

**Riders' Advisory Council  
Monthly Meeting  
April 2, 2008**

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Iacomini called the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) to order at 6:36 p.m. She then asked Mr. Pasek, the RAC's staff coordinator, to take the roll.

The following members of the Riders' Advisory Council were present for its April meeting. (Arrival times for members who arrived after roll call are listed and are also noted in the body of the minutes.)

Nancy Iacomini, Chair, Arlington County  
Kelsi Bracmort, District of Columbia  
Denise Brown, Prince George's County  
Steve Cerny, Fairfax County  
Penny Everline, Arlington County  
Rachelle Olden, District of Columbia  
Kaiya Sandler, Montgomery County  
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Elderly and Disabled Committee Chair  
Lillian White, City of Alexandria  
Robin White, Fairfax County (arrived 6:48 p.m.)  
Diana Zinkl, District of Columbia

The following members of the Riders' Advisory Council were not present for any portion of the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting:

Sharon Conn, Prince George's County  
Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia  
Susan Holland, Prince George's County  
Kevin Moore, At-Large/District of Columbia

II. Public Comment:

Elizabeth Orlen, a student at the George Washington University, noted that she and other students had come to a previous meeting of the RAC to advocate for discounted student fares on Metro. She said that she came to this meeting to let the RAC know that she and the other students are still advocating for these discounted fares and have created a Facebook site and are working on an online petition as part of their advocacy efforts.

Ms. Iacomini said that it was her understanding that student representatives were supposed to meet with Chris Zimmerman, the chairman of the WMATA Board and asked if Ms. Orlen knew the outcome of that meeting. Ms. Orlen said that this meeting has occurred and that Mr. Zimmerman is supposed to meet with school administrators, but that she hasn't heard of any follow-up actions from that meeting.

Ms. White noted that the implementation of student discounts is mentioned in the Board of Directors' 2008 Goals that the Board adopted at its March meeting.

Ms. Zinkl asked what kind of discount, specifically, the students were asking for. Ms. Orlen responded that the students would be willing to negotiate with Metro on the scope of the discount.

III. Approval of March 5, 2008 Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Iacomini noted that the next item on the agenda was the approval of the March meeting minutes and asked for corrections or comments. Lillian White noted that she had suggested that Metro include a virtual station tour on its website, which was not reflected in the minutes. The minutes were changed to reflect her comment.

Ms. Iacomini then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Everline moved approval of the minutes as amended. Lillian White seconded this motion. The RAC then voted on approving the minutes, as amended. The vote was as follows:

*In favor:* Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Cerny, Ms. Everline, Ms. Olden, Ms. Sandler, Mr. Sheehan, Lillian White, Ms. Zinkl

*Opposed:* none

*Abstentions:* Dr. Bracmort, Ms. Brown

The minutes were approved as amended. (8-0-2)

IV. Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Iacomini then asked members for approval of the agenda. She noted that the agenda had changed from what was sent out, as staff from Metro's budget office had asked to come and brief the RAC on Metro's Proposed FY09 Budget.

Ms. Iacomini moved approval of the agenda as presented. This motion was seconded by Ms. Olden. All members present voted to approve the agenda as presented.

V. Communications Initiatives:

Ms. Iacomini then introduced Deputy General Manager Gerald Francis who had come to the meeting to discuss Metro's customer communications and the various initiatives that Metro is working on to improve this communication, especially during emergencies. Ms. Iacomini noted that poor communication was one of the most common subjects addressed by riders during last year's fare increase hearings and has also been the subject of many discussions at RAC meetings. She noted that improving communications is also part of the Metro Board's adopted 2008 Goals.

Ms. Iacomini suggested to RAC members that they familiarize themselves with the WMATA Board's 2008 Goals. She noted that many of the goals are things that the RAC has talked about and can work on throughout the year. She added that many of the

communication improvements listed in the Board's goals could be implemented without spending much money. She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Francis.

