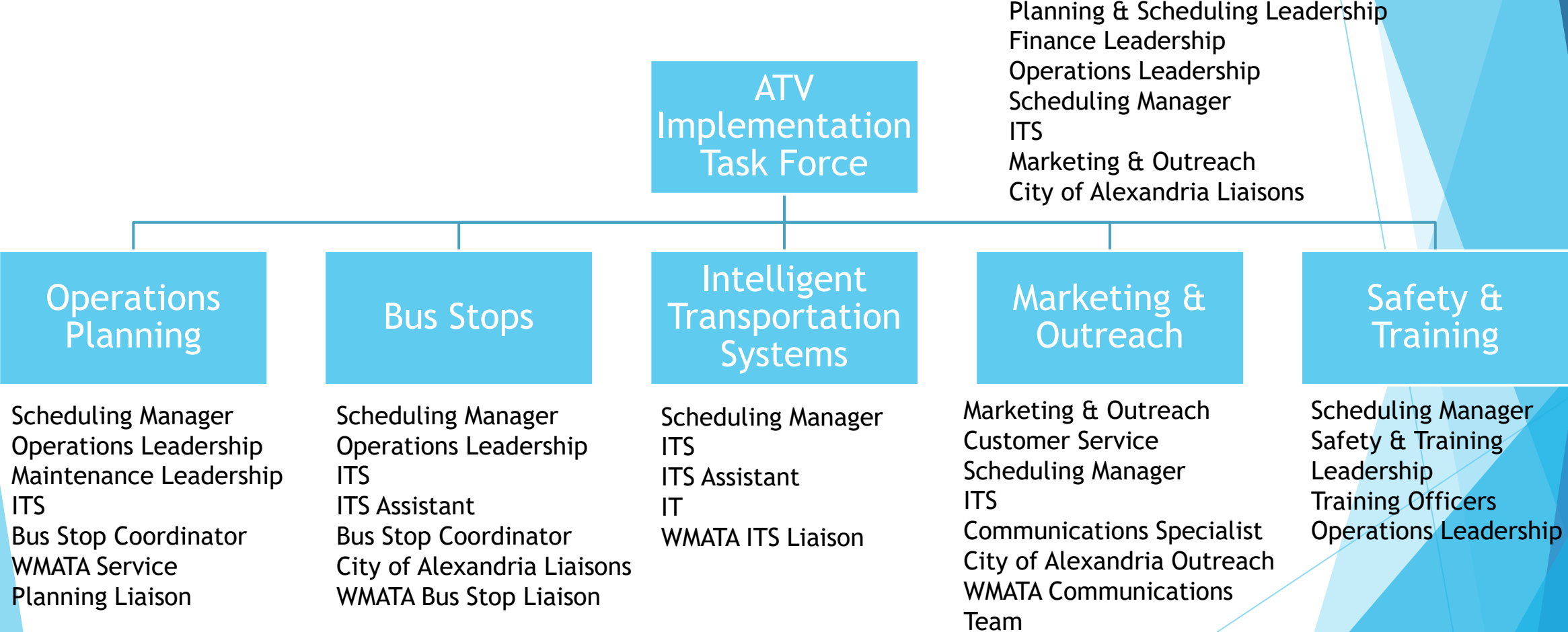
What Does This Mean?

- ▶ New bus stop signage/branding
- ▶ 100% replacement of all bus stops (over 500)
- ▶ Every single route renamed with a new convention
- ▶ Many routes heavily restructured
- ▶ Some service corridors picked up from WMATA
- ▶ Some service corridors given to WMATA
- ▶ 25% more operators
- ▶ 24/7 maintenance and dispatch coverage

....all overnight



Implementation Task Force (& Subgroups)



Recruitment

- ▶ The Task: Recruiting, Hiring, Training, and Onboarding 40+ new operators in under 10 months.
- ▶ The Challenge: Workforce shortage, dry applicant pool, limited throughput due to training program, low graduation rate.

Recruitment - Solutions

- ▶ Round the clock hiring
- ▶ Rethink approach with class scheduling: overlapping classes, AM & PM shift concurrent classes, minimized turnaround time of the training department in between classes.
- ▶ Aggressive outreach for operator recruitment: employment blasts everywhere, PR signs, job fairs.

DASH Operations Control Center (DOCC)

- ▶ Restructured Operations Support Staff (Yard Coordinators, Dispatchers, Road Supervisors)
- ▶ Increased emphasis of support roles on service management
- ▶ Introduction of Active Headway Management
- ▶ Clever Devices Disruption Management Module
- ▶ Expanded coverage to 24/7



Getting The Word Out

- ▶ Outreach Events at various major bus stops: not just Metro Stations
- ▶ Temporary Ambassadors
- ▶ Coordinated effort between DASH and City of Alexandria Outreach Staff
- ▶ Social Media Blasts
- ▶ AVA Announcements on all buses, geo and route specific.



Cherry On Top: Free Fares

- ▶ May 2021 (4 months prior to launch)
 - City Council Adopted Budget to Eliminate all Fares on DASH
- ▶ Scramble to Consider All Door Boarding
- ▶ All Door Boarding Pilot on Line 35



Signage Installation

- ▶ 500 new bus stop signs to be installed and unveiled overnight
- ▶ Volunteers from across the organization contributed to install new signage across the system
- ▶ All signage were temporarily “covered” with service change notice
- ▶ On the evening of September 5th, volunteers drove throughout the city removing the covers.



September 5th: Launch Day

- ▶ Smooth service launch on September 5th
- ▶ Operator target is not yet met, currently being handled with overtime as recruitment catches up
- ▶ Customer service call volumes were high and steady, but nominal amount of complaints
- ▶ DASH service now operates 24/7



NDN Launch Summary so far...

- ▶ Successful transition to the NDN on Sunday with full weekday service rollout on Tuesday, 9/7.
- ▶ Minor issues relating to CAD, farebox login, trip planner.
- ▶ Operational Changes Implemented Successfully
- ▶ Midday/Evening/Weekend Service Increases (~24/7!)
- ▶ North Van Dorn Street concerns from former AT5 riders.
- ▶ Some general customer confusion and anxiety about changes, even if those that are mostly beneficial.

Questions?



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