

No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA
TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA)

PUBLIC HEARING
Hearing No. 530 Docket No. B07-3
METRO FISCAL YEAR 2009 FARE PROPOSAL

Thursday, November 15, 2007
Landover, Maryland

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- 1 APPEARANCES:
- 2 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

3 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
4 ELIZABETH HEWLETT
5 Metro Board of Directors
6 MARCELL SOLOMON
7 Metro Board of Directors
8 JOHN B. CATOE
9 WMATA General Manager
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1 APPEARANCES (CONT'D):
2 Public Speakers:
3 STAN BROWN
4 LORNA TUCKER-JACKSON
5 CRYSTAL KIM
 ESTEBAN OLIVARES
 EUGENE PURYEAR

No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
6 LIZ LOWENGARD
MATT MURRAY
7 NATASHA PERSAUD
PETA LINDSAY
8 ROBERT MOSES
ROGER SCOTT
9 SARAH FRIEDMAN
SUNIL FRIEDMAN
10 TOM ESBROOK
SHANNA PEARSON-MERKOWITZ
REYNALDO MORA
11 BRENDA HOWELL
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17 MARY OLOWOFOOYEKU
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18 LISA PHILPOT
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19 HATTIE THOMAS
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S
2 (7:02 p.m.)
3 MS. HEWLETT: Good evening,
4 everyone. Thank you. First of all, thank
5 you all for coming out this evening on this
6 kind of cool, rainy evening. It's so
7 important that we hear from you, and we know

8 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
9 that there are many things that you could
10 choose to do tonight. But we're glad that
11 you choose to come out here and express your
12 views to us.

13 My name is Elizabeth Hewlett. I am
14 chair of the Washington Metropolitan Area
15 Transit Board of Directors. With me is
16 Marcell Solomon, who is also a member of the
17 WMATA Board of Directors representing Prince
18 George's County. Both of us are from Prince
19 George's County.

20 To my right is John Catoe, who is
21 the general manager of WMATA. So tonight's
22 public hearing, as you know, is on Metro's
Fiscal Year 2009 Fare Proposal. The purpose

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1 of tonight's hearing is to elicit comments of
2 our customers and the public about the range
3 of fare proposals for Metrorail and Metrobus
4 service, and amended parking fees that Metro
5 is considering as part of its fiscal year
6 2009 operating budget.

7 It's important to state at the
8 outset that this is a very difficult time,
9 and it is a very difficult task that we're
10 undertaking here because we wish that we

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11 didn't have to have fare increases. But we
12 know that we have to have some form of fare
13 increase, and we're trying to analyze the
14 various proposals. We cannot do that until
15 we hear from you first and hear what your
16 comment and concerns are, and -- because
17 that's a very important component of this
18 process.

19 This is one of six public hearings
20 being conducted throughout our region. Your
21 comments will become part of the public
22 record that will be examined by the Metro

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1 Board of Directors during its deliberations
2 on the FY '09 operating budget as it
3 considers the possibility of fare increases.
4 Any fare increase that might be approved by
5 that Metro board is tentatively scheduled to
6 take effect on or about January 6, 2008.

7 Metro is proposing to implement the
8 fare adjustment in early 2008 before
9 beginning FY 2009, and the additional revenue
10 would be reserved for use until July 2008,
11 which is the official start of FY 2009.

12 For those attendees who might have

13 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
14 questions or comments about any other aspects
15 of Metro service, please note that the Metro
16 staff has set up a table -- an information
17 table, at the open house portion. And our
18 staff is here and present today willing to
19 listen to any comments or concerns that you
20 may have, or questions or other topics other
21 than the fare proposal.

22 They will provide comment cards and
basic service information if requested, and

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1 you can feel free to step out at any time if
2 you want to get additional information.

3 Notice of this hearing was made in
4 the Washington Post, and advertisements were
5 also placed in the Washington Informer, the
6 City Paper, India This Week, Express India,
7 El Tiempo Latino and Washington Hispanic.

8 In addition, notice was posted on
9 the Metro website, in our buses and our
10 trains; and sent to area libraries in the
11 city of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax,
12 Montgomery and Prince George's counties; as
13 well as the District of Columbia.

14 Briefly, I will cover the procedure
15 that we will follow during the hearing.

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16 First, we will hear a statement presentation
17 on the proposal, which will be presented by
18 our general manager, Mr. Catoe.

19 Second, we will hear from those
20 persons who registered in advance to present
21 testimony. Each pre-registered speaker will
22 be limited to three minutes, except for any

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1 public officials, who will be heard first and
2 allowed five. Third, after we hear from
3 those who have pre-registered, we will hear
4 from those who signed up this evening, or
5 anyone present now who indicates a desire to
6 be heard.

7 If you do wish to speak, please
8 provide your name and address to Ms. Denise
9 Pena, whose hand is raised, if you wish to
10 speak and have not pre-registered.

11 Each speaker tonight, again, who
12 registers tonight will be limited to three
13 minute as well. I will signal you
14 when -- actually, it's Ms. Pena who will
15 signal you when you have 30 seconds left, and
16 you'll get the yellow sign at that point.
17 And just means to wind up your comments and

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21 need the website or where to send additional
22 comments, please feel free to see any of

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1 these folks.

2 A verbatim transcript will be made
3 at this hearing, and a copy of the transcript
4 maybe purchased from Beta Court Reporting at
5 telephone number (202) 464-2400.

6 I will now call upon our general
7 manager Mr. John Catoe, for his presentation.

8 MR. CATOE: Thank you, Director
9 Hewlett. Thank you members of the public who
10 came out tonight for this meeting, and I know
11 it's difficult for you, but it is extremely
12 important that we gain your input. And my
13 job tonight is to go back on why we're
14 proposing this and why did I propose a fare
15 increase.

16 And first, in the last 12 years,
17 Metro has had only two fare increases: one in
18 July of 2003, and the second in July of 2004.
19 During that period of time fares increased
20 with those two increases approximately
21 14 percent for bus and 23 percent for rail,
22 while during the same period of time,

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11

1 inflation has grown 37 percent, or greater
2 than 37, and the cost of fuel for our
3 vehicles has grown more than 300 percent.

4 This past year, after coming on
5 board in January, I delayed a proposed fare
6 increase, and instead, we looked at the
7 budget and we reduced our personnel staff,
8 reducing 20 percent of our administrative
9 employees, as well as other savings that we
10 identified within our operations which
11 reduced the budget by \$34 million.

12 In addition, there was a one-time
13 funding source -- we received \$40 million
14 from a lawsuit that was filed almost 10 years
15 ago. And we used that \$40 million plus the
16 \$34 million in savings to avoid having a fare
17 increase last July.

18 The second issue that has impacted
19 us, of course, has been the inflation and
20 other expenses. This one-time cut that I
21 mentioned, of \$40 million, there is no funds
22 to -- there is no additional \$40 million

12

1 coming in in FY '09, and we have increased
2 costs again for fuel and other expenses.

3 Contrary to a lot of thought, Metro
4 does not operate at a profit. Customers who
5 use our system pay approximately 55 percent
6 of the cost of Metrobus, Metrorail and
7 MetroAccess operations. This includes
8 approximately 79 percent cost-recovery for
9 Metrorail and 32 percent for Metrobus.

10 And due to the fact that passenger
11 fares and other revenues do not cover all the
12 expenses, the jurisdictions of Virginia, the
13 District of Columbia, Prince George's and
14 Montgomery Counties, or rather the state of
15 Maryland, provides for the additional
16 revenues.

17 In fact, and as an example, the
18 state of Maryland provided \$262 million for
19 this year's budget for both operating and
20 some capital expenditures, and that is
21 separate from the revenues themselves.

22 It's also important to note that

1 fare revenues are not used for any capital
2 expenditures such as buying buses or rail
3 cars. They are only used for the costs of
4 operating: our fuel, our salaries, the
5 benefits, the parts that we use on our
6 vehicles that are not capital in nature.

7 The FY '09 budget which begins on
8 July 1, 2008 is estimated to be \$1.3 billion,
9 and currently is projected to have a \$109
10 million shortfall. Metro is proposing to
11 balance the budget through an increase of
12 6.5 percent from state and local governments.
13 That means the \$272 million that Maryland
14 paid this year, we're asking them to increase
15 that by 6.5 percent on the operating portion.

16 The second is the fare increase
17 itself, which is estimated to generate
18 approximately \$111 million, provided that the
19 travel patterns of our customers do not
20 change significantly. The proposed increase
21 is planned to begin in early 2008.

22 In order to keep the increase as

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2 you have the increase in January and we start
3 collecting the increased fares at that point
4 in time, that reduces the number or the
5 amount of increase that we have to ask for
6 because you collect the fares over a longer
7 period of time.

