

**EXAMINING METRO'S TRACK RECORD: AN OVER-  
SIGHT HEARING ON THE CHALLENGES AND  
OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE WASHINGTON  
METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT REFORM  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION  
OCTOBER 6, 2000  
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**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2000**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1 p.m., in room 2203, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Thomas M. Davis (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Davis and Norton.

Staff present: Howie Denis and Victoria Proctor, professional staff members; David Marin, communications director/counsel; Melissa Wojciak, staff director; Jenny Mayer, clerk; Jon Bouker, minority counsel; and Jean Gosa, minority assistant clerk.

Mr. DAVIS. Good afternoon. Apologize for the cramped quarters. But we would not have the other hearing room available for probably another half hour to an hour. We wanted to get this moving in a timely manner. We may have a vote in the middle of this. I will have to go over and vote. Ms. Norton will be taking the Chair at that point. She has committed to me she'll not in my absence, running the committee, she won't bring up D.C. statehood. So with that understanding—usually unprecedented to do, but we have a very good relationship on this. We want to get all the testimony in and get to the questions and try to make this an informative hearing for all concerned.

Today's oversight hearing will focus on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Over the past 25 years WMATA has built a sterling mass transit system with an international reputation for efficiency and safety that has proven to be a model for the rest of the country. As chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and now as a Congressman it's been a great pleasure to work with Metro. I know from my experience that Metro officials work hard to provide reliable service to meet the needs of its riders.

Let me just add I had a conversation with Carlton Sickles, who is here in the audience, one of the architects of the Metro system early on and one of its first board members. And Mr. Sickles, thank you for being with us in attendance today as well.

Recently it's been tough to avoid the media reports about the various problems plaguing the safety and reliability of WMATA's transit services. This summer alone has seen a flurry of incidents which have inconvenienced passengers and in some cases even frightened them. There has been slow progress repairing escalators, persistent overcrowding on buses and trains, and fires in Metro tunnels. And then in July we heard about the fiasco which ensued during morning rush hour when a train stopped for 15 minutes just outside the Farragut North station with a brake problem. Four cars were still in the tunnel and the passengers remained in the cramped cars without air conditioning. There was no communication with the passengers to let them know the reason for the delay and the train operator was unreachable through the intercom. The mishandling of the July tunnel incident could have resulted in a serious injury to passengers.

So the subcommittee is interested in examining the mechanisms that WMATA is implementing in order to create or augment training for Metrorail operators and increase communication with passengers when emergencies like this occur. Passengers who were on the train contacted us to describe their experiences and made clear that incidents like this shatter the public confidence in the transit system.

Now, there is no question that Metro has enacted several significant measures to address these problems. In particular, it has begun a \$233 million capital improvement program for fiscal 2000 aimed at preserving the system and upgrading various facilities. Additionally it recently announced planned improvements within 60 days to provide better training to employees on more effectively communicating with the customers about transit outages, and it announced a revised schedule for accelerated repairs of the Metro escalators.

Metro's board has also approved the opening of the Green Line extension to Branch Avenue on January 13th, 2 months ahead of schedule. Today WMATA's rail service alone is among the Nation's largest systems in terms of its annual passenger trips, second only to New York City's subway system. Its Metrobus service ranks sixth nationally.

As we all know, the economy in the Washington area is booming. High tech companies in particular are attracted to this area. With this kind of rapid economic development and population increase, the Washington area's reliance on Metro will only continue to grow in the coming years. In fact, Metro's ridership is expected to increase by as much as 50 percent over the next 20 years. Therefore, renovation and expansion of the system are critical to Metro's future and its ability to accommodate customer demand.

While many problems may be the result of growing pains, others highlight the need for improved communication and infrastructure. The positive steps that WMATA has taken so far has increased customer loyalty and better serve the region. However, the subcommittee remains concerned that WMATA faces persistent systematic problems that will hinder its expansion and progress, and therefore we want to examine these issues a little further.

We are going to hear from representatives of WMATA to discuss the challenges it faces in providing adequate, safe, secure, reliable

and customer friendly transportation services to citizens in the region. We'll also hear from representatives of BART in San Francisco and the Miami-Dade transit system to help us gauge how WMATA's organization and business practices compare with other large transit agencies nationwide.

The subcommittee also expects to hear from the witnesses about the extent to which WMATA faces unique challenges because of its relationship to the Federal, two States and the local governments that influence its operation and decisionmaking authority, how WMATA funds its operations in capital investments and how WMATA measures its performance in key areas and how it develops its performance standards and how WMATA gauges customer satisfaction.

Unfortunately Mr. Danny Alvarez, the Director of the Miami-Dade transit is unavailable to testify before the subcommittee today. A state of emergency has been declared in Miami-Dade County because of the heavy flooding that resulted from severe storms in southern Florida this week. Mr. Alvarez is part of the county's emergency response team. He's responsible for coordinating all emergency logistical transportation operations. Mr. Alvarez sent me a letter to that effect. I will enter it into the record. I think I can speak on behalf of all the subcommittee members when I extend my support to Mr. Alvarez as he works to successfully manage the crisis facing the county.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Thomas M. Davis follows:]



the fiasco which ensued during morning rush hour when a train stopped for 15 minutes just outside the Farragut North station with a brake problem. Four cars were still in the tunnel and the passengers remained in the cramped cars without air-conditioning. There was no communication with the passengers to let them know the reason for the delay, and the train operator was unreachable by intercom.

The mishandling of the July tunnel incident could have resulted in serious injury to passengers. Therefore, the Subcommittee is interested in examining the mechanisms that WMATA plans to implement in order to create or augment training for Metrorail operators and increase communication with passengers when emergencies like this occur. Passengers who were on this train contacted me to describe their experiences and made it clear that incidents like this shatter public confidence in the entire WMATA transit system.

There's no question that Metro has enacted several significant measures to address these problems. In particular, it has begun a \$233 Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2000 aimed at preserving the system and upgrading various facilities. Additionally, it recently announced planned improvements within 60 days to provide better training to employees on more effectively communicating with customers about transit outages, and it announced a revised schedule for accelerated repair of Metro escalators. Metro's board has also approved the opening of the Green Line extension to Branch Avenue on January 13, two months ahead of schedule.

Today, WMATA's rail service, alone, is among the nation's largest systems in terms of annual passenger trips, second only to New York City's subway system. Its Metrobus service ranks sixth nationally. As we all know, the economy in the Washington area is booming. High-

tech companies, in particular, are attracted to this area. With this kind of rapid economic development and population increase, the Washington area's reliance on Metro will only continue to grow in the coming years. In fact, Metro's ridership is expected to increase by as much as 50% over the next 20 years. Therefore, renovation and expansion of the system are critical to Metro's future and its ability to accommodate customer demand. While many problems may be the result of growing pains, others highlight the need for improved communication and infrastructure. The positive steps that WMATA has taken so far will undoubtedly increase customer loyalty and better serve the region. However, the Subcommittee remains concerned that WMATA faces persistent systemic problems that will hinder its expansion and progress, therefore, we would like to examine these issues further.

We are going to hear from representatives of WMATA to discuss the challenges it faces in providing adequate, safe, secure, reliable, and customer-friendly transportation services to citizens in the region. We'll also hear from representatives of BART in San Francisco and the Miami-Dade transit system to help us gauge how WMATA's organization and business practices compare with other large transit agencies nationwide. The Subcommittee also expects to hear from the witnesses about:

- the extent to which WMATA faces unique challenges because of its relationship to the federal, state, and local governments that influence its operations and decision-making authority;
- how WMATA funds its operations and capital investments;
- how WMATA measures its performance in key areas and how it developed its performance standards; and

- how WMATA gauges customer satisfaction.

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Mr. DAVIS. I will now yield to our ranking member, Ms. Norton, for any opening comments she has before we allow our witnesses to testify and go to questions.

Ms. NORTON. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your leadership in calling this hearing today. This region of the country is increasingly dependent, and I use that word in the best sense, on rapid transit, both bus and subway. And I would like to see us even more dependent on WMATA than we are today. It seems to me not only the preferred methods of travel in this region and in this country, it is fast becoming in this congested region the only method of travel with any hope for getting people home in the same day in which they started.

The Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority's excellent reputation has been tarnished by recent events related to public safety. The most serious are fire related, especially in Metro tunnels. Nearly 600,000 D.C. and regional residents and tourists use Metro each day, second in passenger trips only to New York City. Thus, failures in the system not only endanger riders but the regional economy as well.

In 25 years of operation Metro's record of safety and reliability has not generally been a cause of concern. However, an apparent trend of increases in reports of fires began in November 1999 when four, or twice the usual number of one or two of the preceding months were reported, rising again to February 6th to three times that number, and culminating in a high of 13 in June.

We now see a more hopeful downward trend. Beginning in July, there were five incidents, in August three and in September two. I cannot imagine anything more frightening than to be caught in a stalled and crowded subway, particularly if there is smoke, with no communication. That sounds like a plot for an urban horror movie.

There have been some indications that the spike in stops and reported fires may have constituted an overreaction to bad press and public concern rather than to danger from fire and smoke. Even if so, that would raise questions about the quality of management response to change and crisis within the organization. There are undoubtedly many causes. Training and communication both internally and with the public are clearly deeply implicated. I do not accept that capital improvements and upgrading of facilities may be a cause. A public carrier has to provide public safety under all circumstances or "res ipsa loquitur," as we say in the law.

The reported incidents do a disservice to a long record of reliability. Metro deserves credit for how it has raised ridership on buses and subways within innovations that break through the conventional wisdom. This is no time to countermand hopeful management improvements in ridership with discouraging management deficiencies and safety and reliability.

This hearing should be regarded as an important part of Metro's own effort to regain the full confidence of the public it has traditionally enjoyed. Only with a thorough airing of the current problems and the proposed solutions can the public be reassured. We offer that opportunity to today's witnesses and look forward to

hearing from each of them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Ms. Norton.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Eleanor Holmes Norton follows:]

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

COMMITTEE ON  
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INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEES  
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC  
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Congress of the United States  
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COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT REFORM  
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CIVIL SERVICE

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSWOMAN ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON AT THE D.C.  
SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA  
TRANSIT AUTHORITY

October 6, 2000

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's reputation has been tarnished by recent events related to public safety. The most serious are fire related, especially in Metro tunnels. Nearly 600,000 D.C. and regional residents and tourists use Metro each day, second in the passenger trips only to New York City. Thus, failures in the system not only endanger riders but the regional economy as well.

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This hearing should be regarded as an important part of Metro's own effort to regain the full confidence of the public it has traditionally enjoyed. Only with a thorough airing of the current problems and the proposed solutions can the public be reassured. We offer that opportunity to today's witnesses and look forward to hearing from them.

Mr. DAVIS. I now call our witnesses and supporting witnesses to testify: Ms. Nuria Fernandez, the Acting Administrator, Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation; Ms. Gladys Mack, the chairman of the Board of Directors of WMATA; Mr. Richard White, the general manager and chief executive officer of WMATA; Mr. Ron Tober, chairman of the American Public Transportation Association; Ms. Dorothy Dugger, deputy general manager, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit [BART], the Honorable Kathy Porter, Transportation Planning Board, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; Mr. Michael Carvalho, the Transportation Environmental Committee, Greater Washington Board of Trade; the Honorable Decatur Trotter, vice chairman, Board of Directors, WMATA; and the Honorable Chris Zimmerman, the second vice chairman, Board of Directors, WMATA.

As you know, it's the policy of this committee that all witnesses and supporting witnesses be sworn before they testify. If you would rise with me and raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. DAVIS. We're going to start, Ms. Fernandez, with you and then I understand, Mr. Tober, you have to catch a plane. We'll proceed to you and then go down the line back to Ms. Mack.

**STATEMENTS OF NURIA FERNANDEZ, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION; GLADYS W. MACK, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY; DECATUR TROTTER, VICE CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY; CHRISTOPHER ZIMMERMAN, SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY; RICHARD WHITE, GENERAL MANAGER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY; RON TOBER, CHAIRMAN, AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION; DOROTHY DUGGER, DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER, SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT [BART]; KATHY PORTER, TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD, METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS; AND MICHAEL CARVALHO, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, GREATER WASHINGTON BOARD OF TRADE**

Ms. FERNANDEZ. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. It is with great pleasure that I come before you today to discuss the challenges facing the Nation's transit providers as they strive to deliver a safe, reliable and efficient service to their customers.

This is a significant moment in the history of the Federal mass transit assistance program. Over the past several years the Congress has provided transit industry with unprecedented levels of Federal assistance. Last year alone for the first time since the beginning of the Federal transit assistance program under President Kennedy transit ridership in the United States exceeded 9 billion trips, and based on recent reports, transit patronage is up by 4.3 percent compared to the same period last year.

These ridership gains are the result of a strong national economy that has put a greater demand on transportation in general and transit in particular. These gains are also due to the very hard work by transit managers and employees and by the investment of substantial financial resources from local and State governments with considerable Federal assistance. As good as all this is, however, more needs to be done around the Nation as well as here in Washington. The greatest challenge facing transit industries all across the country is securing the resources to meet the increasing demands for transit services for their communities and to assure that the current transit infrastructure is able to accept the added stress on its assets.

Our recent report to Congress on the conditions and performance of the Nation's surface transportation systems noted that record levels of highway and transit investments have greatly improved transportation safety and enhanced system conditions. Still further progress is necessary for this new century to keep up with the rehabilitation and replacement of existing transit infrastructure to maintain its state of good repair.

All across the Nation, communities have closed the gap between their needs and availability of funds by taking full advantage of the flexibility that was in ISTEA and now provided in TEA-21 in using other surface transportation funds for locally determined priorities. I am pleased to note, Mr. Chairman, that nationally over \$1.6 billion was flexed in fiscal year 2000 with over \$6 billion flexed since start of ISTEA from the Federal Highway Congestion Mitigation Air Quality and Surface Transportation programs to transit systems across the Nation. In fact, WMATA has received about \$13 million in flex funding in fiscal year 2000.

Similarly, Congress has provided a range of innovative financing tools which several of our Nation's transit providers are taking advantage of in order to meet their needs for infrastructure financing. Earlier this year WMATA was the first agency to receive a loan guarantee of \$600 million for the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act [TIFIA]. This loan guarantee is intended to assist and expedite WMATA's rehabilitation program.

As important as the Federal assistance is, it is at the local level where the key decisions concerning how to develop and fund local transit operations are made. The most important thing for transit agencies to accomplish in order to meet these challenges is to assure stable and reliable State and local sources of funding for capital and operating needs. The best agencies start with a firm idea of their goals and future plans. They make realistic estimates of the costs to meet these needs and develop an aggressive multifaceted approach with local and State decisionmakers and the business community to generate the necessary resources.

Based on data that was reported by all mass transit systems, the larger transit agencies typically have dedicated revenue sources of funds for their capital and operating needs. For example, Los Angeles County Metro and the Chicago Transit Authority have a dedicated sales tax, Atlanta has a dedicated income tax, and Portland has a dedicated payroll tax. These dedicated sources give a great degree of predictability to their ability to implement their programs and satisfy their infrastructure needs.

The committee has also demonstrated an interest in FTA's oversight of transit agencies. In my written statement I go into a great level of detail on our activities, including the recent procurement systems review of Washington Metro. As the GAO testified before Congress, FTA has improved the quality of its Federal oversight programs since 1992, when the program was placed on GAO's high risk list. FTA came off the list in February 1995, and we have issued guidance for transit financial compliance based on their recommendations.

Coming back to WMATA, WMATA is experiencing the very same challenge faced by all of our grantees serving major metropolitan areas, such as increased demand for transit due to a strong economy, the need to keep pace with their infrastructure, maintenance and rehabilitation programs, and striking a balance in the allocation of local resources to fund the construction of new corridors without affecting the ability to deliver current service.

I want to thank the subcommittee again for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the state of transit nationally and how Washington Metro fits into this picture. We know that this committee and Congress have shown an interest in ensuring that the public dollars used to finance mass transportation systems result in a cleaner, safer, reliable and timely service to all of its customers, and I look forward to working with this committee to ensure that the Federal resources provided achieve the intended benefits.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fernandez follows:]

**Statement of Nuria I. Fernandez  
Acting Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration**

**Before the  
House Committee on Government Reform  
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia**

**October 6, 2000**

Mr. Chairman and Members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on behalf of the Federal Transit Administration regarding the management, operational and budget challenges facing the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. My role today is to provide a Federal and national perspective on the state of the transit industry, the challenges it faces over the next few years, the actions being taken around the country to meet these challenges, and finally, how the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority fits into this overall picture.

**State of Transit:**

The national picture of transit today is indeed one of very good news. All across the country, transit operators are reporting substantial increases in patronage. Last year, for the first time since the beginning of the Federal transit assistance program under President Kennedy, transit ridership in the United States exceeded nine billion passengers, and it continues to grow. These ridership gains are the result of the strong national economy and the resultant increases in the demand for transportation in general, and transit in particular. It is also due to some very hard work by transit managers and employees, and by the investment of substantial financial resources from local and state governments, with considerable Federal assistance. Transit agencies are also increasing

their use of innovative financing techniques and other modern business management practices as part of their financial planning.

**Challenges Facing Transit Agencies:**

As good as all this is, more needs to be done, around the nation, as well as here in Washington. I believe the biggest challenge facing transit agencies all across the country, including WMATA, is finding the resources to meet the increasing demands for transit and assuring that transit infrastructure is up to the task. In late spring, Secretary Slater released our biennial report on the conditions and performance of the nation's surface transportation systems. The Secretary noted that, "Record levels of highway and transit investment, \$34.5 billion in 2000 alone, have greatly improved transportation safety and enhanced system conditions but further progress is necessary in the new century and the new millennium. Public investment in surface transportation is at its highest level ever. This report illustrates how our record levels of investment have paid off in enhanced safety, which is our highest transportation priority, and an improved surface transportation system. The report also makes clear, however, more still needs to be done."

The Secretary noted that the average annual total capital investment required to maintain the same conditions and performance of transit systems as they are today is \$10.8 billion. The annual cost to improve the conditions and performance of transit systems by eliminating deficiencies is estimated to be \$16 billion. Capital spending on transit nationally would need to increase 41 percent from current levels to reach the \$10.8 billion projected cost to maintain transit systems. This difference is expected to decline to 12.9 percent over the life of TEA-21.

