

**Riders' Advisory Council
October 1, 2008**

I. Call to Order/Roll Call:

Dr. Bracmort called the October meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:34 p.m. She noted that Nancy Iacomini, the Chairman, was unable to attend the meeting and had asked her to chair the meeting on her behalf. She then asked Mr. Pasek, the staff coordinator, to call the roll.

The following members were present for the October Riders' Advisory Council Meeting:

Kesli Bracmort, District of Columbia
Denise Brown, Prince George's County*
Steve Cerny, Fairfax County
Sharon Conn, Prince George's County*
Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia
Kenneth DeGraff, District of Columbia
Mary Kay Dranzo, Montgomery County
Christopher Farrell, Montgomery County
Susan Holland, Prince George's County
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Elderly and Disabled Committee Chairman
Evelyn Tomaszewski, Fairfax County
Carol Carter Walker, District of Columbia
Lillian White, City of Alexandria
Robin White, Fairfax County*
Diana Zinkl, District of Columbia

*The arrival times for members who entered the meeting after the roll call is shown in the body of the meeting minutes.

The following members were not present for any portion of the meeting:

Penelope Everline, Arlington County
Nancy Iacomini, Chair, Arlington County
Kevin Moore, At-Large
Kaiya Sandler, Montgomery County

II. Public Comment:

Dr. Bracmort asked if there were any members of the public present who wished to make comments. There were no comments from members of the public.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Dr. Bracmort asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Zinkl moved to approve the agenda, as presented. This motion was seconded by Ms. White.

In favor: Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Cerny, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeGraff, Ms. Dranzo, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Holland, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Tomaszewski, Ms. Walker, Lillian White, Ms. Zinkl

Opposed: none

Abstentions: none

The agenda was approved as submitted. (12-0-0)

IV. Approval of September 3, 2008 Meeting Minutes:

Dr. Bracmort said that members may not have gotten a copy of the September meeting minutes in time to make corrections or modifications and recommended without objection, a vote on the September meeting minutes be deferred to the November Council meeting. Ms. White noted that the issue of Council members getting minutes on time needs to be addressed, as there have been other instances where minutes were sent out late.

Dr. Bracmort noted that there were two presentations scheduled before the Council for this meeting and since the meeting was running somewhat ahead of schedule, there would be around 35-40 minutes for each presentation.

Robin White arrived at 6:38 p.m.

V. SmarTrip Upgrade Plans/Transfer Changes:

Dr. Bracmort introduced Metro staff members Chris Cipperly and Cyndi Zieman. Ms. Zieman introduced herself and noted that she was the new director of Metro's SmarTrip office. She said that she has been with Metro for about 2 year, and prior to that, worked for Dallas Area Rapid Transit for twenty-five years. She said that she was first hired to work on policy in Metro's procurement office. She said that she was glad to be able to update the Council on the upcoming changes

Mr. Cipperly then introduced himself. He explained that he was Metro's Assistant Treasurer, responsible for cash and revenue management. He added that he has spent a lot of time over the last decade working with SmarTrip.

Dr. Conn arrived at 6:40 p.m.

Ms. Zieman then gave her presentation, which touched on the recent restructuring of Metro's SmarTrip office, the changes planned for SmarTrip cards and additional information about the program that members may find of interest.

Ms. Tomaszewski arrived at 6:41 p.m.

Ms. Zieman explained that the Office of SmarTrip now reports directly to Metro's General Manager, which is a change from previous practice. She also explained that the office also now has dedicated resources and will be implementing a new program management methodology to improve internal and external communication. She told members that the office had undergone a

program assessment in May of 2008 which recommended improvements that the office is implementing.

Lillian White asked about the SmarTrip-only faregates at the Pentagon City station and noted her concerns about these not being repaired in a timely manner. She said that the station managers are able to fix the regular faregates that also accept paper farecards, but that there have been maintenance issues with the SmarTrip-only gates. Ms. Zieman explained that her office isn't responsible for maintaining or servicing faregates, but that if there were concerns about these particular gates that needed to be addressed, she could pass them along. Mr. Cipperly said that he thinks that these faregates didn't provide the benefits that Metro was hoping for and so the Authority has not expanded their use.

Dr. Bracmort asked that, in the interest of time, members hold their questions until the end of the presentation.

