

**Riders' Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2007**

I. Call to Order/Roll Call:

Mr. Snyder called the meeting to order at 6:38pm.

Mr. Snyder then took roll. Attendance was as follows:

Present:

Michael Snyder, Chair, Montgomery County
Mary Blyther, Arlington County
Kelsi Bracmort, District of Columbia
Denise Brown, Prince George's County
Steve Cerny, Fairfax County
Justin Chittams, District of Columbia (arrived 7:28pm)
Sharon Conn, Prince George's County
Armando Cortinez, At-Large/District of Columbia
Susan Holland, Prince George's County
Dennis Jaffe, District of Columbia
Cesar Maxit, District of Columbia
Kaiya Sandler, Montgomery County
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Elderly and Disabled Committee
Aline Stone, Fairfax County
Lillian White, City of Alexandria

Not Present:

Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia
Pedro Erviti, Fairfax County
Nancy Iacomini, Arlington County
Nardra Johnson, Montgomery County
Kevin Moore, At-Large/District of Columbia

II. Public Comment:

Mr. Snyder asked for members of the public who wished to make comments.

Joel Silverthorn, Fairfax County. Mr. Silverthorn said that he has been to the RAC before to discuss the gap in bus service in the Centreville area of Fairfax County. He said that he has talked with representatives of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

He said that he wanted to see if there was any additional information about providing Metrobus service along Lee Highway (Route 29) in western Fairfax County, such as whether the bus garage in the area was on track for completion.

Mr. Cerny said that the West Ox Bus Garage is expected to be completed late next year. He told Mr. Silverthorn that the Fairfax County budget is currently being considered and said that the only way for this to be considered is for money to be put in the County's budget for bus service. He said that he thought that this was a matter of speaking out at County budget hearings. Mr. Cerny said that he would welcome the opportunity to discuss the issue with Mr. Silverthorn off-line and perhaps help him contact appropriate County staff.

Dr. Conn asked if there was any possibility of the RAC assisting Mr. Silverthorn in putting together a "Town Hall" meeting. She said that such a meeting, with members of the community and Metro staff, could be effective in developing options for additional service. Mr. Snyder asked Mr. Silverthorn to work with Dr. Conn and Mr. Cerny about developing a Town Hall meeting.

Steve Cerny said that Fairfax County will be undertaking a public hearing process within the next year to determine where new or revised routes would operate, once the new bus garage is completed.

Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Snyder asked for the Council's approval to make changes to the agenda. He said that for the RAC Chair Report, he would defer to the George Washington University students doing a project on the RAC, for them to tell the RAC where they are on tracking its initiatives, and asked that this be moved up in the agenda. He also said that there was a presentation from the Rules Committee, which he'd also like to take place prior to discussion of the Budget Workshop recommendations.

Ms. Holland moved to approve the changes to the agenda as put forward by Mr. Snyder. Mr. Cerny seconded this motion. All RAC members present (Blyther, Bracmort, Brown, Cerny, Conn, Cortinez, Holland, Jaffe, Maxit, Sandler, Sheehan, Snyder, Stone, White) voted in favor of the motion, with no objections or abstentions. (14-0-0).

III. Approval of February 7, 2007 and March 7, 2007 Minutes:

Mr. Cerny moved to accept the February 7, 2007 minutes. Dr. Conn seconded this motion. Mr. Snyder called for discussion. There was no discussion and Mr. Snyder called for a vote. All members present voted to approve the February 7, 2007 minutes (Bracmort, Brown, Cerny, Conn, Cortinez, Holland, Jaffe, Maxit, Sandler, Sheehan, Snyder, Stone) with the exception of Ms. Blyther and Ms. White, who abstained from voting. (12-0-2).

Mr. Cerny moved to approve the March 7, 2007 minutes. Dr. Bracmort seconded this motion. Mr. Snyder asked for discussion. Ms. Holland made some corrections to the minutes. Ms. Blyther asked that members who aren't present be reflected in the minutes. Mr. Cortinez noted that he arrived late to the March meeting and asked that this be reflected in the minutes. Mr. Snyder then called for a vote. Seven members voted to

approve the minutes, as amended (Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Cerny, Dr. Conn, Mr. Jaffe, Mr. Maxit, Ms. Sandler, and Mr. Snyder), there were no objections, and seven members abstained (Ms. Blyther, Ms. Brown, Mr. Cortinez, Ms. Holland, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Stone, and Ms. White). (7-0-7).

IV. Federal Transit Benefits Legislation:

Mr. Snyder asked Mr. Jaffe to present this item.

