

Riders' Advisory Council
June 4, 2008

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Iacomini called the June 2008 meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:35 p.m. She asked John Pasek, the Staff Coordinator to call the roll.

The following members of the Riders' Advisory Council were present:

Nancy Iacomini, Chairman, Arlington County
Kelsi Bracmort, District of Columbia
Steve Cerny, Fairfax County
Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia
Penny Everline, Arlington County
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Chairman, Elderly & Disabled Advisory Committee
(arrived 6:50 p.m.)
Diana Zinkl, District of Columbia

The following members of the Riders' Advisory Council were not present for any portion of the meeting:

Denise Brown, Prince George's County
Sharon Conn, Prince George's County
Susan Holland, Prince George's County
Kevin Moore, At-Large/District of Columbia
Kaiya Sandler, Montgomery County
Lillian White, City of Alexandria,
Robin White, Fairfax County

II. Public Comment Period:

Ms. Iacomini asked if there were any members of the public who had signed up to make comments to the RAC. There were none. She noted that Doris Ray had submitted comments to the RAC and asked that the RAC consider her comments. She noted, however, the difference between submitting comments to the RAC and making public comment at a RAC meeting, which requires that the person attend the meeting.

III. Approval of May 7, 2008 Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Iacomini noted that there wasn't quorum of RAC members present at the RAC meeting and therefore they would not be able to vote to approve the May 7th meeting minutes.

IV. Approval of Agenda:
Without objection, the agenda was approved as presented.

V. WMATA Capital Budget:
Ms. Iacomini invited Rick Harcum and Jim Hughes, the two staff members who had come to present to the RAC that evening, to come forward.

Mr. Harcum provided a brief overview of Metro's Operating and Capital Budgets to RAC members and noted that there have recently been several stories in the media concerning Metro's "urgent unfunded capital needs." In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Harcum explained Metro's current five-year Capital Budget, referred to as "Metro Matters" and how staff have found additional, necessary capital projects during the five-year course of Metro Matters. He added that Metro's engineers examined the system and found approximately \$400-500 million in additional capital needs. He noted that the electrical problems that Metro experienced in August of 2007 were a result of those capital needs.

Mr. Harcum noted that Metro's funding partners, the federal and local governments, didn't have any additional money to fund projects over and above what was agreed to as part of Metro Matters, and so the Board directed staff to reprioritize projects within available funding. He explained that this means that Metro has a capital funding program in place through FY2010 for approximately \$150 million. He explained that this will require Metro to defer other projects and trying to place these in its next Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that will cover FY2011 and beyond.

Mr Sheehan arrived at 6:50 p.m.

In response to a further question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Harcum said that Metro staff would present a list of Metro's "unconstrained capital needs" for FY2011 - FY2020 to the Board's Planning, Development and Real Estate Committee at its meeting on July 24th. He explained that there would be three kinds of capital projects in this list:

1. Replacement capital (in-kind replacement of existing facilities, such as escalators);
2. Capacity enhancement (projects that would allow Metro to carry additional passengers on its existing system, such as additional buses or provisions to allow more 8-car trains);
3. System expansion (projects which would serve new markets, such as the proposed Purple Line in Maryland).

Mr. Harcum noted that Metro's unconstrained capital need would encompass the first two categories on this list, since expansion projects are funded by the jurisdictions that they serve. He noted that staff is trying to categorize all of the

projects on its list and provided the example of roof extensions along outdoor station platforms. He explained that this could be seen as either replacement capital, since the roof would replace an existing structure, or it could also be seen as capacity enhancement, since expanding the area under cover along a platform would help with Metro's planned use of more 8-car trains by allowing riders to spread out along the platform.

Ms. Zinkl asked about Metro's escalator canopy program and whether any additional canopies would be funded as part of the capital budget. Mr. Harcum responded that there is no money in the current capital budget, which runs through FY2010, but these may be funded in the subsequent capital program.

Mr. Sheehan asked about projects that were previously funded and are now unfunded - how will these rank along with other projects. Mr. Harcum said that these projects will go into the "unconstrained needs" list and then the local and federal governments will determine how much they will be able to fund.

In response to a comment from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Harcum said that the items on the list will depend on the amount of money available in the program; he gave the example of buying new escalators vs. rehabbing existing escalators.

Mr. Cerny asked for an example of projects that Metro is proposing to defer 2 years into the next capital program. Mr. Harcum gave an example of electrical components - some of which would be replaced. Mr. Cerny asked if these are projects that wouldn't be visible to riders. Mr. Harcum said that the projects being deferred are mostly projects not visible to riders.

Mr. Sheehan asked if putting in redundant elevators at transfer stations, which was advocated by the E&D Committee, was in the program. Mr. Hughes noted that this was in the program. Mr. Harcum said that he is hoping to get the RAC's feedback on projects.

