



**Council of the District of Columbia
Capital Budget Joint Hearing
February 6, 2008**

**John B. Catoe, Jr., General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority**

Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting Metro to participate in the District's capital budget discussions. The residents of the District of Columbia and this Council have been a large part of the growth and success of Metro over our nearly forty-year history.

Today, with 86 rail stations and more than 1,500 buses, Metro operates the second largest rail system and the fifth largest bus system in the nation. On an average weekday we operate over a million passenger trips over a 1,500 square-mile area, and we've spurred more than \$25 billion of economic development at or near our property. All in all, I'd say Metro is a very good investment.

In the District alone, we have 40 Metrorail stations, four bus garages and we operate 117 Metrobus routes. Your contribution of close to \$274 million to our operating and capital budgets allows us to do so many things, but it also gives you a return on your investment.

To demonstrate that, I'd like to mention some of the \$12 million in reimbursable projects funded by the District in the current fiscal year. There are a number of investments that pay off today and will continue to pay off in the future.

The investment to extend Yellow Line service to Fort Totten in off-peak hours provides Metrorail riders with more frequent service between downtown and Fort Totten and greater access to the shopping and business opportunities in Columbia Heights neighborhood of the District. This extension also provides residents who live along the the rail line with direct access to National Airport.

Metro supports the DC Circulator by providing contract management and technical advice. The 29 buses provide express service connecting Georgetown, Downtown, Union Station, and the Southwest Waterfront every ten minutes. The Circulator also provides seasonal service along the National Mall, transporting tourists and residents between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Union Station.

The Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus, or MetroExtra, has been a very successful route connecting Silver Spring and downtown with fast and convenient limited-stop service.

These are excellent examples of defining the needs of customers and developing the services to meet those needs. They are also very forward-looking investments by the District, because as we begin to reach full capacity on Metrorail we will need to develop our express and rapid bus capacity fully to meet future ridership demands.

The District's investment in the ElectroMechanical Program is another forward-looking investment. This is a strong partnership forged between DC Public Schools and Metro to prepare Cardozo High School students to apply for Metro's Technical Skills program and other school-to-work programs upon graduation. This innovative program ensures that Metro has a pool of young, technically-skilled potential employees to fill the many positions that will be continue to be available.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the \$20 Million District investment to enhance the Navy Yard Station West entrance in order to increase its capacity from 5,000 customers per hour to 15,000 customers per hour. This investment will also support the continued development of the Southeast Federal Center-Navy Yard-Ball Park District. Since I have mentioned the Ballpark let me assure you that Metro will be ready to play ball on opening day at the end of March.

That's just a small portion of the District's investment in Metro, and it's obvious that the money you invest makes things happen. It creates mobility. It creates opportunity. It creates community.

Certainly over the past year, we've faced challenges with track fires, power problems, and mechanical problems on railcars. But, we are meeting those challenges by doing what it takes.

There have been press articles of late about the state of Metro's infrastructure, and many of the articles focus only on the programs without a discussion of the solutions we are currently employing or planning to implement in the future.

For example, we've dramatically reduced the number of track fires by removing 3,000 bags of trash from our tracks. We've developed a plan by which we'll have reserve power stations available to prevent disruptions like those we experienced last year. We're working diligently to fix the door problems on the 5000 Series cars and the brake problems on the oldest cars in our fleet, the 1000 Series cars. We are moving toward even better preventive maintenance and inspection of our tracks.

In terms of Metrobus, we're reduced the average age of our buses to 7.4 years, and the reliability of the fleet is 70 percent better than it was a decade ago. In the next fiscal year, we'll receive 100 new buses, which will help us continue to increase the reliability of our fleet. Let me just note that of those 100 new buses, 22 will be articulated buses that will be used exclusively in the District.

You are aware that we have issues related to the condition of some of our Metrorail platforms, but we are executing a plan to make the necessary repairs. The proof is right nearby at Metro Center. On President's Day weekend, we'll complete Phase Two of our major

repairs there to fix the old, sagging Red Line “bridge.” We know what needs to be done, and we’re doing it. Also in the pipeline in the next two fiscal years are needed structural repairs to the platforms at the Minnesota Ave and Deanwood stations on the Orange Line.

In 2008, we will continue to focus on safety, reliability and customer service. So, to anyone who feels that continued support of Metro is not a good investment, I’d have to say that nothing could be further from the truth. I’m sure that as one of our regional partners, the District Council would back me up on that. In fact, keeping Metro’s infrastructure vital is exactly why you called me here, today.

This afternoon, we will provide you an update on Metro’s capital budget, so I will turn it over to Chuck Woodruff from Metro’s office of Management and Budget Services.