Mr. Francis introduced himself and Dan Epps, the Managing Director of Rail Delivery, and Rita Davis, Line Director of the Yellow and Green Lines. He noted that Mr. Epps and Ms. Davis are the lead personnel working on the communication initiative.

Mr. Francis then discussed his appearance at RAC in October when he shared earlier problems that Metro experienced on the Yellow Line and how the agency reacted to those problems. He said that RAC members gave him feedback at that meeting and that he and his staff used that feedback to move forward with identifying potential improvements that could be made to Metro's communications.

Mr. Francis said that he wanted to share with the RAC some of the things that staff had learned in their review of the August incidents.

He said that staff recognized that customers were not promptly told what was happening, station managers weren't receiving information from Metro's Operations Control Center (OCC), announcements to customers were not sufficiently specific, and that there were problems with Metro's e-Alert system.

Mr. Francis told members that what Metro heard from its customers was that they want honest information about the situation that is occurring and to be given information about the options they have to complete their trips. He said that, in response to these comments, Metro has instituted the "we stop, we tell" policy that means that any time a train stops, the operator will inform customers about what is happening. He said that operators make announcements every two minutes and provide information about the anticipated length of the delay and any other information that they have.

Mr. Francis added that Metro is upgrading the communications equipment to improve public address systems at 26 of its 38 underground stations. He said that this will allow passengers to better hear announcements from the OCC.

Robin White arrived at 6:48 p.m.

Mr. Francis added that station managers have also been provided with wireless microphones, which allows them to communicate over the public address system as well as to be out among customers. He noted that station managers have also been given handheld radios which allow them to be out of their booth and still remain in contact with the Operations Control Center. He explained that this provides station managers with greater flexibility in assisting customers and allows them to be more quickly made aware of service changes, such as station closures or the establishment of bus bridges during emergency situations.

He noted that Metro also looked at its Station Manager program. Mr. Francis told members that, while Metro hopes to reduce the number of incidents, it will still be

conducting drills with Station Managers to improve its response. He told members that staff would be using a recent incident that occurred at Ballston as an example. He said that these drills would allow Metro to practice and evaluate its response to situations without having to wait for those situations to actually occur.

Mr. Francis then turned the floor over to Rita Davis to further discuss the Station Managers Program. Ms. Davis said that Metro is in the process of rolling out a training program for station managers that will allow them to effectively respond to all types of situations. She said that the key to improving response is for station managers to continually monitor their stations and to communicate with the Operations Control Center as soon as they notice anything out of the ordinary and to then take appropriate action.

Ms. Davis then described the elements of the hands-on incident training for station managers and said that this training would provide them with:

- Information to be able to respond to all manner of situations;
- Consistent approach by all station managers to address incidents;
- Better preparation to address passengers' concerns in a calm, effective manner.

Ms. Davis also mentioned that Metro would create a Customer Liaison position within the OCC and noted that Metro station managers have been using wireless microphones within the stations and have gotten positive feedback from customers on their use. She then asked Mr. Epps to discuss the Customer Liaison position within the OCC.

Mr. Epps explained that the Customer Liaison positions have not yet been filled. He noted that in the interim, Metro has temporarily placed personnel in these positions, which is helping Metro to learn how to best utilize these new positions before filling them on a permanent basis.

He added that the fact that more personnel have been added to the OCC means that there is more flexibility and manpower to address incidents. Mr. Epps noted that Metro is currently going through all of the resumes that have been submitted for the positions and will be hiring the most qualified communicators that it can find to fill the positions. He noted that the currently, the positions are staffed from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Mr. Epps also told RAC members that staff in the OCC has been trying to stress the importance of the OCC Controller telling the train operator and station managers the cause of the incident and how long the possible delay will be. He noted that this is a change from previous procedure. He said that station managers will have the authority to give this additional information to passengers in the event of service disruptions. He added that these changes in procedure are a "culture change" in the way Metro operates, and, as such, will take time to be fully implemented.

