

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

TOWN HALL MEETING

Tuesday, September 13, 2005

FDA Building

5100 Paint Branch Parkway

College Park, Maryland

The hearing in the above-entitled matter
convened, pursuant to notice, at 7:07 p.m.

BEFORE:

For the WMATA Board:

JOHN HARTER

For the WMATA Staff:

DANA KAUFFMAN

JIM HUGHES

RICHARD A. WHITE

MARCELL SOLOMON

CATHERINE HUDGINS

CHARLES DEEGAN

GLADYS MACK

ROBERT SMITH

GORDON LINTON

ALSO PRESENT:

POLLY HANSON, Chief of Police

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. HARTER: Good evening. I'm John Harter from Channel 7 News. It's great to be with you this evening. I'm a third generation Washingtonian and a big fan of Metro. I grew up in the District, took the Metro, then it was the D.C. Transit bus, Janey School, (Inaudible) Junior High, then Wilson. And when I was a senior, because I wanted to be a t.v. director, I got a job, a part-time job, at Channel 5, it was then WWDC, I was a production assistant on the old Pick Temple show. Does anybody remember the Pick Temple show the kids were on? Pick was the greatest guy I've ever known.

I got the trolley on Pennsylvania Avenue, went down to Channel 5, which was at 12th and Pennsylvania Avenue, I was there in 17 minutes. I miss the trolley, but the new Metro system is a lot more efficient now. I'd like to welcome everybody who's a customer of Metro to WMATA's third town hall meeting. Let me tell you how we're going to do things this evening. Attendees will present their questions, comments, on the open microphones that are over there and right there. And you should have a numbered ticket. If you didn't get one, put your hand up to get one. Is there a staff person to give out tickets here? Right

back there, if you didn't get a ticket.

You are limited to two minutes to speak, and a traffic signal will be used to note the time. You know, when the yellow light comes on, you've got 30 seconds; when the red light comes on, your time has expired. And board members and senior level staff will respond to the question. As you probably know, the restrooms upstairs on the right hand side of the hallway, pay phones upstairs, and no food or drink allowed here in the auditorium.

Time constraints may limit the number of questions, but I think we're going to be fine this evening. We would like to adhere to the time limits so we can hear from as many people as possible. For people whose numbers are not called, you may contact WMATA through other outlets including all land chats, public comment period during the board meetings. Okay. I think we're ready to get started. And I would like to let you know that Vice Chairman, Charles Deegan, who's the jurisdictional host, who represents the county on the WMATA board, is going to speak and introduce some folks here. I haven't seen Charlie for a long, long time. Neither of us were gray the last time I saw him.

MR. DEEGAN: That's true. First I want to thank everybody for coming tonight, particularly the Metro

employees. I know you enjoy these things as much as the public does. But particularly thank John Harter, an old friend from when we both didn't have this gray hair. And, you know, I didn't realize, I've got you beat, I'm a fifth generation Washingtonian, but I didn't realize you did the Pick Temple show, so we might have crossed paths as early as that. I don't remember winning anything at Pick Temple, though, but I do remember going down to the Pick Temple show.

So we're both good Washingtonians, and when it came time to host this meeting in Prince George's County, or in Maryland rather, and it fell upon me, I said we have to come to College Park because this is the newest garage we have open, it sits next to the oldest continuing, operating airport in the country, the College Park airport, and there's a lot of nice things, including the University of Maryland that sits here that you can visit while you're here at the town hall meeting.

But my job tonight is really just to introduce the Chairman, so I've already talked too long. But there is one thing I think you ought to understand is, WMATA is a different type of government agency. It's a compact made up of members from Virginia, the District of Columbia, and

Maryland, so it's good that my colleagues have agreed to avail ourselves to the public at least three times this year, and that's the first time that's happened since the inception of WMATA, and we owe that largely to my colleague from Maryland and Montgomery County, Bob Smith, when he was Chairman, he instituted the town hall meeting. We've carried it farther, and the man I'm going to introduce has brought about a public comment period at our board meetings that we never had before. And we instituted a new public foyer procedure where people can request information. So we tried to open it up, and you know, it's nice to see so many people here. And we want to hear the good, the bad, and the ugly, you know, from you tonight, and there's a lot of good.

I'm fortunate because I think the majority of the Metro employees live in Prince George's County, Maryland, and the vast majority live in Maryland, so it's right that we're here tonight. But anyhow, my job, as I said, is to introduce the honorable Dana Kauffman, who is Chairman of the Metro board, and he also is a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; Dana.

MR. : I'm not Dana.

MR. : One of us is Dana Kauffman, and your mission is to guess which one.

MR. KAUFFMAN: Well, good evening, everyone, I'm Dana Kauffman, and this is Gordon Linton, and Gordon is here representing Maryland, and also Robert Smith, representing Maryland, Gladys Mack, who will be our next Chairman of the Metro board from the District of Columbia, you already met Mr. Deegan, Cathy Hudgins, who is a colleague of mine in Fairfax County, who'll be sitting there between Mr. Deegan and Mr. Marcell, who is here from Prince George's, and also Dick White, who is our general manager, Jim Hughes, who does bus scheduling and all kinds of stuff, and darn if I can remember your title, what is it?

MR. HUGHES: I'm the assistant general manager of operations.

MR. KAUFFMAN: Assistant general manager for operations, and Polly Hanson, who, in case you haven't guessed it, is the only one of us with a gun and is the Chief. Well, as Charlie touched on, this idea of having a town meeting is just one of the many parts of a plan that this board moved forward starting back in January to open up this organization we know as Metro to you, riders, to the general community, so frankly, you feel that you're being listened to, that you're getting value for your dollar.

The next step is going to be this coming Thursday,

when we'll be having our first detailed review of establishing a riders advisory counsel. Then, knock on wood, we'll be approving that at our next full board meeting here in September. So certainly, if you have some questions about that, we'd be happy to entertain that, as well. But the key thing is, by being here, by instituting this riders advisory counsel, we do want to hear from you, we want to engage you in providing better service, be it bus or rail or our transit service, and we look forward to your questions tonight. Thank you.

MR. HARTER: It's good to be back in Prince George's County. Let's see, I've been at Channel 7 for 38 years, and before that, hi, I was at WWDC Radio in the last part of that, and for several years at Channel 7 I covered--I was a helicopter traffic reporter, and I covered Prince George's County, and I'll tell you how long ago it was, it was--the chief of police was Rowland Schweikert and the county executive was William Gullet, and I was 12 years old. Okay. Who has a question who would like to bring up? Please, sir. Are we going to do it by numbers? Oh, one, two, three, four. I'm a t.v. reporter, but I think I can--okay.

MR. : Good afternoon, good evening I

mean. My name is (inaudible) and I live at 8611 (inaudible)
I have concerns about the buses. A while back they cut back
my service

(inaudible) at 10:00 in the evening, now we only have until
8:45 (inaudible) I'm concerned in (inaudible) later time in
the evening, when we get home, and activities (inaudible) I
was talking about this meeting tonight, but he unfortunately
can't make it, but he says (inaudible) more time (inaudible)
so he can make it (inaudible) have more time (inaudible) And
I have a question for the panel (inaudible) directors
(inaudible) if anybody has answers.

MR. HARTER: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. : Thank you very much for listening.

MR. HARTER: Who'd like to address that? Sir?

MR. KAUFFMAN: Well, starting in reverse order,
once my colleagues and I approve on Thursday the outline of
how this organization will be structured the counsel and is
endorsed by the full board, then we'll begin the process of
pulling in applications. Leona, the 26th?

MS. : September 26.

MR. KAUFFMAN: September 26 is when the
information will be going out on the internet, and you can
apply there. And--

MS. : And applications in the stations.

MR. KAUFFMAN: --and also there will be applications in stations and buses.

MR. HARTER: Okay, very good. And number two, and she is--

MS. ADAMS: Good evening. My name is Cheryl Adams, I reside in Washington, D.C. And for the most part, my questions have been answered this evening by your very capable people. But I do have one concern, and I would like an answer to it, and it's the 70, 71, and 54, and other lines are grossly overcrowded during the peak rush hour ride. This causes a safety problem. What is WMATA doing to alleviate this safety hazard?

MR. HARTER: Who'd like to address the safety issue? Yes, sir.

MR. WHITE: Well, we'll try to do that, John. I think the issue that you've raised probably has many different facets to it in terms of the amount of, first of all, the amount of service that's on there, and how well does the service adhere to its schedule. I think it's well documented that we certainly have more than our share of problems with bus bunching, that might be some of the issues that you are describing. We had a very good review done of

us by a peer review of people from around the country who we asked to come in and take a look at our bus service as we had at our rail service to give us a comprehensive set of findings and recommendations. They presented us with that set of findings and recommendations. And clearly, in the area of how the service is supervised, how well Metro can keep to schedules is the key issue, which is a little bit separate from how much service does Metro have out on the street.

Like the previous questioner had asked us on the (inaudible) service, and why does that service now terminate earlier than it did before.

Those questions about how much service Metro has is largely determined by the agencies that fund us. They make a lot of determinations with respect to when should service grow and when perhaps--is there perhaps too much service out there depending upon the amount of financial capabilities anybody has at any particular moment in time.

But on the issue of Metro itself and doing what it can do, we know we have a lot of work to do, we know that there is a set of recommendations that we need to follow, we're going to presenting those to our board very soon. Some of it has to do with how well we use technology to help

us keep the buses on schedule and how well Metro itself supervises the service on the street.

We're going to be making a--two things we're going to do for those who follow us closely; number one, very soon, I think it's a week from this Thursday, we're going to be giving the comprehensive assessment back to our board, and all these recommendations that have come to us and how the Metro staff is going to respond to these recommendations with when we're going to do things, who's responsible for it, and a public tracking system then that everybody can have that says, you know, Metro is committed to do the following things, and everybody can watch how well we do or don't do in fulfilling those commitments that we make.

