

Riders' Advisory Council

April 1, 2026

Members Present:

Cole Staudt, Chair, District of Columbia
William Way, Vice Chair, Virginia*
Matthew Clark, Maryland
Eli Craveiro Frankel, At-Large/District of Columbia*
Lucas Habosky, At-Large/District of Columbia
Alex Mendelsohn, At-Large/Virginia*
Brian Meyer, Virginia
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/AAC Representative*
Thomas Shepard, At-Large/District of Columbia
Irene Stephens, District of Columbia
Hendeke Tafesse, Virginia*
Brandon Wu, District of Columbia*

* - Present via videoconference

Metro Staff Present:

Jewel Bell, Assistant Chief Transportation Officer, Bus
Gabriel Morey, Manager, Strategy and Policy
John Pasek, Deputy Board Secretary
José Reyes, Board Program Manager
Spring Worth, Alternate Director/Board Liaison to the Riders' Advisory Council, Metro Board of Directors

Call to Order:

Mr. Staudt called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Mr. Staudt turned the floor over to Board's new RAC liaison, Alternate Director Spring Worth, to introduce herself.

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda was approved without objection.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the March 4, 2026 Riders' Advisory Council meeting were approved as presented.

Public Comment:

Cal Simone shared comments on the schedule of Metrobus route D70 and how the timing of departures is causing issues for employees at the Chevy Chase library. He added that his group, the Friends of Bus Transit, had requests to relocate and restore certain bus stops on routes D80 and D82 and for additional rush hour frequency on route C83.

All-Door Boarding on Metrobus:

Jewel Bell, Assistant Chief Transportation Officer for Bus, and Gabriel Morey, Manager in Metro's Department of Strategy and Policy, provided information about Metro's plans to move to all-door boarding on Metrobus in May 2026. The presentation covered the instances when Metrobus operators would open the rear doors to allow for all-door boarding and the steps Metro has taken to launch this initiative.

Mr. Morey explained that Metro had launched a demonstration of all-door boarding on seven routes in 2023 and, after the installation of rear-door payment targets on all Metrobuses, Metro found that customers were boarding via the rear door on all routes. He noted that, by September 2025, approximately 7% of all customers were boarding via the rear door, with fare evasion rates by customers boarding at the rear door roughly the same as those boarding via the front door. He added that Metro expects to see a decrease in dwell time at bus stops with the roll-out of all-door boarding, and cited examples from peer agencies' reductions in dwell time with all-door boarding.

Ms. Bell provided an overview of Metro's initiatives underway to address fare evasion on Metrobus and also announced an upcoming Bus Town Hall scheduled for April 28th at Metro headquarters. Mr. Morey noted that Metro will also be undertaking efforts to incentivize riders to pay their fares by recognizing those riders who do.

Mr. Staudt then opened the floor to comments and questions from council members. He said that the RAC has been generally supportive of all-door boarding because of its potential to reduce dwell times, especially during rush hours. He noted his experience boarding buses at 16th/U Streets NW during the AM peak and the effect large numbers of people boarding have on dwell times.

Mr. Way asked whether drivers are able to use onboard cameras to capture photos of fare evaders. Ms. Bell noted that the cameras onboard buses are constantly recording, and if operators have issues with pervasive fare evasion, they can fill out a form to request a Metro Transit Police ride-along and enforcement effort. She added that Metro also conducts "HITE" (High-Intensity Targeted Enforcement) campaigns on routes with high rates of fare evasion. Mr. Mendelsohn said that he was happy to see the systemwide implementation of all-door boarding. Mr. Wu said that he wanted to echo Mr. Mendelsohn's comments and noted that the implementation of all-door boarding systemwide was one of the recommendations from the previous year's RAC Annual Report. He added that he's also interested in the results of the pilot of bus/rail signal lights. Mr. Wu asked if Metro provides information about the Metro

Lift low-income fare discount program as part of the targeted fare enforcement campaigns that Ms. Bell mentioned. She said she would need to check and get back to him.