Mr. Chairman, of the \$10.8 billion required annually to maintain current conditions and performance, \$7 billion or 65 percent, is needed just to keep up with the rehabilitation and replacement of existing transit infrastructure. The existing Federal program structure and formula works well to assure that these investments are kept in a state of good repair. Mr. Chairman, I need to stress that the 12.9 percent gap by the end of TEA-21 is related to resources needed to maintain the conditions and performance of the nation's transit systems. Some of those systems are 100 years old. Some are brand new. But regardless of their age, every bus, every heavy rail car, every light rail and paratransit vehicle – and the shops and yards that maintain them -- need us to invest in their upkeep everyday so they can perform their function of providing safe, efficient and convenient mobility to the people of America.

**Coping with Challenges:**

How are transit agencies around the country coping with these challenges? First, as Secretary Slater noted, Congress has provided record levels of transportation investment in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and as a result we expect to see a narrowing of the gap between what is needed and what is provided, thus addressing both existing and potential need. One relatively new way for our communities to address their transit demands is to take advantage of the flexibility provided by ISTEA and now TEA-21 in using surface transportation funds for locally determined priorities. I am pleased to note nationally nearly \$1.5 billion was “flexed” in fiscal year 2000, with over \$6 billion flexed since the start of ISTEA. In fact, WMATA received about \$13.3 million in flexed funding in fiscal year 2000.

Congress has also provided a range of innovative finance tools, which, I am happy to report, our nation's transit providers take advantage of in order to meet their need for funds. Here WMATA has also been a leader. WMATA was the first agency to receive a loan guarantee of \$600 million under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), earlier this year. This loan guarantee is intended to expedite WMATA's rehabilitation plans over the next several years.

But perhaps the most important thing for transit agencies to accomplish in order to meet these challenges is to assure stable and reliable state and local sources of funding for capital and operating needs. Many agencies, such as the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), have dedicated sources of funding. For example, BART's capital and operating programs are funded from a variety of formula or dedicated and discretionary federal (capital only), state, and local sources. State funds include general taxes, transit dedicated taxes, and a variety of statewide bond sources that are typically specific to an activity, e.g., construction, vehicle acquisition, or rehabilitation. Local funding sources include a half-cent sales tax in the three county district, property assessments, and other locally programmed funds. Miami Dade Transit Authority relies on appropriations from their state and local governments, together with a small amount from a dedicated gas tax. In contrast, WMATA has no directly dedicated funds and relies on federal sources for capital assistance, and state and local jurisdictions for both capital and operating funds.

**FTA Financial Planning Guidance:**

The most important lesson here is for transit agencies to develop an understanding of their needs and develop plans to deal with them. Recently, we issued new financial

planning guidance dealing with how we would review the financial plans which we require for candidate New Start projects. The guidelines call for a twenty year capital and operating plan which accounts for the costs of operating the transit system, assuring that the capital stock is maintained and upgraded, and providing resources for the New Start investment. The plan is to identify the funding sources already available, and any additional sources that would be needed to bring the plan in balance. Our guidance expects the plan to be complete and assumptions well supported. In commending FTA's improved oversight, the Inspector General's Office, during a congressional hearing last March, pointed out that FTA will not hesitate to reject finance plans and require changes to those plans before giving a stamp of approval. While this guidance applies specifically to New Start projects, the principles apply just as well to any transit agency.

**Transit Performance Measures:**

While FTA does not specify the measures to be used in addressing local performance at the national level, we are bringing service quality measures (such as wait time, system speed, and reliability) into our review of transit performance. We are also developing a better understanding of the benefits that transit produces, by addressing the characteristics of transit users and the kinds (and value) of the trips they are making. Our Transit Performance Monitoring System, now under development, is designed to develop better information in these areas. In addition, we are now in the process of redesigning our basic source of information about transit, the National Transit Database, to better reflect a broader range of measures of transit cost, use, and benefits. Transit agencies all across the country are developing customer-based service standards and doing surveys of

existing (and potential) customers. Transit agencies are also looking to broaden their definition of performance to be more customer oriented.

**FTA's Oversight Role:**

Now let me address FTA's role in overseeing transit agencies in general and WMATA in particular. FTA's primary role is to provide financial and technical assistance. But we also believe that we should work to assure that the funds provided are used as intended. To achieve this latter goal, my Agency undertakes a range of oversight activities focusing on the grantees' effectiveness in following our requirements. It is in this area that FTA has made significant strides in improving our oversight role in order to be careful stewards of the Federal funds we provide. And I am not alone in this belief. Indeed, the General Accounting Office testified last March, "FTA has improved the quality of the federal grants oversight program since the early 1990's . . . for example, FTA improved the guidance and training provided both to its staff and all grantees and developed standardized oversight procedures. FTA has also established a process to target its limited oversight resources. In addition, our ongoing work shows that FTA is improving its oversight of grantees with large-dollar transit projects."

Mr. Chairman, I am quite proud of the progress we have made in this area, and the affirmation of the General Accounting Office to our successes here. We have raised the bar on accountability in use of federal transit assistance. Thus, I think that some of the reports we are now seeing about issues at specific agencies are simply the result of everyone doing a better job to see that procedures are being followed. WMATA, like other transit agencies, is being reviewed more carefully, and being asked to respond more forcefully. In our view, WMATA, like most agencies, is doing a good job in using the

funds we provide. Indeed, WMATA's compliance with FTA requirements is within the range that we have seen at similarly large transit agencies.

Now, let me outline briefly the specific ways in which we review transit agencies' compliance with our requirements. The main focus of this process is in our Triennial Review; however, FTA also conducts other oversight reviews including financial management reviews, project management oversight, and reviews of compliance with current regulations and guidance on drug and alcohol testing, safety, procurement, planning certification reviews, and civil rights.

Triennial Reviews evaluate formula grant management performance and grantees' compliance with FTA and other Federal requirements. The reviews are conducted, at least every three years, by FTA staff and outside contractor teams. When appropriate, corrective actions are recommended to resolve a grantee's program management deficiencies. FTA monitors the grantee's performance until compliance with all program requirements is achieved.

Financial management oversight (FMO) reviews are conducted to provide FTA an oversight tool and the grantees with technical assistance on financial management systems issues. FTA contractors conduct a series of interviews, a review of grantee transactions, and several process and procedural tests. After the review, the contractor expresses an objective, external, independent professional opinion to FTA on the effectiveness of the grantee's internal control environment and FTA decides whether the grantee's financial management systems meet Federal requirements.

Project Management focuses on the management of major investments in transit projects. This activity begins early in project implementation, usually at the time of

preliminary engineering. PMO contractors monitor some \$48 billion in projects, following guidelines established by FTA. They serve to supplement the FTA technical staff to evaluate grantee project management and technical capacity and capability to successfully implement these major transit projects. They also monitor the projects to determine whether they are progressing on time, within budget, and in accord with approved grantee plans and specifications. Other activities are also involved, such as reviews of whether a given design can in fact be constructed, change order reviews, and value engineering.

FTA's oversight for Rail Fixed Guideway Systems safety is conducted through the states. Federal transit law requires that states designate an independent Oversight Agency (OA) to oversee the safety of rail systems not regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration. FTA monitors the states' compliance with the statute and implementing regulations. FTA provides OA's ongoing technical assistance in the form of guidance and training, including an annual workshop, implementation guidelines, and newsletters. Audits guide the states in ensuring that the program is implemented according to standards that they set forth. Still, we feel that this is not enough. For this reason, FTA is actively working on revising its state safety oversight rule to more effectively integrate system safety concepts into the developmental phases of transit projects.

FTA also implements regulations governing substance abuse management programs, under its drug and alcohol testing regulations for transit employees, published in February 1994. The ultimate goal of the program is promoting the transit riding public's health and safety by eliminating illegal drug use and alcohol misuse by transit safety-sensitive employees.

FTA assures compliance with standards for procurements undertaken with Federal funds through a program of procurement system reviews. This involves site visits to ensure that the requirements for grants are met. In fact, in March and April of this year, FTA evaluated the procurement system of WMATA. FTA used the standard procurement system review process that we have employed for over 74 grantees during the last five years. During the course of the review, 101 contracts were reviewed and interviews were conducted with WMATA staff to assess whether WMATA has met the FTA Third Party Contracting requirements. As in all procurement system reviews, WMATA's procurement system was examined against all applicable requirements. The review disclosed 212 deficiencies distributed among 38 of the 51 elements assessed. These results are within the range found in our oversight of other transit agencies of a similar size and breath of operations. WMATA provided an action plan that specifically addressed all of the deficient areas and identified corrective actions to be accomplished within a specified period of time. And we are pleased to report that, to date, WMATA has made significant progress on resolving these deficiencies. Regardless, FTA will assess WMATA by the end of calendar year 2000 to determine whether the areas of deficiency have been fully corrected according to the corrective action plan and to ensure that WMATA has satisfied our Third Party Contracting requirements.

FTA also ensures that grantees' activities are conducted in accordance with Federal Civil Rights requirements for non-discriminatory use of Federal funds by recipients of FTA assistance, including their sub-recipients and contractors. Non-discrimination is ensured through oversight of grantees' implementation of required civil rights statute, regulations and policy. Compliance reviews and assessments are

conducted and complaints from the public are addressed to determine if the grantee's efforts under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (including aspects of Environmental Justice), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) programs, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are in compliance. FTA continues to monitor the implementation of the ADA to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to mass transit services as required by law. FTA enforcement concentrates on three primary areas. These areas are: ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, accessibility of fixed route service, and the accessibility of rail service through the enforcement of the requirements applicable to existing designated key stations as well as those newly built and those undergoing major renovations.

**Challenges Faced by WMATA:**

WMATA faces the very same challenges faced by virtually all of our grantees in major metropolitan areas, such as increasing demand for transit due to a strong economy, the need to keep up with the costs of maintaining the infrastructure, finding sources of funding to handle these needs, and assuring that customers are happy. While WMATA operates in the Nation's Capital, and thus must deal with the Federal government as the single largest employer, in some ways this makes things easier than in markets with many smaller employers. For example, the President's recent Executive Order on Federal Workforce Transportation puts in place a requirement that all Federal agencies in the National Capital Area provide the maximum tax-free transit benefit (now \$65 per month) in addition to regular pay. While adjusting to additional ridership presents a short-term

challenge, the long-term benefit of having the largest employer subsidize transit ridership is a positive development for the entire region.

**Conclusion:**

Mr. Chairman, I thank the subcommittee again for the opportunity to be here today to talk about the state of transit nationally and how WMATA fits into this picture. I am particularly pleased to do so at a time in which transit agencies all across the country are reporting impressive ridership gains, when local, state, and most particularly Federal support for transit is at an all-time high, and when transit agencies across the country are becoming better able to serve their customers. I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Ms. NORTON [presiding]. Thank you, Ms. Fernandez.

Mr. Tober.

Mr. TOBER. Thank you, Madam Congresswoman. Good afternoon, Madam chairman and the members of the subcommittee. The American Public Transportation Association appreciates the opportunity to testify on the challenges facing the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and other public transportation systems. My name is Ron Tober. I am chair and chief executive officer of the Charlotte Area Transit System, and I have worked for a number of other transit agencies during my 31-year career.

The detailed written statement has been submitted by APTA for the record and I will briefly cover its main points for you here today. Before discussing WMATA, let me talk about transit generally and the major challenges that we face. Quite simply, more and more people are choosing to use public transportation. We closed the millennium by breaking the 9 billion passenger mark for the first time in 40 years. Over the last 4 years transit ridership in the United States has grown by 15 percent, and public transportation generates a real return on the Federal, State and local investment. In addition to the 300,000 people employed directly by the \$26 billion a year public transportation industry, thousands of others are employed in the business sector that depend upon transit investment for their livelihood.

Transit removes vehicles from traffic, saving time for both transit and highway users. This helps increase productivity and stimulates the economy. Traffic congestion has reached epidemic proportions, but as bad as it is, imagine what it would be like without public transportation. Regions like Washington, DC, would require nearly 300,000 more cars on their roadways if transit was not in operation in this area.

Transportation experts, however, agree that our capital investments have not kept pace with the annual \$16 billion in transit capital needs that are present in this country. In order to provide alternatives to traffic congestion, it is critical to invest in all forms of surface transportation, including public transportation.

Let me now turn to WMATA, which is an active APTA member organization. The challenges faced by WMATA are common to those faced by transit agencies in most large metropolitan areas. Like every transit agency, WMATA must raise State and locality funding to match Federal capital funds and pay for operating costs that far exceed annual capital costs. All transit agencies struggle to balance the need to fund capital costs, including both capacity expansion and asset maintenance, against the need to fund operating costs that cannot be deferred or avoided.

Another set of challenges involve the changing demographics and the need to provide service to employment centers that are more centrally located. Urban sprawl requires more route miles of public transportation service and the relocation of businesses and suburban communities has spawned suburb to suburb commuting patterns that are harder for transit to serve. This—I'm repeating myself, aren't I? I beg your pardon, Madam Chairman, I've lost my place.

Ms. NORTON. It's all right.

Mr. TOBER. Regarding the challenges that are unique to the Washington area, WMATA operates a combined bus and rail system in a multi-State region which requires the agency to seek State and local funding from multiple jurisdictions. In terms of revenue raised at the State and local level, which is the principal funding source for transit operating costs, WMATA is unusual in that it derives very little of its funding from dedicated revenue sources.

Of the 14 transit systems in major metropolitan areas that operate heavy rail services, WMATA is second to last in dedicated funding, with only Boston's transit system receiving less. WMATA receives less than 5 percent of its State and local operating aid from dedicated sources. In contrast, New York City Transit derives 80 percent of its State and local funding from dedicated sources. In Cleveland nearly 97 percent of State and local funding, or \$148 million, is from dedicated sources.

WMATA compares favorably to transit agencies nationally in revenue that it derives from fares. While the national average is 41.6 percent of operating costs paid by fares, WMATA's fare box recovery ratio is 51.4 percent, nearly 10 percent higher than the national average. WMATA is responding to the challenges that it has with a wide range of innovative practices, including operating later night service, innovative labor contracting, making Metrobus more competitive, and a fare simplification initiative, improving integration of its bus and rail systems with other regional systems.

Transit agencies are subject to a host of performance and oversight measures. The FTA, as you may know, conducts tri-annual reviews of every large transit agency to measure compliance with Federal requirements. It requires transit operators to report a wide variety of information to the national transit data base, and it enforces numerous procurement standards.

APTA has a number of programs to assist its members, including rail and bus safety management programs, a peer review service and a host of technical services.

Finally, every agency must compete for customers and measures itself by the ability to attract and retain riders. Success in doing this is greatly affected by the quality of the service provided, including reliability, cleanliness, security, convenience and other factors.

Public transportation providers are working to address a variety of emerging trends that affect how they serve their customers. Traffic congestion, the cost of motor fuels, clean air mandates are all contributing to increasing demand for public transportation service.

At the same time the demand is rising, transit infrastructure is aging. Despite major increases in TEA-21 for rail modernization funding, aging rail systems struggle to add modern safety features and maintain their systems in a good state of repair. There is not enough Federal investment for urban communities who want to build new rail systems or for rural systems who want public transit service for the first time. Requests in the appropriations process for bus and rail investment far outstrip available funding.

Madam chairman, before I conclude I'd like to make one additional comment. As you can see from my background, I have worked at several transit agencies that have struggled to maintain

aging rail systems. WMATA finds itself very much in that same situation now, and I see what happens when you have a situation like that if you do not maintain those systems properly.

We've made enormous progress in this country and spent a lot of money, a very good amount of money on public transit. While it's not an inexpensive proposition, I would be remiss if I didn't urge the members of this committee to support efforts to address the public's demand for more transit service and proper maintenance of our existing systems.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify before the subcommittee, and thank you and the other witnesses for allowing me to go out of order.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Tober follows.]

STATEMENT OF THE  
AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION  
PRESENTED TO THE  
GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON  
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

\*\*\*\*\*

October 6, 2000

Presented By

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APTA is a nonprofit international association of over 1,300 member organizations including transit systems; planning, design, construction and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical transit services and products. Over ninety percent of persons using public transportation in the United States and Canada are served by APTA members.

### **Introduction**

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) appreciates the opportunity to testify before the Committee on Government Reform's Subcommittee on the District of Columbia on the challenges facing the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and other operators of public transportation systems throughout the United States.

My name is Ron Tober. I am Chair of APTA's Board of Directors. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Charlotte Area Transit System in North Carolina. I served as General Manager of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority from 1988 to 1999. Prior to that I served as Director of Transit for the Municipality of Seattle. I have also worked at transit systems in Miami, Florida, Springfield, Massachusetts, and Boston, Massachusetts.

### ***About APTA***

APTA represents more than 1,300 member organizations that serve the nation by providing safe, efficient, and economical public transportation service, and by working to ensure that transit services and products support national energy, environmental, community, and economic goals. APTA member organizations include transit systems, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions, and state associations and departments of transportation. More than ninety percent of the people who use public transportation in the U.S. are served by APTA member systems.

### ***Public Transportation Today***

Mr. Chairman, before discussing WMATA specifically, let me discuss public transportation generally. First and foremost, more and more people are choosing to use public transportation. Thanks to Congress' investment in the federal transit program, improvements in the transit commuter benefit tax law, and a healthy economy, we closed the millennium by breaking the 9 billion-passenger mark for the first time since there was even a federal transit program in place. Over the last four years, transit ridership in the United States has grown by 15 percent, nearly 4 percent a year. That trend continues in 2000 with preliminary figures indicating ridership will grow at a rate of 4.5 percent this year.

It is not just that transit ridership is up Mr. Chairman, but public transportation generates a real return on the federal, state and local investment. In addition to the 300,000 people employed directly by the \$26 billion-a-year public transportation industry, thousands of other people employed in the engineering, construction, manufacturing and retail industries are dependent upon transit investment for their livelihood. Moreover, a recent study prepared by Cambridge Systematics, Inc., finds that transit capital investment is a significant source of job creation. Every \$10 million of transit capital investment creates approximately 314 jobs and a \$30 million gain in sales for businesses. Furthermore, the changes in travel patterns caused by transit

investment remove vehicles from the traffic stream, saving time for both transit and highway users. The increased productivity caused by this significant timesaving serves to stimulate the economy.

Mr. Chairman, there is no disputing the fact that traffic congestion in the U.S. has reached epidemic proportions. However, as bad as it is, imagine what it would be like without public transportation! Regions like Washington D.C. would require nearly 300,000 more cars on the road without transit. Chicago would need approximately half a million more cars. Who would have thought 20 years ago that places like Memphis, Tennessee, would require between 10,000 and 30,000 extra vehicles if there were no transit?