The second part of that is the level of resource that the agency itself has in the bus system. The peer review group made some recommendations that were, quite frankly, a bit thin on the supervision side. Yes, we can do more with the resources that we have, but quite frankly, for a system our size, we really don't have the managerial capability that's required to make sure that the service is supervised very, very closely.

I'm going to be making some recommendations to the board shortly in the context of the budget that the board is

going to take up soon, they're going to give us some guidance soon, and then in December I'll present a budget to the board, and the board will go through its deliberations about what it thinks we can and cannot do. So I think there's a variety of different ways that you and others in the audience can kind of take a look at the kinds of things that are going on with Metro, vis a vis, the bus service, kinds of recommendations people have made of us, how the management proposes to respond to those recommendations for things that are under our control, and then the things that are related to the amount of resources that we have, we'll be putting those issues in front of the board and the board can make some value judgements on those.

MR. HARTER: Gladys Mack has a comment.

MS. MACK: Yes, let me just add to what the general manager has said. The lady who raised a concern about the 70 bus, we do have guidelines that determine when we need additional service or when we need to try to change the headways. As the general manager said, when the budget comes to us next month, we will make adjustments according to those guidelines. So we will pay particular attention to this problem that you mentioned, because we are very concerned about crowding and making sure that our passengers

are safe and that they're comfortable.

MR. HARTER: Thank you. Questioner number three, if you would introduce yourself.

MR. MILLER: My name is Dean Miller, I live in University Park, Maryland, and rather than a question, I just have some comments. I was very interested to see that Metro is trying to promote the use of the pedestrian bridge connecting the Prince George's Plaza Metro Rail Station with the mall at Prince George's. I understand the state is planning a fence along the median of East West Highway to discourage jay walking there. I ride Metro rail and use the bridge regularly, at least eight times a week, and I can assure you that the general public will still be reluctant to use the overpass unless changes are made. Some of the problems I observe on a regular basis are evidence that the stairways are used as public toilets, litter and garbage left from people eating meals in the stairways, and groups of teenagers sitting and loitering in the stairways and approaches so as to block access for others. On an occasional basis, I've also seen people sleeping in the stairways and broken glass from lights that have been smashed presumably so that the people can sleep.

If the public is going to use the bridge as a

primary route across East West Highway, a large number of them will have to use the stairs. If everyone waits for and uses the elevators, there will be large back-ups, as well as probable elevator malfunctions. The current state of the stairways will not encourage their use by the public. Thank you for this opportunity to air my concerns.

MR. HARTER: Who would like to comment on Mr. Miller's? Sir.

MR. SOLOMON: Yes, Marcell Solomon, Prince George's County, and I thank the gentleman for those comments. Your delegate, it's probably your delegate, Justin Ross, has been very instrumental in getting that fence constructed so that we can block pedestrian crossway. It's a safety issue, and he and Senator Penske were very active in that issue, and it came down to Metro met with staff, and we expedited the considerations as much as possible. I understand the State Highway Administration will be constructing a fence there, I can't give you a time line now, but at least that safety issue, in terms of pedestrian crossing the highway will be addressed. And I'm certain the Transit Police will address the issues that you raised about loitering on the steps and other issues on the bridge itself. And we have Chief Polly Hanson here, and I'm

certain she could say a couple of things about that.

CHIEF HANSON: What I would say is that Captain Bill Malone is the substation commander, his number is 202-962-2696. We have obviously been working with state, and the folks in dot.com are working with the community to notify them that this action is going to take place. And I think we need to encourage appropriate behavior and conduct as far as littering and the other activities that you described. We are working with the local jurisdictional police to work together to alleviate some of the perceptions of crime and acts of disorder that you've described. And if there are other specific comments or concerns that you have, you could get a hold of me or you can get a hold of Captain Malone, once again at 202-962-2696, and he's the substation commander for that particular facility.

MR. HARTER: Thank you, Chief. Questioner number four. You've got a long way to come there. Don't rush, that's all right. That's a steep stairway.

MS. LYNN: Hi, I'm Laura Lynn and I live in Hyattsville. And, yeah, that bridge is pretty scary. I'm really interested in the riders advisory counsel, and I think it's a really great idea, and I'm glad that Metro is going to establish it. And one of the concerns of mine is

making sure that the riders advisory counsel actually has credibility and that they're listened to and really play a role. And so an important part of that is the staff person that works for the counsel. And I'm wondering if you would consider letting the riders advisory counsel lead the process of choosing who the staff will be that works for the advisory counsel to make its voice really strong for the riders. I mean if the advisory counsel is appointed by, you know, Metro, I mean if the staff person for the counsel is appointed by Metro, then that person would really be working for Metro and might be afraid to, you know, help the counsel have a really strong voice to let the citizens' voices be heard.

MR. HARTER: That's an interesting thought. Sir.

MR. KAUFFMAN: I feel like this is the closest experience I'm ever going to know as a male giving birth to a child. I spent eight months trying to get this RAC forum so far, and I hope along about the 9th it'll be done. As far as the issue of the selection of the staff person, certainly as the members of the board here, we're appointing the members of the RAC, that's one issue. Other questions have been raised about ensuring independence when it comes to the selection of the lead staff person. I would have no

problem with the RAC having the lead role in selecting who the chief staff person would be. I think that it would be helpful, though, to have a non-voting member of our human resources also participate in that selection and, frankly, assure we do it according to Hoyle. But that's one more change that I think would add the finishing touches to the recommendations to start this RAC off on the right note. The balance of independence and also focus is critical, and I think that would be a good change.

MR. HARTER: Good; by the way, if anybody would like to comment on one of these responses, we'd love to hear from you, just put your hand up and come down to the mike. Who's number five?

MR. SANDERS: Harry Sanders, Silver Spring, Maryland, co-founder of the Action Committee for Transit in Montgomery County and founding member of the Prince George's Advocates for Community Transportation. I started my volunteer career out in College Park and Greenbelt advocating for building the green line. I was really excited today to see those crowds as they came to this meeting. But we need more funding for WMATA and future transit. We need to make the pie bigger. There's a lot of talk about dedicated funding, we're not against that. We

think the important thing is more funding and more reliable funding. But we have to start thinking about making our suburb to suburb transit faster.

I picked up a bus schedule to go from here to Bethesda, 10 miles, about 10 miles, it's one hour. Do you think people are going to get out of the car even if it's \$3.00 of gas to ride a bus for here? No, I don't think so. That's why we need things like the purple line, to do it in 25 minutes. Speaking of the purple line, the first element of that project, in my view, is the Langley Takoma Park Transit Center, which WMATA is looking at, and I hope you expedite that project because it serves the community and real need.

My one question is, why does it seem today that Virginia is doing so much better about moving future rail lines forward? We in Maryland seem to be bogged down (inaudible) and we keep hearing this argument, well, you've got to do funding first before we can do rail lines. I don't understand why this is happening.

MR. HARTER: Okay. Mr. Sanders, Virginia is doing better, better funding, is there a problem, or can we do better? Everybody wants bypasses, and I understand. Mr. Linton is going to--

MR. LINTON: Yeah, I'm going to volunteer to bite the bullet. Let me just say, and I'm going to share this from another prospective, I once wore a hat of the Federal Transit administrator at the federal government level, so I had a chance to review and look at all projects that were being funded and that were in the pipe line, and I can say that even though it may appear that the Virginia projects are coming on board rather quickly, I can tell you that there's a long history to their studies and plannings and review and multiple decisions as to what the actual line was going to be. So it just appears that over the last couple of years, because there's been such concentrated action, moving the project forward, I think to some degree that hides the many years of preliminary engineering, final design, all the processes that we went through in terms of looking at alignments and looking at the various options that they were pursuing for many of those lines.

So unfortunately, it is a long process. Democracy is not--the democratic process is not a very quick one, it involves going through a number of processes at this point. But one of the problems that you have is financial constraints, that even though everyone would like to have a more diverse and transportation network in this region, we

are constrained by dollars. I think you started off your comments with the need for dedicated funding. There are substantial needs that we have within the system, and all of us would like to be able to do more. Even the young lady that talked about the congestion on the buses and the bunching of the buses, we have a plan based upon what we've seen from the bus review that calls for us doing more, and we're going to try to do what we can do within the constraints of the finances, but there are going to be a number of proposals that will give you more relief that we're not going to be able to approach because of the financial constraints that we're currently operating under. So you hear the discussions about dedicated funding, I would hope that when you leave here tonight, that you would take up the same type of strong support for that, as the gentleman mentioned earlier, because that is definitely something that we need more of, and we're going to be hearing more and more about that over the next couple of months. And no one can talk about it better and express it more strongly than the people in this room who use the system.

MR. HARTER: Are you happy there, Mr. Sanders?

MR. SANDERS: More funding is what my comment was,

we need more funding, not necessarily dedicated, but more reliable funding.

MR. HARTER: Please, Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Yes, I was really happy to hear Mr. Linton discuss the financial resources issue, because the reality of it is on rail in Virginia, it depends on which estimate you go by, but they're going to spend somewhere between four and five billion dollars to take rail to Dulles. And four to five billion dollars is a sizeable chunk of money these days. And to consider that type of expense, the one thing we have is a lot of folks saying we want more rail, we want more service, we want more buses, but nobody is saying we want more taxes or we want a new gas tax to take us to 50 cents a gallon on tax on gasoline just at the state level, which would get you up to around 70 or 80 cents a gallon on tax on gasoline.

