

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT  
AUTHORITY

Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday, November 9, 2005

7:12 p.m.

Frank Reeves Municipal Center  
Atrium  
2000 14th Street, Northwest  
Washington, D.C.

MILLER REPORTING CO., INC.  
735 8th STREET, S.E.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003-2802  
(202) 546-6666

**PARTICIPANTS:**

DANA KAUFFMAN, Chair  
GLADYS MACK, Vice Chair  
CHARLES DEEGAN, Second Vice Chair  
CHRISTOPHER ZIMMERMAN  
JIM GRAHAM  
ROBERT SMITH  
DAN TANGHERLINI  
MARCEL SOLOMON  
RICHARD A. WHITE, CEO  
POLLY HANSON  
JIM HUGHES  
RODNEY SLATER, MODERATOR

**STAFF:**

JACK REQUA  
MURRAY BOND  
TAFT THOMPSON

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES:**

Demetrius Butler  
Pat Daniels  
Richard Holsager  
Sara Green  
Michael Snyder  
Scott Palmeroy  
Robin Moore  
Eric Smith  
Faith Wheeler  
Ruth Foster  
Dorothy Douglas  
Jeannie Knox  
Doris Headley  
Linda Reed  
Dorothy Gray  
Martin Van Buren  
Ingrid Drahe  
David Grossman  
Kevin Coleman  
Beverly Blakey  
Scott Vining  
Tawanna  
Archie  
Dana  
Alan Greenberg  
Adrienne Smith  
Nancy Duncan  
Natasha  
Tyrone Duggins  
William Taft

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. SLATER: We would ask if everyone would take their seats. Very good. We may end up with standing room only. This is for the members of the staff and the board here.

All right. Well, we are going to get started. Clearly I know that a number of people will be coming in over the course of our deliberations this evening. We would just ask if they would do that quietly, and if you have to leave, we would ask the same as well.

Let me start by saying, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Kauffman, and Vice Chair Mack, members of the board, our distinguished board, and our committed staff -- Dick, we thank you for your leadership as our GM and CEO and the members of your staff who are here this evening.

You know, as I reflect on this gathering, it reminds me of a story of a little boy who happened to come upon the office of a very distinguished individual, a business leader, and said, Sir, I would like to know if I may use your

telephone, and the gentleman said, Yes, you may use the phone, and the little boy walked by and he dialed the number and he started to communicate.

The gentleman was so impressed with the little boy that he sort of paid attention to conversation, if you will. And the little boy said, Hello, Mrs. Smith, I would like to know if I may mow your lawn. And the gentleman watching the little boy noticed as he said, Oh, I can't? So he understood what Mrs. Smith was saying on the other end of the line.

But he was impressed by the persistence of the little boy. And the little boy said, Well, tell me, Mrs. Smith, if I can't do your lawn today, can I do it next week? Oh, I can't? Well, what about the week after next? Oh, I can't?

Well, tell me, Mrs. Smith, are you saying that I can't do your lawn today and I can't do it next week and you don't need me to do it week after next? Are you really saying then that you have someone who already does your lawn? Oh, you are. Well, thanks, Mrs. Smith. Evidently this person

does a pretty good job. Oh, he does. Well, thank you. I was just calling and thank you for the conversation.

So the little boy hung up the phone and this time as he was leaving, you know, his shoulders were not square, his back not straight, and he was not leaving, exiting with that big beautiful smile that the gentleman had seen as he walked in. And so he sort of faced the little boy, and he took his hand and he lifted his chin, and he said, You know, young man, I was very impressed with your persistence, your desire to make a difference, to make a contribution, your desire to be entrepreneurial, to work. And he said, And I could tell that you weren't getting exactly what you wanted on the other end. Hello, Mrs. Smith, can I do your lawn? Oh, no, you can't. Well, can I do it next week? Oh, no, you can't. Well, what about the week after next? He said, I was touched by all of that. And he said, So I want you to know that I've got a yard that you can mow.

And the little boy lifted then that big beautiful face and he smiled and he said, Well, sir, I want you to know that I really don't have time to mow your lawn. You see, I've got all of the lawns that I can possibly mow right now. As a matter of fact, I'm the little boy who mows Mrs. Smith's yard, and I was just calling to check up on myself.

[Laughter.]

MR. SLATER: Well, tonight affords us an opportunity to hear from you, and to check up on ourselves. It affords us the opportunity to extend to you the opportunity to literally sit at the table of discussion, debate, and decision, to participate in this wonderful thing that we call transportation, and making it not only better than it is, but more importantly, what it can be; ensuring that regardless of where one lives, that there is access to transportation and through transportation access to opportunities. Access to the opportunity to go to a good school, if you are a student; and if you are a parent, the opportunity to see your child go

off in his or her pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

If you are a worker, access to a job, wherever that job may be. If you want to enjoy all of the rich amenities of this wonderful city and this wonderful region, then transportation, the opportunity, the tie that binds, the means by which one pursues happiness -- that is what it is at its core.

And so it is appropriate then for us to have these kinds of sessions where you, those whom we have the privilege to serve, are afforded the opportunity to come and to visit with us and to thus give us an opportunity to literally check up on ourselves; to ensure that we are responding to the concerns that you raise, the interests that you have. Because at the end of the day, that's truly what public service is all about. And so we thank you for coming this evening.

Now let me also acknowledge Debora Johnson. She has been wonderful as far as getting me the kind of material I need and giving me some sense of the



schedule that I am to follow, and I am about to get on that schedule, Debora, and offer just a few directions about how the program is going to flow, and then to make a few introductions, and then we will be on with the business of the evening, and that is hearing from you, and then responding to you.

I mean this is a leadership team that will demonstrate not only tonight but over the course of all of its town hall meetings and then in the way that it takes your suggestions and deals with them, this is a leadership team that is demonstrating that it can lead by following as well as lead by leading.

I think at the end of the day no follower can ask for more and no leader -- no leader -- can give more.

So the attendees will present their questions -- this is just a little background information -- via an open mike. I mean there are no written questions tonight where someone decides which question is actually asked and which question is answered. We are going to have an open mike and

you are going to be afforded an opportunity to come forward and to express yourself, to ask your question.

Attendees wishing to comment will be provided a number, a ticket number. The staff, located across and throughout the room right back here, and so if you have a question, just raise your hand and we'll get a ticket to you.

We will call forth roughly five individuals at a time so as to not keep you standing too long, and to ensure that we are focusing on the four or five who will come before us asking their questions.

Now we would ask one thing of you. We would like for you to limit your time at the mike to about two minutes, which means that you get a chance to offer a comment as well as to ask a question. Again, we want to learn from you as well as respond to you.

Now where is the traffic signal? All right. Now I think everybody knows what the purpose of a traffic signal is, right? And as we are talking about time for asking your question and

expressing yourself, we've got this traffic light over here, and I guarantee that Garrett Morgan, when he invented this traffic light, never thought that it would be used in a town hall meeting setting. But clearly -- and by the way, the light is red right now, so let me move on.

[Laughter.]

MR. SLATER: But clearly, clearly, we will find some use for it this evening, and I know that everyone will be governed by it.

Now a few other housekeeping rules.

This is going to be a pretty extensive town hall meeting, and so we have got facilities right back here for anyone who would care to just step out for a moment, and then we would ask if you would come back and rejoin us and do so quietly.

We also would ask if you would turn your cell phones off and if you would turn your pagers off. Clearly everybody here is busy, but there are probably only a few things, if really anything, that would be more important than our gathering here, again with the leadership team of your wonderful

Metro system and the whole transportation brain trust for the region, and those of you who have given of your time this evening to be with us.

Now follow-up for the town hall meeting:

We understand that with this kind of gathering, everyone may not have an opportunity to ask their question, but we are going to make every effort to ensure that everyone will have that opportunity. But suppose you ask a question and then you have thoughts later about something that you just should have put forth because you know that it could have been a benefit to the discussion.

Well, we are going to give you a Web site and an e-mail address to which you can forward any additional information, and we will give you that over the course of the evening maybe a few times as we go forward.

Now with that, what I would like to do is call forth your vice chair, Gladys Mack. As you know, she has been on this board for some years. She has done a wonderful job as a member of the board and continues to do so.

You know, we have completed the original line for Metro, but there are dreams about additional lines and additional miles, and Gladys Mack is right at the center of all of that. And so we would ask her if she would come forward now, offer comments, and then have a few other words.

[Applause.]

VICE CHAIR MACK: Thank you. Thank you so much, Secretary Slater, for agreeing to MC our program tonight. We know what a fan you are of transportation in general, having served as the Secretary of Transportation in the Clinton administration, but also a fan of Metro in particular, and we certainly got accustomed to seeing you at our Metro events while you were in office. So you are happy that you agreed to come back this evening and MC this program for us.

I also want to say good evening to all of you. I am very pleased to see such a great turnout here this evening. We have had town hall meetings in Virginia, we have had one in Maryland, and this is our first town hall meeting in the District of

Columbia. These meetings were initiated by Robert Smith, when he was chair, a board member from Maryland, and it has proved to be an excellent way to just talk to -- or see how we're doing, as Secretary Slater said.

I want to also say that I am the only District board representative here this evening, although there are four of us. Mr. Graham, who is -  
- oh, there. Hello.

[Laughter.]

VICE CHAIR MACK: I was going to explain why you weren't here. Okay. Now I don't have to do that.

Mr. Graham will be here. He will join us this evening. He had another commitment that he had to attend, but he will be here with us within the hour.

I want to say that -- I like to say often that a typical Metro rider in the District is a bus rider. We have the two-thirds of the bus riders are District of Columbia residents, and while the overwhelming number of riders of the rail are in the

Maryland and Virginia jurisdictions, we certainly have a lot of rail riders, but we have far more bus riders in the system.

I want to just take a minute to talk about what we have been doing at Metro for our bus riders because I think it really is a program that we are very happy to have an opportunity to bring to all of the jurisdiction, but particularly to bring to our bus riders.

Oftentimes we have talked about the fact that we don't pay enough attention to the issues surrounding our buses and we get focused a lot on the rail issues, but in the summer of this year, the Metro board approved an \$830 million program for improvements in our Metro bus system.

That program included 708 replacement buses and 185 expansion buses; 417 of those buses will be delivered between now and June of 2006. This is going to reduce the age of the bus fleet in Metro to seven years. It is now 10, and some of us have been on the board for a while remember when it was in the

teens. So to reduce it to seven years is very, very significant.

And, of course, it's going to increase the reliability of our buses and that will be seen as you take your bus trips around the region.

We also have upgraded our bus facilities at Bladensburg and at Four Mile Run to handle C&G buses and that program is running very successfully.

We have new security cameras on 100 buses, and they will be on all new bus purchases. And we also have better bus maps, information systems, bus shelters, and maps on our bus shelters.

So I just wanted to give you a few of the -  
- reiterate a few of the things that we are doing for our bus riders because it is important for us as we move forward to make sure that you know -- you who are bus riders know that we really are thinking about you and working for you as we try to improve our total system. Because actually our modes, our bus, our rail, and our paratransit, all depend on one another.



With that, I am going to turn the meeting or introduce you to the chairman of our board, Mr. Dana Kauffman, who will introduce our other board members.

Chairman Kauffman is coming to the close of his year as chair of Metro, and I think all of you who have followed Metro during his year as chairman have been aware of how he has actually opened up Metro to riders, to our community, to our citizens, and I just want to applaud Chairman Kauffman for making sure that Metro is transparent, that we do respond to our riders, and that you will see more and more of that in the coming years.

Chairman Kauffman.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: Thank you, Gladys. It is an honor to be in the District of Columbia this evening, but it is even more of an honor to serve with you.

That list that Gladys just read to you, that litany of investments that this board before you has just made in bus service would not have

happened except for Gladys' constant pushing, Jim Graham reminding us, and other members of the board who are dedicated to making certain that you can take every bit as much pride in your bus ride as others do in their rail ride.

So again, we are committed to that, and you can thank Ms. Mack for making that happen. If you will join me in a round of applause for Gladys.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: Now I'll put my trifocals and I'll tell you who else is here. In addition to Ms. Mack, our first vice chair, is Mr. Charlie Deegan, who is the second vice chair, representing the government of Maryland and also from Prince George's County. Mr. Deegan.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: Next to Charlie is Chris Zimmerman. Chris is a member of the Arlington County board and also represents Arlington on the Metro board, and is a staunch advocate for business service as well. Mr. Zimmerman.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: Robert Smith is also representing the government of Maryland and Montgomery County, and is the immediate past chairman of the Metro board. Bob.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: Marcel Solomon is next to Bob, and Marcel represents Prince George's County on the Metro Board.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: And yes, he is still there, next to Mr. Solomon is Dan Tangherlini, and it is always nice to come to his office. He is representing the mayor and is also the direction of the department of transportation here in the District of Columbia. Dan.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: And next to Dan is Dick White, our general manager and chief executive officer.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: And on the other side is Chief Polly Hanson, who is the chief of police for Metro Transit Authority Police Department.

[Applause.]

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: And last but certainly not least is Jim Hughes, who is our deputy general manager for operations -- I think I got the title right this time -- who is basically the person on whose shoulders all the scheduling issues and making certain that our buses are working and do connect to the rail system.

With that, I will turn it back to Mr. Slater.

MR. SLATER: Let's give our entire board and members of the staff a round of applause.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Very good.

Well, at this time we would like to begin immediately hearing from those who have come this evening to offer comments and to ask questions.

What I would like to do is to begin by asking Mr. Demetrius Butler to come to the mike, and

then we want to have everyone come based on the ticket numbers. I believe we start at 1, and we will go to 5, and then we will start our next group after that.

Demetrius.

MR. BUTLER: Yes. Can you hear me? I've got a sinus infection.

I would like to start off by saying my name is Demetrius Butler. I am a resident of PG County, and most of my business and so on is in the District.

