

**Riders' Advisory Council
Metrobus Subcommittee
February 19, 2008**

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Iacomini called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. She noted that Dr. Bracmort was out of town.

The follow members of the RAC's Bus Subcommittee were present:

Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia

Rodney Elin, non-voting member

The following members of the Bus Subcommittee were not present:

Kelsi Bracmort, Chair, District of Columbia

Sharon Conn, Prince George's County

Kevin Moore, At-Large/District of Columbia

Rachelle Olden, District of Columbia

Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Elderly and Disabled Committee

II. Public Comment:

There were no comments from members of the public.

III. Approval of December 12, 2007 Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Iacomini noted that the Subcommittee did not have a quorum present and therefore could not vote on the December meeting minutes.

IV. New Bus Fleet Design:

Ms. Iacomini called on Michael McBride to describe the new bus paint scheme that Metro will be unveiling on the new buses that will be delivered later in the year.

Mr. McBride told the members present that he was charged with assessing the fourteen paint scheme designs submitted and creating a new scheme based on elements of these submissions.

Ms. Iacomini asked if the new paint scheme related to increased advertising. Mr. McBride responded that while there is no direct relation between the new paint scheme and advertising, that the new scheme incorporates areas for advertisements to be placed where they would not cover any graphics.

In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. McBride said that the new design could be adapted to any model in the fleet, though it would initially be applied to an order of new articulated buses that would be delivered in spring 2008. He said that, as older buses are overhauled, they would be repainted into the new scheme. There was then discussion between Ms. Iacomini, James Hamre, from Metro's Office of Bus Corridor Planning and Mr. McBride about the refurbishment process and its cost-effectiveness.

Mr. McBride said that his group reviewed fourteen color schemes and chose a red, white and blue color scheme that would match with the existing Metrobus colors. He then presented drawings of the new scheme to the group.

There was then discussion among members and staff about the fuel used by the new buses – the new articulated buses will run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), while subsequent new buses will be hybrids. Mr. Elin asked if the new buses will be low-floor vehicles. Mr. Hamre responded that the buses will be low-floor in the front portion of the bus, similar to Metro's current low-floor fleet.

Ms. Daniels noted that some bus riders on the Georgia Avenue line encounter problems because they mistakenly board a Route 79 "MetroExtra" bus, even though it is painted a different color than local buses.

Mr. McBride noted that the design being shown was chosen because it was "uncomplicated." He added that the red areas of the bus would be painted, while the blue stripe would be a decal. He explained that the placement of the decal avoided the windows on the bus.

Ms. Iacomini asked if there had been any changes to the interior of the bus. Ron Rydstrom, Metro's Director of Marketing said that the bus will have a new interior scheme, along with a new color of seats.

Ms. Iacomini asked about opportunities for additional communication to passengers on the new buses, such as near the farebox. There was discussion about the Metro Channel and its proposed placement of flat-screen televisions on buses that would show advertisements along with providing passengers with service information.

Ms. Iacomini then asked about the opportunity to provide customers with other locations to load their SmarTrip cards on the bus besides at the farebox. Mr. Hamre said that Metro has found that customers loading their SmarTrip cards at the farebox haven't caused many problems because these customers position themselves at the end of the line of passengers boarding at a stop. He added that Metro has funding available to test an off-vehicle fare payment program for bus passengers.

Ms. Daniels asked about bus flash passes and Metro's limits on how far in advance customers are able to purchase these passes. Mr. Rydstrom said that these restrictions are usually placed by the pass retailers, like Giant, because they don't want to have too much of an inventory of these passes on hand at one time. Mr. Hamre noted that Metro is planning to construct a sales center at its Anacostia station. Ms. Iacomini mentioned that, if Mr. Sheehan were present, he would cite the need for Metro's sales centers to open up earlier in the morning. Mr. Hamre noted that Metro is also working on enhancements that would allow additional online fare transactions.

There was further discussion regarding the ability of the scheme to be modified for different “families of service” in which buses for local routes would be painted one color and “MetroExtra” or limited-stop buses would be painted a different color.

V. 30-Line Study Final Report:

Mr. Hamre provided the members present with an overview of the final recommendations from the 30-Line study. He noted that the corridor served by the 30-Line routes has a long history of transit service from streetcars through to buses. Ms. Iacomini suggested that Metro install advertisements in the buses used on the route that would provide riders with information about the 30s-Line’s history. She also discussed the need for better information to be provided to customers at bus stops and the upcoming opening of the Capitol Visitors’ Center, which is located along the route.

In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini about providing bus-only lanes along the route, Mr. Hamre said that Metro has been in discussion with the District’s Department of Transportation about providing such lanes, though they would not be in place when service changes are initially put into effect later in the year.

Mr. Hamre said that Metro would like the RAC’s assistance in getting the word out to the public about the upcoming public hearings. Ms. Iacomini suggested that signs advertising the public hearings be placed at bus stops along the route.

In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Hamre said that, while the series of public meetings held over the past year addressed many of riders’ concerns, staff was still looking for comments from riders on subjects such as:

- Span of service;
- Frequency of service;
- Terminal locations for the various routes;
- Small routing variations.

VI. Additional Discussion:

Following the discussion of the service recommendations for the 30s-Line, there was additional discussion between Mr. Hamre and members on topics such as bus garage locations and bus service to the new Nationals stadium. Ms. Daniels asked that Metro look at adding a stop to the Route 79 “MetroExtra” service on Georgia Avenue. Mr. Hamre said that he would pass this information along to David Erion, Metro’s lead bus service planner, in order for this suggestion to be evaluated prior to the implementation of all-day service on Route 79, scheduled for the spring.

Mr. Hamre also told members that he would be coming back to them to discuss Metro’s upcoming study of the 16th Street (S1/S2/S4) bus line, and would be seeking their suggestions for the study, especially on how to best reach the line’s riders, many of whom are non-native English speakers and work at jobs outside of regular business hours.

VII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Ms. Iacomini adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

DRAFT