There's no crowd out there asking for that, that's no crowd proffering a source for these funds, or even to say--some folks might say we don't need to do that, what we need to do is readjust our spending priorities. Okay, well, there's no crowd out there suggesting what gets cut out of the budget either in order to provide this money. So there is a balance to be had in terms of how this is done. And I

think, as an appointee of the governor and really Secretary of Transportation in Maryland, I'll tell you the thing that we're trying to do in mitigating a way and balance these costs is look more at the efficiencies of running bus, and particular bus rapid transit, to provide dedicated lines where buses come at regular headways and more attractive vehicles in doing that, that where the bus becomes a predictable feature in the way its rail is, without expending large sums of money on land acquisition, rail itself, the vehicles themselves, which a rail car is roughly a million dollars, a bus is \$400,000 these days, a significant difference in change. So unless there's a large portion of the population that comes out and says we're willing to pony up more money to provide that funding, quite honestly, I think we need to find more balance in the transportation system.

MR. HARTER: Sir, yes.

MR. SOLOMON: Just briefly, Prince George's County, part of (inaudible) I heard your name, but I never had a chance to meet you, got the first extension beyond the 103 mile original plan, and those three miles, we opened the station December 18, '04, and that cost was paid by the state of Maryland, and the FTA came in at the end with some

help. But at the tune of 456 million, 150 million dollars per mile. So when my colleague, Bob Smith, talks about funding and the funding restraints, I mean he's looking at what the state of Maryland, in part, have said. And our Secretary of Transportation, Mr. Flannigan, is very adamant about some different mode of transportation, including that bus rapid transit. So there are some issues that we have to address and we are looking at . And the purple line is still on the books, but there's no funding there; that yellow line we would like to see across the Wilson Bridge, as well. And hopefully one day in our life time we'll get both of those, but right now, given the constraints of the budgets, we just don't have the money to do them.

MR. HARTER: Yes, ma'am.

MS. HUDGINS: Good evening. I'm Cathy Hudgins and I just traveled from the Dulles corridor, where we don't have rail. And it's very important in noting, you said because Virginia is doing it right, and I agree with you, although I have to agree with Mr. Linton, we've all sat through many studies and meetings to get where we are. But I think the question is about funding, but I'd like to put a different picture on the support of it. When we look across the region and when we look in the corridors where there is

a high demand for transit, there is support, and there's not only support, but there's support to fund it.

I would remind you that the original rail was funded with 80 percent federal dollars and 20 percent local. This project is going to be funded with 50 percent, and the local share is being picked up by varying sorts of people, business people paying a portion of the local share for Fairfax County by taxing themselves. It does mean that our residents are also going to have to pay a little bit more in order to support the state part. But the reality is, when the partners step back from their funding responsibility, some of us have to step up to the leadership and provide what is needed for economic vitality in the region and for quality of life.

We've heard most of the questions about buses. Buses rail together really make a good transportation network. I couldn't have gotten here if I didn't get on a bus tonight, otherwise, I would have driven. But we've created a good bus service. But we the locality have had to invest in that service in order for it to happen. And I think it sounds good to say that dollars are short, people are there not there pony up, but the reality is, if we're going to keep quality communities, we need a multi-modal

system of mass transit and the road investments that are made. So I think Maryland may be behind Virginia in some sense of it, but I think, as you look today, we do have to look at where that funding source will come from in order to make projects a reality.

MR. HARTER: Yes, sir.

MR. SMITH: Ms. Hudgins makes my point, and that is that in Virginia, in order to do Dulles rail, or at least rail to Tysons anyway, Dulles is kind of out there as a perspective in the future, there is a large group of the business community who said yes, we want to do this, please tax us, and that's what I said was lacking in most other cases. I mean we do have a group in the business community in Virginia who is interested in having a business tax in order to provide local contribution to the rail line, and that, in effect, is what is going to make that project work, is it not? And, you know, we all had a Tysons Corner, and the density associated with, and with the businesses associated with that and a location to make such a project work, but that is exactly the nut that makes that project work.

MR. HARTER: Sure.

MR. DEEGAN: Mr. Sanders, I want to thank you for

bringing up the Takoma Langley Transit Center. That is one optimistic note we can share tonight. We approved in committee last Thursday, a week from Thursday, and it should be approved by the entire board to have that money in the pipe line, and with a little bit of luck, and nothing happens fast in government, the people are dying just to cross the street there, and if we can get that transit center in within the next two years, which I'm confident it will be, that is one good news there, and I look forward to seeing that done.

I grew up in Langley Park, so I'm, you know, I've got a soft spot there. But that's one thing that when that was brought to attention, it was brought to my attention in a regional meeting in Prince George's County with the Director of Public Works and Transportation and the County Executive people, that was a priority there, they were willing to help, Montgomery County was willing to help, and there's a partnership between Montgomery County and Prince George's County and the state, we're making that happen, and it's on the road to happening now, so that's one good thing. The other good thing is, we're also talking about extending Metro rail to BWI. And up until this year, I don't think anybody has talked about that. It might have been our

friends here on either side of me in Virginia that wanted to send it to Dulles that made that happen, but there's some other things with base closings and stuff, but we're going to study that, as well, and you know, some day it will happen. So thank you for mentioning it.

MR. HARTER: Does anybody think we need to--you know, I drive to work, I work weird hours, and I sort of feel guilty; do we need to educate people? I see all these people driving by themselves in cars who probably could be taking mass transit. Do we need to educate people about pollution and traffic and all of these things that it's costing us?

MR. DEEGAN: Yes.

MR. HARTER: No real politician is going to do that, though, right? Yeah, I'm sorry, yes.

MR. LINTON: Well, you know, I think we need to do that, but I think, you know, we had a real education over the last couple of weeks when the people--with the gasoline pump, and I think when you start looking at \$3.00 a gallon, and right now that would be a good number, that if that is not enough of an incentive for people to start reconsidering their commutes, their transportation plans, and how they use their hard earned dollars, I don't know if just talking

about good government, the cost--the efficiencies of transportation and the quality of air is going to have a tremendous amount of impact. I think the financial strain that many people are now facing as they look at their household budgets and recognize that so much of that is being contributed to the high cost of gasoline, I'm thinking that's starting to have some impact on commutes and the way people are thinking about using their cars from day to day.

MR. HARTER: So Katrina has helped a lot. Yes, ma'am.

MS. HUDGINS: I think in addition to that, it's how we build, that is, access to transit, access to bus service. People will only give up their car for a level of exchange of convenience without being dedicated.

MR. HARTER: Yes.

MS. HUDGINS: I have to tell you, I walked a long way across the street to get to this building. But there are opportunities in which we can build buildings closer and within our stations and within access to our work locations and where we play and live. And until we decide to make those investments in how we design some of our stations, and it's I think appropriate for the outer stations, I think how we are going to get people to use them is that they have to

feel that it's convenient, it's accessible for everyone, and that we have to recognize people will only pay so much to change from their cars and get on transit service.

MR. HARTER: Thank you, Mr. Sanders. Number six, please. Oh, wait a minute, you have a comment, please? Can you just walk over to the mike before--sorry, I'll be just a minute, we'll get to you.

MR. : Yes, just addressing the same issue; I wish to say that it is absolutely a delusion to call an automobile a convenience. And the way I calculate that is, if every few years you have to work 1,000 hours to pay all of your automobile related expenses, I do not call that a convenience. That is a huge expenditure of time compared to an occasion waiting of an extra 15 or 20 minutes, you mentioned even an hour, for a Metro bus. And then the rest of this is that I donated my car to charity on June 9, and tonight, if any one of you offered me a car, a new car, for no money at all, I would not accept it.

MR. HARTER: Even a Corvette? I'm sorry.

MR. : Nope, I would not. Now I don't worry about having my car stolen at night, I don't worry about having it towed away, I don't worry about mechanical costs, I just ride the Metro bus.

MR. HARTER: Thank you.

MR. : Let you worry about it.

MR. HARTER: Thank you, and very good. We have another comment. Six, we haven't forgotten you.

MR. DEEGAN: John, I'll take the Corvette, by the way.

MR. KAUFFMAN: John?

MR. HARTER: Yes.

MR. KAUFFMAN: As we wait for the next speaker, one of the things that seldom gets noted is, frankly, how successful we have been in reaching out to riders. Since 1996, we've actually seen a 33 percent increase in the number of people who have chosen Metro. And the other thing is, all of us who are politicians and wear numerous hats, and one of the ones I'm honored to wear this year, as well, is with the Air Quality Advisory Counsel for the Counsel of Governments. And one of the things they note is, over the past five years, while we've seen about a 25 percent increase in population of the region, we've seen about a 40 percent drop in those elements, those organic elements that cause the ozone alert days. So, frankly, the air is getting cleaner because of focused action that we spent several years trying to make happen.

MR. HARTER: Okay. Very quickly now because we've got to move on.

MR. : Yes. I'd like to tell the gentleman who said he sees no one stepping up that I would, if I knew my tax was just going to transportation and not going to disappear into that great bottomless pit of the Maryland treasury, if it were dedicated to transportation, if it couldn't be touched except for transportation. In addition, when you're talking about the dedicated buses, I suggest you talk to the city and county of Honolulu. They have dedicated buses that leave every three minutes, and they're not adequate, they're putting in some sort of a rapid transit rail line. So I think you need to look a little wider before you get yourself too much on the purple line as buses.

MR. HARTER: Thank you. A quick comment, yes, sir.

MR. : I was going to make a comment on that point when my colleague, Bob Smith, made reference to bus rapid transit. Those in the industry may know that I actually fathered bus rapid transit as a concept in the country. But quite frankly, there have been many, many misconceptions of what it actually is. As the lady stated

in the back, bus rapid transit is very efficient in the right setting, under the right conditions. It does have a limited ability to move a significant number of people, so people should not over project what its capacity is.

