

**Riders' Advisory Council**  
**December 5, 2012**

I. Call to Order:

Dr. Bracmort called the December 2012 meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:35 p.m.

The following members were present:

Kelsi Bracmort, Chair, District of Columbia  
Carl Seip, District of Columbia Vice Chair  
Lorraine Silva, Virginia Vice Chair, Arlington County  
James Wright, Maryland Vice Chair, Prince George's County  
Ben Ball, District of Columbia  
Frank DeBernardo, Prince George's County  
Chris Farrell, Montgomery County  
Barbara Hermanson, City of Alexandria  
Patricia King-Adams, District of Columbia  
Joseph Kitchen, Prince George's County  
Pat Sheehan, At-Large, Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair  
Deborah Titus, Fairfax County  
Carol Carter Walker, District of Columbia  
Candice Walsh, District of Columbia  
Victoria Wilder, Montgomery County

Other individuals present:

Jennifer Green, Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing Planning, Metro  
Jim Hamre, Office of Bus Planning, Metro  
Tom Harrington, Office of Long Range Planning, Metro  
Dave Kubicek, Deputy General Manager Operations, Metro  
John Pasek, Council staff coordinator, Metro  
Loyda Sequeira, Board Secretary, Metro

Chris Barnes, member of the public  
Drew Hunter, member of the public  
Robert Youngman, member of the public

**Approved January 9, 2013**

II. Public Comment:

Three members of the public provided comments.

Robert Youngman described an encounter he had with a Metro Transit Police officer at the Silver Spring station, during which the officer confiscated his reduced fare farecard because he didn't think that Mr. Youngman was entitled to receive a reduced fare. Mr. Youngman, who is deaf, said that he explained to the officer that he had received the card from Metro because of his disability, but that the officer would not return it to him. He told the Council that he received a citation from the officer and was told that the only way to contest it was to appear in person. Mr. Youngman asked for information on how to file a complaint against the officer who cited him.

Drew Hunter told the Council that it was an ineffective body and that instead of investigating issues, such as recent incidents involving the Metro Transit Police, it spent its time talking about itself – its meetings, its agendas, etc.

Chris Barnes thanked the Council for beginning to stream its meetings live over the internet. He also told Council members that he had concerns about the service that Metro provided on the Columbus Day and Veterans' Day holidays. He explained that his office overlooks the Red line tracks in Silver Spring, and that he observed that on Veterans' Day, Metro was only running trains every 36 minutes.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Ms. King-Adams moved approval of the agenda as presented. This motion was seconded by Mr. Ball. Without objection, the agenda was approved as presented.

IV. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Seip moved approval of the June 6, 2012 meeting minutes. This motion was seconded by Ms. King-Adams. Ms. Titus noted that there was an incomplete sentence on the seventh page of the minutes. Mr. Pasek said that he would fix that error before finalizing the minutes.

Without objection, the June 6, 2012 minutes were approved.

V. Metro Holiday Service Levels:

Dave Kubicek, Metro's Deputy General Manager of Operations, provided an overview of Metro's track maintenance program and explained that in order for Metro to return to a state of good repair, it has to conduct trackwork that involves single-tracking or shutdowns of portions of lines. He then listed the holidays when Metro didn't conduct trackwork, such as New Year's Day, Inauguration Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Mr. Kubicek also provided information on the holidays on which Metro does conduct trackwork, specifically Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day and Veterans' Day.

He noted that when Metro has to single-track trains, it often runs more eight-car trains to provide additional capacity. He also explained that Metro does outreach to let riders know when and where work will be conducted. Mr. Kubicek added that Metro is very sensitive to the issues that any disruptions can cause when it has to single-track trains because of trackwork.

Mr. Kubicek told the Council that Metro does work on holiday weekends because it is able to fit in a significant amount of work in a short period of time, which allows it to complete work more quickly. He added that if maintenance issues aren't addressed in a timely fashion, they will cause continual delays.

Jim Hamre, Director of Metro's Office of Bus Planning, provided the Council with information about how Metro schedules bus service on various holidays. He noted that in 2010, Metro reviewed all of its routes' holiday ridership to match scheduled capacity with demand and developed "Enhanced Saturday" service levels for these routes that will operate on "minor" holidays (Martin Luther King's birthday, Presidents' Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day). Mr. Hamre explained that Metro has four levels of service, which can accommodate varying levels of ridership:

- Sunday service: 130,000 riders
- Saturday service: 230,000 riders
- Saturday Enhanced service: 300,000 riders
- Regular weekday service: 450,000 riders

Mr. Hamre provided the Council with data of bus ridership on various holidays

Dr. Bracmort then opened the floor to comments from members of the public.