As noted, Mr. Chairman, transit ridership is up and public transportation delivers significant benefits. However, despite the fact that highway and transit spending has increased under TEA 21, transportation experts agree that our capital investments are still not keeping pace with the annual \$16 billion needed for public transportation infrastructure in the U.S. An unprecedented level of travel is taking place, and will continue to take place, throughout this country. Highway travel is expected to increase 40% over the next 15 years alone. In order to provide alternatives to traffic congestion caused by such growth, it is critical to provide maximum investment for all forms of surface transportation, including public transportation.

***More Investment Needed to Provide Mobility Choices***

Mr. Chairman, problems associated with traffic congestion have become one of the major political issues of our day. The average person need not be reminded of the size of the problem; they are surrounded by it weekdays, weekends, no matter what the time of day. Here in Washington, there have been countless briefings, seminars, conferences and round table discussions focusing on the issue of congestion, and possible solutions to enhancing our mobility.

A study recently released by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) confirms our observations: traffic is bad, and it's getting much worse every year. The study notes that in 1997, congestion cost travelers in 68 urban areas 4.3 billion hours of delay. The financial cost of congestion now exceeds \$72 billion annually, an increase of more than \$6 billion from the previous year. That's the equivalent of \$755 per eligible driver, or \$3 every workday. Cities on top of the list include Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco and Chicago. The Washington, D.C. region, as you probably know, Mr. Chairman, finished 2<sup>nd</sup> among very large cities.

While the TTI study advances a number of possible solutions to America's traffic congestion crisis, one of the core proposals to increase mobility is very clear: offer citizens mobility choices. We believe that public transportation can and will play an enormous role in doing just that.

***Recent Study: People Will Use Quality Public Transit Where it is Available***

The steady increase in ridership figures reported above is consistent with a study released a year ago by Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind of the Free Congress

Foundation. In their report regarding the ability of public transit to get people out of their cars, *Does Transit Work? A Conservative Reappraisal*, they dispel the myth that a large percentage of people choose not to take public transportation. Weyrich and Lind point out that this is simply not the case. The authors explain that measuring transit ridership based on the percentage of total trips taken throughout the United States is simply wrong, and misleading. This is because there are large portions of the U.S. where people do not have the option of taking the bus or the train, because it is not available.

However, when given the choice between taking quality public transportation and driving, many people are more than willing to leave their cars at home. This is especially true with respect to those trips where transit can compete, namely, trips to work and recreation. In fact, in areas of the country where these criteria are met, public transportation use reaches significant levels, even in areas where people are entirely new to public transportation. For example, a recent poll by the *Dallas Morning News* found that 8 out of 10 people said Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is worth the 1% sales tax it collects. That simply wasn't the case only a few years ago.

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude this general summary of public transportation by noting that transit's safety record is excellent compared to other modes of travel. Federal statistics show, for example, that travel by bus or rail is significantly safer than travel by car.

#### **WMATA**

Let me turn now to WMATA issues, Mr. Chairman. WMATA is an active APTA member organization, and shares many of the challenges faced by public transportation agencies across the nation. WMATA's General Manager Richard A. White and numerous WMATA employees have been active in APTA for many years. Mr. White was recently elected to APTA's key governing body, its Executive Committee, as APTA's Secretary-Treasurer, and he has previously served on the Executive Committee as Vice Chair for Management and Finance.

WMATA is a large public transportation system serving an area of 1,500 square miles with a population of 3.4 million. We are proud to note that WMATA is in the top ranks of APTA members in terms of passengers carried. In the first half of 2000, WMATA carried the second largest number of heavy rail passengers in the country, and the sixth largest number of bus passengers. WMATA not only carries passengers but brings significant economic development to the greater Washington area as many studies have shown. WMATA participates fully in APTA's many programs, as I will discuss further.

The challenges faced by WMATA are common to those faced by transit agencies in most large metropolitan areas of the nation. Like every transit agency, WMATA must raise state and local funding to match federal capital assistance and to pay for operating costs that far exceed annual capital costs. In fact, all transit agencies struggle to balance

the need to fund capital costs – including capacity expansion and maintenance – against the need to fund operating costs that cannot be deferred or avoided. Similarly, they must work to address competing service demands throughout their service area and among their bus, rail, and paratransit operations. All of these operating challenges exist in an environment where funding for capital investment – from state, local, and federal government sources – falls well short of capital needs.

#### ***Funding Background***

It may be useful to provide the committee with some context on transit operating and financial requirements. Despite the fact that federal transit funding has increased under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21), FY 2001 federal transit assistance, in real dollars, will be 24% less than the level provided in FY 1981 (\$4.6 in FY 1981 dollars equals more than \$8.6 billion today).

It is important to note that federal funding covers only a small portion of annual transit costs, some 16.5 percent. The federal program is limited to capital assistance for transit operators in large urbanized areas, which are far less than annual operating costs and which must be funded with state and local assistance and fares paid by customers. In 1998, capital spending on public transportation was slightly more than \$7 billion; operating expenses were \$19 billion. This emphasizes the clear importance of state and local investment in public transit.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates that transit capital needs to modestly improve conditions and performance will be \$16 billion annually in 1997 dollars over the next 20 years. This funding addresses the need for transit across the board - new buses and vans, garages and maintenance facilities, rail system improvements, rail vehicles, new rail construction and extensions, and modernization of existing rail systems. The DOT estimate is based on an annual ridership growth rate of only 1.9%. DOT estimates that if passenger trips increase at a rate of 2.85% annually, yearly capital needs would be \$18.4 billion.

#### ***Service Challenges Faced by Transit Agencies***

Public transportation agencies in the U.S. face a wide array of challenges in providing quality service to their customers. Successful transit agencies strive to provide transportation service that goes where the customer needs to be, and is safe, reliable, clean, and affordable. Because transit agencies are public entities, the way they fund and provide their services to the public ensures that they are subject to scrutiny by the many partners and stakeholders in the process. Ultimately, however, transit agencies want satisfied customers, and lots of them.

One of the biggest challenges that transit agencies face in providing good quality service is the general lack of adequate infrastructure investment. As traffic congestion has gotten worse and transit ridership and demand for service has increased in recent years, transit agencies have struggled to keep pace with the costs of providing more

service. Increased ridership is a goal for every agency, because it is one of the best indicators that the community wants and needs the service. But, since the average fare covers only 41% of a system's operating costs -- excluding capital costs -- service increases requires more funding from state and local sources. Service increases often result in higher maintenance costs and can also result in equipment wearing out more quickly, which in turn adds to capital costs. If increased service requires adding rail cars to trains, or more buses to a route, or paratransit vans to service for disabled people, agencies must search for a source of additional capital funding. This all takes time. Major capital investments must be part of a local transportation implementation plan, are subject to a lengthy review process, and the actual procurement process requires a fairly long lead time. If service expansion involves construction of new rail lines, dedicated busways, a significant number of new buses, or large-scale fueling facilities or garages, the lead time, the public review process, and the financing become even more challenging.

As noted previously, funding from all sources is short of identified capital needs. Congress has supported increased investment in the public transportation infrastructure, in both TEA 21 and in annual appropriations bills. TEA 21 authorizes funding for some 200 new rail projects, as well as increasing funding for other elements of the federal transit program, including rail modernization and buses. Yet even these programs do not satisfy the public's demand for new services. Requests for new rail funding and discretionary bus earmarks in the annual appropriations process, which far exceed available funding, reflect the demand for transit service across the nation.

Another key set of challenges involve changing demographics and the need to provide service in expanding metropolitan areas with many employment centers that are not centrally located. Urban sprawl requires more route miles of public transportation service, and the relocation of businesses in suburban communities has spawned so-called "suburb to suburb" commuting patterns that are harder for transit to serve. All of these factors pose a service challenge for transit agencies with budget limitations. Furthermore, new services must be reasonably well distributed within an agency's overall service area. Transit agencies cannot increase service to one part of a system, at the expense of service to another area, without offending funding partners and board members who represent constituencies within the overall service area.

#### ***Unique Challenges Faced by WMATA***

WMATA operates a combined bus and heavy rail system in a multi-state region, which requires the agency to seek state and local funding from multiple jurisdictions and to operate under a governing board that includes representatives of those different jurisdictions. Another one of the impacts of operating in a multi-state region, which is also the case in New York City and Philadelphia, is that the agency must make its capital investment and service decisions in a way that satisfies the different political jurisdictions or regions. Moreover, WMATA is different than some rail properties in that it continues to build and expand its existing rail system at the same time that much of that system is aging.

In terms of revenue raised at the state and local level, which is the principal funding source for transit operating funds, WMATA is unusual in that it derives very little of its funding from dedicated revenue sources. Of the 14 transit systems in major metropolitan areas that operate heavy rail, WMATA is second to last in dedicated funding, with only Boston's transit system receiving less dedicated funding. WMATA derives less than 5% of its state and local operating aid from dedicated sources. In contrast, New York City Transit derives 80% of its state and local funding, some \$864 million annually, from dedicated sources. In Cleveland, nearly 97% of state and local funding - \$148 million - is from dedicated sources, with the lion's share derived from locally dedicated sources. Of the \$300 million WMATA received in state and local assistance in 1999, it received only \$14 million from dedicated sources. In conclusion, this makes it harder for WMATA to make long range investment decisions due to the somewhat unpredictable nature of its local funding sources.

Additionally, WMATA compares favorably to transit agencies nationally in the amount of revenue it derives from fares. While the national average is 41.6% of operating costs paid by fares, WMATA's farebox recovery ratio is 51.4%, nearly 11% higher than the national average.

WMATA is responding to these challenges with a range of innovative practices, including operating late night service; innovative approaches to labor contracts, making Metrobus even more competitive; and a fare simplification structure, improving integration among its bus and rail systems and other regional transit systems.

#### ***Lessons Learned – Best Practices***

APTA constantly works to be a forum for the exchange of information on best practices in the public transportation industry. Through its comprehensive committee structure and meeting schedule, APTA strives to provide its members unlimited networking, research, educational and professional development opportunities. One of the key elements of APTA's mission statement is to serve its membership through "information sharing to strengthen and expand public transportation." Improving safety and security for public transportation riders is also one of APTA's strategic goals. Virtually every one of the five major meetings and multiple smaller meetings that APTA convenes each year includes sessions on how to deal effectively with financial, operational, and management challenges.

WMATA employees and board members have been frequent participants in APTA meetings, both as presenters and attendees. At APTA's most recent Annual Meeting, a WMATA employee made a presentation on the agency's program to promote the use of the transit commuter benefit, which allows workers in the public and private sectors to receive tax benefits for commuting on transit similar to those provided for parking. WMATA has one of the most sophisticated fare collection systems in the nation, employing both magnetic fare cards and the so-called "SmartTrip" system, which will allow customers to pay for and receive fare media electronically. It has also set the

industry standard for promoting transit use by federal employees in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

But while every transit agency learns from the experience of other agencies, each community must make independent decisions on the types of transit service they provide, the level of service (hours of service, weekend service, etc), and the cost of their service to the customer.

#### ***Customer Surveys***

For transit agencies, as in other service industries, increases in customer satisfaction translate into retained markets, newly attracted customers, and a more positive image. In that regard, public transportation agencies conduct numerous surveys and use other methods to measure customer satisfaction and service quality. Research from the federally funded Transit Cooperative Research Program is available to help transit systems on a range of issues, including customer satisfaction. A good example is a 1999 study by Morpace International with Cambridge Systematics, Inc., *A Handbook for Measuring Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality, TCRP Report 47*. One of the most telling indicators of customer satisfaction, however, is whether people choose to use local transit service, and by this standard WMATA is successful. Ridership at WMATA continues to grow and use in densely populated areas of the service area is high.

Moreover, the management of virtually every transit system in the country is guided by a board of directors that oversees operations and makes decisions on service levels and other matters.

The public is involved in many ways in transit projects. The dedication of specific tax revenues, the issuance of bonds, and other financing mechanisms for such projects are often subject to approval by voters in a community. Federal requirements on the development of local transportation plans, which dictate how federal funds are spent, mandate public participation in the planning process. No major capital project can move forward unless it is part of a state and local transportation implementation plan. Every rail and bus project must have local support in the form of at least 20% of funding from state or local sources, and most rail projects now have local matches well in excess of the minimum 20%.

#### ***Performance Measures***

Transit agencies are subject to a host of performance or oversight measures, many of which are required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FTA conducts triennial reviews of every large transit agency to measure compliance with many federal requirements; requires transit operators to report a wide variety of information to the National Transit Database; and enforces numerous federal requirements on the procurement of goods and services and other matters.

The FTA mandates state safety oversight programs for rail operations and it requires transit agencies that are constructing new rail lines to provide for project management oversight from funding provided for construction to monitor and oversee the construction process. Rail transit agencies often measure the reliability of their rail car maintenance programs by measuring the miles between breakdowns in their overall system. Again, reports and studies from the Transit Cooperative Research Program are available to help transit systems around the country. These include, for example, reports on bus evaluation standards, and bus maintenance performance.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, one of the key services provided by APTA is the APTA Peer Review service that addresses any aspect of public transportation. Coordinated by APTA, a panel of subject matter experts from peer transit agencies will convene by request at a public transit system to conduct brief intensive reviews. Further, APTA and its members acknowledge that safety is our first consideration in our delivery of service and in our work environments. In support of this commitment to safety, APTA offers our industry specialized services to assist our members in creating even safer environments for riders and employees. The APTA Rail, Bus and Commuter Rail Safety Management Programs establish the industry standard to enable transit systems to build effective and efficient safety management programs and to demonstrate safety diligence and through evaluation by APTA's professional safety audit team. I am pleased to note that WMATA has been a full and active participant in APTA's bus and rail safety audit programs and has taken full advantage of APTA's Peer Review service to enhance its level of safety and operational effectiveness.

Finally, every agency measures itself by its ability to attract and retain riders, which is affected by the quality of the service, including reliability, cleanliness, security, convenience, price, and other factors.

### *Emerging Trends*

Public transportation providers in the United States are working to address a variety of emerging trends that affect how they deliver services. Traffic congestion, the cost of motor fuels, and clean air mandates are all contributing to increasing ridership and demand for public transportation service. The revitalization of cities and development of high density housing in the inner suburbs also adds to demand. For those who choose to live further away from their jobs, commuter rail service is an attractive option.

Transit operators have been involved in providing job access for individuals who move off the welfare rolls and joining the workforce. Local transit agencies are trying to provide service for people who commute from one suburb to work in another. Urban sprawl and the dispersal of employment centers outside central business districts has made it more difficult to provide service with large buses and rail.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has affected how transit agencies serve people with disabilities. It requires transit agencies to purchase buses and other equipment that makes it easier for people with physical disabilities to use public

transportation facilities. It requires the purchase of lift-equipped buses, some retrofitting of rail stations, and the provision of comparable paratransit service for those who cannot use fixed-route bus service. The ADA and new federal coordination guidelines have gotten transit agencies more involved in the provision of transportation service to health and human service agency clients. The transit industry is preparing for the aging of the baby boom and the prospect of providing service to more elderly people.

At the same time that demand is rising, transit infrastructure is aging. Despite major increases in TEA 21 for fixed guideway modernization funding, aging rail systems struggle to add modern safety features and maintain their systems in a good state of repair. There is not enough federal investment for urban communities that want to build new rail systems and rural communities that want public transit service for the first time. Requests in the appropriations process for bus and rail investment far outstrip the funding levels set in the authorization bill or available in the annual funding cycle. State and local governments are stepping up to the plate by overmatching federal funds and using innovative forms of financing, but still the demand grows.

#### ***Conclusion***

The public transportation industry is working industriously to effectively serve a growing number of people in a changing world. We appreciate the fact that Congress has recognized the increasing demand for transit service and the many national and local benefits that transit provides by increasing federal investment. We believe strongly that transit is an important element of a balanced transportation system, that it reduces pressure on expensive highway capacity expansion in metropolitan areas, and makes our existing transportation infrastructure work better. Public transportation is essential to the economic health and effective functioning of our large metropolitan regions and other areas.

Mr. Chairman, we thank you for this opportunity to testify before the subcommittee and we would be happy to respond to any additional questions the subcommittee may have. Please note that Appendix A to this testimony lists some recent reports on the benefits of public transit.

## APPENDIX A

Following are brief summaries of recent reports demonstrating public transportation's effectiveness. Additional studies and research reports are available from a variety of sources, most notably the Transportation Research Board's Transit Cooperative Research Program.

Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind. *Does Transit Work? A Conservative Reappraisal*. Washington, DC: Free Congress Foundation, 1999. The report notes that total trips is a poor yardstick with which to measure the effectiveness of public transit. Instead, the authors propose a new measurement: transit competitive trips. By asking what percentage transit carries of the trips for which it can compete, the result accords much more closely with the real importance of transit in urban areas. The study applies the measurement to three transit systems and shows that, when measured correctly, transit works. In the report's Foreword, Wisconsin Governor Tommy G. Thompson states, "read [this report] and I think you'll see why even conservative state governors want more and better public transit, not less."

*Public Transportation and the Nation's Economy: A Quantitative Analysis of Public Transportation's Economic Impact*. Washington, DC: Cambridge Systematics with Glen Weisbrod Associates, Inc., 1999. The report demonstrates that transit capital investment and operations spending provide a significant source of job creation. Further, businesses benefit significantly from such investments. Indeed, the findings of the report reflect studies of local economic impacts, which carry a positive message that builds upon the body of evidence that shows transit is a sound public investment. Local studies have shown benefit/cost ratios as high as 9 to 1.

Donald H. Camph. *Dollars and Sense: The Economic Case for Public Transportation in America*. Washington, DC: The Campaign for Efficient Passenger Transportation, 1997. The report shows that public transportation benefits not just those who use it but even larger benefits accrue to motorists, business and society in general, and notes that more and more areas are choosing to make public transit an essential element of their strategic transportation investment portfolio. Moreover, it shows that in those areas where such investments have been made, ridership has grown and the economic benefits to those communities have risen accordingly.

Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind. *Conservatives and Mass Transit: Is It Time for a New Look?* Washington, DC: Free Congress Foundation, 1996. The report shows that public transit can serve important conservative goals, including economic development, moving people off welfare and into productive jobs, and strengthening feelings of community.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Tober. We appreciate you being here.

Ms. Mack.

