



600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
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September 19, 2014

Chairman Tom Downs & WMATA Board Members

This report includes highlights from the Riders' Advisory Council's (RAC) August monthly meeting, Committee meetings and other significant actions in September.

Maryland WMATA Board Directors and RAC Members Met

Karen Lynch, Vice Chair (MD) and other Maryland RAC members met with Maryland's WMATA Board members at a meeting hosted by Michael Goldman on September 9th. A summary report pertaining to that meeting is attached.

RAC Membership Update

We welcomed new appointees Pablo Destefanis (DC) and Deborah MacKenzie (At-Large) to our September meeting. We decided to make it easier to get to know each other and with the public by informal meet and greet for 30 minutes before the meeting. We have developed a template to facilitate collection and dissemination of short bios of all members.

Meeting With Public on Impact of Silver Line Opening On Blue Line Riders Update

Lynn Bowersox, Assistant General Manager, Department of Customer Service, Communications and Marketing, will be meeting with the group, *Save the Blue Line* and Virginia members of the RAC on September 24th to have further discussion about their concerns. (This group presented their concerns at the August and September RAC meetings and had been in touch with WMATA staff.)

RAC Resolution of Mid-City North/South Corridors

The RAC unanimously approved a resolution that was researched and drafted by its PPP Committee, urging action to work with the DC Department of Transportation and other stakeholders to take short and mid-range steps to further improve bus service in three corridors: Georgia Avenue, 14th Street and 16th Street, NW. A special thank you is given to Matt Brown, WMATA Alternate Director, DC, for facilitating the access to DDOT and to Jim Hamre, Director, Office of Bus Planning, WMATA, for facilitating our work.

A copy of the resolution was forwarded to you on September 12, 2014.

RAC Comments on WMATA Proposed Signage Concept

The RAC unanimously approved a formal summary of its position on the proposed signage concept being developed by WMATA. The position paper was researched and drafted by the RAC Customer Service Committee.

A copy of the position paper was sent to you on September 12, 2014.

Maturation of Committee Work Concepts

We seem to be settling into the concept of doing work in Committees and presenting the work to the full RAC for approval. The Bus Resolution and the Signage Concept join the work by the Budget and

Finance Committee on the Fiscal Year 2014 Fare Changes and the work by the Governance Committee as tangible deliverables.

WMATA Presentation on New Electronic Payment Project

Mr. Tom Randall, Director, New Electronic Payments Project, met with the RAC and discussed and received feedback on the New Electronic Payment Project (NEPP). RAC members were most impressed by the phased in rollout and by the ability to pay for rides on Metrobus and Metrorail via a variety of media. There was some concern about privacy issues. The RAC Programs, Projects and Planning (PPP) Committee plans to meet to do further study on this initiative.

WMATA Presentation on Customer Care

Lynn Bowersox, Assistant General Manager, Department of Customer Service, Communications and Marketing met with the RAC and discussed and received feedback on WMATA's Customer Care Plan. She acknowledged the role of the RAC's Customer Pledge as an important impetus for this initiative. RAC members were enthusiastic about the involvement of employees, the concept of "Metro University," the holistic approach to station and bus stop effectiveness and the involvement of the public in the rollout. We look forward to hearing about the successes of this new initiative as it progresses.

Other RAC Highlights

RAC members are attending the bus hearings scheduled from September 15th through October 2nd. The RAC Customer Service and PPP Committees, as well as the Leadership Team met since the August meeting. We look forward to a session on Leadership and Parliamentary Procedure at our October 1st RAC meeting. [Sarah Merkle](#), JD, is one of only 30 people to be both a certified Professional Parliamentarian and Professional Registered Parliamentarian. Some RAC members have participated in her webinars hosted by the American Public Transportation Association. She makes the topic interesting—for novices and those who already know a lot--or think they do! You/your staffs are invited.

Sincerely,

Carol Carter Walker, Chair
Riders' Advisory Council

Enclosures

cc: RAC Members

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September 12, 2014

Dear Chairman Downs & WMATA Board Members:

Enclosed are two documents from the Riders' Advisory Council.

