

Riders' Advisory Council  
November 5, 2008

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Iacomini called the November meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:31 p.m. She asked Mr. Pasek, the staff coordinator, to call the roll.

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

Nancy Iacomini, Chairman, Arlington County  
Kelsi Bracmort, District of Columbia  
Denise Brown, Prince George's County\*  
Penelope Everline, Arlington County  
Christopher Farrell, Montgomery County  
Carol Carter Walker, District of Columbia  
Diana Zinkl, District of Columbia

\*- Arrival times for members who arrived during the meeting are noted in the meeting minutes.

The following members of the Riders' Advisory Council were not present for any portion of the meeting:

Steve Cerny, Fairfax County  
Sharon Conn, Prince George's County  
Patricia Daniels, District of Columbia  
Kenneth DeGraff, District of Columbia  
Mary Kay Dranzo, Montgomery County  
Susan Holland, Prince George's County  
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Elderly and Disabled Committee Chairman  
Evelyn Tomaszewski, Fairfax County  
Lillian White, City of Alexandria  
Robin White, Fairfax County

In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Pasek noted that the Council did not have a quorum present at this meeting.

II. Public Comment:

Malachy Kilbride, an Arlington County resident and a daily Metrorail and Metrobus rider, told the Council that he is on the board of the Washington Peace Center. He said that he came express his opposition to the bag searches which were announced by Metro. He said that he thinks that these searches are against riders' rights as outlined in the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

He said that he is asking the RAC to oppose this proposal by the Metro Transit Police. He said that public transit users shouldn't have to give up their Fourth Amendment rights to use Metro. He added that Metro's search policy is intrusive and won't work. Mr. Kilbride quoted Bruce Schneier, a security expert, who said that the searches were "a waste of resources and would likely make residents less safe overall."

Mr. Kilbride asked that the Council speak out and publicly denounce these searches. He said that he wanted the RAC to know that there are people in the Washington area who are organizing to oppose Metro's bag inspection policy.

Ms. Everline asked how Mr. Kilbride would distinguish between the Metro proposal and the searches that airline passengers undergo. He responded that he is opposed to these searches because there has been no direct threat to public transit riders and that people in the area have not been informed that there is a heightened alert. He added that there is a difference between riding public transit and traveling on an airline.

Denise Brown arrived 6:35 p.m.

Ms. Iacomini noted that this item will be on the RAC's December agenda. She said that she has been approached by many Metro riders with varying reactions to the proposal, and suggested saving further discussion on this item until the next meeting when a representative from the Metro police would be present.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Iacomini asked for approval to rearrange the agenda to move the discussion of Council Subcommittees to the beginning of the agenda, so as not to interrupt staff's presentations later on. Without objection, the agenda was approved as amended.

IV. Subcommittee Discussion:

Ms. Iacomini noted that there wasn't a quorum present for that evening's meeting and said that while that is uncommon for a full RAC meeting, it is not uncommon to not have a quorum present at a RAC subcommittee meeting. She noted that the Council requests staff to attend these meetings and make presentations on various topics and also noted that there are several holidays in November and December that may have an adverse effect on attendance. Ms. Iacomini explained that she had emailed back and forth with the Subcommittee chairs and had proposed cancelling subcommittee meetings for November and December.

Ms. Iacomini said that in her email discussion with the subcommittee chairs, suggestions had been made as to how to modify the RAC's meeting schedule to improve attendance. She said that some of the suggestions included having one meeting per month and also scheduling another activity, such as a field trip to a railyard or Metro's Operations Control Center or having two full Council meetings per month – one to receive presentations and another to develop the Council's position on issues before it. She said

that whoever becomes Council Chairman next year will need to make a decision about the RAC's meeting schedule in January.

Ms. Zinkl said that she thinks that suspending Subcommittees for November and December is fine and that for longer-term, this is a decision best left for the incoming chair. She noted that it may be useful to discuss what the subcommittees should be and said that perhaps they may function more as ad-hoc groups related to specific issues, rather than standing committees.

Ms. Iacomini noted that the Council will be suspending Subcommittees for November and December and a discussion of this issue would be an item for discussion in January.

V. Approval of September 3 and October 1 Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Iacomini explained that, without a quorum present at this meeting, the Council would be unable to vote to approve previous meeting minutes. She moved, without objection, to defer the approval of meeting minutes to the Council's next meeting.

VI. Blue Line Realignment Proposal:

Ms. Iacomini then introduced staff to who had come to discuss Metro's proposal to reroute some Blue Line trains across the Yellow Line Bridge and up to Greenbelt during rush hour period.

