

**Riders' Advisory Council
December 3, 2008**

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Iacomini called the December meeting of the Riders' Advisory Council to order at 6:30 p.m. She reminded those present to turn off their cell phones and other electronic devices and asked Mr. Pasek, the staff coordinator to call the roll.

The following members of Metro's Riders' Advisory Council were present:

Nancy Iacomini, Chairman, Arlington County
Kelsi Bracmort, District of Columbia*
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
Penny Everline, Arlington County
Christopher Farrell, Montgomery County
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/Elderly and Disabled Committee Chairman
Evelyn Tomaszewski, Fairfax County*
Carol Carter Walker, District of Columbia
Lillian White, City of Alexandria
Robin White, Fairfax County*
Diana Zinkl, District of Columbia

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

Denise Brown, Prince George's County
Susan Holland, Prince George's County

* - The arrival time for members who arrived after the roll call is noted in the body of the meeting minutes.

II. Public Comment:

Ms. Iacomini then invited members of the public to make comments.

1. *Alec Dubro:*

Mr. Dubro said that he is a fifteen-year resident of the District of Columbia and that he previously lived in New York City. He said that he has never complained about Metro service until now. He said that he is opposed to the Transit Police's random bag inspection program because it is intrusive and obnoxious. He said that he is increasingly frustrated with escalating security demands being made upon citizens.

Mr. Dubro said that he would leave the constitutional issues associated with random searches to others who had come to speak. He added that if this measure is implemented, those who are in favor of an increasingly intrusive police state will have won.

Ms. Iacomini noted that the Riders' Advisory Council is an advisory body to Metro's Board of Directors. She also clarified that the Board of Directors did not institute the random bag inspection policy – it was implemented under the authority of Metro's General Manager John Catoe in concert with the Chief of the Metro Transit Police.

In response to a question from Mr. Dubro, Ms. Iacomini explained that there is an open public comment period at the Metro Board of Directors meeting. She said that she was surprised that no one had come to discuss this issue at the most recent Board meeting. Ms. Iacomini added that there will be another Board meeting with opportunity for the public to make comments the third Thursday of the month at 11 a.m.

2. *Patrick Elder:*

Mr. Elder noted that he came to speak at the Riders' Advisory Council because he was unable to attend the Board of Directors' meeting due to work obligations. He told the Council that he was one of the individuals spied on by the Maryland State Police for attending meetings and demonstrations and, consequently, is very cognizant of feeling that he has lost some of his constitutional rights. He said that the random searches make him feel "edgy" and that he feels that they are a violation of the Fourth Amendment's prohibition of "unreasonable" searches. He said that several terrorism experts are on the record as opposed to this policy.

3. *Sue Udry:*

Ms. Udry told the Council that she had two comments that she wished to make. She first said that she has noticed the "Be good for goodness' sake" ads that have begun appearing on some Metrobuses recently and, while there may have been some complaints lodged concerning these ads, she thinks that they're great. Her second comment was regarding the random bag inspection program. She told Council members that they were not usually called on to protect freedom and the American way, she is asking them to do that this evening. She noted that since September 11th, Americans have been asked to give up their rights, a little bit at a time, in order to feel safer. She said that the bag searches won't make anyone any safer and she hoped that the Council would express this view to Metro's Board of Directors.

4. *Steven Silverman:*

Mr. Silverman noted that he was the executive director of a group called "Flex Your Rights" which serves to educate members of the public about their constitutional rights during police encounters. He said that following the announcement of the random bag inspection policy by Metro, his group held protests outside of Metro stations, letting Metro riders know that they have the right to refuse these searches if they are selected by the police for bag inspections. He told the Council that he received positive feedback from Metro riders concerning his group's opposition to the

policy and said that riders resented the idea of being presumed guilty simply because they were taking transit. Mr. Silverman added that there are two aspects of the program that allow it to pass legal scrutiny, but that thereby render it ineffective: the selection of people at random for inspection and the ability of those selected to refuse to be searched. He said that Metro police need to show specifically how this policy will improve security.