8 If we wait until July 2008, then
9 the amount that we will request or need is
10 still the same \$109 million, but you have a
11 shorter period of time to get those revenues
12 back, which means that the increase would be
13 larger.

14 The proposal has no reduction in
15 Metrobus or Metrorail services, and in fact
16 by the end of 2008, we propose that
17 50 percent of all the rush hour trains on
18 Metrorail will be eight-car trains, and we
19 will have additional bus services in certain
20 portions of the region.

21 There will be no fare increase for
22 off-peak Metrorail service, and if you board

1 a bus and use a SmarTrip card, there will be
2 no increase in costs of your bus fare. In
3 addition, the agency, should the proposal be

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approved, will provide SmarTrip cards to
5 various social service agencies in Virginia,
6 Maryland, and the District of Columbia so
7 individuals whose incomes are below a certain
8 level can receive the card for free and not
9 have to pay the \$5 for a SmarTrip card.

10 The range of proposed options that
11 are under consideration includes increases in
12 the Metrorail and Metrobus fares as well as
13 changes to Metrorail parking rates and fees.
14 I have a summary of them. This list is not
15 all-inclusive, but are the major issues or
16 highlights of the proposed increase.

17 I would like to make clear that
18 this is a proposal, and the Board has made no
19 decision on whether we're going to have an
20 increase, or the amount of the increase.
21 Also, on the Board policy, after the public
22 comments are received, we cannot increase the

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1 amount greater than the numbers that I will
2 mention in a moment. The only change could
3 be is a decrease in the amount.

4 So the proposals or the major
5 points are as follows: an increase of 30
6 cents for the Metrorail peak boarding

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7 charge -- that means when you use Metrorail,
8 it would go up 30 cents. A maximum increase
9 of 80 cents if you make the longest-possible
10 trip on Metrorail. No increases for the
11 Metrorail off-peak fares, and I believe
12 that's after 9:00 a.m. and before 6:00 p.m.

13 And increase of 10 cents for the
14 Metrobus cash boarding charge. No increases
15 for the Metrobus boarding charges when using
16 the SmarTrip card. No increases in
17 MetroAccess fares. That's services for those
18 with disabilities. An increase of \$1.15 of
19 the daily parking fee. An increase of \$10
20 for the monthly reserved parking fee, and an
21 increase in the number of reserved parking
22 spaces by 3,500.

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1 After one year, the rail-to-bus and
2 bus-to-rail transfers will only be available
3 by the use of a SmarTrip card.

4 And as I mentioned earlier,
5 SmarTrip cards will be available for free for
6 those individuals below a certain income
7 level, and the reason that I'm not quoting
8 that is because that would be up to each

9 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
jurisdiction to make that determination.

10 So those are the basic highlights
11 or the outline of the fare proposals, but I'm
12 here tonight along with members of the Board
13 to listen to your comments so we can take
14 back those comments to the Board for their
15 consideration in determining what, if any,
16 fare increases will be put into place
17 effective next year.

18 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much,
19 Mr. Catoe.

20 Since you started speaking and
21 since I started speaking, I see a number of
22 new people have come into the room. So I'm

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1 going to reiterate, if you wish to speak
2 tonight and you did not pre-register, please
3 see Ms. Pena over here so you can sign up to
4 speak.

5 Again, the time limit will be three
6 minutes. But the record will remain open
7 until Monday, November 26, at 5:00 p.m. so
8 you can submit additional testimony or
9 comments in writing or via e-mail. And any
10 one of our staff folks here can tell you how
11 to do that.

14 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
15 parking by 3,500 spaces systemwide, and also
16 limit my comment to the issues of reserved
17 parking at the New Carrollton and Landover
18 stations.

19 I am also a property owner of
20 approximately four acres about a block away
21 from the New Carrollton Metro station, and
22 another four acres with a warehouse about a
block from the Landover Metro station.

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1 In 2004 and 2005, I contracted with
2 WMATA through a lease to provide 300 reserved
3 parking spaces during the construction of the
4 New Carrollton garage. That garage was
5 completed in December of 2005, and I believe
6 it was 1,500 additional spaces.

7 That garage, to my knowledge, is
8 now at capacity, has been at capacity for
9 about the last six months. The Landover
10 station is also, I believe, at capacity. The
11 proposal to increase -- or rather increase
12 parking systemwide I would assume will
13 include additional reserved parking at the
14 end of the line.

15 And again, I'm limiting my comments
16 to Landover and New Carrollton. And the

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17 reason for my comment is the four acres or
18 the eight acres that I have adjacent to
19 Landover and New Carrollton -- I wanted to
20 make sure WMATA was aware that that property
21 is again available for this particular
22 reason.

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1 I also commute at the Landover and
2 New Carrollton station to go down to the D.C.
3 Superior Court. If you in fact increase the
4 reserved parking, I'm confident that you are
5 aware by increasing reserved parking, you
6 will in a sense discourage the regular
7 parkers who cannot ride the Metro
8 until -- or rather before 10 a.m., and so if
9 you have additional reserved parking and then
10 the regular commuters may not use those
11 spaces at New Carrollton and Landover, they
12 are just going to go ahead into the city.

13 If you make a provision for the
14 spaces that are there that is not Metro
15 property but 600 additional spaces, there is
16 the possibility to increase ridership 600
17 additional commuters without depleting or
18 discouraging the regular drivers or commuters

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from using the system.

20 And so my only concern today is to
21 make you aware again that those properties
22 are available so that you do not unilaterally

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1 increase the reserved parking at New
2 Carrollton and Landover without making
3 provisions for other parking that's available
4 in the area.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

7 MR. BROWN: Quite welcome.

8 MS. HEWLETT: Ms. Lorna
9 Tucker-Jackson, followed by Caneisha Mills.
10 I'm sorry, Lorna Tucker-Jackson followed by
11 Caneisha Mills. Come right over here.

12 Do you want -- are you okay, do you
13 want us to pass you --

14 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: I'm okay.
15 I'll sit over here -- it was just hard to
16 find, coming from Branch Avenue.

17 MS. HEWLETT: Okay.

18 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: Do you need a
19 copy or --

20 MS. HEWLETT: You can give us a
21 copy. We have three minutes once you get

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22 situated.

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1 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: My name is
2 Lorna Tucker-Jackson.

3 MS. HEWLETT: Hold on a second. Do
4 you have a microphone right there?

5 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: Right here.

6 MS. HEWLETT: Yeah.

7 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: Hi, my name is
8 Lorna Tucker-Jackson. I'm a Metro rider,
9 from the Branch Avenue mainly, since 2001. I
10 gave up parking when they raised parking to
11 2.50 at the job and decided to try Metro. I
12 have been doing that -- my complaint started
13 when I had to get -- reserved parking was the
14 first major issue.

15 Then I had to -- I went on to get
16 reserved parking trying to think that would
17 compensate for the parking issue, only to
18 find out that reserved parking stops at 10:00
19 in the morning, so if I have doctors'
20 appointments or children activities, school
21 stuff to go to and get there at 11:00, 12:00,
22 I'm just like a regular anybody. That's my

1 issue.

2 what I have outlined is what the
3 problems are and what some of my solutions
4 are. The solutions for the parking lots is
5 that you build multiple levels -- this is at
6 Branch Avenue; I'm only concerned with Branch
7 Avenue -- you build multiple levels like you
8 have at Suitland, Anacostia, Morgan, and
9 especially Montgomery County.

10 The other one is the rush hour
11 fare. You come in -- and I noticed and I
12 actually tracked this from 8:45 to 9:31 a.m.,
13 we only get five trains in the morning, and
14 yet still we pay rush hour fares. My
15 solution is to stagger the rush hour prices
16 for riders in Prince George's County to
17 compensate for the few trains that we're
18 getting during that time frame.

19 My next issue -- on the parking
20 again about the reserved, my solution to that
21 was to extend the parking time to at least to
22 2:00 p.m. in the evening so that people like

1 me who pay for reserved, just to make sure I
2 have a parking space -- when I get there,
3 when I have appointments and things, and I
4 get there late, I could have parking. That
5 also leads to the other problem -- when you
6 come in past -- exiting the parking lot, if
7 you come in past the cutoff time, which is
8 10:30, when you first started that new
9 closing the gate, you were closing it at
10 9:00.

11 And I guess you must have gotten
12 complaints so they extended it to two hours
13 so -- which I thought would have been 11:00,
14 but the gatekeeper informed me that's 10:30.