Ms. Zieman then discussed the timeline for upgrades to SmarTrip functionality, noting that Metro is finalizing a timeline with Cubic and ERG, its contractors, on the schedule for these upgrades. She told members that in the 3rd Quarter of 2009, pass products are scheduled to be accepted using SmarTrip cards and enhancements will be made to Metro's ability to track and deactivate fraudulent cards. She said that the "auto-load" feature, which would link the card to a customer's bank account and automatically add money to the card once it reached a certain dollar amount is scheduled to begin later in 2009. Ms. Zieman added that a self-service customer website would be fully available in the 2nd quarter of 2010, though certain features would be rolled out to the public incrementally before then.

Ms. Dranzo asked if the self-service customer website could be made available before its planned 2010 implementation since this feature would be incredibly helpful, especially to bus riders.

Ms. Zieman noted that Metro is also working on other SmarTrip-related projects, such as the D.C. One Card initiative, which would embed SmarTrip technology into District of Columbia identification cards. She also told members that SmarTrip technology would be installed on Prince George's County's "TheBus" over the upcoming Columbus Day weekend. She said that Metro is also researching the possibility of using contactless credit cards as a fare payment method in the future. She explained that Salt Lake City and New York City transit systems have conducted pilots using this technology and that it is also used overseas. Ms. Zieman also reported that, as part of Metro's capital improvement plan, Metro will conduct a pilot to upgrade its fare vending machines to dispense regular and limited-use SmarTrip cards, to include a touch-screen customer interface and to have upgraded audio capabilities.

Ms. Zieman proceeded to go over some facts and figures about SmarTrip and then opened up the floor for questions. Dr. Bracmort asked members to be concise with their comments so that everyone who wanted to would get the chance to speak.

Ms. Daniels asked about how long money loaded onto SmarTrip cards is able to be used. Mr. Cipperly responded that the money loaded onto the card doesn't expire.

Mr. Farrell noted his concern about the elimination of paper transfers and said that he was pleased to hear that pass products would eventually be incorporated onto SmarTrip. He also noted that other systems have annual passes that provide for unlimited travel for a calendar year and wondered whether Metro would ever have this kind of pass available on SmarTrip. Mr. Cipperly responded that when Metro simplified its fares, it shortened the time periods during which its passes were valid and that, traditionally, Metro hasn't provided passes that offer travel at a substantial discount. He noted that, in the future, Metro's Board of Directors may be interested in establishing more deeply-discounted passes, but that would be a policy question for the Board.

Dr. Conn noted her concerns with deactivation of SmarTrip cards. She said that she would like to see a pamphlet or some type of communication that would instruct riders what to do should their card become deactivated, and that the pamphlet should instruct customers, as a first step, to determine the balance on their card. She asked if customers would need to pay \$5 for a replacement SmarTrip card if theirs became deactivated. Dr. Conn said she also wanted to know who was paying for the installation of SmarTrip fareboxes on Prince George's County's "TheBus" and who would be monitoring these fareboxes. Mr. Cipperly said that "TheBus" is run under contract to Prince George's County. He noted that these fareboxes were procured through WMATA as part of a regional effort, however they will be owned and operated by the various regional providers. Ms. Zieman added that Metro staff will likely assist with troubleshooting and maintenance issues among regional operators, though each property is responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the equipment on their buses.

Dr. Conn also noted that her son had an experience using his SmarTrip card in which his bank account was charged, resulting in overdraft fees being assessed. Mr. Cipperly responded that there is currently no linkage between SmarTrip cards and customers' bank accounts. He explained that SmarTrip cards allow customers to go "negative" for one transaction, but then they must reload their card at a farecard machine in order to use it again. He said that it is possible that the card was loaded at a vending machine using a credit card, but that is an issue separate from SmarTrip cards. He explained that any credit card transaction is given authorization by a bank before any value is added to a card.

Denise Brown arrived at 7:06 p.m.

