

## WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

Wednesday, September 3, 2014  
6:30 P.M. Regular Meeting

### MINUTES

Place: Lower Level Meeting Room, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
Headquarters (Jackson Graham Building), 600 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC

Present: *Members*

Carol Carter Walker, Chair, At-Large  
Barbara Hermanson, Vice-Chair, VA, City of Alexandria  
Karen Lynch, Maryland, Vice-Chair, MD, Prince George's County  
Candice Walsh, Vice-Chair, District of Columbia  
Francis DeBernardo, MD, Prince George's County  
Pablo Destefanis, District of Columbia  
Bob Fogel, MD, Montgomery County  
Katherine Kortum, MD, Montgomery County  
Deborah MacKenzie, At-Large  
Aldea Meary-Miller, VA, Arlington County  
Lorraine Silva, VA, Arlington County  
Deborah Titus, VA, Fairfax County  
Daniel Turk, District of Columbia  
James Wright, Jr., MD, Prince George's County  
Mary Ann Zimmerman, MD, Montgomery County

*Other Individuals*

Lynn Bowersox, Assistant General Manager, Department of Customer Service,  
Communications and Marketing, WMATA  
Tom Randall, Director, New Electronic Payments Project, WMATA  
Loyda Sequeira, Board Secretary, WMATA  
James N. Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator

Absent: *Members*

Ben Ball, District of Columbia  
Caroline Kim, District of Columbia  
Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee, Chair  
Frederick Walker, VA, Fairfax County

Presider: Carol Carter Walker, Chair, At-Large

**I. Call to Order:**

Ms. Walker called the August 2014 meeting of the Metro Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) to order at 6:40 p.m.

**II. Public Comment Period:**

Ms. Walker recognized members of the public who were signed up to speak.

Ms. Laura Koschny, spoke regarding the reinstatement of a discontinued bus stop located at the intersection of Fairfax Drive and North Taylor Street, Arlington, VA.

Mr. Lino Stracuzzi, spoke regarding route the W6 and W8 bus stop located on Jasper Road SE, Washington, DC.

Ms. Laura Larrimore, spoke regarding service issues and conditions on the Metrorail blue line.

Mr. Wright thanked the members of the public who addressed the Council.

**III. Approval of Agenda:**

Without objection, the agenda was approved as amended.

**IV. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes:**

Ms. Zimmerman moved, seconded by Ms. Kortum, to approve as submitted the August 6, 2014 minutes of the Riders' Advisory Council.

Ayes: Mr. DeBernardo, Mr. Destefanis, Mr. Fogel, Ms. Hermanson, Ms. Kortum, Ms. Lynch, Maryland, Ms. MacKenzie, Ms. Meary-Miller, Ms. Titus, Mr. Turk, Ms. Carter Walker, Ms. Walsh, Mr. Wright, Jr., Ms. Zimmerman.

Nays: None

Abstentions: Ms. Silva

The motion was approved.

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**V. Introduction of New RAC Members**

Ms. Debra MacKenzie and Mr. Pablo Destefanis provided brief remarks introducing themselves to the RAC and the public.

**VI. WMATA Customer Care Initiative**

Ms. Lynn Bowersox, Assistant General Manager, Department of Customer Service, Communications and Marketing, WMATA, was present to discuss the WMATA Customer Care

Initiative. She provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Charting a Course to Customer Care Excellence*, which consisted of the following slides:

Value Statement  
Customer Service Improvements To-Date  
S.W.O.T. Analysis  
Actions Needed to Achieve and Sustain KPI

Customer Care Rocket for Success  
Working Groups  
Next Steps

Mr. Wright asked the following series of questions: (1) if every WMATA employee was on a leadership career track, (2) if the creation of local customer service station committees were being modeled after a program similar to “Friends of the Library,” (3) if there had been any discussion regarding the use of personal (body) cameras by Metro Transit Police officers, (4) and if the employee recognition program would include a banquet or luncheon. With regard to the use of body cameras by Metro Transit officers, Ms. Bowersox stated that the practice was still being examined and that follow-up would be provided at a later time. She then said that the initial local customer service station concept was to have employees meet locally to solve local issues, however that the “Friends of the Library” model would be explored going forward. She also responded that that the “automatic” leadership track did not currently exist, but that it was the goal of the Human Resources Department to change that model to emphasize safety and customer service performance. Lastly, Ms. Bowersox stated that the recognition program would be organization-wide, but that the subcommittee would be charged with creating the program.

Ms. Zimmerman thanked Ms. Bowersox for providing the presentation and a thorough analysis. She then asked how responsive the telephone survey had been in providing data for the Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Ms. Bowersox stated that the surveying was successful and that cellphones had been incorporated into the phone surveys to reach a broader demographic of customers.

Noting the proposed changes to job descriptions and business tools, Ms. Meary-Miller inquired if there was a timeline and what stage the development process was currently in. Ms. Bowersox responded stating that WMATA was currently in the design stage and that follow-up would be provided following the implementation of the 90-day plan.