15 Now, if get there after 10:30 and
16 go into one lot trying to find a parking
17 space, you have to pay to exit out. I don't
18 think we should have to. So how I saw that I
19 have the supervisor's business card, so
20 whenever I get there past that cutoff time of
21 10:30, I just make a phone call and tell him
22 you need to send whoever the gate person is

1 to come open up the gate to let me outside to
2 go to another lot to find a space, because
3 just driving from lot to lot, the gates are
4 down -- in order to get back out, you have to
5 pay 3.50 and you are just looking for a
6 parking space.

7 The other problem I have is the
8 parking -- and my solution for that we only
9 have three parking lots A, B, and C, and then
10 the meter lots and then the commuter lots. I
11 have no idea what the commuter lots do
12 because it's like a wasted space.

13 I suggest that we should build up
14 levels because we're having riders all the
15 way from Andrews, P.G., St. Mary's, and
16 Charles County. The other issue I have -- I
17 asked when they were building --

18 MS. HEWLETT: Ms. Tucker-Jackson,
19 that means your time is up.

20 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: Can I just
21 finish my statement?

22 MS. HEWLETT: You can finish and

1 submit any other comments in writing.

2 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: When I asked,
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3 you know, when you were building this station
4 who did you survey, they said, they took a
5 survey. I said who did you survey, because
6 you certainly didn't survey me a resident of
7 P.G., and then you also are building around
8 the lot -- all these different buildings,
9 apartments and you're not doing anything to
10 increase parking.

11 MS. HEWLETT: I explained the time
12 limits I guess before you came in.

13 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: But I know,
14 which I think is unfair.

15 MS. HEWLETT: But you have -- you
16 have comments and we have -- so thank you.
17 And anything else that you feel free to add.

18 Okay, Caneisha Mills. Caneisha
19 Mills, followed by -- no Caneisha Mills?
20 Crystal Kim, Esteban Olivares, Eugene
21 Puryear, Liz Lowengard, Matt Murray, Natasha
22 Persaud, Peta Lindsey, Robert Moses, Roger

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1 Scott, Sarah Friedman, Sunil Friedman, Tom
2 Esbrook, Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, there you
3 go. Thank you. Followed by Mr. Todd Reitzel
4 here.

5 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
6 So you'll be next. Thank you.

6 MS. PEARSON-MERKOVITZ: Hi. My
7 name is Shanna Pearson-Merkovitz. I'm a
8 resident of Greenbelt. Public transportation
9 is supposed to provide a public good,
10 including the environment, and as mass
11 transit for working individuals and families,
12 or it should.

13 Metro must make ends meet,
14 obviously. There's no question though
15 without much more support from the state and
16 federal governments, Metro must raise its
17 fares; however it must do so in a responsible
18 and mindful manner.

19 Our state and federal governments
20 along with the Metro Board must take note of
21 the fact that the working poor are forced
22 through public policy, redevelopment, and

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1 other factors to live further not closer to
2 their jobs, services, and shopping. Thus,
3 those who cannot afford it are likely to pay
4 more because of Metro system of charging for
5 the distance ridden.

6 A person living inside the District
7 is likely to pay only the minimum, or close

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8 to the minimum fare to get to work. But
9 those living in our poorest suburbs will pay
10 close to the maximum plus a bus fare or
11 parking fee due to the fact that most Metro
12 stations are too far from low-income
13 neighborhoods to make walking possible.

14 I ran the numbers myself to see
15 what the impact would be on a minimum wage
16 earner -- \$5.85 an hour still in Virginia.
17 The results are pretty shocking both for the
18 current fares and even more so under the
19 Board's proposal.

20 Assuming the individual -- let's
21 call her Susan, works eight hours a day five
22 days a week for four weeks, under the current

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1 fare structure, before taxes, if Susan only
2 rides the Metro to and from work and pays the
3 minimum fare, she spends 6 percent of her
4 salary. But if she rides further and pays
5 the maximum fare, she spends 17 percent of
6 her income on transportation simply to get to
7 and from work.

8 Under the proposed fare, she would
9 spend 7 percent or 20 percent of her salary.

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10 And this is assuming she is riding the
11 minimum distance.

12 If Susan has to park at the Vienna
13 Metro which is 3.75 currently, 4.90 proposed,
14 before riding, she will pay 14 percent of her
15 salary to Metro at the minimum fare and 25
16 percent at the maximum fare.

17 Under the proposed system, at the
18 minimum fare, she will pay 18 percent of her
19 salary to Metro and 31 percent if she has to
20 ride far.

21 In short over a quarter of her
22 monthly salary could be spent just trying to

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1 get to and from work. Again, these
2 percentages are assuming Susan is paying no
3 taxes whatsoever. So those percentages will
4 actually be much, much higher.

5 Even at the median income, which I
6 also ran, before taxes, a daily Metro
7 commuter will pay up to 10 percent, a little
8 closer to 9 percent, of their income on
9 public transportation. Looking at these
10 figures makes mass transit seem a lot less
11 public and much more like a product only for
12 the elite, and the upper-middle class.

15 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
MS. HEWLETT: Thank you,

16 Ms. Pearson-Merkowitz. Todd Reitzel,
17 followed by -- is Reynaldo Mora here?

18 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you.

19 MR. REITZEL: Hi, I'm Todd Reitzel,
20 11520 Sequoia Lane, Beltsville, Maryland.

21 I think the proposed fare increases
22 are unbalanced and unwise. The proposed

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1 increases will reduce ridership, thus
2 increasing overcrowding on roads and
3 increasing the negative impacts on the
4 environment.

5 Every day, Metro takes more than
6 1 million drivers off our roads, and thus
7 provides a valuable balance in our regional
8 transportation system. What seems like sound
9 fiscal policy is in fact poor public policy
10 in that it will create more traffic and more
11 pollution.

12 Metro's purpose should be more than
13 balancing its budget. It should be to
14 provide the sustainable transportation system
15 that provides valuable commuting alternatives
16 and encourages transit-oriented development.
17 So we need to encourage ridership on Metro

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1 of delivery of service.

2 I was wondering if we could include
3 in that the quality of service as well.
4 Being a daily Metro rider, taking the train
5 daily to work, it appears that every other
6 day, there's an issue on the train, whether
7 it's going in, coming home, whichever, there
8 always appears to be a problem.

9 I think including quality of
10 service in to that would give us a feeling
11 more that you are aware of the everyday
12 problems that we experience coming in and out
13 of Washington, D.C.

14 One other question or comment is
15 why is there a \$5 re-issue charge for the
16 SmarTrip, and why it appears that the parking
17 increase is greater than inflation?

18 That's it. Thank you.

19 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you, Mr. Mora.
20 Brenda Howell, followed by Deirdre Jackson.

21 Ms. Jackson, are you here?

22 There you go, thank you.

1 MS. HOWELL: Good evening,
2 everyone. I'm Brenda Howell. My address is
3 5331 85th Avenue, Apartment 201, New
4 Carrollton, Maryland 20784-3214.
5 I'm an occasional Metro user, and
6 I'm going to limit my comments this evening
7 to fare suggestions. I understand that fares
8 have to go up; I have my own proposed
9 solutions. Some will not be well-received by
10 the public. One is, do not increase the
11 number of reserved parking spaces.
12 Going to New Carrollton Metro
13 station, I have noticed that even after 9:00,
14 there's a vast number of those spaces that
15 are empty. So I don't think increasing the
16 number is the solution.
17 However, we want to encourage
18 people who have the reserved parking spaces
19 to use them. Evidently, some people can
20 afford to pay \$45 a month and not actually
21 use the space, so I'm proposing an increase
22 in that fee to \$75 a month. Maybe if you pay

1 \$75 a month, you'll actually use it.

2 My next suggestion is increase the
3 number of long-term parking spaces that you
4 have systemwide, and then charge for
5 long-term parking. People can actually park
6 for three days and actually pay a one-day
7 rate; I think you can make revenue if you
8 actually charge them by the day.

9 My next suggestion is having a \$5
10 parking fee at all lots -- you have different
11 parking fees at the different lots, that's
12 confusing to someone who may choose to park
13 at New Carrollton one day and Largo another
14 day, and then in Springfield another day.

15 My Metrorail suggestion is to take
16 the base fare to \$1.50 at all times, which
17 would then reduce the amount of increases
18 that you need to make during peak hours.
19 Going to \$4.70 for a maximum fare is just
20 entirely too much money. My last suggestion
21 is to increase the Metrobus fare to \$1.50.

22 Thank you.

1 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much,
2 Ms. Howell. Deidre Jackson, followed by
3 Immanuel Hermann.