Kurt Raschke told Council members that he lived in Silver Spring, and noted that during the previous weekend's trackwork on the Red line, Metro used bus shuttles which were very reliable and convenient from a rider's perspective. He said that he would be interested in Metro staff addressing the breaking point between conducting single-tracking versus running shuttle buses.

Drew H. asked whether Metro is able to make adjustments to its service based on crowding. He asked if, for example, Metro experienced severe crowding during a morning rush hour, and receives several complaints, it could curtail trackwork prior to the evening rush hour.

Mr. Barnes said that Metro seems to have a double standard when it comes to Monday trackwork – he noted that Metro cancels trackwork because of sporting and other special events, but not on days when thousands of Metro riders have to get to work. He said that Metro needs to be more flexible when it conducts trackwork, such as by suspending trackwork during commuting hours on Monday holidays. He said that with headways of greater than 30 minutes, any problems create a domino effect of delays.

Dr. Bracmort then opened the floor to members of the Council to ask questions and make comments.

Ms. Wilder noted that the Metro website only shows the next couple weeks of trackwork and asked when Metro will post its list of planned trackwork for 2013. She also asked whether it would be possible for

Metro to post information about planned single-tracking on its website as well, since it currently only lists trackwork that requires total shutdowns of rail service.

Mr. Kubicek told the Council that Metro is in the process of finalizing its 2013 schedule of trackwork and should have that information in January. He noted that staff is busy planning for the presidential inauguration. He said that he can look into posting information about single-tracking events, and explained that Metro typically plans projects about two months in advance.

Ms. Walker asked whether Metro reaches out to employers to ask whether or not they will require employees to work on various holidays, or does it use historic ridership numbers to plan for holiday service. Mr. Kubicek responded that Metro does both, and that it is also trying to be more sensitive about events like neighborhood festivals when it plans trackwork.

Ms. Hermanson said that she understood the challenges of scheduling trackwork and that riders understand the need for longer wait times, but that riders were frustrated about the length of their trips. She said that if Metro provides more notice in advance, riders can make alternate plans. Mr. Kubicek said that he would welcome suggestions from the Council on how Metro can better communicate with riders. Ms. Hermanson also asked Mr. Kubicek whether Metro is able to be flexible in terms of suspending trackwork if it riders experience severe crowding or delays. Mr. Kubicek responded that the work that Metro is undertaking involves tasks such as ripping up and re-laying concrete and other activities that require a certain amount of time to restore facilities in a usable condition for service and also involves the mobilization of a large number of contractors. He explained that on Veterans' Day, Metro was unable to restore normal service for the afternoon rush hour because of the time required to return the railroad to serviceable condition.

Mr. Ball said that he appreciated hearing detailed information about the kinds of work Metro is performing. He said that one of the frustrations that emerged on Veterans' Day was that people didn't understand what was involved with the trackwork was being done. He noted that riders haven't been given any kind of progress report on how far along Metro is with its trackwork and whether or not it is on schedule. He said that a report on the progress of Metro's rebuilding campaign would generate goodwill with riders.

Mr. Kitchen said that he appreciated all the detail provided by Mr. Hamre about holiday bus service and said that he hasn't received any complaints about holiday bus service. He said that regarding rail trackwork, riders' patience has run out. He noted that riders have been very patient and tolerant regarding Metro trackwork and weekend shutdowns, but that it has come to the point where Metro needs to come up with a better plan to serve riders on these holidays. He noted that many of the riders who have to work on holidays are those who can least afford the delays or inconvenience caused by the trackwork.

Dr. Bracmort said that she finds the bus ridership data provided fascinating and asked whether Metro's Media Relations department could announce details about the bus service that Metro will be running on holidays in addition to providing information about rail service. Mr. Hamre noted that buses often provide parallel service to the rail system and advised riders to plan alternate routes, including bus routes that could get them to work.

Mr. Seip asked Mr. Kubicek whether Metro runs as much service as possible when it conducts trackwork. Mr. Kubicek responded that when conducting trackwork, Metro runs as many trains as it is able to without causing congestion on the rail system. He said that he didn't want to get trains stuck in tunnels waiting for other trains to clear and that running additional trains on Veterans' Day would have resulted in equipment being backed up throughout the rail system.