Ms. MACK. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Norton. With me today are the Honorable Decatur Trotter, Prince Georges County, MD, the first vice chairman of the Board, and the Honorable Christopher Zimmerman of Arlington, VA, the second vice chairman. They have already been introduced to you. On behalf of the Board I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today to talk about our transit system.

The unique Federal-regional partnership which created and supports the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has endured for nearly half a century, and together we have created the finest transit system in the Nation, providing quality transit service for the National Capital Region, Federal employees, tourists and visitors from all over the country and the world.

The WMATA compact enabling legislation specifies how Board members are appointed, how the Authority is financed, and how we procure goods and services. WMATA's 12 Board members represent those jurisdictions that finally participate in funding Metro. The compact also mandates consensus in that all actions of the Board require an affirmative vote from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, the compact signatories. Jurisdictions covered under the WMATA compact are the District of Columbia, Montgomery and Prince Georges County, MD, Fairfax County, Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax City, Falls Church and Loudoun County, VA.

Our efforts are a case study in making regionalism work. In January 2001 the last segment of the original 103-mile rail system will open from Anacostia to Branch Avenue. In March we will observe the 25th anniversary of Metrorail. It is a time for celebration by those in the Congress, the Federal Government and the region who have worked so hard to bring us to this point.

Transit ridership is at an all time high and customer demand continues to grow. Each weekday 18 percent of total work trips are made on transit and 40 percent of total work trips to the inner core are made on transit. With over 340,000 Federal employees located in this area, 36 percent of our rail customers are Federal workers. In addition, Metro serves many of the region's 21 million visitors each year and large numbers of people attending special events in the Nation's capital. No other transit system in the country is called upon to regularly handle such events.

In meeting the challenges of increasing ridership and a maturing system, the Board and staff are doing everything within our power to ensure that our riders have a safe, efficient and affordable transit system. Over the years the Board has engaged in active oversight of the Authority. In addition to our policymaking role, the Board conducts detailed performance reviews, monitors financial statements, ridership trends, operations reliability, and customer feedback, and we direct changes where indicated.

We have also emphasized fiscal prudence and have implemented programs to assure that budget growth is reasonably contained. The Board's Budget Committee annually conducts detailed budget proceedings, which include the establishment of budget guidance

for the general manager, review and comment by participating jurisdictions and the chief administrative officers of the region. Before the budget is approved by the Board it must be concurred in by all member jurisdictions.

These authorities are also subject to oversight by a number of outside agencies, including the Federal Transit Administration, the National Transportation Safety Board and the Tri-State Oversight Committee.

I would just like to take a few minutes to focus on some of our funding challenges. Chart 1 shows that approximately 54 percent of WMATA's 2001 operating budget will be covered by fares paid from our customers. This reflects a 69 percent cost recovery on the rail system, the second best in the country. In some months rail recovery is in the high 70's and for the month of July this year it was 81 percent, a record for WMATA. These recovery rates have steadily increased despite the fact that we have not had a fare increase in 5 years. We can also say that we will not have a fare increase in 2002. Approximately 40 percent of the 2001 budget will be paid for by \$366 million in subsidies from the District and the Maryland and Virginia participating jurisdictions.

Chart 2 shows that of the \$9.4 billion cost of the 103-mile Metro-rail system, approximately 67 percent was funded by Federal appropriations and the remainder was funded by State and local jurisdictions. We are proud that the last 13½ miles of the construction program were completed ahead of schedule and under budget.

The last chart, chart 3 shows our 2001 infrastructure renewal program, or capital improvements program, of \$170 million, which is needed to purchase and rehabilitate rail cars and buses and to refurbish facilities. Approximately 76 percent of WMATA's infrastructure funding comes from TEA-21, with the remainder from State and local sources. Annual funding levels of \$445 million are required to maintain adequate rolling stock and to refurbish our physical plant. Of this amount, \$180 million is currently unfunded. TEA-21 expires in fiscal year 2003, and we hope that Federal funding will increase when the bill is reauthorized.

Adequate Federal funding is needed to help sustain the Metro system. At the same time it is imperative that the region step up to the task and continue to contribute its share of Metro's infrastructure renewal cost.

Finally, the Federal Government and the region have created the finest transit system in the Nation. But we find ourselves at the crossroads that other older systems have experienced. We must now garner the support needed to protect our enormous investment. We cannot stand by and allow our system to decline to a point where it cannot meet the demands placed upon it, as has happened in cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Boston. As we look to the future, we must be prepared for the dynamic changes that are occurring in our region.

In 1999, the Board adopted an ambitious 25-year service expansion plan with a goal of doubling transit ridership. We are now working with the region and the Federal Government on our first expansion beyond the 103-mile system, including a new station at New York Avenue in the District and extension along the Dulles Corridor and to Largo Town Center. We must all work together to

look for ways to meet the funding challenges presented by our need to preserve and protect the magnificent system and to expand both the rail and the bus systems to serve the demands of this growing region.

On behalf of the WMATA Board, I commit to you that we will continue the close partnership with the region and the Federal Government to operate a transit system worthy of the Nation's capital. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Mack follows:]

**STATEMENT OF  
GLADYS W. MACK  
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**OCTOBER 6, 2000**

GOOD AFTERNOON, CHAIRMAN DAVIS AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE. I AM GLADYS W. MACK, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY. WITH ME TODAY IS THE HONORABLE DECATUR TROTTER, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. MR. TROTTER SERVED IN THE MARYLAND SENATE AND HOUSE, AND ALSO AS MAYOR OF GLENARDEN, MARYLAND. ALSO JOINING ME IS THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER ZIMMERMAN, SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD. MR. ZIMMERMAN IS A MEMBER OF THE ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD AND HAS SERVED AS CHAIRMAN OF THAT BOARD.

WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REPRESENT THE WMATA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE REGION BEFORE YOUR SUBCOMMITTEE THIS AFTERNOON. THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA) IS IN MANY WAYS "THE REGION". WE ARE A UNIQUE MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL OPERATING ENTITY. WE CUT ACROSS STATE BOUNDARIES AND MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON REGIONAL CONSENSUS. OUR DECISIONS HAVE AN IMPACT ON LONG TERM REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES AND DAY-TO-DAY TRANSIT SERVICE. WE MUST WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENTS TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION.

THIS REGION IS VERY PROUD OF THE WORLD CLASS TRANSIT SYSTEM WE HAVE CREATED. EACH WEEKDAY ON AVERAGE, 18% OF TOTAL WORK TRIPS ARE

MADE ON TRANSIT IN THE WMATA SERVICE TERRITORY, WITH 40% OF TOTAL WORK TRIPS TO THE INNER CORE MADE ON TRANSIT. IF THE METRORAIL SYSTEM HAD NOT BEEN BUILT, THIS REGION WOULD HAVE HAD TO BUILD THE EQUIVALENT OF AN ADDITIONAL 32 LANES OF HIGHWAY TRAFFIC TO MOVE THE SAME NUMBER OF PEOPLE AS METRO DOES IN THE PEAK ONE HOUR OF THE RUSH PERIOD. THIS WOULD BE A ONE THIRD INCREASE OVER THE NUMBER OF COMMUTER LANES CURRENTLY SERVING THE REGIONAL CORE. CLEARLY, WE WOULD NO LONGER BE NUMBER TWO IN THE COUNTRY IN TERMS OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION; WITHOUT METRO, WE WOULD BE NUMBER ONE AND IN A CLASS OF OUR OWN!

I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ASSURE THE SUBCOMMITTEE, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND THE PUBLIC THAT THE WMATA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF TAKE OUR MISSION AND RESPONSIBILITIES VERY SERIOUSLY. WE ARE A PUBLIC AGENCY CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC DOLLARS. OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY IS SAFETY AND MAKING SURE THAT OUR CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE A SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO TRAVEL AND WORK. WE STRIVE TO PROVIDE OUR SERVICES WITH THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE DEGREE OF RELIABILITY AND COMFORT. WE ALSO TAKE OUR FISCAL AND FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITIES VERY SERIOUSLY. WE ARE COMMITTED TO SPENDING TAXPAYERS' DOLLARS WISELY.

WMATA CHARTER

BEFORE DISCUSSING OUR FUNDING AND FISCAL PERFORMANCE, I WOULD LIKE TO DESCRIBE THE UNIQUE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE UNDER WHICH WMATA OPERATES. FOR OVER FOUR DECADES THE REGION HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSIT WORTHY OF OUR NATION'S CAPITAL. THIS PARTNERSHIP HAS ENABLED THE AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT THE MANDATE FIRST STATED AND ENACTED BY CONGRESS IN THE 1952 NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING ACT; TO CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FOR THE NATION'S CAPITAL. IN 1960, CONGRESS ENACTED THE NATIONAL CAPITAL TRANSPORTATION ACT (NCTA) WHICH AUTHORIZED MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT TO NEGOTIATE AN INTERSTATE COMPACT TO PROVIDE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES. THIS ACT RECOGNIZED THE NECESSITY OF CONTINUING FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BY DECLARING THAT THE "CREATION OF CERTAIN MAJOR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES ARE BEYOND THE FINANCIAL CAPABILITY . . . OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF THE REGION."

IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT THE MANDATE OF THE NCTA, WMATA WAS CREATED IN 1967 AS AN INTERSTATE COMPACT AGENCY, BETWEEN THE STATE OF MARYLAND, THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

AND APPROVED BY THE CONGRESS. AS AN INTERSTATE AGENCY, WMATA IS NOT UNIQUE IN THIS COUNTRY. THERE ARE A FEW OTHER TRANSIT INTERSTATE COMPACT AGENCIES, SUCH AS THE BI-STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION IN ST. LOUIS AND THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY. OF THESE COMPACT AGENCIES, WMATA IS THE ONLY TRANSIT AGENCY THAT SERVES AN AREA AS LARGE AND DIVERSE AS TWO STATES, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND THE FEDERAL ENCLAVE.

ARTICLE II OF THE 1967 COMPACT DEFINES THE PURPOSE OF WMATA: "...TO PLAN, DEVELOP, FINANCE AND CAUSE TO BE OPERATED IMPROVED TRANSIT FACILITIES...". WHILE OUR INITIAL MISSION WAS CENTERED ON THE CREATION OF A RAIL SYSTEM, IN 1973 THE COMPACT WAS AMENDED TO INCLUDE RESPONSIBILITY "...TO COORDINATE THE OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATELY OWNED OR CONTROLLED TRANSIT FACILITIES...", SPECIFICALLY BUSES.

WMATA WAS THE SECOND IN A WAVE OF CONSTRUCTION OF NEW RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN THIS COUNTRY, AFTER A CONSIDERABLE HIATUS. PRIOR TO THE 1970'S, THE LAST RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM BUILT WAS IN CLEVELAND IN THE 1920'S. IN 1972, THE BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM IN CALIFORNIA OPENED, FOLLOWED BY WMATA IN 1976, AND THEN ATLANTA, MIAMI, BUFFALO AND BALTIMORE.

THE WMATA COMPACT IS OUR ENABLING LEGISLATION. IT SPECIFIES HOW OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS APPOINTED, HOW WE ARE FINANCED, HOW WE PROCURE GOODS AND SERVICES, THE JURISDICTION AND DUTIES OF OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON HOW WE CONDUCT OUR DAILY BUSINESS.

THE WMATA BOARD HAS A TOTAL OF TWELVE MEMBERS, TWO FROM EACH JURISDICTIONAL SIGNATORY, WITH TWO ALTERNATE DIRECTORS. SECTION 5 OF THE WMATA COMPACT SPECIFIES HOW THE AUTHORITY IS GOVERNED AND HOW THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ARE TO BE APPOINTED. THE AUTHORITY IS GOVERNED BY A BOARD OF SIX VOTING DIRECTORS, TWO FROM EACH SIGNATORY, WITH TWO ALTERNATE DIRECTORS FROM EACH SIGNATORY WHO MAY ACT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE DIRECTOR FOR WHOM HE OR SHE HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS AN ALTERNATE. THE SIX DIRECTORS AND SIX ALTERNATE DIRECTORS COMPRISE THE BOARD OF TWELVE.

FOR VIRGINIA, THE DIRECTORS ARE APPOINTED BY THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PARTICIPATING VIRGINIA COUNTIES AND CITIES. TWO MEMBERS REPRESENT FAIRFAX COUNTY, ONE MEMBER REPRESENTS ARLINGTON COUNTY AND ONE MEMBER REPRESENTS ALEXANDRIA. FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TWO

MEMBERS REPRESENT THE MAYOR AND TWO MEMBERS REPRESENT THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF COUNCIL ARE CHOSEN FROM AMONG ITS MEMBERS, WITH ALL FOUR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA REPRESENTATIVES REQUIRING THE APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL. FOR MARYLAND, TWO REPRESENTATIVES ARE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR (WITH THE CONSENT OF THE STATE SENATE) FROM AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE WASHINGTON SUBURBAN TRANSIT COMMISSION, AND TWO REPRESENTATIVES ARE APPOINTED BY THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE OF MONTGOMERY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTIES (WITH THE CONSENT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNCILS). THE MEMBERS SERVE FOR A TERM COINCIDENT WITH THEIR TERM ON THE APPOINTING BODY. ACTIONS BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS REQUIRES AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE FROM EACH JURISDICTION. THIS FORMULA HAS WORKED WELL FOR THE PAST QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

THE BOARD MEETS, AS A WHOLE, EVERY TWO WEEKS, AND BOARD COMMITTEES MEET EVERY WEEK TO CONSIDER BUDGET, SAFETY, OPERATIONS, SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION, AND REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES. THE BOARD TAKES ITS OVERSIGHT FUNCTION VERY SERIOUSLY. BECAUSE WMATA WORKS CLOSELY WITH MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TWO COUNTIES AND THREE CITIES IN VIRGINIA, TWO COUNTIES AND NUMEROUS MUNICIPALITIES IN MARYLAND, AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THERE IS A RICH DIVERSITY OF OPINION, BACKGROUND, AND EXPERIENCE

REPRESENTED ON OUR BOARD. THIS DIVERSITY PROMOTES AN EXCEPTIONALLY INTENSE LEVEL OF OVERSIGHT AND REVIEW TO WHICH THE GENERAL MANAGER AND HIS STAFF ARE SUBJECTED. POLICY ISSUES ARE THOROUGHLY AIRED AND OFTEN DEBATED AS THE BOARD STRIVES FOR THE CONSENSUS NECESSARY TO TAKE ACTION.

IN ADDITION, THE AUTHORITY IS SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT BY A NUMBER OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES INCLUDING:

- FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (COVERING NUMEROUS AREAS OF OVERSIGHT);
- NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD (SAFETY, ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION);
- TRI-STATE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (SAFETY OVERSIGHT BY JOINT COMMITTEE OF VIRGINIA, MARYLAND AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA REPRESENTATIVES); AND
- AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION (APTA) PEER REVIEWS AND SAFETY AUDITS

SERVING THE FEDERAL CITY

OVER 340,000 FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ARE LOCATED IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AREA AND BENEFIT FROM THE PRESENCE OF METRORAIL AND METROBUS. OF METRORAIL'S DAILY RIDERSHIP, 36% ARE FEDERAL WORKERS

WHO RELY ON THE SYSTEM TO MAKE THEIR DAILY COMMUTE TO AND FROM WORK. IN FACT, THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REQUIRES THAT THE AVAILABILITY OF ADEQUATE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BE CONSIDERED WHEN CHOOSING LOCATIONS FOR FEDERAL FACILITIES. AT PRESENT, HALF OF ALL METRORAIL STATIONS SERVE FEDERAL FACILITIES.

APPROXIMATELY 21 MILLION VISITORS ON BUSINESS OR PLEASURE VISIT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION EACH YEAR AND MANY OF THEM DEPEND UPON METRORAIL AND METROBUS TO TRAVEL AROUND THE AREA. THE TRANSPORTATION LINKS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, ITS EMPLOYEES AND VISITORS AND THE METRORAIL AND METROBUS SYSTEM ARE SO INTERTWINED THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE WHERE ONE BEGINS AND THE OTHER ENDS.

METRO ROUTINELY PROVIDES SERVICE FOR EXTRAORDINARY CROWDS DRAWN TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL FOR SPECIAL EVENTS SUCH AS INAUGURATIONS, DEMONSTRATIONS, MARCHES AND CELEBRATIONS. FOR THE 1993 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL, METRO CARRIED OVER 800,000 TRIPS IN ONE DAY, SURPASSING OTHER RECORD-BREAKING TRANSIT RIDERSHIP EVENTS SUCH AS THE DESERT STORM PARADE, THE MILLION MAN MARCH, AND THE PROMISE KEEPERS EVENT. NO OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY IS CALLED UPON TO REGULARLY HANDLE SUCH EVENTS.

WMATA FUNDING STRUCTUREOPERATIONS

THE COMPACT DOES NOT GIVE WMATA ANY INDEPENDENT TAXING AUTHORITY. THIS MEANS THAT EACH YEAR THE TRANSIT AUTHORITY HAS GREAT DIFFICULTY PLANNING BECAUSE THE AUTHORITY DEPENDS ON ANNUAL FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL APPROPRIATIONS TO COVER ANY COSTS IN EXCESS OF REVENUES. I WOULD LIKE TO DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO *CHART 1* WHICH SHOWS HOW WMATA'S DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS ARE FINANCED. APPROXIMATELY 53.5% OF WMATA'S APPROVED FY2001 \$728.5 MILLION OPERATING BUDGET, WHICH INCLUDES WAGES, ELECTRIC POWER TO RUN THE TRAINS, FUEL FOR THE BUSES, AND OTHER SIMILAR EXPENSES, IS EXPECTED TO BE COVERED WITH FARES PAID BY THE RIDING PUBLIC, PARKING FEES, ADVERTISING REVENUES, AND OTHER REVENUES. THIS COST RECOVERY RATIO REFLECTS A 69.2% COST RECOVERY ON THE RAIL SYSTEM, THE SECOND BEST IN THE COUNTRY. I SHOULD NOTE THAT IN SOME MONTHS OUR RECOVERY RATIO IS IN THE HIGH 70S, AND FOR THE MONTH OF JULY THIS YEAR, IT WAS 81%, A RECORD FOR WMATA. OUR COST RECOVERY RATIO ON THE BUS SYSTEM, WHICH IS MORE LABOR INTENSIVE, IS EXPECTED TO BE 35.9%, ABOUT AVERAGE FOR BUS SYSTEMS IN THIS COUNTRY.