In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Harcum said that he would look for the RAC's feedback on the proposed list of projects over the summer.

Ms. Zinkl asked for a timeline of Metro's budgeting process. She also asked for background on Metro's current capital program.

Mr. Harcum said that the current capital budget, which is referred to as "Metro Matters" aimed to do 3 things:

1. Catch up on deferred maintenance;
2. Allow Metro to run 8-car trains;
3. Purchase expansion buses.

Mr. Harcum said that the deferred maintenance part of the program got off to a slow start, but is now on track, and that the 8-car train portion of the capital

program is also running smoothly. He noted that the expansion buses have been scaled back because they have an impact on the operating budget, which is funded by a separate mechanism from the capital budget.

Ms. Everline asked how Metro would prioritize system or capacity expansion versus maintaining the system in a state of good repair. Mr. Harcum explained that Metro didn't fund system expansion, and other decisions about funding priorities were made by Metro's Board of Directors.

Ms. Iacomini asked if Metro had a capital budget prior to Metro Matters. Mr. Harcum responded that while Metro did have a capital budget, it was only a year-to-year capital budget. He explained that Metro was focused on building the rail system, so the idea of maintaining its existing assets was something of a new idea. He noted that Metro's focus had shifted, as it was no longer in the construction business and that any expansions to the system would be handled by the jurisdictions. He noted that Metro is now more focused on the maintenance of the existing system.

Ms. Iacomini said that she would ask Mr. Harcum to come back to the RAC to further discuss and get feedback on the proposed capital program. There was additional discussion of the timeline for the RAC to make comments and for the development of the listing of projects.

Ms. Iacomini asked about the role of consultants in the development of the new capital program. Mr. Harcum replied that Metro has hired three consultants from Parsons Brinkerhoff to help analyze Metro's needs. Ms. Iacomini asked whether dedicated funding would go to operating or capital. Mr. Harcum responded that the intent of the dedicated funding legislation being talked about was that those funds would be used for capital projects. Ms. Iacomini provided some information about legislation that would provide dedicated funding for Metro that is currently being considered in Congress.

VI. Blue Line Realignment:

The RAC then moved on to discuss the proposed realignment of Blue Line service to enhance system capacity. Jim Hughes, the Director of Metro's Office of Planning and Scheduling provided an overview and history of the project.

Mr. Hughes noted that in February, staff went to the Board for the authorization to look at operating the rail system differently. He noted that over the last five years most of the growth downtown has occurred in its eastern portion, around the Gallery Place area. He said that Metro is also looking at the proposed service realignment because capacity is becoming an issue on Metrorail: there currently exists excess capacity for additional trains on the Yellow Line bridge and insufficient capacity for through the tunnel between Rosslyn and Foggy Bottom.

He noted that the number of passengers traveling over the Yellow Line bridge in the peak hour has increased 13% while the number of passengers traveling through the Rosslyn portal has declined 4% during this time period.

Mr. Hughes explained that Metro sends 26 trains/hour in the peak period through the Rosslyn portal. He noted that this is the maximum number of trains/hour that can be put through the tunnel and added that when there is a delay, it takes a the system long time to recover.

Mr. Hughes the detailed the realignment plan - four trains/hour from Franconia-Springfield in the morning would go over the Yellow Line bridge to L'Enfant and on to Greenbelt. (Six trains per hour would continue to travel via Rosslyn.) He said that this would free up those four slots per hour for use by Orange Line trains. He added that some Orange Line "tripper" trains would then be rerouted to serve Largo to make up for the rerouted Blue Line trains.

Ms. Everline asked about trains to New Carrollton. Mr. Hughes said that reverse commuters - from downtown eastward would see the same number of trains, just that more of them would be Orange Line trains.

Dr. Bracmort asked what Metro would call the trains that went on different routings. Mr. Hughes noted that if Metro changed its train designations, the Authority would then also need to change signs, which would be the big expense of the project.

Mr. Hughes went over the pros and cons of the project:

Pros: More capacity used;
Ability to add more Orange Line trains;
Direct service from Franconia-Springfield to Greenbelt and vice-versa;
Some passengers, depending on the trip that they take, will save time.

Cons: Passengers traveling on the Blue Line to Rosslyn and Foggy Bottom will have less service.

Ms. Iacomini asked if Metro has been able to use farecard or SmarTrip records to determine how many passengers would be affected by the change in operations.

Mr. Hughes gave an explanation of how Metro calculates passengers' travel time and gave an example of a trip originating at National Airport. He noted the difference in travel time between waiting for a Blue Line train versus taking a train to L'Enfant Plaza and transferring to get to the western part of downtown.

Ms. Everline asked if Metro would beef up its express bus service to try and address the increases in travel time. Mr. Hughes said that this wasn't in the

original presentation but has been suggested to staff. He noted that this will be included before Metro goes back to the Board.