And even in Cortiva, Brazil, where I went, and Ed Thomas was with me, and we developed bus rapid transit as a concept for the country, in many of the studies that you will see that talks about bus rapid transit, we'll talk about Cortiva, even they are studying a rail system. And the reason they're studying a rail system and they designed a bus rapid transit system primarily as an interim way towards rail, recognized that over a period of time, the capacity of the bus rapid transit system would not meet the needs of their population. So I think it's important that we have truth in lending, and as those who talk about the bus rapid transit, they need to (inaudible) both its positive, as well as its negative aspects as they talk about it. And it can work in the right conditions, under the right terms and provisions. But it's not a cure all, and it doesn't solve all the problems that we face in this region. So I just want to make sure that we're clear about that. And anyone who wants to talk about the conception, how the program works, we'll be glad to spend a lot of time with

them and give them some examples where it works and how it was developed and ushered into this country. Thank you very much.

MR. HARTER: Six.

MS. McKELL: Hello, my name is Nancy McKell, I'm a resident of Silver Spring, very blessed to be at home over there. I'm very glad to see that Metro is buying buses and upgrading its buses, and generally, rail can never replace buses. These buses are the wave of the future, and I'm talking about improved regular transit buses, not those huge things that run dedicated lanes. And I hope that the new buses are low riding, similar to the models that are used on the Metro bus F4, F6 routes, and I think that will lure some of the people who have to have the wheeled suitcases, that take their laptops every day. I work with some of those folks when I was working in the Tysons Corner area, I would take the Fairfax connector bus from the Metro, and they said they didn't even realize the bus came down there, because it was so hard to get those bags on and off the bus, they wouldn't even consider riding it. And so I think that those low riding buses are the key, and they also--you're less likely to fall when you're going to your seat. And also, I get motion sickness on wiggity buses, and the buses are in

good repair, good shock absorbers, the low riding, it's great, it's like riding in a limo.

In contrast to the previous speaker, we do not need the purple line. This is a study--this thing has been a very vague concept, it's been around for a lot of years, and I think a lot of people thought it was going to be a deep underground extension to the Metro rail system. But right now the Maryland Transit Administration, MTA, is studying it and had several meetings in our community, and it's really scary, because the plan currently understudy would run on the surface of the ground, some shallow tunneling is being eyed, individual yards in E Silver Spring would have substantial footage taken, and under at least one scenario, houses would be taken, as well, just to build the track. A track requires still more land, overhead wires would cut into the tree canopy, and that's not even counting the land for the stations themselves. Now, the purple line proponents, we're already talking about busting open the master plan in doing rezoning, and of course, intensive zoning, the toe mix is being looked at.

MR. HARTER: I'm told your time is up. I don't mean to be rude.

MS. McKELL: Okay. Who would like to comment on

the purple and the buses, please?

MR. WHITE: I think a lot has been said on the purple line, so I'll talk about buses.

MR. HARTER: Okay.

MR. WHITE: Leave the purple line back to somebody else. I mean there's a lot of good news that was just presented to our board a week ago. We presented an \$830 million bus improvement program. There's lots of buses that are going to be on the way, almost 900 buses we have plans to purchase over the next six years. It's a huge investment in buses. We have 250--and they're all going to be low floor, too, I think that was one of the things you were talking about. They've been a huge success here. Whatever initial caution that we had about how well they would operate in our environment has proven to be, you know, they're very successful, people love them, and so we're going to, you know, stick with that commitment.

We have 250 compressed natural gas buses that are being delivered now. They happen to be going over to Virginia, but we have 50 hybrid buses that are under contract, and hopefully we'll see all 50 of those hybrid buses by next spring and summer. Another 117 clean diesel buses right behind that that we're going to be putting under

contract, and likewise, should see sometime in the middle part of this calendar year, and then we'll be back to our board after that with the next set of recommended purchases and what kind of technology to use, because right now we've been using both, actually all three, clean diesel, compressed natural gas, and then we'll have our first experience with hybrid buses, and then the board can make its evaluations after that as to what it wants to do with the rest of the buses. But a tremendous investment in bus purchase going on now, and hopefully everybody will be seeing them on all corners of our service territory.

MR. HARTER: Mr. Smith, you're going to address the purple line, right?

MR. SMITH: Yes. I'll touch the purple line. The purple line, for most peoples' mind, I mean there's a lot of purple lines out there on paper that run from different ports of (inaudible) to other end points. But in general, the purple line is considered rail connecting Silver Spring and Bethesda, whether or not it's on the Georgetown branch, or north of there is another discussion. The (inaudible) Administration, in coming into office and viewing that, and now in terms of the studies that are going on looks at the traffic on the beltway and sees the volume of cars

traversing the Georgia Avenue area, the University Boulevard area, coming from Prince George's County, indeed, into Montgomery County, and then into Virginia even in some cases.

So the whole notion is with what we now call the by-county transit way and going to bus rapid transit is taking dollars and expanding them and making--trying to create a transit route that doesn't stop at the doorstep of Prince George's County and leave them off the edge of the cliff, as it were. We're trying to develop a bus rapid transit system that would, indeed, connect New Carrollton to Bethesda, and in terms of that study in expanding the route, include more folks, and I think we believe that more people--give more availability to people who are actually out on the beltway jammed in traffic every morning in terms of a cross by-county connection route between New Carrollton and Bethesda rather than just stopping at Silver Spring, which given the costs at hand, is what any rail project would have to do. Thanks.

MR. HARTER: Thank you, Mr. McKell. Number seven, who is number seven? Right there, great.

MS. RUCKER: Hello, good evening. My name is Connie Rucker and I'm from Bladensburg, Maryland. And I

have in my hand a petition with over 100 signatures of riders of the TA team bus route. We call it the terrible TA team because we are fed up with the terrible service, such as late buses, no buses show up at all, no morning express buses, passenger safety, and employees' attitudes. The main thing that we want to address is the no morning express buses. Since the increase of passenger cars, we feel that Metro need to take a look at its schedule because we rely on that schedule every day to get us back and forth to work. And if the buses cannot get us to the Metro Center on time, that causes us to be delayed.

We don't understand on the TA team why we had express service in the morning before, but it was taken away, and we have to stop at every stop in D.C. to pick up those passengers coming from Maryland, which causes us to be delayed, and we wish that you would address that. And, Mr. White, it's great that you're getting a whole fleet of new buses, but if the service is lousy, that's not encouraging people to ride it, and that's the problem we have experienced for years now, and we're fed up with it, and over 100 people are disgruntled and dissatisfied with the TA team.

MR. WHITE: I appreciate your comments on that,

Connie. I've kind of given you a general, or gave one of the previous questioners an answer generally about what we're trying to do to do a better job in terms of running the buses on time and doing the supervision and the bus bunching. The specifics on the TA team route, I'm going to ask--I think Jim Hughes, who's the assistant general manager for operations, has some degree of familiarity with that, and I'm going to ask if he can comment on the specifics of your comment on the TA team.

MR. HUGHES: Good evening. Several years ago, I think it's five years ago now, we did a lot of changes in the area, and we were balancing about where our riders were going, where express buses were necessary, trying to get rid of some of the local services, and the TA team was involved in why we were getting rid of one of the local services and converted the TA team from an express to local, not for your benefit as much as for the benefit of everybody else in the room. And what we've seen, we do that to try to, you know, take service where it's not used and add it to service that's necessary.

You mentioned traffic congestion in the area. Washington has got the third worse congestion area in the region, you've read that, and it continues to get worse, we

continue to grow as a region, and it does continue to slow our bus service down. The TA team has seen some increase in rider ship over the years, even though it is local, that's part of the problem that you're seeing in addition to the travel time. At the moment, we don't have any plans to "fix the TA team or make it back to an express", it's something that we can look at.

A few years ago, two years ago, we completed a regional bus study of all the Metropolitan region. In it, it told those are the types of things that we need to do. In order to make it work, though, we need to work with the local jurisdictions in order to make the highway system also work with it, get the traffic lights in sync, maybe do some things with buses so they get some preferential treatment. What I'd like to ask you to do is to give us the petition, if you'd give it to the gentleman in the second row down here. We'll take that for you, we'll get in touch with the riders out there specifically to get your comments that you want. We'll go back and look at the rider ship. Again, we are looking at ways to improve our bus service, but we do need to make sure that we do it within our budget constraints, also in terms of what's happening now with the gas prices, it's going to put an awful lot of pressure on

us. So let us take a relook at that for you and commit to get back to you as our riders as quickly as we can.

MS. RUCKER: Okay. And I will give you a letter or send you a letter, Mr. White, with another petition, and also to our elected officials. Thank you.

MR. HARTER: Thank you, Ms. Rucker. Number eight, please.

MR. DEEGAN: Before you leave, Connie, I've got one. I would like a copy of that petition, too, because I've only been on the board a little over a year, but when I first got here, I found out about a problem in the southern end of the county and they sent a petition about three times that, and we were successful working with Mr. Hughes to solve that, and when those new buses (inaudible) finally get down there, you know, those people are going to be very thankful and maybe we can look at, you know, some of the service issues here on the TA team, as well, so I'd appreciate a copy of that, as well. Thank you. One other thing I can't let go, because one of my delegates has arrived in the audience, Delegate Mo, would you like to stand and be recognized, now that I've done that to you?

MR. HARTER: Yes, ma'am.

