


# Williamsburg Area Transit Authority Executive Newsletter Volume 23

October 20, 2009

## Williamsburg Trolley to Participate in William & Mary Homecoming Parade



**Figure 1. Williamsburg Trolley at the recent Occasion for the Arts on Boundary Street**

The Williamsburg Trolley will take part in the William & Mary 2009 Homecoming Parade on Saturday, October 24. Following the parade, regular service will start at 11:00 am and end at 11:00 pm. Those interested in parking at New Town or the parking deck at High Street may board the Trolley at those locations for a ride into town for the noon start of the football game versus rival James Madison. The Williamsburg Trolley will now operate from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm on Saturdays through January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Weekday and Sunday hours remain the same. Currently, a review of the service is underway to determine whether any changes will be made before the holiday season. The Trolley continues to run every fifteen minutes at stops between New Town and Merchant's Square. 

## DRPT Meeting Looks at Significant Negative Impact on Revenues

Last Friday WATA staff attended a forum in Richmond held by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation which included a financial update as well as new program guidelines for the FY 2011 application period that begins February 1. The news on revenues for transit is grim as it is for all state government supported programs. The revenue reductions are due to decreases in sales tax revenues, vehicle and fuel tax revenues and other taxes such as the insurance premium tax and the recordation tax. Overall, the State is doing what it can to offset the loss of revenues with ARRA funds (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) and by stretching out the new lower estimates over a six year period. Despite these efforts, WATA will have to cut an additional 7.3% from the FY 2010 allocation of funds. Although the year-to-date budget was on track for the reporting period ending September 30, action will have to be taken to stay in the black. First, WAT Operations is committed to reduce overtime expenses by increased utilization of part-time and on-call drivers. Second, plans for a monthly/weekly pass program in the second half of the year should result in additional revenue. Finally, a reduction in service hours during the slower winter months is being considered. January, February and early March are typically the poorest performing months for ridership. As an option for savings, WATA is considering a return to hourly service from half-hour service offered this summer. Another option is to explore advertising on and inside the buses, in a limited fashion. Other factors which affect the budget include fuel prices which are always subject to volatility and contracting out programs such as ADA. In all, WATA staff will be working hard to

stay on budget for FY 2010 while preparing for what we all know will be a tough budget year in FY 2011. ☞

### **Office Space Move Put on Hold**

Another move prompted by unprecedented financial times is a temporary halt to the search for space to fill WATA's customer service, administrative and operational needs. On hold are plans to utilize state and Federal funds for additional space to include a storefront customer service operation, as well as space for training, meetings, and satellite field offices for route supervisors. Another factor contributing to the temporary delay was the relocation of RIDES from the WATA office to the Community Center on Longhill Road, freeing up space to a limited degree for WATA personnel. WATA's expansion will be revisited in February and/or March 2010. ☞

### **AECOM, Inc. Meetings Show Progress**

Early in the week of October 12<sup>th</sup>, consultants from AECOM, Inc. met with WATA Board members and staff, as well as Colonial Williamsburg representatives, for a series of charrettes regarding the facility feasibility study. Options discussed included the feasibility of modifying the existing facility on Pocahontas Trail, as well as the feasibility of relocating to a new location. Five new sites were reviewed; the teams visited various available parcels located in both James City and York Counties. An update to WATA Board members will be given at their December 17<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. It appeared that all parties agreed in principle to the resulting overview and process as being the path to future facility funding, if that is the direction to be taken. ☞

### **WATA Procurement in Action**

WATA procurement is very busy with proposal requests for a generator station for Colonial Williamsburg's Natural Gas Buses, ADA Demand Response Services, Design and Production of Marketing Brochures, and a maintenance contract. Richard Drumwright, Director of Planning and Development, is wearing the Director of Procurement hat these days. Assisted by WATA Administrative Services Coordinator Lisa Judkins and with technical assistance from Don Breland and Deborah Merritt-Ham from James City County's Purchasing Department, Richard is pursuing multiple procurements in addition to leading the facility feasibility study. ☞

### **Last Stops**

KFH, Inc. is finishing the cost allocation formula as presented during the WATA Board meeting on October 15. By decree of the legislation that established the Authority, WATA must adopt a formula for allocation of funds for local shares.

An operational note: Passengers on the TAN Line going to Wal-Mart are now able to get off at the stop near the door rather than the rear of the parking lot. No other changes were made to the Tan Line to make this accommodation.

☞

*Mark Rickards*

Executive Director, WATA