I'll start off by saying a few of my comments, and it's probably going to be a lot of ones of a lot of people in here.

One of my comments is why there are not too many buses on certain routes. The second one is why subways that stop at our Metro subway stations, doors are open, but allow people to offboard but not enough time for people to onboard.

Also I experienced that, I also sat down and had to take a picture of that one day. I just couldn't believe it.

Let's see. Also in a timely manner, sometimes those subways come so quick in back of each other, you miss them by the time you come down the escalator. People are pushing, but sometimes they don't have a choice but to push to get to a subway.

The third question is why are there too many buses in certain areas but not enough, especially during rush hours, at other areas.

And also I have had -- I experienced, and probably a lot of people, too, I asked the bus driver one day why the bus didn't come such and such. I think I was at Minnesota Avenue trying to get into PG, he told me, oh, the supervisor sent them straight down to PG because they figured nobody is going to get on here. There must have been about -- maybe about 50 people waiting, and I had to call on my cell and talk to management, and I was rudely cut off, and I said, okay, I said, I'll put it in writing, which I do very well.

Also especially I experience problems, the subways, especially the Red line and the Blue line.

There's always problems, been for four months. There's so many problems that it makes you late even if you leave two hours early. I've really got like, whoa. And I'm used to driving. I said this is crazy. I just buried a mother, so this is a lot on me.

I like to thank you for your time and patience in this matter. I don't want to hold you up. Thanks again for listening.

MR. SLATER: Thank you. And, Demetrius, thank you for coming tonight and being a part of the discussion.

Well, Demetrius starts off with a number of interesting questions. They seem to pretty much relate to issues of service, and what I would do maybe is to come to you, Dick, to take a stab at responding to some of them, and then if you would like to point to others to join you, please do so.

MR. WHITE: We operate a lot of service every day and it's a real challenge to make sure that all the service that we do put out there is able to be done in a reliable fashion.

Clearly on the bus side I think the challenges are compounded by how congested our road system is, and we know that we need to do a better job in terms of being able to have our buses run in a way that is in adherence to the schedule.

In some cases what we really need to do -- and it does come down to money -- is we need to break some of these bus routes up into smaller -- we need to restructure the routes, we need to add running time to the routes in order to be realistic for what today's traffic congestions are. But that does require additional money to be spent to do that.

So the bus system is getting a lot of attention now. We did a peer review on it, and they pointed out to us the fact that we needed to do more things on our service supervision side. My budget request is going to the board next month, and it's going to be responsive to those recommendations about some of the extra things that we can do to try and make the service run better to schedule.



We have a lot of technology that's been bought, radio systems, automatic vehicle location systems, and other things to give us the tools to try to do a better job of running that bus system on time.

On the rail side, yes, the stations are enormously congested. There is no doubt about it. For that matter, the bus system is as well, and there's a lot of things that we can do to try and help condition how our customers use the sum. We are experimenting now. The board has just -- actually a committee of the board has authorized us moving to modify the interiors of our rail cars to make it easier for people to get on and off the rail cars so they don't all congest around the doors.

We are also going to be introducing some other techniques to try and help customers as they enter the rail cars and leave the rail cars to try and do it in a way that makes room for people.

So the board and the management is very focused on paying attention to some of these back-to-basic attention to detail that is required to

make sure that this very enormous system that we operate can do it as reliably as we can, with all of the passengers that we are carrying. We are carrying 730,000 passengers a day on the rail system and about 430,000 passengers a day on the bus system.

So more can be done. I think the system does run reasonably reliably most of the time, but certainly surface congestion on the bus system is hurting us severely.

MR. SLATER: Dick, I think that you generally addressed this, but let me just specifically mention the Red and Blue lines. I know Mr. Butler specifically mentioned those. Any particular issues related to that, that concern you as relates to service?

MR. WHITE: Well, I mean I certainly would like to hear from Mr. Butler on any of the specifics of the specific trips that he is talking about, but generally speaking, all parts of the railroad, especially in the last several months, have been operating pretty reliably at and above 97, close to

98 percent of the time, our trains arrive within four minutes of the scheduled time from end to end throughout the system. We probably run I dare say the most reliable rail system in the country.

There are times and there are days where we have some serious service interruptions. Sometimes they are induced by sick passengers or other things that take place, where there may be some extraordinary delays that occur on rare instances. But I would like to know more about his actual trip patterns if there are some things that are happening on a regular basis. I think we need to know about that.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good.

Mr. Butler, what we will probably do is maybe later you will have an opportunity to follow up on some of the specifics regarding your experiences on the Red and the Blue line.

Let me mention just one thing. It's interesting about this issue of entering and exiting. You may have seen an article in the paper last week, I believe, dealing with the airlines and

they are actually dealing with this question as well. How do you move people onto the planes more efficiently and effectively, how do you move them off, and so that issue is one that is really on the table across transportation modes, and I think we are going to hear more about that as we go forward.

But good questions.

I think that is a signal as to what we can expect over the course of the evening. Please. And would you do the same thing as Demetrius did, let us have your name and where you live within the region, and then your question, please, or comment.

MS. DANIELS: Okay. My name is Pat Daniels. I live in Adams Morgan, and my question is why the bus drivers do not lower the lifts when they see you struggling to get on. That's number one.

And number two is why are there no 42 buses in the morning between 8:30 and 9 timely that's going to Mount Pleasant.

The good comment I have is I love the B-30 because I get a chance to go to Baltimore to see my

family, and I hope you do not discontinue it because I was the first passenger on the B-30.

MR. SLATER: All right.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: All right. Very good. You can see how some of these issues become very personal. So, thank you, Ms. Daniels, for your question.

MR. DEEGAN: Let me go first and just thank you for mentioning the B-30 because I try to do that everywhere I go.

MS. DANIELS: I love it.

MR. DEEGAN: You can rest assured, we are not going to discontinue that route. I want to tell you, I don't miss an opportunity to do this. Any of you that want to fly out of BWI, you go to the Greenbelt station, for \$3 we have a bus that takes you. It's configured as an airport bus and it drops you right off at the terminal, and from there I guess you take the light rail from the airport or another bus.

MS. DANIELS: Yes, I take another bus. But I do also want to say in order to make it really, really work, I went to Atlantic City, New York City, Baltimore, University of Maryland, the hospital there, and I put brochures everywhere. I met some doctors and I wanted to keep going. Thank you so much for the time.

MR. SLATER: All right. Thank you.

MR. DEEGAN: I think we ought to hire her.

[Laughter.]

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Charlie, I want you to know I have used the B-30, too, and I am from Virginia.

MR. SLATER: All right. Very good.

MR. DEEGAN: And if you're really clever there, you can arrange your flights on weekends, and you don't even have to pay to park if you have a car you want to drive there.

MR. SLATER: Now let me ask, I think you also mentioned the No. 42, right? What about that issue? Because that's a little problematic for you, right? Okay. Yes.

MR. TANGHERLINI: I was just going to say, Mr. Secretary Slater, that the department of transportation in the District of Columbia, the mayor and the city council over the last six or seven years have been adding money every year to expand bus service in the District of Columbia. We took the path of contracting bus service in the District of Columbia in the mid '90s when we had a financial crisis, and we paid the price. We paid the price in terms of mobility, we paid the price in terms of people's access to jobs, health care, to where they needed to go. And I just want you to know that in the District of Columbia, the mayor and the city council is behind expanding bus service and improving bus service.

You heard the general manager talk about our \$800 million investment in improving the buses themselves, but we also have a bigger program to improve and look at the way these bus routes are structured, to try to get more and better service out there.

I think, as my colleague Gladys Mack said, there is an increased focus on the part of the board and certainly led by the District of Columbia to improve and expand our business service.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thank you, Dan.

Yes. The lifts? What about the lifts?

Now I know that there is a requirement that all buses -- let's go to that question.

MR. HUGHES: If I can, just before I get to the follow-up on the 42, about six months we looked at trying to add some trips out there in the direction in the morning to Mount Pleasant. We have some buses that end downtown and deadhead back to the garage. We actually converted them to live trips.

If you are not seeing enough, I guess we've got to go out and check it again, but there are some ways that we could get some low-cost improvements out there.

Back to the lifts, if I can.

MR. SLATER: Yes.



MR. HUGHES: All of our -- almost all of our buses are equipped with lifts. With the new buses we are purchasing that you heard about earlier, by springtime all of our buses will be equipped with lifts.

MR. SLATER: Very good. I think that deserves a round of applause, by the way.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: That's good.

MR. HUGHES: They will either have a lift or they will be accessible for a ramp, and so your issue of trying to get the driver to operate it, they are required to cycle that whenever someone asks them to do that, to board the bus.

What I need -- what would help us, though, is some specific information about where you were, a date and time, and you can either give it to me later or there is a group of people that work for the bus company out in the back. Some of them are waving their hands. To get back specifically to the operators, to get back to the garage. The information would be very helpful to us.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good.

Let me also ask as you are answering questions, we should probably have you give the audience your names as well, and we appreciate those comments. I know Dan appreciates yours, and then Charles, our second vice, we appreciate your comments as well.

One point about the ADA and the disability community, transportation very important, and transit very, very important. And if you noticed all of the articles about Mrs. Parks and her contributions over the last few weeks since her passing, one article in particular noted the ADA, and how that effort in many respects picked up on the spirit of her struggle in 1955, and really made things a lot better for our fellow citizens who have disabilities. And so we acknowledge the importance of transit to that community especially. And thank you, Pat, for mentioning that.

Next, please. Okay, we've got two lines. Let me just go over here, if I may.

MR. : Is this mike on?

MR. SLATER: Well, we'll test it. We'll come over here. Yes, please.

MR. HOLSEGER: Okay. My name is Richard Holseger. I live in D.C. up near the Takoma Metro station.

MR. SLATER: Yes, Richard.

MR. HOLSEGER: At that station there is a joint development program that is in the late stages of its planning. There is something like 90 townhomes to be built there, and also there will be a reconfiguration of the transit facilities, the parking, the bus lanes, and so forth.

The organization that is in charge of the townhome building, which has a lot of expertise in that field, is also doing the planning of the transit facilities, which is not so clear about their expertise because a couple of things -- there's a number of things, but maybe I'll mention two. The fact that the short-term parking for people who use the Metro is being cut in half to make room for townhomes. There will be cars mixed

in with the bus lanes and other things I can't think of offhand.

But my question is basically why -- it seems to me that when you are at a transit station, the first thing -- and it says this in various places like the plan for our District and so forth, the first priority should be the transit. Why don't you have Metro or some contractor that really does transit designing the transit facilities first and then putting the townhomes in afterwards, where they fit in with the Metro facilities, rather than fitting the transit facilities to the townhomes?

It seems to me that what we have here is not transit-oriented development, but development-oriented transit.

MR. SLATER: Okay. I like that. A nice play on words.

Who would care to respond to that question?  
Thanks, Richard.

MR. TANGHERLINI: I'll dive in.

MR. SLATER: Okay, Dan.

MR. TANGHERLINI: And I think one of the issues you have to realize is that if our primary focus is on transit, it should be on transit, and I agree with that. But then our secondary focus shouldn't be on cars. There are other ways to get to transit other than driving. You can walk. Living next to transit is obviously a preferred approach. Having transit-oriented development. And trying to move towards actually reaping some of the value of those investments that we have.

Replacement of a transit station would be \$250 million. So the question is, how can we reap some of the value, extend some of the benefit, and enhance the number of customers who have access to it, and not do it in such a way that further exacerbates traffic problems.

I think that is the balancing act we are constantly trying to strike.

I think in the case of the Takoma Avenue station development proposal, we are looking at ways for Metro to get much-needed revenue. We are looking at ways to build customer base. We are

looking at ways to get people closer to their jobs, give them closer access to transit, we are looking at ways to try to strike some balance between transit, walking, as well as driving.

And are we doing it 100 percent? Clearly you don't think so, and that is part of the dialogue that we're going through still on that project.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Just underscore balance. I think we are going to hear a lot more about that over the course of the evening.

Yes. Thanks, Richard, for your question.

MS. GREEN: My name is Sara Green.

MR. SLATER: Sara.

MS. GREEN: And I live in Takoma, D.C., and this question is also about the Takoma station and the unfortunate joint development proposal that is there.

During the two-year discussion about the Takoma central district plan, your representative, Elisa Hill, attended some of those meetings, and she repeatedly told the community that WMATA would abide

by the terms and conditions of the Takoma central district plan.

The terms and conditions of the Takoma central district plan included the replacement of 150 short-term parking spaces and retaining the 50-foot buffer that buffers apartments. On Eastern it's a landscape buffer. It buffers the apartments on Eastern Avenue from the fumes and noise of the buses that go by. These are very specific details in the Takoma central district plan. Ms. Hill said WMATA would abide by them.

When the WMATA board ratified the contract or finished the contract for that joint development proposal, these were not present, these elements were not part of the proposal before us.

So the question is: Why did you break your promise, and do you think this erodes WMATA's credibility in the community? Because it certainly has in Takoma.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Thank you, Sara.

Who would care to respond to that one?

VICE CHAIR MACK: Could someone at WMATA speak to the plan, Dick?

MR. WHITE: Yeah, let me try and speak to process first. What we have, folks, so everybody is familiar, this is a joint development proposal that the board has taken an initial step on to help develop around the Takoma Park station, and part of the equation involves modifying some of the station facilities to replace surface parking with less than one-for-one parking and to modify some of the ways that the vehicles circulate in and out of the station, and provide for relocation of bus phase.

What we have now is the next step -- and I don't want to speak for the process that the District of Columbia is using, and I'll let members at the table who represent the District speak to that. From a WMATA point of view, the next step that is required of us is to have a public hearing that is required under our compact, and to make sure that we make available to the public basic information associated with the impact on our facilities of this development.



We did have a public hearing scheduled for that. A number of members of the community thought that there wasn't enough notice associated with that, and also that there wasn't enough access to basic information that the public would want to be able to review in the context of commenting on that.

