Riders' Advisory Council
September 2, 2026

Members Present:
William Way, Chair, Virginia
Lucas Habosky, Vice Chair/District of Columbia
Solomon Chen, Virginia
Eli Craveiro Frankel, At-Large/District of Columbia
Brian Meyer, Virginia
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/AAC Representative
Thomas Shepard, At-Large/District of Columbia
Cole Staudt, District of Columbia
Irene Stephens, District of Columbia
Hendeke Tafesse, Virginia

Metro Staff Present:
Juwahn Lee, Service Director, Bus Transportation
Al Himes, Director, Bus Planning and Scheduling
John Pasek, Deputy Board Secretary
José Reyes, Board Program Manager
Spring Worth, Alternate Director/Board Liaison to the Riders' Advisory Council, Metro Board of Directors

Other Individuals Present:
Jake Goodman, Board Member, Action Committee for Transit
Mike Larkin, Vice President, Action Committee for Transit

Call to Order:
Mr. Way called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:
The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes:
The minutes of the July 1, 2026 Riders' Advisory Council were approved as presented.

Public Comment:
Mr. Pasek noted that the Council received two comments via email. He explained that the first email was from Lyric Swift, a journalism student at Howard University who was looking to interview a member for a class assignment on Metro system reliability, and if any members wanted to talk with Ms. Swift for her assignment to please let him know. He then read the second email from Nick Ashley, a Navy Yard resident who said that Metro needs to do a better job connecting the Navy Yard, Potomac Avenue and H Street via transit. He said that the

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current bus network doesn't connect Ward 6 as a connected community and that Metro should establish frequent, direct transit between Navy Yard, Potomac Avenue, H Street, Union Station and the RFK Campus that operates throughout the day, evening and weekends. Mr. Ashley noted that Metro should work with DDOT to address bus lane violations, provide real-time bus information and passenger amenities. He asked that the Council address this during the "Bus Service Update" presentation at the meeting.

Cal Simone raised concerns about buses on the C83 route leaving the Friendship Heights terminal early, which is making it difficult for people transferring from Metro Rail to catch their bus. Mr. Lee said that staff would investigate this report and respond back through Mr. Pasek. Mr. Simone also noted that Chevy Chase Day is coming up on September 19th and the Friends of Bus Transit will have a table at the event with WMATA staff to discuss bus service.

Mr. Goodman asked about the current Maryland vacancies on the RAC and noted that he had applied. He asked about the timeline for when those vacancies would be filled and noted that he had submitted an application. Mr. Pasek said that the vacancies would likely be filled in October and, in response to a comment from Mr. Goodman, he said that Mr. Goodman's being on the Action Committee for Transit (ACT) board would not prohibit his service on the RAC.

In response to a question from Mr. Simone, Mr. Pasek explained that the RAC currently had two vacancies for Maryland members and one for a high school student. He noted that half of the members' terms would expire in December and that the Board would also be making appointments/reappointments at that time.

Action Committee for Transit:
Chair Way introduced Mike Larkin, the Vice President of ACT, and Jake Goodman, ACT Board member and provided background information about ACT, noting that part of the RAC's mission is to seek riders' views. Chair Way said that ACT began in 1986 to push for the creation of the Purple Line and also advocates for bike and pedestrian safety, frequent and reliable bus service, transit-oriented development and expanded MARC train service.

Mr. Larkin explained that ACT was an initial advocate for the Purple Line, which will connect New Carrollton and Bethesda and, while not operated by Metro, will connect with and be integrated with Metro service. He said that, now that the Purple Line is being built, ACT is focusing on ensuring construction of sidewalks to connect neighborhoods with the Purple Line and to advocate for land use near Purple Line stations that takes advantage of the transit service. Mr. Larkin said that ACT is also interested in coordination of bus service between Montgomery County RideOn and Metro Bus as well as advocating for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service on corridors within Montgomery County.

Mr. Larkin added that ACT wants to make sure that the word gets out about Metro Lift fare program for low-income individuals. He said that ACT thinks there's a lack of awareness of this program. He also noted that Metro Lift requires SNAP enrollment for verification and

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noted that Capital Bikeshare allows people to use other methods to enroll, such as Medicaid enrollment or veterans discounts. He then turned the floor over to Mr. Goodman.

Mr. Goodman said that ACT is also looking at how to improve bus service in Montgomery County, and added that Metro needs to evaluate how to make bus stops more accessible. Mr. Sheehan noted that the Accessibility Advisory Committee would be interested in getting a briefing on the accessibility features of the Purple Line.