Mr. Francis said that during the service disruptions in August, he noticed that Mr. Epps, who was in charge of the OCC, was trying to "do everything" in response to the situation. He added that watching Mr. Epps helped him realize the need for additional personnel in

the OCC so that the Controller, or whoever is in charge, could focus on certain tasks and leave other duties, such as customer communications, up to specific staff members.

Mr. Francis added that Metro also needed to review its internal communications as well as its communications with customers. He said that Metro has tried to change its procedures so that all of the decision-makers are “joined at the hip” and are in consultation in their decision-making. Mr. Francis said that this would help keep Metro’s decisions focused on the impact to its customers and gave the example of how different Metro staff (Metro police and rail operations staff) would have different reactions to the decision to close a station and by working together, could develop a response that is most effective while also minimizing the disruptions to riders. He noted that this policy of working together is being strengthened through more frequent drills and “tabletop” staff exercises.

*e-Alerts:*

Mr. Francis also discussed Metro’s e-Alert system. He said that Metro’s policy is to issue e-Alerts after situations cause a 10-minute delay, but if a situation arises that Metro knows will cause significant delays, Metro sends out the alert immediately. Mr. Epps also noted that Metro’s e-Alerts are the same as the scroll bar that appears on the WMATA website. He said that Metro is looking at modifying the way emergency messages are displayed to passengers to provide them with more information.

*Customer Liaison Position:*

Mr. Epps described to members that the Customer Liaison staffer is positioned close to the OCC Controller so that he or she can hear the discussion between the Controller and the train operator and then use that information when informing customers about the delays. He added that the Customer Liaison staffer also has the opportunity to take some extra time to ensure that the information put out about the incident is correct so that accurate information is provided to the public.

Mr. Epps also noted that every incident is now announced system-wide, rather than just announced line-by-line so that, for example, Green Line delay announcements will be made at Red Line stations. Mr. Francis said that Metro used to make announcements only specific to the various lines, and has changed this practice based on customer feedback. He said that this gives passengers better information to make decisions about altering their trips.

*Station Specific Brochures:*

Ms. Davis then gave an overview of the station-specific brochures that Metro is developing. She said that these brochures will provide information on nearby landmarks along with bus routes in the vicinity of the stations. She noted that Metro will be updating information from its bus maps and putting this information into a take-one form.

She said that Metro staff is currently reviewing all of its information to see which information would be included in the final version of the brochures.

*Bus Shuttles/Bus Bridges:*

Mr. Francis then discussed bus shuttles/bus bridges. He said that previously, Metro would give the impression in its announcements that buses would arrive relatively quickly following a service disruption. He told members that, Metro now announces that it will take a certain amount of time to establish the bus bridge, depending on how many buses it has available. He noted that by providing this information to customers, they will have the ability to make decisions on how to best reach their destinations. He added that providing this information also avoids giving customers unrealistic expectations about when buses would actually arrive.

Mr. Francis discussed the difficulty of operating bus shuttles during emergency situations when roads can be blocked off. He said that the Bus Operations Control Center would work to have supervisors on the scene to manage bus traffic, and added that Metro's transit police would be talking with local jurisdictions' police to ensure that buses would be able to get through to serve customers.

*Signage:*

Mr. Francis told RAC members that when bus bridges are established, Metro needs to let customers know where these will be staged. He said that Metro is looking at various options on how to provide this information to customers, such as signage or painting the poles at the designated stops a different color. He noted that in the interim, Metro can use the PIDS displays to provide this information.

*Additional Personnel:*

Mr. Francis explained that Metro has met with the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District (BID) and the Downtown BID and as a result of that meeting, BID Safety and Maintenance workers would be dispatched to help with crowd control in the event of an emergency. He added during an emergency, all Metro employees in the station or within the vicinity would also be called on to help provide assistance to passengers. He said that, when a train is offloaded, there can be hundreds of people looking for information, and noted that cooperation from passengers can help staff respond more effectively.

Mr. Francis said that he has taken the RAC's comments from its October meeting and was looking for additional comments from the RAC to help staff put together a more useful communications plan.