Ms. Zinkl asked if there was any way for a customer to get an accounting of the trips they took using their SmarTrip card prior to the activation of the customer self-service website which is planned for 2010. Mr. Cipperly said that this information is currently available to customer service staff and that customers can get this information by calling the SmarTrip customer service center. In response to further questions from Ms. Zinkl, Ms. Zieman added that she wasn't sure if it would be possible for customer service staff to print out an activity report to be mailed to a customer, since the existing readout of SmarTrip activity is formatted in a way that isn't very customer-friendly. Ms. Zinkl said that with Metro moving to a SmarTrip-based fare

system, she would estimate that SmarTrip cards would be tapped around 2 million times per day, and with so many “hits,” there would be the potential for errors to affect users’ accounts.

Ms. Zinkl said that she is concerned about the timing of the elimination of paper transfers versus the implementation of aspects of the SmarTrip program. She specifically noted her concerns about rail pass users who would not be able to receive discounted bus transfers after January 2008 until pass products are made available in the third quarter of 2009. Mr. Cipperly responded that Metro has looked at the issue of paper rail passes but has not yet made a decision on how it would address the issue. He noted that the passes are priced as “rail-only” fare media, and that they were not priced to take into account a discount for riders transferring to buses. He said that the transfer machines in the rail system are failing and Metro is faced with the option of either spending \$2 million to replace these machines, which will be supplanted by SmarTrip a short time later, or removing these machines now.

Dr. Bracmort said that she is not sure that Ms. Zinkl’s concern can be completely addressed at this evening’s meeting but that it is something that Ms. Zieman and Mr. Cipperly can take with them from this meeting.

Mr. Cerny asked when new cards would be issued to the public that could take advantage of the new features that Ms. Zieman mentioned in her presentation. Ms. Zieman said that there is no plan to issue new SmarTrip cards, and that the existing cards will be able to accept the new features. She did note that Metro is looking at producing SmarTrip cards made of a composite material which would make them more durable.

Mr. Cerny also asked about the IRS rule that Ms. Zieman mentioned in her presentation. Mr. Cipperly said that the IRS is concerned about the commingling of parking and transit benefits - they don’t want money provided for transit benefits to pay for parking and vice versa. Ms. Zieman added that she has heard concerns from customers who use their employer-provided transit funds to buy unlimited passes and that, being required to use SmarTrip cards would force them to pay for additional trips, such as those taken at lunch. She noted that the money provided by employers is only intended to cover the cost of an employee’s commute, not additional trips beyond the commute. She added that this is an IRS ruling and there isn’t much Metro can do to challenge it.

Mr. DeGraff noted his concerns about the lack of places where riders can buy SmarTrip cards, especially in the District of Columbia and also noted his disappointment that there are no plans to add more machines that would dispense SmarTrip cards. He suggested that Metro look into other opportunities to sell the cards, such as at neighborhood festivals, and suggested that Metro also have demonstrations to show riders how to use the cards.

Mr. DeGraff also asked there are plans to allow riders to use SmarTrip cards to pay fares at other transit authorities, such as New York City or Boston. Ms. Zieman said that she isn’t aware of any plans for SmarTrip to be accepted beyond Metro and its regional partners – Arlington (ART), Alexandria (DASH), Fairfax (Connector), MTA Maryland, Prince George’s County (TheBus), Montgomery County (RideOn), Loudoun County Transit, and PRTC Transit. Mr.

Cipperly said that all of the counties in the Washington region that operate service are regional partners. He added that there are plans to eventually accept SmarTrip on VRE and MARC commuter trains. Mr. Cipperly said that it is possible that common cards could be accepted along the entire Eastern Seaboard, for example, and that some efforts have been made on that front, but that it would be a long time until that happened, if at all.

Mr. DeGraff said that he wanted to reiterate his concerns about opportunities for riders to purchase SmarTrip cards. Mr. Cipperly said that staff agrees with these concerns and noted that it is much more difficult to reach bus riders, as they are much more dispersed than rail system users.

Robin White asked that Metro consider adding SmarTrip capability to its fare vendor machines that are located inside the faregates, such as the Exitfare machines. She explained that this would allow customers who were waiting for a train the opportunity to add value to their SmarTrip card without having to exit through the faregates and pay a separate fare.