5. *Karen O'Keefe:*

Ms. O'Keefe noted that she is an attorney and a member of the National Lawyers' Guild and that she is very disappointed in Metro for instituting the random bag inspection policy, because it makes a mockery of Fourth Amendment protections. She said that refusing to be searched is not realistic to expect of individuals selected as part of the program, since they need to get to the train to get to work on time, and added that the policy is counter to the spirit of the Fourth Amendment. She also noted that the searches will delay transit riders and provided an example of the difficulties that she experienced while acting as a caregiver to an individual staying with her. She explained that if she was delayed on the Metro she would then miss a connecting bus and have to wait forty minutes for the next one. She also noted that a security expert has termed this policy "security theater" in that it doesn't actually do anything to make riders safer, but simply has the appearance of doing so.

6. *Fritz Mulhauser:*

Mr. Mulhauser told the Council that he is a staff attorney for the National Capital chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and that he is opposed to Metro's bag search policy. He asked the Council to carry a message to Metro's Board of Directors expressing their opposition to this policy. Mr. Mulhauser said that he thinks that this policy will fail a legal challenge and that Metro would be better off withdrawing the policy before it is defeated in court. He said that the court will look at whether the policy minimizes intrusion and is effective to carry out its purpose. He raised concerns about profiling of individuals selected for bag searches and whether officers will be trained to conduct these searches swiftly. He said that no serious person can think that this is an effective policy.

Ms. Tomaszewski arrived at 6:46 p.m. during Mr. Mulhauser's comments.

7. *Leroy Morgan:*

Mr. Morgan said that he would come back to offer his comments about Metro service on holidays directly to the Board of Directors at their meeting on December 18th. He said that he respected the police's decision based on his previous experience in the military.

8. *Ann Wilcox:*

Ms. Wilcox told the Council that wanted to add her voice to those who are opposed to Metro's random bag search policy and that these searches will make riders' trips more onerous, which needs to be a consideration due to upcoming events which will bring huge crowds to the city. She said that, with these searches, there is the potential

for profiling in selecting individuals to be searched. She also said studies have shown that the searches do not deter terrorist attacks. Ms. Wilcox added that Metro needs to balance security with protecting passengers' rights.

Dr. Conn arrived at 6:49 p.m. during Ms. Wilcox's comments.

9. *Luke Kuhn:*

Mr. Kuhn told the Council that the "elephant in the room" regarding Metro's random bag inspection was the possibility of racial discrimination. He said that he has received reports from the Salvadoran community that people aren't riding the Metro because of their apprehension about the searches. He said that people of color are disproportionately experiencing checkpoints. Mr. Kuhn noted that he has not used Metro since this policy was announced.

Ms. Iacomini thanked members of the public for their comments and noted that they are welcome to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

III. Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Iacomini then asked for a motion to approve the meeting's agenda. She proposed deferring the approval of past meeting minutes until the end of the meeting so that members would have as much time as possible to hear the evening's presentations and to ask questions.

Mr. DeGraff moved to approve the agenda, as amended. This motion was seconded by Ms. Walker. The agenda was approved unanimously, as amended.

IV. Random Bag Inspection Program:

Ms. Iacomini asked a representative from the Metro Transit Police to come forward to present information on Metro's random bag inspection program.

Chief Taborn introduced himself, noting that he had been the Metro Transit Police Chief since March 2008 and, prior to that, worked for the Federal Transit Administration.

He told members that on October 22nd, John Catoe, Metro's General Manager, introduced a policy of random bag inspections which would be implemented at a later date. He said that in developing the program, Metro looked at other agencies and did legal research to ensure that its policy would pass legal challenges.

In light of time constraints, a video that the Chief had intended to show was cut short. Ms. Iacomini said that the Council was looking for a presentation specifically on the bag inspection policy – such as why it was developed and answers to specific questions members of the Council may have. Chief Taborn said that he would make the video available to anyone who would like a copy. He added that as a member of the law enforcement community, he wants to ensure that Metro takes initiatives in advance to

ensure passengers' and employees' safety. He noted that, after New York City's transit system, Metro is the most attractive terrorist target among transit systems. Chief Taborn also noted that patrons attending events at the Verizon Center must submit to having their bags inspected, as well as those attending museums, boarding airplanes or even entering the Metro headquarters building. He said that the police are not in the business of violating people's rights or profiling and told Ms. Iacomini that he would provide her with documents concerning the legal challenges and issues faced by other transit agencies in relation to their efforts to prevent terrorism.

