

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
201633

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Rail Service Optimization

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Board authorization to hold a Public Hearing, to seek customer and stakeholder input on a potential revision to the current rail service.

PURPOSE:

Obtain Board authorization to hold a Public Hearing, to solicit public comments on a potential revision to optimize the current rail service based on recent trends in ridership and service performance.

DESCRIPTION:

Based on a comprehensive review of the on-time-performance, operating schedule, and ridership profile on the newly configured Orange, Blue and Silver Line services that support customers traveling regionally through the Rosslyn tunnel, a service alternative was developed that optimizes the level of service and that aligns with the existing ridership.

Key Highlights:

Metro's goals of this rail service alternative are to:

- Align service levels with ridership demand;
- Enhance reliability; and
- Improve experience for the Blue Line riders.

Background and History:

As we approach the one year anniversary of the opening of the Silver Line for passenger service, a comprehensive review of the on-time-performance, operating schedule, and ridership profile has been completed on the newly configured Orange/Blue and Silver Line service that supports customers traveling regionally through the Rosslyn tunnel.

Discussion:

Since the introduction of the Silver Line, on-time-performance on all three lines has not consistently met target. In fact, the decline in on-time performance was immediate upon

the opening of the Silver Line with a minor bounce back in September 2014. The downward trend continued through the fall and winter of 2014. On-time-performance showed some recovery in the spring of 2015. The schedule must consider the condition of the fleet, uneven passenger flows, infrastructure (continuing work on state-of-good-repair) delays and, the complexity of dispatching over three “major” and two “minor” junction points.

The Blue/Orange/Silver Lines are constrained by the Rosslyn tunnel with a practical capacity of 26 trains per hour with currently scheduled headways. Because this junction is at the practical scheduled capacity, any in-line issue with service has an impact on the ability to maintain on-time-performance as measured by scheduled headways. This can be the result of train offloads, arcing insulators or longer (or shorter) dwell times at stations. As a result of this daily operating variation, the daily scheduled through-put of 26 trains per hour is rarely achieved. The actual mean throughput currently being achieved is an average of 24.6 trains per hour.

In addition, it is important to understand the recent ridership trends. Metrorail ridership has seen a minor decline over the last 5 years. Since Metro’s rail ridership peaked in Fiscal Year 2009, there has been a decline of over 1½% a year or 8% over the five year period, from a high of 222 million to 204 million in FY2014. Although the ridership is projected to level off for fiscal years 2015 and 2016, we are carrying fewer riders than we did five years ago.

By widening the headways, we would effectively manage the actual ridership and the ability of the system to support the scheduled headways. In so doing, Metro will provide a much more reliable and predictable ride and service for our passengers. Due to the interconnection of the system, changes to service on the Blue, Orange and Silver Lines have an effect on Yellow and Green Line services as well. If you can imagine the junction points like cogs in a gear mechanism – the speed at which one gear moves and the size of the cog – results in changes to any of the interconnected gears.

Lastly, there continues to be complaints from Blue Line riders about crowding and train frequency. This review is part of the continuous monitoring we committed to our passengers, the Riders Advisory Council, and the Board prior to the Silver Line opening in 2014.

Service Plan Revision

The recommended service revisions are:

- Increase scheduled rush period headways on the Orange, Silver and Green Lines from six (6) minutes to eight (8) minutes;
- Decrease Scheduled rush period headways on the Blue Line from twelve (12) minutes to eight (8) minutes, and;
- Increase Scheduled rush period headways on the Yellow Line from six (6) minutes to eight (8) minutes with elimination of “Rush Plus” service from Franconia – Springfield.
- Add one tripper train will be added on the Orange and Green Lines to assist in managing the projected ridership.

- Current service on the Red Line will not be impacted.
- Scheduled non-rush period headways will not be changed.

After a robust public engagement period with outreach in conformance with the Public Participation Plan, staff will return to the Board with a final service plan and an Action Item to amend Board Resolution #2012-29 which sets Board policy on Rail Service Standards during rush periods. Service changes are scheduled to begin in December 2015. With continued monitoring and adjustments as needed, this service plan would be in effect until the initiation of Dulles Phase II service, as indicated in the existing Fleet Management Plan.

FUNDING IMPACT:

This alternative rail service plan will not negatively impact the approved FY16 Operating budget.