Ms. White also asked about the expected useful life of the cards as well any budget implications that might result from the delayed roll-out of the improved SmarTrip card functionality. Ms. Ziemann explained that Metro estimates the useful life of a SmarTrip card to be approximately three years, though there are still several active cards that have been in use since 1999. She noted that the new cards made of composite material would have an estimated useful life of five years. Ms. White asked if Metro would charge to replace a customer's malfunctioning card with a new, composite card of the kind mentioned by Ms. Ziemann. Mr. Cipperly said that Metro will usually replace a failed SmarTrip card free-of-charge if there are no signs of physical damage to the card. He said that if a card is cracked or otherwise appears to have been mishandled, Metro will charge the \$5 card replacement fee.

Ms. Walker said that she thinks that Metro is headed for a public relations fiasco in January when it implements this "paperless" system, however, she understands that Metro has stopped ordering paper transfers and therefore doesn't have the option to not make this change. She said that it is important for Metro to extend the hours at its sales outlets, offer additional SmarTrip sales locations and engage in other outreach activities, such as demonstrations on how to use the card. She said that she isn't concerned that customers will be able to understand how to use the card, but that Metro hasn't been particularly customer-friendly in communicating with its customers on this and other issues.

Ms. Dranzo asked how pass products would work and asked if it would be possible to accelerate the launch of the customer self-service website. Ms. Dranzo also had questions about the D.C. OneCard initiative and whether this would require residents to replace their driver's licenses every time the embedded SmarTrip card in the license fails. She also raised concerns about security issues associated with RFID (Radio Frequency Identifier) technology and asked whether Metro is addressing these concerns.

Ms. Dranzo also asked if there were a way for Metro to make the cards free to riders and noted that there is a need for additional vendors for SmarTrip cards.

Lillian White said that she was concerned about the inability of Metrorail pass users to receive a discounted fare when transferring to the bus, and said that this amounts to a fare increase without a public hearing. Dr. Bracmort noted that this kind of reaction was important for staff to hear from the RAC, as she expects that Metro will hear it from its customers later on. Mr. Cipperly noted that Metro, at 28% penetration, has not yet achieved the kind of SmarTrip usage from its bus customers that it had hoped for, especially after approving a fare increase that had a differential between cash and SmarTrip bus fares.

In response to a question from Dr. Conn, members of the RAC confirmed that paper bus passes would not be eliminated as part of the proposed change. Dr. Bracmort noted that this the RAC may want to send some kind of correspondence directly to Metro's Board of Directors to ensure that its comments are heard.

Mr. Sheehan asked if there was a timetable to accept SmarTrip in MetroAccess vehicles. Mr. Cipperly responded that Metro is working on getting transit benefits to recipients using their SmarTrip cards, however, the technology to install SmarTrip riders in MetroAccess vehicles is very expensive. Mr. Sheehan said that having SmarTrip in MetroAccess vehicles would be helpful in recording when passengers get on or off the vehicles, which could help Metro in settling lawsuits brought by paratransit customers. Mr. Sheehan asked that staff keep MetroAccess in mind as they develop plans for the expansion of SmarTrip across the Metro system.

Dr. Bracmort thanked RAC members for their comments and said that members had raised many good points during the discussion. She added that Metro needs to put more resources into the SmarTrip card system before making certain changes. Lillian White suggested putting information about SmarTrip, including a proposed timeline for improvements up on Metro's website. Dr. Bracmort added that, if Metro is going to require customers to use SmarTrip cards, it should provide them with information about the planned changes as well as allow them to see their account activity. She noted that the RAC would be following-up with its comments.

VI. Public Comment:

Dr. Bracmort then opened the floor back up for comments from members of the public. Doris Ray voiced her concerns about the elimination of paper transfers. She said that she and the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia were especially concerned about low-income and disabled individuals who rely primarily on the bus for transportation. She noted that these individuals do not have the opportunity or resources to make a special trip to purchase SmarTrip cards and asked that the RAC protest the elimination of transfers as that would require these riders to pay double fares to complete their trips.

Ms. Ray also noted that the current SmarTrip technology isn't accessible for persons with disabilities, especially those with visual impairments. She also raised concerns about the accessibility of Metro's audible farecard vending machines, the its proposed SmarTrip account-management website and the touch-screen vending machines that were mentioned in Ms. Zieman's presentation. She said that if the features of SmarTrip are not accessible, Metro's

service would not be accessible and, therefore in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Ms. Ray asked the RAC to stand up for riders and protest Metro's actions.