Chief Taborn then turned the floor over to Deputy Chief Mark Olsen to provide information on how the searches will be conducted.

Deputy Chief Olsen said that he is a nineteen-year veteran of the transit police force and helped create the bag inspection program for Metro. He said that he and some of his colleagues went to New York and Boston and studied their systems and incorporated elements of their programs into Metro's. He then introduced Lt. Greg Hanna, Sgt. Pete Sepulveda and Sgt. Stan Hanlon, who are in charge of the teams that will conduct these inspections.

Sgt. Sepulveda provided an overview of the security inspection program. He said that the program's objective is to deter terrorism and increase safety for transit riders and others in the National Capital Region. He provided information about earlier terrorist attacks in Madrid and London. He said that the inspections will not be pre-announced, but that signs will be posted at station entrances alerting riders to the inspections.

Sgt. Sepulveda said that Metro's program is very similar to the program in place in New York City. He noted that people attending large events on the Mall or entering federal buildings undergo a more rigorous screening than what would be in place under Metro's policy. He said that the searches will be conducted by officers who have specialized training, and explosive-sniffing dogs will also be present at the inspections.

Sgt. Sepulveda explained that the on-scene supervisor will pick a random number and police will then search every *n*th rider who enters the station with a carry-on item that would be able to carry an explosive device. He said that people selected will be brought over to a table and asked to open their bag for inspection. Sgt. Sepulveda said that the inspections should take no more than 8-15 seconds. He said that officers will not search through papers or personal effects, as they will only be looking for explosives. He added that if someone refuses to have their bag inspected, they will be refused entry to the system unless they secure their carry-on item elsewhere. Sgt. Sepulveda said that Transit Police would not secure carry-on items for members of the public.

Dr. Bracmort arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Chief Taborn noted that Metro Transit Police conducted a demonstration of a bag inspection for members of the press on October 27th. He said that if the officer conducting the inspection were unable to see all of the contents of a bag or item, an

explosive-sniffing dog would also be called in to examine the item. Chief Taborn noted that riders would be provided with a card that explains the inspection process. He added that if an individual were to refuse a search, they would either have to leave the station or get rid of any items they were carrying.

Following his presentation, the Chief opened up the floor for questions.

Ms. Iacomini asked the Chief how the searches will be performed. He explained that officers will do a hand search of bags and packages and will be wearing gloves so that they don't come into direct contact with riders' things. In response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, Chief Taborn responded that police will only have a trained dog sniff the bag if they are unable to see all of their contents as part of their manual inspection.

Ms. Iacomini also asked about how Transit Police will determine which riders' bags to inspect – specifically if police ask to inspect the bags of every *n*th rider, how will they determine what interval of riders' bags to inspect. Chief Taborn responded that the Transit Police will know in advance the station at which they will be performing inspections and the time of day that the inspections will be performed. He said that with this information, the police then know how many passengers per hour will be passing through the station. He noted that the inspections will be performed outside of the paid area to allow riders to turn around if they don't want to their bags inspected. He said that this will also allow police to make changes to procedures to reduce passenger delays or back-ups, if necessary. Chief Taborn explained that one or two officers would be assigned to count passengers entering the system. There was further discussion between Ms. Iacomini and Chief Taborn regarding how officers would select riders for inspections and how they would to conduct searches without affecting passenger flow into Metrorail stations.

Ms. Daniels asked what would happen if she were chosen for inspection and she happened to be carrying a prohibited item, such as a knife, in her bag. Chief Taborn responded that she wouldn't be detained unless the knife or other object in question was illegal in the jurisdiction in which the search was taking place. He said that if she were carrying an illegal item police would confiscate it and arrest her. Ms. Iacomini also noted that most knives are legal to carry – prohibited or illegal items would be more along the lines of machetes or other very large knives.

Dr. Conn asked if the police are going to publish anything detailing the things that riders should know in case they are subject to one of these random bag inspections, such as lists of prohibited or illegal items. She said that she thinks that it would be appropriate to make this clear to riders. Chief Taborn responded that the Transit Police will make this information clear to riders.

Dr. Conn also noted that individuals in New York City who are delayed by the random bag inspections receive a note from the police which they are able to show their employer in case the inspection made them late for work. She suggested that Metro Transit Police should provide something similar to individuals here who are subject to bag inspections.

