

**Metro Riders' Advisory Council
Minutes**

September 4, 2013

I. Call to Order:

Mr. Ball called the September 2013 meeting of the Metro Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:40 p.m.

The following members were present:

Ben Ball, Chair, District of Columbia
Barbara Hermanson, Virginia Vice Chair, City of Alexandria
Carol Walker, District of Columbia Vice Chair, At-Large
James Wright, Maryland Vice Chair, Prince George's County
Frank DeBernardo, Prince George's County
Pat Jackson, Fairfax County
Pat King-Adams, District of Columbia
Karen Lynch, Prince George's County
Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair
Lorraine Silva, Arlington County
Candice Walsh, District of Columbia
Mary Ann Zimmerman, Montgomery County

The following members of the Council were not present for any portion of the meeting:

Italo Cruz, District of Columbia
Alex Parcan, Montgomery County
Deborah Titus, Fairfax County
Fred Walker, Fairfax County
Etta-Cheri Washington, District of Columbia

II. Public Comment Period:

Kurt Raschke provided comments on the recent news that Metro may need to close a portion of the Red Line in the Bethesda area to deal with water infiltration in the tunnels there. He said that there was a disconnect between the information put out by news organizations and what was put out by Metro, specifically regarding the severity of the problem and its impact on safety. He said that if this isn't a safety issue, as Metro says that it isn't, Metro should have been clearer in explaining that to its customers and the media.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Without objection, the agenda was approved as presented.

Approved October 2, 2013

IV. FY2014 Bus Service Changes:

Jim Hamre, Director of Metro's Office of Bus Planning, Scheduling and Customer Facilities, provided the Council with an overview of the proposed Metrobus changes that Metro will be taking to public hearings later in September.

Mr. Hamre explained that many of the routes proposed for changes have had recent studies conducted of their operations, either as part of Metro's Priority Corridor Network studies or its Service Evaluation studies. He said that other routes were chosen to help Metro maintain a "State of Good Operations," where resources are transferred to higher-performing routes to relieve crowding, or schedules are proposed for changes to improve a route's reliability or to more efficiently use Metro's resources.

Mr. Hamre noted that Metro was doing additional outreach in the form of "pop-ups" to get riders' comments about the proposed changes. He explained that for a "pop-up" staff members visit bus stops along the routes proposed for changes and try to gather riders' input directly, rather than requiring them to attend the scheduled public hearings. He noted that a list of the planned "pop-up" locations was included in the information he passed out to the Council.

Mr. Hamre then gave an overview of the proposed timeline for changes. He said that after the hearings, Metro staff will evaluate the information it received from the public as part of the hearing process and compile a report for the Board's approval. He said that his goal is to have the Board approve any changes in November, and then implement those approved changes in December 2013, March 2014 and June 2014. He noted that public hearing items get "stale" after about six months, so any changes that wouldn't happen until after June 2014 would likely go back out to public hearing at a later date.

Mr. Ball then opened up the floor to questions from Council members.

Questions from Council Members:

Mr. Wright asked about whether the shuttle to the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Coast Guard headquarters will be operated by Metro, and whether there is any chance that Metro will increase service or add weekend service on the X9 route. Mr. Hamre responded that the shuttle to the DHS headquarters began operating recently and provides an extension of an existing bus route from the Anacostia Metrorail station to the DHS/Coast Guard facility at 10-minute intervals. He added that Metro has also started a route that carries riders from the L'Enfant Plaza area, which has connections to VRE commuter rail, to the DHS/Coast Guard facility using buses that would otherwise just be deadheading back to the bus garage. He said that ridership has been decent so far, especially considering that only about 1000 people have begun working at the facility.

Mr. Hamre said that with regard to increasing service on the X9 during middays or on the weekend, it would take additional money to run this additional service. He noted that more service on the X9 is not currently on Metro's workplan for the coming year, but if it is suggested, then Metro can work with the District of Columbia to evaluate the possibility of adding service. He noted that Metro recently added

Saturday service on Route 79/Georgia Avenue MetroExtra and is now looking at adding Sunday service on this route because of increased ridership.

Ms. King-Adams said that she hadn't seen any of the notices for the hearings and is concerned that these meetings are just over a week away and people don't know about them. She also asked Mr. Hamre to explain what it means to "restructure" a route, as noted in the hearing notice, and said that she had specific concerns about service on the Route 80 bus.

Mr. Hamre said that the proposed changes have been discussed in Metro Board Committee meetings, Metro has put out legal notices about the hearings, posted signs in all of its buses, issued MetroAlerts to bus riders, done in-person outreach and produced handouts to inform riders about both the hearings and their opportunities to provide comments. In response to Ms. King-Adams' question about the meaning of the term "restructure," Mr. Hamre said that it means to change a route's operating patterns, and gave examples of combining routes that operate along the same corridor or simplifying the route patterns of a given service. He explained that the proposal to restructure service on Route 80 came from Metro's study of the route, and would only change service along the westernmost portion of the route, between McPherson Square and the Kennedy Center.

