

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
200484

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Customer Value Statement

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Overview of the customer research and drafting process for a WMATA Customer Value Statement.

PURPOSE:

To present the Metro Commitment to Customers drafted by the Riders' Advisory Council, as well as a Customer Value Summary Statement drafted by WMATA staff for Board consideration.

DESCRIPTION:

Following is the Customer Value Summary Statement provided by WMATA staff and the Metro Commitment to Customers provided by the Riders' Advisory Council:

Metro Values Customers

The safety and security of our customers is our fundamental commitment. Metro is committed to quality transit service, including clean transit vehicles and facilities, as well as courteous customer service. Metro strives to meet customers' expectations of reliable service and recognizes the importance of timely and accurate communication, especially during service disruptions. To be responsive to our customers, we will regularly incorporate their feedback in decision making.

Metro's Commitment to Customers

Metro provides a safe, reliable, accessible, and courteous transit experience to all customers.

Safety is Metro's number one concern. Metro is accountable to customers for the safety of its equipment, property, and service, working to deliver a system that is in a state of good repair and free of incidents, where possible. Metro establishes clear, responsive communication with customers throughout emergency situations.

Metro provides the highest level of customer service. Metro provides clear, timely, and accurate information to its customers, interacting with them using a variety of media. Metro makes it easy for customers to ask a question or report a concern. For any issue that cannot be immediately resolved, Metro will provide an acknowledgement within one business day and keep customers updated until the issue is addressed.

Metro meets customers' expectations for reliable, frequent service. Metro continually works to improve on-time performance and dependability.

Metro provides timely and useful information during both scheduled and unscheduled service disruptions. When service is delayed, Metro provides actionable information to the public once conditions are assessed. . In the event of significant delays, Metro provides frequent updates and information about alternate transit options until normal operations resume.

Metro offers an accessible environment for all. Metro service is accessible to and easily navigated by the diverse communities it serves. Metro actively engages communities and responds to their needs.

Metro is committed to customer security. Metro Transit Police work with law enforcement officials across jurisdictions to prevent crime throughout the Metro system. If you are a victim of crime on Metro property or within the Metro system, Metro Transit Police will work to provide timely and effective resolution.

Metro is committed to transparent and responsible use of public resources. Metro regularly and proactively discloses information through its established Vital Signs report, and other reports to the Board on its safety, operations, finances, and administration.

Key Highlights:

- The Riders' Advisory Council drafted the Metro's Commitment to Customers statement.
- WMATA staff drafted the Customer Value Summary Statement based on themes outlined by the Riders' Advisory Council and input from customer focus groups.
- The statements articulate Metro's commitment to its riders.
- Statements build on Momentum strategic plan and lay groundwork for an Authority-wide customer care initiative.

Background and History:

The Riders' Advisory Council proposed the creation of a customer pledge in July 2013 and established a drafting and review process with its members. In addition, WMATA staff undertook an effort to write a Customer Value Summary Statement that reflects the Authority's commitment to providing safe, reliable service and enhancing the customer experience.

The creation of a Customer Value Statement is timely for WMATA. Consistent with the Board's Momentum strategic plan, the statement reflects WMATA's vision, mission and strategic goals. In addition, the statement will be used to lay the groundwork for an Authority-wide customer care initiative being undertaken at the direction of the General Manager/Chief Executive Officer.

Discussion:

In order to better understand the public's view on the idea of a customer pledge, WMATA staff engaged focus groups that represented both bus and rail customers in late August 2013. Two groups each were conducted with rail-only riders and with bus/rail riders. Both frequent and infrequent customers who possess a mix of demographic and geographic characteristics were invited to participate. The groups discussed the idea of Metro undertaking a value statement to its customers.

During the course of the conversation, some clear themes emerged:

Overall, Customers are Unenthusiastic About A Pledge

Overall the sentiment on WMATA putting together a value statement was of general non-interest:

- *“Aren't they already providing all this?”* (Rail riders)
- *“Isn't that [pledge information] what everyone expects anyways?”* (Bus/Rail riders)
- *“Go ahead, put the goals up on the walls, just don't spend so much time thinking about it...just do it”* (Infrequent Bus/Rail riders)
- *“What makes more sense [than putting a pledge together] is that whatever they come up with is more for Metro employees...”* (Infrequent Rail riders)

Keep Whatever It Is, Short

Riders were quite clear that whatever Metro decided to use as a customer pledge needs to be very short and concise. Customers were shown three different “sample” statements and what was noted as most important among the samples was the length of them.

- *“Don't make it too long, stuff about times, maintenance is too much stuff that I don't care about...”* (Bus/Rail riders)
- *“I like the shorter version ones...”* (Infrequent Rail riders)
- *“If this is Metro's promise, I'm not going to spend more than 1 minute reading it”* (Bus/Rail riders)

Safety, Security, Customer Service Top Issues

When asked to come up with specific items to put in a statement about customers, the top issues were safety and security, customer service, transparent communication, and reliability (timeliness). Additional items included cleanliness, environmental impact, and affordability.

- *“Safe, service-oriented, simple, smart”* (Bus/Rail riders)
- *“Getting you there fast, safely and securely”* (Infrequent Rail riders)
- *“Get riders to their destinations in a timely, safe, and affordable manner”* (Infrequent Rail riders)
- *“Reliable and dependable service on a system that is properly maintained—good coverage during all hours”* (Bus/Rail riders)

Based on the focus group input and themes laid out in the first draft from the Riders' Advisory Council, WMATA staff drafted a Customer Value Statement and began a review process. Executives from Bus and Rail provided input, as well as members of

the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The draft was also presented to the Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) in October 2013, which considered it in deliberating on its final draft, which was approved at that time.