Mr. Jaffe said that HR 1475, the bill that RAC members had in front of them, was introduced by Congressman Jim McGovern of Massachusetts. He said that this bill increases the dollar amount of federal pre-tax benefits that participating employers offer to employees from the current \$110 maximum to \$215. Mr. Jaffe said that he learned several weeks ago that there are competing bills on this subject, one of these introduced by Congressman Steny Hoyer or Maryland. Ms. Sandler added that Senator Schumer introduced legislation identical to HR 1475 in the Senate.

Mr. Jaffe noted that Ms. Iacomini raised some questions about this bill at the last meeting. He noted that, because bills get amended during the legislative process, what he'd like the RAC to do is provide a general position, rather than supporting a specific bill, and moved that the RAC "Support the goal of increasing the level of federal, pre-tax transit benefits offered by employers to employees, to the same level that is offered for parking."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Cortinez.

Mr. Cerny said that this legislation would require federal agencies to provide this benefit; and would need to be funded from agency budgets. There was clarification from Mr. Jaffe who said that this is about pre-tax income, which would affect the amount of tax employees pay, and therefore the general treasury, rather than agency budgets.

Mr. Snyder noted that most agencies add this as a benefit in addition to salaries. Mr. Cerny said that the main point he wanted to make was that if the federal government wants to increase transit usage, it should eliminate the parking benefit, which it hasn't done. He said that he thinks that people parking in federal garages should pay market rate parking rates. He said that he has been meaning to talk with Rep. McGovern's staff about this. Mr. Cerny added that he thinks it's OK to subsidize parking for those with special needs or vanpools, but beyond that, tax dollars shouldn't subsidize parking. Mr. Snyder asked if Mr. Cerny wanted to amend this motion to include this. Mr. Cerny said that he wasn't sure, but the RAC could go on record supporting the elimination of parking benefits provided by the federal government.

Dr. Bracmort asked Mr. Jaffe to restate his motion, which he then did. Dr. Conn said that the legislation has two sections, meaning that benefits could reach \$400/month.

Mr. Jaffe said that the RAC could advocate for a “common cost of living adjustment” and there was discussion from Dr. Conn about the dollar amount of the benefits that the legislation would provide for transit and for parking.

Mr. Sheehan asked about the parking rules and whether parking at transit facilities is included in the parking subsidy monies. He asked how to eliminate one parking subsidy without eliminating the subsidy for transit parking. Mr. Cerny said that transit parking is not included in the transit benefits.

Mr. Snyder noted that the RAC was analyzing the bill and the motion specifically and that the motion on the floor was to offer general support that was not tied to a particular bill.

Mr. Jaffe asked about tying this to cost of living adjustments – increasing the level from \$100 to \$200 and then allowing for cost-of-living adjustments in subsequent years. Dr. Conn asked why cost-of-living adjustments are not included now.

Mr. Jaffe put forward an amended motion: “The RAC supports the goal of increasing the level of federal pre-tax transit benefits offered from employers to employees from the current \$100 or \$110 level up to \$200 with the allowance for adjustments in subsequent years.” This motion was seconded by Ms. White.

Mr. Cerny said that he would like to offer an amendment to Mr. Jaffe’s motion. Mr. Jaffe said that he wouldn’t accept an amendment to his motion. Mr. Snyder suggested that Mr. Cerny’s motion be voted on separately.

Mr. Snyder then called for a vote on Mr. Jaffe’s motion. The vote was as follows:

In Favor: Ms. Brown, Mr. Cerny, Mr. Cortinez, Ms. Holland, Mr. Jaffe, Mr. Maxit, Ms. Sandler, Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Snyder and Ms. White;

Opposed: Dr. Conn

Abstaining: Ms. Blyther, Dr. Bracmort and Ms. Stone

Mr. Jaffe’s motion passed. (10-1-3)

Mr. Cerny moved that the RAC recommend to the Board of Directors to take a position opposing all federal parking subsidies, excepting those for carpools and disabled employees, in federal parking facilities, and that the federal government should charge market rates for parking. This motion was seconded by Ms. White.

Ms. Brown asked about “qualified parking” as described in the HR 1475.

Mr. Cerny said that his motion discusses the tax benefit and that people who park in federal facilities pay for parking, but don’t pay the market rate.

Ms. White said that, when Mr. Snyder reports this to the Board, that he should note that the intention of the RAC’s motion is to encourage federal employees to use Metro. Ms.