Bob Orr said that he is the Director of Metro's Office of Operations Planning and Support, and that he is substituting for Jim Hughes, who was unable to attend due to family issues. In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Orr said that he has worked with Mr. Hughes on this proposal, though he said that he is not as knowledgeable as Mr. Hughes regarding this specific proposal.

Mr. Orr explained the reasons why Metro is proposing this realignment of service – specifically that there has been greater ridership growth at stations in the eastern portion of downtown, that there, that Metro wants to improve reliability at the Rosslyn portal and that Metro wants to use available capacity on the Yellow line bridge over the Potomac.

He then explained the benefits of the proposal, such as increased capacity to bring Virginians into downtown Washington, more reliable service on the Orange and Blue lines, direct service between Franconia-Springfield and Greenbelt which does not currently exist. He then reviewed ridership numbers from stations in downtown Washington, which showed that, between 2002 and 2007, there was a 15% increase in ridership at stations in the eastern portion of downtown, while stations serving the western portion of downtown saw a 5% increase over the same period.

Mr. Orr then reviewed the ridership numbers for Blue line trains traveling between Rosslyn and Foggy Bottom and for Yellow line trains traveling between the Pentagon and L'Enfant Plaza. This showed a 4% decrease in passengers on Blue line trains from

2002 to 2007 and a 13% increase in passengers on Yellow line trains from 2002 to 2007. He clarified for Ms. Iacomini that the numbers shown in his presentation were actual passenger counts, not faregate data.

Mr. Orr then explained the operating details of the proposal: some Blue line trains would travel over the Yellow line bridge and then up to Greenbelt and additional Orange line trains would run from West Falls Church to downtown in the slots vacated by the rerouted Blue line trains. He showed the Council a map of the proposed service patterns.

He then reviewed the pros and cons of the proposal. He noted that this would reduce travel time for 17,000 riders, while 13,000 riders would have their travel time increased. Mr. Orr then turned the presentation over to Donna Murray.

Ms. Murray introduced herself and told members that she is Metro's Manager of Customer Research. She said that, when this proposal was first suggested, Metro's Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee (JCC) suggested that Metro do research on how to best communicate this proposed change to its customers. She said that Metro contracted with a professional research firm who went out and surveyed customers. She said that a total of 446 interviews were conducted as part of this research, and that passengers were interviewed during a.m. and p.m. peak hours between May 15<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup>. She listed the stations where passengers were interviewed – stations on the northern end of the Green line (Greenbelt, College Park, Prince George's Plaza and West Hyattsville) and the southern end of the Blue/Yellow lines (Braddock Road, King Street, Eisenhower Avenue, Huntington, Van Dorn Street and Franconia-Springfield).

She reported that, overall, the research showed that riders potentially affected by this service realignment were favorable towards the proposal, even though the majority of riders were unaware of the proposal. Ms. Murray noted that, specifically, less than one in five riders (17%) were aware of the proposal. She noted that, among those aware of the proposal, 61% thought that it was a good idea.

Ms. Murray reported that more riders along the northern portion of the Green line were favorably inclined to the new service (78%) versus riders along the southern portion of the Blue/Yellow lines (54%). She explained that this makes sense because riders along the northern portion of the Green line would see increased service, including new service from Greenbelt to Franconia-Springfield. She also showed findings from the customer research indicating that customers were more likely to think that the proposed service would offer more service availability, allow for a more direct route, take less time or require fewer transfers.

Ms. Murray also explained that customers' response to the proposed map was largely positive. She added that the research also asked customers how they determine which train to board when waiting at a station. She said that the research showed that 69% of riders use the PIDS displays to determine which train will next arrive at the station. She added that 69% of passengers also look at the destination signs displayed on the exterior of the train.

Ms. Murray then reviewed the key findings of the customer survey, specifically that there are advantages and disadvantages to the proposal, but that more riders would be advantaged by the proposal than would be disadvantaged. She noted that the survey found that, should the proposed realignment of service move forward, communication and signage are key elements in terms of customer acceptance. She said that the research found that the new service should have its own color/line designation, that comprehensive signage packs must be installed in all stations and that a region-wide customer information program must be developed and deployed to inform the public about the change. She then turned the presentation back over to Mr. Orr.

Mr. Orr described the next steps for the proposal – to share Metro’s findings with the RAC, the JCC and other interested groups, and to prepare to present the proposal to the Metro Board in early 2009. He explained that presenting this proposal to the Metro Board would require the development of a detailed cost estimate for signage improvements, the creation of a customer communication plan, and the development of plans for express bus service to supplement the rail service. Mr. Orr said that he would take questions on the presentation.