Dr. Bracmort thanked Ms. Ray for her comments.

VII. Bus Priority Corridor Network Program:

Dr. Bracmort then introduced Jim Hamre to discuss the Bus Priority Corridor Network Program. She asked RAC members to hold their questions until the end of Mr. Hamre's presentation when there would be time for a question-and-answer period.

Mr. Hamre discussed the program, and said that it is the most important thing that Metro has done in the past decade. He said the program would improve bus service around the region and lay out an implementation plan for those improvements. Mr. Hamre noted how critical bus service is to the region, serving approximately 600,000 riders per day, and that one of the great advantages of bus service is that it is not confined in its reach like rail service. He explained that bus service is challenged by crowding, slowing travel speeds due to increased congestion and a change in customer profile. He added that with the change in customer profile has come a change in the expectations customers have for their bus service.

Mr. Hamre went over the planning that Metro has done to improve bus service, including:

- Regional Bus Plan (2000);
- Bus Enhancement Program (2003) which provided for new customer information;
- Metro Matters (2005) which funded new and replacement buses;
- Bus Network Evaluation (2006) to help develop detailed recommendation on how to improve service;
- Regional Bus Conference (2006);
- Fleet Management Plan (2007).

Mr. Hamre said that Metro has been able to make plans, but has not implemented these plans. He noted that Metro was challenged by its Chairman at the beginning of 2008 to improve its bus service. Mr. Hamre explained that Metro's long-term goals increase its bus ridership by one-third based on forecast growth, by one-third by improving the quality of its service and by one-third through expanding its bus service coverage area.

He explained that Metro is proposing a network of 24 priority corridors throughout the region. He said that these corridors have high ridership, service that runs seven days/week and have enough ridership to support different types of bus service. He noted that these corridors were evaluated by performance, ridership, land-use potential, service levels and jurisdictional support. Mr. Hamre added that Metro's General Manager has challenged the Authority to develop a six-year plan to implement improved service on these routes.

Mr. Hamre told members that the Priority Corridor Network will allow Metro to integrate improvements along these corridors, improvements such as: customer service, service, operations, bus stop and shelter improvements, customer information improvements. He noted

that the implementation will also allow Metro to coordinate with stakeholders, such as the jurisdictions, since Metro doesn't control many things that impact bus service, such as sidewalks, roadways and traffic signals, trash pick-up, police patrols and so on.

He explained that the 24 selected corridors serve half of the total Metrobus ridership, 70 million riders annually out of a total Metrobus ridership of 140 million riders/year. He said that Metro is trying to design a "family of services" to best meet the needs of each corridor, which would include such service such as local Metrobus service, MetroExtra limited-stop service, express service and neighborhood shuttles. He provided statistics about these routes – that they average 9200 total riders per day, or about 55 passengers per trip. He also explained that these routes often run in corridors where a high percentage of people traveling are using transit. He added, however, that the buses on these routes average only 12 m.p.h., and to improve service, Metro must increase buses' overall travel speeds. Mr. Hamre also told members that the selected routes have low bus/rail transfer rates – their riders do not transfer between modes, though there are high bus-to-bus transfer rates between these routes.

He explained that Metro is trying to make runningway improvements such as bus-only lanes, and traffic signal priority to speed bus service, and showed examples of these improvements. He noted that the District used to have an extensive network of bus-only lanes. Mr. Hamre noted that by improving bus travel speeds by 30%, thereby allowing buses to complete more runs, would be like putting 100 new buses on the street, meaning that the program is not only good for customer, bus cost-effective.

Mr. Hamre then gave an overview of the schedule for the implementation of these corridors.

He outlined the additional operating costs required by the new services – that, once all of the service is implemented, it would represent a \$25 million increase in annual operating costs, while there would be a \$326 million capital cost for these services, though half of that cost would be borne by the jurisdictions with the rest coming through Metro's capital program. He said that Metro would create buy-in from stakeholders through the implementation study and gave the example of the study that Metro did for the 30s-Series buses in the District of Columbia.

Mr. Hamre also explained that the Board was clear that the corridor studies needed to be public processes, and said that Metro has gone out of its way to include the public in these studies. He noted that over 200 people participated directly in the 30s-Line study, and the study received 1900 customer surveys and has had over 14,000 hits on its website.