Brown noted that not every federal agency has subsidized parking. Mr. Cerny said that it is mostly managers that are able to receive parking at his agency (HUD). Mr. Snyder noted that many agencies have adopted lotteries which are open to all employees to allot parking spaces. Mr. Jaffe asked if his motion would preclude Metro from supporting legislation that establishes parity between parking and transit benefits. Mr. Cerny said that this motion on parking was a separate issue and that his motion would leave the tax code as-is, but that the federal government shouldn't provide parking benefits.

Mr. Snyder asked Mr. Pasek to read the motion back to the Council. The RAC then voted on Mr. Cerny's motion:

In Favor: Mr. Cerny, Dr. Conn, Mr. Cortinez, Ms. Holland, Mr. Maxit, Ms. Sandler, Ms. Stone and Ms. White;

Opposed: None.

Abstaining: Ms. Blyther, Dr. Bracmort, Ms. Brown, Mr. Jaffe and Mr. Snyder.

The motion passed. (8-0-5)

V. RAC Chair Report:

Mr. Snyder said that the RAC is trying to find a way to track its initiatives – that the RAC has suggested several initiatives but has been unable to determine their status. He introduced Cali Ence and Dan Paepke, two George Washington University graduate students in Public Administration who are doing their capstone project on the RAC. Ms. Ence and Mr. Paepke explained their project, which was to research civic involvement in transportation. They said that they had researched the RAC and other transit agencies and had spoken with Mr. Jaffe, Mr. Snyder, Mr. Pasek and Debbie Lipman from WMATA. Ms. Ence said that they had initially planned on developing the framework for a database, but that Metro's existing CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system could be used for this purpose. She said that what was lacking was a document to capture information to be inputted into CRM.

Ms. Ence said that she wanted to get RAC members' comments on the document and would be back in May to give a full presentation on the project. She and Mr. Paepke then went over the evaluation document that they envision RAC members filling out to begin the process of tracking their suggestions.

Ms. Holland asked why MetroAccess wasn't a separate category on the evaluation document. Ms. Ence and Mr. Paepke said that this was an oversight and that it would be added.

Mr. Paepke continued through the document with RAC members. Ms. Ence said that the goal was to make the document something that was easy for RAC members to fill out and that they can use to present end-of-the-year results to the Board of Directors. Mr. Jaffe noted that he appreciated the inclusion of an "estimated timeline for completion" as part of the document.

Dr. Bracmort thanked the students for their efforts said that she thought that this was a good idea for record-keeping. She said that the RAC also needs to figure out a way to make sure that this is included in the RAC's Annual Report. She also suggested that the report be changed to add in a specific dollar figure estimate, rather than a "low/medium/high" estimate, as that can be subjective. She also expressed concern about the follow-up to the RAC's suggestions and how these would be monitored and how the RAC is to receive appropriate responses to its suggestions.

Mr. Snyder said that he envisions putting forward some kind of appendix to each of the RAC's monthly reports that will outline outstanding initiatives. Mr. Paepke noted that CRM allows for an audit trail; Ms. Ence added that CRM will allow the RAC Staff Coordinator to keep track of outstanding requests and send reminders to staff. Dr. Bracmort asked if this was used by Metro to track its customer comment forms – Ms. Ence replied that it was.

Mr. Cerny asked if this is designed to track specific recommendations that it has made to the Board of Directors. He said that the RAC made recommendations to the Board of Directors. Mr. Snyder said that this would also be able to track recommendations in progress. He said that the RAC doesn't have any idea of what happened to its recommendations and gave the example of escalator signage that the RAC recommended that Metro install. He said that he has no idea what happened to this recommendation. Mr. Snyder said that these recommendations that are in the process of being evaluated would also show up in the appendix to his monthly report.

Mr. Jaffe asked whether "status" was needed as a field on the form. Mr. Paepke replied that the information on the form is used to populate cases in the CRM system, which would provide the status. Dr. Bracmort asked if this would be possible to have as part of an electronic database whereby CRM could be used to tell RAC members the status of requests. Mr. Sheehan asked if CRM can "escalate" any of these cases, if action is not taken within a specified timeframe. Mr. Paepke said that yes, the staff coordinator would get an email reminding him that certain items were "past due" and required action. Mr. Pasek added that he would get a system-generated reminder and then could follow-up with appropriate staff.

Dr. Conn said that she has a concern that this doesn't say who is assigned to work on the individual item. Mr. Snyder said that this is something that the RAC determines, by who they refer a particular recommendation to.

