

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
201733

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Waiver of Fares and Fees Due to Service Disruption

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Board approval will be sought for the waiver of rail fares on March 14, 2016, as well as the waiver of parking fees on March 16, 2016, that resulted from the recent service disruption on the Blue/Orange/Silver Lines. The Board action will also clarify the WMATA Tariff language regarding temporary fare reductions during emergency events.

PURPOSE:

Board approval will be sought for the waiver of rail fares on March 14, 2016, as well as the waiver of parking fees on March 16, 2016, that resulted from the recent service disruption on the Blue/Orange/Silver Lines. The Board action will also clarify the WMATA Tariff language regarding temporary fare reductions during emergency events.

DESCRIPTION:

Key Highlights:

- The WMATA Tariff authorizes the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO) to temporarily reduce fares during a declared emergency. As a result of the cable fire at McPherson Square on March 14, 2016, Station Managers at certain Blue/Orange/Silver Line stations were directed to open the rail faregates and allow patrons to exit without paying a fare in order to alleviate platform crowding.

Background and History:

Section 22 (“Temporary Reduction of Fares”) of the WMATA Tariff authorizes the GM/CEO to temporarily reduce fares during a declared emergency, including “an event occasioned by nature.” This authority to reduce fares from peak to off-peak in such cases also requires the GM/CEO to seek Board approval for any other temporary lowering of fares.

Discussion:

On March 10, 2016, as part of the FY2017 operating budget, the Finance Committee recommended for approval by the Board of Directors a new “grace period” policy that will credit back any fare paid by a patron who enters and exits the same rail station

within a 15 minute period. It is expected that this grace period will be approved by the Board as part of the FY2017 operating budget on March 24, 2016, and will be implemented on or before July 1, 2016.

On March 14, a cable fire at the McPherson Square station caused severe disruptions to service on the Metrorail Blue/Orange/Silver Lines. In order to alleviate platform crowding, Station Managers at certain stations were directed to open the rail faregates and allow patrons to exit without paying a fare. On March 16, the GM/CEO directed the closure of the entire Metrorail System to allow for comprehensive, system-wide emergency inspections and repairs in response to the cable fire. Parking fees at Metro parking facilities were also waived on that day.

In addition to approving the GM/CEO's direction to open rail faregates on March 14 and to waive parking fees on March 16, this proposed Board action also will clarify language in the WMATA Tariff related to future temporary fare reductions in response to emergency events. While the new grace period will help mitigate the impact of service disruptions to many customers, future incidents may arise where additional flexibility is needed to waive fares during times of emergency. In such cases, the GM/CEO is authorized to waive any otherwise applicable fare or fee when faced with emergency conditions, and any such decision by the GM/CEO shall then be reported to the Board of Directors as soon as practicable after the event.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Total lost fare revenue due to the initial service disruption on March 14 is estimated at less than \$100,000. However, total lost Metrorail fare and parking fee revenue due to the system closure on March 16 is estimated more than \$2 million, though a portion of that loss may be offset by higher Metrobus revenue.	
Project Manager:	Thomas J. Webster
Project Department/Office:	CFO/OMBS

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	March 10, 2016 – Finance Committee approval of FY2017 operating budget, including 15 minute grace period
Anticipated actions after presentation	March 24, 2016 – Board approval of FY2017 operating budget

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval the waiver of rail fares on March 14 and the waiver of parking fees on March 16 as a result of the service disruption on the Blue/Orange/Silver Lines, and approval of the clarification of the WMATA Tariff language regarding temporary fare reductions during emergency events.

PRESENTED AND ADOPTED: March 24, 2016

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF TEMPORARY RAIL FARE WAIVER ON MARCH 14, 2016; AND APPROVAL OF WAIVER OF PARKING FEES ON MARCH 16, 2016

2016-17

**RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, Section 22 of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Tariff ("Temporary Reduction of Fares") authorizes the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO) or his designee to temporarily reduce fares during a declared emergency; and

WHEREAS, On March 10, 2016, as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 operating budget, the Finance Committee recommended for approval by the Board of Directors on March 24, 2016, a new "grace period" policy that will credit back any fare paid by a patron who enters and exits the same rail station within a 15 minute period; and

WHEREAS, Metrorail service on the Blue/Orange/Silver Lines was severely impacted on March 14, 2016, as a result of a cable fire at the McPherson Square station; and

WHEREAS, In order to alleviate platform crowding during this emergency event, Station Managers were directed to open the rail fare gates at certain Blue/Orange/Silver stations and allow patrons to exit those stations without paying a fare; and

WHEREAS, The GM/CEO closed the entire Metrorail system on March 16, 2016, to allow for emergency inspections and repairs in response to the March 14, 2016 incident; and

WHEREAS, WMATA parking fees were waived on March 16, 2016, due to the closure of the Metrorail system; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors approves the GM/CEO's decision to open rail fare gates on March 14, 2016, and allow patrons to exit without paying a fare; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors approves the GM/CEO's decision to waive parking fees on March 16, 2016; and be it finally

Motioned by Mr. Evans, seconded by Mr. Goldman

Ayes: 8 – Mr. Evans, Ms. Harley, Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Downey, Mr. Price, Mr. Goldman, Mrs. Hudgins and Ms. Tregoning

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective immediately in order to approve the actions already taken.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Mark R. Pohl
Acting General Counsel

WMATA File Structure No.:
9.12.9 Tariff (WMATA Fare Structure)