

VIA's Essay Contest Winner

Congratulations are in order for Denise Willis. She is the winner of VIA's 30th Anniversary Essay Contest, and now she is riding the bus free for the rest of the year.

VIA's essay contest asked riders for their experiences in how VIA helps them live their lives, and they had to tell their stories in 100 words or less. As such, the stories had to be concise and to the point while still offering a creative narrative. A panel of judges considered the final essays, and, based on their scores, Ms. Willis's entry was chosen as the winner.

Here is the full text of the winning essay:

"When I moved to San Antonio I was going through a divorce and had just left the Army. In a strange new city looking for a new job, feeling alone, afraid and very much defeated – life was hard. But for every job interview, apartment, grocery store and new church home that I needed to find, there was this friendly voice from VIA, telling me how to get there. What I am trying to say is that VIA is an important part of my life. I still need you to get to work and back home. This is one relationship that works."

For her winning essay, Ms. Willis was given six months of free rides on VIA. Agency representatives Jerri Ann Jones and Buster the Bus visited Ms. Willis to present the prize and thank her for riding VIA.



Fast Transit Facts



- VIA employs almost 2,000 people.
- At approximately 1,200, bus and van operators make up the majority of VIA's work force.
- VIA's maintenance facility operates 24 hours a day with about 250 vehicle maintenance workers.
- VIA's maintenance facility is located on North Flores Street.
- VIA's administration offices are at 800 West Myrtle.
- The VIA Metro Center is located at 1021 San Pedro.

VIA Metropolitan Transit was created according to Ch. 451 of the Texas Transportation Code to provide public transportation services for the citizens of Bexar County. VIA has prepared this Rider Reader to keep you informed of VIA services. We welcome any comments or questions regarding this publication or VIA - - your transit company.

In Memoriam

The VIA Metropolitan Transit Board of Trustees and staff members mourn the passing of VIA board member Sidney G. Ordway. He passed away August 12, 2008 at the Audie Murphy Veterans Hospital.



Ordway was a Vietnam War veteran who retired with the rank of Major from the United States Army, where he earned the Silver Star, three Bronze Stars, and four Purple Hearts among other honors. He subsequently received a bachelors degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, a doctorate from the St. Mary's Law School, and a doctor of philosophy from the University of California at Los Angeles. He was an advocate for the blind, the visually impaired, and the disabled, and he often did pro bono legal representation for the financially disadvantaged.

Ordway was appointed to the VIA board in 2006 by the Bexar County Commissioners Court. He was a registered VIAtrans patron, and he used his experiences riding VIA to help represent the public on the board.

Ordway also served as the president of the South Texas Regional Group of Blinded Veterans, and he was the secretary of the National Board of Directors for the Blinded Veterans Association.

How To Reach Us:



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Customer Service and Information	362-2020	362-2019 (TDD)
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Rider Reader

Fall 2008



Bus Rapid Transit Feedback Welcomed

VIA's Essay Contest Winner



To enhance the community's environment and quality of life by providing regional and customer-oriented public transportation that is dependable, cost effective, and enticing to more riders.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT: WHERE WE'VE BEEN, WHERE WE'RE GOING

VIA plans to have bus rapid transit, or BRT, running on Fredericksburg Road by 2012. This transit line will serve VIA's busiest corridor, and it will carry riders from the downtown area out to the South Texas Medical Center.

The planning for this project has been going on since 2005, and VIA has already achieved significant progress in bringing BRT to San Antonio. Here is a brief rundown of the stages VIA has accomplished, what the agency is working on now, and what you can expect to see in the next few years.

Northwest Corridor Alternatives Analysis (NWCAA) (2004-2005)

In 2005, at VIA's behest, the MPO completed the Northwest Corridor Alternatives Analysis. This study built upon the work initiated by VIA's Comprehensive Service Plan (CSP) which led to the complete restructuring of VIA's transit network. The CSP identified a need for transit alternatives in the Fredericksburg Road corridor. The NWCAA studied a broad range of transit options in the corridor and after considering cost, potential ridership and community input, the study concluded bus rapid transit as the locally preferred alternative for transit improvements along Fredericksburg Road.

Environmental Assessment/Preliminary Engineering (Summer 2008-Spring 2009)

VIA is currently in the environmental assessment/preliminary engineering phase of the BRT project.

Before the BRT project can move forward to construction, a thorough investigation of all potential environmental issues must be conducted and an environmental clearance must be received from both the Federal Transit and Highway Administrations. In preparation of the environmental assessment VIA will follow the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and its purpose is to identify all environmental, transportation, cultural, and social impacts of the proposed project. Public involvement is an important part of this process.

During the preliminary engineering, VIA will define the project more clearly and calculate preliminary costs for all of its components.