Mr. Hughes then provided information about the estimated number of passengers affected:

He explained that in total, approximately 13,000 people per day would be disadvantaged by longer waits, increased travel time or a requirement to transfer trains, and that Metro estimates that approximately 50,000 passengers per day would be advantaged - either through more frequent service, shorter travel times or increased reliability.

Ms. Iacomini asked about the possibility of phasing in the service, so that, in the beginning, only two Blue Line trains per hour would be rerouted.

Mr. Hughes discussed the data collection methods that Metro was using to gather information to bring back to the Board of Directors:

1. *Survey of customers:* Mr. Hughes described the interview/survey process and noted that Metro had conducted over 450 interviews with passengers: 220 – from Braddock Road south to Franconia-Springfield on the Blue Line, 100 at the Huntington and Eisenhower Avenue stations on the Yellow Line and also at stations on the northern end of the Green Line (West Hyattsville to Greenbelt) who would see additional service.
2. *Meet with RAC, Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee, etc. to get reaction:* Mr. Huges said that Metro didn't get much of a reaction from the JCC. He noted that staff has also met with the Arlington County Transit Advisory Committee and reported that Arlington County residents were split about whether the realignment was a good or bad idea.

Mr. Hughes noted that Arlingtonians would prefer that the line be named a different color. Dr. Bracmort suggested calling the trains from Franconia-Springfield to Greenbelt Yellow Line trains to minimize confusion.

Ms. Zinkl said that she couldn't imagine that there is sufficient excess capacity on the eastern legs of the Blue and Orange lines to allow for any decreases in service frequency.

Ms. Zinkl said that her understanding that much of the high ridership on the Orange Line in Virginia is because riders are funneled by Metrobus and various other bus lines to Orange Line stations and wondered whether these buses could be rerouted to the Pentagon to allow riders to catch a Yellow or Blue Line train. Mr Hughes said that Metro has looked at running express buses to downtown rather than forcing people to transfer again.

Dr. Bracmort said that she is encouraged by the idea of direct buses and also that if service in the eastern portion of town would not be affected, she didn't have much of an opinion on the change either way, since it wouldn't affect her trips.

Ms. Iacomini disclosed that as an Orange Line rider from Arlington, she would be advantaged by the proposed realignment.

Mr. Hughes said that the most complicated part is how to communicate this information to customers.

Mr. Hughes also explained Metro's capacity concerns from 2015 onward. He noted that, even with all 8-car trains, Metro will reach capacity limits in 2025. He then discussed proposed regional growth patterns and future plans for additional transit service in the region.

Mr. Hughes committed to explaining the survey results and riders' reactions to the surveys and communications plans once Metro had that information. Ms. Iacomini asked about the proposed timeline for realigning service. Mr. Hughes responded that the change couldn't happen before late fall, and would likely not occur until the beginning of 2009. He said that if additional signage were required, the start date would be later still.

Ms. Everline asked what the impact of customer feedback would be on the project. Mr. Hughes said that if Metro found out that there's large majority of people who oppose the plan, the Board likely wouldn't enact the plan.

Dr. Bracmort suggested connecting the ends of the Blue Line (excluding the section from the Pentagon to L'Enfant Plaza) by making a track connection at L'Enfant Plaza. Mr. Hughes noted that Metro had looked at this and it isn't technically feasible to make such connection.

Mr. Hughes explained that he would come back with Donna Murray, Metro's Director of Customer Research, in July to go over the information that Metro had received from its customers.

VI. Station Emergency Evacuation Maps:

Mr. Pasek showed RAC members the prototype of the station evacuation maps that they had previously seen in draft form and commented upon. He highlighted changes to the draft that reflected their comments.

Ms. Everline asked about size of the map.

Dr. Bracmort asked if there will there be a large version mounted at the station. Mr. Sheehan suggested that such a large version could be the accessible version of the map.

Ms. Zinkl asked if these maps would be available online. Mr. Sheehan said that he thought that it would be worth looking at creating accessible version and

possibly making that the electronic version available for users to download. He asked how to get information about these maps to the Elderly and Disabled Committee.

VII. Subcommittee Reports:

Ms. Iacomini noted that the Bus and Rail Subcommittees had upcoming meetings:

- The Rail Subcommittee would meet at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 11th;
- The Bus Subcommittee would meet at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 17th.

VIII. New Business:

Dr. Bracmort asked when the Board would be appointing new members to the RAC to fill existing vacancies. Mr. Pasek said that he was forwarding recommendations on to the Board this week and that he expected that new members would be appointed at one of the Board's next meetings.

Ms. Iacomini asked RAC members to think about potential capital projects while they were out and about using the bus or rails systems.

IX. Adjournment:

Without objection, Ms. Iacomini adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m