



# Metro Riders' Advisory Council Report on WMATA Governance

Presentation to Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
Board of Directors

February 9, 2011



# Background and Process

- RAC formed a “Metro Governance Review Committee” in July 2010 to ensure that riders’ concerns were included in discussions of Metro’s governance structure
- Committee meetings held beginning in July 2010
- Public discussion sessions held on August 25<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>
  - Participation by current and former Board members, union representatives and regional transit and business advocates
- Draft Report approved for public comment Nov. 3, 2010
- Final Report approved Dec. 1, 2010



# Key Findings

- Six broad “key” recommendations - 23 specific sub-recommendations:
  1. The Board is analogous to a legislature and should include public officials
  2. The Board should set clear, high standards for members.
  3. The Board should focus on high-level policy and objectives.
  4. The Board should act as a regional body.
  5. Metro’s top staff person should be CEO.
  6. Board decision-making should include a clear and accessible public input process.



# Further Conclusions

- There is a need for the Board and CEO to clearly define their roles and relationships
  - Board should avoid “micromanagement”
  - Staff should request policy guidance rather than operational specifics
  - Board should set objectives and goals and monitor progress – responsibility for implementation should be left to Metro staff
  - Board should act as a body, not as individuals
  - Board should outline members’ responsibilities and set high standards for members



# Role for Public Officials

- Are accessible to riders and community
  - Help act as “relief valve” to address concerns
  - Recommend having as many riders as possible represented by an elected public official
- Encourage coordination with jurisdictional partners
  - Involved in jurisdictional budget processes as they relate to transit funding
  - Involved in land-use planning processes, especially in the vicinity of Metrorail stations
  - Public stature helps educate region about Metro’s need and its importance



# Further Conclusions

- Metro Board should set clear standards for members
  - Employ open and transparent decision-making process
  - Set high standards for attendance
  - Ensure that Board acts as a body, not as individuals



# Appendix

## Riders Advisory Council

- “Voice of the Rider” at Metro
  - 21 members:
    - 6 members each from D.C., MD and VA
    - 3 members appointed At-Large
  - Appointed by the Metro Board of Directors
- Council’s Mission:
  - To actively seek input from Metro riders
  - To advise the Metro Board on operational and policy issues
  - To promote meaningful public participation in Metro decision-making process





# Appendix

## Discussion session questions:

1. What does the WMATA Board do well? What could it do better?
2. What types of decisions are appropriate for the Board to make?  
What types of decisions are more appropriately delegated to the General Manager and his/her staff?
3. What advantages/disadvantages do you see in including public officials, appointed individuals and/or directly elected representatives to the Board?
4. How does the composition of the Board affect WMATA's ability to secure funding?





# Discussion Participants

- Current Board Members:
  - Peter Benjamin, Board Chairman
  - Catherine Hudgins, Board Vice Chairman and Fairfax County Supervisor
  - Mortimer Downey, federal representative
  - William Eulle, City of Alexandria member and mayor
- Former Board Members:
  - Kate Hanley, Fairfax County
  - Gladys Mack, District of Columbia
  - Matthew Watson, District of Columbia
  - William Eulle, City of Alexandria member and mayor



# Discussion Participants

- Representatives of advocacy and other organizations:
  - Richard Bradley, Downtown DC Business Improvement District
  - James Dinegar, Greater Washington Board of Trade
  - James Dyke, Greater Washington Board of Trade
  - Dennis Jaffe, Sierra Club Metro DC, Former RAC Chairman
  - Jackie Jeter, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689
  - David Robertson, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
  - Richard Rybeck, aide to former Metro Board member Hilda Mason
  - Stewart Schwartz, Coalition for Smarter Growth
  - Tina Slater, Action Committee for Transit
  - Lateefah Williams, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689