



Metro Riders' Advisory Council Report on WMATA Governance

Presentation to National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

February 16, 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 25th and September 15th, 20th and 22nd
 - 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

1. The Board is analogous to a legislature and should include public officials

Elected 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

Elected officials encourage coordination with jurisdictional partners

- Involved in jurisdictional budget processes
- Involved in land-use planning processes, especially in the vicinity of Metrorail stations



Key Findings

2. The Board should set clear, high standards for members

- Attendance

3. The Board should focus on high-level policies and objectives

- Staff should request policy guidance rather than operational decisions
- Board should avoid “micromanagement”
- Board should set objectives and goals and monitor progress – responsibility for implementation should be left to Metro staff



Key Findings

4. The Board should act as a regional body
 - Act as body, not as individuals
5. Metro's top staff person should be CEO
 - Board should avoid "micromanagement" – set benchmarks
6. Board decision-making should include clear and accessible public input process
 - Need additional public input opportunities prior to decisions
 - Deliberations and decision-making should be open process



Additional Conclusions

- Jurisdictional veto should remain
 - Does not prevent action – encourages consensus solutions
- Board size should remain the same
 - Continued role for alternate members



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 processes





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