



600 Fifth Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
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December 20, 2012

Chair Hudgins and Members of the Board:

It is my pleasure to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council's report for December 2012.

**Holiday Service Levels:**

Deputy General Manager of Operations Dave Kubicek and Director of Bus Planning Jim Hamre came to the December Council meeting to discuss Metro's holiday service levels, especially the level of service provided on "minor" holidays, such as Columbus and Veterans' Day, when many private-sector employees are still required to report to work.

Council members raised concerns about the level of rail service provided on these holidays, especially when that service is further reduced by scheduled trackwork. Members understood the critical need for Metro to continue its aggressive rebuilding campaign, though they suggested that Metro needs to provide more robust information on the progress of its rebuilding effort and a clearer timeline on when riders might expect at least partial relief from weekend shutdowns and single-tracking. We recommend Metro consult with riders, the private sector, and others to find a solution that allows for track work to occur without major inconveniences and hindrances to thousands of commuters on minor holidays.

Members also asked that Metro act quickly to provide better information at affected stations about regularly-scheduled service that can provide alternate transportation. Members also strongly suggested that Metro, to the extent possible, remain flexible to adjust service levels in response to crowding or greater-than-expected ridership.

Mr. Kubicek asked the Council for feedback on additional ways for Metro to communicate information about trackwork to customers and possible trade-offs riders would be willing to accept to allow normal service to resume earlier. We look forward to following up on these issues in the new year.

**Momentum:**

Metro staff also presented information on "Momentum," the conversation around Metro's strategic framework. The Council is encouraged that Metro is planning for the future and seeking community input, and urges Metro to continue to reach out to stakeholders throughout the region, not only to get their feedback on Metro's future plans, but also to leverage their participation to encourage continued regional support for Metro.

**Changes to Meeting Schedule and Structure:**

Also at its December meeting, the Council approved a change to its meeting structure to allow for additional meetings during each month. This change is intended to streamline the Council's monthly meetings as well as to provide the Council additional time to discuss topics in greater depth. We look forward to discussing this issue in more detail with the Board as we work together with the Board and Metro staff to develop a workplan for the coming year.

In addition, the Council has begun streaming the audio for its meetings live over the internet to allow members of the public to more easily listen in.

**2012 Recap:**

Attached is a brief recap of the topics that the Council has discussed and provided feedback to either the Board or Metro staff over the past year. The Council will continue to focus on many of these issues in the coming year, as well. Any guidance from the Board on issues and topics that the Council should consider in 2013 would also be welcomed.

Thank you, as always, for your attention and for the Board's continued support of the Council and its work over the past year.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelsi Bracmort". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelsi Bracmort, Chair



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## **Riders' Advisory Council 2012 Overview**

### **Development of Goals and Workplan:**

At the beginning of the year, the Council identified issues where it wanted to direct its focus throughout 2012, incorporating guidance from both the Board of Directors and the General Manager. The Council invited Board Chair Hudgins to its January meeting to provide guidance and also met with General Manager Sarles and his staff in April to solicit their input.

The issues that the Council decided to focus on throughout the year were:

- Bus stop accessibility and enhancements;
- Improving Metro's communications with its riders;
- Encouraging greater input from low-income and limited-English proficient riders;
- Youth safety and youth transit concerns;
- Improving transit service to Dulles and BWI airports.

### **Provided Feedback on Metro Programs:**

Including the topics noted above, the Council provided feedback on numerous Metro programs, policies and proposed changes during the year. In addition to those items included in the Council's workplan, topics were items either requested by the Council or that were being subsequently considered by the Board of Directors.

The Council provided input on:

- Rail Service Criteria – proposed rush hour headways, proposed passenger loads during peak periods and span of service (February and September)
- Metro's Strategic Plan and Vision (March and December)
- Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign – Metro's planned campaign to address incidents of sexual harassment (April)
- Bus Stop Improvements – planned improvements to regional bus stops using federal grant funding, including proposed selection criteria; the Council will continue to work with staff on this project in 2013. (May, November)
- Communications – provided suggestions on opportunities for Metro to improve communications with its riders, including greater use of its social media sites (Twitter and Facebook) and more regular communication with riders from the General Manager and Board Chair (May)
- Changes to SmarTrip Rules and Availability (June)
- Youth Coordinator Position (June)
- Metro outreach to low-income and Limited English Proficient riders (August)
- Rush+ service changes (October)
- Rail service levels and trackwork on holidays (December)

### **Provided Increased Opportunity for Stakeholder Input and Collaboration:**

During 2012, the Council made changes to the way it operates to allow for increased input from its stakeholders and improved coordination with the Metro Board of Directors.

- Expanded opportunities for members of the public to provide comments on Council agenda items, both in-person and electronically.
- Worked with Metro Media Relations staff to provide enhanced public notice of monthly Council meetings.
- Worked with Board of Directors' leadership to establish quarterly meetings between Council and Board leadership.
- Worked with community in Edgewood Terrace neighborhood in Northeast DC to organize community meeting on Metrobus service (February).
- Partnered with the Mayor's Youth Leadership Institute to sponsor a Youth Transit Town Hall, attended by approximately 200 young adults. The Town Hall offered these transit riders the opportunity to self-identify issues of concern with transit service in the region as well as to discuss possible solutions and opportunities for youth to advocate for those solutions to be implemented. (July)
- Provided live streaming of Council meeting audio over the internet for members of the public unable to attend meetings (December)

### **Attended Public and Community Meetings:**

In addition to Council meetings, members attended Metro-sponsored and other public meetings concerning transit service throughout the year to listen to riders' concerns. These meetings included:

- Ward 7 Transportation Summit (February)
- FY2013 Budget and Fare Increase public hearings (March)
- Deanwood Metro station access study meeting (April)
- Bus Stop Consolidation meetings (May)
- Metrobus public meetings on the 14<sup>th</sup> Street line (February, April June)
- Public hearings on proposed Metrobus service changes (October and November)
- Metrobus public meeting on the East Capitol Street line (November)
- Community meeting on proposed W6/W8 service changes (December)

### **Special Projects:**

The Council also worked on two special projects during the year.

*Airport Accessibility:* The Council established a working group to gather information and develop recommendations for improvements to transit service to the region's airports. The group met with staff from Metro's Office of Bus Planning, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and Destination DC. The group plans to produce a report on its findings in early 2013.

*Incident Communications:* In collaboration with the Board, the Council participated in a panel discussion on Metro's incident communications at the Board's October Safety and Security Committee meeting. The Council is working with the Board to identify follow-up actions from that discussion and will be conducting outreach with riders to develop recommendations on how Metro can better communicate with its riders in emergency situations.