The first is a resolution on the Mid-City North/South Bus Corridors. We want to express our appreciation to Matt Brown, WMATA Board Alternate Director, District of Columbia, and Acting Director, District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), for facilitating a presentation by Sam Zimbabwe, Associate Director of Planning, Projects and Sustainability Administration, DDOT, on bus improvements on 16th Street NW and elsewhere in the City. His presentation, as well as an earlier one by Jim Hamre, Director of Bus Planning, WMATA, informed our work on the resolution

The second is a summary of the RAC's comments on the concepts for signage changes proposed throughout the Metro system. Proposal presentations were given to the RAC and to a joint meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee and the RAC by Michael McBride, Manager of Public Art and Environmental Graphic Design, WMATA. These comments have already been shared with Mr. McBride. We are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to provide early input into this far-reaching proposal.

If you have questions about either the resolution or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

/s/

Carol Carter Walker, Chair
Riders' Advisory Council

Enclosures

cc: Riders' Advisory Council

Barbara Richardson, Chief of Staff

Lynn Bowersox, Assistant General Manager, Customer Service, Communications and Marketing

Jack Requa, Assistant General Manager, Department of Bus Services

Jim Hamre, Director of Bus Planning

Michael McBride, Manager of Public Art and Environmental Graphic Design

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SUBJECT: MID-CITY NORTH/SOUTH BUS CORRIDORS

RESOLUTION
OF THE
RIDERS' ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA)

WHEREAS, the Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) is responsible for advising the WMATA Board on issues that will facilitate WMATA's goal of providing the best service to all of its customers; and

WHEREAS, the RAC affirms its strong support for bus transportation as a flexible solution to the region's transit needs; and

WHEREAS, the RAC recognizes the growing capacity issues in the mid-city north-south corridors, including the S series buses (16th St NW), the 50 series buses (14th St NW), the 60 series buses (11th St NW), and the 70 series buses (Georgia Avenue/7th St NW); and

WHEREAS, the RAC notes that over 20% of District riders ride buses in these corridors daily and that three of the top six bus lines by ridership are in these corridors; and

WHEREAS, the RAC is concerned that population growth in these corridors will increase congestion in the future; and

WHEREAS, the RAC sees the pressing need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to transportation in these corridors; understands that the complications of changing infrastructure and competing urban development goals make comprehensive solutions difficult; and

WHEREAS, the RAC is concerned that lack of coordination and action on the part of relevant jurisdictions and agencies is leaving riders feeling frustrated and poorly served; and

WHEREAS, the RAC appreciates the mitigation efforts WMATA has taken so far to alleviate congestion on some of these corridors; yet recognizes that these efforts to alleviate congestion are not a long-term solution to the issues of congestion and schedule unreliability; and

WHEREAS, the RAC believes that the mid-city north-south corridors are likely to be the first of many cases where WMATA and the jurisdictions will have to work together to alleviate congestion by significantly upgrading bus services towards the establishment of Bus Rapid Transit services; and

WHEREAS, the RAC recognizes the urgent need for forward movement by all relevant agencies and jurisdictions; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the RAC urges WMATA to coordinate with the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) to implement further mitigating measures now in order to relieve

congestion on the mid-city north-south bus routes, to include shorter-term operational improvements involving signal timing, additional larger buses, staggered bus stops, movement of bus stops past intersections; expanded rush-hour restrictions on parking, full scale signal optimization, and transit signal priority; and be it

RESOLVED, that the RAC encourages WMATA to diffuse passenger demand through promotion and enhancement of alternative bus routes, enhancement of bus service on parallel or complementary routes (14th St., 11th St., and Georgia Avenue lines); and be it

RESOLVED, that the RAC urges WMATA to assist DDOT in undertaking the long-awaited Transit Priority Study of 16th St., NW without further delay, advancing longer-term capital improvements towards establishing Bus Rapid Transit services, to begin with the evaluation, and if feasible, implementation of dedicated lanes for buses during peak hours; and be it

RESOLVED, that the RAC asks the WMATA Board to ensure the allocation of necessary capital and operational resources to implement improvements through creation of a forward-looking, fully budgeted strategy document which proposes integrated short and long term bus solutions for the mid-city north-south corridors; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the RAC encourages WMATA to work with its jurisdictional partners, including the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), to establish a results-oriented working group to establish joint accountability and maintain productive communication on transportation in these vital corridors.

