

## WMATA Riders' Advisory Council

Wednesday, August 6, 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  
Ben Ball, District of Columbia  
Bob Fogel, MD, Montgomery County  
Caroline Kim, District of Columbia  
Pat Sheehan, At-Large/Accessibility Advisory Committee, Chair  
Deborah Titus, VA, Fairfax County  
Daniel Turk, District of Columbia  
Frederick Walker, VA, Fairfax County  
Dexter Williams, 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  
Sam Zimbabwe, Associate Director Policy, Planning & Sustainability  
Administration, District Department of Transportation  
John Pasek, Assistant Board Secretary, WMATA  
Loyda Sequeira, Board Secretary, WMATA  
James N. Jackson, RAC Staff Coordinator

Absent: *Members*

Frank DeBernardo, MD, Prince George's County  
Pablo Destefanis, District of Columbia  
Katherine Kortum, MD, Montgomery County  
Deborah MacKenzie, At-Large  
Aldea Meary-Miller, VA, Arlington County  
Lorraine Silva, VA, Arlington 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 6:37 p.m. She then read a prepared statement into the record recognizing Mr. John Pasek for his tenure as the RAC Staff Coordinator. Ms. Walker noted that he served the RAC from October 2006 to July 2014. Mr. Pasek thanked the RAC for the recognition and provided brief remarks.

**II. Public Comment Period:**

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

Ms. Laura Larrimore, spoke regarding lack of funding to improve services on the Metrorail blue line.

Mr. Colin Reusch, spoke regarding customer service issues and a lack of funding to improve services on the Metrorail blue line. He requested that the RAC develop a "Riders' Bill of Rights."

Mr. David Cox, spoke regarding the impact of the Metrorail silver line opening on blue line riders.

Mr. Jeff Larrimore, spoke regarding lack of funding to improve services on the Metrorail blue line.

Ms. Connie Patriarca, spoke regarding service issues and conditions on the Metrorail blue line.

Mr. Ball responded stating that RAC had brought many of the complaints discussed to WMATA. He said that although some adjustments had been made, such as adding several eight car trains, that there were still other improvements that could be made. He encouraged the public to support the WMATA Momentum strategic plan, which would bring eight car trains throughout the Metrorail system and add new Metrorail blue line connections.

Mr. Wright and Ms. Hermanson thanked members of the public who provided their comments and additional information to the RAC.

Mr. Walker discussed the necessity to receive data regarding ridership and service issues since the opening of the silver line. Ms. Titus concurred. Mr. Fogle questioned whether it might be more beneficial to obtain data from July through September in order to capture a true perspective of the Metrorail ridership. Mr. Turk concurred.

Mr. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Zimmerman, to request that WMATA provide ridership, operational and service-related statistics for the Orange, Silver and Blue Metrorail lines from July 26, 2014 to August 26, 2014.

The motion carried unanimously.

**III. Approval of Agenda:**

Without objection, the agenda was approved as amended.

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

Mr. Ball moved, seconded by Mr. Walker, to approve as submitted the July 9, 2014 minutes of the Riders' Advisory Council.

The motion carried unanimously.

**V. Introduction of New RAC Members**

Ms. Caroline Kim provided brief remarks introducing herself to the RAC and public.

**VI. District Department of Transportation (DDOT) 16<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Study/Other Bus Issues**

Mr. Sam Zimbabwe, Associate Director, Policy, Planning & Sustainability Administration, DDOT, was present to discuss the DDOT 16<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Study. He provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *16<sup>th</sup> Street Bus Improvement: Opportunities and Challenges*, which consisted of the following slides:

Where We Are Today (District)  
Where We Are Today (16<sup>th</sup> Street)  
Lack of Good Examples  
Change is Hard!

Incremental Steps Toward the Future  
Getting to a Vision  
Making the Vision a Reality

Mr. Walker asked if there were examples of other communities that used transit priority signals. Mr. Zimbabwe responded stating that they were being used in other communities across the country and would allow buses approaching a traffic signal to extend the time of the green light.

With regard to the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Study, Ms. Walsh stated that a similar study was conducted of 14<sup>th</sup> Street in 2012. She continued saying that there was a lack of activity since the completion of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street study, which resulted in a shift of customers from 14<sup>th</sup> Street going to 16<sup>th</sup> Street for service. Ms. Walsh commented that some of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street improvements should also occur on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Zimbabwe discussed that the issues surrounding the 14<sup>th</sup> Street/Columbia Heights area continued to be a work in progress. He said that Columbia Heights continued to be an area that experienced a lot of change regarding the needs of customers, but that there were some modifications that could be made to help with Metrobus service in that area. Ms. Walsh stated that Metrobus service on 14<sup>th</sup> Street continued to be impeded morning, afternoon and during the evening and that the area should be made a priority.

Mr. Turk asked what effect priority bus lanes would have on 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Zimbabwe stated that currently there were peak-hour restrictions in peak directions with regard to parking. He said that there was a low lane utilization rate for the right lane in during peak traffic hours. He discussed the essential components and the challenges of implementing a bus only lane. Mr.

Turk questioned the communication of technical information regarding the study improvements. Mr. Zimbabwe stated that the communication was positive and that there were many opportunities for collaboration as to how to meet the needs of everyone.

Referencing Montgomery County (MD), Ms. Zimmerman questioned how riders in other jurisdictions could be support of the efforts to improve the 16<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. Mr. Zimbabwe stated that there were plenty of opportunities for “synergy,” and that customers would benefit if local bus authorities worked with the District to align their priorities.