ANY FUNDING FOR OPERATIONS THAT IS NOT RECOVERED FROM OPERATING REVENUES IS PAID FOR BY CONTRIBUTIONS TOTALING APPROXIMATELY \$338.8 MILLION FROM MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT. AS YOU KNOW, FEDERAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE TO AREAS OVER 200,000 IN POPULATION ENDED.

CONSTRUCTION

CHART 2 SHOWS HOW CONSTRUCTION OF THE 103-MILE METRORAIL SYSTEM WAS FUNDED. OF THE TOTAL \$9.4 BILLION COST, APPROXIMATELY 67.5% WAS PAID FOR BY FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS, WITH THE REMAINDER FUNDED BY MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. THE \$6.4 BILLION CONTRIBUTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR METRORAIL CONSTRUCTION WAS BASED ON DIRECT APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE GENERAL FUND, RATHER THAN THE TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND AS RAIL TRANSIT CONSTRUCTION ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY IS FINANCED. I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE THAT WE HAVE CALCULATED THAT IF THE METRORAIL SYSTEM WERE BUILT TODAY IT WOULD COST \$22 BILLION TO CONSTRUCT.

WE ARE VERY PROUD THAT THE 103-MILE METRORAIL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM IS GOING TO BE FINISHED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND WELL WITHIN BUDGET. ON JANUARY 13, 2001, WE WILL OPEN RAIL SERVICE FROM ANACOSTIA IN THE DISTRICT TO BRANCH AVENUE IN PRINCE GEORGE'S

COUNTY, THE LAST SEGMENT OF THE 103-MILE ADOPTED REGIONAL SYSTEM. OUR FAST TRACK CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM, COVERING THE LAST 13.5 MILES OF THE RAIL SYSTEM, HAS BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL THAT WE ARE DELIVERING THESE SEGMENTS \$260 MILLION, OR 12% UNDER BUDGET. WE ARE USING THE SAVINGS TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL RAIL CARS AND BUILD A RAIL MAINTENANCE YARD, THAT WOULD OTHERWISE NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

AS COMPLETION OF THE 103-MILE SYSTEM NEARS, THE REGION HAS BEGUN TO PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. IN APRIL OF 1999, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPTED AN AMBITIOUS SERVICE EXPANSION PLAN WITH THE GOAL OF DOUBLING TRANSIT RIDERSHIP IN THE NEXT 25 YEARS. THIS IS OUR FIRST UPDATED EXPANSION PLAN SINCE THE ORIGINAL SYSTEM PLAN WAS ADOPTED OVER 30 YEARS AGO. WE ARE NOW WORKING WITH THE REGION AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON PLANS FOR OUR FIRST EXPANSION BEYOND THE 103-MILE SYSTEM, INCLUDING EXPANSION OF THE SYSTEM AT NEW YORK AVENUE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW IN-FILL STATION, ALONG THE DULLES CORRIDOR IN VIRGINIA AND TO LARGO TOWN CENTER IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY IN MARYLAND. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THESE ADDITIONS AND EXTENSIONS WILL BE FUNDED IN A DIFFERENT MANNER THAN THE INITIAL 103 MILES, WITH WMATA COMPETING IN THE NATIONAL FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION DISCRETIONARY "NEW STARTS" PROGRAM, RATHER THAN RECEIVING SPECIAL GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS EARMARKED FOR METRORAIL CONSTRUCTION.

**INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL**

WMATA MAINTAINS AND OPERATES THE SECOND LARGEST RAIL AND SIXTH LARGEST BUS SYSTEM IN AMERICA, MEASURED IN TERMS OF RIDERSHIP. A SIZEABLE CAPITAL INVESTMENT HAS BEEN MADE BY FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND EVERY EFFORT MUST BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT THIS INVESTMENT IS MAINTAINED TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD. WE OWE IT TO OUR CUSTOMERS, EMPLOYEES, AND FUNDING PARTNERS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL OF SAFE, CLEAN, RELIABLE SERVICE.

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAM IS USED TO PURCHASE AND REHABILITATE RAIL CARS AND BUSES, AND TO REFURBISH OR REPLACE THE SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES THAT COMPRISE OUR VERY LARGE PHYSICAL PLANT.

AS *CHART 3* SHOWS, APPROXIMATELY \$129.9 MILLION OR 76.6 PERCENT OF WMATA'S FUNDING FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAM IN FISCAL 2001 COMES FROM FEDERAL SOURCES, AND \$39.7 MILLION OR 23.4 PERCENT FROM STATE AND LOCAL FUNDING, FOR A TOTAL OF \$169.6 MILLION.

THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY EXPIRES IN 2003. WHILE WE HOPE THAT FEDERAL FUNDING LEVELS WILL INCREASE WHEN THIS BILL IS REAUTHORIZED, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE REGION MAKE AN EFFECTIVE CASE TO THE CONGRESS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ADEQUATE

LEVEL OF FEDERAL FUNDING TO HELP SUSTAIN THE METRO SYSTEM. IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE REGION STEP UP TO THE TASK AND CONTRIBUTE ITS SHARE TO FUND METRO'S INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL COSTS.

FINDING THE FUNDING TO ADEQUATELY REINVEST IN THE METRO SYSTEM IS PROBABLY WMATA'S BIGGEST CHALLENGE AT THIS TIME. WE BELIEVE THAT ANNUAL FUNDING LEVELS OF \$445 MILLION ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT WE ADEQUATELY REFURBISH AND REPLACE OUR ASSETS AND PHYSICAL PLANT, IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO ENSURE RELIABLE PERFORMANCE OF THE SYSTEM. OF THIS AMOUNT, \$180 MILLION PER YEAR IS CURRENTLY UNFUNDED.

WE ARE NOW AT THE SAME CROSSROADS THAT ALL OF OUR NATION'S OLDER TRANSIT SYSTEMS HAVE PREVIOUSLY EXPERIENCED. WE MUST DECIDE WHETHER WE CAN GARNER THE SUPPORT TO ADEQUATELY PROTECT OUR ENORMOUS RAIL AND BUS INFRASTRUCTURE, OR WHETHER WE WILL SEE IT DECAY TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS INCAPABLE OF MEETING THE DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT, AS HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST IN OTHER CITIES SUCH AS NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA AND BOSTON. THE UNDER-INVESTMENT IN REHABILITATING WMATA'S PHYSICAL PLANT IS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO METRO'S RECENT RELIABILITY PROBLEMS. IN RESPONSE TO THIS NEED, THE BOARD HAS AUTHORIZED ACCELERATED SPENDING ON CERTAIN

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF OUR INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAM. IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE SPENDING, THE AUTHORITY IS USING AN INNOVATIVE FINANCING TECHNIQUE, A LINE OF CREDIT GUARANTEED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UNDER THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE AND INNOVATION ACT (TIFIA). WHILE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S TIFIA LOAN GUARANTEE HAS GIVEN US GREATER FLEXIBILITY TO ACCELERATE SPENDING, IT HAS NOT CREATED ANY NEW FUNDING. IT HAS SIMPLY ALLOWED US TO BORROW, IN ANTICIPATION OF THE CONTINUING RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS TO REPAY OUR BORROWING.

WMATA FACES AN ANNUAL FUNDING CHALLENGE IN PERSUADING ITS FUNDING PARTNERS TO MEET INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS. ALTHOUGH MANY OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN THIS COUNTRY FACE FISCAL CHALLENGES, MANY ARE FORTUNATE TO SERVE CITIES AND STATES THAT HAVE ENACTED LAWS THAT DEDICATE FUNDING SOURCES DIRECTLY TO THE TRANSIT AUTHORITY. WMATA RANKS LAST AMONG THE TOP 25 TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN TERMS OF THE AMOUNT OF DEDICATED FUNDING RECEIVED. GIVEN THE POLITICAL COMPLEXITY OF THIS REGION, PAST ATTEMPTS TO EVEN DISCUSS REGIONAL DEDICATED FUNDING FOR WMATA MET WITH NO SUCCESS. WITHOUT ADEQUATE AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING, IT IS ENORMOUSLY DIFFICULT FOR WMATA TO PLAN, PROGRAM AND FUND ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO PROTECT THE

SUBSTANTIAL PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE SYSTEM AND TO SERVE THE 300 MILLION PEOPLE METRORAIL AND METROBUS SERVE ANNUALLY.

CONCLUSION

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THIS REGION HAVE CREATED THE FINEST TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE NATION. THE FEDERAL/REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP HAS ENDURED FOR OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AND HAS PROVIDED QUALITY TRANSIT SERVICE TO CITIZENS OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, EMPLOYEES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TOURISTS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND VISITORS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

AS WE COMPLETE THE INITIAL ENORMOUS TASK ASSIGNED US BY THE CONGRESS -- TO BUILD AND OPERATE A RAPID RAIL SYSTEM WORTHY OF THE NATIONS' CAPITAL -- WE MUST LOOK TO THE FUTURE. WE MUST PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE MAGNIFICENT SYSTEM DESIGNED BY SOME OF THE FINEST ARCHITECTS AND BUILT BY SOME OF THE FINEST ENGINEERS IN THE WORLD. IN ADDITION, WE MUST SEEK TO EXPAND BOTH THE RAIL AND BUS SYSTEMS TO SERVE THE TRAVEL DEMANDS OF THIS GROWING REGION. ON BEHALF OF THE WMATA BOARD, I COMMIT TO YOU THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE TO WORK IN CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE REGION AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT WE CONTINUE TO SERVE THE NATION'S CAPITAL WITH WHAT IS FREQUENTLY REFERRED TO AS "AMERICA'S TRANSIT SYSTEM".

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The Washington Metropolitan  
Area Transit Authority

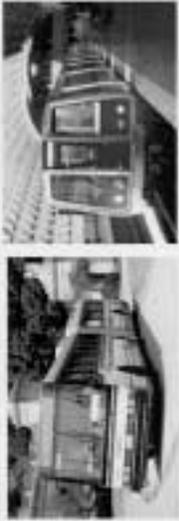
# Issues and Challenges The Washington, D. C. Metrorail and Metrobus System

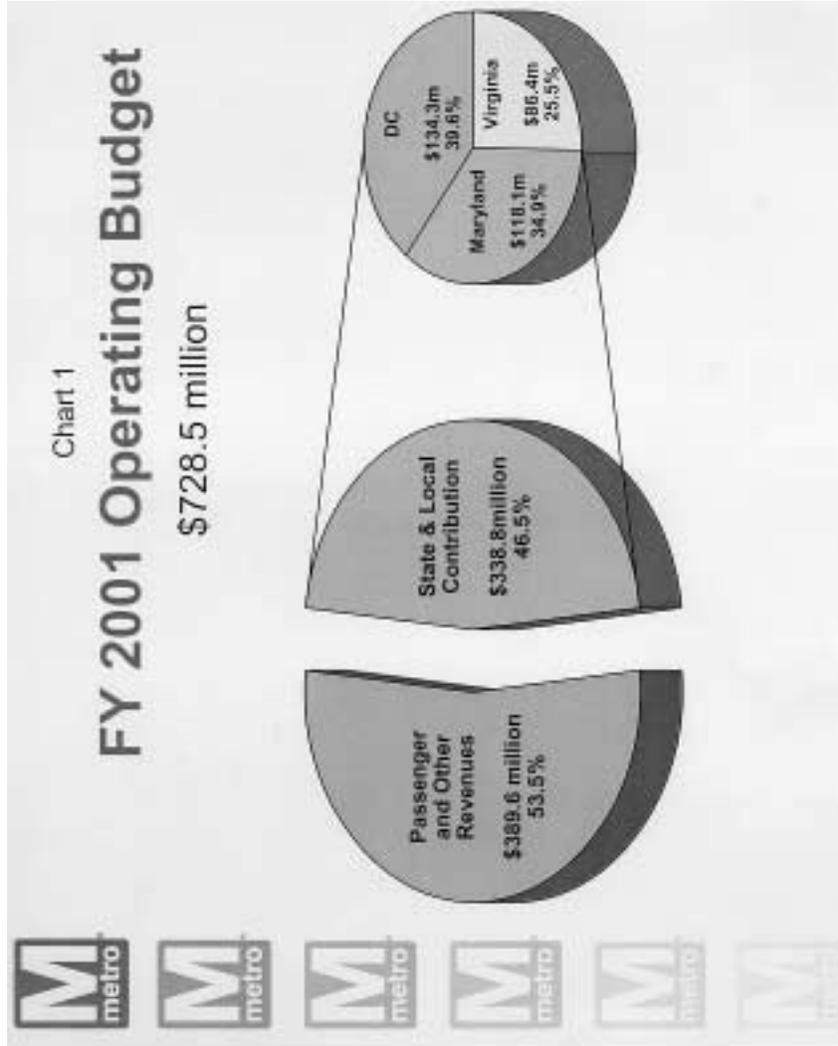
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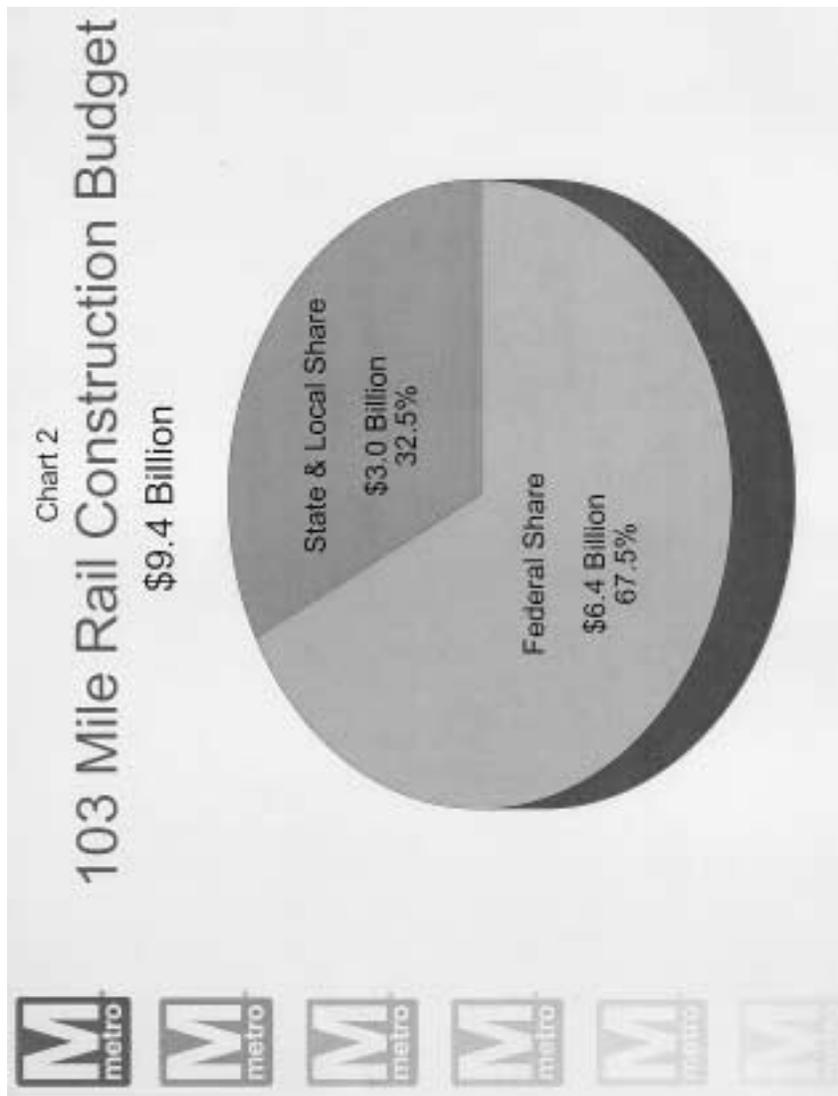
Gladys Mack  
Chairman, Board of Directors

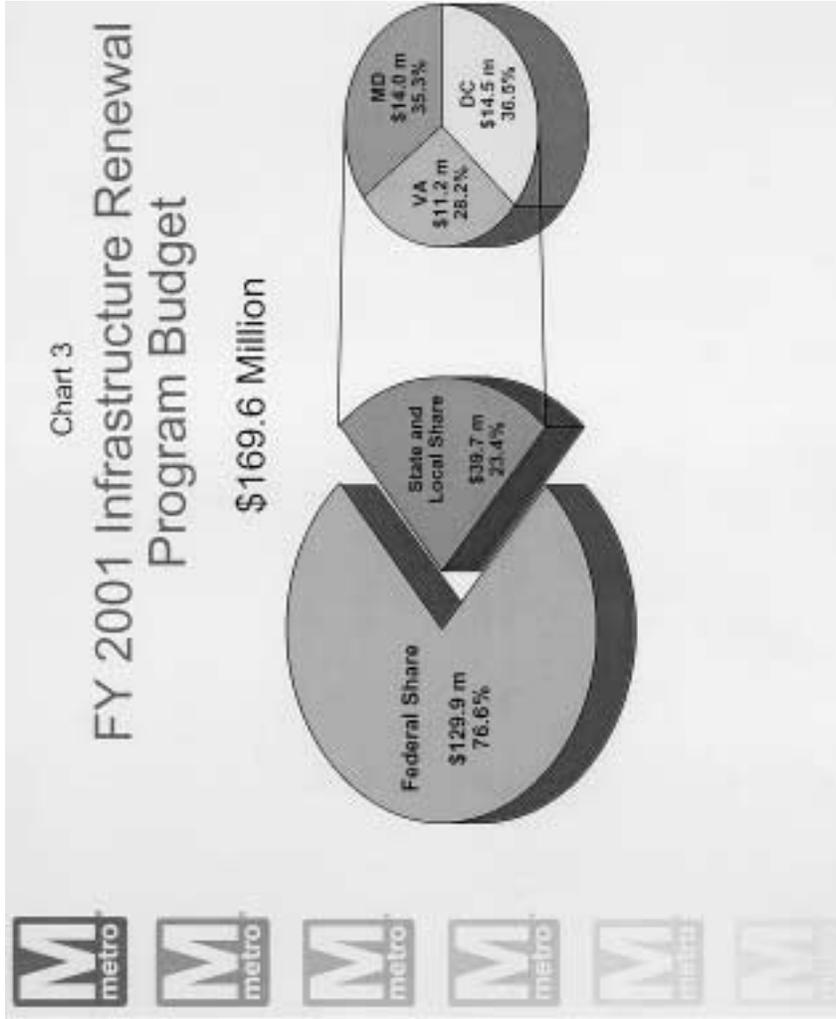
Testimony before the  
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia  
Committee on Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives

Friday, October 6, 2000









Mr. DAVIS [presiding]. Thank you very much.

Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. My name is Richard White, and I have been the general manager of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority since August 1996. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the current state of the Metro system, our many successes and some of our most significant challenges. I am submitting, Mr. Chairman, my testimony for the record and would like to use my time to try and work off of—

Mr. DAVIS. Your whole testimony and all of yours is in the record. So thank you.

Mr. WHITE. First, just to give you some information on the size of our operation, the metropolitan area that we serve is 4½ million and it's about the seventh largest area in the United States. Metro-rail system carries 163 million trips. That's the second largest, as we've already heard. Our bus system carries 138 million trips per year. That's the sixth largest. And our total system carries 301 million trips per year. That's the fourth largest in the United States.

The size of our work force is over 9,300 positions, about the third largest. Our operating budget is \$728.5 million, the sixth largest. The percent of people who use our services to the urban core on a daily basis for commute purposes is 40 percent and those who use it for regional trips during the work period is 18 percent. That makes us the second largest.

The message, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, is the transit utilization is disproportionately greater in this region than in most other areas of the country.

Chart No. 2 tells you about the age of the Metrorail system. Many people still think of the system as a young system. Its visual condition literally belies its true age. This chart shows you the various segments of our system and the age. Those in red are between 17 and 25 years of age. As you can see, that's 45 percent of our system. In blue that's between 9 and 16 years, and that's 33 percent of our system. And less than 8 years is 22 miles, or only 22 percent of our system.

Next year, specifically March 29, 2001, we celebrate the 25th year of the Metrorail operation and we are now beginning to experience the effects of an aging rail system.

On chart 3, the Metrobus system was established in 1973 as a result of WMATA's purchase of four private bus companies who were failing in the region. Some of the facilities used today were literally built in the early 1900's and were actually used as street-car barns. The average age of our fleet is 7.8 years, which is an accomplishment for us in that it was over 10 years just 2 to 3 years ago because of the ages of many of our facilities, which go back as early as 1906.

Recently our ridership, just to give you an indication of what the ridership growth has been on Metrobus and Metrorail for the last decade, in 1990 the system was carrying 301 million trips per year. The local bus and commuter rail system carried another 18 million trips, meaning there were 319 million trips per year carried on transit services in 1990. 10 years later, interestingly enough, the Metro system is carrying about the same number, 301 million. As

you can see, there's been considerable differences with large growth on the rail side and decreasing growth, or actually a steep decline on the bus side. On top of the 301 million trips are 44 million trips carried by county-based bus systems and the commuter rail system. So the region is carrying 345 million trips per year.

On the bus system, the changes have been related to, I would say, four issues. One is as we open rail services our bus system literally is converted to a feeder bus system. Also, some of the counties have been establishing their own local bus services to substitute for some of the Metro services. In the mid-1990's we had a devastating effect of fare increases and service cuts, which led to a 20 percent reduction on the bus system. The news for the last 3 years is up 14 percent, the bus system is even up higher, 16 percent. So today we are literally carrying 128,000 trips per day more than we did just 3 years ago.

Chart 5 tells you what the effect of this public investment in the Metrorail system has been. Each of these arrows represents what would be a need for an additional five to six lines of high capacity to move the same number of people that Metro moves during the peak period. You could see that capacity would need to come literally in the 14th Street Bridge Corridor, Roosevelt Bridge Corridor, Wisconsin Connecticut Avenue Corridor, Georgia Avenue Corridor, New York Avenue Corridor, and Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor. Each peak period we carry 200,000 people both in the morning and afternoon rush hours; 85,000 of them are carried in the peak 1 hour. Like a utility, we are very peak oriented. We run 480 trains during the peak period, literally two trains per minute.

Chart 6 shows our service reliability from the period of time January 1999 through August 2000. This is an index that measures two things: The percent of our trips that are completed within 4 minutes of the scheduled time as well as the effect as to whether anybody is off-loaded off of a train and is inconvenienced because of a mechanical malfunction. As you can see, our performance has generally been within the 97, 98 percent range, sometimes approaching 99 percent, which means that on a daily basis we're carrying approximately 600,000 people and we are successfully delivering 580,000 to 590,000 of them to their destination. However, for the 10,000 to 20,000 who are delayed, we do recognize that is a serious inconvenience to them and we are focused on trying to make those numbers even better.

On chart 7, this speaks to the infrastructure renewal program issues that we have, our capital refinancing issues. These numbers in our program were developed on a very comprehensive needs assessment that we had conducted a couple of years ago. I would say that we really did our homework on trying to understand what our funding needs were for capital reinvestment, and over 25 years this shows a need to invest \$9.8 billion just to repair and replace our assets. It has nothing to do with providing service improvements or growth issues. This is necessary to protect what has been a \$10 billion public investment in our regional rail system, which if we were building it today would cost \$22 billion to construct. Presently this is approximately 88 percent funded, as you may hear in testimony later, in the regional planning process. That is a large issue that we are dealing with.

As you can see, we are today in the \$170, \$190 million range of annual funding. We are growing to \$265 million but need to grow to \$445 million, and the green space of the chart shows you that \$180 million per year funding level that we are seeing ourselves being short on.

Two other arrows to point for you on this. One is the expiration of funding agreements with our local funding partners for which that is the only actual funding commitments that we have in place for 2003, and also pretty much around the same timeframe the expiration of the TEA-21 transportation reauthorization bill, the importance of that, that reauthorization bill to perhaps help us address some of our issues.

If I could finish with the last chart, Mr. Chairman, to kind of just succinctly describe what we consider to be our key management challenges. These are explained in considerable detail in my testimony. The first challenge of course is to provide our basic mission of providing safe and reliable service, which is growing more challenging in the face of growing pains where we're serving record demand, operating at near capacity and aging pains where we're contending with an aging infrastructure. We have clearly had two or three wakeup calls that have been well chronicled: In April 1999 during the Cherry Blossom Festival, April 20th, of our fire incident and the July 19th Red Line incident that I'm prepared to talk to you about a little bit later and is included in my testimony.

Second challenge is the one that we've been talking about in terms of securing sufficient funding to adequately rehabilitate and replace WMATA's system infrastructure. I think, as has been said, we are literally now at the crossroads as to whether we're going to allow ourselves to fall further behind in disrepair or meet the challenges that we need to keep our infrastructure in the kind of condition that people are accustomed to.

Our third challenge is maintaining the reliability of our elevators and escalators. We have the most and deepest in the world, and they are suffering the effects of exposure to weather. And my testimony explains a number of things that we're doing in that arena.

Our fourth challenge is to ensure that we do have the sufficient rolling stock system and facility capacity to support our goal of doubling ridership in the next 25 years, and that indeed is a serious challenge.

Our fifth challenge is to meet the growing demands of a changing population employment center in this metropolitan area. Much of our growth is now occurring in the outer suburbs. It is estimated by the year 2025 two-thirds of the trips will be suburb-to-suburb trips, and that clearly brings some new challenges for us.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the last key challenge that I would point to is the need that we would have the capacity inside of our organization to enhance and ensure that we have that capacity to continue to do the job that we do and to meet the challenges ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to comment.

[The prepared statement of Mr. White follows:]

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**STATEMENT OF  
RICHARD A. WHITE  
GENERAL MANAGER,  
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**OCTOBER 6, 2000**

OPENING STATEMENT

CHAIRMAN DAVIS AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, MY NAME IS RICHARD WHITE AND I AM PROUD TO SERVE AS GENERAL MANAGER OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA) HERE IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL. I APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WITH YOU THE CURRENT STATE OF THE METRO SYSTEM - OUR MANY SUCCESSES, AND SOME OF OUR MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES.

METRO IS COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE. PROVIDING SAFE, RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT MASS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE IS A MISSION NEVER TO BE COMPROMISED OR NEGLECTED. OUR BOARD AND THE ENTIRE WMATA STAFF ARE KEENLY AWARE THAT OUR ULTIMATE SUCCESS IS A FUNCTION OF HOW WELL WE PERFORM DAY IN AND DAY OUT.

NOTWITHSTANDING OUR QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF UNPARALLELED SUCCESS, WE WILL NEVER BE COMPLACENT. I AM HERE TO TELL YOU WITHOUT HESITATION THAT WE HAVE HEARD RECENT CRITICISMS, HAVE TAKEN THEM TO HEART, AND ARE BUSILY WORKING TO CORRECT PROBLEMS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED. ANYTHING SHORT OF EXCELLENCE WILL NOT DO.

WE WILL MARK THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF METRORAIL NEXT YEAR. MANY OF THE ISSUES THAT HAVE DRAWN ATTENTION AND SOME CRITICISM FOR THE AUTHORITY ARE THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF THE AGING OF EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE AS WELL AS THE SIGNIFICANT RECENT INCREASES IN OUR RIDERSHIP LEVELS. SOME OF OUR CHALLENGES HAVE IN FACT BEEN RELATED TO OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES. WE HAVE BEEN QUICK TO FACE UP TO ISSUES THAT REQUIRE MANAGEMENT ATTENTION AND TO TAKE NECESSARY CORRECTIVE ACTIONS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING SOME OF THE FUTURE FUNDING CHALLENGES FOR YEARS KNOWING THAT THE TIME WOULD COME FOR A SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED LEVEL OF CAPITAL FUNDING FOR SYSTEM REFURBISHMENT THAT IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT DETERIORATION OF SERVICE AND SYSTEM PERFORMANCE.

IN FACT, THE WMATA COMPACT JURISDICTIONS HAVE DEDICATED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP MEET OUR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS. THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY FEDERAL LEGISLATION HAS PROVIDED CONSIDERABLE HELP AS WELL. YET WE ARE STRUGGLING TO DO MORE, MUCH MORE, WITH FAR FEWER RESOURCES THAN ARE REQUIRED TO GET THE JOB DONE.

OUR CHALLENGE, AND MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO THIS REGION AND TO YOU, IS TO HELP WASHINGTON METRO LEARN HOW TO REMAIN YOUNG AND VIBRANT WHILE GROWING OLD. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW OUR BUS SERVICE TERRITORY AND MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE TO WHERE PEOPLE LIVE AND HOW THEY COMMUTE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS TO EXTEND THE METRORAIL SYSTEM TO HEAVILY CONGESTED AND RAPIDLY GROWING CORRIDORS WHILE WE WORK TOWARDS ENSURING THAT THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN THE SYSTEM IS ADEQUATELY PROTECTED. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR ASSISTANCE IN EXAMINING THE APPROPRIATE FUNDING ROLE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN MEETING THE CURRENT NEEDS OF THE AUTHORITY, AS IT HAS DONE THROUGHOUT ITS MORE THAN 30-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH WMATA.

BUT TODAY, AND IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, MY ATTENTION WILL BE ON THE DEMANDS OF A SYSTEM THAT IS EXPERIENCING SUCH DRAMATIC RIDERSHIP GROWTH THAT OUR INFRASTRUCTURE IS STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT IN TERMS OF CAPACITY AND RELIABILITY.

**SYSTEM SIZE AND AGE**

METRORAIL IS THE SECOND LARGEST RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES, AS MEASURED BY THE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS CARRIED PER YEAR. THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY SERVICE AREA RANKS SEVENTH IN SIZE AS MEASURED BY POPULATION, SO DEMAND FOR WMATA'S RAIL SERVICES IS DISPROPORTIONATELY GREATER IN THIS REGION THAN IN MOST OTHER AREAS IN THE COUNTRY. IN ADDITION, METRO CARRIES 18% OF THE REGION'S DAILY COMMUTERS AND 40% OF COMMUTERS TRAVELING WITHIN THE METROPOLITAN CORE. NEXT YEAR, THE METRORAIL SYSTEM WILL CELEBRATE ITS 25<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF OPERATION.

METROBUS IS THE SIXTH LARGEST BUS SYSTEM IN THE U.S. AS MEASURED BY TOTAL PASSENGERS CARRIED ANNUALLY. OUR METROBUS FLEET WILL BE 7.8 YEARS OLD ON AVERAGE AT THE END OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR AND OUR BUS REPAIR GARAGES ARE QUITE OLD - NORTHERN GARAGE WAS BUILT IN 1906, WESTERN GARAGE IN 1909. ALL OF THE GARAGES REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT REHABILITATION.

OVER THE YEARS, IT HAS BECOME APPARENT THAT WMATA AND THE REGION MUST SHIFT FOCUS FROM A CONSTRUCTION MODE TO A

REHABILITATION/RENEWAL MODE. OLDER TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS COST MORE TO KEEP IN A STATE OF GOOD REPAIR, JUST AS OLDER HOMES DO. AND LIKE HOMES, TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS ARE A MAJOR CAPITAL ASSET THAT MUST BE PROTECTED BY PROPER CAPITAL INVESTMENT. MAJOR REHABILITATION IS NOT INEXPENSIVE, BUT IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OUR TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE. WHEN COMPLETED, THE METRORAIL SYSTEM WILL HAVE COST NEARLY \$10 BILLION TO BUILD. IF THE EXISTING SYSTEM WERE BUILT TODAY, THE COST WOULD EXCEED \$22 BILLION. ADEQUATE REHABILITATION FUNDING LEVELS ARE CRITICAL TO PROTECTING THIS MAJOR REGIONAL AND FEDERAL INVESTMENT.

#### RECENT RIDERSHIP TRENDS

FROM WMATA FISCAL YEAR 1997 TO FISCAL YEAR 2000, METRORAIL AND METROBUS AVERAGE WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY, TO OVER 1 MILLION PASSENGER TRIPS PER DAY ON THE COMBINED BUS AND RAIL SYSTEM. OVER THIS TIME PERIOD, METRORAIL RIDERSHIP IS UP BY 12.9 PERCENT, TO 163 MILLION TRIPS PER YEAR. DURING FY2000, AN AVERAGE OF 558,000 WEEKDAY TRIPS WERE PROVIDED ON METRORAIL, WITH SEVERAL MONTHS IN THE 580-590 THOUSAND DAILY AVERAGE RANGE. IN JULY, AN AVERAGE OF 616,000 DAILY TRIPS WERE TAKEN ON METRORAIL, WHICH IS AN

ALL-TIME HIGH AND REPRESENTS 40,000 MORE TRIPS PER AVERAGE WEEKDAY THAN JULY 1999. THIS NEW RIDERSHIP RECORD BROUGHT OUR FAREBOX COST RECOVERY RATIO TO AN UNPRECEDENTED 81% .

THE NUMBER OF METRORAIL TRIPS WHICH OCCUR IN THE PEAK PERIOD IS GROWING AT AN EVEN GREATER RATE. MORNING PEAK PERIOD RIDERSHIP HAS INCREASED 16 PERCENT FROM FY97 TO FY00. INCREASED PASSENGER VOLUMES OCCURRING DURING THE PEAKS ARE CHALLENGING CURRENT SYSTEM CAPACITY AND WILL REQUIRE ADDITIONAL RAIL CARS AND OTHER INVESTMENTS IN OUR SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES TO MEET THESE SURGING MARKET DEMANDS.

SINCE 1997, METROBUS PATRONAGE IS UP 15.7 PERCENT, TO 138 MILLION ANNUAL TRIPS. DURING FY2000, AN AVERAGE OF 475,000 WEEKDAY TRIPS WERE PROVIDED ON METROBUS. IN JULY 2000, THE AVERAGE WEEKDAY FIGURE WAS 499,000. THIS IS AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF DECLINE DUE TO EXTREME BUDGET CUTS, SERVICE LEVEL REDUCTIONS, AND A SERIES OF FARE INCREASES. AVERAGE WEEKDAY TRIPS ON METROBUS ARE NOW GROWING AT A RATE THAT EXCEEDS THAT OF METRORAIL, THANKS TO A BOLD CHANGE IN OUR FARE STRUCTURE AND POSITIVE REGIONAL ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT. HOWEVER, JUST LIKE THE RAIL SYSTEM, OUR BUS SYSTEM IS REACHING ITS LIMIT OF AVAILABLE CAPACITY. WE WILL NEED MORE BUSES

AND NEW MAINTENANCE FACILITIES TO MEET THE GROWING DEMANDS OF THE REGION.

METRORAIL UTILIZATION

ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION IS CURRENTLY RANKED SECOND IN TRAFFIC CONGESTION, METRORAIL HAS DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED AREA MOBILITY. WITHOUT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF RAIL SERVICE, THE REGION WOULD REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL THIRTY-TWO LANES OF HIGHWAY TO EQUAL THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF METRORAIL DURING THE MORNING PEAK ONE HOUR. DURING OUR MORNING AND AFTERNOON RUSH PERIODS, ALMOST 200,000 PEOPLE ARE USING THE METRORAIL SYSTEM. DURING THIS BUSIEST ONE HOUR OF RUSH PERIOD, MORE THAN 85,000 PEOPLE ARE USING THE RAIL SYSTEM. WE MEET THIS DEMAND BY OPERATING 480 TRAINS EACH RUSH PERIOD, OR THE EQUIVALENT OF TWO TRAINS EVERY MINUTE.

AS THE REGION GROWS, THIS SITUATION CAN ONLY BECOME MORE EXTREME, SINCE HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION IS UNLIKELY TO KEEP PACE WITH BURGEONING TRAFFIC VOLUMES. PRESERVATION OF AND INVESTMENT IN THE METRO SYSTEM TO EXPAND ITS CAPACITY IS CRITICAL TO PROTECTING THE REGION'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMPETITIVENESS.

RAIL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND RELIABILITY

THE RESIDENTS OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION HAVE FOUND THE METRO SYSTEM TO BE A HIGHLY EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE METHOD OF TRAVEL. THE RELIABILITY OF THE SYSTEM OVER THE YEARS HAS BEEN THE VERY BEST IN THE COUNTRY. RECENTLY, WE HAVE BEEN DELIVERING OUR CUSTOMERS TO THEIR DESTINATIONS ON TIME AN AVERAGE OF BETTER THAN 97 PERCENT OF THE TIME. THE REMAINING TWO TO THREE PERCENT INCLUDES ALL PASSENGER DELAYS, WHETHER THE PASSENGERS ARE ON THE PROBLEM TRAIN OR CAUGHT IN THE DELAY THAT QUICKLY DEVELOPS BEHIND A PROBLEM TRAIN IN RUSH HOUR.