So we made the decision to postpone and reschedule that public hearing, which will be occurring a little bit further down the road.

And in conjunction with that, based upon the kinds of input that we just heard from Ms. Green and others, we are examining the basic impact assessment information that we would have for our public hearing to ensure that it is adequate and that it covers issues as Ms. Green has just indicated. So we are in the process of reexamining the evaluation that needs to be done and whether we need to supplement any of that work.

So we are stepping back, we are recognizing we want to make sure we fulfill our responsibilities to provide the public with its adequate documentation for their review, to look back at some

of the historical issues that have been presented to us, to make sure that our assessments are adequate and complete, and to make sure that we have evaluated as required any issues associated with whether we are doing something less than a one-for-one replacement parking.

When we finish this evaluation work and review it with our board and go back to the public with a public hearing date, hopefully we will have all the information that people want to make sure we have so that they can adequately comment on the next step of the process.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Very good.

I would just offer that you can tell by the character and quality of the questions that nothing is scripted here, and so we will just continue to get really good questions, as has been the case thus far, and that's what makes this a productive evening.

So thanks, Dick, and thanks, Sara.

MR. SNYDER: My name is Michael Snyder. I live in Rockville, Maryland in Montgomery County.

First of all, I would like to thank you all for being here. I think this is a great program, great forum for being able to communicate with your customers.

I would also like to say that I have been riding Metro rail for 19 years, and for the most part I have been very happy with the service. I have also had an opportunity to use the business service, and I wanted to say that the new signage that you are putting in the buses that tell you the next stop is absolutely fabulous. I would like to see more of those types of enhancements to the service.

MR. SLATER: Very good.

MR. SNYDER: I would like to know what the progress is being made on establishment of the RAC, the Riders Advisory Council, where you are in the process of filling the positions, and how you anticipate that having a RAC in place will affect events such as this, this town hall meeting and things like that.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MR. SNYDER: Second, I had an opportunity to look at the new train configuration. I am very concerned that we are losing seats. I get on at Rockville, second stop on the Red line. Generally the seats are all full and I may have to wait for a second train to be able to get a seat because I have to ride for about 40 minutes. So I think that losing seats on the trains is going to be a major concern, and maybe you need to revisit that or find a way to come up with a configuration where we can at least keep or improve the number of seats.

And finally, I would like to ask why there isn't signage outside of the Metro rail stations that tell you about what's going on inside, such as delayed trains, such as fires, such as lines that are closed and things like that.

It is unfortunate that you end up getting into the system and find out about the problems rather than finding out about them in advance.

Thank you for your time.

MR. SLATER: Okay, thank you. Thanks, Michael.

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: I'll start on the RAC question. I think Mr. Zimmerman might be a good go-to on the cars and the signage.

As far as the RAC, I'll tell you what is most impressive to have put out the opportunity for people to participate. There are 21 positions, and one of those is to be held by the head of our chairman of our elderly and disabled committee, so that leaves 20. Well, for those 20 slots we received some 940 applications.

So where we are right now is the staff is going through an initial review, looking at all the detailed essays, sorting it by regular rail riders, bus riders, Metro access, and then giving to each of the states and the District the opportunity to say here are who we recommend as your first cuts. The first folks that we recommend that we recommend be appointed to this. We will review that on a state-by-state basis and then look forward to contacting those individuals and getting the RAC in operation.

And as far as the value-added of having it, I think it is a natural outgrowth of these type of public hearings. So we have the opportunity to hear on a regular basis from our riders and hopefully that will change the type of service we provide because we are not just dealing with an abstract or our occasional use, but hearing from the regular users of the system.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MR. SMITH: Robert Smith from Montgomery County.

Before I comment, I just want to say who is missing. One of our colleagues who does represent Montgomery County, Mr. Gordon Linton, has undergone significant surgery over the past month and has not been able to be with us for a number of meetings. So in addition to representing the governor, I'll step in, I guess, and say I'm from Montgomery County at the same time.

The seat question, in terms of removing the seats, interesting, a lot of people have viewed the new car configurations and your comment is really

the first negative that I have heard on that. I think we are talking about two seats in most cases. Staff can adjust that. In some cases it may be four, but the reality of it is what an earlier questioner raised in terms of the dwell time of being able to get on the train when the doors open and people file off, and then there's not enough time to get on -- that's one of the things that reducing those seats right there around the doors is trying to accomplish, by creating more room for people to move more quickly into the train and out of the train, so that we can facilitate that dwell time at each station.

Additionally, you know, there are estimates that by doing this reconfiguration -- that is moving not just a couple of seats but the rails that one holds onto in the system -- that we may accomplish moving as much as 15 percent more people in a given car, which we are in a system that's finite in terms of the amount of track we have and the number of track we have.

Once we go to eight-car trains, we are pretty well maxed out. So using more creative ways to get people onto the train and off faster, and to get more volume out of the cars and the dollars we invest is something that is absolutely essential that we do.

So I think that you may hear stories on both sides of this question, in the media and otherwise, and until you have actually experienced the new cars, which I think will be coming on during the next year on the train, hold your fire and take a look at them and see how the ride goes.

I ride from Shady Grove, so no one has a longer ride than me to downtown.

MR. SLATER: Dan?

MR. TANGHERLINI: I would like to offer a little bit of an alternate perspective, too. I am a daily rider. I get on at Union Station or at Navy Yard. I get back on right here at U Street-Cardozo. I tell you, a seat is more of a vague concept to me than something I ever think I'm ever going to get. More often than not, I'm hoping for a train. And so



I think in many cases what we need to do is start making sure that we have space, we have accessibility, we have opportunities for everyone to get onto that train, and that may mean rearranging the seats and maybe opening up some more space.

As far as sharing information with riders before you get into the tunnel, I agree with that entirely. The board and the staff have been working on that issue. I think those of us who do have options, who could ride the bus or could take a taxicab, would like to know when that next train is coming so we can make that decision.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good.

Let us also hear from Chris Zimmerman.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Let's not.

MR. SLATER: Let's not? Well, I want to say this about Chris. I understand that he chairs the committee that deals with the signage, so all of the positive comments about what's in place, we thank Chris for that, and then Chris gets the responsibility for helping us with the signage outside, maybe, as well.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: I agree with what he said.

MR. SLATER: Let's then go to the next questioner.

Let me also acknowledge that Jim Graham has joined us. Jim, you should know that the chairman was talking about your leadership as relates to buses along with Gladys earlier, and how much you have contributed to the work of the board. So we are pleased that you have joined us this evening.

Yes.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Oh, yes. There you go. Okay. Very good. Thank you.

MR. POMEROY: Hello, everyone. My name is Scott Pomeroy. I'm a Washington, D.C. resident. I have lived a block away from this building here on the 14th and U community for the past 18 years. So I have seen the effect of the Green line, which wasn't open when I first moved here. I saw the effect that it had on the corridor where less than 10 percent of the businesses survived the construction, but then I have been able to be a

great part of the revitalization that it has served as a major catalyst to bring to this area, where I have been -- where I served as the director of the Community Revitalization Project for this area through the development of the WMATA parcels and the leadership of our council member and the land development chair, Jim Graham. We have seen just hundreds of millions of dollars investment occur in this area.

My question relates to the potential of extending the Yellow line from where it's terminating here at Mount Vernon Square to points further beyond possibly Fort Totten or Greenbelt as an alternative to a decision that was made several decades ago to build an expensive turnaround at Mount Vernon Square and terminate service at the only area -- and this means that we have stops at Shaw, U Street, Columbia Heights, and Georgia Avenue that are seeing amazing development and will see further development that have half the service that was originally intended by the plan, which called

for the Yellow line to go to near West Hyattsville and extend east.

What I am asking for is whether or not we can have a cost-benefit analysis similar to what has been done for these particular projects to really look at the potential of this. Because it would not only benefit these very dense urban areas, but potentially the Prince George's Green line section which right now has some of the lower ridership numbers, but it would potentially create a great northeast to southwest corridor along what is one of the hardest access routes trying to cross the bridges across the river.

So my question is, can we get this type of analysis? And I would like to hear from each of the jurisdictions.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Let's go with Jim first.

MR. GRAHAM: I'm a jurisdiction. Thank you very much, Scott. We appreciate all of your good work on this U Street area. Absolutely.

As you know, you and I have been exchanging communications about this still again because this issue has come up periodically, and while we have some, the general manager has given us some preliminary estimates as to how much it would cost to extend the line, I think you are absolutely right; we should have -- and I do call upon management to conduct a thorough physical analysis of the potentiality of this. Because I think Ms. Mack is certainly going to be very interested in that; I'm going to be very interested in it. So I just want you to know you have my support to get this really, really solid set of numbers that we can then take a look at.

Thank you very much.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Yes, Dan.

MR. TANGHERLINI: Can I tag onto that? I would love to be able at Mount Vernon Square to get on a Yellow line train and take it up here to U Street every morning. And so there are issues associated with how we do it, how much will it cost,

how do you run the service. But I think those are worthy of exploring.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good.

I think those two comments may speak for the entire group, Scott.

MR. GRAHAM: Well, does Maryland and Virginia help pay for it? That's the --

[Laughter.]

MR. ZIMMERMAN: Well, I'm happy to address that. We, of course, always want to be very supportive of transit everywhere in the region. I would point out, however, that there are six lines from Metro rail that extend out into Maryland. There are only two places where it extends into Virginia. And out of the -- was it 83 stations now -- 86 -- only 20 of them are in Virginia. We have a long way to go to catch up with some of the extent of the reach of the system in the District and in Maryland, and so I think we would probably have to do a lot of investing in that ourselves for the extension that we are looking to do, and a few others we have in mind. So I expect that there will

be interest, but probably each jurisdiction is going to have to come up with funding itself to be able to talk about doing any further extensions, and that is essentially the agreement since the completion of the 103-mile system, that if you want to do an extension, you want new stations, that's fine, but that jurisdiction has to find out to pay for it.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thanks, Chris. Thanks, Scott.

Yes, please.

MS. MOORE: My name is Robin Moore. I live in the U Street area as well. One of my concerns is for the Metro access system. I have a disabled sister who solely relies on this as her means of transportation. She is on oxygen and there have been instances where she has called for pick-ups and they do not arrive on time, as well as picking her up from her appointments on time.

My concern is, and question, will there be some way of Metro access trying to rectify these problems in the future? Because it's been ongoing ever since Metro access has started, and we have

spoken with supervisors who say they're going to do something, and nothing seems to be done with that.

On my behalf, I was an avid rail rider until a couple of months ago. I do not like the services that I have been receiving. They have been overcrowded, something that some people have already mentioned. I have now converted solely to the Metro bus system to get me back and forth where I need to go, and I especially like the Circulator bus system and was wondering if there is any way of having that system extended to other areas.

Thank you.

MR. SLATER: All right. Very good. Thank you, Robin.

Yes, Jim.

MR. GRAHAM: Well, I can just say very quickly, I mean we share your concerns about Metro access, believe you me, and a whole lot of others that you didn't mention.

The good news is that there is a new contract, there is a new contractor, there is going to be a new set of services on Metro access. And we



have learned our lesson in terms of what needs to be corrected, and I think you are going to see, I believe starting in January, you are going to see a whole new service in that regard.

We are also -- I want to say one other thing. We are also exploring, I hope very aggressively, for those who are able -- you know, we want everybody who is disabled and qualified to have access to transportation in this region. For those who are able, however, we want to issue them a SmarTrip card, so that they can choose their own planning. You know, they can get on the buses, they can get on the subway, they can travel free, you know, for those who are able.

And I think this will be a good system for some people. I don't know how many. I don't know what percentage it is. But for some people, it's going to make sense. For a whole lot of other people, they are still going to want to have Metro access. But we are going to try to do both.

But I think you are going to see some very good changes.

Thank you.

MR. SLATER: Very good. Very good.

Yes. Thanks, Robin.

Oh, I'm sorry, did I miss Dan? Sorry about that.

MR. TANGHERLINI: I just can't let a compliment about the Circulator go by without saying, you know, thank you, Mom. No, I'm just kidding.

No, thank you so much. I think that's the kind of service, that's the kind of quality, that's the kind of level of investment that we want to see replicated throughout the entire bus service. We believe that the bus service and the rail service should be integrated into one system --

[Applause.]

MR. TANGHERLINI: -- one system that you then get to make a decision about. What do you want to ride, what fits in your day today, having options, having alternatives. That's key to a successful city, that's key to a successful transportation system.

MR. SLATER: Excellent. You know, I was wondering when it would come up, and we are roughly half way through the session, and it did come up just almost midway there. Very good.

Yes.

MR. SMITH: My name is Eric Smith, and I live in Dupont Circle, and I have a comment, a suggestion, and a question, so hope I can get that all in.

My comment is my bride and I moved to Washington just a year ago, and we want to say that we really love the Metro service. It's been a very useful way to get around town. We moved here from a city where we had bus service, and we also had a car, and we had to use the car a lot. Since we came to Washington, we found that the service was so good here, we didn't need to have a car anymore. So we got rid of it. We use both Metro bus, Metro rail, and walking, and between all those things, we get where we need to go.

My suggestion has to do with the Ride Guide feature on the phone system, the 637-7000. I use it

a lot. It's a very useful way to find out where to go and how to get there. But one of the things, you often have special announcements on there, and sometimes they are quite lengthy, and so far as I know, there is no way to bypass those announcements. They are worthwhile. I learned about this meeting from one of those announcements, but if I have heard the announcement before, I don't usually need to hear it again. So if there is a way to bypass that announcement, that would be a great improvement.

My question has to do with the SmartCard. I understand there are some ways in which it is accessible, but there seem to be other ways in which it is not.

One of the ways that it appears that it's not is that there is no independent way to find out how much money have on the card. I mean if you can see, you know, you can access it visually, but if you are a person who is blind or visually impaired or has limited English skills, it might be -- it would be worthwhile to be able to access that information auditorily or in some other way.