4 MS. TUCKER-JACKSON: Good evening.
5 My name is Deidre Jackson. I'm a resident of
6 Upper Marlboro, Maryland, and I have been a
7 resident of the state of Maryland, Prince
8 George's County, for seven years. In the
9 time that I have lived here, the Metro fares
10 have increased as well as the parking fares
11 significantly. It's insane.

12 To have -- I want to address the
13 Largo Metro as well as the Landover Metro
14 stops -- I don't have to be to work until
15 9:30 a.m. but if I don't get to the Metro by
16 7:00 a.m., I don't get a parking space, yet I
17 have to pay 3.75. Either I'm getting bigger,
18 possibly, or the spaces are getting smaller,
19 definitely, because there just isn't enough
20 room to park there.

21 The Largo Metro, when you get there
22 at a certain time, you are supposed to have

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1 two elevators. It has one elevator. The
2 reserved parking spaces are on the second
3 level; the handicapped spaces are on the

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4 fourth. I'm not understanding the rationale
5 behind that -- and the elevator never works.

6 There is a problem when I spend
7 more energy getting to work than I do at
8 work. I have to drive 10 miles, and I looked
9 into not putting the wear and tear on my car.
10 As a New Yorker, I'm used to taking public
11 transportation.

12 But for me to leave my house in
13 Upper Marlboro to take the bus to get to the
14 Metro, to get to work to walk up the
15 escalator, to walk another two blocks to
16 work, it infringes on my quality of life.
17 Like this meeting that they have at 7:00 at
18 night, when -- you know, I think you'd get a
19 better turnout if you had it at during
20 business hours when people are able to come
21 and address the issues.

22 I'm all for the reserved parking

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1 spaces, but they do need to be used by a
2 certain time, because if you can pay \$55 a
3 month, it just isn't cost-effective. The
4 costs now in your proposed increases, for me,
5 it's going to be -- not economically

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9 (Applause)

10 MS. HEWLETT: Immanuel Hermann. Is
11 Sandra Bowman here?

12 You'll be next. Okay. No, the
13 other mic, it's the other mic.

14 MR. HERMANN: Hi, I'm Immanuel
15 Herman, I live at 22 Crescent Road in
16 Greenbelt. And I have lived here
17 for -- gosh, probably over eight years or
18 something. Anyway, I didn't really prepare
19 any comments, but I agree with what a lot of
20 the people have said.

21 And I just want to point out that
22 I'm sort of an incentive-driven rider of

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1 Metro. I also work in the K Street corridor
2 like the person that spoke before me. And if
3 the parking rates are increased per the
4 proposal here, it's very likely that I will
5 drive into work a lot more and abandon Metro.

6 I do appreciate the environmental
7 impact -- the benefits of Metro, and you
8 know, I like to try to ride it. You know, if
9 the quality of being on Metro were
10 better -- I mean, that's the other thing. I

11 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
12 mean, if it were nicer to ride Metro, I would
13 probably take it, too, even if it were
14 equally expensive.

15 All things being equal, if it were
16 a nice ride, I'd probably take it, you know?
17 So either increase -- if you are going to do
18 things like increasing the parking, then
19 there'd better be substantial quality
20 increases actually riding, or I would just
21 spread the costs more equitably, you know?
22 Including buses, where I saw you are
collecting 30-something percent of the actual

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1 expenses. So we're subsidizing buses.
2 I would spread it out that way.
3 For me, it would be 10.15 with the parking
4 and fare increase to go into D.C. I can
5 either get tax-subsidized Metro or
6 tax-subsidized parking. So I'm paying for
7 gas. That's the only thing I have to pay
8 for. That probably costs me \$5 to \$7 a day.
9 So I'm paying to \$5 to \$7 a day
10 extra for the convenience of taking a car
11 into the city. It's worth it,
12 unfortunately -- I hate to say that because
13 I'm someone who believes that public transit

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14 is a worthwhile public good that we should
15 all have, and that -- I hate the smog here; I
16 hate the environmental impact of driving. So
17 that's basically it.

18 (Applause)

19 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very, very
20 much, Mr. Hermann.

21 Sandra Bowman, followed by Shirley
22 Dunklin. Okay. Thank you.

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1 MS. BOWMAN: My name is Sandra
2 Bowman and I live in Oxon Hill, Maryland, and
3 I ride the bus and the Metrorail every day,
4 and sometimes I do drive to the Southern
5 Avenue Metro station. And as it was said
6 previously -- I'm not going to reiterate it,
7 repeat it too much -- that the incentive for
8 riding public transportation is for the
9 environment and to cut down on the traffic.

10 And the increases in -- I'd say you
11 have to make increases, but the increases
12 that you are making are not incentives to do
13 that. Especially a \$1.15 increase in
14 parking -- and the cards for the students and
15 making the senior/disabled fare one half,

16 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
17 half the regular fare, those are not an
18 incentives, just like others have said.

19 If we have to -- if public
20 transportation isn't feasible then they'll
21 end up driving, which defeats the purpose of
22 trying to save the environment and traffic.

And I do get subsidized from the

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1 federal government, but then are they willing
2 to increase? I live closer than some people
3 and -- that live there.

4 And I just want to say that I know
5 you may have to increase, but really
6 reconsider the amount that you are
7 increasing. And I just want to end with
8 this, that last night at the Southern Metro
9 station, I was looking at a bus, and it had
10 an ad on there and it had a purse with a gas
11 pump squeezed around -- wrapped around it,
12 and it says, "Feeling the squeeze? Ride
13 Metro."

14 But we are feeling the squeeze from
15 Metro, so then what we do with that?

16 Thank you.

17 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you. Thank
18 you, Ms. Bowman. Shirley Dunklin, followed

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19 by Dr. Geraldine Drake-Hawkins.

20 MS. DUNKLIN: Hi, I'm Shirley
21 Dunklin. I'm a resident of Suitland, and I
22 will be very brief because actually my

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1 comments have already been stated. My major
2 concern is the daily fare for parking going
3 up a \$1.15. I think that increase is too
4 severe for one year, because we're looking at
5 \$5, \$6, \$7 just for parking, not to even
6 include the cost of riding the Metro.

7 I think with the increase in fare
8 and in parking as drastic it is, I think
9 ridership will decrease, and with that, I
10 think Metro is going to really defeat their
11 purpose, because once ridership decreases,
12 then you have even a bigger problem on hand.

13 And not only is the increase with
14 the increase being \$1.15, there is also -- it
15 seems to be a severe increase for people that
16 drive. Seem like drivers are increased more
17 than people that ride the bus. But people
18 that drive then, we have to pay for gas as
19 well as pay for the Metrocard and everything
20 that everyone else pays for.

21 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
People that catch the bus just
22 catch the bus; they don't have to put the

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1 fuel in the Metro -- in the bus tank, so I
2 just want everyone to be aware of the
3 increased costs on people that drive to the
4 Metro station, because I would hate for
5 ridership to decrease.

6 And that could be a big problem,
7 because right now, like someone already said,
8 driving to the Metro station, you have to
9 drive to the Metro station, walk up, go in,
10 then you have to wait on your train -- there
11 is increased fares -- there's everything that
12 you encounter on the train.

13 So it's almost more beneficial to
14 just drive in. Listen to your music, get to
15 the parking garage and pay your \$10 and you
16 are through. So that's my concern, and I
17 would really hate for ridership to go down
18 because of the increased fares. I understand
19 that fares do need to be increased, but to
20 maybe look at it a little bit closer, and
21 maybe have the Metro fare for peak and
22 non-peak, why not have that the same price?

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1 So those are just my concerns. Thank you.

2 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very, very
3 much, Ms. Dunklin.

4 (Applause)

5 MS. HEWLETT: Dr. Geraldine
6 Drake-Hawkins, followed by Dr. Sharon Cow.
7 Okay.

8 DR. DRAKE-HAWKINS: Good evening.

9 MS. HEWLETT: Good evening.

10 DR. DRAKE-HAWKINS: I'm a resident
11 of the village at Colington and our address
12 is a Bowie address, but we are right here,
13 and I use the Blue Line at Largo Center on a
14 daily basis, and I go in on the weekends, so
15 I'm a regular rider.

16 I have a concern, and my concern is
17 shared by some of my fellow employees, and
18 somebody did identify -- two people who
19 identified themselves as folk who work for
20 the federal government.

21 And we're not able to get
22 assistance with parking. When you raise the

1 parking fee, there's no assistance from the
2 employer with that. You can get assistance
3 for your transportation, but not for the
4 parking. So when you make the greatest
5 increase the \$1.15, the folk who are getting
6 some kind of subsidy from the employer cannot
7 get any help with that.

8 So that's going to continue to come
9 out of your pocket; it's coming out of your
10 pocket now, but increasing it, it's more
11 coming out of your pocket. I'm also
12 concerned about consideration that needs to
13 be given to the changing demographics of the
14 Metro ridership.