He then went through the next steps for the study, including that the Board will receive an update on the status of this program at its October Planning, Development and Real Estate Committee, and that staff would also make recommendations for locations for runningway improvements in November.

He then went over the next steps required for implementation of the network, including jurisdictional responsibilities and policy and land-use planning decisions that need to be made.

Mr. Hamre then went through the list of proposed corridors and then opened up the floor to any questions that members may have.

Dr. Bracmort thanked Mr. Hamre for his presentation and said that it has always been a pleasure to work with him and that he has very been very responsive.

Ms. Holland asked how Metro prioritized the listing of bus routes and if this listing would be constantly updated or reprioritized. Metro said that the list will be updated on an annual basis to reflect jurisdictions' priorities.

Lillian White noted the need for dedicated lanes throughout all of the jurisdictions and asked how Metro has coordinated with the jurisdictions. Mr. Hamre responded that the recommendations came from the Regional Bus Study, which was conducted with substantial jurisdictional input and also explained how projects in the Priority Corridor Network were selected to align with jurisdictional priorities, citing examples from the City of Alexandria such as the Route 1/Potomac Yard corridor, the Duke Street corridor and a corridor between Kingstowne and the Pentagon which, since it does not involve existing bus service, was placed on the "Emerging Corridors" list.

Ms. Dranzo asked if these routes would, essentially be a region-wide network of MetroExtra routes and was told that, yes, this was. She also noted her concerns about enforcement of bus-only lanes. Mr. Hamre explained that Metro is trying to get the District of Columbia to pass legislation that would provide penalties for cars parking or driving in bus-only lanes. He noted, in response to another question from Ms. Dranzo, that the only other bus-only facility in the region is in the City of Alexandria.

Ms. Walker asked why safety was not included as part of the plans. Mr. Hamre said that safety is included in these plans, specifically regarding bus stops and accessibility, incident response management plans for these services. He then reviewed the eight elements that make up successful bus service.

Robin White asked if the projected costs include accommodations for the currently-suspended NextBus service. Mr. Hamre said that there are plans for the resumption of NextBus service, which would serve the routes on these corridors, but that funding would come from a different source in Metro's budget.

Ms. Tomaszewski noted that 31% of riders on these priority corridors transfer to or from other buses and noted that it highlights the importance of the earlier discussion that the Council had concerning the elimination of paper transfers.

Mr. Cerny asked which routes have signal prioritization and what has been Metro's experience with these systems. Mr. Hamre responded that there is signal prioritization on Georgia Avenue in D.C., Columbia Pike in Arlington and Richmond Highway in Fairfax County. He said that the effectiveness of the systems has been mixed is directly related to the intensity of use. He said that Metro has seen good results on Columbia Pike and is still studying the results on Georgia

Avenue. He noted that the service on Richmond Highway only involves eight signals in the corridor, so it hasn't made as much of a difference in bus performance.

Mr. Cerny also asked if there were plans to install queue-jump facilities for buses along Leesburg Pike in Tysons Corner as it is reconstructed for the coming of Metrorail. Mr. Hamre responded that he isn't sure about the exact plans for Leesburg Pike in that location, but that Metro is doing a study of its 28-Line that runs along Leesburg Pike between Alexandria and Tysons Corner and will be conducting public meetings on that study later in the month.

Ms. Brown asked if Metro has considered extending service out to Howard County to address some of the growth that has occurred out in that region. Mr. Hamre said that Metro has done studies in conjunction with the Maryland Mass Transit Administration about how to improve service. He said that the MTA has focused on improving its own commuter bus and MARC train service in the Baltimore-Washington corridor rather than asking Metro to extend its service out to Howard County. He noted that Metro does serve Laurel and Bowie, and has one route that serves BWI Airport, but there are no further plans for further extensions. Mr. Hamre did say that one of the priority corridors included in the proposed network is Baltimore Avenue, which extends to Laurel.

Ms. Zinkl asked if the plans for these corridors have been impacted by the increase in gas prices. Mr. Hamre responded that, while Metro must pay increased fuel costs, those also make Metrobus service more attractive, and added that Metrobus had a 4% increase in ridership for July.