Do you have plans to make that card more accessible?

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thanks, Eric. Dick.

MR. WHITE: I don't know the answer off the top of my head about that. We can certainly -- we do have some staff here that might be able to provide some additional explanation on that.

I know our station managers have the ability to be able to read the value on that card and provide you with some information. I don't know whether any of the staff that are sitting here can provide any supplemental comments on that.

In the back, yes.

MR. SLATER: Go ahead. Why don't you go to the mike, please.

MR. BOND: Yes, sir. If you are in a rail station, you can tap the card on the target on the vending machine and on the menu it will tell you how much fare value you have remaining on the card.

You can also take it to the station manager who can do the same thing for you. He has a device

in the kiosk that allows him to check the card and the value.

When you use it on the bus, it will show you the value after the fare is deducted, and some time in the future there will be point-of-sale devices.

MR. SMITH: I understand, though, that I guess I was talking about when you're actually on the mode of transportation, there doesn't seem to be any way that, you know, unless you ask somebody that you can independently access that information.

MR. BOND: That's correct. We do not have readers on the rail cars. There is a reader on the bus, but it will only show you the balance when you pay the fare. However, the bus driver could tell you, and the station manager could do the same thing.

MR. SMITH: I mean independently accessible.

MR. BOND: I know what you're saying. We have an auditory function on the vending machine. I don't think it gives that, but if you and I can get

together, I will get your phone number and get back to you on that.

MR. SMITH: And my question on the Ride Guide.

MR. WHITE: We will have to get back to you on that.

MR. SMITH: Okay.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Yes, Chris.

MR. ZIMMERMAN: I mean it seems like something we might want to look into, how complicated it would be to have a reader of some kind that you could present the card and get feedback from. I don't know, but seeing things they have in various kinds of stores, where they read the codes and give you price information -- I would at least like to know the answer to that if at some point staff can give us some information.

MR. SLATER: That's a good point. Good point.

Okay. I know that Dan Tangherlini is going to have to leave us, so I would ask if he would just

maybe offer any parting comments that he would have before dismissing himself.

MR. TANGHERLINI: Mr. Graham just asked me, where are you going? And so I'm going to tell you. I want to first of all thank everyone for coming out, and particularly my fellow board members, and it's always good to see you, Secretary Slater, my old boss.

MR. SLATER: Thank you.

MR. TANGHERLINI: But I am headed over to Wards 7 and 8, where I'm going to meet with a fellow board member, Mr. Barry, and Council Member Gray and some citizens, where we are continuing to discuss the Anacostia streetcar project. And so we are making progress on that. We just got a group back who went out to Portland to look at it, and so we are continuing to discuss that possibility.

So I want you to know that while I am leaving you tonight, I am going to continue to work on transit, and I know Mr. Graham is now here, and he can more ably fill in for me with all his experience on the board.



So thank you very much, everyone, for coming out. Thank you for coming to the Reeves Center, which I get to call home.

MR. SLATER: Thank you, Dan. Yes, give Dan a round of applause.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: And I think I would be remiss if I didn't say that, number one, Dan does a great job.

MR. TANGHERLINI: Thank you very much.

MR. SLATER: But also all of this work that's going on as relates to Anacostia, this is special work, and it's going to redound to the benefit of the entire region. So I commend Dan on the meeting he's going to. Please tell all of our friends there hello and thank you for your work.

MR. TANGHERLINI: Thank you.

MR. SLATER: All right.

MR. TANGHERLINI: I appreciate it.

MR. SLATER: Thank you. Okay. Very good. Let's go back here for our next question.

MS. WHEELER: Hello. I'm Faith Wheeler, ANC commissioner in the heart of Takoma. First of all, I would like to thank all of you board members and staff, lots of staff, for coming out. This is really important to hear people's concerns and all.

I want to say that I also want to specifically thank Gladys Mack and Jim Graham, our two main representatives on the board, for their concerns and their work in making transportation more accessible by buses and clean air buses and all that sort of thing, which is really very important to us in Takoma.

Just very briefly, I do want to say that Takoma is one of the first transit-oriented communities in the metropolitan area. We are very proud of that. We are very proud of our Metro station and want it to be as accessible as possible. Accessible, I think, is the key word here and the key theme.

What I want to say is -- well, first of all, I think I want to talk about, of course, the proposal to build a number of townhouses, 90, 95

townhouses adjacent to the Metro station on a green space. And I want to particularly thank our Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton for ensuring that the residents of Takoma have a chance to learn what the current proposal is, to be sure that the public has access to the public documents, and to be sure that the public has an opportunity to express their concerns before FTA makes its decision on the WMATA sales contract.

As I said, we in Takoma are very, very proud of our system and our station. We have in fact a history of playing an important role for WMATA to have been established as soon as it was. We stopped the north central freeway, which some of you are familiar with, which was going to pour 12,000 cars into D.C. daily, and asked -- recommended that the Federal funds, the Federal Highway funds be transferred to a rapid transit system, which is what we have now, the Metro system.

My questions will reflect really my constituents' concerns in the heart of Takoma, and two of them are general. Very quickly, why is WMATA

proposing to reduce accessibility to our transit services in order to build as many as 90, 95 townhouses there? Which is the priority of the WMATA, adequate accessibility to transit services for the public, or significant profit for developers?

More specific concerns, more specific questions, which have not -- in addition to what have already been raised, if d.dot and WMATA are expanding bus services in D.C., which they clearly are, why is WMATA reducing the recommended number of bus bays at the Takoma Metro station from 12 to 10?

I attended a d.dot WMATA meeting a few weeks ago explaining the possibility of a BRT system across the park via Military Road, and we, with all of our development, we have now about 563 new housing units coming in which were either built, approved, or formally in the approval process. They are right within two and a half to three blocks of the Metro station. So we will have not only those who are currently interested in crossing the park

and using public transit instead of cars, but also new folks coming in.

Fourth and last question, handicapped access to our transit platform, again another accessibility question. Why is the access to our handicapped elevator service being reduced, according to this plan?

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. A number of questions. How do we -- yes, Ms. Mack, please.

VICE CHAIR MACK: Let me address the issue of the concerns about the Takoma development, and Ms. Wheeler, I want to thank you for your continued interest in transit and contribution to transit over the years, and we have had an opportunity to discuss your concerns regarding the Takoma project.

As the general manager said, we are planning a public hearing where there will be an additional opportunity for the community to speak about the issues regarding this development project. And I will just say that the plan there is for 85 to 90 townhouses. There was a point at which there were a few more than that number, but based on some

of the concerns that have been raised, that number was reduced, and it's important to go back to something that Mr. Tangherlini said earlier, and that is we are -- we do try to strike a balance between development that will make transit available to people who can walk to transit and not have to use their cars, and also the convenience of around the people who already live around transit, so that their accessibility is not diminished.

We hope that at this hearing that we have in the coming months we will have an opportunity to hear again the concerns that have been expressed, and that will occur before any final decisions are made on the project.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. What about some of the other questions?

MR. GRAHAM: On the subject of the Takoma development, I am chairman of the real estate committee at Metro WMATA, and I am very proud of the development that we have had, the joint development that we have had, which has always occurred with strong community support.

The Takoma development has been delayed year after year after year as a result of community opposition, and you know, my position on this has been absolutely firm. I think this is a decision for the District of Columbia because it is within the District of Columbia. I know we can't ignore the fact that there are people in Maryland -- now, Commissioner Wheeler, you are not in Maryland, you are in the District of Columbia. You are an ANC commissioner. We cannot ignore all the views of the neighboring community, but this is principally a decision for the District of Columbia.

With that said, I think I have reached the point where community opposition to this has forced me to reopen my mind on this issue, and I am prepared to go to the compact hearing, I am prepared to meet with people from Takoma, Takoma, D.C. in particular, to just take a serious look at this project, to make sure whether this is something that is going to be welcomed into this neighborhood, or is this something where we're going to continue to have the resistance that we have experienced.

I want to be respectful of that dissenting point of view, and I want to work with the people, including yourself, Commissioner Wheeler, to see what we can do about this.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Yes? And thank you, Mrs. Wheeler.

MS. FOSTER: My name is Ruth Foster.

MR. SLATER: Yes, Ms. Foster.

MS. FOSTER: And I'm from Takoma, D.C. I was in on the planning of the Metro before it was built, and a lot of promises were made. But what I am concerned about right now is that we have learned that WMATA has an environmental study and a traffic study for the proposed townhouse development at the Takoma Metro station.

However, we were told that we cannot get copies of these studies. I would like to know why we can't get copies of these studies, and when will these studies be available for the public?



Also I want to talk about bus transportation on Georgia Avenue, which is atrocious. You know, I have caught the bus in Silver Spring to come into the District, and I have had to wait 45 minutes during rush hour to get a bus --

[Applause.]

MS. FOSTER: -- and it's not because the buses are broken down, either, because one day I was -- you know, I kept seeing these 70 buses going by "not in service," "not in service." And I said where could they be going not in service during rush hour?

I was on the bus one day and the bus driver was so mad that he called Metro about the driver ahead of him, because every day he puts "not in service" on the bus, and goes down Georgia Avenue and leaves people waiting there at the station. And every time the bus comes to that station, it almost has a full bus right there at Silver Spring, and they have to pass people coming down.

And I want to know why. The person who is at Silver Spring needs to monitor those drivers better, and make sure -- and then when the buses come, you get two and three buses at one time --

[Applause.]

MS. FOSTER: -- so if you miss one bus, you missed all the buses. And that's not right.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Ms. Foster, I think you are speaking for a few other people here tonight.

Dick?

MR. WHITE: Yeah, I think Ms. Foster had two issues here. On the Takoma Park, let it be said that all the information that is going to be made available to the public for their review and comment as a part of the public hearing process will be available 30 days prior to the public hearing. So that when we reset the date for this public hearing and complete our evaluation of the documentation for that, we will commit that 30 days prior to the public hearing, any and all of the documentation

that will be a part of that public hearing will be fully and completely available for the public.

MS. FOSTER: That sounds good. It sounds good. But how are you going to make it available?

MR. WHITE: People can get access to this information by coming to the Metro offices where it is available for review. I don't know -- I think that's the basic procedures for the review of the documentation, isn't it, Carol?

We will identify appropriate places where it would be more accessible in the community for people to review.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. And, Dick, maybe we could visit with Ms. Foster about places that she might know about that we could use as well.

MR. WHITE: Yes, that is an excellent suggestion.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MR. WHITE: Let me ask Jim Hughes and Jack Requa whether they can help provide some additional information to Ms. Foster about the specifics of

what she is talking about with her experience on Georgia Avenue and Silver Spring.

MR. HUGHES: Yes. My name is Jim Hughes. I am the deputy general manager of operations and all the rail and bus operations come under that.

Again, I'll talk a little bit about it. The Georgia Avenue corridor is one of our busiest corridors in terms of ridership. We have a lot of service out there. Buses are still crowded.

It is also one of the corridors that we are constantly having a problem of running time in terms of just getting the bus from one end of the line to the other.

We have worked real closely with the District to try to get some traffic improvements on the corridor so that there is a connection between our buses and the traffic lights. It's the first corridor we're doing this with in the District so that as a bus is approaching, if he is -- if the bus is late, the green will stay green longer, and I'm sorry Dan laughed, but this is the first corridor that we have identified in the District where we

have some demonstration out there to try to improve that. It's tied into their traffic signal improvements.

However, it doesn't stop your comment about buses are late, they're bunching, they're overcrowded, because all of those things are true. There is no reason an operator should be posting a sign that says he's full when he's not.

We do have supervisors. You mentioned one in Silver Spring. We have been noted by review people that came in and looked at it and said we know enough people watching our service. So it's one of the areas of improvements where we're going to have more people on the street looking at our operators, looking at our service, see if there is a different way that we can monitor the service and put it out there, so that when buses bunch, can we get them farther apart. When an operator is doing something he's not supposed to be doing, we've got somebody out on the street closer to seeing them from time to time, and that's something that's

coming forward through our board, through our budgetary process, in the next couple of months.

MS. FOSTER: What about the "not in service"?

MR. WHITE: Again, there are some instances where buses are going from one place to the other not in service. There aren't that many of them. We'll pay extra attention to Georgia Avenue and get some people out there to take care of it.

Thank you.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Yes, Jim.

MR. GRAHAM: We have the same issue on 16th Street that you are referencing on Georgia Avenue, and I really would like the statistics -- I've asked several times for the statistics on 16th Street, and having asked several times, I'm going to ask publicly for that information to be provided on the 16th Street routes.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Very good. Very good. Could you go to the mike? Okay, that's good.

MR. BUTLER: Excuse me. My question is why there isn't enough Metro security at certain stations, but there's too many at other stations. It's been times that I've seen teenagers as well as some people, you know, just some radicals, some of the stuff that you see, and you know, they just bunched up. I seen teenagers get jumped at stations and people get robbed, and I say this is crazy. And I just want to know why there isn't more security.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Chief, please.

CHIEF HANSON: We currently have a sworn strength of 400 people, and that's in a tristate jurisdiction of 1500 square miles. Generally for the trains and rail stations, one police officer has a handful of stations on his or her beat, and then that is augmented by officers in a police car. We do work in a concurrent jurisdiction with the local police, and I hear what you say.

In fact, I would suggest to you that robberies in this region are probably up and we're -

-

MR. : You have to wait your turn.  
Excuse me.

MR. SLATER: Yes. I think I wanted to make sure that Chief Hanson had finished her answer, and then we're coming right to you.

MR. : Thank you.

CHIEF HANSON: And we have experienced more robberies, too. If you want to give me specific locations. The District commander for the Red line and stations up this way is standing in the back. That's Captain Bill Malone, and then we also have Captain Markelson that's responsible for the other half of our system. So we are happy to take your specific information and respond to whatever concerns you may have about the juveniles, which we recognize is an issue, and the sergeant who deals with that situation is also in the back, and that's Sergeant Warren Donald. So we would like to get who, what, where, and when, and look at what type of strategies or deployment we can use to respond to those particular situations, sir.