Chief Taborn reiterated that he does not expect riders to encounter delays from having to have their bags inspected.

Dr. Conn also asked whether individuals who refused to have their bags inspected will receive any kind of identifying mark denoting that they had refused a bag inspection. Chief Taborn said that the police will not tag the bags of individuals who do not consent to an inspection.

Ms. Everline asked if there have been quantitative benefits demonstrated at other transit agencies from the implementation of these policies. Chief Taborn responded that it is hard to provide statistical evidence on the number of crimes that were prevented. He added that he would argue that police presence does deter crime. Ms. Everline asked if there was any evidence concerning terrorist attacks prevented, since that is what this policy was designed to prevent. Chief Taborn responded that Metro uses several tools to keep its system safe, and said that Metro will use any and every initiative that it can to keep the system safe, and the bag inspection program is element of many designed to keep Metro safe.

Ms. Everline also asked about unintended consequences that this action may have, especially among illegal immigrants or people who come from countries where interactions with the police are not always pleasant. Chief Taborn said that this policy does not remove anyone's right to access transportation services and that Metro Transit Police officers are highly trained, and that he would not stand for mistreatment of any member of the public by one of his officers. He added that the policy randomly selects people to avoid any possibility of profiling. In response to a comment from Ms. Everline, Chief Taborn said that the police would view suspicious behavior as a valid reason to detain or pursue an individual. Deputy Chief Olsen said that Metro Transit Police are constantly on the lookout for suspicious behavior, whether or not they are performing these inspections. He added that police officers will not be asking riders for any form of identification. Sgt. Sepulveda said that all officers involved in the inspection program have undergone training to help them identify suspicious behavior.

Chief Taborn noted that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has authority to conduct searches on any mode of transportation and would have the right to conduct searches on mass transit if it wished to. He added that Metro has received correspondence from TSA that is supportive of this program.

In response to a question from Ms. Zinkl, Chief Taborn said that the inspection program would be implemented on both bus and rail. He added, in response to a comment from Ms. Iacomini that MetroAccess would also be included in the program. Chief Taborn explained that searches on bus would be conducted in response to a specific threat, and would be done where passengers are already waiting. He noted that police would not hold up buses in order to conduct these searches. He said that the searches would be conducted under the authority of the General Manager in response to specific, credible threat information.

Ms. Zinkl said that she wanted to respond to Chief Taborn's comment that searches on transit were analogous to searches at airports or museums. She said that flying or attending a museum is a discretionary event, while commuting to work, especially as the region becomes more transit-dependant, is not discretionary.

Ms. Zinkl also noted that there are also several day-to-day safety and security issues on Metro, such as theft or assault, and that she is concerned about the diversion of police resources from protecting riders against these issues. The Chief responded that Metro is one of the safest transit agencies in the country and that riders are approximately fifteen times more likely to be the victim of a Part One crime outside of the Metro system as they are when they are within the Metro system. He noted that Transit Police are also responsible for crowd control, preventing robberies and patrolling parking lots, along with their responsibility to combat terrorism. Deputy Chief Olsen added that the officers assigned to perform bag inspections will not be patrol officers – he said that they are part of Metro's Special Operations force.

Dr. Bracmort asked about how the searches would be performed and whether, if she boarded a train somewhere, would she also be subject to search when exiting the train. Chief Taborn responded that searches will only take place outside of the paid area, for passengers entering the system, to give them the opportunity to refuse to be searched and to leave. He also said, in response to an additional question from Dr. Bracmort, that there will not be exceptions made to the search policy – if someone is selected to have their bag inspected, an exception will not be made if the individual is a child or senior citizen for example.

Ms. Tomaszewski wanted to note that riders' reactions to the searches may not be what the police expect and what the police might see as suspicious behavior is rather the reaction of a rider unable to access his or her bus. She said that she was concerned about the chief's comparison of security on the Metro to screenings that patrons must go through when entering the Verizon Center, and added that she would like for the Council to see some kind of documentation, once the program is implemented, of how it has functioned to prevent terrorist incidents. Chief Taborn responded that he didn't understand Ms. Tomaszewski's comment, in that it implied that Metro shouldn't want the same degree of safety afforded to its customers as to patrons at the Verizon Center.

