

**Riders' Advisory Council  
Rail Subcommittee  
April 9, 2008**

I. Call to Order/Roll Call:

Mr. Cerny called the April meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council's Metrorail Subcommittee to order at 7:06 p.m. The following members were present:

Steve Cerny, Chair, Fairfax County  
Nancy Iacomini, Arlington County  
Kaiya Pontinen Sandler, Montgomery County  
Diana Zinkl, District of Columbia

Penny Everline, a RAC member from Arlington County who is not on the Rail Subcommittee was also present at the meeting.

Tom Harrington and Wendy Jia from Metro's Office of Planning and Scheduling were also present.

II. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Mr. Cerny asked for approval of the meeting agenda. Without objection, the agenda was approved as presented.

IV. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Cerny then asked for members' approval of the minutes of the Subcommittee's December and February meetings.

Ms. White suggested some changes to the December meeting minutes.

Mr. Cerny then called for a vote on the December 12, 2007 meeting minutes:

*In favor:* Mr. Cerny, Ms. Iacomini, Ms. Sandler

*Against:* none

*Abstentions:* Ms. White, Ms. Zinkl

Mr. Cerny then called for a vote on the March 12, 2008 meeting minutes.

*In favor:* Mr. Cerny, Ms. Iacomini, Ms. Sandler, Ms. White

*Opposed:* none

*Abstentions:* none

V. Future Capacity and Blue Line Realignment:

The Subcommittee then began its discussion of Metro's future capacity needs and the proposal to realign service on the Blue Line to operate over the Potomac River bridge.

Ms. Iacomini asked several questions about specific aspects of the study to realign Blue Line service.

Mr. Harrington began his presentation and told members that he was in charge of the Station Capacity Study, which was completed last fall. He noted that Ms. Jia also worked on the study. He said that the study of future capacity needs expands on the State Capacity Study to look at capital needs. He noted that the Blue Line concept was presented to the Board in February and explained that Jim Hughes was supposed to talk with the RAC about the proposal but was presently out of town. He added that the Blue Line Realignment and the Future Capacity study were linked.

Ms. Jia noted that the Future Capacity Study would be coming to Metro's Board of Directors in April at its Planning Development and Real Estate Committee.

Mr. Harrington went through his presentation.

Mr. Cerny noted that while regional growth estimates represent the best available data, they didn't and can't take into account other factors such as high gas prices that may slow growth in the outer suburbs.

Mr. Harrington said that Metro's ridership projections are driven by downtown employment growth - which is expected to be around 20%. He also noted major assumptions - Dulles extension and Blue Line realignment. He noted that ridership will grow to almost 1 million pax/day by 2030, though will slow much after 2020. He also contrasted this with the 1999 Board goal of growing ridership by 3% annually to double ridership by 2020 - which would include a great deal of system expansion. He said that Metro's projections didn't assume any system expansion beyond Dulles.

In response to a comment from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Harrington noted that Union Station is the busiest station in the system and what Metro may not be accounting for in its growth projections which would be largely driven by commuter rail growth.

Mr. Harrington also noted that Metro is focused on peak capacity, because that is where the system is bumping up against constraints, and showed a slide that showed the max load points on each line. He then went through a line-by-line graphic that showed railcar loading on each of Metro's lines.

Ms. Iacomini asked whether the figures presented anticipated the Blue Line split. Mr. Harrington responded that all of the figures after 2010 assume the Blue Line split and the figures after 2015 would include Dulles Rail and sufficient cars (7000-series) to make the Dulles extension at least 50% 8-car trains.

Ms. Zinkl described the conditions that her friend faced in the morning commuting on the Green Line from Waterfront to L'Enfant Plaza, she said that this experience showed that her friend experienced much higher loads.

Mr. Harrington continued with his presentation to show the load factors when Metro would receive additional cars (130 additional 7000-series) which would allow it to run 75% or 100% 8-car trains.