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WMATA Riders Advisory Council Signage Presentation Feedback

Drafted by Customer Service Committee
August 2014

Overview: In July 2014, Michael McBride, Manager of Public Art and Environmental Graphic Design for WMATA, presented the Riders' Advisory Council with an overview of concepts for revised station signage. He explained that these are early ideas in the process of designing and installing improved signage throughout the Metrorail system. WMATA is trying to increase standardization of its signage and prioritize the information presented to riders. Examples of existing signage and proposed concepts for new station signs were shown. (The presentation slides are available on the RAC portion of the WMATA website, under the July 9 meeting.)

Mr. McBride asked the RAC for feedback on the new signage concepts. The RAC Customer Service Committee has taken the comments gathered from the meeting and later emails, compiled and analyzed them, and are presenting some recommendations for WMATA to consider going forward. In addition, we also raise some questions which will be relevant as WMATA moves forward to finalize and approve any changes to signage.

Analysis of Feedback: Twelve RAC members actively participated in the Signage discussion. Two topics received the bulk of the comments:

- The proposed move to utilize "Cardinal Directions" for each Metro Line, based on the approximate location of each line's termini relative to each other, and
- Changes in readability and understanding of proposed new signage

Other topics that each triggered a few responses included SALs (Station Ahead List signs), ADA compliance, and Maps. Some general comments and issues for the future were also mentioned.

Cardinal Directions. Virtually all RAC members expressed serious concerns about the proposed move to cardinal directions; only two noted a positive response. Among the concerns expressed:

- People don't conceptualize the region in terms of cardinal directions
- The directions do not match the geography
- Riders tend to be destination-based, not direction-based

Signage Readability. Many RAC members mentioned positive aspects to the proposed changes. Two additionally expressed some concerns. Among the positive points, two were most often expressed:

- Use of more universal signage
- Simplification/standardization, larger print size and color contrast

Readability concerns included the use of all capital letters (e.g., with proposed Accessible Entrance signage) and the need for more spacing on and between signs.

Other Comments: Other comments were that the signage changes would not provide significant improvements for the following scenarios:

- Riders with limited English skills or impaired vision
- Riders trying to quickly understand what station they are in, which platform has the train going to their destination, and which of the multiple lines stops at which stations.

Others expressed fundamental concerns, questioning whether the benefits would be worth the expense. One suggested a preference for increased spending on station manager training instead.

Recommendations:

1. Cardinal directions: Do not use cardinal directions on any sign unless the sign includes some other description as well. It is more critical that signs include a direction widely understood, such as the name of the last station on the line, or “toward” DC, Maryland or Virginia, or “to downtown DC,” or “via” a landmark station.
2. For platforms serving 2 or more lines, consider displaying a portion of the System map instead of the parallel horizontal lines used in current and proposed SAL designs.
3. Include more Station Name signs along the platforms.
4. Make signage as clear as possible to Metro’s multiple audiences served by maximizing the use of universal signage and dual language signs for critical sign categories (e.g., emergency).
5. Improve signage readability:
 - Add space between sign text (e.g., between yellow & green line info and between days of the week for operating hours).
 - Minimize the use of upper case lettering.
6. Consider ways to supplement signage space limitations by including multiple reference points in arriving train announcements (direction, landmark stations, terminus station, state, etc.).
7. Research signage of other rail systems (if not done already).
8. As always, look for ways to maximize the benefit of new signage at minimal cost. Suggestions include:
 - Pilot options prior to broader adoption.
 - Limit replacements to when/where there is a compelling need, such as station additions and terminus changes.
 - Use modular sign components, to make updates more quickly and inexpensively.

Next steps: RAC members are interested in understanding the next steps for WMATA to generate additional ideas and refine the options into a proposal for Board action. We are also interested in the timeline and decision points, as well as the response from internal WMATA reviews, so we can continue our involvement in this process. One RAC member suggested that at one level, there was too much information in the concept presentation, while at another level, there was not enough context, making more detailed input difficult at this time. We look forward to additional opportunities to learn more about both the concepts and details.

Conclusions: The RAC membership is very appreciative that WMATA is looking ahead to the next generation of signage and is seeking our input. Despite some concern that an overhaul of rail station signage would be extremely costly, we recognize that it is a significant element in WMATA’s communications to Metrorail riders. We are happy to provide our feedback on the signage proposal and look forward to further involvement as the planning continues.