Mr. Seip followed up by asking whether Metro would be interested in or willing to run shuttles instead of single-tracking trains. Mr. Kubicek said that running shuttles becomes more complex in system's core in and around downtown Washington and that Metrobus is limited in terms of its capacity to provide shuttles and also must consider the cost of running shuttles. Mr. Hamre added that Metro riders are creatures of habit and they won't necessarily change their travel patterns, even if it would mean a faster trip. He explained that previously, Metro had tried running supplemental bus service on regularly-schedule routes to provide alternatives to portions of the Metrorail system that were undergoing trackwork. He said that riders didn't take advantage of that service – instead they stayed on the train because that was what they were used to.

Ms. Silva noted that if Metro is already performing shutdowns every weekend, it may need to consider "minor" holidays off-limits to trackwork and instead just conduct work on the Saturday and Sunday of those holiday weekends.

Ms. King-Adams noted that holiday trackwork disproportionately inconveniences lower-income employees and those that are considered "essential personnel" since these individuals are more likely to have to work on these holidays. She asked whether it would be feasible to provide service levels during rush hours on these holidays that more closely resembled regular weekday service.

Mr. Kubicek told the Council that he would really welcome suggestions on additional ways for Metro let riders know about service disruptions, especially those that Metro doesn't currently use. He said that Metro already uses in-station banners, signs, murals, announcements, postings on social media and the website, MetroAlerts, call center recordings, on-site personnel, media alerts, and newspaper and radio ads to let people know about trackwork. He said that he would be open to ideas on how to enhance its communication efforts.

Ms. King-Adams asked whether Metro can put information on buses about weekend trackwork. Mr. Hamre said Metro does do signage and announcements on buses when it runs special holiday service. He added that because trackwork occurs every weekend, the signs would need to be continually replaced and updated and that riders would likely not pay attention to the signs because they would always be present in some form. He told Ms. King-Adams that he would be interested in any suggestions on how to keep the message fresh for customers.

Mr. Farrell asked for information on the upcoming weekend's bus bridge that was planned as part of weekend trackwork on the Red line. Mr. Hamre said that Metro will be providing alternate bus service from Fort Totten to Glenmont over the coming weekend and would use up to 70 buses to transport riders in lieu of rail service.

Ms. Walsh said that if Metro wanted riders to use alternative service, it needs to do a better job telling riders about that service, including providing clear information at affected stations about alternative service. She said that many rail riders don't know about the availability of alternative bus service.

Ms. Walsh also asked how many more years Metro will be conducting trackwork on weekends. Mr. Kubicek said that Metro is currently addressing a backlog of maintenance work and that it would be a couple more years while Metro works through that backlog. He said that Metro is evaluating the level of work that it is conducting and also noted that Metro has been able to improve its productivity in terms of the amount of work it's able to conduct in a set amount of time. He added that there should be a point within the next couple of years where trackwork levels will be more manageable and sustainable.

Ms. Walsh then asked whether Metro always needed the third day of a three-day weekend to conduct trackwork. Mr. Kubicek said that Metro evaluates the work that it needs to accomplish when scheduling work; he noted that Metro had cut down significantly on mid-day trackwork because it wasn't providing a sufficient return on investment compared with the amount of inconvenience it was causing riders. He added that Metro will look at scaling back track work on holidays when ridership is higher. Mr. Hamre suggested that the Council could provide feedback on the tradeoffs of Metro conducting its track work differently, such as shutting down service earlier on Friday evenings to allow for normal service to resume on Monday mornings.

Ms. Titus asked about communication with deaf and hard of hearing riders, specifically whether it was possible to sync the verbal announcements in Metro stations with what appears on the electronic message boards. Mr. Hamre noted that Metro has installed LCD screens on station managers' kiosks that will be providing information about service status and other announcements. Mr. Kubicek added that there will be new passenger information features in the

7000-series railcars that Metro has on order. Mr. Hamre also encouraged riders to sign up for MetroAlerts to get information about service disruptions and changes.

Mr. Kitchen noted that the Inauguration would alter the 2013 holiday schedule for many people and noted that his school won't observe Veterans' Day. He said that Metro needs to take this into account when planning service and trackwork on "minor" holidays.

Mr. Kubicek told the Council that he considers the Inauguration a five-day event, and that Metro will run regular service on the Saturday and Sunday prior to the Inauguration, with the possibility of running extra service on those days, and will provide significant extra service on Inauguration Day Monday. He explained that there will be no trackwork scheduled for that weekend. Mr. Hamre added that Metrobus will be running full weekday service on Inaugural Monday.