Ms. Iacomini said that RAC members are, in effect, part of a "Secret Shopper" program and that members have the ability to communicate with staff directly. She described her experience during a service disruption and how she relayed that information on to staff. She asked that members provide that kind of feedback through Mr. Pasek, so that they can make suggestions or provide feedback on how the revised procedures are working.

Mr. Epps added that it would be helpful to include times, locations, train numbers, etc. to help staff reconstruct incidents. Ms. Davis added that providing this information for station managers is also helpful.

Ms. Iacomini also asked that, if members have any suggestions on what to include in the take-one, to pass them along to Mr. Pasek. Ms. Davis noted that, in certain situations, bus routes shown on the take one would likely be detoured but that it would be difficult to reflect this information on the take ones.

Mr. Francis said that his goal is that the train operator would be the first person to inform the customers about the incident, and that then passengers would receive information from the station manager about bus bridges, the location of other stations, etc. as soon as they are off-loaded. He said that he wants Metro to be able to provide information to customers as quickly as possible and that one of the ways it will be able to do that is to practice through drills and other exercises. He noted that Mr. Pasek had sat in on one of these sessions to provide feedback. Ms. Iacomini said that RAC members may be able to attend these sessions if they are scheduled with sufficient advance notice.

Ms. Iacomini then asked RAC members for their feedback.

Dr. Bracmort said that most of her interaction with WMATA is with the bus system and asked what Metro is doing to improve information for customers on the buses during service disruptions. Mr. Francis said that, in response to a fire last month in DC, there were complaints about lack of information about bus detours. He said that staff is working to implement an e-Alert system for Metrobus system similar to what is already provided for rail passengers. He also noted that two of the five Customer Liaison positions will be in the Bus OCC. Ms. Iacomini suggested that Dr. Bracmort provide and feedback or suggestions to staff through Mr. Pasek.

Robin White said that she has noticed that Metro has made announcements about delays on other lines, but only when she's on the platform, but not when she's on the train. Mr. Epps said that these announcements are only provided on the platforms - not on the train. He said that these announcements are made by live operators and that the operators generally try to make these announcements every two to three minutes. She added that take one maps described by Ms. Davis would be very helpful during service disruptions.

Ms. Brown asked how frequently the "You Are Here" maps are updated. Ms. Davis said that Metro is looking to make sure that they are as up-to-date as possible when first produced. She added that she expected that the maps would then be updated approximately every three years.

Ms. Zinkl said that she would find information provided "outside the faregate" would be helpful. She said that knowing this information ahead-of-time. Ms. Davis said that Metro has "Rail Delay" signs that are placed on the faregates, though these are often hard to see when there are crowds. Ms. Zinkl noted that these signs don't provide enough information, especially at stations such as Gallery Place which is served by multiple lines.

Mr. Francis said that Metro can also use PIDS to communicate this information to customers at stations where these are located outside of the faregates. He noted that the challenge is to get customers to look at the screens before entering the station. Ms. Zinkl noted that not every station has PIDS located outside of the faregates for customers to look for. She suggested additional signage, such as sandwich boards, that could alert riders to disruptions.

Mr. Zinkl said that she thinks that the idea of making station-specific brochures that include bus information is a great idea. She said that Metro is a great system but that it doesn't always link its rail and bus systems very well and that customers could take better advantage of the bus system if they had more information about it. . She added that she would look forward to using such a brochure.

Ms. Zinkl also asked if Station Managers receive first aid and CPR training. Ms. Davis replied that they do receive such training.

Ms. Sandler discussed her recent experience with telling a passenger about Metro's no eating/drinking rule and noted the need for more visible signage to inform customers about this rule. Ms. Iacomini added that she has also had trouble finding this information among Metro's other signage and that this information is less prominent on new and refurbished railcars than it had been on older or unrefurbished railcars.

Ms. Olden said that providing consistent information is important – that signage available at one station should also be available in the same manner at other stations so riders know what to expect and where to find information. She said that this consistency would make it easier for both riders to find information and for WMATA to provide information.