Final Design (Spring 2009-Summer 2010)

Final design includes the preparation of final construction and management plans for the BRT terminals, stations, and related infrastructure. Construction cost estimates and bid documents will be produced in this phase, and other project components will be considered, such as right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and integration of public art.

Construction (Spring 2010-2012)

During this phase, the BRT terminals, stations, and infrastructure will be built.

Service inception (2012)

Once construction is complete and testing is finished, VIA will begin BRT service along Fredericksburg Road.

For more information on BRT and to submit your comments regarding this project, log onto www.viabrt.net or call 362-2222.

TRANSITO RÁPIDO DE AUTOBUSES: ¿DÓNDE ESTAMOS Y A DÓNDE VAMOS?

VIA tiene planes para que el Tránsito Rápido de Autobuses, o BRT por sus siglas en inglés, se inicie en la Calle Fredericksburg en el año 2012. La línea de tránsito le dará servicio al corredor más ocupado de VIA y llevará pasajeros desde el centro de la ciudad hasta el South Texas Medical Center.

Los planes de este proyecto se iniciaron en el 2005, y VIA ha progresado en traer el BRT a San Antonio. Los siguientes son las etapas que ha logrado VIA, en lo que está trabajando ahorita, y lo que puede ver en los siguientes años.

Análisis de Alternativas para el Corredor del Noroeste (NWCAA) (2004-2005)

En el 2005, a la petición de VIA, la Organización de Planeamiento Metropolitano, o MPO por sus siglas en inglés, completó el Análisis de Alternativas para el Corredor del Noroeste. Este análisis le siguió al trabajo iniciado por el Plan de Servicio Comprensivo de VIA (CSP) el cual le dio paso a la reestructura de la red de tránsito de VIA. El CSP identificó la necesidad de alternativas para el tránsito en el corredor de la calle Fredericksburg. El NWCAA estudió un alto margen de opciones en el corredor y después de darles consideración al costo, posibles pasajeros y los comentarios de la comunidad el estudio concluyó que el BRT es la alternativa preferida local para mejoras de tránsito por la calle Fredericksburg.

Evaluación Ambiental/Ingeniería Preliminar (verano 2008 – primavera 2009)

Al momento, VIA está en la etapa de la evaluación ambiental/ingeniería preliminar del proyecto del BRT. Antes de comenzar la etapa de la construcción, se tiene que conducir una investigación al caso que haya cualquier problema ambiental. VIA tiene que recibir una autorización ambiental de la Administración Federal de Tránsito y de la Administración de Carreteras.

Para prepararse para una evaluación ambiental VIA seguirá el Acta de la Póliza Ambiental Nacional del 1969, y su propósito es de identificar todos los impactos ambientales, de transportación, culturales y sociales del proyecto propuesto. La participación del público es muy importante a este proceso.

Durante la ingeniería preliminar, VIA definirá el proyecto con más claridad y calculará los costos preliminares para todos los componentes del proyecto.

Diseño Final (primavera 2009 – verano 2010)

El diseño final incluye la preparación de la construcción final y planes para la gerencia de los terminales del BRT, las estaciones e la infraestructura relacionada. Las estimaciones de los costos de la construcción y los documentos de licitación se introducirán en esta etapa, y otros componentes del proyecto serán considerados, como la adquisición de los derechos de paso, reubicación de los servicios públicos y la integración del arte público.

Construcción (primavera 2010-2012)

Durante esta etapa, se construirán los terminales del BRT, las estaciones, y la infraestructura.

Inicio del Servicio (2012)

Ya que se complete la construcción y han terminado las pruebas, VIA iniciará el servicio del BRT por la calle Fredericksburg.

Para más información sobre el BRT y para presentar sus comentarios sobre este proyecto, entre a internet www.viabrt.net o llame al 362-2222.

Holiday Reminder:



Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 27, 2008

Buses on "Sunday" schedule

Day after Thanksgiving

Friday, November 28, 2008

Buses on "Saturday" schedule

Bus Rapid Transit Feedback Welcomed

VIA is continuing work on bringing bus rapid transit, or BRT, to Fredericksburg Road, and citizens are urged to learn more about this project and to share their comments and concerns.

VIA has started a new Web site to serve as a central information point for the BRT line on Fredericksburg Road. Located at www.viabrt.net, the site offers basic information on BRT, timelines, station information, frequently asked questions, and much more. There is also a section where you can learn how to get involved in the project, and there's a page where you can offer your feedback directly to VIA.

If you wish to stay informed throughout the BRT project, you can also sign up for the contact list on the BRT Web site. You will be added to a list, and you will be notified of meetings, newsletters, and progress updates as they develop. You can also call 362-2370 to get the latest information and to get signed up for the contact list.

www.viainfo.net