Mr. Goodman also shared concerns raised by ACT members regarding this summer's Red Line shutdown. He said that he applauded Metro for the improvements it had made in shuttle service since it began in early July but raised concerns about using coach buses as shuttles since they only have one entrance/exit, have wider turning radii than transit buses and are not as accessible for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Goodman noted that the bus lanes put into place for the shutdown were often blocked by delivery vehicles and some stations needed clearer signage directing riders to shuttles. He said that, overall, the bus lanes were fairly effective and that ACT encouraged Metro to work with the Maryland State Highway Administration and Montgomery County to make these bus lanes permanent.

Mr. Goodman also reiterated the concerns Mr. Larkin raised about Metro Lift eligibility relying solely on SNAP enrollment.

Ms. Stephens shared her experience enrolling in Metro Lift and suggested that Metro could do more outreach and enrollment at social service offices and community events. Mr. Goodman added that Metro should also do more outreach for its half-fare program for individuals with disabilities.

Mr. Larkin said that there needs to be a more formalized process for Metro Lift enrollment and coordination with SNAP enrollment. Mr. Craveiro Frankel suggested that Metro Lift cards should be issued in conjunction with SNAP benefits cards to simplify the process for enrollees. He said that he appreciated the group's advocacy on this issue.

Metro Bus Update:
Al Himes, the Director of Bus Service Planning and Scheduling and Juwahn Lee, the Service Director for Bus Transportation, presented updates on Metro Bus service. Mr. Himes noted that by shifting to providing consistent, all-day frequent service, Metro has been able reduce Metro Bus unit operating costs and outlined other bus service improvements implemented in recent years.

Mr. Lee told the group that Metro is working with regional partners on projects such as bus priority treatments, transit signal priority and Clear Lanes to improve reliability and speed and implemented headway management on Route C53 to provide more consistent service. He added that Metro is also working to update its bus garages and fleet; making improvements to bus stops and customer information, including real-time customer information; and updating fare payment options, including allowing direct payment by

contactless credit/debit cards. Mr. Lee also provided information about technology improvements and investments in Metro's workforce to provide better service.

Mr. Himes explained that the redesigned Metro Bus network provides more consistent and frequent service along several routes, allowing riders to be able to reach 20,000 more jobs within 60 minutes as compared to before the network redesign. He provided examples of specific route adjustments (A58, D74, P60) that provide new, direct connections. He added that Metro has increased the number of routes that provide frequent service (every 12 or 20 minutes) and that these routes have seen disproportionate increases in ridership. Mr. Himes noted that Metro has shifted its schedules to deliver more service during middays and evenings and on the weekends.

Mr. Lee explained some of the efforts that Metro is taking to improve reliability, including improving run-time reliability, which results in more buses running on-time, and reducing crowding. He noted that Metro continues to experience issues with operator reliability, which results in missed trips and that missed trips have a disproportionate impact on customer satisfaction. He said that Metro is increasing new operator class sizes and hopes to be at full staffing levels in 2027, which should result in fewer missed trips.

Mr. Himes then reviewed current ridership levels and the factors impacting ridership numbers, including transfer of some bus service to other operators, federal return-to-work mandates and economic trends such as job losses and consumer sentiment. He explained that, in order to make the redesigned bus network cost-neutral, Metro had to make certain trade-offs that impact ridership. He noted that customer satisfaction remains steady and provided an overview of the factors that influence customer satisfaction. He said that Metro plans to continue to make incremental improvements to the new network within resource constraints and build to a "visionary network" that will include things such as 30-minute daytime frequency on most routes, a regionwide 24-hour bus network and new routes to emerging activity centers.

Mr. Himes reviewed next steps and said that he was happy take questions.

Mr. Larkin asked about the change in bus ridership in Montgomery County. Mr. Himes explained that the overall ridership number on Metro Bus is affected by the fact that some of the service it previously operated, such as on Viers Mill Road, is now operated by RideOn. Mr. Larkin said that the decrease in Metro Bus ridership in Montgomery County was alarming and that he and other ACT members were trying to figure out the factors behind it.

Mr. Craveiro Frankel noted that the presentation answered the questions he had about customer satisfaction and asked about how the $13 weekly bus pass would work – whether riders would opt-in or whether it would be implemented through fare capping. Mr. Lee said that it's his understanding that it's a weekly pass, and that more information would be coming out regarding the pass in the next few weeks.