TIMELINE:

<p>Anticipated Actions after presentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2015 - Conduct Public Involvement Process and Public Hearing • October 2015 – Provide comments from involvement process and final recommendation to Board for action
--	---

RECOMMENDATION:

Board authorization of a Public Involvement Process, including a Public Hearing, to obtain customer and stakeholder input on a potential revision to optimize the current rail service.

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO TRAIN HEADWAYS TO OPTIMIZE SERVICE

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

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors' Bylaws (Article II.C.4) require the Board to adopt and review key performance and service standards to provide policy and guidance regarding the quantity and quality of service; and

WHEREAS, In Resolution No. 2012-29, the Board established the current maximum Rush Period Headways as part of a Metrorail service standard; and

WHEREAS, On-time performance for the Orange, Silver and Blue Lines continues to be below the desired goal, and the Rosslyn tunnel cannot meet the currently established headways of 26 trains per hour; and

WHEREAS, Customer satisfaction on the Blue Line continues to be low since the initiation of the Silver Line; and

WHEREAS, There has been a decline of rail ridership in the last 5 years, from 222 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 to 204 million in FY 2014; and

WHEREAS, In order to optimize rail service, Staff proposes an alternative service plan with the goals of aligning rail service with current ridership demand and improving on-time performance; and

WHEREAS, The alternative service plan would decrease Rush Period Headways for the Blue Line from 12 minutes to 8 minutes, but increase Rush Period Headways for the Orange, Silver, Yellow and Green Lines from 6 minutes to 8 minutes, as detailed in Attachment A; and

WHEREAS, This alternative service plan also would provide for one additional train to both the Orange and Green Lines during the rush period to manage projected ridership and the elimination of "Rush Plus" service from Franconia-Springfield Metrorail Station , which are also detailed in Attachment A; and

WHEREAS, Board of Directors approval is necessary to hold a public hearing on the proposed changes to Rush Period Headways in order to optimize rail service; and

WHEREAS, The proposed changes to Rush Period Headways and corresponding changes in rail service, as detailed in Attachment A of this Resolution, will be presented for customer and stakeholder input at a public hearing required by Section 62 of the WMATA Compact and through public outreach required by WMATA's Public Participation Plan; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors authorizes the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer to seek customer input on the proposed changes to Rush Period Headways and corresponding changes to rail service, as detailed in Attachment A of this Resolution, through a public hearing held in accordance with Section 62 of the WMATA Compact and through public outreach as required by WMATA's Public Participation Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors authorizes the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer to report on the findings on the public hearing and public outreach efforts, and the Board shall consider these findings and public comments in their deliberations on any proposed changes to rail service; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective 30 days after its adoption by the Board of Directors in accordance with Section 8(b) of the Compact.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Mark R. Pohl
Acting General Counsel

Attachment A
Rail Service Optimization Proposal

Segment	Current Service		Proposed Service	
	Lines Serving	Headway	Lines Serving	Headway
Vienna - East Falls Church	Orange	6 minutes	Orange	8 minutes
Wiehle Reston East-East Fall Church	Silver	6 minutes	Silver	8 minutes
East Fall Church - Rosslyn	Orange/Silver	3 minutes	Orange/Silver	4 minutes
Rosslyn - Stadium Armory	Blue/Orange/ Silver	2-3 minutes	Blue/Orange/ Silver	2-3 minutes
Stadium Armory - Largo	Blue/Silver	4 minutes	Blue/Silver	4 minutes
Stadium Armory - New Carrollton	Orange	6 minutes	Orange	8 minutes
Rosslyn - Pentagon	Blue	12 minutes	Blue	8 minutes
Huntington - King Street	Yellow	6 minutes	Yellow	8 minutes
Franconia/Springfield - Pentagon	Blue/Rush Plus	6 minutes	Blue	8 minutes
King Street - Pentagon	Blue/Yellow/Rush Plus	3 minutes	Blue/Yellow	4 minutes
Pentagon - L'Enfant	Yellow/Rush Plus	4 minutes	Yellow	8 minutes
Branch Ave - L'Enfant	Green	6 minutes	Green	8 minutes
L'Enfant - Mt Vernon	Green/Yellow/Rush Plus	2.4 minutes	Green/Yellow	4 minutes
Mt Vernon - Greenbelt	Green/Rush Plus	4 minutes	Green	8 minutes

PROPOSED