Ms. White said that the figures don't reflect trains coming more frequently. Ms. Jia responded that currently, there isn't exist the technology to do that now but Metro is looking into doing this with better computer technology.

Mr. Harrington then discussed the station capacity; Ms. Iacomini asked if the study looked at the platforms. Ms. Jia responded that it didn't because platforms aren't standardized, which would possibly provide misleading statistics. Ms. Iacomini said that platform capacity could be a factor, especially at side-platform stations.

Mr. Harrington then showed proposed 2010-2020 Improvements. Ms. Iacomini suggested that the slide separate "operational" strategies (like the Blue Line split) and "capital" strategies (additional railcars, pedestrian studies).

Mr. Harrington responded that this presentation's aim is to try and establish needs for rail capital projects and that a similar study on bus will come to the Board in May regarding bus; he added that then the Board will get information on the CIP in June.

In response to a question from Ms. Everline about access to the stations, Ms. Jia said that the ridership projections include future transit service by the jurisdictions that are in the region's CLRP (Constrained Long Range Plan).

Mr. Harrington discussed the proposed tunnels between the Farragut North and Farragut West stations and between Metro Center and Gallery Place. In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Hester said that the pedestrian tunnel could help ease congestion at Metro Center. Mr. Harrington said that this could help passengers avoid double-transfers through Gallery Place, especially in the off-peak.

The presentation then highlighted capital needs beyond 2020. Mr. Harrington discussed additional capacity that would be provided through interline connections and an additional line through downtown.

Ms. Iacomini asked if Metro was looking at an additional line down Lee Highway in North Arlington. Mr. Harrington responded that Metro is looking at core capacity as part of this study, not capacity further out from the core.

*Blue Line Split:*

Mr. Harrington said that the Blue Line Split is a “tool in Metro’s toolbox.” He said that this would allow for Dulles service and also give more service to the east side of downtown which is growing in demand.

Ms. Iacomini noted that there is a lot of pushback in Arlington about this proposal, however, she noted that Metro’s capacity is constrained, which would call for Metro to look at proposals such as this to use all of its existing capacity. Mr. Harrington said that eventually this realignment of service will need to happen .

Ms. Iacomini asked about the public outreach for the proposed BLS. Mr. Harrington replied that there would be 300-400 surveys distributed and would likely

Ms. Zinkl asked how much of this project is designed to address the Dulles extension. TH said that the He noted that approximately 13,000 people would be affected negatively. He said that Metro’s calculations showed that there would be a benefit to 17,000 riders - not including the increased reliability and frequency for Orange Line riders.

Ms. White asked about the effects on service to Maryland. Mr. Harrington responded that there would be some change to service to Largo because of the rerouting of Blue Line trains.

Ms. Everline said that Metro needs to be clear with how the feedback will be used. Ms. Iacomini said that it’s pretty clear that this will be implemented at some point. Mr. Cerny said that the area affected is well-represented on the Board.

Ms. Zinkl asked if it would be possible to turn around Blue Line trains at Mount Vernon Square. Mr. Harrington responded that the Mount Vernon Square turnback track does not have any additional capacity.

Ms. Zinkl noted that the Crystal City area has a large contingent of tourists which may complicate the issue. Ms. Sandler said that Metro isn’t as complicated as other systems.

Mr. Harrington suggested that the RAC contact Donna Murray regarding the surveys.

Mr. Cerny suggested that the survey could be a topic for discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Ms. Iacomini said that what needs to happen is for Metro to get a more accurate read about the number of riders that would be affected. She said that Metro needs to be honest that some trips will get longer and other trips will get longer. She noted that the downside of the proposal is that it pits one part of Arlington against another.

VI. New Business:

Ms. Iacomini discussed the possibility of RAC members receiving a tour of Metro's Operations Control Center. She noted some of the difficulties in arranging a tour. She suggested that RAC members determine who would want to be a part of such a tour.

VII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Mr. Cerny adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

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