MS. CALMER: My name is Dorothy Calmer and I live

in Takoma Park, and I have had numerous communications with Mr. Smith. Also, four years ago, I gave to Mr. White a system of (inaudible) mobility which would decrease the need for private car ownership. He told me it wouldn't work. I have since gotten a pattern on it and written a book, and it would work very well. In fact, all we really need to do is to organize the existent system that we have, but your system and your management is mainly concerned with putting vehicles on the street, they are not concerned with the mobility of people, and that is getting them from their origin to their destination.

MR. HARTER: Could you tell us in 30 seconds how your system worked? I'm curious.

MS. CALMER: Well, I'll be glad to give you the reference to the book. But I want to tell you that your management is very outdated. It has never picked up on the quality management (inaudible) Tom Peters, you are still back in the '70's, when the system was built, as far as your approach to management. I attempted to talk to Mr. Hughes four years ago when I came to you, and I met him at a board meeting, and he gave me his card, I spent six months trying to call him, he never returned my phone call. My system is based on better use of power (inaudible) it is not a

substitute for mass transit, but it would greatly supplement it--

MR. HARTER: Okay.

MS. CALMER: --so that it would make it more easy to use mass transit.

MR. HARTER: Ms. Calmer, we'd like to--by the way, I'm a t.v. reporter, I don't read too good, but I would like to see the book. Who'd like to address that, please?

MR. WHITE: I'm sorry that I'm not familiar with what your concept is, and if we weren't as thoughtful and responsive to you previously, you know, we certainly want to look at your ideas and your concepts of what you have, and we will make sure that we get in touch with you right after this so that we can have a dialogue with you on that.

MR. HARTER: Number nine, please. If you're the next person, you might want to sort of get ready. Thanks. Yes, your name?

MS. THURSTON: My name is Sally Thurston and I live in Hyattsville. I put together something that the board members will see. I will deal with a couple of issues immediately, one of which is bus rail and rail to rail interface. I am very tired of missing a train at L'Enfant Plaza by less than 15 seconds when the green line pulls in

in the morning, otherwise, you have up to a 15 minute wait. Another problem is, I'm curious as to why, as a handicapped rider with a handicap Smart Trip card, I am paying half of full rush hour fare whenever I ride, even on the weekends. The other aspect of that is, I use a flash pass for buses. Why do I have to go to Metro Center, why do I have to go, why can't I get a longer period to have a three week period of flash passes? Thank you.

MR. HARTER: Three questions.

MR. HUGHES: Sally, I'm going to start, if I can, talk about the transfer at L'Enfant Plaza. And I'm curious, if I can get you to stand back up. What time of day are you making this trip?

MS. THURSTON: Because the buses were not adjusted, when you went to the 5:00 a.m. opening time, I catch a 5:03 bus from Hyattsville, the R4.

MR. HUGHES: Right.

MS. THURSTON: Gets us to the station about 10 after. If everything runs well, we're at L'Enfant between--anywhere between 39 and 41, and then we catch the next blue line. The problem when catching that next blue line is that when they reconfigure the buses at Largo Town Center, the bus leaves at 6:02, we pull in at 6:05. The

next bus is 6:22, your next bus is supposed to be 6:42, it's usually closer to 6:46.

MR. HUGHES: Thank you, Sally. You're talking early in the morning, and as we're ramping up both our bus service and our rail service. We are constantly juggling in terms of the specific trip times and what they meet. Our buses are often serving a number of purposes, not only to get to a train station, to get places along the trip. In addition to that, when you get to L'Enfant and we're ramping up our rail service that early in the morning, we're generally coming, a train running anywhere from the 10 minute headway at 6:00 in the morning, 15 minute headway at 6:00 in the morning, about 6:30 we're down to a 10 minute headway, and by quarter until 7:00 we're down to a six minute headway on the lines. As we're ramping it up and putting the trains out there, trying to match bus schedules has been very difficult for us. We have a similar problem for people that would come in off of the green line and want to transfer to an orange or a blue line. On our early morning trips, we've made a number of adjustments to try to make those accommodations, and every time we move one trip, we're making it better for some people and worse for other people. The same is true for bus service. So I have your

specifics, I'll see if we can make that a little better for that early morning trip. Our problem is, there's not a lot of service. So we will try what we can do for that specific trip.

MR. HARTER: Thank you. Number 10.

MR. TAVEL: My name is Gregory Tavel, I live in Riverdale, Maryland. A lot of my questions have been answered, but I do have a question about accountability on the bus side. I hear a lot has been said about you're going to have someone be accountable for a specific rail line, I think you know what I'm talking about. My question is, do you have--are you doing something like that for the bus service? Is there going to be someone accountable for certain instances like the TA team and other things on the bus side?

MR. WHITE: The way the bus system is managed is quite a bit different, Gregory, than the rail system. The accountability is more--had largely already been there on the bus side in terms of the lines come out of a specific garage, and there is, you know, there is management in a garage, you know, supervisor and superintendent that has responsibility for the lines that do come out of that garage. In some instances, there are dispatchers out of

more than one garage, but by and large, it's a lot easier to track down and to know where that responsibility lies. So in terms of is the bus dispatched on time, is it out of the garage, is it, you know, is the operator ready to go, is the operator properly uniformed, how does the bus work when it goes along the route, where it breaks down, Gregory, is, largely, we don't have much management resource once the bus gets out of the garage. There's not--I'm sorry, go ahead.

MR. TAVEL: I just want to say that I understand how the buses run a whole lot more than you might think, and I heard you state that earlier, but I think it needs to be looked at more closely about the--I heard you say something about not enough, I mean I'm just going to leave it right there. I think it needs to be looked at a lot more closely.

MR. WHITE: I couldn't agree with you more, Gregory, I couldn't agree with you more, yes, absolutely.

MR. HARTER: Please (inaudible).

MR. LINTON: If I can respond, I think we have, you know, I think the general manager, Mr. White, made reference to a bus review that was done recently. I think there's some recognition that historically there's been a lot more work on the rail side, and it is a lot more that needs to be done on the bus side. I think that peer review

reflected a number of areas where we need to strengthen. I think, clearly, one of those areas was on street supervision, to provide more accountability, that was cited in the peer review. I think Mr. White has brought that to the board, I think there are some plans in place to do that. There are also some technology, some cooperation from the jurisdictions. There's a number of things that we should and can and will be doing to improve the bus service.

I can say to you that there has been a stronger commitment by both the board and also the management recognizing, as a result of that peer review, and some things we've done even prior to that, that more attention needs to be given to the buses. Some of that is reflected in the commitment to purchase new buses, new technology, cameras on buses, and providing additional supervision. I think there's a number of things that you will see. We're also going to new technology with wayside information so you'll know what time buses are arriving at several locations. So there's a number of things that we have in place that you will slowly start seeing some improvements in the bus system. I don't want you to leave here tonight to think that we think everything is okay there and that it's fine, we know it's not, and we are bringing some attention

to address some of those issues. So I do want you to leave here tonight to understand that we hear you, you will start seeing some results, we will take your petition, as well, but we are going to try to be responsive to some of the bus routes.

MR. HARTER: Very briefly, yes, ma'am.

MS. : (inaudible) it's always going to be more expensive and impossible. Go back and read Tom Peters and Edward (inaudible).

MR. HARTER: I used to deliver the post to Mr. (inaudible) he was a great guy. Okay. Number 11, please.

MR. SIOPA: George Siopa from Arlington. With the new buses that the county or the board is going to be buying, please arrange the seats so if you're taller than 5'8, you can sit on them. The new 2000 and 2000 series buses, if you're 6 foot, it's impossible to sit in a cross seat. Also, can the Smart Trip cards be programmed to allow you to do an above ground transfer between China Town and Metro Center? People have talked about a tunnel, but in the interim, that would be a very easy way to get people moving between those stations. I work in this building, and I get trapped at times with a 15 minute wait in the evening trying to make the connections between those two stations. And the

third thing out of general curiosity, besides Ms. Hudgins, who else at the panel up there took Metro to come here tonight?

MR. HARTER: Who would like to address the first two questions?

MR. WHITE: Well, on the seats basing side, I may fit in the same category as you, George. If you're much over six foot, you're in the five percentile range. And, you know, the (inaudible) of how the bus seat spacing works is generally it's, you know, just like the airlines, quite frankly, is--the desire is, you've got to try and, you know, fit a reasonable amount of seats inside of the bus and to have some kind of basic seat spacing that fits the, you know, the vast majority of what peoples sizes are, because, you know, so it fits, you know, the 90 percent range and it doesn't fit the range beyond that. And, you know, I can sympathize with you, I know what you're talking about, but I think it's kind of a practical matter, the way the transportation system works for capacity, that's generally what most people try to do in terms to try to put the right, you know, right mix there for sizing capacity.

There are some sorts of--there are some amount of routes in some of the things that we're taking a look at.

We heard reference to bus rapid transit and other concepts where there's sort of kind of a more premium type of service that has a set of qualities associated with it, with running speed advantages and time speed advantages, and in some cases, with different kinds of seating configurations. And, you know, we have largely, you know, been heretofore, you know, kind of a one size fits all company, and I think we need to kind of respond differently. We do have mixes of small buses in with our fleet and articulated buses in with our fleet, but we don't have kind of the express bus quality to our system. There are a very limited number of routes that have what I would call the express bus quality to it, and I think we need to do more in that regard.

On the Smart Trip, if you're referring to how people might be able to navigate between places like Metro Center and Gallery Place, by pedestrian movement, is that what you're talking about? Yeah, I thought that's what you were talking about. I mean I think that's a concept whose time has come. I mean we have examined it in the context of making tunnel connections, whether it be actually the ability to try and have pedestrian movement below ground between those stations. Certainly our fair collection technology on the rail side has the capability to do things

like that by how much time is built into the system in terms of entering and exiting the system and the origin and destination trip pairs that take place in that travel patent. So I think that's a concept that we could probably study a little bit more to see if at least incrementally around the edges something like that could be done just with how the Smart Trip system works.