Dr. Bracmort thanked Mr. Kubicek and Mr. Hamre for their presentations and said that the Council would look forward to following up with them regarding the questions they had asked.

#### VI. Momentum – Metro Strategic Plan:

Jennifer Green from Metro's Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing Planning and Tom Harrington, Director of Metro's Office of Long Range Planning provided the Council with an overview of Metro's strategic plan, Momentum. They provided an overview of Metro's role in the region's economy and the challenges that Metro will face in responding to future regional growth. Ms. Green and Mr. Harrington asked members of the Council for their input on:

- What ideal (future) bus and rail rides should look like?
- Which communities are most in need of enhanced Metro connectivity?
- How will adequate funding be identified to sustain and grow Metro, and what form will that funding take?

Mr. Barnes said that communicating with customers and asking for their input is vital and noted the shortcomings of the *MetroForward* and *Rush+* campaigns. He said that Metro needs to get buy-in from the community to help develop its outreach.

Ms. Titus said that it is good for Metro to look at making improvements, and asked how it will communicate with the public regarding these improvements. Ms. Green explained that Metro launched *Momentum* in September and, since then, has spoken with 25 groups consisting of around 500 people and is compiling their input to develop a strategic plan. She said that developing this plan is an ongoing conversation and that Metro needs to get buy-in from stakeholders once the plan is developed.

Ms. Walsh asked how the strategic planning effort fits in with the work that other departments are undertaking to improve Metro and how information from those departments is being incorporated into the plan. Mr. Harrington said that there is a component of allowing departments and employees to provide input. He added that the questions Metro is asking to help develop its strategic plan are focused on what Metro should look like in the future. He said that Metro recognizes that Metro has to build on the rebuilding process it is undertaking through *MetroForward*.

Mr. Farrell said that for Metro to get the long-range funding it needs to maintain and grow its system, it must help the region recognize the critical role Metro plays in regional mobility.

Mr. Seip said that finding a solution for the Blue line needs to be a priority, more than expanding the system further out.

Dr. Bracmort said that the communities on the outer edges of the District of Columbia, such as Wards 5, 7 and 8 are most in need of enhanced Metro connections. She added that individuals in those neighborhoods are willing to ride buses, but they want those buses to be fast and reliable. She also said that the region should look at the possibility of ferries to help link communities and also expressed support for underground pedestrian tunnels to connect its stations.

Mr. Wright noted that downtown D.C. is becoming a strong regional destination and asked whether the strategic plan was based on downtown D.C. being the region's core. He also asked about plans for extensions to outlying areas of the region. Mr. Harrington said that Metro relies on regional growth forecasts and that all parts of the region – the core and the inner and outer suburbs are all growing. He said that Metro is looking at areas where Metro can get the highest transit use, which is generally closer to the center of the region. He said that Metro is looking at the cost-effectiveness of various extensions and trying to find a balance between expansion in the core versus expansion further out.

Mr. Kitchen said that he really liked the idea of underground pedestrian links between stations. He also asked for Metro's timeline on getting input for the strategic plan. Ms. Green said that Metro hoped to have a draft strategic plan by January. Mr. Kitchen suggested that Metro look at holding regional summits to get public input on multiple topics such as its budget, its strategic plan, proposed bus service changes, etc.

Mr. Ball suggested that as part of the strategic plan, Metro should build more flexibility into the existing system, such as by building additional pocket tracks. He also said that he would like to see Metro expand what the region considers its "core" by better linking certain stations. He added that Metro needs to do a better job of encouraging riders to contact their elected officials and leverage its political support.



In response to a question from Ms. Wilder Ms. Green provided information on how people can provide input on the strategic plan through its online forum.

Ms. King-Adams noted her concern for individuals east of the Anacostia River, especially students riding to and from school. She said that these people should be included in Metro's strategic planning outreach efforts.

Ms. Green reminded the Council about the upcoming forum at The Washington Post scheduled for December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Bracmort noted that there were several items still on the agenda and asked members that could to stay until 8:45 p.m. to allow the Council to conduct its business.

#### VII. Council Meeting Efficiency and Structure:

Mr. Seip explained to Council members that a working group had met to examine the issues and constraints that the Council faced in terms of conducting its business. He said that the group developed a plan that called for additional Council subcommittee meetings during the course of the month.

Mr. Seip said that he hoped to get members' feedback and guidance in advance of the Council leadership's upcoming meeting with the Board of Directors.