Ms. Tomaszewski clarified that she doesn't agree with equating the two because riders who use Metro do so daily, usually more than once and that she is concerned about riders' reactions to the inspections, when they occur. Chief Taborn said that Transit Police officers are trained to deal with reactions from members of the public and is something that officers do on a daily basis. Ms. Iacomini said that it may be useful for the Transit Police to provide follow-up information to the Board of Directors once the searches are implemented.

Mr. Cerny said that he had questions about the public process involved in the implementation of this policy, and asked if Metro's Board of Directors has weighed in on this policy. Ms. Iacomini said that the Board received a report on the policy, but that the

Board did not vote on implementing the policy – that was done by authority of the General Manager. Mr. Cerny said that it would be appropriate, in his view, to have a public hearing on this policy. He added that he is sensitive to the civil liberties issues that are raised by this policy, but that he is also confident in the professionalism of the Transit Police and officers' ability to carry out these inspections in a respectful manner. He said that a public hearing would allow these and other issues to be brought to the table and addressed.

Ms. Dranzo clarified that Metro is only searching for explosive devices as part of the program and asked, if that is the case, whether it would be possible to use explosive-sniffing dogs exclusively, rather than have hand searches. Chief Taborn responded that, as technology improves, it may be possible to use machines for explosive-detection duty rather than having officers manually inspect bags. Ms. Dranzo also suggested that Metro provide a list of items that are illegal to carry in the various jurisdictions. Chief Taborn responded that Ms. Dranzo also brought up the need to have information in languages other than Spanish and English, and Chief Taborn said that would be something that he would consider.

Mr. DeGraff said that he is concerned that this policy will not be make a difference, specifically because it selects passengers at random rather than targeting behavior. Chief Taborn said that he disagreed with this assertion and said that while this policy won't address every security issue that Metro faces, the policy is a tool for the Authority to use. Mr. DeGraff said he would like to take the opportunity to urge the Council to pass a resolution on this issue.

Ms. Walker asked if schoolchildren would be subject to bag inspections. Chief Taborn responded that they would. She also asked whether Metro's special police force who would be conducting the inspection "looks like Metro's passengers." Chief Taborn asked the officers present to introduce themselves and also tell how long they have been on the force and what languages they speak in addition to English. Chief Taborn noted that there are around twenty languages spoken by members of the Metro Transit Police and, in response to a question from Ms. Iacomini, said that officers have received training on how to communicate with individuals who have hearing or visual impairments.

Ms. Walker asked what would happen if individuals attempt to flee the police. Chief Taborn responded that transit police officers would use the same tools that every law enforcement officer has to pursue and detain suspicious persons. Ms. Walker also noted that there will soon be a new presidential administration which might take a different view than the current administration of these kinds of searches. Chief Taborn said that the police chiefs of the largest transit agencies in the country will be meeting the following week in Dallas and discussing these kinds of issues.

Lillian White asked about coordination between Metro Transit Police and police officers from the various jurisdictions. Chief Taborn responded that MTPD has coordinated with the various jurisdictional police forces on this effort and other efforts. He noted that Metro Transit Police have jurisdiction anywhere within the 150' of a Metrobus stop and

Chief Olsen noted that if someone commits a crime, Transit Police can pursue them without limit. Ms. White also asked how Metro will select the stations at which it will conduct the inspections. Chief Taborn responded that stations will be selected in response to credible threat information. In response to an additional question from Ms. White about the number of officers who will be involved in each bag inspection, Chief Taborn responded that the number of officers present will depend on how many officers are needed at each particular location. There was further discussion between Ms. White and Chief Taborn about security strategy and bomb threats.

Robin White suggested that Metro show a video at locations where they are conducting the random bag inspections which would give riders an overview of what to expect should they be subject to an inspection. Chief Taborn said that this could cause further delays for passengers. She also asked Chief Taborn if someone could get rid of a bomb prior to being searched. He responded that it would be possible for someone to do that and noted that Transit Police currently perform periodic sweeps of the entire system to look for suspicious packages and will continue to do so.