Dr. Bracmort said that she had some concern about the impact to passengers from Maryland specifically those from Largo and Greenbelt. She also suggested that Metro limit the amount of money that it spend on signage since this change may only be temporary, especially since there will be additional service changes when the Silver line to Dulles Airport begins operation. Dr. Bracmort added that she was not convinced that this change in service was justified for the net 4000 passengers that would ultimately benefit (17,000 passengers with reduced travel times vs. 13,000 passengers with increased travel times).

Mr. Orr said that this proposal would increase service to Greenbelt, along with providing a direct ride between Greenbelt and National Airport. He explained that, in order to maintain the same level of service to Largo, some Orange line trains would be diverted to Largo, as opposed to going to New Carrollton.

In response to Dr. Bracmort’s question about whether or not this would be implemented on a trial basis – he said that the final decision on that matter rests with Metro’s Board of Directors. He added that he hoped to get sufficient information to the Board for them to make a final decision on the matter, though it would certainly be an option for them to implement the service on a trial basis. Mr. Orr said that, even a trial service change would require money to be spent on signage changes.

Responding to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Mr. Orr said that Metro is refining its numbers on how many passengers would be advantaged/disadvantaged by this proposal. He added that Metro is only able to operate so many trains through each portal. He said that, in 2013 when the first phase of Silver line opens, those trains will have to travel through the Rosslyn portal, so at that point, if not before, some Blue line trains will have to be diverted. He added that there are also other ways to increase capacity, such as

running more eight-car trains but by 2013 some kind of decision will need to be made to address capacity issues at the Rosslyn portal.

Dr. Bracmort asked Mr. Orr to clarify whether or not the Green and Red lines would be affected by this proposal. He said that the northern portion of the Green line (from L'Enfant Plaza north) would receive additional service, and that there would be no change in service on the Red line.

Ms. Iacomini noted that she had been asked why Metro is proposing this change now – is it to get a head start on capacity issues that will occur with the opening of the Silver line, is it because of projected growth and development, or other specific issues. Mr. Orr said that the impetus for making this change now is because Metro is beginning to experience extremely high ridership on the Orange line and the only way to increase capacity is to run more or longer trains.

Ms. Iacomini asked whether Metro would fully implement the revised service from the beginning or if it had the option of phasing in the new service by rerouting less trains per hour at the outset. Mr. Orr said that Metro is currently looking at rerouting between three and five trains per hour, though this number may be refined as the proposal is finalized.

Ms. Brown asked about the extended Yellow line service during off-peak hours and if any survey had been done on whether or not passengers approved of this change. Ms. Murray said that Metro's Rail Passenger survey showed increased ridership at the stations served by the off-peak Yellow line extension. Ms. Brown suggested that Metro extend the Yellow line to Greenbelt at all times. Mr. Orr noted that Metro has looked into extending the Yellow line and found that it would be very costly. Ms. Murray clarified that the expense would be incurred because it would mean operating additional service, all day, every day, which would not be the case with rerouting existing Blue line trains during peak periods.

Dr. Bracmort asked if Metro could extend the Yellow line during peak periods all the way to Greenbelt. Ms. Murray said that this would be an all-day extension of the Yellow line, since it is already extended to Fort Totten off-peak, and would raise the issues previously described. She noted that extending the Yellow line would not do anything to alleviate congestion at the Rosslyn portal. She added that the extension of the Yellow line to Fort Totten was put in place to give riders from Fort Totten south additional options to get downtown. In response to a comment from Dr. Bracmort, Ms. Murray said that the goals of proposal are to provide additional service from Virginia points south of the Pentagon to the eastern part of downtown, where this is ridership growth, and to reduce congestion at the Rosslyn portal.

Ms. Everline asked if anyone from Metro had talked with the Arlington Transit Advisory Council (TAC) about this proposal. She noted that opinion from Arlington County would likely be split on the proposal, since some County residents would be advantaged by the proposal and some would be disadvantaged by the proposal. Ms. Murray said that Mr. Hughes attended that meeting but, since he wasn't here this evening, he couldn't give an

update on the proceedings. Ms. Everline noted that there was a member of the TAC in attendance at the meeting and he might be able to provide a summary of the meeting. Ms. Iacomini said that she was concerned about opening up the discussion on this topic but that she had the minutes from that meeting. Ms. Iacomini then proceeded to read an excerpt from those minutes relating to this item and added that it appeared that the TAC only received a briefing and still needed to have a more fulsome discussion on the proposal. She added that she had a list of questions given to her by Mr. Antonelli, the gentleman in attendance, and would address those later in the meeting. Mr. Orr said that he could check with Mr. Hughes to get a recap of the TAC meeting.