MR. HARTER: Okay. I think our next consumer is number 13--12, I'm sorry, I apologize.

MR. GRAY: My name is Frederick W. Gray, I'm from Capitol Heights, Maryland. Sixty years ago today I was on a little place called Iwo Jima, and our concern is the safety of Metro. We feel very strongly that Metro will be hit at some point in time, and I think that we should be ready, we should expect this.

MR. HARTER: You mean by terrorists?

MR. GRAY: I do, indeed.

MR. HARTER: All right.

MR. GRAY: I don't have to read the Washington Post, Washington Times to tell you what terrorist act, I was there 60 years ago on Iwo Jima. I was there when the President of the United States, Harry Truman, announce the ending of World War II. And it's not a question whether or

not we're going to be hit again, the question is when. And we should certainly, to the Chief, I certainly had the pleasure of meeting her earlier, I think you're doing a wonderful job, but we should not lose the fact, forget the fact of what late President John F. Kennedy last speech before he was assassinated. We are living in a dangerous and uncertain world, and it's a matter of time that they're going to try to hit Metro and the tunnels. When I told some of my fellow World War II veterans that I was coming down here, and they said, Sarge, tell them about terrorists. It happened 60 years ago on Iwo Jima with us. One man, one plane, and one (inaudible) and we had to run to the fox hole, we had to run down to the bottom of the ship. Anytime you're fighting people that do not mind dying in order to kill innocent people, you've got a terrible situation on your hands. And we should ever be mindful that this is real.

MR. HARTER: Thank you, Mr. Gray. I think that's a question that's in many of our minds. We all think about this, especially about what happened across the ocean. This is a toughie. How can we address this?

CHIEF HANSON: Sir, it was a pleasure to meet you in the lobby. You mentioned your military career. You also

mentioned to me that you are a retired Metropolitan policeman. I think you said that you came on the job in 1951. And the things that we're seeing now, I don't think that members of the Metropolitan Police could have imagined in 1951. Your comments are sobering, it's something that the members of the Metro Transit Police live with every day. I came on in 1981, and I have to say, you know, the issues and concerns that we had then don't compare. We've really had to step up our game.

I'm getting ready to graduate a new class on Monday, and it's always so difficult to talk to recruits and their families because of what they've signed up to do, and I think your comments touch us all because they make us recognize how vulnerable we are. You see since London the conversations in this country about the vulnerabilities of mass transit, and that's something that we as employees and users of mass transit I think live with every day. In the Washington Post, there were comments on September 11, where people said that they wish some of the announcements that we have that encourage our customers and our employees to be mindful, but they didn't have to be mindful anymore, that they want to go back to a time where people can sit on trains and just merely read their books and not be concerned

with having to be observant for suspicious activity and criminal behavior. We're not there and we'll never be there again. So I do want to assure you that the WMATA board, and certainly Dick White, our CCO, we, through training and technology, training of our employees and working with our customers very effectively with our corporate communications, are doing everything we can. Can I guarantee your safety? No, I can't. But I'm telling you that the members of the Metro Transit Police are committed to doing everything that we can and working with our local law enforcement and federal partners to examine whatever deployment or resources are out there to make the system as safe as we can for you, sir.

MR. GRAY: Thank you very much for your remarks. We took 911 so hard, until I took \$1,000 from my savings and gave the citizens \$1,000 worth of free gasoline in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. I did this personally because I was hurt and innocent people was killed in New York and in the Pentagon, and we as veterans know what war is all about, we have been there, we have been shot at, suffered, you name it, we had it, so this is not to condemn you, I think you're doing a good job, and I'm only asking to keep your eyes open. Thank you.

MR. HARTER: Thank you, Mr. Gray, and thank you for your service to our country. Number 13.

MR. NORWOOD: Good evening. My name is Bill Norwood. I'd like to thank you all for arranging this and being here for us passengers. I work nearby at the University of Maryland, I have four items. The first is, recently, with more frequent riding of Metro buses, I sort of get stuck in traffic as the University of Maryland has ball games, and when the semester starts, each freshman has to learn for himself that you can't drive a car to class. What I'm urging you to do is to initiate communication with the University of Maryland so that they can inform you of when they will be tying up traffic, so that you inform passengers of that so we can plan our rides. I did send an email to people at the University of Maryland today about that. Okay. The next thing is, several times when I'm riding in Metro buses, I see the bus cut off just by a car, in much cases, a fairly good sized truck, where a car swerves right in front of a Metro bus, just inches in front of it, and so that it is totally out of the power of the driver to prevent an accident, is totally in the hands of the car driver who cuts off the Metro bus. I've written several emails to the Metro system, I get no response on

that.

My suggestion on it is two parts; one is to put cameras in the front of the Metro bus to record all the time and select those incidents, you know, as a compromise. Right now the driver is telling me that if anything happens, it's always their fault, that Metro decides it's always the driver's fault. And the other part of my suggestion on that is that we really look at, to start with, the Maryland's driver training manual. As far as I can understand, it does not tell people that Metro buses can't stop in a shorter distance. No example is, it doesn't tell people that trains sometimes take a mile to stop. So it's one thing to be stupid enough to swerve in front of a Metro bus, it's another thing to actually not know that the bus can't stop in a short distance.

Okay. The next topic is what I call stealth Metro buses, and this is just a maintenance problem. You know, some buses just have no signage sometimes, and it puts some of these drivers under a terrible strain every time, at every stop, they have to shout out who they are, what the bus is, and which way it's going. That's a terrible situation. And my suggestion is, until you replace the buses, that you dedicate particular buses to particular

routes, and they have two signs, one for one direction, one for the other direction, and that bus stays in that route. Okay. That's--

MR. HARTER: I think we're going to have to stop you there, because you've got to give a lot of people chances. Thank you.

MR. NORWOOD: This is a very light one, though, it's a very--

MR. HARTER: Okay, quickly.

MR. NORWOOD: Okay. This next one lightens it up. I'm suggesting for the express routes, that there be a party bus with a restaurant, and the people can do multi-tasking. Thank you.

MR. HARTER: Will you bring the alcoholic beverages? No. Okay. The first three, please.

MS. HUDGINS: I want to respond to the last question. You know, we had that party bus traveling between Reston and the District of Columbia, and someone told on us, and it's no longer a party.

MR. HARTER: How about the business in front of the bus?

MR. WHITE: Well, we'll try and give it a shot. Clearly, there's a lot of conflict with buses operating in

mixed traffic with automobiles. I know exactly the phenomenon you're talking about. I know our bus drivers, they probably have one of the toughest jobs of all the Metro employees, quite frankly. It's a big struggle out there. I'll try and answer it two-fold; one, on the technology side, we are following very closely and looking to set up to try and take advantage of a collision avoidance technology that's now begun to get introduced into our industry. And I don't know whether Bob Golden can share a little more information on that. I know we've got plans to--I think Pittsburgh is one of the first systems that have been testing this out, and we're very, very interested in seeing whether that gives our drivers just a tiny bit of extra help in being able to respond in very short notice, vis a vis, technology alerting that there's something that's coming in close proximity to the bus. In terms of the bus incident itself, we understand that probably more often than not when something happens, it is not the fault of our bus operator. Each one of our incidents, when something takes place, they are examined as to what the nature of the accident or the incident is, if it's an issue with another vehicle, if it's an issue with something other than a vehicle. Each one of these things results in either a determination that it was

avoidable or unavoidable. And in more instances than not, the answer is that it was unavoidable. And I know there are some bus staff here that might be able to give you a little bit more specifics, but I know that our data shows that, quite frankly, our operator is more likely to be the victim of circumstances that he or she really cannot controls that results in perhaps an accident taking place. So I can assure you that we do take those situations very seriously and attempt to be very, very correct and objective in making a judgement on that and making sure we don't, you know, hold the driver responsible for something that they really have very little control over. Bob, I don't know if you can talk about this collision avoidance technology or anything related to that.

MR GOLDEN: (inaudible) We're testing right now new technology, the see more system (inaudible) comes in proximity to the bus. I know Mr. Petracilli is working on this also. It has a set of lights, they're in the field of vision of the operator, depending on how close someone comes in proximity to the bus, it alerts the operator to be more cognizant of what's going on around him. We also plan to install that system on 50 of the new Orion buses currently being delivered. As far as the camera system, all of the

buses that are being delivered with the new video surveillance systems do have a camera that aims out of the front windshield, so that is an additionally--

MR. WHITE: I think the last question was on destination signs. We know we have work to be done there. One of our budget initiatives at the board just approved in this years budget is some additional maintenance resource for us to start campaigning some of the older destination signs that are chronic in terms of them malfunctioning because they're very, very old technology signs. And quite frankly, what we want to do is move the old signs out of the system as fast as we can, bring the new, better technology, state of the art types of signs into the system two ways, one, through the new bus purchase program that I outlined for you earlier, and number two is, I know we've decided to kind of bite the bullet and replace some number, I can't remember what it is off the top of my head, but actually take some number of old signs out of the buses and replace them with new signs. What is it, 270. So we know we have a problem on signage, we know there's more work that needs to be done both on the maintenance side, as well as in kind of getting that old technology out and bringing some newer technology in.

MR. HARTER: Gladys Mack.

MS. MACK: Yes, I just want to add to what the general manager has said about the bus destination signs. I've heard so much talk about buses here tonight, I thought I was in the District for a minute. The District of Columbia has 60 percent of the bus riders, and we are always vigilant to make sure that our bus service is meeting its goals, that we have issues like crowding that were mentioned before, and the headways, and the bunching, those are all issues that we worry about all the time. And, quite frankly, I just want to thank all of you who have come here tonight and all this discussion about buses, because it does show how important the buses are to this multi-model system that Ms. Hudgins mentioned. So we appreciate your coming here tonight and talking about your issues with the buses, and to say for the board, we are working very hard to try to make improvements on the bus system and to make sure that there is really equity between the bus and the rail.