In response to a question from Mr. Habosky, Ms. Bell said that operators would open the rear door only when the specific criteria are met (at least five customers waiting at a bus stop; wheelchair ramp is deployed; a customer is exiting from the rear door) for consistency.

Mr. Craveiro Frankel suggested spotlighting participants in Metro Lift and other fare discount programs, such as senior fares, as part of Metro's upcoming campaign to highlight riders who pay their fare. Mr. Morey said that he would check with staff that are putting that campaign together to confirm.

Mr. Meyer asked how Metro records riders who don't pay their fare. Ms. Bell explained that Metro tracks passengers using Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) that are installed at both front and rear doors.

Mr. Staudt thanked Ms. Bell and Mr. Morey for the update and added that the Council was looking forward to all-door boarding launching systemwide.

Annual Report Committee Update

Mr. Staudt then introduced the item on the RAC's Annual Report. He said that members should have received a draft for their review in advance of the meeting, and that the focus of this evening's discussion would be to review the draft so that it can be transmitted to the Board as part of the RAC's April report. He added that this year's report had received the most responses of any year and that the report helps surface customer concerns that Metro may not be tracking. He then turned the floor over to Mr. Shepard to review the report and take comments.

Mr. Shepard provided an overview of the report's sections and its findings, including the five major areas of customer concern and the geographical representation of respondents. He then reviewed in detail each of the areas of concern identified by respondents and the potential solutions to address them.

As part of the review of rider concerns around bus frequency and reliability, Mr. Staudt suggested that the report add verbiage to acknowledge that Metro was working on some of the proposed solutions, including implementing bus priority projects, which require jurisdictional coordination, and hiring additional bus operators to improve reliability.

As part of the section covering rail reliability, Mr. Meyer suggested that the report include language encouraging Metro to continue its engagement with the jurisdictions to fully implement the recommendations from the *DMVMoves* task force. In response to a question from Mr. Mendelsohn, Mr. Staudt said that proposed solutions come from both survey respondents and from RAC members, though mostly from RAC members because they've received briefings from Metro staff on the projects and initiatives that Metro is pursuing. Mr.

Mendelson suggested adding language to the report to clarify the source of the recommendations. Mr. Way noted that implementation of advanced signaling systems would address rail reliability issues during both peak and off-peak hours.

Mr. Clark suggested that the section on micromobility solutions, the RAC support a centralized drop-off point at each station for scooters and other vehicles and continue to engage with staff on that issue.

Mr. Wu recommended that as part of its proposed solution for Metro to continue the conversion of bus seating from cloth to vinyl, the RAC ask WMATA staff to provide a regular progress update and estimated timeline for project completion. Mr. Way noted that a survey of older adults in Arlington found a need for more seating at bus stops, so he was glad that was included as part of the RAC's recommendations, as well.

Mr. Clark suggested including language about collaboration with jurisdictions to address quality-of-life issues, in addition to snow removal issues as laid out in the "Bus Facilities" section. Mr. Shepard noted that addressing quality-of-life issues such as littering, smoking, etc. were included in the "Safety and Security" section of the report. Mr. Staudt said that the group could review the "Safety and Security" section and see if that addressed Mr. Clark's suggestion.

Mr. Habosky noted that Metro is working on many of the proposed solutions identified in the report and said that adding language encouraging Metro to continue or accelerate that work would be a good way to recognize the agency's efforts. He also suggested adding language recommending that Metro highlight its work on these projects to make riders more broadly aware of its efforts.

As part of the "Wayfinding Improvements" recommendation on rail facilities, Mr. Sheehan noted that the AAC is working closely with Metro on wayfinding improvements and laid out a timeline for the project, including the implementation of a pilot project at L'Enfant Plaza in April and seeking Board approval for systemwide implementation in September.

After Mr. Shepard reviewed the section on "Safety, Crime and Law Enforcement Presence," Mr. Staudt said that the report did a good job of balancing competing perspectives and addressing sensitive issues around public safety and asked if other members had any suggestions on language or framing for this section of the report. Mr. Meyer said that he didn't feel that, as a Board-appointed advisory body, its report should speculate on certain aspects of the relationship between Metro and the federal government and suggested removing a portion of the language in the section titled "Evaluate Partnership with Federal Law Enforcement Agencies."