RECENTLY, WE HAVE BEEN CARRYING APPROXIMATELY 600,000 PASSENGERS EACH WORK DAY. ON AVERAGE, OUR SERVICE IS ON TIME FOR BETWEEN 585,000 AND 590,000 OF OUR PATRONS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT FOR THE 10,000-15,000 PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE A SERVICE DELAY, IT IS AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE. WE ARE DEDICATED TO REDUCING THAT NUMBER TO THE LOWEST POSSIBLE LEVEL.

THE RELIABILITY OF METRORAIL SERVICE DEPENDS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MANY INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS:

- 1) RAIL CARS
- 2) TRACKS, INCLUDING SWITCHES
- 3) POWER SYSTEMS, INCLUDING THE THIRD RAIL
- 4) AUTOMATIC TRAIN CONTROL SYSTEM
- 5) COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
- 6) AUTOMATIC FARE COLLECTION SYSTEM
- 7) STRUCTURES: TUNNELS, SURFACE AND ELEVATED STRUCTURES,  
PASSENGER STATIONS
- 8) ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS
- 9) HUMAN FACTORS, INCLUDING THE HOLDING OF TRAINS FOR LAW  
ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES

AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, OUR RAIL SYSTEM IS 25 YEARS OLD NEXT YEAR AND TWO OF OUR BUS GARAGES ARE ABOUT 90 YEARS OLD. OUR EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES ARE SUBJECTED TO HEAVY WEAR AND AGE-RELATED DETERIORATION. LEFT UNCORRECTED, THESE CONDITIONS WILL INEVITABLY CAUSE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS AND EROSION OF SERVICE TO OUR PASSENGERS. THERE ARE MANY EXAMPLES OF OLDER SUBWAY SYSTEMS THAT SUFFERED DRAMATIC PHYSICAL DETERIORATION AND RESULTING SERVICE DECLINES BEFORE UNDERGOING MASSIVE AND COSTLY UPGRADES. WE MUST AVOID A CRISIS-MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO MAINTENANCE AND REINVESTMENT. REHABILITATION AND REPLACEMENT OF CRITICAL EQUIPMENT

AND FACILITIES IS ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAINING OUR HIGH LEVEL OF SERVICE RELIABILITY.

INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL FUNDING

IN MARCH 1999, WMATA CONTRACTED WITH FREDERIC R. HARRIS, INC., A NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION CONSULTING FIRM, TO PERFORM A COMPREHENSIVE CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT OF THE ENTIRE METRORAIL AND METROBUS SYSTEM. THE ASSESSMENT FOUND THAT WMATA'S PHYSICAL ASSETS ARE SAFE AND GENERALLY IN REASONABLE CONDITION BUT ARE AGING AND IN NEED OF INCREASING REINVESTMENT. THE REVIEW POINTED OUT THAT CERTAIN ASSETS ARE SUFFERING FROM UNDER-INVESTMENT. IT FORMED THE BASIS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE MULTI-YEAR CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAM (IRP). THIS PROGRAM IS BASED ON A RENEWAL AND REPLACEMENT OF OUR EXISTING ASSETS ONLY AND DOES NOT INCLUDE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS AND EXPANSIONS.

THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW DETERMINED THAT FOR THE 25 YEAR PERIOD OF FISCAL YEARS 2001 - 2025, \$9.8 BILLION IN INFLATED DOLLARS WILL BE NEEDED TO KEEP WMATA INFRASTRUCTURE IN A STATE OF GOOD REPAIR.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE MATURING METRO SYSTEM AND THE CRITICAL NEED TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR WMATA'S INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL, THE REGION HAS MADE A SHORT TERM COMMITMENT TO SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE SUPPORT FOR THIS PURPOSE. IN 1998 WMATA WAS SPENDING ON AVERAGE \$115 MILLION FOR REHABILITATION AND REPLACEMENT PROJECTS. BASED ON AN INTERJURISDICTIONAL FUNDING AGREEMENT THAT EXTENDS THROUGH 2003, THIS AMOUNT WILL INCREASE TO \$215 MILLION A YEAR IN FEDERAL AND LOCAL FUNDING FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAM. REGIONAL DISCUSSIONS ARE ONGOING TO EXTEND JURISDICTIONAL FUNDING COMMITMENTS BEYOND 2003, TO AN ANNUAL FUNDING LEVEL OF \$265 MILLION. THE FEDERAL TEA-21 LEGISLATION EXPIRES ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2003, DURING WMATA'S FISCAL YEAR 2004.

THE WMATA BOARD HAS IDENTIFIED THE NEED TO INCREMENTALLY INCREASE INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL FUNDING TO AN ANNUAL FUNDING LEVEL OF \$445 MILLION. GIVEN THE SUBSTANTIAL OUTYEAR FUNDING SHORTFALL PROJECTED FOR THIS PROGRAM, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT OUR FUNDING PARTNERS ACT SOON TO FILL THIS GAP. WE MUST COLLECTIVELY ACT TO RESOLVE THIS FUNDING SHORTFALL IN ORDER TO RESPONSIBLY PROTECT THE SIZABLE PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE METRO SYSTEM. AS THE DEBATE ON THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CONTINUES, WE WILL URGE THE REGION AND THE CONGRESS TO

SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR RAIL SYSTEM MODERNIZATION, A NATIONWIDE PROGRAM THAT IS UNDERFUNDED IN COMPARISON TO THE SUBSTANTIAL DEMAND FOR THESE FUNDS FROM TRANSIT SYSTEMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. AS THE NEXT GENERATION OF RAIL SYSTEMS THAT WERE BUILT IN THE LAST 25 YEARS START TO AGE, THEIR NEED FOR CAPITAL REHABILITATION FUNDING INCREASES. HOWEVER, THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE RAIL MODERNIZATION FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED BY FORMULA TO THE SMALL NUMBER OF OLDER URBAN RAIL SYSTEMS. IN ADDITION, WE WILL URGE THAT INCREASED FUNDING BE MADE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT CORE CAPACITY AND RIDERSHIP GROWTH. THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT MANY OTHER SYSTEMS AROUND THE COUNTRY, BOTH OLDER AND NEWER, ARE BEGINNING TO SEE AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR TO SUPPORT CONTINUED RIDERSHIP GROWTH.

WMATA SERVICE EXPANSION PLAN

THE INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PLAN ADDRESSES THE NEED TO PRESERVE WMATA'S CURRENT TRANSIT CAPACITY. IT IS A PROGRAM THAT IS LIMITED TO REPLACING AND REFURBISHING EXISTING CAPITAL ASSETS. IT DOES NOT INCORPORATE ANY EXPANSION OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO MEET THE BURGEONING DEMAND RESULTING FROM THE METROPOLITAN REGION'S DRAMATIC GROWTH, PARTICULARLY IN THE OUTLYING SUBURBS. IN RESPONSE TO THAT NEED, THE WMATA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPTED A TRANSIT SERVICE EXPANSION PLAN IN APRIL 1999. THIS PLAN EMBRACES THE GOALS

AND OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED IN THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS VISION PLAN. OUR PLAN IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING THREE GOALS:

- 1) THE REGION MUST COMMIT TO DOUBLE TRANSIT RIDERSHIP BY 2025 IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN TRANSIT'S EXISTING MARKET SHARE AND TO ENHANCE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY, TO IMPROVED AIR QUALITY, TO REDUCED TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND TO SERVE INCREASED REGIONAL GROWTH AND TRAVEL DEMANDS
- 2) MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS AND THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MUST INCLUDE A SIGNIFICANT TRANSIT ELEMENT THAT COMPLEMENTS AND EFFECTIVELY UTILIZES THE REGION'S ROAD AND BRIDGE SYSTEM BY CONNECTING MAJOR COMMERCIAL, RETAIL, ENTERTAINMENT AND RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITY CENTERS AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES IN A WAY WHICH ENSURES THAT THE REGION REMAINS ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AND COMPETITIVE IN THE WORLD MARKET PLACE.
- 3) PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION MUST BE ENVISIONED AS AN ESSENTIAL MEANS TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY LIVABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

THE PLAN IS COMPRISED OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR MAJOR ELEMENTS:

- 1) IMPROVE METRORAIL ACCESSIBILITY AND CAPACITY BY EXPANDING PARKING, FEEDER BUS SERVICES AND REMOTE PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS, IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES, AND ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL ROLLING STOCK.
  
- 2) IMPROVE BUS SERVICE LEVELS AND EXPAND TO NEW SERVICE AREAS. WHILE THE REGION'S POPULATION DOUBLED SINCE 1960, BUS SERVICE HAS FAILED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE NEEDS OF A GROWING POPULATION BASE. BUS SERVICE EXPANSIONS SHOULD FOCUS ON SEVERAL MARKETS, INCLUDING ENHANCED SERVICE IN THE CORE AREAS, SUBURB-TO-SUBURB, REVERSE COMMUTE TO SUBURBAN EMPLOYMENT CENTERS AND ACCESS-TO-JOB INITIATIVES BEING PROMOTED AT THE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS. A NETWORK OF EXPRESS BUS SERVICES AND STRATEGICALLY LOCATED COMMUTER PARKING LOTS ARE REQUIRED THAT WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (HOV) LANES BEING PLANNED FOR SEVERAL MAJOR ROADWAYS TO MOVE PEOPLE QUICKLY TO VARIOUS SUBURBAN LOCATIONS USING ENHANCED VEHICLES AND THROUGH CREATIVE SERVICE CONCEPTS SUCH AS BUS RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEMS.

- 3) ADD STATIONS, ENTRANCES, AND STATION CAPACITY - THESE PRIORITIES INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF NEW STATIONS, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED NEW IN-FILL STATION AT NEW YORK AND FLORIDA AVENUES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA; NEW ENTRANCES AT EXISTING STATIONS; AND INCREASING STATION CAPACITY AT EXISTING STATIONS.
  
- 4) EXPAND FIXED GUIDEWAY SYSTEMS – WHETHER THE MODE IS METRORAIL, LIGHT RAIL, OTHER RAIL TECHNOLOGIES, OR BUSWAYS, THE GOAL OF THE PLAN IS TO PROVIDE FOR AT LEAST A 50 PERCENT EXPANSION OF THE REGION'S FIXED GUIDEWAY SYSTEMS OVER THE NEXT 25 YEARS; (I.E., 50-60 ADDITIONAL MILES). THE PROPOSED TRANSIT PROJECTS IN THE DULLES CORRIDOR AND TO LARGO TOWN CENTER ARE INCLUDED IN THIS CATEGORY.

STATUS OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING EFFORTS

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD (TPB) IS CURRENTLY UPDATING ITS CONSTRAINED LONG-RANGE PLAN (CLRP) FOR THE YEARS 2001-2025 AND THE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FOR THE YEARS 2001-2006. THE TPB WILL ACT ON THE NEW CLRP AND TIP ON OCTOBER 18<sup>TH</sup>. THIS CLRP FULLY FUNDS THE ANTICIPATED OPERATING COSTS

FOR THE 103-MILE SYSTEM. HOWEVER, THOUGH THE AUTHORITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS IS ONLY PARTIALLY FUNDED AGAINST OUR \$445 MILLION PER YEAR IDENTIFIED NEED, OUR FUNDING PARTNERS ARE ONLY ABLE TO COMMIT AT THIS TIME TO A FUNDING LEVEL OF \$265 MILLION PER YEAR.

IN ADDITION, WMATA HAS IDENTIFIED AN ESTIMATED \$100 MILLION (IN CURRENT DOLLARS) ANNUAL LEVEL OF INVESTMENTS IN VEHICLES, FACILITIES AND SYSTEMS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE RIDERSHIP GROWTH. NONE OF THESE COSTS ARE FUNDED IN THE FORTHCOMING CLRP AND TIP. THE TPB HAS SCHEDULED A SUMMIT MEETING WITH REGIONAL ELECTED OFFICIALS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS ON NOVEMBER 30TH TO DISCUSS THESE AND OTHER REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SHORTFALLS .

#### REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT BY OUTSIDE AGENCIES

WMATA IS SUBJECT TO A VARIETY OF OVERSIGHT REVIEWS AND AUDITS BY FEDERAL AND REGIONAL AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATIONS, INCLUDING THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA), THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD (NTSB), AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION (APTA). APTA AND THE TRI-STATE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, A REGIONAL BODY PERFORMING STATE SAFETY OVERSIGHT, CONDUCT ROUTINE

AND INCIDENT-RELATED SAFETY REVIEWS. THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION CONDUCTS A TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF OUR ADHERENCE TO ALL APPLICABLE GRANT AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS. IN ADDITION, THE FTA CONDUCTS MONTHLY AND QUARTERLY REVIEWS OF ONGOING CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECT OVERSIGHT, KNOWN AS PROJECT MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT (PMO). ALSO, IT CONDUCTS COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REVIEWS, AND HAS RECENTLY PERFORMED ONE IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE AND INNOVATION ACT (TIFIA) APPROVAL AND OUR FULL FUNDING GRANT AGREEMENT REQUEST FOR THE LARGO EXTENSION. ALSO, IT CONDUCTS OUR PROGRAM REVIEWS IN AREAS SUCH AS DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING, SAFETY, PROCUREMENT AND CIVIL RIGHTS.

LASTLY, IN SPRING OF THIS YEAR THE FTA CONDUCTED A THOROUGH PROCUREMENT SYSTEM REVIEW. BY ITS OWN ADMISSION, IT WAS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE PROCUREMENT REVIEW EVER CONDUCTED OF ANY GRANTEE. THE REVIEWERS EXAMINED OUR PROCUREMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, FILE DOCUMENTATION, AND CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION PRACTICES. ONE HUNDRED AND ONE (101) PROCUREMENT FILES WERE REVIEWED TO ASSESS OUR COMPLIANCE WITH FTA CIRCULAR 4220.ID AND THE MASTER GRANT AGREEMENT. THE REVIEW ASSESSED WMATA'S PROCUREMENT SYSTEM AGAINST FIFTY-ONE (51) SEPARATE ELEMENTS. THE RESULT WAS THAT OF THE 1,355 TOTAL ITEMS REVIEWED FOR COMPLIANCE, WMATA WAS FOUND TO BE

NOT DEFICIENT IN 1,143 ITEMS, AND DEFICIENT IN 212 ITEMS. FTA CONCLUDED THAT THESE RESULTS WERE WITHIN THE RANGE FOUND IN THEIR OVERSIGHT OF OTHER TRANSIT AGENCIES OF SIMILAR SIZE AND BREADTH OF OPERATION.

WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE FTA TO CORRECT THE FEW DEFICIENCIES IDENTIFIED. WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED 30-, 60- AND 90-DAY PLANS TO CORRECT THOSE ITEMS. MANY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS HAVE ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED. WE EXPECT TO BE IN FULL COMPLIANCE IN ALL AREAS BY DECEMBER 2000.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HAVE PRESENTED WMATA WITH A SERIES OF CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM THE AGING OF THE SYSTEM, GROWING DEMAND FOR OUR SERVICES, NORMAL OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS, AND THE IMMINENT COMPLETION OF THE 103-MILE SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION. WE HAVE HAD TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACTS ON OUR RIDERS AND ON SERVICE RELIABILITY. BELOW IS A DISCUSSION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THOSE CHALLENGES.

1. PROVIDING SAFE AND RELIABLE SERVICE

OUR TOP PRIORITY AND MOST CRITICAL CONCERN IS PROVIDING SAFE AND

RELIABLE TRANSIT SERVICE TO OUR CUSTOMERS. OUR TRAINING PROGRAMS, OPERATING PROCEDURES, AND SYSTEMS REDUNDANCIES ARE ALL FOCUSED ON ACHIEVING THE LOWEST POSSIBLE FAILURE RATE.

WE ARE, HOWEVER, CONTENDING WITH THE DUAL CHALLENGES OF UNPRECEDENTED RIDERSHIP GROWTH AND AGING SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE, BOTH OF WHICH CAN ADVERSELY IMPACT OUR SERVICE RELIABILITY. WE ARE CONTINUALLY REPAIRING TUNNEL AND ROOF SURFACES, REHABILITATING ROLLING STOCK COMPONENTS, INSPECTING KEY SYSTEM COMPONENTS FOR CORROSION AND PERFORMING OTHER CRITICAL MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS TO AMELIORATE THE IMPACTS OF AGE. AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, OUR RIDERSHIP IS AT ALL-TIME HIGHS AND IS SETTING NEW RECORDS ON A REGULAR BASIS. WE ARE WORKING AGGRESSIVELY TO MAXIMIZE THE UTILITY OF OUR EXISTING RAIL CAR AND BUS FLEET AND OUR SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE. HOWEVER, WE ARE OPERATING AT NEAR CURRENT CAPACITY DURING THE MOST HEAVILY UTILIZED PERIODS OF THE DAY, AND WE MUST FOCUS ON EXPANDING OUR FACILITIES, INCLUDING PARKING FACILITIES, STATION ENTRANCES, VEHICLES, PLATFORM SPACE, AND TRACK INFRASTRUCTURE, JUST TO ACCOMMODATE THE GROWING NUMBER OF PATRONS UTILIZING OUR EXISTING BUS AND RAIL SYSTEM.