MR. HARTER: Good. I see people in cars just doing such stupid things with buses, and the drivers doing incredible things to avoid accidents, and I'm really impressed. Yes, Mr. Deegan.

MR. DEEGAN: Every time I get a public forum, and

this is the appropriate time to mention this, I am always, yeah, Steve, you know exactly what I'm going to say, and my colleagues do, too. There's a fact that, you know, I like to expel every time I get the chance, and we have over 90 Metro bus drivers that have driven over a million and some two million miles without an accident, a ticket, or anything. I don't think there's anybody in this room, except maybe one of our Metro bus drivers, that can say that. I know my wife can't. But it's just--but just think about. It's just amazing that we have that many drivers that have driven that many miles without an accident, and it just goes on year after year after year, and we should applaud our Metro bus drivers. I mean it's, you know, it's (inaudible)

MR. HARTER: It's 14 next, sir.

MR. RANDALL: My name is Bill Randall, I'm from Silver Spring. I have a few different questions; number one, in terms of reaching out to riders, why are there no system maps for bus service? For those of us trying to get from point A to point B, it's a little bit difficult to do it without a map to tell you which bus to take. Second thing, several years ago you stopped selling monthly bus passes saying demand was low. At that time I was taking the

Metro bus. Demand was low, it seemed to me, because it was extremely inconvenient to purchase available and very, very few places. So I'm hoping that it won't be necessary to buy a bus pass every single week and that one can buy one once a month or so. The third thing is a little bit more specific on bus service. On the C2 and C4 bus line, from here in College Park and nearby, often on the weekends it's extremely crowded, it doesn't go very often on the weekend, it doesn't go early, it doesn't go late, and wait is--it ends very early on Sundays. And even when they're not going that often, they tend to bunch up, and bunching up is not only a problem in terms of bunching up, it's a problem because C2 and C4 don't go to the same place, the drivers bunch up, and only one will stop at a bus stop, leaving anybody who wants to go to the other destination out of luck.

MR. HARTER: That's good. That's a good three. Let's do three different people. One, why no system maps, who would address that?

MS. HUDGINS: Well, Leona, how about system maps? I thought we were developing those?

MS. : We do have bus system maps available, they're broken down according to D.C./Virginia

routes and D.C./Maryland routes. They're in the stations and in our building, as well. And if you call the customer service number, let me give you the number, it's 637--7000, 202-637-7000, they should be able to mail you one. I know they mail out on a regular basis.

MR. RANDALL: I've been trying to get one for six months (inaudible) and they just keep on saying that they're going to be (inaudible) sometime.

MR. HARTER: Will you do something about that?

MS. : Yeah.

MR. HARTER: Okay.

MS. : They did go through a recent route change at the end of the year. I know they had a problem with some supply, I believe that they're back, but let me check. If you'll give your information to Joanne right there, she'll get it to me, and I'll get in touch with you tomorrow.

MR. HARTER: How about monthly passes, who could talk about that? No monthly passes? Yes, sir.

MR. LINTON: Well, I think we now have our buses available for our Smart Trip, correct?

MR. HARTER: Bus passes?

MR. LINTON: And I think part of the effort to get

the Smart Trip on the buses is so that that, in essence, allows you to have a frequent use of the bus in having a pass, it doesn't require you to purchase it on daily basis. Have you tried a Smart Trip?

MR. RANDALL: No. We talked about (inaudible) as opposed to buying a bus pass on a weekly basis.

MR. HARTER: Are they monthly or weekly?

MR. LINTON: Smart Trips can be loaded and you can use them for--you can load \$300 on a Smart Trip.

MR. HARTER: Will you do more than that in a month? You won't do more than that in a month, no, okay. C4 and C2 and C4 weekend crowded, poor service.

MR. HUGHES: If I can, C2 and C4 has been one of the fastest growing routes in the county. We've made a number of changes on them. The comments you specifically made were on weekends. And we've tried to figure out how to fund some additional service on the weekends. We've been able to do some of it in the evening, we've not been able to find an answer or solution for the weekends. It does cost money. Rider ship demands for overcrowding is what we're addressing first. So we are still some vulnerability for some weekend service, and we've been working with Montgomery County, and some of their representatives are here to find a

way to do that. But the weekend service is primarily coming down to how much resources we have and where do we want to put it, and right now we're trying to respond to our overcrowding situations.

MR. HARTER: Thank you. You're 15.

MR. FRAUGHM: Good evening. My name is Brad Fraughm, I'm here on behalf of the Prince George's County Councilman Will (inaudible) office. I'm going to throw a bit of praise to the board from what you said earlier, sir. I'm here to speak on behalf and in support of, my boss couldn't be here, but he asked me to be here in his place, about the Takoma Langley Park Transit Center. As you know, there's a heck of a need in that area. There are hundreds upon thousands of workers who use mass transit who have several stops located across two busy roads, and that's obviously the (inaudible) You only have to drive through there pretty much any time of the day to know that.

The Transit Center, combining those bus stops into one central location obviously would alleviate much of that problem, that and a fair amount of channeling, pedestrian channeling to that station. I appreciate, I know my boss appreciates your support. I know the WMATA is going to contribute 7.3 million, that will go a long way towards

making it easier for my boss to get our county's share, the 2.5 million dollars for the program. So I just want to say thank you, look forward to that funding coming through. I know my boss is a big supporter of it, and also--I'll say one other thing, too, is, we do need a purple line, we do need a dedicated purple line above ground, below ground, it should be dedicated rail, so thank you very much.

MR. HARTER: We have talked about purple line. How about these other things? Go ahead, I'm sorry.

MR. DEEGAN: Make sure you thank the counsel for letting you come tonight. Both Mr. Solomon and I worked very hard to get the Transit Center approved, and I think it was one of the fastest things we've ever done and fastest thing I've ever seen come out of either county. So like I said earlier, I'm confident that it will be built and it will be built within two years hopefully.

MR. SOLOMON: I have an additional comment. Thank your, boss, for me, as well, he's a fine man. Last week in the real estate committee we approved the seven million dollars plus, and the board would take up that for consideration, not this Thursday, but next Thursday. And I do know that the County Executive, Mr. Johnson, sent a letter to Secretary Flannigan recently pledging 2.5 million

dollars on behalf of the county towards the Transit Center, and he's put it in the CIP for that purpose. So it may take two years to get it done, but the money is coming in, the planning is being done, the state is getting ready to acquire property, and it will work. Thank you.

MR. HARTER: Number 16, please. Oh, wait a minute, I'm sorry, Mr. Linton.

MR. LINTON: Let me add, because I think it's important to add that the Transit Center has been a well needed and also something that has been noted in Montgomery County, as well, and County Exec Doug Duncan has talked to County Exec Johnson, and both of them have been supportive of this for a number of years and very excited about the fact that Governor Ehrlich has now joined in, as well, so that we have the resources from the county, and those funds from WMATA that will go towards building the Center. So we're glad to see that both the state and the county government, as well as WMATA (inaudible) come together to make that Center happen.

MR. HARTER: Yes, sir.

MR. METCALF: Hello, my name is Tom Metcalf, I live in the District of Columbia. A week or so ago, Metro had a press release about people switching to Metro as gas

prices go up. I'd like to ask about the bus side of this. I hope that Metro finds a way to keep a Metro bus a viable alternative by keeping Metro bus fares down and service up, perhaps even increasing service, but I am concerned about the impact of rising fuel costs on Metro bus operation cost, and so I'm just wondering how much of a problem are rising fuel costs for Metro bus?

MR. HARTER: That's a good question.

MR. WHITE: Well, they're a problem for us like everybody else. In the last fiscal year, we were over budget about seven and a half million dollars on diesel fuel, now that's the bad news. The good news is, in totality, we finished under budget by more than 14 million dollars, so we were able to offset that unintended or unanticipated expense. We're worried about it from two points of view, we're worried about it from the price point of view and the supply point of view. I mean it's bad enough that the prices are high, but you know, heaven forbid we can't get it, that's even a bigger problem. I think, you know, our initial fear is on that.

Like others, I think we're becoming more and more comfortable that the actual supply side issue should be less problematic, but we're watching it closely. Every single

day we get, you know, I get a daily report from the CFO, who is tracking this, who's looking at it from a diesel swap point of view, you know, when do you lock into a price, how much over budget are you going to lock yourself into--how does that compare to your time exposure, and if you think the time is right, we'd make a recommendation to the board to try and lock in from a point of view of at least cutting your losses. You know, you would reduce your risk to further spikes in pricing.

However, the good news is, it seems to be ramping down a little bit here. I think the market place still has a level of volatility associated with it, but you know, it's costing us more money, it's a problem we're going to have to figure out how to accommodate inside of the existing budget, we know we're going to have a budget hole that comes from that, instead of a billion dollar a year operating budget, we're going to have to figure out how to offset it. But I think we're just struggling to deal with it like the average consumer is having to put gas into their tank, and the county bus systems have to worry about it, and all of the transit systems across the country, it's kind of a fact of life that we're living with.

MR. LINTON: I would just like to thank the

gentleman for his insights. I think very often when there are cost drivers in everybody's family budget, there's not a recognition that those same cost drivers exist within the WMATA budget, and as a result of that, dealing with the same restraints that many of us deal with, we come home every week with our paycheck, we have to make those type of adjustments to be able to accommodate staying within our budget, but dealing with those cost drivers. And so when your fuel costs are going up, so is WMATA's fuel costs, and those are the kind of tough decisions that the board is often faced with in terms of how do you accommodate those increased costs within the existing budget and also try to respond to many of the suggestions, very good suggestions, on how we can improve service and provide more service to many of you within this room. So I'd just like to point that out, as you mentioned that in your insights in trying to query us as to what impact did it have on our budget.

