

**Riders' Advisory Council  
Metrobus Subcommittee  
March 25, 2008**

I. Call to Order:

Dr. Bracmort called the March meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council Metrobus Subcommittee to order at 6:06 p.m.

She noted that the meeting is being held on a different evening because of her travel out of the country and told members that this is the first RAC meeting that she has chaired. She told members to feel free to stop her at any time if there are questions.

II. Roll Call:

Dr. Bracmort then asked Staff Coordinator John Pasek to call the roll. The following members of the Metrobus Subcommittee were in attendance:

Kelsi Bracmort, Chair, District of Columbia

Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia

Rodney Elin, non-voting

The following members of the Subcommittee were not in attendance at the meeting:

Sharon Conn, Prince George's County

Kevin Moore, District of Columbia

Rachelle Olden, District of Columbia

Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Elderly and Disabled Committee

Mr. Elin noted that a quorum wasn't present for this meeting, so it wouldn't be able to take any votes.

III. Public Comment:

Dr. Bracmort then asked if there were any members of the public wishing to make comments. There were no comments from the public.

IV. 30-Line Public Hearing Recap:

Mr. Hamre told the members present that Metro had held public hearings on the proposed restructuring of the 30s-Line the previous week – Monday (March 17<sup>th</sup>) in Northwest Washington and Wednesday (March 19<sup>th</sup>) in Southeast Washington. He added that there were

21 members of the public in attendance at the Tenleytown meeting and 22 members of the public in attendance at the meeting held in Southeast D.C.

Dr. Bracmort asked about how these meetings were different than the 30s study meetings held in the fall. Mr. Hamre noted that the study developed recommendations for changes in Metrobus study and that the meetings held last week were the required official public hearings on the proposed changes. He described the public hearing process and noted that the public hearings are finished though the public comment period remained open until March 26<sup>th</sup>. He said that staff is developing the staff report on the hearings to present to the Board of Directors at its May Budget Committee meeting.

Mr. Hamre told members that, despite the fact that the staff report won't make it on the Board's agenda until May, this shouldn't affect the implementation of the new service which is planned for June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Hamre then showed the members present the revised service plan. He said that the comments received at the public hearing in Northwest focused on the Circulator's service in Georgetown and the public's desire to maintain Circulator service up Wisconsin Avenue to Whitehaven Street. Mr. Hamre said that during the study, it was determined that not many people used the Circulator on Wisconsin Avenue. He said that the Circulator would implement service changes at the same time as Metro to remove service from Wisconsin Avenue. He added that, as a follow-up to the public hearing, he will be attending an upcoming ANC-2 meeting to discuss this matter in greater detail with neighborhood residents.

Mr. Hamre said that the meeting in Southeast focused on the following issues:

- The routing of the proposed Route 39 along Pennsylvania Avenue. He said that members of the public were concerned that the bus would become stuck in traffic along Pennsylvania Avenue, especially during rush hours;
- Routing of buses through the Hillcrest neighborhood;
- Service on Route 32 leaving the Southern Avenue station and the fact that there is no longer duplicate W2 service to certain stops on the route;

He said that staff would be evaluating these comments to see if there is any possibility of making changes to the proposal that would address these comments.

Mr. Hamre said that Metro would put as many buses out on the road as possible to address crowding. He added that Metro has also committed to holding public meetings following the service changes to allow people to comment on the revised service. Mr. Hamre also noted that Dr. Conn, the previous RAC Bus Subcommittee chair was in attendance at the meeting expressed concerns about service to the Naylor Gardens area.

Dr. Bracmort asked if there were any other routes discontinued. Mr. Hamre replied that all of the stops currently served will be served under the proposed plan, though the 34 has been replaced by the M5 that terminates at Eastern Market. He said that Metro's plan is to use the M5 to tie the communities east of the river to Capitol Hill, the Metrorail system and other bus lines that connect there.

Dr. Bracmort noted that the M5 wouldn't cover all the stops as the 34 because it terminates at Eastern Market.

Dr. Bracmort asked if Metro has made allowance for increased ridership in the plan. Mr. Hamre responded that Metro currently has enough buses on the route to handle the number of passengers, if the buses showed up on time. He said that buses currently don't operate on-schedule because of all of the interruptions to service that the routes face. He added that Metro is trying to change the way it operates this service by increasing supervision – supervisors will be on duty seven days per week. He said that this will allow Metro to change the way it responds to incidents by putting strategic buses in service, etc. to maintain the scheduled headway.

Mr. Hamre noted that Metro met with DDOT's new traffic operations director to discuss the idea of dedicated bus lanes on certain portions of the route along with traffic signal adjustments and other enforcement techniques. He said that some attendees of the public hearing in Tenleytown said that Metro needed to invest in better technology to manage the buses rather than hiring additional supervisors.