Dr. Bracmort asked why the RAC is submitting items to the online Customer Service form, which is something that members could do as individuals. She said that, as RAC members representing the region, their recommendations should have some kind of priority. Mr. Snyder said that the goal is to get this information in the system to be tracked. Dr. Conn added that she can track her communication but is more focused on whether or not her issue has been resolved.

Mr. Cerny noted that, in response to the RAC's resolutions, the Board of Directors needs to take some kind of follow-up action. Mr. Snyder said that, yes, the RAC will need to follow-up with the Board and this will help with that. Ms. Ence thanked the RAC members for their time and said that she could email her with any comments.

VI. Rules Committee Report:

Mr. Snyder noted that there was a Rules Committee meeting prior to the RAC meeting this evening and turned the floor over to Mr. Cerny, who is the Rules Committee chair. Mr. Cerny said that it had two items on its agenda and was able to discuss one of them. He said that the Committee was able to discuss the issue of non-RAC members participating on Subcommittees.

Mr. Cerny moved that the RAC approve the following motion as it relates to non-RAC members participating on RAC Subcommittees. He asked Mr. Pasek to read the motion, as approved by the Rules Committee. The motion was read as: "The RAC adopt a policy of allowing non-voting members on Subcommittees, including the following components:

- Appointments would be voted on by the RAC at a monthly RAC meeting;
- Applications would be circulated to RAC members the week prior to the RAC's monthly meeting;
- Criteria for appointing a non-RAC member to a subcommittee shall include but not require:
 - The ability to commit to the monthly Subcommittee meeting schedule;
 - Commitment to and interest in strengthening the regional transit system;
 - Knowledge of particular areas; and
 - Ability to devote time and effort to the work of the Subcommittee;
- Appointments would last for one calendar year;
- Appointees would need to sign and adhere to the RAC's Standards of Conduct;
- There would not be a need to maintain jurisdictional balance of appointees;
- Each applicant must receive the support of a majority of the members of the Subcommittee that he or she wishes to join and be recommended to the RAC Chair by the Chair of that Subcommittee;
- An application for appointment, similar to the application for membership on the RAC must be filled out; the inclusion of a résumé is optional;
- The respective Subcommittee Chair shall discuss with the applicant, in advance of his or her appointment, the expectations for his or her participation; and
- Information about the appointees shall be submitted to the Metro Board of Directors.

Ms. White seconded this motion.

Dr. Bracmort asked what the impetus for this is – why is it necessary to add non-Council members to Subcommittees. Mr. Cerny said that at last month's Rail Subcommittee, the Chair recommended the appointment of non-voting, non-RAC members and there was a

discussion. He said that this was an issue that was discussed by the RAC last year but never followed up on.

Mr. Snyder said that there are people who are interested in participating and helping with the RAC. Dr. Bracmort said that she remembered this discussion and said that she feels uncomfortable agreeing to this motion because RAC members had to go through the application process to be on the RAC. She added that she also understands that the RAC has a great deal of work to do and that additional participants could be helpful.

Ms. Holland said that it's always advantageous to have additional help, but would like to see this motion in writing before voting on this; asked that the motion be circulated prior to the May RAC meeting.

Dr. Conn said she agreed with Ms. Holland and that having these participants abide by the By-Laws and Standards of Conduct.

Mr. Snyder asked if other members were uncomfortable voting on this motion. Mr. Jaffe asked that it be re-read. Dr. Conn asked if the motion was in a final form said that, if the RAC was going to vote on this, it needed to be in a final form.

Ms. Sandler said that it would be easier to see this motion in print because of language such as "shall include but not require," which doesn't make sense to her.

In response to Mr. Snyder's request, Mr. Cerny withdrew the question. Mr. Snyder said that he'd make sure that language was sent out to members via email and RAC members could comment on it.

VII. Budget Workshop Recommendations:

Mr. Snyder noted that Mr. Moore wasn't in attendance so he would discuss the recommendations from the Budget Workshops. He told RAC members that the Budget Committee had three workshops and a Committee meeting where members formulated policies based on recommendations from the workshops. He said that, at the Budget Subcommittee meeting, Rick Harcum told Subcommittee members that there would not be a fare increase as part of the FY08 Budget, nor would there be service cuts, though there would be some reallocation of resources among services. He said that the majority of the \$121 million shortfall will come from administrative and accounting adjustments. He said that the RAC's recommendations will help Metro finish up its FY08 Budget as well as to help Metro formulate policies to help with future budgets. He said that he put together some policies on SmarTrip, Fares, Advertising and a recommendation on Late Night Service, along with a policy on Retail/Rental facilities.