MS. DOUGLAS: Good evening. My name is Dorothy Douglas. I am the ANC chairperson of 7-D, and I will give a suggestion on how you can obtain this information. We also are seeking information, statistics for the Deanwood subway station. I would suggest as the ANC that those documents, the information should be given to the ANCs and also to the civic association groups and also to city council, where this young lady or anyone else can go and get copies of these documents instead of being run around. I think that would be a helpful thing to the community to be able to have access to that, because this is Freedom of Information that should be allowed for each person that wants to get this information. That's my suggestion. The ANCs, the civi association group, and also the city council.

But while I'm here, my concern is basically just what everyone has spoke upon. My concern is that at the Deanwood -- not the Deanwood, the Benning Road Metro center, you all are building a five stories building that's there, and the community is opposed to this. No one has come

forward to the ANCs from Metro. We trying hard to reach Metro to come out to our community meeting.

Well, Ms. Darvin came yesterday but was unable to answer the questions that we needed for the community. They do not want this project in the community because they were never notified in the first place. So what is happening, you all are putting things in the community and not letting people know what's happening, and then they having a hard time to fight to say that we don't want this building or any kind of projects that you putting in here without addressing the community first of all.

So I'm asking you all as the board and Mr. Graham that you all reach out to the community because the community does not want this project, and also Councilman Mr. Gray say it's not coming up, and I'm sure Mr. Graham probably had some communication with him. He say it's not going to happen, and it shouldn't happen. Because just putting a rubber stamp back in that area which is not big enough.

And my second question, and you all had a canvass that you putting all over the Metros around citywide. That was never even shared with the commissioners or the ANCs because of the fact that you got that at a late date that you going to put them up and this is what's happening. It's a lack of communication between Metro. You all decide to do what you want to do and the community is never made aware of what's going on. You all don't keep your good faith with the community. The community is the one that help keep the process going, keep the Metro and putting money into these buses and trains.

So I'm asking you to please reconsider or not to put this building up for the community because they do not want it. And I have Ms. Knox is also part of the committee that is working on it, and she have a few questions.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MS. KNOX: That's basically my sentiments are shared with her, and so that's basically it. We would like to find out basically where Metro stands

with respect to the withdrawal of this project,  
given our relationship with you all.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thank you. Jim.

MR. GRAHAM: May I? The project you are  
referring to at Benning Road, the Sasosa Project, is  
dead. There's not going to be any Sasosa Project in  
that location.

Now what I would like to do is I would like  
to join with Council Member Gray and Commissioner, I  
would like to talk to you, if you are able to stay.  
If you have to leave, please get my card before you  
leave, because I would like to speak to you about  
other possibilities and about definitely sharing  
those possibilities and getting the reaction of the  
community and the advisory neighborhood commission  
before we proceed any further.

But insofar as the project you referred to,  
I think that is definitely off the table.

MS. DOUGLAS: You say it's off the problem.  
Would you get it in writing, please?

MR. GRAHAM: Yes, that's not a problem.  
We'll get it in writing, because you need things in

writing. I appreciate that. I get things in writing.

[Applause.]

MR. GRAHAM: You should have things in writing.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Very good.

Thank you, Ms. Douglas, and who was the -- all right, very good. Very good. Thank you.

Yes, please.

MR. HENDLEY: My name is Don Hendley, and I live in Fairfax County, Virginia. I daily ride the Yellow line and Blue line from Arlington. I'm generally quite happy with the service. I just have one critical and one positive comment to make, and anybody can respond.

The critical comment I guess has to do with the nature of public service, and that is a couple of times, about three or four times over the last several years I have had a damaged farecard, and the station master is usually helpful in giving me an envelope and I mail it in, but I really never get a response, and to me that's kind of -- I classify it

as a minor irritant, but I say it reflects something about the way correspondence is logged and tracked or something like that, because I never -- I have never heard back on three or four attempts at getting compensation.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MR. HENDLEY: I solved this problem by going to SmartCard, so I don't have that problem anymore, which makes me hope that Mr. Kauffman is working hard to make sure that the Fairfax Connector gets the SmartCard soon.

Part of the comment I have is on operator training, and that is that I've been on a train a number of times when there's some kind of a delay, single tracking, you know, slowly enter a station. I generally find that the operators are very clear about how long it will take and the reason for it, and while I'm not happy about the delay, I'd say their training shows that they are quite good at explaining it, and that kind of helps put passengers at ease. So keep up that part of your training.

MR. SLATER: Very good. Thanks, Don.

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: Don, I appreciate your coming out here. I know it's a bit of wide. We'll ride the Yellow line together going back.

As far as answering the question, I had also spoken with Mr. White last week about some of the questions on customer service, and maybe he can talk about that.

MR. WHITE: Well, the example that you used, Mr. Hendley, about the card refund, you know, certainly there is no excuse. You know, if you've put this in the mail to try and get it handled, my apologies for that.

I think to the point, I think there are still a number of things that Metro does that are very, very bureaucratic, and probably haven't been reexamined in quite some time, things like how do we handle card refunds. And I certainly accept your comment here in the spirit of encouraging us to reexamine some of our basic procedures to make this a bit more user friendly and a bit more easy to do.

We have had a conflict inside of the organization around how we handle these, since they have fare value on them, and they are worth money, and who in the organization has the ability to provide instant satisfaction to the customer.

But I think we need to challenge ourselves a little bit more on that to see if we can't be more user friendly.

On just the general issue of how Metro as an organization kind of handles all of the contact points that come its way, be it by telephone contact, be it by mail contact, be it by e-mail contact, there is no doubt that the organization is not nearly as responsive as it should be, nor do we always provide the best and most complete answers to provide satisfaction to people who are examining that.

We have taken that to task. As a matter of fact, one of the issues that the board approved in last year's budget was a good increase in some of our resources to handle this. We have a reengineered process that we have developed that we



are going to be sharing with our board and then the public very shortly which is designed really to streamline how we handle this, reduce the response times that we provide, and do it in a way that provides more meaningful response to the customer and making sure we've got the right tracking systems in place so we both provide faster response and have a better management monitoring system so we really know on a real-time basis what kinds of things are coming our way from our customers and how we're doing that.

So we accept the notion that the agency needs to be better and faster in this. Quite frankly, e-mail has just exploded our world. We have not kept up with the resources to handle the volume of inquiries that have come our way, both in the traditional forms and in the nontraditional forms, and I am hoping that we will be able to share things very, very shortly with you and other members of the public and our board that will see the benefits of a reengineered process and hopefully better customer service.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Thanks,  
Don. Thanks, Dick.

Let me just by way of information say that we have got roughly 20 minutes to go. We are about 8:40, and so I think we are doing quite well, but we want to hear from as many people as possible, and then if we have a shot, I'd like to -- I know we've got a couple of questions right here. I'd like to get to those as well.

Yes, please.

MS. REED: My name is Linda L. Reed, and I live in the Petworth area of Washington, D.C.. And I have two main concerns, and it's also dealing with the 70 bus line, the cleanliness of the buses when they arrive, because a lot of times they are so dirty you don't even want to sit on them with your - - you know, work clothes.

Secondly, the cleanliness of the bus shelters at the Silver Spring station pertaining specifically to the 70 bus lines. A lot of times they are so dirty and stinky, you don't even want to

stand there and wait for the bus, and the glass a lot of times is missing from the shelters.

I would also like to say, however, I have been riding Metro for 28 years since I moved to Washington, D.C., and it has served me well. My favorite bus line is the J-2. It's usually punctual, the drivers are usually friendly, and they do their job. And I would like to say with regard to the 70 bus, my suggestion to make that a better bus line would be to divide it up at the Petworth station where you have the buses that leave from there to southwest, and from there to Silver Spring. Because if it cuts down the travel time, then you have the less crowding, you have a lot of the issues that were discussed earlier resolved.

So I had mentioned that I had given the information to call up on the phone, and I don't know if you ever got mention of it or anything, but that is one way to really eliminate it very quickly without a lot of money probably being spent, and just do it.

So that's it. But you have been doing a good job, and I have been satisfied overall with riding the bus line.

MR. SLATER: You've been riding the bus line for 28 years. That's quite a period of time for a customer. Thank you.

Yes, Dick.

MR. WHITE: I would like to address the issue certainly of cleanliness. We have recognized that. The board approved putting some additional resources in the budget that we are in right now to address that very issue. We are increasing our bus cleaning cycles from once every two weeks to once a week, and then we are also introducing a new heavy-duty clean once a month in addition to that, and we are going to have that service contracted out.

So we recognize that there is improvement to be made. The board saw the wisdom of approving some resources to enhance the cleaning cycles on both our buses and our trains.

You haven't seen the benefit of that yet because they are in the process of being

implemented, but hopefully, perhaps the next time we get together, you will see the benefits of some of the improved cleanliness in the bus system with these improved cleaning procedures and actually more resources.

Shelters. It's clearly a troubled area for us. Metro owns a bunch of the shelters, local government owns a bunch of the other shelters. Frequently people don't really know who owns the shelters and who's got the maintenance responsibility for them. So there is a lot of work that has been done where Metro is partnering with our local governments to make sure that we all have the knowledge of who's got what ownership of these things, that we have basic standards that we try and take in place of what a shelter looks like, what kind of information is available to the customer at the shelter, and what kind of cleanliness and maintenance standards are associated with those shelters.

But clearly there is a lot more that can be done to improve the overall attention to that issue,

and part of Ms. Mack's comments in her introduction where she said there's \$830 million going to work on the bus system over the next five years, a lot of that is also in this area of improving the bus shelters, expanding bus shelters, and making sure they are in a better state of affairs, and the information that is out there is reliable and up to date.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Let me just ask one quick question, Dick, and I think we have had this come up at least twice tonight, but when you have a situation like the J-2 that gets the kinds of compliments that it's gotten this evening, and I think one other, how do you acknowledge that? How do you reward that?

MR. WHITE: Well, you know, we have an internal system -- thank you for bringing that up, Mr. Secretary, because far too often it's the complaint side of the ledger that dominates everybody's focus. But we do get a fair number of commendations and compliments that get brought in of individual employees of the authority, and when

those are received, they are duly acknowledged in terms of making sure that minimally there is at least the positive feedback that goes to the employees, say, Here is a customer that really saw the benefit of you doing a good job here. And beyond that, the extent to which there is perhaps an abundance of compliments that a particular employee may be getting, there are certainly some very modest reward systems inside of the authority to try and duly recognize those.

But I think perhaps the authority can do a little bit more in that regard in terms of trying to provide some additional incentives for the employees who do get so duly recognized. But we do have a system in place that does feed those commendations back so that the employee does know it.

MR. SLATER: Sure. You know, I don't want to belabor this, but UPS, if you notice, in moving their brand, talk about what can Brown do for you, but they really show you how that driver is connecting with the customer. And you watch it and you feel good. And you hear something like we have

heard tonight, again on two or three occasions, about a particular line, a particular bus, it really makes you feel good. I think we may want to really think about how you lift that up, not only to reward the individuals who are named, but to show everyone else exactly what is expected.

Thanks for that comment.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Okay. Let me go on because, again, I don't want to lose time that we need for other questions or comments.

Yes, please.

MS. : Good evening. My name is Dana and I live in the Anacostia Metro station area, and I have been taking the bus and the Metro for 10 years. When I first started, they had a pass called Super Pass, and it was wonderful. It allowed me to go on the buses, and on the trains, as well as the local buses, such as RideOn in Montgomery County, as well as the Dash in Virginia, et cetera.

Then in 1997 they decided to go regional and then that's why they stopped their Super Pass.



My question is, are you ever going to have a Super Pass like that? Because right now I have to pay \$87 every two weeks for a bus pass and also a train pass.

And my second question is I'm from New York City, and I love my train up in New York, and it's 24 hours. I don't know if this has been addressed before, but I wonder are you all ever going to have a 24-hour system? Because for me it would be wonderful.

MR. SLATER: You've got to have a 24-hour city. No, no, I'm --

[Applause.]

MS. : Because you have to understand, where I come from in New York, I can go anywhere, everywhere, okay, it don't matter what time. But when I come down here, I have to be like, okay, I have to make sure that I get on this train before 3 o'clock or I'm going to be stuck. And let me tell you, I have been stuck, and it's not cute, okay.

The last question is Anacostia, there's a problem with the bus A-4. It never seems to come on time on Saturdays and Sundays, and I notice the A-8 comes like every 15 minutes, but somehow the A-4 never seems to come on time.

For instance, this past Saturday I was there at 1 o'clock, and it took about 45 minutes. Now according to the schedule, the schedule says it's supposed to come like around 1:20. It never showed up. It came around 1:45. And that's always on Saturday and Sunday. And I was just wondering is there any way that you all can rectify that? Because the A-8, which is the next bus stop at Anacostia, they come every 15 minutes, and it's like -- and I can't take the A-8, okay, because it doesn't go where I need to go.

So what I'm asking for you all is if you can regulate the A-4 on Saturdays and Sundays to be more on schedule. I know with traffic and things, et cetera, but it has happened, and I have been living in Anacostia for three years now, and you know, I don't think that's right, especially me

having to come from the store and then I want to go home, and then I see other people on the A-8 leaving, you know what I mean? Before me. So that was just my comment and my questions.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Yes, Jim.

MR. GRAHAM: Well, first in terms of the late night, when I joined the board in 1999 -- you'll forgive me -- the subway system shut down, the whole system shut down at midnight, and so we moved it to 1. And then there was a period of time -- then we moved it to 2, and then we moved it to 3 in terms of the weekends, and I want to acknowledge Ms. Mack for her leadership in terms of the early morning, too, because now we have the 7 a.m. on Saturday morning.