With regard to the proposed “Metro University” concept, Mr. DeBernardo asked if employee participation in the Metro University would be rewarded with promotions, salary increases, et cetera. Ms. Bowersox said that because the concept was still in development, it would be premature to come to a definite conclusion. She did say that it was a general consensus that Metro University would prepare employees and place them in a better standing to compete for certain promotions and assignments. She commented that the goal was to better equip employees to progress up the career ladder and retain talent. Mr. DeBernadro suggested that WMATA seek guidance from cell phone companies in order to train staff in the area of customer care, to which Ms. Bowersox agreed.

Mr. Turk asked that staff perform a cost-benefit analysis with regard to finance and “bureaucratic difficulty” in order to prioritize and maximize the efficiency of staff.

Ms. Hermanson asked whether the action plan would be developed by the end of 2014, or if the actions would be taken by the actions taken by the end of 2014. Ms. Bowersox affirmed the latter.

Ms. Lynch asked the following series of questions: (1) who participated in the S.W.O.T analysis, (2) how the mission statement was being promoted by WMATA, and (3) if Metro was reviewing and addressing complaints received via social media. Ms. Lynch also suggested that “Metro University” include a formal mentoring program. Ms. Bowersox replied that the S.W.O.T. analysis was led by Barbara Moulton, Director of Customer Care, and involved several Metro departments. She then said that the customer values statement would be part of the internal communications campaign that would launch in the fall of 2014. Ms. Bowersox explained the methods in which the organization responded to customer complaints and concerns received via social media. She continued saying that WMATA was exploring the possibility of incorporating social media into the next generation of customer relationship management software. Lastly, Ms. Bowersox expressed her agreement with incorporating a formal mentoring program, but discussed the employee coaching that was currently in place.

Mr. Fogel asked if the customer service expectations for the Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) would be different from other WMATA employees. Ms. Bowersox said that the MTPD would have the same standards and values introduced into their culture. However, she noted that because of the public safety function that they perform, that public safety would always be a priority. Mr. Fogel complemented the customer service extended the previous weekend due to service delays on the Metrorail Red Line.

Mr. Destefanis inquired if a feedback device such as a scorecard had been considered to provide customer service-related performance information to station managers. Ms. Bowersox said that the delivery mechanism for station managers was still under consideration due to the regulated use of cellphones for WMATA employees. She continued saying that staff were still trying to develop a mobile or desktop application to provide station managers with the best tool to receive information.

Ms. Silva questioned how the MTPD worked with jurisdictional police officers for operational purposes. Ms. Bowersox stated that the MTPD worked closely with jurisdictional police officers and then discussed several of the joint task forces, shared resources and divisions of responsibility.

Ms. Titus asked that the responses of station managers to customer concerns be included in the customer service initiative. Ms. Bowersox said that staff would explore possible methods to track concerns expressed to station managers and the associated responses.

## **VII. WMATA New Electronic Payments Project (NEPP)**

Mr. Tom Randall, Director, New Electronic Payments Project, WMATA, was present to discuss the WMATA New Electronic Payments Project (NEPP). He provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *New Electronic Payments Program*, which consisted of the following slides:

Goals  
Current State  
Current System Challenges  
New Electronic Payments Program  
New Look and Feel

Central Data System & Devices  
Regional Coordination  
Electronic Payments  
NEPP – Current Schedule

Mr. Destefanis expressed concern regarding the privacy of customer's financial and personal data. With regard to the volume of data available, he asked that staff consider open data initiatives. Lastly, Mr. Destefanis asked if there would be intelligent gates, which would have the capability to be reversible.

Mr. Turk asked if there were any advantages of the current system over the new electronic payment system being proposed and the associated risks. Mr. Randall said that an advantage of the previous system was that customers were already familiar with it and that it may be challenging for them to transition to a new system. He continued saying that the current system was satisfactory as it processed a large number of customers daily and was comparable to other transit fare systems in the United States. Mr. Randal commented that there would always be a calculated risk when introducing new technology. He acknowledged that there could be some glitches during the development and implementation phases, but that staff maintained confidence in the work being performed. Mr. Turk asked if the ultimate goal was to phase out the SmarTrip® technology or if it would remain in place after the implementation of the New Electronic Payments Program. Mr. Randall stated that the physical SmarTrip® cards would be compatible with the new system, with the exception of a series of vintage SmarTrip® cards. He continued saying that the SmarTrip® "back end" processors and readers would be discontinued and eventually replaced by the new system. Mr. Randall reiterated that the new system would be phased.