Ms. Everline then asked if there would be any signage issues involved in running Orange line trains to Largo, as proposed, since they would essentially be turning into Blue line trains enroute. Ms. Murray said that the destination sign would read “Largo” as soon as it left its original terminal, but the color of the signage could be changed after the train passes through downtown Washington, if necessary. Mr. Orr said that there would need to be some change of signage to identify these trains, and that would be part of the new signage associated with this proposal. Mr. Orr added that a decision would still need to be made on whether or not these would be considered Orange or Blue line trains.

Ms. Zinkl asked if Metro had conducted any qualitative research, such as public meetings or listening sessions in addition to the quantitative research conducted through the rider survey. Ms. Murray said that she is not planning on conducting any qualitative research because it provides data that is much less clear and more open to interpretation. She said that meeting with various stakeholder groups such as the Arlington County TAC, the Riders’ Advisory Council and the Jurisdictional Coordinating Council (JCC) could be considered qualitative actions.

Ms. Zinkl said that she thinks that qualitative data-gathering can be beneficial. She added that such data gathering, in the form of meetings with affected riders, could help Metro determine what kind of options it can offer to reduce the impacts on negatively-affected riders, such as how to best structure replacement bus service for these riders. She said that there are probably some options for bus service that could be explored as part of public meetings or sessions.

Ms. Murray said that she isn’t clear what kind of public meeting requirements, if any Metro would face if it implements this service change. Mr. Orr noted that this is something that Metro should consider as part of the process. Ms. Zinkl said that even if the public meetings were not “required” per se, it may still be a good idea for Metro to hold meetings for public relations purposes. She also suggested holding these meetings as “joint ventures” with other stakeholder groups, such as Arlington County. Ms. Murray clarified her earlier statement that while she had not planned on conducting qualitative research, that option is not off the table at this point.

Ms. Zinkl said that the RAC understands that this would likely be considered a relatively minor change for many riders and a substantial change for some riders. She added that to target the passengers in Arlington and Alexandria might who would be most affected

may be a good idea. Ms. Murray noted that Mr. Hughes had also been to a meeting of Alexandria's transportation advisory committee and got their feedback. She added that all options in terms of research or conducting meetings are still on the table. Ms. Iacomini said that the RAC may want to urge the Board to hold additional public meetings.

In response to Ms. Iacomini's comment, Mr. Orr said that this proposal has been to the Board previously, but would likely need to go back to the Board, either as an information item or for staff to get the Board's authorization to spend money on new signage, meaning that this proposal would go before the Board's Finance, Administration and Oversight Committee.

Ms. Walker asked about Metro's methodology in terms of counting passengers and the margin of error in its measurements. She said that the proposal seems like a large change for a relatively small change in the passengers' travel habits. Mr. Orr described the methodology Metro uses to count passengers – specifically that traffic clerks stationed on the platforms count the number of passengers in each car and perform the checks twice monthly. He explained that the numbers presented were a one-year average of these twice-monthly passenger counts. Mr. Orr said that, even if the numbers aren't exactly correct, they still show an increase in the number of passengers heading to the eastern portion of downtown D.C.

Ms. Walker asked for clarification about the “pros” and “cons” presented as part of the presentation, specifically that there would be “no added cost for the service” but that there will be a “cost for signage changes and customer information.” Mr. Orr explained that there would be no added personnel costs to operate the service, however there would be a one-time cost to change signage to reflect the revised service pattern.

Ms. Walker also asked why riders at Fort Totten were not included in the survey of riders along the northern portion of the Green line. Ms. Murray said that no passengers on the northern end of the Green line would be negatively impacted and so she made an arbitrary cut-off at West Hyattsville. Ms. Murray further clarified that her aim with conducting the rider research was to get their reactions to the communication of the service change, rather than their opinion on the service change itself. Ms. Walker said that it may be good to talk to riders at Fort Totten about how to best communicate this change since many riders there would likely use the new service.

In response to a question from Ms. Walker, Mr. Orr explained the JCC (“Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee”), which is made up of staff members who work for the various jurisdictions that subsidize Metro. He said that these staff members represent their various jurisdictions and also take information from Metro back to the various Board members.

Ms. Walker then asked about the proposed express bus service and whether passengers would divert from Metrorail to Metrobus. She said that, in her experience, she knows many riders who will only ride Metrobus and not Metrorail and vice versa. Ms. Murray

gave an example of the realignment of bus service when the Franconia-Springfield service was opened and said that Metro kept some Springfield-Pentagon express service operating because many bus riders didn't want to take Metrorail. She added that she doesn't have any specific ridership numbers for the express bus service mentioned as part of the presentation. She noted that adding the express bus service was a suggestion made by the JCC, the Arlington and Alexandria advisory groups and the RAC. Ms. Everline noted that Metro has examples of bus routes that save riders time over riding rail, such as the 16Y which operates from Columbia Pike to downtown.