The problem is -- so I'm very pleased that we did what we did. I'm pleased that we got to 3 a.m. because we want people, particularly those who are out for a night on the town, who might have had a cocktail or two, we don't want them in their cars driving, we want them in public transportation. And so this is important.

[Applause.]

MR. GRAHAM: But what keeps us from the 24-hour situation or something approaching that is that unlike New York, we don't have a third track, and so we have to have, as a matter of necessity, we have to have repair and maintenance of the system. And so we think we have the right balance right now. I think we did so with the support and confidence that was given to us by our general manager that we have enough time for proper maintenance.

But I think we have pushed it pretty close to the limit at this point, but I am very glad we did, because it's about a living city, isn't it?

MR. SLATER: Yes. Okay. Very good.

Yes, please.

MS. GRAY: I've been on the 11th floor of this building and looked out over the rest of the city. It's ironic that you mentioned Rosa Parks. I was born and raised in D.C. I went to the march. I remember when there were streetcars, I remember when this was the D.C. Transit System. I've had the president kiss me all over my face. But I want you

to know what it feel like to be discriminated on because Metro treats handicapped people like dogs, worse than dogs. I sit in the street so many times and cry because I can't get on a bus in the heat after the bus fills up because the handicapped ramp don't work. And I'm telling the bus driver how do you lead the live? I know they spot-check buses, so I know Metro knows what work and what doesn't work. I watching buses well decorated. I'm watching money being given for homeland security. I saw a lady, Spanish lady, didn't speak no English, when her daughter, severely handicapped in a manual chair, and we sit in the street and couldn't get on the bus.

Mr. from Prince George's County, there are no P-12. One out of every four has a wheelchair ramp that works. I almost got hit by a car. I left to go get a prescription on Silver Hill Road, and there were no -- they just leave you sitting there. They're not even supervisors any more that are available. I know how Metro used to operate, and I know what you do now, and it's very, very sad.

I didn't come here to ask you to listen to my complaint. I didn't come here to ask you your concerns because it hurt too bad. I came here to tell you, being born in this city, Mr. Graham, whenever somebody is killed, something happens here today and every day, I rise. I came in to tell you I'm going to take Metro to court. You not in compliance. If you can paint the buses, if you get \$830 million, how come you can't fix a wheelchair ramp? How come you making people on the bottom, the elderly, and the people that are severely ill, suffer like that?

How come when you get on the bus, you don't have a bus driver to ask people to move so you can even get on it? If you all live -- and listen, I don't drink. I serve Jesus Christ. If God allows every last one of you'all breath and life, one of these chairs will be waiting on you at one point or another and you will understand what it feels like not to be able to get in a cab or go somewhere else. To have a bus driver -- and you talking about -- I'm not going to tell you what a bus driver did to me

because I got a lawsuit. You would not believe how nasty, how vicious, how horrible you get treated by a transit authority. But I'm going to rise and I'm going to take you to court.

That's all I came to say. I don't have to ask for my rights. I lived here when they brought them up and I will not let anybody flush them down the toilet.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: All right. Well, now, first of all, let me ask this. Let us get your name, if we may.

MS. GRAY: My name is Dorothy Gray.

MR. SLATER: Okay, Ms. Gray.

MS. GRAY: No, it ain't okay.

MR. SLATER: No, no, no.

MS. GRAY: You don't know how it feels to sit in the dark. You leave home with the sunlight and you get back when you get back. You have no idea.

MR. SLATER: No, no, no.

MS. GRAY: And you ask somebody to call a supervisor. Who you call in the middle of the night? 637-7000. We don't know anything. You have managed to -- that's okay because you have no idea. Go and get a prescription in the dark, in this chair. I should have been back home. I might leave at 10 and get back at dark. Okay? That's the essence of compliance. There's a Federal law. You got buses with little wheelchairs and decoration on them. The law requires that you don't discriminate on anybody. One out of every 30 buses that run by the District building. One out of every five or six has a working wheelchair ramp. I got pictures and I got tapes. I carry a voice recorder and a camera. So I'm going to make you understand how bad it feels. Because it breaks my heart that I go to get up and go through a struggle, but you can't get on a bus. You can't get on a bus because you got a wheelchair. It's so sad.

MR. SLATER: Right. Thank you. Let me make this point. Now clearly Ms. Gray took her time and she should have. I mean I know we've got the



red light and we've got timing and we do that. But I think we all owe Ms. Gray a round of applause for bringing her statement to us and challenging us to respond to it.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: And, Ms. Gray, we thank you for bringing this --

MS. GRAY: I don't want you to thank me.

MR. SLATER: No, no, no.

MS. GRAY: I got to go through the same --

MR. GRAHAM: I understand.

MS. GRAY: You can't shut me down, sir. Listen. I will die a soldier's death. I might get punched out, but you going to reckon with me because that's what U.S. District Court is. You not going to shut me down with a round of applause. I didn't come to make friends. I'm telling you. I'm older than you. I know what it was to have to walk through discrimination. I never expected in my elderly life to have to go through what I go through in this wheelchair with the transit authority that I watched integrate.

Do you understand what I'm saying? So you can't shut it away. God has been good to this city. Y'all making plenty of money. But you're not sharing the good things with the people that live here. You have to be accountable for what you do. And a handshake won't get it for me.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Very good.

Let me offer this. We are going to move on. I think we have heard Ms. Gray. By the way, I was the Federal official who required that all buses have wheelchair lifts. I was the Secretary of Transportation who made a commitment to work with local officials to ensure that that was going to be put in place. That's why when the issue first came up, I knew that there was a requirement that all buses meet that standard.

So we do understand --

MS. GRAY: No, I'm not talking about [off microphone].

MR. SLATER: I understand.

MS. GRAY: [Off microphone.]

MR. SLATER: We're going to -- Ms. Gray, please.

MS. GRAY: The problem ain't the problem. The problem is how you address the problem. That's the problem.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MS. GRAY: Because you haven't addressed it, the problem is going to get bigger. Tomorrow they are still not going to work. They're going to leave the garage and wheelchair ramps are not going to work. Now if we have inspectors that inspect our cars, what else on the bus that don't work? Somebody is not doing what they're supposed to do, and money is being allocated for other things, and the handicapped and the people at the bottom are having to suffer [off microphone].

MR. SLATER: Okay. And I don't think you should have it.

We are going to move on. Again, I appreciate the comments that were made, but I think we can go back possibly to a couple of comments that were made by Ms. Mack earlier. Eight hundred and

thirty million dollars, with a lot of that being dedicated to buses.

I think it important that the first question dealt with buses and before we got into the discussion to a great degree, we were talking about ensuring that there was access to all. And so again, I want to acknowledge the contribution that Ms. Gray made, and I think that the pain with which she speaks merely underscores the importance of transportation to all of us. But some of us take it for granted; others of us can't. And those of us who are in positions of leadership have to ensure that individuals like Ms. Gray and others have their needs met as well. And I think we have that commitment from the board. I believe we have that commitment from the staff, and all we can ask is that people hold us accountable.

Now with that said, we are going to proceed with the remainder of the questions, and then wrap up this evening's town hall meeting.

Yes, please.

MR. VAN BURDEN: Yeah. Good evening, board members. My name is Martin Van Buren.

MR. SLATER: Yes.

MR. VAN BUREN: And I'm a bus operator in Montgomery County.

MR. SLATER: All right.

MR. VAN BUREN: And I operate every line in Montgomery County, and I have. My problem tonight is that I believe I'm the only operator in here. Well, we talk about in uniform.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MR. VAN BUREN: In uniform. And my problem is this. The lady spoke some of the truth, and some of the truth is this, and it's best to hear it from the horse's mouth.

MR. SLATER: Now when you say the lady, are you talking about Ms. Gray?

MR. VAN BUREN: Yes.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. We want that clear for the record.

MR. VAN BUREN: It's best to hear it from the horse's mouth. Because I operate every bus in

our division. And right now I'm hoarse because I was talking back there. But what's going on is that Montgomery County is becoming a dump-off division. And what I mean by that is that we get the sorriest buses -- and this is true. Mr. White, you're supposed to come to our garage on the 21st. You will hear this. And it's true.

I had someone to try to tell me something different, and it's not. Okay. We have bus lifts that do not work, but we don't have enough employees to fix them. Okay?

Also we supposed to get new buses, all right. Now in getting these new buses, remember, we got people out there who are tearing them up. Okay? We supposed to have cameras. We going to enforce graffiti and tearing up the seats in these buses? That's one question.

The next question is this: We are losing our best buses, which is the 4300s. Okay? We are getting 2000 series in place of the 4300s, which is ridiculous.

Number one, we have the K line, the Y line, the C line, and the Q. And I know all of you up there are familiar with those lines. Those lines are very heavy. And my question is this: How can we replace the 4300s and the 2100s with 2000s that have less seating, less seating, and very little room for standing up?

Now I have been on the C-4 today, and I had standing room only. And we going to bring a 2000 bus that is very unsafe. It has a back in it. They took out the seats, 37 seats, right? And we are a crowded line, which only about 42 people get on a 37-seat bus. This is called a low rider. They're bringing this to Montgomery County. Okay?

I want the public to know exactly what's going on. Okay? Because I'm not hiding behind anything. A lot of us get up here and we say we want to improve. Well, improve relationships with the bus driver, the bus operator, the supervisors, improve the relationship there. Because a happy driver is a good driver. Believe me.

MR. SLATER: That's a good point. Thank you, Martin.

MR. VAN BUREN: Don't always try to write that driver up, all right? Talk to him. Stop switching supervisors. Stop switching managers. When you get comfortable with a manager, you need to stay with him. Right? Because he knows his personnel. Okay?

Now my other point is this, and I'm going to get to the safety part. A lot of these people -- see, they don't want me to talk. But I'm going to tell you the truth. Safety issue. Those 2000s has a big back in it, okay? Things can be hidden, right? It's a very poor constructed bus. That's why it's being given to Montgomery County. It's a dump-off county. Because every bus we got there, most of them don't even work. And I know they don't work.

And please answer my question. You are from Montgomery County. You should know. You ask around on drivers. They got almost similar



problems. But nobody, no operator will come forward and really say the truth about what's going on.

I'm tired every evening, I get on the J-9, right? And I got to take a regular bus because our high backs are being used somewhere else. I'm getting tired of that. We have to make the line -- we got overcrowding now. We got to get out there and do something about this. We can't even make the line.

I know what you're saying, but guys are sitting there waiting for buses. We are short of buses now. And those 2000 will not solve the problem.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Let me offer this. Now I think you mentioned that Dick was going to be coming to the division in a couple of days or so. I think there will be an opportunity to continue the discussion. But clearly you put some important issues on the table, and why don't we take a couple of minutes to respond to some of them. And we want

to do this rather quickly. I see the line is growing rather than shrinking.

What I am going to ask is if with the remaining speakers if we could just maybe ask one question so that we can respond to everyone who is in line, and then we'll wrap things up. But I don't want to leave this question without addressing some of the issues regarding graffiti, and I know, Chief Hanson, that you may have a comment or two as relates to that.

Also, I do think that there is a legitimate question here about maybe a particular area, Montgomery County in particular, where we are talking about buses that are in a state of disrepair, and whether there is in fact a conscious effort to direct most of those buses to that particular area.

Again, let's -- I think those were some of the high points. Maybe we can respond to those. We will be at the division headquarters here a little later to continue, and then we can get to the other individuals who have questions.

MR. VAN BUREN: Yeah, but they'll come to the division to talk to the operators, but let's talk to the people and tell them exactly what's going on. I got to put you on the spot.

MR. SLATER: Well, I think that's what we've been doing now.

MR. VAN BUREN: Yeah, but we evading the question.

MR. SLATER: Yes, but --

MR. VAN BUREN: I want to know about the buses. Why is Montgomery County a dump-off?

MR. SLATER: That's what we're about to do. All right? And that's why I set up that particular question.

Dick or others who would respond.

MR. WHITE: Yeah, I'll try and take the first crack at it and ask Jack or Jim to supplement it.

The buses that Ms. Mack explained that are on their way, the average age of the fleet is 10 years of age, and in some of our locations it's well in excess of that. And the buses that are under

order for delivery, the next set of buses are all buses that are going to go into our Maryland, three garage locations in the Maryland area. There are 217 buses that are going to be coming here that are going to substantially upgrade the condition of the fleet that are in those three locations.

I mean it is very difficult when you have buses that are 14, 15, 16, 17 years of age, which is the workhorse bus that you've got to count on every day to meet the line, it is enormously difficult, as you are saying, to ensure that that can be done.

But just a little bit more patience. Your location is coming next.

MR. VAN BUREN: Mr. White. Mr. White.

MR. WHITE: Yes, sir.

MR. VAN BUREN: I drive the J-9 every day, okay? Up and down 270. Those five buses are great. But now we are losing them, what I hear, for 9800s, right? Which are old. So how old can we get if we're taking something that is younger than what we're getting? There's nothing wrong with those five high-back buses that we have up there. Those

buses are great. And we can make time with them. There is nothing wrong with those buses. But they are taking them away from us --

MR. WHITE: Okay. That's a good point. Let me see if Jack can answer that question.

MR. REQUA: As we buy new buses, which primarily the natural gas compressed buses that we have now, we are reallocating the fleet, taking the oldest buses off the street, those that were 1986, '87, '88, and '89s off the street. So you will be getting the better buses. The older buses will be coming off the street, and when the 217 buses come in over the next year, they will be all coming to Maryland and we will allocate them to the three facilities.

We are bringing in some low-floor buses that have working wheelchair ramps and all the other amenities. They do have less standing room on those buses, but the convenience of the low floor we think is a positive.

The average age of the fleet at Montgomery is no different than most of the other facilities,

and the mean distance between failures or the opportunity for breakdown on the buses in Maryland, in Montgomery, is really in midstream with the other facilities. So I would disagree with you on the buses that are there.

MR. VAN BUREN: Can I ask you this right now?