He said that the RAC has been invited to make a presentation to the Board's Budget Committee in May. He asked if everyone had an opportunity to read these in advance.

SmarTrip Policy:

Mr. Snyder asked for a motion on SmarTrip Policy. Ms. White moved approval of the policy as handed out (See p. 15 for the text of these recommendations). Ms. Stone seconded this motion.

Mr. Jaffe suggested making changes the language in the motion, including the elimination of the word “must” in many of the components and he also asked for explanation of what “Next Generation SmarTrip Cards” means. He said that any changes to SmarTrip cards would need to be tied to the new technology which would be available in 2008. Mr. Snyder also clarified questions from Mr. Jaffe on transaction reports and keeping minimum balances on cards.

Dr. Conn asked about the ability of SmarTrip cards to keep track of rail-to-bus transfers. RAC members said that cards automatically track this transfer and deduct the appropriate 35¢ fare. She said that she experienced a 90-minute delay on Metrobus and in this instance, someone was charged the full bus fare when paying with his SmarTrip card. She said that there should be a way for the transfer discount to be given if the delay is Metro’s fault.

Mr. Jaffe asked if Dr. Conn wanted the 2-hour transfer period be extended. Dr. Conn said that there needs to be some process to extend the transfer if the delay is Metro’s fault. Mr. Jaffe replied that this can’t be done on a day-to-day basis. Mr. Snyder suggested a process to dispute the charge.

Mr. Jaffe said that he thinks, because of all the various factors that cause delays, that the only remedy is to increase the amount of time transfers are valid. He said that if there are delays on train, there’s no way for there to have an appeal process. Dr. Conn described the situation she experienced with a severely delayed bus. He said that the question is whether the current two hour time limit is sufficient and whether a long time period would be rational or financially manageable for the agency. Dr. Conn responded that drivers who are late know that they are late.

Mr. Snyder said that one of the goals of putting transfers on SmarTrip is to take some of these decisions out of the drivers’ hands because that allows opportunities for abuse of the system. Mr. Jaffe said that there are so many factors that contribute to delays, the only thing that can be done is to change the transfer policy. He asked if it would make sense to ask Metro staff for the cost impact of changing to a 4-hour transfer period.

Ms. White discussed her experience using transfers with SmarTrip and noted that the time limit is still two hours, the same as when using paper transfers. She asked if the time period was the same using SmarTrip and paper transfers. Dr. Conn said that the time period is the same, but that her question is if buses are late, what do passengers do? Ms. White said that Metro said that needs to communicate with its passengers about delays. Dr. Conn said that, as NextBus is rolled out, there is a way to track buses’ performance. Mr. Snyder said that Metro could take the approach that anyone who calls to complain would be given a refund. Mr. Jaffe said that the idea of an appeals process is “unwieldy.”

He asked if it would make sense to ask for a cost estimate of extending the time period for transfers. Mr. Snyder said that this is an issue and there needs to be mitigation for it.

Ms. Blyther said that it may be more helpful for the two-hour period for rail-to-bus transfers to begin when a passenger exits the rail system, rather than when he or she enters, as is currently the practice. Mr. Jaffe said that he thinks that the RAC should ask about that as well.

Mr. Jaffe asked Mr. Snyder for the best way to approach this – he said that he thinks that it's best to ask for information, and that he would also support asking for information on the change proposed by Ms. Blyther.

Mr. Snyder said that he thinks that this is an additional item that needs to be addressed by Metro as part of the RAC's budget recommendations. Mr. Jaffe said that this is asking for information. Mr. Snyder replied that Metro would be looking at a cost-out of all of these recommendations when reviewing the RAC's

Mr. Jaffe said that he had suggested that the RAC ask for information from Metro on the cost impact of this change, along with the cost impact of changing the rail-to-bus transfer time to start at system exit rather than system entry, not that it supports changing the transfer policy, as would be reflected if the RAC put that in its budget recommendations. Ms. White said that the RAC needs this information before voting. Mr. Snyder asked RAC members if a vote was needed before adding this in to the recommendations. Mr. Jaffe suggested that this suggestion be kept separate because it isn't a policy recommendation, but rather a request for information.

Ms. White suggested adding this suggestion in to the existing budget recommendations. Dr. Conn stressed that this discussion also needs to be about people who are stranded at bus stops for over 2 hours. Ms. White suggested that Ms. Blyther amend the motion to include rail-to-bus transfer time beginning when riders exit the system.