Ms. Silva asked about the proposal for changes to Route 10B – she noted that the docket says alternative service would be available for affected portions of the route on ART 77, but it wouldn't necessarily provide an alternative since it goes to Court House, rather than Ballston, and doesn't operate seven days/week. Mr. Hamre responded that Metro has been working with Arlington County on this proposal and that there would be a requirement for coordination with Arlington Transit (ART) if the proposed changes are approved. He said that this coordination with ART service would be part of Metro's implementation strategy. Ms. Silva noted her concern about public facilities along the route such as schools and recreation centers that might lose service if the proposed changes are implemented.

Mr. DeBernardo posed two questions to Mr. Hamre:

1. Regarding the proposal for the B30, would additional buses be added to the route if service is rerouted to stop at Arundel Mills?

Mr. Hamre said that the proposal would reduce the time between buses from the current 40 minutes to 30 minutes to handle the increased ridership. He added that it is his hope that some of the new riders going to/from Arundel Mills would be riding in the opposite direction of peak ridership, which would mean they wouldn't cause additional crowding on buses. He noted that stopping at Arundel Mills would provide connections to other regional transit providers such as Howard Transit and Anne Arundel County Transit.

2. If the proposal for eliminating the NH1 route to Branch Avenue could be construed as a "threat" to Prince George's County.

Mr. Hamre responded that it isn't a threat, but rather was put on the docket to provide an opportunity for people to give their comments about the proposal. In response to a question from Mr. DeBernardo about the effect this would have on workers at National Harbor, Mr. Hamre explained that, at present, Metrobus service runs between National Harbor and Branch Avenue,

and that recently, Prince George's County's *TheBus* has added service between National Harbor and the Southern Avenue Metro. He said that with the planned opening of outlet stores and the casino at National Harbor, it would become a regional destination, hence the proposal to run service to connect with Alexandria. Mr. Hamre added that the implementation of any changes depends on the State of Maryland's decisions about funding the service and also noted that the City of Alexandria could also play a role, though it hasn't offered to provide any additional money for this proposed bus connection to Maryland. He noted that there is an ongoing dialogue about the service and the proposed changes.

Ms. Walsh noted that none of the bus hearings are in locations convenient to H-Line riders, despite the fact that there are changes proposed to that service. Mr. Hamre said that the LaSalle Elementary School hearing is close to the eastern end of the H-Line services, as it's near the Fort Totten Metro. Ms. Walsh said that she would contact Mr. Hamre offline with specific questions about the proposed changes.

Ms. Zimmerman asked about the location of the "pop-up" meeting to talk to customers on Route 74. Mr. Hamre said that it will be held on M Street SW, just west of 4th Street and that there will be multiple Metro employees at this meeting, so they should be easy to spot. Ms. Zimmerman noted that people in that neighborhood are concerned about not having bus access, especially with the recent changes to the Circulator and are confused about what the proposed changes would actually entail.

Mr. Sheehan noted that the AAC had a discussion of public hearings the previous evening and these specific bus hearings weren't mentioned. He also noted that public hearings on fare changes would also be coming up soon. Mr. Sheehan asked Mr. Hamre whether Metro received any comments or questions about fares at its bus hearings. Mr. Hamre responded that, in general, Metro gets comments about bus service, though not always about what is proposed as part of the docket.

Mr. Ball noted that Metro gave three options for proposed changes to the 5A and asked if there was a preferred option. Mr. Hamre said that Metro's desire is to keep the 5A operating as-is for now. He added that the reason it was included in the docket was to facilitate the request of a jurisdictional partner to bring items to the public for hearings.

Mr. Ball told Mr. Hamre that, with respect to the changes proposed for the 96 route, that Metro should keep the route as-is. He explained that, because it serves a large number of students, ridership fluctuates seasonally. He encouraged Metro to do outreach events with Wilson High School or Deal Middle School. Mr. Hamre responded that Metro recently completed a study of the 96/97 route and that it has three different, overlapping ridership patterns. He added that, because of the length of the route, it's only 53% on-time, which is a problem because of its relatively low frequency. He noted that many people who live in Upper Northwest use this bus to commute to Capitol Hill, and that, heading west, there is also a lot of turnover of riders at Union Station. He said that Metro needs to find some kind of chance to make to fix this route.

Mr. Ball suggested that Metro could more evenly space the schedule of the X3 and 96 on the common portions of their route, and added that because of ongoing construction in the 7th Street corridor, there will

be many new residents that will need bus service. Lastly, Mr. Ball suggested running the 96 bus at least as far as Woodley Park to connect to the Red Line, rather than terminating it at the Ellington Bridge.

Comments from Members of the Public:

Kurt Raschke noted that many of the proposals for changes in the docket are “overly broad,” and may provoke overreaction from riders, especially since preferred options aren’t identified. He asked Mr. Hamre whether riders should take these options at face value.