Mr. Sheehan asked if there was an implementation date set to begin these searches. Chief Taborn responded that there is no date set, rather that inspections would begin in response to a credible threat. Mr. Sheehan asked that Transit Police staff provide a briefing to the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee concerning this program. He also noted that it would be helpful if there were equipment to perform these kinds of searches rather than having them done by police officers, as that would eliminate any concerns about officers not being impartial.

Mr. Sheehan also asked how Transit Police would make decisions about inspecting the bags of Metrobus or MetroAccess customers. Chief Taborn responded that, like with Metrorail, inspections would be carried out in response to specific threat information. In response to a comment from Ms. Iacomini, Chief Taborn noted that Transit Police would not hold up a bus or force a rider to miss his or her bus because of a bag inspection. There was discussion between Mr. Sheehan and Chief Taborn about how searches would be carried out on MetroAccess. Chief Taborn noted that, since the inspections would take place in response to specific threats, their scope would be limited on Metrobus and MetroAccess.

Ms. Dranzo asked about the budget for these searches. Chief Taborn responded that the money to pay for the searches is coming from existing budget resources.

Ms. Iacomini asked about stations that have more than one entrance and how police would address issues such as when someone declines a search. Chief Taborn said that while it was likely that only one entrance at a station would have the bag inspections, there would be officers stationed in the vicinity to address any suspicious activity, such as someone who went to use another station entrance.

Ms. Iacomini asked members of the Council if anyone would like to put forward a resolution. She noted that it was 8:10 p.m. and that there were two more presentations

scheduled at that evening's meeting. She said that it was likely that the Council would not receive the planned presentation on the new Metro website and urged members to review the handout they were provided.

Mr. DeGraff said that he would like to reserve the right to submit a resolution later on in the evening's meeting. Ms. Iacomini said that if anyone were to offer up a resolution, she would prefer that he or she do so sooner rather than later.

Mr. Cerny offered the following resolution for the Council's consideration:

"The RAC urges the Metro Board and General Manager to convene a public meeting at a time and place convenient to the public where the Metro administration will present information on its random security inspection policy, including any information supporting its rationale for such a policy, and to give the public sufficient opportunity to ask questions and make comments."

This motion was seconded by Lillian White.

Mr. DeGraff moved to amend this motion to have the Council request that the General Manager suspend implementation of the policy until such time as the public meeting is held. This was seconded by Ms. Dranzo.

Ms. Iacomini then called for a vote on Mr. DeGraff's amendment:

In favor: Ms. Iacomini, Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Cerny, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeGraff, Ms. Dranzo, Ms. Everline, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Tomaszewski, Ms. Walker, Lillian White, Ms. Zinkl,

Opposed: Dr. Conn, Robin White

Abstentions: none

The amendment passed 13-2-0.

Ms. Zinkl moved to amend Mr. Cerny's motion by replacing the words "a public meeting" with "at least one public meeting." This was seconded by Ms. Walker.

Robin White said that she is concerned that holding only one meeting may mean that it is in a location that is inconvenient to some of Metro's riders. Ms. Zinkl said that the language in her amendment was designed to allow for Metro to hold more than one meeting.

In favor: Ms. Iacomini, Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Cerny, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeGraff, Ms. Dranzo, Ms. Everline, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Tomaszewski, Ms. Walker, Lillian White, Ms. Zinkl,

Opposed: Dr. Conn

Abstentions: Robin White

This amendment passed (13-1-1).

Ms. Iacomini then asked for a vote on the resolution as amended.

Ms. Tomaszewski asked if there would be an opportunity for written comments to be considered and whether it would be useful to include something about that in the resolution. Ms. Iacomini said that written comments are considered as part of Metro's public hearings and that it would not be necessary to include anything about them in the Council's resolution.

In favor: Ms. Iacomini, Dr. Bracmort, Mr. Cerny, Ms. Daniels, Mr. DeGraff, Ms. Dranzo, Ms. Everline, Mr. Farrell, Mr. Sheehan, Ms. Tomaszewski, Ms. Walker, Lillian White, Ms. Zinkl,

Opposed: Dr. Conn, Robin White

Abstentions: none

The resolution passed as amended (13-2-0).

Ms. Iacomini thanked members of the Transit Police Department for attending the evening's meeting and for staying to take questions.