Ms. King-Adams said that she would be open to committing to additional meeting time for the Council. She said that there are several issues that the Council needs to address that cannot be tackled only meeting once per month.

Mr. Seip said that it is proposed to have subcommittees on a regular schedule so members can plan their attendance.

Ms. Walsh asked whether each subcommittee would have a member from each jurisdiction. Mr. Seip responded that the composition of the subcommittees wasn't discussed, but that it would make some sense to have jurisdictional balance on the subcommittees. He added that the Council needed to decide on how it would organize these subcommittees – either by mode (bus or rail) or by topic (customer service, operations, etc.)

Ms. Walsh asked how Mr. Seip's proposal differed from the Council's current practice of convening working groups on particular topics. Mr. Seip responded that the proposed committee would have standing meetings and could refer matters to the full Council for action.

Ms. Titus left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Walsh also asked how the Council's attendance policy would apply under the new meeting structure. Mr. Seip responded that the bylaws were written under the current meeting structure, so individuals who only attended one meeting per month would still meet the attendance requirements.

Mr. Kitchen said that he had similar concerns to the ones that Ms. Walsh raised but that the Council needs to look at additional meetings. He said that he didn't feel like the Council was providing the kind of service that members had hoped to provide when they joined the group. In response to Ms. Walsh's question about working groups, Mr. Kitchen noted that the Council has had issues with working groups – specifically that they're poorly attended and issues have to be discussed again at the general body meeting. He said that he also thought that the working groups could be included in the business of the committees.

Mr. Raschke noted that the Council used to have standing committees which met on a regular basis that had mixed levels of effectiveness. He also asked about how public participation would work at the proposed subcommittees and noted that the current working groups allow for open participation.

Mr. Seip noted that the current working groups have been conducted on an ad hoc basis and the proposed subcommittees would have a more regular meeting structure and that they would allow for public input similar to how the full Council solicits input at its meetings, though that issue could be revisited.

Mr. Barnes asked whether the Council had considered setting up a committee structure that mirrors the Board's. Mr. Seip responded that mirroring the Board's committee structure was discussed, but the Board and the Council don't always look at the same issues.

Mr. Sheehan noted that the Accessibility Advisory Committee's subcommittees have workplans and these plans go to the full Committee.

Mr. Seip moved to establish second and third monthly Council meetings to be set aside for Council subcommittees and to develop the timing, topics and membership for these committees over the next month. This motion was seconded by Mr. Kitchen.

*In favor:* Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Seip, Ms. Silva, Mr. Wright, Mr. Ball, Mr. DeBernardo, Mr. Farrell, Ms. Hermanson, Ms. King-Adams, Mr. Kitchen, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Walker, Ms. Wilder

*Opposed:* Ms. Walsh

This motion was approved.

VIII. 2012 Riders' Council Recap:

Dr. Bracmort drew members' attention to the listing of topics that the Council had worked on in 2012 that was contained in their packets. She thanked members for the hard work and contributions and said that she wanted members to know what the Council accomplished over the past year. She noted that this list would be shared with the Board and asked that if members had any additional or corrections, to send those to Mr. Pasek.

IX. January 2013 Council Meeting:

Mr. Kitchen moved to change the date of the January Council meeting to Wednesday, January 9, 2013. This motion was seconded by Mr. Ball.

Without objection, this motion was approved, with Mr. Farrell abstaining.

X. Council Elections:

Dr. Bracmort provided members with a brief overview of Council elections, which are scheduled for the January meeting.

Mr. Pasek noted that there would be several new members appointed to the Council at the Board's December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

XI. Open Mic/Community Meeting:

Dr. Bracmort told members that she, along with Mr. Kitchen and Ms. Walker, attended the DC Council Public Roundtable the previous Monday on the proposed discontinuance of W6 /W8 evening service and said that she thought it was a very productive meeting.

Mr. Ball noted that he attended the Mobility Lab's "Transit Hack Day" where he created a real-time arrival screen. He told members to contact him or Mr. Raschke if they had any questions.

Mr. Ball also asked members to review the draft Airports Accessibility Working Group report that he had circulated previously and noted that it would be on the agenda for the January Council meeting.

Ms. Hermanson told the Council that she attended one of the rescheduled bus service public hearings in Fairfax County and that she was very impressed by the level of attentiveness and professionalism of the Metro staff in attendance.

Ms. King-Adams thanked Dr. Bracmort for her service on the Council.

Without objection, Dr. Bracmort adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.