

Proposal for a Monthly RAC-Metro Feedback Mechanism

The Issue

The RAC was originally created by WMATA to provide a channel for public comment and advice on service issues. Up to this point, however, the RAC's influence on WMATA decision-making has been limited by the lack of a consistent process for both gathering information from Metro and holding it accountable to the riding public.

Communication between the RAC and WMATA staff is asymmetrical. WMATA officials and Board members regularly visit the RAC to gather input for ongoing projects, and by doing so intrinsically set the priorities for what the RAC considers. The RAC itself, however, has no established mechanism or ability to solicit feedback from WMATA on the concerns and issues which matter to riders. As a result, the RAC's effectiveness as an advisory body, advocate for riders, and accountability mechanism is limited – it influences the course of decisions that WMATA places before it, but does not have the ability to originate action items for WMATA to address.

The Proposal

In order to regularize the dialogue between WMATA and the RAC, it is proposed that the RAC provide a monthly list of questions for WMATA. This would give members of the RAC the chance to publicly bring the concerns and issues of the riding public to WMATA's attention, and give WMATA the chance to formally respond to those concerns and issues in a controlled setting.

In order to keep the requests manageable, it is proposed that each member of the RAC be allocated one question per month for inclusion on the list. The questions will not be limited in scope, but it is hoped that RAC members will use this opportunity to focus on the issues that matter to the jurisdictions they represent.

It is proposed that members of the RAC send their monthly question to the chair for inclusion on the list. The chair will then confer with the RAC leadership team and compile the questions into a pre-determined form. The RAC leadership team will vet the questions for content (i.e., appropriateness, likeliness to result in a substantive/actionable response, scope), and work with members of the RAC to eliminate duplicative questions. The list of questions will then be presented by the leadership team at the monthly RAC meeting for approval by the entire council.

WMATA will be expected to respond to questions provided by the RAC by the time of the following regularly scheduled RAC meeting. It is proposed that the questions and answers will then be posted on the RAC's portion of the WMATA website where the meeting agendas, minutes, and session recordings currently reside. If appropriate, the questions and answers could also be highlighted in local media outlets.

Below is a proposed monthly timeline for submission of questions and completion of the WMATA response:

Action For...	Action Item	Deadline
RAC Members	Provide questions to RAC Chair	15 th of every month
RAC Leadership Team	Compile and vet question list to ensure appropriateness and eliminate redundancies as needed; send the completed list to John Pasek for dissemination to the RAC and inclusion in the monthly meeting materials	End of every month
Entire RAC	Vote to approve question list	Monthly RAC meeting
John Pasek	Disseminate questions to appropriate WMATA staff for response	Friday after the monthly RAC meeting
John Pasek	Compile staff responses and submit to WMATA leadership for clearance	15 th of every month
John Pasek, WMATA public relations staff	Disseminate responses to RAC members, post responses on RAC website, send to local media outlets as desired	End of every month