Mr. Hamre responded that the proposals for changes to the NH1 were intended to provoke discussion, while the proposed changes to the Laurel and Bowie services are ideas that Metro would like people to look at more closely. He also noted that there are several minor adjustments to previously-approved changes related to service that will connect to the Silver Line. Mr. Hamre said that part of the hearing process is finding out the balance between riders’ needs and what is required of Metro to operate certain services.

Mr. Ball thanked Mr. Hamre for his presentation.

V. Customer Pledge Discussion:

Mr. Ball explained to the members of the Council that assembled the most recent draft of a customer pledge and that he would like the Council to vote to approve a final draft at that evening’s meeting. He said that he wanted the discussion to take place in three parts:

1. To identify any items that should be eliminated;
2. To go through the (remaining) pledge as written and make modifications; and
3. Add/restructure the draft as modified and then vote on approving it.

Mr. Ball said that he recognized that this would be a difficult discussion since different people have different interests.

Members of the Council then discussed the draft of the customer pledge that had been presented and agreed, by consensus, to modifications noted in the attached document.

At the end of the discussion on the customer pledge, Mr. Ball told Council members that he would send around the revised draft for additional comments and that the Council would vote on a final version at its October 2nd meeting. He noted that this would allow for discussion on additional points, for input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee and from the Council’s committees. He said that he planned to share this working draft with the Board leadership when he met with them the following week.

VI. RAC Membership:

Mr. Ball noted that there are some members of the Council who have missed several Council meetings.

Ms. Walker moved that the Council recommend that the Board remove Italo Cruz (District of Columbia) and Alex Parcan (Montgomery County) from membership on the Council because of their lack of attendance at Council meetings. This motion was seconded by Ms. Silva.

The motion was approved (11-0-0)

In favor: Mr. Ball, Ms. Hermanson, Ms. Walker, Mr. Wright, Mr. DeBernardo, Ms. King-Adams, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Silva, Ms. Walsh, Ms. Zimmerman

Opposed: None

Abstentions: None

Ms. Hermanson then moved that the Council recommend that the Board remove Etta-Cheri Washington from the Council due to her lack of attendance at Council meetings. This motion was seconded by Ms. Walker.

This motion was approved (9-0-2).

In favor: Mr. Ball, Ms. Hermanson, Ms. Walker, Mr. Wright, Mr. DeBernardo, Ms. King-Adams, Ms. Lynch, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Silva

Opposed: none

Abstentions: Ms. Walsh, Ms. Zimmerman

Mr. Ball asked that Council members check in with him following the meeting to let him know which of the upcoming bus public hearings they would be attending.

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Metro's Pledge to its Customers Pledge

Safety is our number one concern. Metro is accountable to riders ~~on for~~ the safety of its equipment, property, and service. We ~~constantly~~ strive (work towards?) for to deliver a system that is ~~well-maintained~~ in a state of good repair and free of incidents.

~~Metro is committed to reliable, frequent service.~~ **Metro meets customers' expectations for reliable, frequent service** Metro will continually work to improve on-time performance and dependability.

~~Rush-hour and high-volume routes will run at least every six minutes. Off-peak service will run at least every twenty minutes.~~ [When scheduled maintenance or other factors stretch wait times beyond twenty minutes for rail service, Metro will inform passengers before they pay and provide information about alternate options.]

[Metro offers a high-quality, accessible ride environment for all. Metro service is accessible to the diverse communities it serves and easily navigated by all members of the community. Metro ~~makes every effort to~~ keeps its facilities stations and vehicles clean and comfortable. [If something inhibits your use of the Metro system, contact us and we will address it.]]

Metro will provide timely and useful information to passengers during service disruptions. Metro strives to limit service disruptions ~~as much as possible~~. ~~When an incident delays service is delayed due to an incident~~, Metro will provide immediate clear information to affected passengers and the public within two minutes, and will frequent updates incident information at least every five minutes until normal operations resume.

Metro is committed to passenger security. Metro Transit Police constantly works across jurisdictions to prevent crime throughout the Metro system. If you are a victim of crime while riding in the Metro system, you have the right to file a report with Metro Transit Police, MTPD who will work to provide timely and effective resolution treat you courteously and respectfully.

Metro will provide the highest level of customer service. ~~We will treat you with courtesy and respect. We will make it easy for you to ask a question or report a concern. If we can't answer your question, we will find someone who can. If you report a specific problem or ask a question, For any issue that cannot be immediately resolved we will we will offer provide~~ a substantive response within one business day and keep you updated until the issue is ~~resolved~~ addressed.

Metro is committed to transparency and responsible use of public resources. Metro will demonstrate accountability through regular, proactive disclosures of information on the operations, finances, and administration of the agency. Metro will actively engage communities and respond to their needs. ~~Metro will demonstrate accountability through regular, proactive disclosures of information on the operations, finances, and administration of the agency.~~ Our default is to release more information.