MR. SLATER: Well, but let me offer this.

MR. VAN BUREN: I have one question and I will stop.

MR. SLATER: No, no, no, I --

MR. VAN BUREN: One question and I will stop.

MR. SLATER: Come on.

MR. VAN BUREN: No, no, just one question. Just one question.

MR. SLATER: Okay, one question, and then we move on, because everyone has been very understanding.

MR. VAN BUREN: Number one is this, right, we just had a turnover, right, we just had our articulated buses sent to Bladensburg. Those buses

are rolling up and down Benning Road. And you know what they said? Those are the most improved line. You know where those buses came from? Montgomery. You know what buses we got? We got the buses that came off the 70 line, right? And you know what they doing now? They are sitting in the parking lot broken down.

Now tell me if that isn't a dump-off place. And the high backs, you never spoke on that. Our high backs, which we are losing, right, and we will gain some other high backs which are older. How is that being replaced?

VICE CHAIR MACK: Mr. Secretary, could I have a word here?

MR. SLATER: Yes.

VICE CHAIR MACK: This gentleman is a Metro employee, I understand. What you are discussing are operational issues. There is an opportunity to discuss those, and I think we are beyond our two-minute, considerably beyond our two-minute limit. It is important for us to hear from the people in

line. We are all over time. We will have someone that you can talk to about those issues.

Thank you.

MR. SLATER: Okay.

MS. DRAKE: My name is Ingrid Drake. I am a reporter with D.C. North newspaper and Hill Rag east of the river. And I didn't hear anything about any improvements to the air quality in D.C. We've got high rates of asthma in this city and we are looking for our public transportation investments to reflect the needs of our lungs. Any new green initiatives that we are going to get in these improvements?

MR. SLATER: Well, I think definitely the new buses will help in that regard, but are there other comments that you would offer?

MR. GRAHAM: Well, as you know, we made a major investment in CNG buses in the District of Columbia, and in the state of Virginia, and they have been extremely well received. They have been efficient; people like them; they are quiet. You



know, I for one am committed to more of that technology on our roads.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good.

MS. DRAKE: Well, have any of the new buses that were just purchased, the -- how many was it you mentioned -- were any of those CNG buses?

MR. SLATER: Yes, Robert.

MR. SMITH: No, the new buses are not CNG buses, but they are a package of buses that consist of diesel-electric hybrid, and new clean technology diesel buses that the package that was purchased, by taking significantly more numbers of the older buses off the road that were just referred to a few minutes ago can actually bring us lower overall levels of carbon dioxide production within our system as a whole.

So, yes, the new bus purchase as it is constructed is situated such that it will help improve the environment within the Washington region.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Why don't we go to the next questioner.

MR. GROSSMAN: Good evening. My name is David Grossman.

MR. SLATER: Yes, David.

MR. GROSSMAN: From Arlington. I travel to D.C. I have also lived in D.C. and lived in Maryland. And I want to thank you guys for holding this forum and also to say that I think that Metro is doing a lot of great things. I have grown up in D.C. my whole life, and I was probably one of the first people to get a SmarTrip card seven years ago or whenever it was, and also the later hours. Because I certainly remember when Metro closed at 12 and I'm definitely one of those people who frequents Metro at 1:30, 2:30, and trying to make the last train on a Saturday night at 3 a.m. So I want to thank you for doing that.

My question concerns the frequent stopping of trains within the tunnels during rush hour, and I know this happens traveling on the Blue line, and I guess my question would be, I see that what is happening here is it adds up to 25 percent of my commute time from what is posted on your Web site or

on the brochures. So I wonder where the issue is. Is it that people are holding the cars? Are the trains not spaced far enough apart from each other? How can we solve this problem? And maybe a way to do this is keeping the trains at the platform so that more people can get on, and then you're not stuck in the tunnels.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thank you. All right, thanks, David.

Dick.

MR. WHITE: Yeah, I think the issue that David is speaking to is probably the Blue line and the Blue-Orange common shared trackage, and the toughest challenge that Metro has anywhere in our system now in Metro rail is that merge point through what we call the Rosslyn portal, where the Orange line trains and the Blue line trains converge, and then share track under the Potomac River and on into Washington, D.C.

Right now during the highest point of that rush hour period, we are running 29 trains an hour

through that system to try to provide the adequate amount of capacity to carry out passengers.

Our system is basically designed to accommodate up to 26 trains an hour, so right now there is no margin for error whatsoever in the movement of those trains and any small delay, be it matter of seconds anywhere up and down the system, will have an impact, particularly during the highest point of the rush hour, that peak one hour.

What Metro is doing, the solution that we have, as has been referred to previously, is to move to eight-car trains. That is the maximum amount of design capacity that the Metro rail system has. That is our best and most effective and least-cost way to add the extra capacity into the rail system and at the same time we do that to try to correct some of the areas where the greatest challenges are in the system, particularly through that merge point.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Let me offer this. Now my line is continuing to grow, and we do need to come to closure on the meeting. I

think a few of us will actually stand around a bit after it's over, but I'm going to ask that it be cut off, and what we will do is we'll just have everyone ask their question, and then in turn we are going to answer all of them. Okay.

So let me get your name and then your question, and then we'll answer them all.

MR. COLEMAN: Hello. My name is Kevin Coleman, and I'm trying to get used to public speaking.

MR. SLATER: Well, you're doing well, Kevin.

MR. COLEMAN: My name is -- excuse me, please. No one was talking when you was talking. My name is Kevin Coleman.

MR. SLATER: Yes.

MR. COLEMAN: And I think the most important issue tonight isn't new rail cars, environmentally friendly buses, or snappy farecards. It's health. Health of the patron, meaning the riders; health of the workers, meaning all Metro officials and contractors; in clarity; bird flu; and

the giant influenza are the real threat to WMATA. Not in a panic, but in a real sense of pride for a system well maintained, well served, and well secured.

In conclusion, it would give me great -- it would give me a great sense of pride when the Washington Post prints the article about how the general manager hired a leading American physician with a background in transportation to lead the health initiative for Metro riders, workers, and patrons.

Thank you.

MR. SLATER: All right. Thank you, Kevin.

Dick, I think that is something to take into consideration, and Kevin, thank you for bringing that to our attention. And I do think it fits with a comment made earlier about the environment and how transportation impacts that. Thank you.

Yes.

MS. BLAKEY: Good evening. My name is Beverly Blakey.

MR. SLATER: Yes, Beverly.

MS. BLAKEY: My issue is one that I wrote on two cards at the first town hall meeting that were not chosen, and today have not shown up on the Web site. And that issue is customer service. And I'm talking about the customer service or customer relations department.

It is absolutely, positively ridiculous and ludicrous, and I do know that those words are synonymous, that a customer should call and ask for directions and be told take this bus, this bus, this bus, and walk. When customers call, they have to give a date and a time. I have been given directions and have to ask for time. That's one issue.

Another issue is that I have lived in every jurisdiction in Washington, D.C., born and raised in Washington, D.C. The only jurisdiction I have not lived in is Montgomery County. The worst offenders are PG County and Washington, D.C. Bus service 86 was awful for seven years, and for seven years I called customer service, told them that the rush

hour bus was running early, and only thing we can do is take your name and pass it on.

That is tantamount to taking a dirty bandaid and putting it on the same wound.

MR. SLATER: Right.

MS. BLAKEY: The other problem is that when I moved to D.C., I got the D-6 bus and it was running early. I got the same treatment. It is utterly unacceptable, and I have had it up to here. Nine years being told all we can do is this, this, or this.

Now from where I stand, from where I sit, from where I phone, it appears from the outside that the people either are not trained, are neglecting their training, or just don't care.

Now having worked for 35 years, and at some of those years working on a reception desk in law firms, where you cannot treat people like that, I challenge you to improve your customer service department.



I was even told by the manager of customer service when I stated a problem to her, that the problem did not exist.

The other thing is is that I hear all of you -- and I mean spending money on things and improvements is wonderful. But they mean absolutely nothing because customer service is my pet peeve. I challenge each and every one of you on the board who does not take a bus to get on the 70 bus, the 86 bus, the D-6 bus, the X-2 bus, the buses that that gentleman was talking about in Montgomery County, and then come back and tell these people that this works and this doesn't work, and then when you ride those troubled lines, I want you to call your own customer service department and let them tell you, well, I'll take your name and what's the problem, and to this day, since 1986, was the last time anybody ever called me back.

That is not customer service. If you want customer service, here it is. And I won't cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars to do a study.

MR. SLATER: Right. Well, Ms. Blakey --

MS. BLAKEY: Thank you.

MR. SLATER: Thank you, Ms. Blakey.

Actually, you know, and I don't want to speak for the group, but I think this idea about riding some of the lines is actually a good one.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: And you may be able to fold that into some of the outreach effort that you are engaged in which I think you should be commended for. So let's keep that in mind.

We are going to move on quickly.

MR. : Okay, quickly, my name is Archie, and basically I'm just wondering -- well, I'm interested in clarity of information at buses, particularly at bus stops where you don't necessarily -- you don't have a map, you don't have times at all of the bus stops. I would just argue that is something we need in D.C. Or we have tourists who aren't comfortable with public transportation or who haven't taken it before, or even for us who go out somewhere and need and don't know exactly where we are because we're not in the

exact same -- because we're not on the same route all the time, and we need to know what bus will go where. So I argue for that.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Good point.

MR. : And I just want to quickly also check on if we are going to ever go back to dedicated bus lanes on the roads, and whether that is ever considered.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. On Ninth Street? Okay. The Circulator, we understand, has been doing some of that, and on Ninth Street, some focus to it.

Now again, my line is growing. I know we've got someone at the front sort of policing things, but do we have anyone at the back now? Okay. And again, let's try to keep it at two minutes and move on and wrap things up.

Yes, please. And I know you have been waiting for a good while. We have communicated with notes here for a while.

MR. VINING: Good evening, folks. My name is Scott Vining. I am the chair of the Metro Access

Subcommittee of the E&D Committee. I am vice chair there. I want to give you a couple of comments.

First I want to commend all of you respectfully with respect to everything, in allowing the Free Ride Program to go through with respect to everything. I heard that that came through last month.

I am curious to know with respect to your Metro access versus Metro buses why you all don't utilize your buses more so it takes less constraint on Metro access. Personal example relationship to everything: If any one of you live three miles away from a Metro station but you don't have any bus service during midday, if there is a bus out there to get you from your place to the rail, then you can hop the rail and go on about your business.

With respect to everything, I'm curious to know when you will find your -- giving some initiative to more bus lines during the day as opposed to strictly PM-AM rush out in the Clinton, Maryland area.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Now, Scott, how many do you have?

MR. VINING: A couple more, about three or four more.

With respect to the seating, I really am concerned about the seating as far as it being changed. I am, you know, a big advocate of, you know, people getting onto the trains and everything. But with respect to the seating, my concern is that you all have designated seating for the elderly and disabled, when that seating gets taken away because of the new plan in place, what is going to happen with that seating and how is it going to be enforced?

MR. SLATER: Sure.

MR. VINING: I recognize my time is up, and my final comment with respect to everything, I know the PM -- or excuse me, the off-peak hours are every 12 minutes, and the on-peak hours are like every three minutes when you are on a double line like the Orange and Blue, or six minutes if you are on a single line like the Orange going out to Vienna.

Why is it 25, 30 minutes at 9:30 at night before you ever see a train?

Since my time is up, thank you.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thank you, Scott. And I know we are going to take some of those suggestions and questions under advisement.

We will move on to our next speaker.

MR. GREENBERG: Thank you. My name is Alan Greenberg. I'm a Dupont Circle resident.

MR. SLATER: Was that Alan?

MR. GREENBERG: Yes.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thanks, Alan.

MR. GREENBERG: Thank you. I just work with various organizations, but I just want to hone in on one thing that was a focal point of a number of questions, and that is this issue about land development around the Metro stations.

I think really the issue is about taking advantage of the system we have today. It's about providing access at low cost. It's about sustainable transportation, sustainable housing, an economy that works and so on and so forth. And I

think that it is very important that we do concentrate development around Metro rail stations.

Yes, we need to be sensitive about design issues and access issues and so forth, but that really needs to be a focus of what we do, and we shouldn't, just because somebody complains, just because a lot of people complain -- I mean the best areas in this region, if you look at this corridor, if you look at Gallery Place, both sustain large amounts of new development and we really need to think strategically as a board and as a Metro community how are we going to provide incentives to local -- providing access, housing, jobs, et cetera, by Metro stations. And that is my only comment. Thank you very much.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good comment, Alan, and I think that we will be taking that under advisement as well. Thank you.

Yes.

MS. : Hello. My name is Tawanna and I am a D.C. resident, and my question is what needs to be done to get a bus or two running across

the Wilson Bridge, 495, connecting the southwest, southeast, and southern Maryland areas to Virginia?

Right now riders have to go travel northbound all the way up to northwest D.C., transfer like either at L'Enfant Plaza, or something like that, just to travel way back down.

All I'm trying to do is get from Eastover to Huntington. I can do that in like three minutes. But instead, I got to travel for like two hours. That's all.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Tawanna, thank you.

Let me ask -- that's a question that seems -- okay. Thank you, Robert.

MR. SMITH: Yes. Quickly, we cut the bus that did that, and there was a bus that used to go from the end of the Green line over to the Virginia side, and we cut the bus that did that and the reason we did that is because the number of riders were insufficient, we were subsidizing each and every rider on that line to the tune of over \$3,000 per year per person, and it didn't make financial sense.



So with that, we hoped that people would ride the rails if they wanted to make that kind of connection. We just don't have the ridership that would justify that kind of bus at this time.

MS. : How long has that been?

MR. SMITH: About a year ago.

MS. : Well, no, it's been at least two years that I've been traveling for two and a half hours every day, so --

MR. SMITH: We cut the bus a year ago June. Eighteen months. Eighteen months ago.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Okay, we'll go to the next question. But I think you are also saying, though, that there is rail service that would accommodate that need?