Ms. Everline thanked staff for the updates and said that she has noticed improvements in announcements. She also suggested making announcements about no food/drink in the system. Mr. Epps said that this announcement is on rotation within the system, but is probably less frequently than other announcements. He said that he would look at having the announcement made on a more frequent basis.

Ms. Everline also asked that Metro provide the "You Are Here" take ones be made available in alternate formats such as large print or Braille and in different languages. She also noted that the RAC is interested in Metro improving its bus signage and noted that Metro is currently undertaking a study to determine how to best do that.

Mr. Cerny said that he was very impressed by what he heard this evening. He said that he would be interested in getting information about Metro's upgrading of its speaker system and wanted to know if the 26 stations that have been finished reflect the "state of the art" in p.a. systems. Mr. Francis said that, yes, these stations are state-of-the-art when they are completed and said that in his experience, the sound quality has been quite clear.

Mr. Francis said that Metro is working on underground stations first and then hopefully expand to the above-ground stations.

In response to a question from Mr. Cerny, Mr. Francis said that Metro hopes to improve the public address systems at all of its stations, and the ongoing improvements are the first phase of that. Mr. Francis said that the remaining stations should be completed by the end of the year.

Ms. Olden asked if Metro had any plans to install automated announcements in railcars. Mr. Francis responded that this is something that Metro is looking into. Ms. Iacomini noted that riders who helped Metro develop specifications for its next series of railcars had asked that these systems be part of the specifications. Mr. Sheehan noted that Metro's Elderly and Disabled Committee has also supported the installation of automated announcement systems.

Lillian White noted that, in Metro's FY2009 budget, it plans on replacing the p.a. systems in 19 stations and replace the intercom systems in 98 stations.

Lillian White said that station managers have huge responsibilities, even in non-emergency situations, and related a story about a station manager who chased down a fare evader. Ms. Davis noted that station managers are discouraged from running after fare evaders, which is more properly handled by police officers.

Lillian White also raised questions about janitorial services at stations and trash pickup. Ms. Iacomini asked that comments be limited to discussion of the communications initiatives reviewed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Sheehan said that he supported the idea of automated announcements in railcars and noted that these are critical for individuals with visual impairments. He added that Metro also needs to look into accessibility upgrades for its website. Mr. Sheehan noted that Metro staff have been receptive to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in projects such as redesigning Metro's website and the Metro Channel proposal. He also discussed the potential for "talking sign" technology on buses and the potential to provide audible information for individuals with disabilities through the Metro Channel or some other means and that Metro should begin looking into whether this technology can be implemented, and if so, what kind of guidelines should exist for its use.

Ms. Iacomini thanked staff for coming and said that they will be hearing feedback from RAC members. She asked that members pass along their feedback or suggestions about communications. Mr. Francis asked that members provide this information to Mr. Pasek and also noted that staff will be conducting another "tabletop" training exercise based on a recent incident on the Orange Line at Ballston.

#### VI. FY09 Budget:

Ms. Iacomini told RAC members that Metro is currently in the middle of its budget season. She noted that Chuck Woodruff, Metro's Chief Financial Officer, had contacted her to see if she wanted to have a presentation to the RAC on Metro's FY09 budget. She

added that it would be helpful for RAC members to hear information on how riders' priorities, especially the concerns voiced by riders during last fall's fare increase hearings are reflected in the Authority's proposed FY09 budget. Ms. Iacomini then turned the floor over to Rick Harcum, Metro's Budget Director to provide an overview of the budget.

Mr. Harcum told members that one of the differences in the development of this year's budget, as opposed to budgets from years past was that the WMATA Board has provided the General Manager with a very clear set of measurable goals for the coming year. He noted that this is different than in the past, when Metro had a very broad mandate to make improvements on issues such as improving the environment and decreasing homelessness. He noted that while these were noble goals, they were very broad, very difficult to quantify and difficult to achieve.

Mr. Harcum explained that the goals passed by the Board this year would be used to evaluate the General Manager, and that he would use these goals to evaluate his senior staff, who would evaluate their staff in a similar manner, and so forth. He said that this would have the effect of getting all Metro staff moving in the same direction and with a common purpose.