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Mr. Shepard said that he had noticed bunching on the routes, including buses following directly behind one another when leaving their initial terminals, including on Route D80. Mr. Lee said that schedules are built to take traffic and other predictable issues into account, but sometimes unplanned things like accidents, construction or motorcades can cause bunching. He said that staff looks into these reports to determine the cause and any possible mitigation strategies to improve reliability. Mr. Shepard said that bus bunching is a frequent issue on the D80.

Mr. Shepard also asked if Metro has plans to get more funding from local governments for service improvements, such as increased frequency. Mr. Himes noted that additional money was provided in the FY2027 budget for service improvements in June and December 2026. He added that, while Metro wasn't able to include all of the service improvements that it wanted when it launched the new network in June 2025, the new network provides a framework to add service as additional resources become available.

Ms. Tafesse asked how Metro calculates on-time performance and whether missed trips are included in the calculation of on-time performance. Mr. Himes and Mr. Lee said that they would need to check with the team that calculates on-time performance metrics and get back to her. Ms. Tafesse said that excluding missed trips from on-time performance calculations could explain why customer satisfaction around reliability decreased despite improvements in on-time performance.

Mr. Simone noted that he consistently sees bunching on the northbound D80/D82 routes on Wisconsin Avenue. He also asked about the plan for new bus stop flags; he noted that staff had come to the RAC a year ago to ask for input on the redesigned bus stop flags but he hasn't heard anything since. Mr. Himes suggested that Mr. Pasek could follow up with the staff responsible since neither he nor Mr. Lee were leading that project. Mr. Pasek said that he would check with staff to see about opportunities for additional input from the RAC regarding the bus stop flag project.

Summer Red Line Shuttle Update:
Mr. Pasek noted that this item was on the agenda to provide members with the opportunity to share their observations about the shuttle service over the summer. Mr. Shepard noted that the some of the shuttle buses didn't always use the bus lanes that were put into place for the project, especially on the south end of the route near Friendship Heights.

Mr. Goodman discussed potential strategies to increase bus ridership in Montgomery County, including adding back some bus routes within the county while Bus Rapid Transit corridors are still under development. His suggestions included bringing back direct service between Rockville and Silver Spring that was eliminated when service along Veirs Mill Road was turned over to RideOn.

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Metro Safety and Readiness Overview:
Jayme Johnson, Metro's Chief Safety and Readiness Officer provided the Council with an overview of Metro's Safety and Readiness department and said that he'd welcome the opportunity to attend a subsequent meeting to do a deeper dive into any particular items of interest.

Mr. Johnson explained how his teams support Metro's Strategic Transformation Plan, provided an overview of the Safety and Readiness organization, and explained the roles and responsibilities of the various teams within the organization. He noted that he oversees Metro's departments of Safety, Occupational Health and Wellness, System-Wide Accessibility, Technical Training and Quality and gave brief descriptions of the functions of each department. He said that he'd be happy to take any questions or to come back and do a deeper dive into any specific topics.

Mr. Way thanked Mr. Johnson for coming and noted that, as a veteran, he recognized the importance of training. He said it might be nice for the RAC to visit the Metro Training Center; Mr. Johson said that he'd be happy to give RAC members a tour of Metro's training facilities or answer any other questions.

Outreach/Member Report Out:
Mr. Way began by thanking members for their work on RAC outreach, specifically recognizing Mr. Wu, Mr. Shepard and Mr. Craveiro Frankel for drafting an article on the RAC's Annual Report; thanking Mr. Craveiro Frankel for his outreach to the Action Committee for Transit and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; and to members who attended the session on recruitment for the next Metro Transit Police Chief.

Ms. Tafesse said that she had experienced several incidents of missed trips on Metro Bus where scheduled buses did not show up.

Ms. Stephens said that she attended the recent RFK Transit Improvements open house, along with Mr. Meyer and Ms. Worth. She said that the event was well-attended and noted that attendees raised concerns about parking and about how new transit facilities will fit into existing right-of-way. She also told the group that she posted information online about the Gold Line which generated a lot of discussion and comments and asked whether there would be additional opportunities for public input on the Gold Line.

Mr. Habosky said that he has had conversations with riders about real-time prediction accuracy, specifically discrepancies between online predictions and predictions on signage at bus stops. He suggested this may be a topic for future meeting discussion. He said he felt it would also be interested in talking with someone regarding the outreach for the Metro Lift program.

Director Worth said that she appreciated seeing members at the RFK transit event and appreciated all of the good information that was shared during this evening's meeting.

Adjournment:
The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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