Mr. Orr added that to make bus service attractive, the service must be fast – operated as limited-stop or express service. He said that Metro has to do research on where to run the route and where to make stops in order to develop an attractive alternative service for riders who will end up with less rail service.

Ms. Brown asked if there were any members representing Prince George's County on the JCC. Mr. Pasek said that there was staff on the JCC from Prince George's County. Ms. Iacomini recommended that Ms. Brown get that information from Mr. Pasek after the meeting.

Mr. Farrell noted that he frequently transferred between the Red and Green lines at Fort Totten and noted that many other passengers also transfer at this station. He said that he expected that more passengers would transfer if direct service to Virginia was offered at this station and asked whether there was sufficient capacity for additional transferring passengers. He noted that while there are four escalators between the Red line platform and the station mezzanine, there are only two escalators between the Green line platform and the station mezzanine. He said that it was his understanding that when the Yellow line was extended to Fort Totten, there was a proposal to extend the service all of the way to Greenbelt but this proposal wasn't supported by Montgomery County.

Mr. Farrell asked whether an offer had been made to the Foggy Bottom civic association or advisory neighborhood commission to present them with information on this proposal. He said that he thought they would have very strong opinions about this proposal. He said that they might support the service on a limited, trial basis.

Mr. Orr said that he isn't surprised by Mr. Farrell's comment that many passengers already transfer at Fort Totten and that more passengers would likely make this transfer with extension of service from Franconia to Greenbelt. He also said that Mr. Farrell was correct in that current Blue line riders traveling through Rosslyn – such as passengers boarding at Foggy Bottom or Farragut West, would have less service. He said that currently, Metro runs a six-minute headway on the Blue line, and, under the proposal, there would be four less Blue line trains per hour, meaning that riders would be faced with a maximum ten-minute wait rather than a six-minute wait. Mr. Orr added that passengers heading to Foggy Bottom or Farragut West should also be given the chance to weigh in at public meetings as discussed earlier.

Ms. Iacomini noted that Mr. Antonelli, a member of the Arlington County Transit Advisory Commission (TAC) was in the audience and had attended the meeting at which Metro staff had briefed the TAC on the proposal. She said that he had emailed her some questions about this proposal and that she wanted to ask these questions of staff on his behalf and on behalf of Arlingtonians, though she noted that she likes the proposed service realignment because she rides the Orange line. She noted that trains on the Orange line have recently been very crowded.

She asked Mr. Orr why Metro is making this change in service now and when the Silver line is in service, whether or not there would be additional trade-offs that would need to be made to accommodate those trains. Mr. Orr noted that, at this point, this is still a proposal. He responded to Ms. Iacomini's question by saying that Metro is looking at its options, such as purchasing more railcars to run more eight-car trains or running more eight-car trains but on slightly wider headways, which would only require the same number of railcars as it operates presently. He said that Metro would look at changes such as those before making additional changes to service patterns. He added that, if necessary, once the Silver line is in service, Metro could again widen headways to create more eight-car trains. Mr. Orr said that, growth and unmanageable ridership on the Orange line is driving the need to make the change, either in 2013, when the Silver line opens, or before.

Ms. Iacomini noted that, if Blue line service is realigned, as proposed, there would be fewer trains in the peak hour between National and Dulles airports. Mr. Orr agreed that there would be fewer trains between the two airports and that would have to be considered in the evaluation of the proposal. He noted that, while there would be less service between the airports, the realigned service would allow passengers from Greenbelt a one-seat ride to National Airport. Ms. Murray noted that in all of the rail passenger surveys that she has seen, she has never experienced a rider traveling between the two airports, and, while there may be passengers that make that trip, it isn't common. Ms. Iacomini noted there is not yet direct service to Dulles Airport.

Ms. Iacomini asked, on Mr. Antonelli's behalf, why riders from south Arlington were not surveyed, since they would "lose" under the proposal. Ms. Murray responded that riders from all of the stations on the southern portion of the Blue line – Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn Street, etc. would face some negative impacts and that riders from south Arlington were not intentionally excluded. She said that there were some riders from south Arlington ZIP codes included in the survey.

Ms. Iacomini also noted that development in southern Fairfax County and southern Arlington County was not factored into the ridership calculations, while planned development in D.C. was used as a guiding factor in decision-making.

Ms. Iacomini said that she is getting the sense from the discussion and the questions being raised by members, that there are more questions being raised about the proposal and that these questions may need to be addressed and that more research may need to be

conducted before action is taken. She said that she thinks that the Board may direct staff to do additional research and implement the service realignment incrementally.