Mr. Harcum said that he isn't sure how well he would be able to quantify how riders' comments are reflected in the budget. He said that much of the concerns reflected by riders related to reliability and he can't easily equate line items in the budget with specific improvements in reliability. He noted that improving reliability is largely a management issue rather than a budget issue and that Metro management is now more focused on its customers, which is the most important factor in delivering better service.

He noted that one of these changes is that Metro is reporting on its performance on a monthly basis and being very up-front about the methodology it is using to measure its performance. He said that this transparency helps people understand whether or not service is actually improving and helps Metro measure its outcomes.

Ms. Iacomini asked Mr. Harcum whether the revenue from the fare increase being collected now is being banked for FY09. He replied that this is, in fact, happening and that Metro is seeing approximately \$6 million in additional revenue each month and is reserving that revenue. He said that by the time Metro gets to the end of June, it will have \$36 million to apply to the FY09. He added that revenues are coming in a little bit better than expected and would report findings to the Board in May. He said that it doesn't appear that Metro has lost riders, though it appears that there have been some shifts in ridership patterns - more people have been using SmarTrip cards on the buses, for example. He noted that ridership actually went up in January and February.

Dr. Bracmort said that she would guess that the increase in ridership would be caused by the increase in gas prices and the increase in SmarTrip use on buses would be a factor of the discounted fare provided to SmarTrip users. Mr. Harcum said that Metro has done studies that show that there isn't much correlation between Metro ridership and the price

of gasoline. He noted that Metro ridership levels are most strongly influenced by rates of employment in Washington.

Dr. Bracmort asked about the recent article in the Washington Post about how Metro needs more money for repairs despite the recent fare increases and said that she wanted Mr. Harcum to provide more information about Metro's financial condition. Mr. Harcum said that Metro has two "buckets" of money - one bucket, paid for by passenger fares, including money from the fare increase, as well as funding from the jurisdictions covers operating costs such as wages and fuel, while a separate bucket handles repairs and other capital needs such as buying buses and railcars, which is paid for by federal grants and matching grants from Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia. Mr. Harcum said that the second "bucket," the capital budget, is where Metro needs additional funds.

Dr. Bracmort suggested that Metro needs to do a better job explaining this information to the public about the difference between the operating and capital budgets.

Ms Brown asked if there were any way to use the extra operating money to help fund capital improvements. Mr. Harcum said that moving the money between the two wouldn't result in net additional money for Metro, which is what the system needs. In response to a statement from Ms. Brown, Mr. Harcum noted that the capital needs to not represent current safety hazards. He also noted that the majority of the capital budget comes from federal monies and much of the communication about Metro's financial needs is aimed at the federal government.

Ms. Everline asked whether RAC members had ever advocated for federal funding and whether or not it would be appropriate for the RAC to advocate for additional transit funding. Mr. Harcum said that the RAC had discussed this previously, though the RAC didn't exist when the previous transportation funding was written several years ago. He added that he thinks this would be a good thing for the RAC to do.

Ms. Iacomini added that this is something that the RAC can think about. She also mentioned the current Metro funding legislation sponsored by Congressman Tom Davis and also discussed the difference between authorizing and appropriating legislation. She also discussed federal responsibilities for funding Metro since, unlike other cities, Washington D.C. cannot tax its major industry, which is the federal government, to fund public transit. Ms. Iacomini said that she would be interested in getting information on how other cities fund public transit.

Lillian White said that the RAC can focus on the Capital Improvement Program later on but that for the present, the RAC should focus on the FY09 operating budget which will be adopted by the Board in June. She discussed Mr. Harcum's comments about advertising and fare revenue from a previous Budget Subcommittee meeting and then asked for his suggestion for additional opportunities for non-fare revenue sources for Metro. Mr. Harcum said that his suggestion relates to the fact that Metro doesn't use its fares as a pricing mechanism to optimize the use of its system. He said that raising prices on customers that are least likely to leave the system could generate revenue that could be

redirected into the system for other improvements, but added that Metro has been criticized for advocating this approach because it is seen as penalizing its best customers.