Dr. Bracmort asked if there has been approval to add the extra operators and supervisors. Mr. Hamre said that the approvals for those positions would be part of the overall approval process. He said that Metro would be able to hire these new supervisors even without approval because it currently has several vacant supervisor positions. He added that the target date for beginning the revised service is June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Hamre noted that he is meeting with Metro's marketing staff to develop a promotion plan to make riders aware of the upcoming changes. He said that Metro thinks that the service plan will allow Metro to increase ridership on the line by up to 50%.

Ms. Daniels asked about some routing scenarios and which buses she would be able to take to reach various destinations.

Ms. Daniels also asked about the possibility of HOV lanes on Irving Street. Mr. Hamre said that Metro would be trying to aggressively restore bus lanes where they used to exist in the city, working in conjunction with DDOT. Ms. Daniels noted that with the increased development in the area, there has been an increase in congestion and has resulted in problems with buses in the Columbia Heights area.

Dr. Bracmort asked about the span of service for the new routes. Mr. Hamre responded that the 37 and 39 will operate during the rush period only, while the 32 and 36 will run from 4:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. daily, and the 31, M5 and M6 will run from 6 a.m. to midnight, daily. He said that this would result in increased service to Southeast on the weekends.

Dr. Bracmort commended Metro and the study team for a good job on advertising the public meetings and listening to the public. Mr. Hamre said that the public process was different this time around than when changes were initially proposed. She also asked that

Mr. Hamre keep the RAC abreast of changes and said that the RAC can be of assistance in later outreach activities.

Mr. Hamre asked that the RAC send a letter in support of the proposal to Metro's Board of Directors.

V. 16<sup>th</sup> Street Study Kick-Off:

Mr. Hamre said that he wanted to request that the RAC perform the same "citizen advisory committee" function with the 16<sup>th</sup> Street study as it did for the 30-Line study. He said that Metro will have issues that it needs to address with this study related to public outreach - language issues and issues with when meetings can be held to allow for the greatest public participation as many of the residents of the neighborhoods in the corridor work outside of regular business hours.

Ms. Daniels asked if Metro has considered putting in a MetroExtra line along 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Hamre said that Metro doesn't have sufficient resources or buses to pay for this extra service and so it has to have a more deliberative process to determine what would work best.

Mr. Elin noted that in the mid-90s there were more variations on the S-Line buses – S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5. Mr. Hamre said that these routes were discontinued because of the District's financial issues in the mid-90s. He said that the questions the study will hope to address are which bus routes to bring back, where should buses begin/end their routes, right-of-way issues, equipment needs, how to address bus bunching, etc.

Mr. Elin noted that he has an interest in the study because he lives on Eastern Avenue along the S2 route and he noted that residents there would like to see improved service along that portion of the route. Mr. Hamre added that there would also be changes caused by the construction of the Silver Spring Transit Center.

Dr. Bracmort asked what the timeline would be for the 16<sup>th</sup> Street study. Mr. Hamre said that he expected the study to take about six months.

Dr. Bracmort also asked about the timing of the Corridor Development and Service Evaluation Projects and whether they would take place separately or concurrently. Mr. Hamre said that these studies would take place concurrently. He said that Metro would try and do three corridors per year for the next six years. He added that the Service Evaluations would be a less intensive process than the Corridor Development studies and would focus on identifying opportunities Metro may have in the future to improve service.

Ms. Daniels discussed her experience on the Q2 along Viers Mill Road. Mr. Elin noted that taking the bus from Silver Spring to Rockville is quicker than taking the train.

Dr. Bracmort thanked Mr. Hamre for coming to the meeting.

VI. New Business:

Mr. Hamre noted that Metro began service to the new National Harbor development on Easter Sunday. Dr. Bracmort asked who is paying for the service. Mr. Hamre responded that the service is being paid for by the State of Maryland like other Metrobus service.

Mr. Hamre also noted that he made a presentation to the Transportation Planning Board's Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) regarding bus service. He said that the CAC members were enthusiastic about bus service and wanted to form a bus subcommittee to discuss the issue further. He said that it may be beneficial for the RAC to work with the CAC on this issue.

Dr. Bracmort said that she would skip the discussion of goals for the subcommittee. She said that she would like for there to be more members present for this discussion. She asked members to think of 3-5 issues with Metrobus service and divide these into short-term, medium-term and long-term. She said that she'll send out another email and have this discussion at the April meeting.

Dr. Bracmort asked Mr. Pasek if he had any announcements. Mr. Pasek noted the upcoming bus service changes that would take effect March 30<sup>th</sup> – increased service on the N22 to the Navy Yard, all-day MetroExtra service on Georgia Avenue and service changes in Virginia.

VII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Dr. Bracmort adjourned meeting at 7:00 p.m.