

**Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority  
Board Action/Information Summary** Action  
 InformationMEAD Number:  
99694Resolution:  
 Yes  No**PURPOSE**

Request Board to approve issuance of Request for Proposal (RFP) for the consolidation and operation of communications infrastructure to carry cellular telephone and other broadcast transmissions within the subsurface Metrorail system.

**DESCRIPTION**

The subsurface Metrorail system is currently provided with cellular telephone services by Verizon Wireless under auspices of a 1993 contract due to expire in 2017. WMATA owns and operates Public Service Radio System (PSS) in the tunnels. The PSS system carries emergency services radio traffic for several local jurisdictions under separate contracts. The expansion of cellular telephone service in Metrorail to include other carriers would contribute to both customer satisfaction and safety. In addition to voice, current wireless technology supports data and image transmission, including a widening variety of products offered by Wireless Information Service Providers (WISP). A modernized subsurface communications infrastructure may also augment the capabilities and performance(s) of public safety radio systems.

Staff is seeking Board approval for issuance of a RFP to construct and operate a new, modernized communications infrastructure, or "backbone" in the subsurface portions of the Metrorail system. Technically, the new system will (1) expand cellular telephone service to include all participating major carriers, (2) provide the technical and operational means to transmit data and images as well as voice and (3) allow for improved public safety communications in the tunnels. From a commercial perspective, the new infrastructure may be organized as either a "neutral host" or an "open access" system. Under either alternative, the owner or owners of the system will be required to financially compensate WMATA, and provide access for WMATA and governmental public service/safety communications as well as third party (WISP) programming or information services.

An independent assessment of WMATA communications requirements is underway. Results of that study will substantially influence aspects of the RFP that address WMATA and other public service communications needs.

Responses to the RFP will be evaluated during the period November-December 2006. An award will be subject to Board approval and may be made in the first quarter of 2007.

### **FUNDING IMPACT**

No funding impact at this time.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve issuance of RFP for the consolidation and operation of communications infrastructure to carry cellular telephone and other broadcast transmissions within the subsurface Metrorail system.