Mr. Harcum said that non-fare revenue is a relatively small budget item. In response to a question from Lillian White about the desirability of expanding its advertising inventory, he said that Metro's ad contractor isn't able to sell the ad inventory that is currently has.

Lillian White said that Metro's inability of Metro to raise additional revenue from advertising or other means, such as kiosks at stations, means that Metro is locked in to relying on fare increases to raise revenue. She noted that focusing on other revenue-enhancement proposals wouldn't actually result in much revenue for Metro.

Ms. Everline asked whether the purpose of the meeting was to provide comments or just to get information. Ms. Iacomini said that the RAC would be discussing recommendations at its meeting in May.

Ms. Everline asked whether or not it was true that Metro had ever returned jurisdictions' contributions to the jurisdictions. Mr. Harcum responded that, if Metro ends the year with a surplus, that money is automatically refunded to the jurisdictions.

Ms. Zinkl said that she doesn't think that it would be impossible for the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia to all enact some kind of dedicated funding for Metro. She said that she also doesn't have a problem with variable pricing, especially in an area where many of the system's riders are tourists and aren't using the system to get to work. She also asked for a comparison of Metro's fares with those of other transit agencies and added that she thinks that Metro's fares are comparatively low.

In response to Ms. Zinkl's question about fares, Mr. Harcum said that Metro did this research prior to the fare increase and found that its bus fares are among the lowest of any major metropolitan area, while its rail fares are on the high end of major transit systems as a result of Metrorail's distance-based pricing.

Mr. Sheehan asked whether the performance measures discussed this evening were reflected in the budget documents. Mr. Harcum responded that there are quantifiable measures listed in the Board's goals and went through the Board's Goals document and listed some of those measures, such as improving bus schedule adherence by 10% or reducing train offloads by 25%.

Ms. White asked about Metro's labor contracts and asked who evaluates these contracts. Mr. Harcum said that Metro uses the same process as, for example, Safeway and Giant in negotiating contracts - representatives from each side meet and work out the best deal they can for their respective side and the final agreement is then voted on by the union members and the Metro Board of Directors. Ms. Iacomini suggested that these comments can be discussed at the upcoming RAC Budget Subcommittee meeting. Ms. Iacomini thanked Mr. Harcum for attending the meeting.

VII. Subcommittee Meetings:

Ms. Iacomini asked whether or not Subcommittee chairs had anything to report. She then asked Mr. Pasek to give the schedule for the RAC's April Subcommittee meetings and encouraged members to attend a subcommittee meeting, even if they hadn't signed up to be a member. She said that the Subcommittees are having a hard time conducting business when only one or two members come to the meetings.

Ms. Iacomini noted that it was 8:30 p.m. if members wanted to adjourn the meeting. She also asked members to consider attending subcommittee meetings and to also think about the budget and budget recommendations. She also asked members to think about the items that were presented regarding Metro's emergency communications and to offer suggestions or feedback, as she thinks that Metro staff is receptive to it.

Lillian White noted that she had concerns about Metro's ridership projections and said that she didn't think that its projections took into account various events and festivals that would increase ridership. She said that she would circulate a list and ask members to write down events or other changes in operations that might lead Metro to have a higher-than-projected ridership for the coming year, and that she would use the list to try and persuade Metro staff to increase their ridership projections as part of the FY09 Budget. Ms. Everline suggested emailing this list to members. Robin White said that budget staff is often purposefully conservative in making estimates and budget forecasts.

Ms. Zinkl mentioned an assault that occurred last month at the Tenleytown Metro that was brought to her attention by Mayor Fenty's office. Ms. Iacomini said that she suspects that the mayor's office is already working with its appointee to the Board to address this situation. There were additional comments from members about unruly student behavior on buses and trains.

VIII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Ms. Iacomini adjourned the meeting at 8:36 p.m.