Subsequently, WMATA tested its final staff draft with customers via a survey of one thousand bus and rail customers. In total, 213 customers responded for a response rate of 21%. Of those 213 riders, 63% were both bus and rail while 28% were rail only. The vast majority of them (79%) were commuters riding 10 times a week or more.

- The final staff draft statement, which is one paragraph, was considered too long by more than half of customers (53%). Slightly less than half, (47%) think it is about the right length.
- More than one-half (54%) liked the value statement.
- 64% of customers found this value statement to provide a compelling benefit.

While WMATA staff prepared the Customer Value Summary Statement, the Riders' Advisory Council was also in the process of drafting a customer pledge. Following its discussions with the Board and interaction with Metro customers, the RAC felt the need to address the gap between customer expectations and the capacity of Metro to deliver on those expectations.

Over a period of three months, the RAC engaged in a rigorous and expansive series of discussions focused on the priorities of Metro customers. Feedback was gathered through public outreach, studies of customer commitments from other transit agencies, and Metro-sponsored focus groups.

The resulting customer commitment from the RAC is an expression of what riders want from Metro and what they believe Metro can deliver.

Both the Customer Value Summary Statement and the Metro Commitment to Customers reflect the performance targets tracked quarterly in the Vital Signs Report:

- Bus On-Time Performance
- Bus Fleet Reliability
- Rail On-Time Performance
- Rail Fleet Reliability
- Metro Access On-Time Performance
- Escalator Availability
- Elevator Availability
- Customer Injury Rate
- Employee Injury Rate
- Crime Rate
- Customer Satisfaction

The statements are meant to reflect the goals of WMATA and will be used as the Authority embarks on a new Customer Care initiative in early 2014. The Customer Care program will address specific uses for the statements for internal and external purposes, and will present a timeline for their introduction.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Project Manager:	Lynn Bowersox
Project Department/Office:	CSCM

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	<p>April 2013 – RAC holds listening session; is urged by members of public to have Metro adopt a service guarantee that would provide for refunds in case of delays, etc.</p> <p>Summer 2013 – RAC proposes the creation of a customer pledge and identifies the elements that it would like to see incorporated into a customer pledge at Metro.</p> <p>August 2013 – WMATA staff conduct focus groups to gauge interest in value statement and key themes to be covered.</p> <p>September 2013 – First draft of Customer Pledge discussed/edited by RAC at monthly meeting.</p> <p>October 2013 – Final draft of “Metro’s Commitment to Customers” approved by RAC at monthly meeting.</p> <p>October 2013 – WMATA staff write statement based on themes laid out by RAC and focus group input. Statement taken to RAC and AAC for feedback.</p> <p>November 2013 – WMATA staff conduct rider survey to evaluate response to proposed staff draft of value statement.</p>
Anticipated actions after presentation	<p>2014 – Authority-wide customer care initiative will use Customer Value Statement as a foundation.</p>

RECOMMENDATION:

WMATA staff recommends the Board adopt the Metro Commitment to Customers drafted by the Riders’ Advisory Council, as well as the Customer Value Summary Statement drafted by WMATA staff for public uses.

PRESENTED AND ADOPTED: December 19, 2013

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER VALUE SUMMARY STATEMENT AND WMATA'S COMMITMENT TO ITS CUSTOMERS

2013-36

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

WHEREAS, The Riders' Advisory Council proposed the creation of a Customer Value Statement in July 2013; and

WHEREAS, The creation of a Customer Value Statement is timely for WMATA; and

WHEREAS, WMATA staff engaged focus groups that represented both bus and rail customers in late August 2013; and

WHEREAS, When asked to come up with specific items to put in a statement about customers, the top issues were safety and security, customer service, transparent communication, and reliability; and

WHEREAS, WMATA staff prepared a Customer Value Summary Statement entitled "Metro Values Customers" addressing the issues of safety, security, customer service, transparent communication and reliability; and

WHEREAS, The Riders' Advisory Council prepared a Statement entitled "Metro's Commitment to Customers," addressing the issues of safety, security, customer service, transparent communication and reliability; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors finds both of these statements to be useful tools for purposes of educating customers and employees of customer values; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors adopts the following Customer Value Summary Statement:

The safety and security of our customers is our fundamental commitment. Metro is committed to quality transit service, including clean transit vehicles and facilities, as well as courteous customer service. Metro strives to meet customers' expectations of reliable service and recognizes the importance of timely and accurate communication, especially during

Motioned by Mrs. Hudgins, seconded by Mr. Downey

Ayes: 8 – Mr. Downs, Mr. Downey, Mr. Nichols, Mrs. Hudgins, Mr. Dyke, Ms. Bowser, Mr. Acosta and Mr. Goldman

service disruptions. To be responsive to our customers, we will regularly incorporate their feedback in decision making.

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors adopts the attached statement entitled "Metro's Commitment to Customers"; and

RESOLVED, That the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer is authorized to utilize these statements for purposes of educating customers and employees of customer values as he deems appropriate; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Kathryn H.S. Pett
General Counsel

WMATA File Structure No.:
2.5 WMATA Policy/Instructions

Metro's Commitment to Customers

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