Dr. Bracmort brought said that swiping her card when exiting the system would be one more thing for riders to remember. Other RAC members clarified that this would only be for leaving the rail system, not the bus, as riders already must swipe their cards to exit. Ms. Stone said she thinks that it's a rare case that buses are so late as to have the RAC creating a whole other scenario. Dr. Conn said that this does happen.

Dr. Bracmort said that the two-hour time frame has been in effect since she was a child and that due to traffic and other factors, may need to be lengthened. Mr. Snyder asked whether lengthening the time to 3 or 4 hours would be preferable. Dr. Bracmort suggested asking Metro for 4 hours and see what their response is.

Mr. Jaffe said that there would be an inequity with response to the bus and asked if there was consensus to move forward with Ms. Blyther's recommendation.

Ms. Blyther said that increasing the time would address this issue, because the transfer time would be in effect across-the-board. Mr. Snyder said that the RAC would propose that the transfer time be extended to 4 hours due to longer commutes, traffic and missed buses.

Mr. Pasek asked for clarification as to whether this would be just for fares paid with SmarTrip or for all transfers, including paper transfers. After some discussion, RAC members said that they would include this in their fare policy. Dr. Conn said that this could be restricted to certain time periods. Mr. Snyder said that SmarTrip cards offer significant flexibility in doing something like that. Ms. Blyther said that making such a change with paper transfers would be simply a matter of changing the printing on the back of the transfer. She said that she often gets transfers with varying amounts of time on them from bus drivers. Mr. Snyder said that the goal of pushing SmarTrip would be to eliminate such inconsistencies and fraud. There was discussion of transfer fraud and how SmarTrip cards could eliminate this.

Mr. Snyder called for a vote on the SmarTrip policy, as revised. Everyone present voted in favor (Snyder, Blyther, Bracmort, Brown, Conn, Cortinez, Holland, Jaffe, Maxit, Sandler, Sheehan, Stone, White) with the exception of Mr. Chittams, who was opposed, and Mr. Cerny, who was out of the room. (13-1-0).

Mr. Chittams said that he thought that having transfer time beginning 2 hours after exiting a rail station would be more appropriate. Mr. Snyder said that increasing the transfer time could cost Metro money and that would be something it would have to figure out.

Mr. Jaffe said that he was convinced that there would be a gain in ridership due to people not feeling penalized with having to pay additional fares when they left and re-entered the system.

Fare Policy:

Mr. Snyder then asked for a motion for the RAC to approve Fare Policy Recommendations. (See p. 16 for text of these recommendations)

Ms. Stone moved approval of the recommendation as presented, and the motion was seconded by Ms. White.

Mr. Jaffe suggested adding in language extending transfer periods to 4 hours.

Dr. Conn raised question about the phrase “All fare policy must be implemented through SmarTrip.” Mr. Snyder responded that the recommendation that any special fares must also be available using SmarTrip cards. Mr. Jaffe suggested changing the language to “All fare *options* should be available through SmarTrip.”

Ms. Brown said that she didn't agree with this because she doesn't think that senior citizens should be forced to make special trips to purchase SmarTrip cards. Dr. Bracmort

said that this could be addressed as part of the RAC's recommended SmarTrip policy which called for increased sales outlets for SmarTrip cards. Mr. Snyder said that anywhere a customer can purchase a pass, a customer should also be able to purchase and reload a SmarTrip card.

Mr. Jaffe said that he thought that the change in language meant that the RAC's recommendations wouldn't require customers to use SmarTrip, just that it would be an option.

Mr. Snyder read through the SmarTrip policy which said that certain conditions needed to be met before Metro could differentiate fares between SmarTrip and non-SmarTrip customers and added that there is a move within Metro to charge more for those who use cash to pay their fares.

Mr. Sheehan asked a question about the need for SmarTrip readers in MetroAccess vehicles. Mr. Snyder replied that the RAC was encouraging that MetroAccess users to use SmarTrip cards to access the fixed-route bus and rail system. Mr. Sheehan replied that he was asking about payment on MetroAccess vehicles. Mr. Snyder said that MetroAccess should have SmarTrip readers on MetroAccess vehicles. Mr. Sheehan replied that there are several levels of MetroAccess vehicles, including privately-owned cabs, and asked how private companies could be mandated to install card readers in their vehicles. Mr. Snyder asked about current payment practices, and was told that MetroAccess fares can be paid using tokens or cash.

Ms. Holland said that she doesn't think that the RAC has the authority to mandate that any cab company can require a cab company install SmarTrip readers. Mr. Sheehan asked if MetroAccess vehicles don't accept SmarTrip, would he be able to exchange some of the value on his card for tokens that could be used to pay for MetroAccess trips. Mr. Snyder said that the RAC is simply saying that it would like to see Metro increase its use of SmarTrip technology. Mr. Sheehan said that he could see some benefits to this.