[Discussion off microphone.]

MR. SMITH: There is a time component with that rail service, but the bottom line is there is not the ridership there to justify that line at this time, particularly because of the construction of the Wilson Bridge. It may be something that we look at again once the bridge is completed, but what we

found was a lot of folks saying they weren't going to take that ride because they were just sitting in the same traffic they would sit in their car in while the bridge is under construction.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thanks, Tawanna.

Yes, please.

MS. SMITH: Hi. My name is Adrienne Smith. Okay. I am here to talk about two things very briefly that are interconnected, and especially after something that happened this morning.

The first is that I am from Baltimore City, and so the bus transportation service here is definitely an improvement over the bus service in Baltimore, from what I am familiar with, as well as the train system.

The problems, as I see it, are two things: The maintenance, which I have never been asked so many times to get off of a bus because the back doors don't work. I had a neighbor who told me that -- and I don't know this is true, but I have had bus drivers also, that D.C. does not keep contracts, maintenance contracts with the bus companies.

I even have a friend of mine who worked for a bus company 10 years in Laurel who confirmed this question when I asked her about it. She says, oh, that's very simple. And my neighbor used to work on it. It's not working.

It's also causing everybody to be late to work, and it's bad publicity because everybody knows where I come from. I come down 16th Street in the morning, which brings me to my second point. I want to know, because when I first started commuting, when I stopped commuting daily on the MARC, and I started living over here, I used to be able to get to work from Upshur, okay, downtown to Pennsylvania and 18th within 20 minutes.

Now the commute from Baltimore City was an hour and 20 minutes, and now it takes me a good hour every day to get to the same distance taking the bus.

A lot of people on the S-line risk their health and safety because the buses -- what did you say, they are bunched, but we say they travel in herds. Okay. And today I was on a bus 40 minutes.

There was not another bus. I don't care what time you get out there, if it's 7:30 in the morning or today I was there at 9:30, and the bus filled up. By the time it got down to -- there's a school, a charter school down there, about 12 small children got on, and it was scary, because the bus was completely packed, you're looking for an accident, and you're going to get sued. The drivers are pretty nice. They know that there are not enough buses on this line, so they go out of their way, most of them, to try to squeeze on as many people as possible.

It was really dangerous today. The children were there, the bus was shaking, and that's when I happened to see the article that you were having this meeting this evening. I said I'm going. Okay.

MR. SLATER: Well, thank you.

MS. SMITH: Now it is starting to remind me too much of Baltimore City. The quality of service is very important, and I would just say I would

expect that something would happen because you took away the express bus.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Smith, and I think we will definitely take that under advisement. We probably need to look into that issue. So thank you for coming this evening, and we are glad you saw the notice.

Yes.

MS. DUNCAN: Hi. My name is Nancy Duncan.

MR. SLATER: Yes, Ms. Duncan.

MS. DUNCAN: And I have been in the city for 33 years, and I want to say right at the top that in riding the buses I found a number over the years of bus drivers who have not been very nice, have been quite nasty sometimes. But I do want to say that the majority of bus drivers truly over the years, and especially nowadays, I find amazingly nice, so nice it makes me nearly weep. So I want to say thank you to the nice bus drivers who make the effort.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: They're here.

MS. DUNCAN: It's especially helpful, when I used to resent people in wheelchairs getting onto the buses and taking time, and now I'm one of those, I'm afraid.

I do want to say I had a couple of concerns -- I don't know if I have time, but let me just say this first. And that is a few years ago on Metro rail, as I was getting on, other people pushed past me, took over the disability and senior seats. I did not have the wheelchair then, but I was hobbling with a cane, and I had no use of my left arm, and I asked several people could they please let me have a seat. I got the finger as well as the F word, you know, FU, et cetera, and nobody would give me a seat. And I had the train lurch into the station. Therefore, I feared it would lurch forward, and it did, and I started flying, breaking all the ribs on my left side, punctured my lung and my kidney. And it leads to the issue of there is no enforcement of the senior and disability seats for those who need them, and I am concerned. With this concern, it

makes me more concerned about the proposed propositions for the lesser seats on trains.

There are plenty of people who are not really disabled in the usual sense or senior citizens who still need a seat, and I am afraid that there are a lot of people aren't that evidently needing seats who may need a seat.

Then finally, in terms of this issue, is there any way, just as a suggestion -- I don't know how to pay for it -- but to have somebody who can enforce the senior-disability seats on maybe the first and the last cars of each train? That's a lot of people, I realize, but if those two cars were known to have seats that if someone were begging, such as I was, they could be assured of a seat, then the other cars would be to be catch-as-catch-can.

That was my first concern, a way to enforce the senior-disability seats on Metro rail.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Well, thank you, Ms. Duncan, and let me go -- Dick, on that one --

MR. WHITE: Yes, there are seats that are to be reserved for elderly and disabled folks. They're right around the entries into the rail cars. Obviously it's not always honored. We do make attempts to try to remind people of that. We do have special campaigns now and again to try to -- you know, Metro manners type of message to our customers to be respectful to the people who need to use those seats.

You know, I have witnessed it myself on the trains. I mean there are some people who don't generally respect what they are supposed to do in that regard, and it is a constant struggle, but we do try to make sure that the trains are properly signed for people, we do try and engage in campaigns to remind them of their responsibilities to make those seats available.

MS. DUNCAN: Thank you.

MR. SLATER: All right. Thank you. Thank you.

Yes.



MS. : Hi. My name is Natasha, and I recently moved here like three years ago from New York, and my question is, do you guys hire bilingual people when you hire like train conductors? Because I had family from Venezuela here this summer, and they spoke very little English, and my uncle, he's diabetic, and he had the hardest time finding directions. He almost passed out. I mean it was like a total emergency for me. And they had the hardest time finding somebody to explain stuff to them.

The board that you have on the top that says what time the train is coming, I mean it's only in English. I mean I think half of the people that work in this city, I know there is a lot of people that speak Spanish, you know. There's Mexicans that ride the bus, there's people from all other parts of the world, and most of the -- I mean half or majority of the of the people here, like a lot of them that ride the bus, they do ride the bus, take the train, they do speak Spanish and English. Most of them don't speak any type of English, they speak

totally Spanish. And for some reason there's not even like -- we were given one of these to fill out. It's a comment card, and I remember that comment card was only in English. There wasn't even one in Spanish or -- I mean it was totally -- I mean I think it's totally unacceptable for a place like D.C. to not even have like the hardest time for somebody riding the Metro that's bilingual to be able to speak to somebody, ask them a question, you know. If they can't speak English.

And then my next question is that I ride out to Tysons Corner. Are you guys doing anything about the bus system there, like the 20-T and the 28-A and B? Because I have had to wait on weekends like 45 minutes until the last weekend it cost me \$40 to get back and forth to my job, and my job does not tolerate people being two minutes late, you know. It is just totally ridiculous. There's thousands of people that commute out there, and I mean I don't know if you guys -- I've heard that you guys are planning something for it, but it's really -- I mean after 5 o'clock, you should see how many

people are standing outside Tysons Corner trying to get onto those buses to go where they have to go. You know, it's like a fish market out there.

MR. SLATER: Okay. All right. Thanks, Natasha.

Well, the bilingual question and the issue of Tysons Corner. I do know that there are a lot of plans dealing with Tysons, and you may want to speak to that, Mr. Chairman, or Dick as well.

CHAIRMAN KAUFFMAN: In the interest of time, Natasha, if you will just give me a call. If you have a piece of paper and a pencil, 703-971-6262, and I'll get you some answers.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Dick, you want to let that suffice for your --

MR. WHITE: We do have a number of multilingual services that are available for people who are looking for the basic information at Metro, but we don't necessarily hire people specifically with bilingual skills to be able to communicate with people onboard the bus or the train, for example. It is not a job requirement that we define when we

do hire people. But your point is well taken on that.

MS. : Yeah, well, they do in New York City. They all speak Spanish and English, like every single one, they speak Spanish. If someone is from another country and they can't understand, I mean if there is a disaster or something happens, how you supposed to understand, okay, what exit you supposed to go in and it's in English?

MR. SLATER: Sure. Okay. I think we are going to take note of that issue, and try to respond in some way.

Yes.

MR. DOUGLAS: Good evening. My name is Tyrone Douglas. I'm a resident of the District of Columbia. I teach in Alexandria, Virginia. Unfortunately, I'm not really coming to wage a complaint with you tonight.

MR. SLATER: Unfortunately?

MR. DOUGLAS: Unfortunately.

[Laughter.]

It seems that would put me in the minority. I have been listening to the pain and the angst and some of the heartfelt appeals to the organization, and it would seem that the high-tech component for Metro is in place. Case in point, with the SmarTrip card.

What it sounds like is missing is the high-touch element. It would seem that Metro might make strides with their ridership across the board if their training included -- I don't know if the word is sensitivity, but with regard to your bus operators, kiosk managers, your train operators, and custodial staff, it would seem that they need to be trained in regard to customer management. I should say customer managing.

If your ridership feels like they are being heard and listened to, and if you guys have a system in place that allows for the information flow to be collapsed, Metro functions as a huge bureaucracy. We know that. But it may seem that you may need to make a bent toward networking in the sense that the communications aspect of your company is flattened

so that there is a horizontal interface from the store operator, a regular person on the street, a resident in the District or Virginia, because what I am seeing here is I think a need for mind share.

While you guys may be transportation experts, there are people who go through a demonstrable amount of challenges in this system, and by and large, most people tend to want to try and solve a problem. They want to be solution makers. And so if people think about a problem long enough, they will come up with a solution.

The next step obviously is to implement that and if you are taking advantage of the everyday common man who is looking at a problem every day and taking the opportunity to solve it, and they communicate that to you, it hasn't cost you any money, it hasn't taken any of your time, but it certainly has given some value-added component to your organization.

Metro is in the business of transportation and real estate acquisition and communication, and those three elements have to be tied together, not

only in your organization, but within the community so that there is more synergy involved in this process.

That's all I came to say, and thank you for your time.

MR. SLATER: Okay, Tyrone. Thank you, Tyrone.

Let me offer this, and maybe it's obvious to a few, but I do think that, number one, you have raised great questions and offered significant insight. I think that this step with the town hall meetings is a way for the leadership of the organization to do exactly what you are talking about, and then demonstrate by example the kind of sensitivity that you are speaking to. But I do think that it is something that has to go throughout the organization. I think your points are well taken and very much appreciated by the leadership of our board, and management here tonight.

Yes. I think we've got two more questions.

MR. : Mr. Slater, he was the last person.

MR. SLATER: Oh, okay. Was that it? All right. Very good. Let's give everyone, everyone who participated --

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Oh, is this our last --

MR. : Mr. Slater, sir, when you asked people to wind up and get in line, I was asked to be the last person, so nobody else would come behind me. This gentleman, while I was in line, said that he got out of line, and was talking to somebody, and then he wanted to force his way back into the line.

MR. SLATER: Well, let's do this. Let's hear from him. We're going to do it, and then we'll respond and wrap up in the appropriate way. Please. Let us get your name, sir.

MR. TAFT: I thank you, sir. I am William H. Taft, T-a-f-t, and I am with the D.C. Local Organizing Council for Empowerment.

MR. SLATER: Yes, Mr. Taft.

MR. TAFT: I want to acknowledge Ms. Gladys Mack being on the board and appreciate her



contributions to the community in regard to this board. And I want to ask the board if it would consider a resolution that was passed last year during the election to support this year's anniversary of the -- 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. And now that Sister Rosa Parks has passed, that is another component that could be a part of this resolution.

The resolution would ask that Metro will support a song that has been created in honor of those who have given us the right to vote. The name of the song is "U.S. Voters Twin National Anthem for a More Perfect Union." How would Metro support this? We just had a threat in London where the bomb went off. If this song is played in Metro to encourage people to think about democracy, think about voting, think about being a part of the process, then we are standing up for our democracy every day on our train systems, which Ms. Rosa Parks stood up and did.

So I will submit our resolution to your board to consider that, and I ask that Ms. Gladys Mack be the introducing of that board for that.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good.

MR. TAFT: Secondly, I would like to address a question about homeland security in Metro.

MR. SLATER: Sure.

MR. TAFT: My concern is about what happened in London. That thing just scared me. So I was approached as of last week by two different developers of an air system that they sell to hotels and the like, and I want to know if Metro would consider speaking with those gentlemen to get that kind of system in our Metro system in case a bomb blocks in any part of the Metro, we still have fresh air that would kill the pollens of whatever that bomb was throughout the system, because there are people trying to get out, the bomb has already blown up. So we still got to deal with safety. So that's question two.

And the second person that approached me businesswise wanted to deal with the water, the fire

hydrants, designed a new fire hydrant that no one can break into, which is an excellent opportunity, too, for terrorism. If they can get into it, they are into the water system.

So I don't know who on the panel I would speak to at your office or that could help me with that, but I would like very much to address those issues and the song as well, because all of that to me is national security.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Very good.

CHIEF HANSON: I'll make sure that he gets my card and he can e-mail me the information, if you have access to the Internet, sir, but I'll make sure you get a card.

MR. SLATER: Okay. Very good. Thank you.  
Thank you.

Now let's give everyone a round of  
applause.

[Applause.]

MR. SLATER: Let me just close by saying that I have personally enjoyed this evening's town hall meeting. Clearly we had a number of

individuals who were quite emotional and, frankly, when you commit to do this sort of thing, you really open yourself for that, because there are people who hurt, and for that, I think again the board and its leadership deserve our commendation.

This is the kind of thing that gives people an opportunity to express themselves. We then can take that information, process it, and become better decisionmakers. That's what leadership is all about. Sometimes it's following, and always it's listening. And again I think that our leadership team has personified that this evening, and I am just very pleased to have been a small part of tonight's program.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 9:54 p.m., the town hall meeting was concluded.]