

**Riders' Advisory Council  
Rail Subcommittee  
May 14, 2008**

I. Call to Order:

Mr. Cerny called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

II. Roll Call:

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

Steve Cerny, Chair, Fairfax County

Denise Brown, Prince George's County (arrived 6:54 p.m.)

Nancy Iacomini, Arlington County

Kaiya Sandler, Montgomery County

Diana Zinkl, District of Columbia

Mr. Cerny noted that Metro has made changes to its Capital Improvement Program and that these may be related to guidance from the Federal Transit Administration concerning the Dulles Rail extension.

III. Public Comment:

There were no comments from members of the public.

IV. Approval of April 12, 2008 Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Cerny deferred the approval of the April meeting minutes due to the lack of a quorum.

V. Approval of Agenda:

Without objection, the agenda was approved as presented.

VI. Mystery Rider Program Discussion:

Members of the Subcommittee then discussed Metro's proposed "Mystery Rider" program which had been presented by staff at the previous week's RAC meeting. Members suggested additional items to be evaluated or measured by the contractors performing the program.

Mr. Cerny suggested that the program measure the exterior physical condition of stations, such as sidewalks on Metro property.

Ms. Iacomini discussed the maps which are posted on bus shelters at Metrorail stations. Bob Hester, the Customer Service Manager for the Red Line noted that these maps and all elements of the bus terminals at rail stations are the responsibility of Metrorail staff.

Ms. Zinkl noted that the various maps displayed at Metro stations are not displayed in a consistent manner.

Ms. Sandler suggested that the status of the recycling bins at the rail stations should be added to the Mystery Rider checklist.

Ms. Iacomini suggested that the cleanliness of elevators be added to the Mystery Rider checklist.

Ms. Zinkl discussed Metro's elevator and escalator status information. She said that this is something that should be measured as a continuous experience rather than just reflected as part of one specific trip.

Ms. Iacomini discussed the difference between customer complaints and "systemic" problems which would be reflected in the Mystery Rider reports. She also noted that the Mystery Rider program would be an addition to the customer complaint data that Metro receives, rather than a replacement of this data. Mr. Hester said that the goal with the Mystery Rider program is to make changes to Metro's policies and procedures.

Denise Brown arrived at 6:54 p.m.

Ms. Zinkl noted the tendency of small issues to become big problems if they aren't effectively addressed. In response, Ms. Iacomini discussed the role of customer complaints versus the role of the information provided by Mystery Riders.

Ms. Zinkl said that she didn't see what Metro is hoping to get out of the information that the program will provide, using station cleanliness as an example.

Mr. Hester said that the Mystery Rider program is designed to provide an objective look at the current situation on the Metro system, and used station announcements and interior railcar temperature as examples. He noted that in measuring temperature, the Mystery Riders would measure whether a railcar is at a set temperature in degrees, rather than if it feels "hot" or "cold" which could vary from person to person. He also discussed that the information would be used in concert with customer complaint data.

Ms. Iacomini pointed out that the mystery riders would be anonymous and unknown to Metro employees.

Mr. Hester also noted the problems with relying on customer complaints to make changes to operating procedures. He said that changes would be made in response to a relatively small number of complaints that could affect large numbers of riders.

Ms. Zinkl suggested that the Mystery Rider program add the "directional appropriateness" of faregates to its checklists – whether the orientation of the faregates matched the flow of passengers into and out of the station.

Ms. Zinkl also asked who owned was responsible for the sidewalks around Metro stations. Mr. Hester responded that Metro is usually responsible, but only up to a certain point. Ms. Zinkl noted her concern with newspaper boxes around the entrance to Metrorail stations. Mr. Hester discussed some of the issues that Metro has had in limiting the number of newspaper boxes around its stations.

Ms. Brown noted that there is a sign in front of the Prince George's Plaza Metrorail Station on East-West Highway directing motorists into the station, but is mislabeled and needs to be changed.

VII. Station Enhancement Program:

Mr. Pasek provided details on Metro's Station Enhancement Program that had been provided by Metro's Office of Plant Maintenance, the department within Metro responsible for overseeing the program. Subcommittee members had questions about certain aspects of the program, specifically whether light bulbs were replaced as part of the program, the extent of repainting performed on station ceilings under the Station Enhancement program and other the nature of other enhancements performed as part of the program. Mr. Pasek said that he would follow up with staff in Metro's Office of Plant Maintenance for answers to members questions.

VIII. New Business:

There was discussion about members for topics to be discussed at subsequent meetings, specifically plans for capital improvements at rail stations, Metro's Capital Improvement Program and its plans for canopy installation over exterior escalators at rail stations. Ms. Zinkl and Mr. Hester discussed Metro's program of canopy installations and its escalator maintenance practices.

IX. Adjournment:

Without objection, Mr. Cerny adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.