Ms. Murray noted that Mr. Hughes is aware of the questions that had been raised about the proposal but, unfortunately, was called out of town and unable to answer those questions. She said that the discussion also suggests that Metro may need to look at alternatives to the proposal as presented, such as terminating some Blue line trains at Rosslyn, as is done on the Fourth of July, since that would allow passengers to transfer to the Orange line; special bus service, similar to the 16Y bus that currently operates between Columbia Pike and downtown; phasing in the service with only two rerouted trains per hour and less-extensive signage than would be required for a full implementation of the proposal.

She said that the RAC is appreciative of staff coming to discuss this with the Council, and that while there are certainly many positives to the proposal, it is a proposal that would affect the entire system and raises many questions that the RAC would want to forward along to the Board for their consideration.

Ms. Iacomini thanked staff for their presentation and then asked Ms. Murray to present the next item on the outreach being conducted for Metro's planned elimination of paper transfers.

#### VII. Paper Transfer Elimination Outreach:

Ms. Murray said that she is pleased to be giving this presentation because it is the result of a lot of input from many groups, including the RAC, and that a lot of effort has gone into the Metro's outreach to inform riders about this upcoming change.

She explained that Metro's Board of Directors approved the elimination of paper transfers as part of its approval of the FY09 budget, and that paper transfers would be eliminated beginning January 4, 2009. She also noted that the RAC had expressed concerns about the extent of the communications outreach associated with this change.

Ms. Murray then reviewed some of the planned outreach materials with the Council. She explained that Metro will be installing 150 exterior bus ads. She added that these ads are will be printed in both English and Spanish and that their installation on bus exteriors began on October 27<sup>th</sup> and would continue through November 7<sup>th</sup>. In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Ms. Murray noted that the ads would be installed on buses that run on all of Metro's routes and that the 150 buses represent approximately 10% of the Metrobus fleet. Ms. Murray noted that this was only one part of a multi-faceted effort to reach Metro's riders and that no one single type of communication would reach all riders.

Ms. Murray told the Council that there would be ads in other locations as well, including:

- On the inside of Metrobuses fleet-wide;
- In bus stop information cases;
- In bus shelters;

- On the interior of 500 railcars;
- In backlit dioramas in rail stations (25);
- On posters displayed in rail stations (50).

Ms. Murray told the Council that there would also be print advertising, beginning on November 10<sup>th</sup> and running through January 2, 2009. She provided a list of region-wide, local and ethnic-market newspapers where Metro would be placing quarter-page, four-color advertisements about the planned elimination of paper transfers.

She also explained that Metro would be placing “hanger cards” on the grab bars inside Metrobuses. She said that 320,000 cards would be installed on buses – 80,000 at a time, at four separate times – November 13<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. She said that these hangers would be installed system-wide to be distributed on every bus. Ms. Murray also noted that Metro would be printing 115,000 “Take One” flyers with text in both English and Spanish and that these flyers would be made available on Metrobuses, in Metrorail stations, through social service organizations and at various events. She explained that the flyers are also being printed in French, Korean, Vietnamese and Amharic.

Ms. Murray added that Metro also has a webpage to provide information about the planned elimination of paper transfers. In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, she said that the webpage is not the Metro website homepage, but that it is linked from Metro’s main page. Mr. Pasek added that there is a link from the main page, as well as a large graphic on the main page that takes viewers to the webpage with information about the elimination of paper transfers.

Ms. Murray said that there is also a podcast available via Metro’s website. She noted that an English-language version of the podcast is currently available and that the podcast will be translated into French, Korean, Vietnamese and Amharic. She added that staff is conducting public outreach, including outreach to social service agencies, showing social service providers how to teach their clients about loading the value of Metrobus tokens onto Smartrip cards. Ms. Murray noted that staff is also conducting outreach at public meetings, churches, including Spanish-speaking churches, and for interested civic groups. She said that staff will even be coming to churches as far afield as her neighborhood in Manassas to conduct outreach.

Ms. Iacomini asked if staff will be deployed to conduct outreach at major bus transfer locations. Ms. Murray responded that outreach at bus transfer locations is being discussed as part of a marketing blitz. She said that the amount of outreach is dependant on available resources.

Ms. Murray concluded her presentation by noting that staff from Media Relations is also working to disseminate information about the elimination of paper transfers through press releases and its media contacts.

Ms. Iacomini said that she didn't see any information on the outreach material about how riders would save money by using their SmarTrip card instead of cash. Ms. Murray responded that Metro is trying to keep the message simple and to highlight the elimination of paper transfers in its materials.