In order to address people parking in the bus only lanes, Mr. Walker suggested that staff conduct a review of the parking signage. Mr. Zimbabwe stated that staff looked at signage from other municipalities and that revisions to local parking signs remained a priority.

## **VII. WMATA Public Presentation Plan/RAC Comments on the Silver Line Opening**

Ms. Walker stated that the period of time allotted on the agenda for RAC comments on the Silver line opening would be used for comments from the public.

Ms. Lynn Bowersox, Assistant General Manager, Department of Customer Service, Communications and Marketing, WMATA, was present to discuss the WMATA Public Participation Plan and respond generally to comments regarding the opening of the Silver line. He provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled *16<sup>th</sup> Street Bus Improvement: Opportunities and Challenges*, which consisted of the following slides:

Customer Demographic Profile  
Public Participation Plan (PPP) Goals  
What Will Trigger the PPP?  
PPP Development Process  
Key Findings for Future Outreach

Customer Preferences  
Recommendations for the Future  
Internal Toolkit  
Next Steps

Ms. Walker suggested that the Public Participation Plan (PPP) include education and/or language to explain Title 6 and its requirements to customers.

Mr. Ball commented that most people were against public hearings because of the way that they were run. He continued saying that the hearings did not provide an opportunity for speakers to receive feedback on their comments. He questioned if there was any way to change the format to foster better communication. Ms. Bowersox replied stating that the traditional format for public hearings was such to build a transcript of public comments; in the interest of time one-way dialogue was used and the governing body did not respond to individual comments. She then discussed the alternate methodologies used for public meetings.

Mr. Turk asked that Ms. Bowersox speak to her comfort level regarding soliciting feedback from the public regarding the proposed plan. Ms. Bowersox responded that one of the challenges was creating enough flexibility to collect enough data to provide thoughtful feedback. She said there needed to be a range of times considered given the complexity of the information the amount of information to be collected.

Ms. Zimmerman requested that the RAC be provided with a list of the community-based organizations that were included in the PPP, to which Ms. Bowersox responded in the affirmative. Ms. Zimmerman then asked what the difference was between the PPP and a “customer care document.” Ms. Bowersox stated that the RAC would be given a separate presentation regarding the Customer Care Initiative, which was a broader initiative to change the way that WMATA viewed customers in terms of human capital.

Mr. Walker thanked Ms. Bowersox for her presentation and the statistics provided. He discussed the importance of WMATA knowing who its’ new customers are as it moves forward with future planning.

Mr. David Cox, spoke regarding the reductions in blue line Metrorail service due to the opening of the silver line.

Ms. Laura Larrimore, spoke regarding lack of funding to improve services on the Metrorail blue line. She asked what more can be done to facilitate a dialogue between customers and WMATA.

Mr. Jeff Larrimore, spoke regarding WMATA’s public outreach regarding the Metro Momentum strategic plan.

In response to Ms. Larrimore, Ms. Bowersox stated that there was not an “easy, quick and cheap” solution to the issues surrounding the Metrorail Blue line. She said that WMATA was open to new ideas or suggestions from the public and that she would contact members of the public who provided public comment to arrange a meeting.

## **VIII. Committee Presentations**

- Governance Committee – Review Revisions to Bylaws

Ms. Walker reviewed the proposed changes to the RAC bylaws. The following revisions were made:

- Amend line 28 to strike “promote” and insert “facilitate.”
- Amend lines 25-27 to read “to actively seek input from a broad range of riders and organizations with an expressed interest in public transit on operational and budgetary issues that affect Metrorail, Metrobus, and MetroAccess.”
- Strike lines 52 and 53.

Mr. Ball discussed the suggested language for Article III, Section B (Membership/Appointments). Ms. Loyda Sequeira, Board Secretary, WMATA, clarified the RAC application and appointment process. Ms. Walker commented regarding members of the RAC choosing other individuals to join the Council. Mr. Sheehan discussed that Accessibility Advisory Committee application and appointment process.

Mr. Ball moved, seconded by Ms. Walker, to amend Article III, Section B of the RAC bylaws to read: “when vacancies occur, WMATA staff will solicit applications and nominations from the public, including the RAC. The RAC Chair and jurisdictional Vice Chairs will then generate a slate of nominees from the applicant pool in consultation with WMATA staff. The nominee will be approved by a majority vote of the RAC and forwarded to the WMATA Board for final approval. In the vent that the Board does not approve of the nominee, the RAC will choose an alternate to be approved by the WMATA Board.”

The motion was defeated 7-5.

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Ms. Zimmerman questioned why there was not a requirement for RAC members to participate on committees. Ms. Walsh commented on the reason that the requirement was not included in the original revision of the bylaws. Ms. Sequeira spoke about the information provided to new members regarding the time commitment of the RAC and standing committees.

Ms. Zimmerman moved, seconded by Ms. Lynch, to amend Article VI, of the RAC bylaws to require RAC members participate on at least one standing committee per year.

The motion was defeated 7-4.

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Mr. Fogel moved, seconded by Mr. Wright, to amend Article VI, of the RAC bylaws to add language that encourages RAC members participate on at least one standing committee per year.

The motion carried.

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Mr. Ball moved, seconded by Mr. Walker, to approve the RAC proposed bylaws as amended.

The motion carried.

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**IX. Committee Reports**

- Customer Service: Action Item – Approval of Ms. Lorraine Silva as Committee Chair

Ms. Zimmerman moved, seconded by Mr. Turk, to approve Ms. Silva as Chair of the Customer Service Committee.

The motion carried unanimously.

**X. Adjournment:**

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

The motion carried unanimously.

The regular session meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

James N. Jackson  
Riders' Advisory Council Coordinator

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