Referencing slide seven, Ms. Walsh inquired as to the location of the new on-board payment targets on the Metrobuses. Mr. Randall replied that that staff sought consistency across all of the Metrobuses, so the desired location was near the fare boxes, minimally attached to the handrail or on mounted on the floor next to the fare box. Ms. Walsh asked if the on-board payment targets would eventually replace the fare boxes. Mr. Randall said that the fare boxes would always allow customers to pay with cash on Metrobuses, but that the payment targets currently on the fare boxes would be phased out. Ms. Walsh also asked if the new on-board payment targets would allow customers to add money to their SmarTrip® card. Mr. Randall responded stating that WMATA would continue expanding the retail network of SmarTrip® card sales and that the loading of funds on SmarTrip® cards on Metrobuses would be phased out. Referencing slide eight, Ms. Walsh inquired if V-Block technology made the computer chip in your credit card irrelevant. Mr. Randal said that the chip in each credit card served as a unique identifier that credit card in the V-Block system.

Ms. Walker suggested that future presentations on the New Electronic Payments Program include a comparison list of the old fare payment system and the new fare payment system.

Mr. Fogel asked how staff planned to implement the employer fare subsidy process into the new system. Mr. Randall stated that SmartBenefits® program would not be implemented during the

pilot phase, but would be included during the design, building and testing phases. Mr. Fogel asked what percentage of customers participated in the SmartBenefits® program. Mr. Randall stated that follow-up would be provided at a later date.

Ms. Titus if it was possible to create a model fare machine for customers to learn about its functionality and operation. Mr. Randall stated that staff was currently working on training videos, but that he would take the suggestion back to staff.

## **VIII. Committee Reports**

- Program, Projects and Planning Committee – Approval of 16<sup>th</sup> Street Bus Resolution

Mr. Turk introduced the agenda item and reviewed the general purpose of the resolution. He invited comments from the RAC regarding substantive or grammatical changes.

Ms. Walker commented on the interest of the WMATA Board of Directors in the resolution and stated that it afforded the RAC the opportunity to work across the local jurisdictions.

Ms. Walsh expressed her support for the resolution.

Ms. Hermanson asked if the resolution would go to the Board of Directors or WMATA staff.

Ms. Walker replied that the resolution would be sent to the Board of Directors with copies to WMATA staff.

Mr. Turk moved, seconded by Ms. Kortum, to approve the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Bus Resolution.

The motion was approved unanimously.

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- Customer Service Committee – Approval of Signage Recommendations

Ms. Silva introduced the agenda item and reviewed the general purpose of the recommendations. She invited comments from the RAC regarding substantive or grammatical changes.

Ms. Zimmerman inquired if the recommendations would be forwarded to the Board of Directors or to the staff member who made the presentation. Ms. Walker suggested sending the recommendations to the Board of Directors, with the addition of a closing paragraph that referenced the staff presentation.

Mr. Turk suggested including a summary paragraph that the beginning of the recommendations that highlighted the important points of the recommendations.

The RAC discussed the inclusion of additional information in the recommendations.

Ms. Walker suggested including a cover letter in lieu of additional language in the body of the recommendations.

Ms. Meary-Miller commented that there were main points at the end of the recommendations that needed to be brought to the forefront in case individuals did not read the entire document.

Ms. Silva moved, seconded by Ms. Zimmerman, to approve the signage recommendations as written.

The motion was approved unanimously.

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## **IX. Announcements**

Mr. Turk announced the agenda for the Program, Projects and Planning Committee meeting on Monday, September 8, 2014 and invited all members to participate.

Ms. Walker announced the resignation of Dexter Williams from the RAC. She then announced that the revised RAC Bylaws were sent to the WMATA General Counsel for review.

Ms. Walsh commented on the potential that the RAC had with regard to Metrobus issues. She announced that several expander buses had been added to routes traveling 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

Ms. Lynch inquired about the status of the meeting to discuss Metrorail Blue Line issue originating in Northern Virginia. Mr. James Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator explained that customers had been contacted to identify a location in Northern Virginia to hold the meeting.

## **X. Adjournment**

Mr. DeBernardo moved, seconded by Mr. Turk, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Council.

The motion carried unanimously.

The regular session meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James N. Jackson  
Riders' Advisory Council Coordinator

## WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

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### SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Abdul Ayub, arrived following the close of the public comment period to express his concerns regarding Metrobus route and bus stop changes. Mr. James Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator, spoke with the customer to obtain his contact information for timely follow-up.

Mr. Jackson met with Mr. Ayub on September 4, 2014 at WMATA Headquarters, 600 Fifth Street NW, Washington, DC. Mr. Ayub stated that his first concern was with a bus stop located at 37<sup>th</sup> Street and Davis Place SE. He said that there was a bus pad there, but no bus stop. He also said that there had not been a bus stop at this location in six to eight months. According to Mr. Ayub, this area was served by the D1 and D2 buses in the morning.

Mr. Ayub also cited the lack of a bus stop located in the 2200 block of Wisconsin Avenue NW. He stated that the previous bus stop was located across from an Embassy. Mr. Ayub said that the bus stop was discontinued approximately 2 weeks ago.

Lastly, the customer expressed concern that the number 33 Metrobus ended its route at 10<sup>th</sup> Street. He suggested that the bus end at 7<sup>th</sup> Street to better accommodate Metrorail Green Line customers.

Mr. Jackson responded that the concerns expressed would be forwarded to staff and that follow-up would be provided.