In response to a question from Ms. Brown, Ms. Murray explained that the SmarTrip card is programmed to allow free bus-to-bus transfers. Ms. Brown asked what would happen if a bus was caught in traffic or otherwise delayed, causing passengers to miss their free transfer "window." Ms. Murray noted that the free transfer period will be extended from two to three hours as part of the elimination of paper transfers. Ms. Iacomini said that the situation Ms. Brown described is possible now with paper transfers, since they are also time-limited.

In response to an additional question from Ms. Brown, Ms. Murray said that it would have been cost-prohibitive for Metro to purchase advertisements in the Washington Post and Washington Times. She explained that a one-day, ¼-page ad in the Post or Times costs approximately \$30,000. Ms. Murray noted that there would be ads in the Express and the D.C. Examiner. There was further discussion among members and Ms. Murray about placing advertisements on newspapers' websites.

Ms. Murray said that, no matter how much outreach Metro conducts, there will still be something that was missed. She noted that Metro had already spent over \$200,000 on this outreach, not including the cost of printing flyers. She added that while the elimination of paper transfers is certainly a significant change, Metro has spent substantial sums of money to communicate this change to riders.

Ms. Brown asked whether Senior SmarTrip cards cost the same (\$5) as regular SmarTrip cards. Ron Rydstrom, staff from Metro's Office of Marketing explained that while the Senior SmarTrip card costs the same as a regular SmarTrip card, it is programmed to calculate the discounted senior fare on trains and buses.

Ms. Brown noted that the presentation stated that Metro staff will be conducting outreach at area churches asked how to contact Metro staff to get them to make a presentation to her church. Ms. Murray said that she would need to contact Metro's Director of Community Relations, Jorge Nevares, and that she would get his contact information out to her. Mr. Rydstrom said that Mr. Nevares' contact information could be added to Metro's webpage about the elimination of paper transfers.

Mr. Farrell said that he thinks that the flyers are useful but that he is concerned about the amount of out-of-date material displayed at rail station kiosks and said that there is often visual clutter at rail station kiosks. He added that display racks at some stations are well-maintained, while others are not.

Ms. Walker said that she found the flyer very dense to read and difficult to understand, especially if someone tries to read the flyer quickly. She also asked how Metro kiosk attendants are being trained to deal with this upcoming change – she noted that over the

past few weeks she has talked with Metro station managers and staff at the customer service office, and only one person was aware of the upcoming change. Mr. Rydstrom replied that Metro staff is getting specialized training, tailored to the various positions. He added that there is training for station managers, bus operators as well as call center employees to help them address the type of questions that they may be asked about the change.

Ms. Walker also asked how Metro is preparing to deal with disputes and passengers who are unaware of the change, since, inevitably, some passengers will still be unaware of the change when it occurs. Ms. Murray said that Metro recognizes that there will be some passengers who didn't get the message and that there will have to be a period in which Metro is lenient with passengers to avoid disputes. She noted, however, that such a grace period will have to have a definite end. Ms. Walker suggested that this transition time would be an ideal opportunity to provide customers with additional information about the change. Mr. Rydstrom said that outreach is already occurring in order to give customers time to become aware of the change and make the necessary adjustments.

Ms. Walker noted that people often wait until the last minute to adapt to changes or to take action and provided the example of people waiting until April 15<sup>th</sup> to file their taxes or waiting to get the necessary equipment to handle the digital television switchover planned for February 2009. She recommended that Metro look into having public service announcements. Mr. Rydstrom noted that public service announcements aren't always effective because they don't air during prime time and do not specifically target Metro riders. Ms. Murray said that Metro is trying to target its message to those customers that will be affected, who, in this case, are Metrobus riders, which is why most of its efforts are focused on providing information on buses.

Ms. Walker asked if it would be possible to have people out to talk to bus riders, since the District of Columbia has a relatively high illiteracy rate. She added that her church often makes donations to social service agencies around the holidays and that she will suggest that it purchase SmarTrip cards to give to these agencies.

Ms. Iacomini said that she has heard that many social service clients have not perceived the SmarTrip cards given to them as having any value. She said that it may be possible that cards given as part of a specific project or through person-to-person outreach may be perceived by clients to have some value.

Ms. Zinkl said that she appreciated the work that staff had done to prepare for the change, and that she realized that the staff members in attendance were not the decision-makers who approved the elimination of paper transfers, but she wanted to reiterate some concerns that she had regarding the timing of this change. She stated that she was concerned about the timing of the elimination of paper transfers as it relates to the timeline for planned improvements to SmarTrip cards, such as the ability for SmarTrip cards to calculate the various Metro pass products.

Ms. Zinkl noted that she was also concerned about the timing of the elimination of paper transfers with relation to the holiday season and about its effect on vulnerable populations, especially since many SmarTrip cards given to area social service agencies have not been distributed to clients. She also noted that some riders who use weekly passes will be unable to transfer to buses at a discount once paper transfers are eliminated.