15 And as more people in my age group
16 determine that they are not going to stop
17 working just because we're aging, we want to
18 be able to ride the Metro and not to have to
19 take our cars downtown, destroying the
20 environment for our grandchildren, et cetera.

21 So I ask Metro to consider the fact
22 that the changes in the demographics here in

1 our area are similar to the changes in
2 demographics around the country. And if
3 that's important that we're addressing the
4 needs of the people and the environment, then
5 I think that we want to consider -- ask you
6 to please consider again that there may be an
7 unbalanced share of the burden on people and
8 families also who are economically unable to
9 live closer to the places where they work.

10 A lot of people live in the county
11 because they are not able to afford the high
12 prices of living in the District of Columbia,
13 where a lot of us work. We love Prince
14 George's County, we want to stay here, but
15 we'd like the Metro system to realize that
16 we're an entity that care about the
17 community, too.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much,
20 Dr. Drake-Hawkins.

21 Dr. Sharon Cow.

22 DR. CONN: Conn, C-o-n-n.

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1 MS. HEWLETT: I'm sorry. Well,

2 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
it's just a handwriting issue here from me.

3 DR. CONN: Absolutely right.

4 MS. HEWLETT: Dr. Sharon Conn,
5 followed by L. Lewis. Thank you.

6 DR. CONN: Good evening, everyone.

7 MS. HEWLETT: Good evening.

8 DR. CONN: I'm a member of the
9 Riders Advisory Council, and also the
10 chairperson of the bus subcommittee, and just
11 to let you know, we meet the first wednesday
12 of every month, the bus committee meets the
13 second wednesday of every month, and I do
14 encourage you to come down to WMATA
15 Headquarters -- if you do have a concern, we
16 will be there to address them.

17 I'm here tonight as a rider. I do
18 ride the bus and the train, but sometimes you
19 have to ask the question -- what am I
20 getting, you know? If the price goes up,
21 what am I getting? Am I getting better
22 service? I live in Temple Hills, Maryland,

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1 and I feel that suburban bus schedules, such
2 that they limit travel; okay?

3 Most of the suburban buses stop at
4 a certain hour, or they start running maybe

5 one every hour up until about 10:00 at night,
6 and very infrequently -- infrequently on the
7 weekends. I feel that the suburban buses are
8 too large; they need to have smaller buses
9 because you don't have as many riders, and
10 maybe they can increase the service.

11 our children can't get around,
12 seniors can't get around on weekends. I
13 travel a lot. I travel to New York and other
14 places -- my fellow New Yorker there -- I've
15 been here for 20 years, but I have what I
16 call these all-transit days where I take
17 public transportation everywhere.

18 I'll do it from here to New York to
19 Atlanta, et cetera, and I want to be able to
20 get home on Sunday night. And it's very
21 complicated if you live in certain places.
22 So I think we need to focus on having more

1 buses run more frequently on the weekends.

2 Some of the things that we've
3 discussed at our meetings include non-fare
4 revenue sources; okay? We have a number of
5 Metro stations that are underutilized. Why
6 not have businesses on those stations to

7 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
generate more income? We talk about bus
8 wraps and other ways to increase the revenue
9 as opposed to just fare increases.

10 I think that it's inevitable that
11 there may be a fare increase. But I think it
12 should be equitably distributed. I think
13 everybody needs to pay the increase, not just
14 the ones that ride the rail and the bus
15 during the day. They mention that there
16 won't be any increases with flash cards and
17 seniors and MetroAccess.

18 I think everybody needs to pay
19 something, because I'm hearing tonight that
20 people are paying \$5-\$6 for parking. That's
21 a substantial increase. I think there should
22 be a flat rate. If you look at the chart

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1 that you were given earlier, it compares our
2 rate to other Metro organizations around the
3 country. And it's a bit disingenuous because
4 they're showing you our lowest fare.

5 You know, I took the train from
6 Foggy Bottom here tonight. I normally don't
7 ride to Largo and didn't realize it was 3:25
8 just to get here, because I have to scramble
9 in my pocket to make sure I have enough money

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10 to get home, you know? But it's like a
11 mystery. Sometimes you don't know how much
12 the fare is. And I think that there should
13 be a flat rate.

14 I think that there should be an
15 increase in customer service; okay? I think
16 that they need to have maybe instant surveys
17 like they do on the phones. They wait two
18 minutes and then someone comes back and says,
19 okay, how was that call?

20 MS. HEWLETT: Dr. Conn, I don't
21 know if you were noticing about your time.

22 DR. CONN: No, I didn't. Do I have

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1 three -- I should have five minutes.

2 MS. HEWLETT: No, you're --

3 DR. CONN: I only have three
4 minutes; okay?

5 MS. HEWLETT: You had them.

6 DR. CONN: I had my three minutes.

7 MS. HEWLETT: Okay.

8 DR. CONN: But as I said, I'm not
9 opposed to a fare increase. But I think the
10 service and the quality needs to increase as
11 well.

12 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
Thank you very much.

13 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much.

14 (Applause)

15 MS. HEWLETT: L. Lewis, followed by
16 Raymond Colbert. Raymond Colbert? Okay,
17 there you are.

18 Again, I've seen other people come
19 in. If you haven't signed up to speak and if
20 you wish to speak, please see Ms. Pena over
21 here so you can sign up.

22 Ms. Lewis?

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1 MS. LEWIS: Thank you. My name is
2 Ms. Lewis. I'm a Prince George's County
3 resident. Thank you for giving me the
4 opportunity to speak. I propose no increase
5 in parking, rail, or bus.

6 Over the years, Metro has not
7 produced any evidence of improved service or
8 safety while it has increased its fare.
9 Metro is going to lose current customers and
10 new customers with outrageous increases in
11 fares and lack of safety and service in rail,
12 buses, and in the parking lots.

13 I have every confidence this will
14 work itself out because Prince George's

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15 County residents such as myself will utilize
16 carpooling or drive at a public parking lot
17 and simply stop using Metro.

18 Thank you for your time.

19 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you, Ms. Lewis.

20 Raymond Colbert, followed by
21 Charlene Lucas. Charlene Lucas? Okay, thank
22 you. Come on down. You're on.

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1 MR. COLBERT: Thank you. My name
2 is Raymond Colbert. I live at 16605 Village
3 Drive West, Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

4 I'll tell you the real reason why
5 we're here is for two reasons: is that Metro
6 did not like to listen, and they would rather
7 ask people who ride the Metro pay \$2. And
8 everybody out there, they said, we don't need
9 your business. And I could prove that
10 with -- if I can get five volunteers real
11 quick. Real quick, I could show you -- come
12 on up. This is going to be quite familiar,
13 musical chairs. I need three -- I got to get
14 up real quick. It's musical chairs, see, you
15 all know this works. Two more. Musical
16 chairs, get up, you can't do it until --

17 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
(Laughter)

18 MR. COLBERT: One more, one more;
19 okay? Go ahead --

20 SPEAKER: Musical chairs.

21 MR. COLBERT: Yeah, musical chairs.
22 Okay, stop. Here's what we have right here.

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1 we have two people with, what -- whatever the
2 increase in the parking is plus the Metro
3 fare -- we have one, two, and then if we had
4 a third person, that's \$12 missing on the
5 parking alone. Business alone says that for
6 80 cents profit, you're losing over \$10.
7 It's not rocket science saying you're going
8 to lose money now doing that.

9 Here's the second thing. You have
10 one person here and one person here.
11 Assuming this is just Largo Town Center. But
12 you also have New Carrollton, which has MARC
13 trains as well as the Amtrak, which means if
14 they did their business is equal, the parking
15 revenues for Metro is decreased even more for
16 Metrorail. That's over \$1 million right
17 there that you get if just parking increased.
18 If people could actually -- who want to use
19 Metrorail, could go ahead and park whenever

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20 they want to, how many time -- I've been
21 saying this before September 11th.

22 I could tell you on September 11th,

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1 they used three Metrorail systems. New
2 Carrollton was for 7:00. Landover for 7:30.
3 I had to actually go to Branch Avenue. That
4 was after 8:00, because I wanted to be in
5 a -- worked till 8:00. Excuse me. Sorry
6 about that.

7 when you include the parking
8 because of this, which is against the law
9 anyway, that's more money you're wasting.
10 That's over \$1 million in itself, which is
11 against the law -- which means, of course, if
12 they don't care about that, why should they
13 care about littering and everything else
14 which also increases your numbers as far as
15 maintenance and stuff?

16 MS. HEWLETT: Okay, Mr. Colbert, I
17 have to stop you now because your time is up.
18 But thank you for your comments.