Ms. White said that Alexandria buses all accept SmarTrip, meaning that jurisdictions are converting to SmarTrip.

Mr. Jaffe said that he has suggested that all of the RAC's recommendations excise the word "must" because they are meant as recommendations.

Ms. Blyther asked about caps on daily/weekly fares. Mr. Snyder and Ms. Stone explained the concept of fare caps – which would limit the amount of fares riders would pay over a certain time period and would be more than a pre-paid pass, but less than paying for each individual ride. Ms. Blyther said that people should be encouraged to use the SmarTrip, but not be penalized for using cash. There was further discussion between Ms. Blyther and Mr. Snyder about enforcement of fare payment by drivers.

Dr. Conn asked about the language on fare caps. Mr. Snyder said that the RAC is asking Metro to create caps, which currently do not exist.

Ms. White called the question on fare policy and members voted on the recommendations as modified. All present voted in favor (Snyder, Bracmort, Chittams, Conn, Cortinez, Holland, Jaffe, Maxit, Sandler, Sheehan, Stone, White) with the exception of Ms. Brown and Ms. Blyther who voted against the motion. (12-2-0)

Ms. Blyther noted that she had concerns about fare caps.

Mr. Snyder noted the time and asked if there was anything from any of the Subcommittee meetings that needed to be brought forward to the full RAC.

VIII. Bus Subcommittee Report:

Dr. Conn told RAC members about the Adopt-a-Stop program which Metro launched on April 1st. She noted that Scottie Borders, from Metro, made a presentation at the Metrobus Subcommittee meeting and recommended that RAC members adopt certain bus stops. She said that, by doing so, the RAC's name would be placed on the bus stop and Metro would provide equipment to maintain the stop. She said that this would be discussed at the Metrobus Subcommittee meeting, but wanted to mention it to members.

Dr. Conn also mentioned the NextBus program, and asked for RAC members to call NextBus to see if it works. She listed the routes where NextBus is available.

Lastly, Dr. Conn mentioned the rollout of the MetroExtra along Georgia Avenue (Route 79) occurred last month. She described the characteristics of the line and encouraged RAC members to ride the 79 line to give feedback.

Ms. Holland said that she understood the value in the Adopt-a-Stop program but thinks that localities should be held accountable for making improvements to bus stops as outlined in the Regional Bus Study. Mr. Jaffe said that this would be all the more reason for the RAC to adopt a bus stop to call attention to the need for bus stop improvements. Mr. Snyder added that Metro told the RAC that it would do a thorough clean-up of bus stops before they are assigned to the groups adopting them.

Ms. Blyther said that she noticed that the 16Y isn't included in the list of routes having NextBus. Dr. Conn said that it is included in the listing.

Mr. Snyder suggested that the RAC discuss advertising policy recommendations from the Budget Workshop that evening and then return to other recommendations at its next meeting.

Advertising policy:

Mr. Snyder said that the advertising policy recommendations were proposed at the Communications Subcommittee meeting. (See p. 16 for the text of the recommendations)

Dr. Bracmort said that “clearly distinguishable” in discussing the requirement that the Metro logo be “clearly distinguishable” on wrapped buses is subjective and that this may not be “clearly distinguishable” by general riders.

There was discussion of making the “M” logo visible on wrapped buses and the wording of the resolution that calls for their visibility on buses.

Mr. Jaffe said that he supports including telephone numbers on signage but they aren’t advertising. Ms. Holland suggested that the Metro logo and police and information telephone numbers presented in a block. Mr. Jaffe said that the RAC had passed a resolution on providing the police telephone number in December, and that there is something else related to that which he can’t get into. Mr. Snyder suggested removing the middle paragraph of the recommendation and deal with it as a separate issue, which Mr. Jaffe agreed with. Dr. Conn suggested

Mr. Jaffe said that John Catoe had suggested that Metro condense its telephone numbers to provide a single number for customer contact. Mr. Snyder said that this doesn’t always work, and Dr. Conn said that these numbers are menu-driven, which is impractical for emergencies.

Mr. Jaffe said that, in his meeting with Marketing staff several weeks ago, that advertisers who include “Take Metrobus or Metrorail to (event)” receive a discount on their advertising, and he doesn’t think that this should be the case.

Mr. Snyder asked that the RAC to clarify advertising policy recommendations at next Communications meeting.

