

**Riders' Advisory Council  
Metrobus Subcommittee  
June 24, 2008**

I. Call to Order/Roll Call:

Dr. Bracmort called the June meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council's Metrobus Subcommittee to order at 6:01 p.m.

The following members of the Subcommittee were present:

Kelsi Bracmort, District of Columbia

Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia

II. Public Comment:

There were no comments from members of the public.

III. Approval of Past Subcommittee Meeting Minutes:

Because a quorum was not present for the meeting, the approval of past meeting minutes was deferred.

IV. 16<sup>th</sup> Street Line Study Overview:

Douglas Stallworth from Metro's Office of Long-Range Planning provided an overview and timeline of Metro's study of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street (S1/S2/S4) Line. He said that the study is a comprehensive analysis of service and schedules that is being conducted in response to complaints from customers about crowding and bus bunching on the line.

Mr. Stallworth noted that the study began on April 14, 2008 and is currently 15-20% complete. He said that the study conducted a customer survey on June 18<sup>th</sup>, and described the survey distribution process, which included handing out surveys to customers at key stops along the line and hanging surveys from the overhead bars on the buses in service on the 16<sup>th</sup> Street line for passengers to take. He told members that approximately 400 responses have been received so far and that they expect additional responses to come in via the U.S. Mail.

Mr. Stallworth added that the study would be hosting its first public meeting on July 15<sup>th</sup> at St. Stephen and the Incarnation Church which is located at 16<sup>th</sup> and Newton Streets, NW. In response to a question from Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Stallworth explained that the data collected as part of the survey would be presented at this first public meeting, along with other information Metro has about issues with the service, such as customer complaint data. He said that there would be a second project meeting in September to present proposed changes and that service changes are planned to be implemented in December 2008.

In response to another question from Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Stallworth said that the first meeting is designed solely to solicit feedback, and that the second meeting is structured to present solutions to the problems that the service is experiencing. Jim Hamre, also

from Metro's Office of Long Range Planning said that the first meeting was designed as a chance for the public to express their concerns and for staff to "drill down" into those concerns to get as much specific information as possible about those concerns during break-out sessions during the second half of the meeting. Mr. Hamre and Mr. Stallworth also touched on why the study is only having one public meeting, as opposed to the two sets of meetings (one in NW, one in SE) held as part of the 30-Line study. They said that most of the line's ridership is clustered near the middle of the line and that the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Line is only half the length of the 30s.

Dr. Bracmort then asked about the community outreach being conducted as part of the study. Mr. Hamre noted that the study does not have a separate consultant for public outreach, unlike the 30s Line study. Mr. Stallworth noted that civic associations along the line have expressed significant interest, including the association in his neighborhood, Shepherd Park. Ms. Daniels asked if the study was contacting the Hispanic media because of the high concentration of Latino riders on the line. Mr. Stallworth responded that Jorge Navares, Metro's new Director of Community Relations has committed to doing outreach with the Hispanic media.

Dr. Bracmort said that the RAC would help publicize the meeting and asked if there was any other assistance that it could provide. She said that once the study has made recommendations for improvements, it should be an item on the full RAC's agenda.

V. Bus Priority Corridor Network Plan:

Mr. Hamre then presented information on Metro's Bus Priority Corridor Network Plan. He noted that the 30s Line was the first in a series of corridors on which Metro hopes to improve service. Mr. Hamre's presentation noted that:

- Bus is responsible for almost 1/2 of the transit trips in the region.
- Buses have a much wider range of service than rail systems and are better able to respond to changes in demand or trip patterns.
- Customers' expectations for service are changing – they are no longer satisfied that the bus simply "shows up."
- Metro and other agencies have done significant planning regarding bus service and now want to move forward with implementation of those plans.
- The 24 recommended corridors represent about 1/2 of Metrobus' current total ridership.
- The Priority Corridor Network Plan is a 6-year plan, encompassing 2008 and the next five years.

In response to a question from Dr. Bracmort about MetroExtra service, Mr. Hamre explained that the goal of the project is not simply to layer in a new type of service but also to make all bus service along these corridors better, including making infrastructure improvements (to sidewalks and bus stops) and traffic operations improvements.

Mr. Hamre said that dividing the service into corridors gives Metro "manageable slices" and allows it to mold service to match the unique characteristics of each corridor. Mr. Hamre then discussed the need for capital investments as part of the plan, such as HOV

and bus-only lanes and transit centers. Mr. Hamre noted that bus-only lanes had previously existed in the District of Columbia and that Metro is doing a “warrant study” for bus-only lanes along sections of Wisconsin Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue and H/I Streets NW. In response to a question from Dr. Bracmort about the effectiveness of these lanes, Mr. Hamre said that they can work well if the lanes are “filled up” with traffic such that cars won’t have the incentive to use an “empty” lane, and that in some cases that means opening up the lanes to HOV traffic.

Mr. Hamre noted that increasing buses’ average speeds results in greater productivity for buses as well as cost savings.

He also explained that Metro would implement service on 3-4 corridors per year, and that the Board’s guidance was to implement the plan over 6 years with 3-4 corridors implemented per year. He then gave the schedule for information being presented to the Board:

June 2008:	Board approval of Priority Corridor Network concept
September 2008:	Priority Corridor Network financing plan
November 2008:	Plans for runningway improvements

Dr. Bracmort asked whether the plan identified all of the various players’ responsibilities. She said that she had concerns that if Metro isn’t specific about its needs, then the jurisdictions may not live up to their obligations to make improvements and Metro will end up being blamed. Mr. Hamre said that over the summer staff would be working with the jurisdictions to determine priorities. He said that Metro will also continue to look at smaller bus corridors as “emerging corridors.”

Ms. Daniels asked about the Route 79 MetroExtra service on Georgia Avenue. She said that Metro still needs to evaluate whether or not that service is working as intended. Mr. Hamre said that an evaluation of the service will possibly take place this summer.

Dr. Bracmort said that she thinks that the bus has gotten a "bad rap" and asked what the timeframe is to implement these new services. She noted that Metro should only plan what it is able to implement. She also noted her concerns about how the list was created. Mr. Hamre responded that the list included the highest ridership lines within the region and also tried to maintain regional equity between jurisdictions. Mr. Hamre said that the Plan's biggest challenge will be for staff to sustain the effort, especially when corridor plans include large construction projects.

Mr. Hamre also noted that the revised 30-Line service begins this weekend.

VI. New Business:

Dr. Bracmort noted her concern about recent Subcommittee attendance and wondered, with such low attendance, if it was worth continuing the these meetings.

There was further discussion about a topic of discussion for the July Subcommittee meeting, and it was suggested that the Subcommittee invite Sara Wilson, Metro's Assistant General Manager for Corporate Strategy and Communications, to discuss the need for an outreach campaign to help improve rider etiquette.

VII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Dr. Bracmort adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

DRAFT