19 Ms. Charlene Lucas, followed by --
20 is it Penisi? Okay.

21 MS. LUCAS: I'm Charlene Lucas.

22 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
I'm a resident of Prince George's County.

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1 I'm not going to say everything that's
2 already been said, as a lot of people have
3 said the same thing I'm thinking. But I just
4 want to sort of like sum it up.

5 And with the new rates, I would be
6 paying, just roundtrip transportation, \$7.30;
7 parking, \$4.65; gas, \$4. So that's about \$16
8 a day. So I could really drive downtown and
9 park for that amount of money.

10 I could have my own car, when I get
11 out -- and when I'm at home, I'll be at home.
12 I'm happy doing all this driving to get back
13 and forth. And that's one thing I wanted to
14 sort of touch bases on.

15 And another. Mr. Catoe -- he was
16 saying the subsidy that the county, state,
17 and federal taxes give -- I think he says
18 55 percent is only for what we actually pay
19 for our carfare. Well, I pay federal,
20 county, and state taxes. So I'm sort of like
21 paying -- and I think about it, it's like the
22 federal government, you know? I'm just

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1 getting my money robbed all kinds of ways. I
2 mean, I just feel like we're just paying
3 money and how much money do we have left, you
4 know? So yeah, we are paying for more
5 already, if you consider the taxes that we
6 pay.

7 And last is security. I'm a little
8 concerned about security now that the time
9 has changed and it's dark at night. And a
10 couple of stations do have some real serious
11 problems of being robbed, with the person
12 being robbed.

13 So it would be nice to see security
14 at the stations after 5:00, at least during
15 rush hour, to make women -- I don't know
16 about you guys, but I think that guys get
17 attacked, too. But women, in this time of
18 the year, holiday, it's time we really do
19 need some security. So that would be really
20 helpful if you could kind of get some
21 security there just for a few hours in the
22 evening. Thank you.

1 (Applause)

2 MS. HEWLETT: I can't -- is this
3 Penisi? Thank you. No? Okay, Benjamin --

4 MR. DZIEKELEY: Dziekeley.

5 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you. Followed
6 by Victoria Harrell.

7 MR. DZIEKELEY: Good morning,
8 everyone. Somebody's been paying attention.

9 (Laughter)

10 MR. DZIEKELEY: Most of this has
11 already been said. But I think that the one
12 thing that's been missing is efficiency. And
13 we all don't want increases, you know? We
14 all can't afford them. But there is a way
15 that we can run Metro more efficiently if we
16 could run Metro on biodiesel.

17 It's like we have a car -- oh, I'm
18 sorry. We have a vehicle which runs on
19 gasoline that costs \$3 a gallon to drive a
20 car. If it costs \$1 with alternative fuel,
21 it would be more efficient and it'd be
22 cheaper for the riders. And if there was a

1 way that Metro could investigate alternative
2 fuels on the bus side, maybe that would
3 alleviate some of the costs on the rail side.

4 A few other comments would be,
5 perhaps a standing car. If we could pack
6 more people into the trains and be more
7 efficient during -- let's say, for example,
8 during peak hours, if we had a car where
9 there were no seats. Most of you don't sit
10 down anyway. So if we had a car with all
11 standing rails, then we could put more people
12 in and run the train more efficiently.

13 So it's all about being more
14 efficient, getting more for the dollar rather
15 than getting more dollars, but getting more
16 for the dollar. And I'm thinking that if we
17 could investigate these ways and think out of
18 the box rather than thinking we need more
19 riders and we need more money, then we can
20 save some money in the long run.

21 So that's my comment. Thank you so
22 much for your time.

1 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much.
2 Victoria -- is it Harrell -- okay, oh -- is

3 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
it Penisi?

4 MS. YENISI: Hi. I'm Yenisi. And
5 I'm from --

6 MS. HEWLETT: Oh, Yenisi; okay?
7 I'm sorry.

8 MS. YENISI: Hyattsville, Maryland
9 about -- the other mic? Okay, sorry. Hello,
10 I'm Yenisi. And I'm from Hyattsville,
11 Maryland. And I have taken Metro for years.
12 I have to because of the type of work I do.
13 And it constantly gets me to my location
14 late. I have to take a bus first and then
15 take the train. And why would you be asking
16 for fare increases when you can't get people
17 to work so they can keep their job and pay
18 Metro fares?

19 Now, I have -- smoke on the tracks
20 is the newest thing. We stall because of
21 smoke on the tracks. Also, track work, which
22 has been -- supposed to be going on from Fort

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1 Totten on the Red Line for the past three or
2 four years, I believe. Buses are slow to
3 come. I've waited -- on my way to work. And
4 it's taken me three hours to get there. And
5 it's only about a seven-mile ride, basically,

No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD

6 if you take a car. Why would I want to pay
7 more? You tell me.

8 Buses that pass customers. You're
9 obviously there waiting for the bus and they
10 pass you. Therefore, you have to wait maybe
11 an hour or a half-hour for another bus.
12 Also, overcrowding on buses, which has you
13 waiting another half-hour or an hour for a
14 bus.

15 I also have seen many things such
16 as problems -- when I get off late from work,
17 you cannot get a bus from the train to my
18 area of Prince George's County from
19 Montgomery County and from Washington, D.C.
20 Because of the nature of my work, I work in
21 various locations, and I cannot get home on
22 the F4, the F6, the R2, and R3 because they

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1 do not run late enough. I also work on the
2 weekends. These buses -- and even earlier on
3 the weekends, R2 and R3 being about 6:30 p.m.
4 why would I want to pay more; okay?

5 This has been making it really hard
6 for me to do my job. I'm not so much
7 concerned with what Metro needs when I can't

11 problems. And you cannot justify fare
12 increases. You cannot justify parking
13 increases or anything else when your
14 customers have to go through all these
15 things.

16 I was also in a bus collision. I
17 had terrible service. There was a
18 supervisor, G. Shepherd, who told me yes, we
19 will make sure that you get checked out.
20 Just call me. I called him, could not reach
21 him. Another woman, Tracy -- I forgot her
22 last name, but I will tell you afterwards.

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1 And she would not give me the time of day,
2 calling back and forth, back and forth.

3 Back pain. I could not do my job.
4 I'm a dance choreographer and dance teacher.
5 I could not do my job; okay? And this is all
6 from Metro. You do not deserve to increase
7 your fares. And I've rode in Metro even less
8 and less every day because I just do not want
9 to be bothered. It's not worth what it's
10 costing now.

11 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you.
12 Victoria -- is it Harrell or Harrell?

13 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
Harrell. Followed by Mary Olowofooyeku;
14 okay?

15 MS. HARRELL: My name is Victoria
16 Harrell and I live in Bowie, Maryland. Quite
17 frankly, I'm really tired of paying -- it
18 just feels like through your mismanagement of
19 funds and you not having provisions in place
20 to budget the money accurately, you're
21 constantly putting the costs on us. Like
22 several years ago with the Penn Parking,

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1 where that company was not charging the
2 proper fees, you imposed that fare upon us.

3 Now, someone, as myself, who use a
4 weekly pass -- I pay \$130 a month and I don't
5 have access to the Metro parking unless I pay
6 \$7.50. That's not fair. I'm giving a lot of
7 money compared to other people who use
8 SmarTrip versus a seven-day pass.

9 why don't you have provisions in
10 place to deal with individuals who are not
11 honest, like for instance, who'll go from
12 Bethesda to Capitol Heights on a \$1.35 pass
13 and you just let them out of the gate, where
14 I'm paying an honest fee. But yet you're
15 passing those costs on to me saying that you

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16 can't do anything about it, you can't hold
17 that customer. Or students who demagnetize
18 their card in order to get out of paying the
19 60 cent fare.

20 why don't you have something in
21 place to handle these shortfalls as opposed
22 to just constantly -- your solution to the

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1 problems always passing the increased fares
2 on to those who are working hard and paying
3 the fares honestly? That's all I have to
4 say. Thank you.

5 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much,
6 Ms. Harrell. Now, Mary Olowofooyeku.

7 MS. OLOWOFOOYEKU: Thank you.
8 That's correct.

9 MS. HEWLETT: Okay.

10 MS. OLOWOFOOYEKU: Thank you for
11 the opportunity to come here and complain and
12 bellyache about your service. I'm
13 representing other individuals that take
14 Metro more often than myself.

15 The main complaint is that the
16 Metro does not operate on time. It's too
17 slow at rush hour. And it allows the

18 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
19 individuals to get to work late. Now it
20 seems to me that if you want riders, they
21 have to have jobs to make money in order to
22 ride the Metro. So therefore, the service
should be improved.