Dr. Conn noted her concerns about the NH-1, specifically that it doesn't provide connections to the local Oxon Hill community. Mr. Hamre responded that the route was designed to provide the shortest possible link to the Metrorail system, which was accomplished by routing it to the Southern Avenue station on the Green Line. In response to an additional question from Dr. Conn, he said that the route stops at the Oxon Hill park-and-ride lot, which allows for connections to be made to local bus routes. He said that Prince George's County's "TheBus" had asked for state funding to provide local service in the Oxon Hill area but did not receive any funding from the state.

Mr. Farrell asked if bus rapid transit had ever been studied for the Dulles Corridor. Mr. Hamre responded that bus rapid transit had been studied in the corridor, and Fairfax County currently runs significant bus service in this corridor. He added that Fairfax County determined that rail service in the corridor would serve more riders by reducing the number of transfers they would be required to make, and has gone through the federal planning process.

Mr. Farrell also noted that the Y-Line buses along Georgia Avenue were included in the Priority Corridor Network and asked about the potential for Metro to combine the bus services that operate along Georgia Avenue from downtown to Silver Spring and the services that operate north from Silver Spring into Montgomery County. Mr. Hamre responded that reliability can suffer if bus routes become too long, and that Silver Spring makes a logical point to split the route because of its function as a transfer location among several bus routes. He added that

Metro is working with Montgomery County to have a bus station built as part of the development of Montgomery General Hospital.

Mr. Farrell also asked if Metro would be able to have riders exit through the rear doors. Mr. Hamre responded that this would require customer training, as well as making sure that bus stops are improved so that trees or other obstacles do not block the buses' rear doors.

Ms. Daniels noted her concerns about crowding and bus bunching on the 79/MetroExtra service along Georgia Avenue. She explained that it was difficult for her to get a seat on MetroExtra buses. Mr. Hamre responded that he has requested additional buses for the 79 service, since approximately 30% of the customers on the 70/71 Georgia Avenue service have shifted over to the MetroExtra service. He added that he is also trying to get additional supervisors to monitor the Georgia Avenue MetroExtra service.

Dr. Bracmort thanked Mr. Hamre for coming and answering questions.

VIII. Subcommittee Reports:

Dr. Bracmort then asked Subcommittee Chairs to give a brief report on their activities over the past month and the date and time for their next Subcommittee meetings.

Lillian White said that the Budget Subcommittee did not meet in September but is planning to meet in October, and that an email with details about the meeting will be sent out later.

Mr. Cerny said that the Rail Subcommittee had a presentation from the Office of Plant Maintenance, who gave an overview of the office's responsibilities, with an emphasis on Metro's station enhancement program. He explained that the station enhancement program provides a cleaning and rehabilitation of each station approximately every 3½ years and detailed the various jobs that are performed as part of the program. He said that there would be a presentation on the proposed realignment of some Blue Line service, as well as a presentation on signage alerting riders to planned trackwork. He said that the meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 8th at 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Bracmort asked about attendance at the Rail Subcommittee meetings. Mr. Cerny responded that attendance has been alright, though no new members attended the recent Rail Subcommittee meeting.

Dr. Bracmort then gave a brief overview of the September Bus Subcommittee meeting. She said that the Subcommittee received a presentation on bus on-time performance, and noted that Metro now has a system to get more reliable information about bus service. She said that the system has recently been activated, and Metro is establishing baseline data to then use to make improvements to bus service.

Dr. Bracmort encouraged members to come to Subcommittee meetings. She said that Metro staff at these meetings are very knowledgeable and very open to suggestions. She also noted that, unlike full RAC meetings, the Subcommittee meetings are much more informal. Mr. Pasek

explained that presentations from RAC Subcommittees can be accessed through the Council's website.

IX. New Business:

Dr. Bracmort said that there were many different opinions and concerns expressed at this meeting concerning the elimination of paper transfers and SmarTrip cards and suggested that some members of the Council get together to draft a statement that the Council could review and approve at its next meeting.

There was discussion about the elements that would go into the letter and how it would be presented to the group. Ms. Zinkl agreed to take the lead in developing the document.

X. Adjournment:

Dr. Bracmort thanked members for coming and for the good discussions this evening. Without objection, she adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

DRAFT