Mr. Staudt said that he agreed with this suggestion and identified language to be removed in that part of the recommendation. Mr. Clark also agreed with the recommendation to remove some of the language but that, overall, that section of the report was well-presented and did

a good job in addressing a sensitive subject. Mr. Staudt noted that Metro only controls the officers under its jurisdiction, i.e. the Metro Transit Police, and it's important for Metro to maintain that relationship for the long term, regardless of any changes in federal law enforcement presence. There was further discussion to refine the wording in this section.

Mr. Wu noted that riders were clearly opposed to the presence of federal law enforcement presence and that the report could note that, as a reflection of rider sentiment, without making specific recommendations.

Mr. Staudt said that, over the coming week, he and Mr. Shepard would look at the language in this section of the report and encouraged RAC members to also weigh in with proposed edits to this section of the report to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the language.

Mr. Shepard then covered the sections titled "Communication and Access to Information" and "MetroAccess and Transit Accessibility," with Mr. Sheehan providing additional information about MetroAccess service performance and proposals to address the sustainability of the Abilities-Ride program. Mr. Staudt and Mr. Sheehan reviewed other issues that the Accessibility Advisory Committee was working on, including reviewing the Prince George's County Transit Vision project, rail station restroom availability, streamlining the MetroAccess eligibility process and emergency preparedness issues.

Mr. Staudt asked members if any members had suggestions or edits to the "Other Concerns" section before asking Mr. Shepard to cover the "Rider Sentiment" section of the report. Mr. Shepard reviewed riders' feedback on various Metro initiatives and said that Metro received a 7.56/10 rating from riders, which was an improvement from the 7.5/10 received in the prior year. Mr. Staudt suggested moving this section up in the report, prior to the "Rider Concerns" section, to help set the stage for that section.

Ms. Worth asked whether there would be an executive summary of the report. Mr. Staudt said that he and Mr. Shepard would look at changes made to the report's organization to better highlight its findings and make information more accessible to the people reading the report. Mr. Pasek suggested developing a graphic to give a high-level summary of the report's findings.

Mr. Staudt thanked Mr. Shepard for all of this work on the project. He added that the report is a great resource for both the Board and other riders to see what's happening at Metro to address rider concerns.

RAC Leadership Elections:

Before calling for elections for a new RAC Chair and Vice Chairs, Mr. Staudt explained the logistics of the election process duties and responsibilities of the chair and vice chair roles and noted that he would not be seeking re-election. He then opened the floor to officer nominations.

Mr. Staudt, seconded by Mr. Clark, nominated Mr. Way to the position of Chair. With no other nominations, Mr. Staudt closed the floor to further nominations for the position of Chair. Mr. Way was elected Chair unanimously.

Mr. Staudt explained that, since Mr. Way lives in Virginia, the Vice Chair positions will need to be filled by members from Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Mr. Clark volunteered to serve as Maryland Vice Chair; Mr. Wu seconded this nomination. With no other nominations, Mr. Staudt closed the floor to nominations for Maryland Vice Chair. Mr. Clark was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

Mr. Habosky volunteered to serve as District of Columbia Vice Chair; Mr. Wu seconded this nomination. With no other nominations, Mr. Habosky was elected as Vice Chair without objection.

New Business/Announcements:

Mr. Pasek reminded members about the Metro Bus Town Hall scheduled for April 28th and said that he would get them additional information about this event. He also thanked members who participated in the events to mark Metro Rail's 50th Anniversary on March 27th.

Lastly, Mr. Pasek thanked Mr. Staudt for his service during the previous two years as RAC Chair; Mr. Meyer and Mr. Way echoed this sentiment. Mr. Staudt he's been glad to be a part of all of the changes that have happened at Metro since he moved to the area in 2016 and to be able to help expand the RAC's reach and improve the input for the Board's decision-making.

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the Council, Mr. Staudt adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.