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1 Another complaint is that the buses
2 tend to go -- namely the S bus as well as
3 the -- well, the 70 bus going into the
4 District in the morning -- there seems to be
5 just bunches of those buses that are going in
6 town, but very few buses going out of town.
7 So it makes it difficult for those people
8 that want to go into the 'burbs.

9 Another thing is the concern about
10 the Metro being open later than the buses.
11 In other words, you can come into a Metro
12 stop and you have no bus to take. And I
13 think some other people have voiced that
14 concern. The buses coming from Fort Totten
15 going into Maryland and the buses coming from
16 Silver Spring -- the R buses and the F buses
17 don't allow people chances to get home.

18 In fact, the individuals can't even
19 get a cab at some of those stations if they
20 get off late in the evening time. And I've

21 been called on occasions to pick people up at
22 like 2:00 a.m. in the morning because they've

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1 been stranded. It is dangerous out there.
2 You try standing at some of the Metro stops
3 at that hour in the morning and not able to
4 get a cab. It's a rather frightening
5 experience.

6 I think someone already made
7 reference to buses passing individuals, and
8 them being overcrowded as well. I would
9 suggest that you have a lot of people here
10 with a lot of good ideas. And you might pay
11 some of them to come up with some solutions
12 to your problems, because I think they're
13 really dedicated individuals to come out here
14 to make suggestions and try to solve this
15 problem -- problems where maybe your staff
16 don't feel the need and they don't have the
17 desire that those of us that ride the Metro
18 or have family members that are going to be
19 greatly affected by this increase.

20 I don't believe that, as some have
21 said, the Metro fare increase is necessary.
22 I believe that those in the political realm

□

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1 could possibly give you guys more money.
2 However they do that. Maybe if you try a
3 little harder, you might be able to get them
4 to finance you, as well as doing some other
5 projects -- merchandising, whatever, to come
6 up with additional resources rather than
7 hitting the general public who's committed to
8 riding Metro and absolutely have to ride
9 Metro.

10 otherwise, they have to have a
11 whole lot of investment and shoe leather to
12 walk the miles that they might have to walk
13 to work. And that just doesn't work these
14 days. I thank you for your time.

15 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much.

16 (Applause)

17 MS. HEWLETT: Delores Cooke. Also,
18 if there is anyone else who wishes to speak
19 who did not sign up -- you did; okay? So I
20 mean, if there is anyone else who wishes to
21 speak and you have not signed up yet, please
22 do so.

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1 MS. COOKE: Can everybody hear me?

2 MS. HEWLETT: No. Don't worry
3 about that one.

4 MS. COOKE: Can everybody hear me?
5 My name is Delores Cooke. I live right
6 around the corner, in Upper Marlboro. So I'm
7 always on the Largo Metro. And I've lived in
8 this area for about 10 years. And I've
9 caught Metro for many, many years in P.G.
10 County.

11 There are not a lot of jobs in this
12 area. So a lot of times you do have to catch
13 the train to Montgomery County and D.C. and
14 so forth. So you're talking about a long
15 commute living in this area pretty much to go
16 to other areas. So yes, catching the train
17 is the main thing you'll do because it's
18 better than trying to drive and spend a lot
19 of money on gas and parking.

20 But now my concern is with Metro
21 going up again, and I'm just having a hard
22 time how that's justified as far as going up

1 on the fees and the parking. And when Metro
2 goes up, if your salary doesn't go up with
3 it, it's going to be a problem. And that's
4 most of our issues. I know that's my issue.
5 Yes, I work in the federal government. And I
6 just got back there a few months ago. So
7 normally, I have always paid all of my
8 transportation.

9 I paid \$200 a month on the last job
10 that I had for two years, and that's hefty.
11 And it's only now that I'm back in the
12 federal government as of July, at least they
13 give you a certain amount. That's for Metro
14 only, not for parking. So it concerns me
15 that Metro is going up again, because it's
16 going to be a problem as far as handling all
17 of these additional expenses with gas and
18 people's utilities. And you have things
19 going up everywhere. So it's a problem if
20 Metro goes up, too, and like I said, if your
21 money doesn't go up with it.

22 My main concern is with the Largo

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2 working. I have lupus, so sometimes I have
3 issues with my joints and my knees aching.
4 And there is a lot of times that the elevator
5 is broken down because the one garage only
6 has one elevator, and there is room for two.
7 But I understand that they rush to open it.
8 And so they only put one elevator in one of
9 the garages. One garage has two elevators.

10 My concern is the one that only has
11 one and they never put the other one in. And
12 there is -- it looks like the space there.
13 So what happens is that one elevator breaks
14 down routinely. And when it breaks down, I'm
15 hobbling up three-four levels of stairs.
16 That's a problem as far as a health
17 condition. So I would like something to be
18 looked into regarding the elevators in that
19 situation.

20 And then even when I get to the
21 station at 7:00, I'm still -- I have to drive
22 up because I have a handicap decal, but I

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1 have to drive up maybe to Level 3, 4 at 7:00.
2 And I have to be to work at 8:00 -- and I
3 know not to push it. I have to get there as

4 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
5 soon as I can to try to get a good space.
6 Now, if I got there at 6:30, it may be a
7 little better. But you're still going up to
8 Level 3 or 4. So that was my main issue.

8 Thank you very much.

9 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you very much,
10 Ms. Cooke.

11 (Applause)

12 MS. HEWLETT: Lisa Philpot,
13 followed by Marina Temkin.

14 MS. PHILPOT: Hello. Yes, I'm also
15 a P.G. resident and I live in Temple Hills.
16 And really, I'm saying the same thing
17 everybody else is saying.

18 But in terms of what we can do to
19 not put costs on the people who have to ride
20 the train and who are doing everything
21 correctly, is that -- again, that quality of
22 the service is not good.

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1 And one thing that I've noticed is
2 that when I take the train, I see a lot of
3 people who are doing -- what is the big sign
4 saying? Prohibited: eating on the train,
5 drinking on the train. They have loud music
6 playing on the train. And it's taking up

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7 seats because people will leave their trash
8 everywhere.

9 I have over an hour to get to work
10 and I'm not going to stand the whole hour.
11 Some people said make it so that you don't
12 sit. But -- I mean, some of us have a long
13 train ride. And so my thing is for people
14 who are not legally doing what they're
15 supposed to, why are they not getting the
16 penalty instead of people who are doing what
17 they're supposed to be doing getting this
18 penalty of the extra cost.

19 You can find ways to cut down on
20 our expenses by fining -- I mean, I don't
21 know what system is in place. People walk
22 through the Metro gates with food and nobody

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1 is being -- is saying anything. And they go
2 on the train, eat it, and leave it there.
3 It's a mess that I have to sit there and ride
4 on -- or can't sit because it's plenty of
5 junk all over the train instead of it being
6 neat and clean and orderly like it should be.

7 So I'm suggesting that you do look
8 outside of the box of just raising costs, and

9 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
10 find other ways to pay these extra costs that
11 you all have to do. And that's one way
12 because that's something that you say is
13 supposed to be illegal, but I don't see any
14 action being taken. Thank you.

14 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you,
15 Ms. Philpot. Marina Temkin, followed by -- I
16 don't know, Hattie someone. Okay.

17 MS. TEMKIN: Okay. My name is
18 Marina Temkin. I'm a resident of Greenbelt.
19 My main concern is that the fares are going
20 up for people who are commuting to work. And
21 the fares aren't going up for people who are
22 traveling off peak, which are, in my

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1 experience, people on vacation. And those
2 are the people that are willing to spend the
3 money. And those are the people that should
4 shoulder the hikes, not the people who are
5 going to work, who have to be there, people
6 who are paying the taxes, people who really
7 have no other choice.

8 And the concern for me really is
9 that it seems like Metro considers itself a
10 monopoly, that there's no other options, and
11 you guys can pretty much do whatever you

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12 want. And you say that you need the fares
13 increase, but I don't really understand why.

14 I know you have a shortage. I
15 don't really understand why you have a
16 shortage. There's no explanation, and there
17 was no explanation in the presentation today.
18 And I'm sure everybody has a grocery list of
19 complaints. In my experience, the buses are
20 not on schedule; the trains are not on
21 schedule. There's no way to schedule your
22 day.

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1 The Metro employees that I've
2 observed for the large part are really giving
3 minimal effort. They're making absolutely no
4 effort to make sure that seats are given up.
5 People are laying on the seats. You know,
6 students in the mornings are obnoxious and
7 almost threatening. And Metro employees will
8 stand there and say nothing and do nothing.
9 And that's unacceptable. We're paying their
10 salaries. They should stand up for the rules
11 of the Metro.