Dr. Conn asked about the timing of Mr. Snyder’s presentation to the Metro Board. He said that it would be following the May RAC meeting, and additional issues could be discussed then.

Mr. Snyder noted that none of the Subcommittee meetings recently have had quorums and that, if members cannot participate in these meetings, they should resign their membership on these committees. Mr. Jaffe said that there needs to be more and more timely communication to members about these meetings.

Dr. Bracmort brought up the Wednesday meeting issue and that it’s not fair to those that are unable to make Wednesday nights. There was then discussion between Mr. Snyder and Mr. Jaffe about the process used which determined that RAC meetings be held on Wednesday evenings.

Ms. Sandler left @ 8:37. Mr. Cortinez left @ 8:38.

Ms. White mentioned the upcoming RAC Rail Workshop. She asked RAC members to post or distribute flyers in their communities at public buildings, etc.

Mr. Snyder asked Subcommittee chairs to talk to their members to see if there is a more convenient time to hold their meetings rather than Wednesday evenings.

Ms. Blyther said that, if the RAC wants to get public input, it can't change the dates for the meeting.

X. Adjournment:

Mr. Jaffe moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Dr. Bracmort. Everyone present voted in favor of adjourning the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Text of Motions from Budget Workshop Recommendations:

SmarTrip Policy

The RAC supports the expanded use of SmarTrip throughout Metro and the Region. The following conditions must be met prior to differentiating fares based on use of SmarTrip:

- A better explanation of SmarTrip in Metro's marketing messages must be provided to riders;
- Increased and clearer information about SmarTrip for the non-English speaking and ADA communities must be provided;
- More explicit explanations of how to use SmarTrip (swiping vs. touching) must be provided;
- The cost for obtaining a card must be eliminated or significantly reduced;
- Modifications to SmarTrip vending machines (from \$10 machines to include \$20 and credit/debit cards) must be made;
- SmarTrip must be available for purchase and reloading at local retailers, banks, tourist destinations, kiosks, through the internet, and via cell phone technology;
- Must support all (daily, weekly, monthly, senior, student, etc.) passes;
- Must be integrated with MetroAccess;
- Next-Generation SmarTrip cards that have more than the number of programmed fares must be available.
- SmarTrip-only fare gates and Add Fare/vending machines at Stations need to be installed;
- A transaction report (statement), must be available to the owner of a registered card, but also protected as privacy information. (e.g. Using a CardID and PIN).

In addition, Metro should consider the following additional options as part of any fare policy which differentiates fares based on SmarTrip:

- Availability of SmarTrip technology in a debit and/or credit card;

- Option for automatically maintaining a minimum balances when tied to a debit, credit card, or bank account like with EZ-Pass should be provided;
- Branding rights for SmarTrip cards should be encouraged as a way to pay for the fixed costs of the cards.

Benefits:

- Faster entrance and exit from Rail Stations;
- Faster boarding of Busses;
- Recovery of lost transfer revenue;
- Recovery of lost pass revenue;
- Better tracking of ridership across modes, including use of fixed route services by paratransit community;
- Reduction in cash processing;
- Easier to increase balances;
- Easier to purchase passes;
- Can more easily offer discounts for reverse commutes, and off-peak parking.

Fare Policy

The RACs support a Fare Policy that encourages the use of under utilized resources, encourages the use of public transportation over driving, and is not punitive towards those who are totally dependent on public transportation.

- The fare policy must be simple to understand by locals, non-English and ADA communities, and visitors.
- Better information must be disseminated through marketing of options (i.e: availability of passes)
- All fare policy must be implemented through SmarTrip (i.e.: Including Passes)
- If fares are tied to an economic indicator, it should be relevant to wages and transportation costs. Jurisdictional contributions must be tied to the same or a more aggressive indicator.
- Passes must be available for pre-purchase, open to morning commuters; and be available for any or all modes.
- Caps on daily and/or weekly fares must be considered to encourage “friends and family” use of the system by daily commuters.

Advertising Policy

The RAC supports an Advertising Policy that opens up additional inventory to advertisers, provided that 10% of the space on each medium is reserved for public service announcements (such as community groups or Metro information).

Additionally, all “temporary signage” (including advertising, maps, schedules, and emergency procedures) throughout the system must have the following two numbers displayed:

Metro Police: 202-962-2121

Customer Information: 202-637-7000

All buses that are wrapped must be clearly distinguishable as a Metrobus from both the front and side. If the Metro logo is covered, a replacement must be included in the wrap, and this advertising must follow the 10% public service reserved rule as well.