Ms. Iacomini noted that these comments were not related to the outreach being conducted to inform the public about the elimination of paper transfers, but were reiterating concerns raised at previous Council meetings.

Ms. Everline said that she shared Ms. Zinkl's concerns about the timing of the elimination of paper transfers, though she would not reiterate those concerns at this point. She said that she wanted to commend staff on the progress they had made so far in reaching out to communicate with Metro riders about this issue. She asked if Metro was conducting any training for travel trainers – people who then show riders how to use transit. Mr. Rydstrom responded that Metro is conducting sessions to “train the trainers.” In response to a comment from Ms. Iacomini, he noted that this included training not only for individuals who work with people with disabilities, but also those who work with other populations.

Ms. Everline also asked whether Metro was going to use “travel hosts” – volunteers or part-time employees who would be available to answer riders' questions. Mr. Rydstrom said that City Year students would be helping out to provide information to riders. Ms. Murray clarified that City Year was a volunteer program for college-aged individuals, similar to AmeriCorps.

Ms. Iacomini suggested that Metro institute an “all hands on deck” policy during the week of January 4<sup>th</sup> and have as many employees out assisting customers, especially at key bus transfer points. She noted that Metro employed this strategy during the papal visit and for the opening of the new Nationals ballpark. Ms. Walker said that Metro needs to make sure that these employees are sufficiently trained and that they actively assist customers if they will be stationed out in the field. .

Ms. Everline offered her services as someone who works with persons with disabilities in the transit industry.

Dr. Bracmort said that the outreach efforts outlined in the presentation are a very good start and that she appreciates all of the effort Metro is putting into communications for this upcoming change. She said that she didn't want to get into the other questions and concerns that she has about SmarTrip. She noted that the flyers and other materials have too much text on them. Mr. Rydstrom replied that the flyers need to list all of the information about the change to fully inform riders. Dr. Bracmort said that she didn't disagree, but that the information could be presented much more concisely than was laid out on the flyers.

She also noted that the presidential inauguration is coming up in January and there will be many people in the Washington area from out-of-town. Ms. Iacomini said that Sara Wilson, Metro's Assistant General Manager in charge of communications has asked to come to the RAC's December meeting to discuss Metro's communication plans for the presidential inauguration.

Ms. Zinkl said that she had some questions about training for bus drivers and what kind of flexibility they will be able to employ with passengers in the days following the changeover. Mr. Rydstrom said that Metro's Operations department is handling the training of bus operators and other operations personnel. Ms. Murray noted that the amount of "flexibility" that operators will be able to display is a policy decision that must be made by the Board.

Ms. Iacomini said that she agreed with Dr. Bracmort that the flyer was too dense and said that she wished that the RAC had been approached earlier for its comments concerning the layout of the card. She also asked whether Metro was planning to install signs on bus fareboxes and transfer machines in rail stations. Ms. Murray said that there will be decals installed on bus fareboxes, rail transfer machines and fare vending machines. She said that the decision was made to install these decals after the presentation was finalized.

Ms. Murray said that she wanted to stress that no one communications piece was going to reach all riders, which is why Metro is getting out its message using many different types of outreach materials.

Ms. Brown asked how people who don't have access to Metro sales centers can reload their SmarTrip card. Mr. Rydstrom explained that customers can load their cards using the bus farebox. Ms. Iacomini noted that customers can only use cash to reload their cards using bus fareboxes. Ms. Everline noted that the bus fareboxes are not accessible for passengers who are visually impaired. Mr. Rydstrom said that, in the future, there will be other options for riders to load their cards, but that these upgrades have not yet occurred. In response to a quote from Ms. Walker, he said that riders can purchase SmarTrip cards at Giant, but cannot reload them there. He added that customers can reload their cards at farecard machines in rail stations as well at Metro sales offices and on bus fareboxes.

Ms. Brown noted that Metro was installing ads notifying riders about the elimination of paper transfers in the District of Columbia and Montgomery County and asked why it wasn't doing this in other jurisdictions. Ms. Murray responded that not all jurisdictions allow ads in their bus shelters – she said that the ones in the District and Montgomery County are managed by Clear Channel and allow advertising. In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Ms. Murray noted that Metro will be installing signs in bus stop information cases and Mr. Rydstrom said that Metro will be placing signs in other bus shelters, those without advertising similar to the advertisements that will be placed on Metrobuses

Ms. Iacomini thanked Mr. Rydstrom and Ms. Murray for their presentation. She said that, at its December meeting, the Council will discuss Metro's plans for the inauguration along with its random bag inspection program.

VIII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Ms. Iacomini adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

DRAFT