12 The announcements that are given in
13 the Metro stations are completely

14 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
unintelligible. If there are any
15 announcements about the delays, I have no
16 idea what they're saying. And nobody has an
17 idea what they're saying. And if you try to
18 contact the station manager, nobody will
19 respond.

20 The escalators are broken. Most
21 people who get off at DuPont Circle; most
22 people end up walking. The huge escalators

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1 on DuPont Circle and on Q Street -- not
2 fun -- especially first thing in the morning.
3 And if Metro was a business, if it had
4 competitors, it wouldn't stay in business for
5 long because customers wouldn't go for that.

6 So I guess my main point is I want
7 to know why these fares are going up. And I
8 guess it's a rhetorical question because I
9 don't expect it to be answered. But most
10 people are unhappy with the fares. And
11 probably the fares are going to go up. So
12 what's the point of having these meetings?
13 what's the point of having them next time you
14 plan to increase the fares, if you're not
15 really taking our opinions into
16 consideration?

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17 That's it. Thank you.

18 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you.

19 I didn't have a last name, but --

20 SPEAKER: Thomas.

21 MS. HEWLETT: Hattie Thomas,

22 followed by Marsha Hudgens.

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1 MS. THOMAS: Good evening,
2 everybody. Thanks to Metro; they didn't do a
3 good job in publicizing the location. I've
4 been riding around trying to find this place.
5 There's no number. I didn't see a number on
6 the building saying 8001 -- blah, blah, blah.
7 I did not see it. Nobody seems to know where
8 the building was or -- there was a young lady
9 in the parking lot that was kind enough to
10 give me -- that there was two conference
11 rooms in the back, maybe it's in there.

12 But anyhow, I'm a concerned rider
13 of Metro. I made it a point to be here this
14 evening. I've ridden all over the place, but
15 I'm here now and I'm voicing my opinion.

16 I don't think it's fair to impose
17 additional costs on Metro riders to and from
18 work. You're talking about parking lot

22 my face and the passengers had not even

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1 gotten off.

2 I take two trains -- the Orange
3 Line to the Yellow Line. And that's
4 unacceptable to me. Sometimes I have to
5 stand from Point A to Point B. Whoever
6 thought about these trains that they
7 got -- they are for cattle, not people.

8 Please, Metro, consider looking at
9 other means and other ways how you can defer
10 your costs without passing it on to us.
11 Think about managing your money as if it was
12 your own.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause)

15 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you,
16 Ms. Thomas. Marsha Hudgens. Again, if
17 there's anyone else who wish to speak who did
18 not sign up, please sign up. Thank you.

19 MS. HUDGENS: Good evening.

20 MS. HEWLETT: Good evening

21 MS. HUDGENS: My name is Marsha
22 Hudgens. I live in Mitchellville, Maryland.

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1 I'm not going to tell you about my Metro day.
2 I think everybody went through that already.
3 But I'm just mystified that you're
4 eliminating the gameday parking. It says
5 here that you're going to eliminate the \$25
6 Redskins gameday parking fee at Morgan
7 Boulevard and Largo Town Center. That's a
8 gold mine. How can you throw away revenue?
9 Jericho clears church -- my sister
10 goes to Jericho -- on game day, they have to
11 leave. They have an early service and that's
12 it because they want that parking revenue
13 that's coming in. The boulevards has started
14 to do it in the back. I'm -- just don't
15 understand.

16 You're telling me you're going to
17 raise fees, but you're going to let this go?
18 So I think you need to reconsider that,
19 because that could take tons of thousands off
20 of us for people who are driving in from all
21 over using our roads just for that period to
22 go to that game. They should pay something.

1 And the \$25 should be it. Thank you.

2 (Applause)

3 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you.

4 Tajiesha -- or Tajiesha, excuse me, Howard.

5 MS. HOWARD: Good evening,
6 everybody. My name is Tajiesha Howard. I'm
7 a resident of Prince George's County. I
8 agree with pretty much what everybody is
9 saying today. However, a lot of people are
10 saying I understand that you need to increase
11 the fares. And I'm saying that I disagree
12 with that and I think they need to decrease
13 them.

14 If we look at the lessons learned
15 and maybe study other models of other
16 industries -- for example, restaurant
17 industry, airfare industry, entertainment
18 industry, you would see that if you actually
19 decrease certain costs, people would be
20 encouraged to actually use a service or buy
21 the product more.

22 And I'm going to ask everybody for

1 their participation in this, because several
2 franchises, several companies have actually
3 used this model to actually increase
4 customers. For example, if you were to go to
5 McDonald's and pay \$3.49 for a
6 quarter-pounder, how many people here would
7 actually want to buy that quarter-pounder?
8 what McDonald's did was basically lower it to
9 \$1. Now how many people would actually want
10 to buy that quarter-pounder? So you're
11 actually making a profit.

12 when you look at the airfares, a
13 trip -- a roundtrip ticket to Miami was \$549.
14 But what Southwest did was actually say, you
15 know what, we're going to give you an online
16 fare of \$99 each way. How many people would
17 pay the \$549 to Miami? And how many people
18 would actually think about paying \$99 each
19 way to go to Miami?

20 Again, there is a profit there.

21 Let's look at entertainment,
22 movies, for example. Movies have also

1 increased. You know, I remember when I was
2 younger -- ha, ha -- and a date or something

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3 that -- you know, to go to the movies was
4 maybe \$5-\$6. Now it's \$10 or \$15. How many
5 people like to pay that amount, \$10 or \$15 to
6 go to the movies? But you know what one
7 movie theatre did? They said you know what,
8 we're going to have a movie theatre that's
9 \$1.75. And how many people then would be
10 willing to actually go there?

11 It's the same thing for Metro. If
12 you keep on increasing parking, if you keep
13 on increasing the actual fares, people will
14 not only search for alternatives, but they'll
15 go somewhere else. So if you actually
16 decrease the amount that people pay, people
17 will have more incentive to actually ride
18 Metro.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 MS. HEWLETT: Thank you, Marsha
22 Hudgens. That concludes our list of speakers

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1 for this evening. I just want to take a
2 moment to, first of all, to say a couple of
3 things.

4 As you can see, this is a very,

5 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
6 very difficult process. And you may or may
7 not realize that -- it's very difficult for
8 WMATA to figure out what to do here
9 because -- to address the problem that was
10 articulated earlier in the presentation. But
11 yet we do have to grapple with it.

12 We are WMATA representatives here
13 and we're not trying to hide behind anything.
14 We recognize that there is a problem. We
15 have to fix it. We can't do it without your
16 input. Your input is critical to this
17 process. So we thank you very much for
18 coming out here this evening.

19 And granted, some of it is not easy
20 to hear, some of it -- the complaints. But
21 they're very legitimate concerns expressed by
22 our customers who took the time to come here
and express them to us. So we take it as

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1 constructive feedback. Whether it's easy on
2 the ear or not, we take it as constructive
3 feedback, and we value your comments and we
4 value you for coming here tonight to express
5 them.

6 Yes, we're trying to grapple with
7 these many, many issues, and it's just not

8 easy. And also -- and we know -- I mean,
9 we're struggling with this and we're looking
10 at other things. As you know, we've
11 implemented major cuts there at WMATA as
12 well.

13 we've gone through our budget
14 repeatedly. We are proposing an increase
15 from the respective jurisdictions. And as
16 Mr. Catoe said, it's millions of dollars that
17 are contributed from the compact
18 jurisdictions. And particularly, he
19 highlighted the State of Maryland. So we're
20 trying to find balance here.

21 we know that service is critical to
22 you, that what -- we heard that some of you,

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1 not all, but some of you may not even mind
2 some semblance of an increase if the service
3 is better. So we're working towards that.

4 we're not here to say that
5 everything is perfect at WMATA. We know that
6 it's not. But it is our nation's transit
7 system, and we're going to work
8 extraordinarily hard to try to implement the
9 improvements that have been suggested and

10 No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD
that we know are needed. And your input has
11 been invaluable in that regard.

12 So again, we thank you for coming
13 out. If you haven't said anything or if
14 something else comes to mind after this,
15 don't forget the record will remain open
16 until November 26 at 5:00 p.

17 M. You can submit those comments
18 in writing. We can tell you -- Ms. Pena can
19 tell you where to send them to our WMATA
20 office on 5th Street.

21 Or you can just e-mail them to us.

22 So we thank you very much for

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1 coming, and look forward to a continued
2 dialogue.

3 (Whereupon, at approximately 8:35
4 p.m., the PUBLIC HEARING was
5 adjourned.)

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No. 530 Fare Hearing Landover, MD

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