Prior to the discussion on customer service standards, Vic Grimes from Metro's Department of Information Technology took the opportunity to introduce himself, as there would not be time for his presentation at the evening's meeting. He told the Council that he looked forward to coming back at a subsequent meeting and urged them to check out the new website after it goes live on December 8th. He also provided his email address so that members could send comments.

VI. Customer Delivery Standards:

Ms. Iacomini then invited Deputy General Manager Gerald Francis and Christian Kent, Metro's Assistant General Manager for Access Services to present information on Metro's proposed customer service standards.

Mr. Francis noted that he is looking to get the Council's comments on Metro's proposed service delivery standards. He said that for Metro to achieve its goal of becoming "the Best Ride in the Nation," it needs to listen to customers' feedback and communicate and implement realistic expectations. He told the Council that the feedback it provided on Metro's communications initiative was very helpful and he hoped for the same type of feedback on these standards. Mr. Francis explained that Metro will be twelve customer service standards which will address all aspects of the customer experience. He said that the standards are designed to strike a balance between customers' expectations and Metro's ability. He said that it is important to set realistic expectations.

Ms. Iacomini asked about the timeline for implementing these standards. Mr. Francis responded that these need to go to the Board of Directors for approval before they are implemented. Ms. Iacomini asked what kind of feedback was being asked of the Council at this meeting. Mr. Kent added that Metro measures "inward-facing" standards –

standards that make sense to employees of the Authority but may not make sense to customers. He said that Metro also needs to develop “customer-facing standards” to measure its performance. He said that he wanted to give members an overview of the categories for customer service standards and will then circulate a draft document for members’ feedback.

Mr. Kent then went through the twelve categories for which Metro will be developing customer-focused standards:

1. Accessibility standards;
2. Multimodal Travel standards;
3. Aesthetic and Environmental standards;
4. Facilities standards;

Mr. Kent provided specific examples of aspects of these standards in his presentation. He also noted that this is the first time that Metro has worked to develop these kinds of standards and explained that because this is the first time Metro has created such a document, that it is really looking for Council members’ comments to help ensure that the document is comprehensive and clear. He then asked Mr. Francis to continue with listing the categories for which Metro will be developing customer-focused standards:

5. Customer Service standards;
6. Customer Information standards;
7. Safety and Security standards;
8. Staff Training and Behavior standards;
9. Operating Standards for Metrorail - Mr. Francis noted the roll-out of 8-car trains as an element of minimizing crowding is coming soon;
10. Operating Standards for Metrobus – Mr. Francis also noted that Metro is conducting a thorough review of all of its bus routes and has also reorganized staff within its Bus Operations department to empower street supervisors to keep buses from bunching;
11. Operations Standards for MetroAccess;
12. Operations Standards for Vertical Transportation.

Mr. Kent noted that the team that drafted the standards document involved staff from all of Metro’s operating divisions which is helpful because customers often transfer between modes and because customers have certain expectations that are similar across all modes, such as the desire for on-time service. He added that he will send out a draft of these standards for members’ comments. Ms. Iacomini said that Mr. Kent can expect to receive many comments from Council members about standards for vertical transportation.

Ms. Daniels noted that she rides Metrobus frequently and asked by buses don’t always stop at the bus-stop flags. Mr. Kent responded that this is an issue related to driver training. Mr. Daniels also asked why bus operators are often unable to give passengers information about connecting routes. Ms. Iacomini said that this also seems to be an issue of driver training.

Dr. Conn asked whether there was a limit on the number of trips that MetroAccess customers can take in one month. Mr. Kent responded that there is no limit on the number of trips that MetroAccess customers are allowed to take.

Ms. Iacomini thanked Mr. Francis and Mr. Kent for their presentation and said that she will be looking forward to receiving the list customer standards from them shortly.

VII. Information on Riders' Advisory Council Elections:

Ms. Iacomini noted that the next time the Council meets will be in January of 2009 and that the chairmanship of the Council rotates annually. She explained that the next chairman of the Council would need to be one of the members from the District of Columbia. She discussed the time commitments that come with being the Council chairman and some of the responsibilities of the position and recommended that if anyone wanted to run, that they let other members of the Council know.

Mr. DeGraff said that he wanted to congratulate Ms. Iacomini on her tenure as chairman.

VIII. Adjournment:

Without objection, Ms. Iacomini adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.