MR. HARTER: Thank you. Certainly.

MS. MACK: I just want to comment that it certainly is impacting our budget, but I can say at this point, as long as we can get the fuel, we have no plan to cut service because of it.

MR. HARTER: Seventeen, I believe is next.

MS. ATKINS: Hello, my name is Deborah Atkins, I live in Hyattsville, and my complaint is for the R12 Deenwood New Carrollton bus. The bus is consistently late in the mornings and the evenings, especially during rush hour. The buses lack signage. The drivers are rude. They need customer service orientation, it's just not acceptable. I have a flexible schedule, so I leave any time between 6:30 in the morning and 9:00 in the morning, always late except 7:25. Two weeks ago, the driver that leaves Deenwood at 7:25 was on vacation, and when he came back, the bus hadn't shown up for Thursday and Friday of that particular week. He said that the supervisor did not know he was on vacation, so we had no bus. So the next bus that shows up is 8:15, unacceptable, and I'd like to know what you're going to do about that.

MR. WHITE: Well, if that's the situation, I agree with you, that is unacceptable. I mean there's several of us in this room that, you know, need to follow up with you, you know, between myself, Jim Hughes, head of operations, Jack (inaudible) sits right here, he's in charge of the bus operations. We need to take your specific considerations and be able to follow up on them, and my apologies if that's the experience that you have had on some of the service. We

clearly know also that some of the oldest buses are still running in service in routes that are out here, and you know, getting to the heart of that problem is to execute the bus purchase program that I spoke to you about. I mean Maryland has sort of been kind of third in line, you know, in terms of the bus purchase program because of the way we've approached this, buying compressed natural gas. Maryland's turn is now coming.

There's 217 buses that are soon to be on their way and they're coming here into this service territory, so that's going to take some of these oldest buses out of the fleet that really desperately need to get out of the fleet, which is going to address some of the issues you speak about, including the destination sign issue. But in terms of the actual experience that you have with Metro bus operators and other people in the system, we have to follow up with you on the specifics of that.

MR. SOLOMON: And I appreciate very much, and we all appreciate your comments and everyone else's comments. That's one of the reasons why our former Chairman, Mr. Smith, came up with the concept, and we talked about it amongst ourselves, the board members and the senior staff, to do these town hall meetings, because we want to be able

to talk to you directly and get some feedback. We have one of the best staffs in the area. I mean WMATA staff is the top, and the federal government has good employees, too, but WMATA has some of the best in the area. And we supplement them with our own jurisdictional staff. But often times, we, as board members, don't hear those type of comments, so we need to hear them. And then I can assure you that what Mr. White said, that if you give him the particular information, they will follow up on it and he will do that. And so we thank you for those type of comments, because it helps us to make us better. Thank you.

MR. HARTER: Are you number 18, sir?

MR. HOUSLING: Yes, I am.

MR. HARTER: Great.

MR. HOUSLING: I'm Damian Housling, I'm from Western Loudoun County, but I now live in D.C. I have a dear friend who lives near the (inaudible) Station, she's wheelchair bound, and you know the elevator is away from where all the other gates, the fare gates are, she uses a weekly pass, and so I have to go buy the pass for her because it's at the other part of the station and then, do you know what I mean, it's away from--it's the other side of the station, she can't go to where the normal gates are, and

so I have to buy her her passes, and we were thinking that maybe at that fare gate machine, you guys could make it so that it has passes. I also notice it's at Takoma, as well, where the elevator is not where all the gates are, and it's the one pass machine there, the one machine is only for fare cards, so it doesn't do passes. Have I confused you?

MR. WHITE: No, we understand.

MR. HOUSLING: Okay, thank you.

MR. WHITE: No, we understand what you're saying. There's some of our--some of our elevators are no where near the proximity to fare machines and other things, as it turns out, I think basically because of design considerations and engineering considerations as to where the actual elevator could be placed. We'd like to do whatever we can to help make the situation more convenient for you and the person that you're assisting. So if you could see us afterwards, we'll try to help you out as best we can including making an arrangement for you to, you know, issue weekly passes that will make it a little bit more convenient for you, but we'll try to do whatever we can to help make this more convenient for you.

MR. HARTER: Number 19, sir.

MR. RABIN: My name is Carl Rabin, I'm from Olney

in Montgomery County. And I guess it's three things to wish for, but they sound small compared to some of the other peoples' problems. One is, it seems like the green line being built from Gallery Place to Fort Totten is a beautiful system, runs nicely, but the train runs every 12 minutes, and that's the middle of the city, which seems like the yellow line should run to at least Fort Totten, even though I know there's no pocket track there to turn the trains around. If there was some way that could be reconfigured, that would be a great thing.

A second thing is, the Smart Trip card is also a great idea. And a number of years ago you said, someone said that they planned this program so that if you used it, let's say after 9:30, you would never be charged more than the \$6.50 cost of a one day pass, or all day on a weekend day, but that's never been implemented, so I don't even use my Smart card half the time, because if I want to use a one day pass, I have to buy a separate card, but the Smart card could work just like the Oyster card does in London. And the third thing is, I'm a volunteer at the information desk at one of the Smithsonian museums, and the most common question we get is, how can we get to the Lincoln Memorial, how can we get to the World War II Memorial, how far is it

to walk over to the American Indian Museum, and what bus do I take, and I either tell them they have to pay \$20 for the tour mobile, or take a taxi, or they walk a mile and a half. It seems, now that you have the circulator that runs along K Street and Massachusetts Avenue from Georgetown to Union Station and another circulator that runs down 7th Street from the Convention Center down to L'Enfant Plaza, it seems that the most useful circulator, which a number of us volunteers down at the Smithsonian have thought about is, to run one along Constitution Avenue, from 23rd Street to 3rd Street, and maybe loop around through Independence, but at least on one side of the mall, to have one Metro bus, using maybe those red circulators, they're really well built, they run well, the drivers seem to move them along really easily, and if it could run from the Lincoln Memorial to 3rd Street every 10 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays and let's say between 10:00 and 5:30 on weekdays, that would be a great thing.

MR. HARTER: If we can do that in the nine minutes we have left, I'll be impressed. Okay, number one, green line.

MS. MACK: Yeah, I'm going to talk about circulator.

MR. HARTER: Green line?

MS. MACK: Well, if we can take the last one on the circulator first.

MR. HARTER: Uh-huh.

MS. MACK: Douglas, where are you? Raise your hand. We have one of our staff members from the D.C. Department of Transportation, he'll see you afterwards and have a conversation about your ideas on the circulator.

MR. HARTER: Smart Trip?

MR. WHITE: I think on the circulator side, I mean the District has moved forward with the first two phases of a four phase plan, and the next two phases have to do with moving largely people around the mall and distributing from the mall and off the mall. So I think the good news is that that planning process is already, is that correct, Edward, phases three and four are largely targeted to assistance with those kind of trips. I think some of the problems that the District is struggling with is, how does it work with the tour mobile operation and some of the issues that they, of course, would have associated with that. So yeah, I know that, so I think when we follow up with you on this with respect to what the District's planning on that, and Edward Thomas right here on our staff, if you could raise your

hand, Edward, is I think probably the most familiar one on what the rest of the plans are associated with that.

On the Smart Trip side, I think you've kind of touched on something. I was going to bring it up in response to another question, but you know, it's one of these things that's just, you know, it's an unfortunate situation because of the supply side of our industry being as limited as it is, but you're speaking to a design that we've had to introduce a concept called fare fares.

And once and for all, we could be done with the notion that people have about I need this pass and I need that pass, and why doesn't that pass work for me, and I can't get. And the notion here is that the technology itself, inside of the Smart Card imbedded chip technology, would be smart enough to know, based upon your own travel patent, it would stop charging you when you hit a threshold, whether it was a daily threshold, when you trip the daily one day pass threshold or you trip the weekly threshold or a monthly threshold, the system would be intelligent enough to act as the pass, invisible to you, so you wouldn't even have to worry about the whole thing. The problem is, it's been damn hard getting this thing done, because you're dealing with a sole source contractor who moves at a very different

pace and who is supplying a big industry, and we're just one customer, and it's like moving a glacier to make something happen. So we can follow up with you a little bit after this. I don't know, Leona, if this is one of the things I know that just we're still waiting on the delivery of this, I don't know if you have any updated information on the notion of fare fares and kind of what the current state of situation is with (inaudible) on this. You don't have any updated information on it? What's that? Does Craig have any information? Craig Maxey here, I don't know if you can give us all a little more information on that?

MR. MAXEY: As Mr. White has stated, this is one of the issues that we've been working on for quite a long time. There have been some technological difficulties and some delays with the contractor. I guess I would characterize it as the good news is that we are still working on it, but also the bad news is, we're still working on it. This is something that we're hoping to achieve probably within the next 12 to 18 months, so it is coming, along with a lot of other initiatives concerning passes and flexibility with the Smart Card use. So unfortunately, it's not here yet, but we are still actively working on it.

MR. HARTER: Our time is up. I'd like to thank

all of the Metro board members and all of you who came.
Once again, attendees whose numbers were not called can use
the outlets, online chats, public comment during the board
meetings, and the Board of Directors at Metro,
opendoors.com. The next town hall meeting, November 9th,
the Reed Center in Washington. Thank you all very much, I
enjoyed being here.

[Whereupon, the hearing was concluded.]