WHEN WE DO ENCOUNTER OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS THAT ARE UNDER MANAGEMENT'S CONTROL OUR RESPONSE IS IMMEDIATE AND THOROUGH. AN

EXAMPLE IS OUR HANDLING OF VITAL RELAY FAILURES. OUR RAIL SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO OPERATE AUTOMATICALLY VIA ELECTRONIC SIGNALS FROM TWENTY THOUSAND WAYSIDE VITAL RELAYS TO CARBORNE RELAYS ON OUR RAIL CARS, AND HAS OPERATED IN SUCH A FASHION SINCE THE OPENING OF THE SYSTEM. IN MARCH 1999, DUE TO FAILURES WITH CERTAIN OF THESE RELAYS, WE IMPLEMENTED A MANUAL MODE OPERATION AND INITIATED A COMPLETE REVIEW OF THIS SITUATION WHICH LED TO A COMPLETE REPLACEMENT OF THE RELAYS. THESE RELAYS ARE DESIGNED TO BE A FAIL-SAFE SYSTEM, AND ANY FAILURES ARE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. UNTIL THESE RELAYS ARE REPLACED, WE ARE REQUIRED TO OPERATE IN MANUAL OPERATION. SINCE OUR SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO BE AN AUTOMATIC TRAIN OPERATION, THIS CHANGE HAS BROUGHT SOME NEW CHALLENGES WITH WHICH WE WERE NOT FAMILIAR. WE EXPECT TO BE BACK IN AUTOMATIC OPERATION IN THE NEXT 60 DAYS.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS OUR RESPONSE TO THE SEVERE CROWDING AND RESULTING TRAIN OFFLOADS THAT OCCURRED DURING THE CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL IN 1999. CRUSH LOADS OF PASSENGERS INADVERTENTLY CREATED CONDITIONS WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY IMPAIRED TRAIN MOVEMENT AND FORCED PASSENGER OFFLOADS. THIS CONDITION WAS MADE MORE EXTREME BECAUSE WE WERE IN THE VERY EARLY STAGES OF OPERATING IN MANUAL MODE DUE TO PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED PROBLEMS WITH OUR VITAL RELAYS. WE IMMEDIATELY CREATED AND IMPLEMENTED A \$97 MILLION EMERGENCY RAIL

REHABILITATION PROGRAM TO ADDRESS NECESSARY CORRECTIVE ACTIONS, PRIMARILY RELATED TO THE RAIL CARS. WE ALSO RETRAINED OPERATORS IN CERTAIN OPERATING PROCEDURES. OUR RESPONSE WAS IMMEDIATE, AND WE HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED SUCH PROBLEMS SINCE.

THIS PAST APRIL, A POWER CABLE SHORTED OUT IN A TUNNEL BETWEEN FOGGY BOTTOM AND FARRAGUT WEST STATIONS WHICH LED TO AN ELECTRICAL TUNNEL FIRE AND EXTREMELY LENGTHY DELAYS IN SERVICE FOR THAT DAY. IN RESPONSE, WE DETERMINED THE CAUSE OF THE SHORT (NON-STANDARD CABLE INSTALLATION), INSPECTED EVERY POWER CABLE IN OUR SYSTEM TO ENSURE NO OTHERS WERE SIMILARLY INSTALLED, IMPLEMENTED NEW EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES, AND CREATED A NEW COMMUNICATION PROGRAM TO ENSURE THAT OUR PASSENGERS ARE FULLY INFORMED ABOUT DELAYS AND OTHER EVENTS IN OUR SYSTEM. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE GREATLY ENHANCED OUR COORDINATION EFFORTS WITH LOCAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESCUE AGENCIES. MANY OF THESE CHANGES WERE RECOMMENDED BY BOTH OUR INTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE AND A PEER REVIEW PANEL OF EXPERTS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY WHICH I ASKED APTA TO ASSEMBLE ON OUR BEHALF. THESE INITIATIVES HAVE PAID SIGNIFICANT DIVIDENDS. WE HAVE REDUCED THE TIME IT TAKES FOR ALL PERSONNEL TO HANDLE SIGNIFICANT FIRE AND SMOKE RELATED INCIDENTS FROM A PREVIOUS AVERAGE OF 90 MINUTES IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS AFTER THE TUNNEL FIRE, TO A RECENT AVERAGE OF 30-45 MINUTES IN THE

LAST TWO MONTHS. HOWEVER, DURING THE PERIOD OF TIME THAT WE IMPLEMENTED THREE SETS OF PROCEDURAL CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO THIS CRITICAL SITUATION, WE DID EXPERIENCE SOME LENGTHY SERVICE DELAYS. WE BELIEVE THAT WE NOW HAVE A PROPER BALANCE IN OUR PROCEDURES BETWEEN SAFETY ISSUES AND SERVICE RELIABILITY ISSUES. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE FREQUENCY OF THESE OCCURRENCES HAS NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY AS COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEARS. WHAT HAS CHANGED IS OUR OPERATIONAL AND SAFETY PROCEDURES WHICH DICTATE HOW WE RESPOND TO THESE EVENTS.

ASIDE FROM IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES, WE ROUTINELY CONDUCT SPOT DRILLS, PROCEDURAL REVIEWS, SKILLS TESTS AND OTHER MEASURES TO DETECT AND CORRECT ANY POTENTIAL OPERATING PROBLEMS. OUR CUSTOMERS DESERVE NO LESS.

2. SECURING SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO ADEQUATELY REHABILITATE AND REPLACE THE WMATA SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

METROBUS AND METRORAIL ARE CARRYING RECORD-BREAKING NUMBERS OF PASSENGERS, EVEN AS OUR SYSTEM MANIFESTS INCREASING SYMPTOMS OF AGE AND HEAVY USE. IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN OUR HIGH LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE AND RELIABILITY, AS WELL AS TO PROTECT THE FEDERAL AND LOCAL INVESTMENT IN OUR FLAGSHIP TRANSIT PROPERTY, WE MUST SECURE

THE NECESSARY FUNDING FOR REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENTS OF CRITICAL SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE. THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN ADDRESSED AT GREATER LENGTH IN EARLIER PARTS OF THIS TESTIMONY.

3. MAINTAINING THE RELIABILITY OF OUR ELEVATORS AND ESCALATORS

OUR ESCALATORS AND ELEVATORS ARE CRITICAL TO THE EASE WITH WHICH OUR PATRONS NAVIGATE OUR METRORAIL SYSTEM. IN FACT, WE HAVE THE LARGEST NUMBER OF ESCALATORS (557) AND ELEVATORS (205) AND THE DEEPEST ELEVATOR AND SECOND LONGEST ESCALATOR OF ANY TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE WORLD. THIS IS DUE TO OUR ORIGINAL SYSTEM DESIGN WHICH EMPHASIZED DEEP UNDERGROUND STATIONS TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS ON SURROUNDING NATIONAL MONUMENTS AND COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES AND DUE TO GEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS. OUR ESCALATORS AND ELEVATORS ARE SUBJECT TO HEAVY USE AND OPERATE IN A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE TYPICAL "DEPARTMENT STORE" ESCALATOR OR FOR MOST OTHER TRANSIT ENVIRONMENTS. MANY ARE REACHING THE END OF THEIR USEFUL LIFE, AND THEY ARE SUBJECT TO FAILURES WHICH CAN BE DIFFICULT AND TIME-CONSUMING TO REPAIR. APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD OF OUR RAIL RIDERS EXPERIENCE A TRANSFER DURING THEIR USE OF THE SYSTEM, SO THEY COME IN CONTACT WITH ESCALATORS IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT STATIONS DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR TRIP.

WHEN THE ESCALATOR INSTALLATION WAS DESIGNED, IT WAS ASSUMED THAT ESCALATOR EXPOSURE TO RAIN, SNOW AND ICE WOULD NOT AFFECT THE EQUIPMENT PERFORMANCE AND RELIABILITY. HOWEVER, OUR EXPERIENCE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT EXPOSURE TO THE ELEMENTS, AS ELSEWHERE IN THE SYSTEM, HAS CAUSED CORROSION AND INCREASED FAILURES AND HAS LED TO A SHORTER USEFUL LIFE OF THE UNITS. OUR MAINTENANCE RECORDS SHOW THAT ESCALATORS WHICH ARE IN A PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT PERFORM A FULL 9-10% BETTER THAN ESCALATORS THAT ARE EXPOSED TO THE WEATHER. THIS HAS LED TO OUR DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW \$27 MILLION PROGRAM TO PROVIDE WEATHER PROTECTIVE CANOPIES OVER OUR EXPOSED STATION ENTRANCE ESCALATOR UNITS. THESE WILL BE NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR SYSTEM AND ARE A DIRECT RESULT OF OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR ESCALATORS.

IN ADDITION, TRAINED ESCALATOR/ELEVATOR REPAIR STAFF ARE IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY IN THIS REGION AND THE NATION AS A WHOLE, AND CAN COMMAND HIGHER SALARIES THAN WMATA'S PAY STRUCTURE WILL ALLOW. WE HAVE EXPANDED OUR RECRUITING EFFORT OUTSIDE THE WASHINGTON REGION TO ATTRACT STAFF TO HANDLE THE INCREASING REPAIR WORKLOAD. WE HAVE ALSO IMPLEMENTED AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM TO TRAIN OUR OWN ELEVATOR/ESCALATOR MECHANICS. THIS WAS ANOTHER NEW MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS THE ESCALATOR PERFORMANCE ISSUE. THE TWO-YEAR PROGRAM IS ONLY NOW GENERATING QUALIFIED PERSONNEL.

CURRENTLY, WE NEED 127 CERTIFIED REPAIR WORKERS BUT HAVE ONLY 97 ON BOARD, INCLUDING 45 OF WHOM ARE IN OUR APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.

BECAUSE OF OUR STAFFING SHORTAGE, WE ARE IMPLEMENTING A \$225 MILLION, SIX-YEAR PROGRAM TO REHABILITATE 170 OF OUR WORST PERFORMING ESCALATORS, OUTSOURCE THE REFURBISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF 350 ESCALATORS AND 117 ELEVATORS (INCLUDING ADA UPGRADES), AND TO CONSTRUCT 53 ESCALATOR CANOPIES TO MINIMIZE ESCALATOR EXPOSURE TO THE ELEMENTS. THIS IS A DRAMATIC INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF FUNDING WHICH HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN ALLOCATED BY WMATA FOR THIS PURPOSE. WE ARE AUGMENTING OUR WMATA MANPOWER WHICH MAINTAINS OUR ESCALATORS THROUGH THE USE OF CONTRACT RESOURCES. THIS IS BRINGING MORE MANPOWER TO ADDRESSING THIS CHALLENGE. SINCE THE EQUIPMENT IS ALREADY IN THE WEAR-OUT PHASE OF ITS LIFE CYCLE, WE HAVE ACCELERATED THE REHABILITATION PROGRAM TO REDUCE THE LENGTH OF TIME IT TAKES TO REHABILITATE AN ESCALATOR AND TO MINIMIZE PASSENGER INCONVENIENCE CAUSED BY REPAIRS TO EQUIPMENT THAT OTHERWISE COULD FAIL AT AN UNACCEPTABLY HIGH RATE. RECENTLY, OUR BOARD APPROVED A MANAGEMENT REQUEST TO ACCELERATE THE OVERHAUL TIME FOR CERTAIN OF OUR ESCALATORS FROM AN AVERAGE PERIOD OF 16 WEEKS TO AN AVERAGE PERIOD OF 12 WEEKS, A 25% REDUCTION IN THE TIME TO REHABILITATE AN ESCALATOR.

4. ENSURING SUFFICIENT ROLLING STOCK, SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES FOR DOUBLING RIDERSHIP BY 2025

IN ADDITION TO WMATA'S REHABILITATION AND REPLACEMENT NEEDS AND OUR PLANS FOR EXPANDED METRORAIL SERVICES, ANOTHER REQUIREMENT FOR ACCOMMODATING REGIONAL GROWTH HAS RECENTLY BEEN IDENTIFIED. THE EXTREME RIDERSHIP GROWTH ON METROBUS AND METRORAIL EXPERIENCED DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS HAS PLACED HEAVY DEMANDS ON EXISTING BUS ROUTES AND ON THE CAPACITY OF THE RAIL SYSTEM DURING RUSH HOUR. IN ADDITION, THE RECENT PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER AUTHORIZING THE TRANSIT BENEFIT PROGRAM FOR USE BY ALL WASHINGTON, DC BASED EXECUTIVE-LEVEL AGENCIES IS EXPECTED TO GENERATE MORE THAN 40,000 NEW WEEKDAY TRIPS. THIS EXECUTIVE ORDER BECAME EFFECTIVE AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2000.

WMATA IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A CORE CAPACITY STUDY WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS. THIS EFFORT IS EXAMINING THE ABILITY OF THE CENTRAL CORE OF THE METRORAIL SYSTEM TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE A DOUBLING OF RIDERSHIP BY 2025. THE ANALYSIS IS BEING CONDUCTED TO GENERATE THE ANSWERS TO TWO BASIC QUESTIONS:

- 1) CAN THE CORE OF THE WMATA SYSTEM, AS PRESENTLY CONFIGURED,

SUSTAIN CURRENT RIDERSHIP VOLUMES AND ACCOMMODATE FUTURE RIDERSHIP INCREASES AT AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE? IF NOT, WHAT MUST BE DONE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS?

- 2) CAN THE CORE, AS PRESENTLY CONFIGURED, SUSTAIN THE INCREASED PASSENGER DEMAND GENERATED FROM FUTURE EXPANSIONS (E.G. DULLES, LARGO, NEW YORK AVENUE)? IF NOT, WHAT MUST BE DONE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS?

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN BY ANY TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES. IT IS INTENDED TO SERVE AS A BLUEPRINT FOR THE AUTHORITY TO SERVE THE NEXT GENERATION OF ITS CUSTOMERS.

COST ESTIMATES ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE AND ARE THEREFORE NOT INCLUDED IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL OR EXPANSION BUDGETS.

5. MEETING NEW DEMANDS OF GROWING AND CHANGING POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT CENTERS IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

CHANGING POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS ARE PRESENTING A NEW SET OF CHALLENGES TO WMATA. IN THE RECENT PAST, AND EXPECTED TO CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE, CHANGING LAND USE PATTERNS

ARE CHALLENGING THE REGION'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. BY 2025, OUR REGIONAL POPULATION IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY NEARLY A THIRD, WITH HALF OF THAT INCREASE OCCURRING IN THE OUTER SUBURBS, SUCH AS LOUDOUN, PRINCE WILLIAM, AND FREDERICK COUNTIES. ONLY ONE-FIFTH OF WASHINGTON AREA RESIDENTS WILL LIVE IN THE CENTRAL JURISDICTIONS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, ARLINGTON COUNTY, AND THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA.

MEANWHILE, EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATIONS ARE ALSO CHANGING. A FULL THIRD OF THE REGION'S JOBS WILL REMAIN IN THE REGION'S CORE, WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE LARGEST SINGLE CONCENTRATION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE REGION. THE GREATEST NUMBER OF NEW JOBS, HOWEVER, WILL BE CREATED IN FAIRFAX, MONTGOMERY, AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTIES. AS A RESULT, TRAVEL PATTERNS HAVE CHANGED AND WILL CONTINUE TO CHANGE, WITH INCREASED LEVELS OF COMMUTING WITHIN AND AMONG THE SUBURBS. THE REGION'S TRANSIT SYSTEM MUST BE READY TO ACCOMMODATE THESE NEW TRAVEL NEEDS.

IN ADDITION, WHILE THE REGION'S POPULATION BECOMES MORE DISPERSED, IT WILL ALSO BE AGING. BY 2030, 1 IN 5 AMERICANS WILL BE 65 OR OLDER, AS COMPARED TO ONLY 13% TODAY. MANY OF THESE ELDERLY BABY-BOOMERS WILL RELY UPON THE TRANSIT SYSTEM TO MEET THEIR TRAVEL NEEDS – IN THE SUBURBS AS WELL AS THE URBAN CORE.

GIVEN THESE CHANGES IN POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT, THE TPB ESTIMATES THAT BY 2025, TWO-THIRDS OF ALL DAILY TRIPS WILL BE SUBURB TO SUBURB. TO SERVE THESE NEEDS, THE REGION'S TRANSIT SYSTEM MUST BETTER CONNECT THE MANY REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS. THESE CENTERS, WHICH INCLUDE PLACES SUCH AS TYSONS CORNER IN VIRGINIA AND ROCK SPRINGS IN MARYLAND, WILL CONTAIN THE MAJORITY OF THE REGION'S JOBS AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, WHILE THE MAJORITY OF THE REGION'S HOMES WILL REMAIN OUTSIDE THE REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS. CIRCULATION SYSTEMS TO ALLOW TRAVEL WITHIN THESE CENTERS WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED. AS CONGESTION WORSENS IN THE SUBURBS, TRANSIT WILL BE AN ESSENTIAL TOOL IN ALLOWING THEIR ECONOMIC GROWTH TO CONTINUE.

TODAY, OUR TRANSIT SYSTEM SERVES RADIAL TRAVEL PATTERNS WELL, AS IT WAS DESIGNED TO DO IN ITS MASTER PLAN BASED ON CONDITIONS THAT EXISTED DECADES AGO, EFFECTIVELY LINKING THE SUBURBS WITH THE REGION'S CORE. WE DO NOT ADEQUATELY SERVE DEMAND BETWEEN OR WITHIN THESE SUBURBAN AREAS. WMATA IS COMMITTED TO DOUBLING TRANSIT RIDERSHIP BY 2025 IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE EXISTING TRANSIT MARKET SHARE AND ENHANCE OUR CONTRIBUTION TO MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY, IMPROVED AIR QUALITY, AND REDUCED TRAFFIC CONGESTION. INCREASING THE HOURS OF SERVICE FOR OUR EXISTING SUBURBAN ROUTES, ADDING NEW ROUTES BETWEEN ACTIVITY CENTERS, AND IMPROVING CIRCULATION SERVICES WITHIN THOSE CENTERS WILL ALL BE REQUIRED FOR

THE REGION TO ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS.

6. ENHANCING AND ENSURING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

WMATA HAS A RELATIVELY MATURE WORKFORCE, WITH 34% OF OUR OPERATIONS PERSONNEL ELIGIBLE FOR RETIREMENT WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. THIS REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT POOL OF EXPERTISE WHICH WILL BE LOST TO WMATA. WE ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING THE ILL EFFECTS OF HIGH TURNOVER. APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD OF OUR BUS OPERATORS AND ABOUT 17 PERCENT OF OUR RAIL OPERATORS HAVE THREE YEARS' OR LESS EXPERIENCE. AS OUR SYSTEM GROWS TO MEET INCREASING REGIONAL DEMAND FOR TRANSIT SERVICES, OUR STAFF REQUIREMENTS INCREASE ACCORDINGLY.

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION DOES NOT HAVE A LARGE POOL OF TRAINED MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL WORKERS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO CAN MAINTAIN TRAIN CONTROL AND OTHER SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT THAT HAS BEEN IN PLACE FOR OVER 25 YEARS. MANY OF OUR PREVIOUS SOURCES OF SUPPLY FOR THESE SKILLED WORKERS, SUCH AS RETIRING MILITARY WORKERS, ARE NO LONGER AVAILABLE. ALSO, THE REGION ENJOYS AN ENVIRONMENT OF NEAR-FULL EMPLOYMENT, SO OUR CANDIDATE POOL IS EVEN MORE LIMITED. THEREFORE, WMATA IS AGGRESSIVELY RECRUITING FROM

AREA TECHNICAL SCHOOLS AND FROM LOCATIONS OUTSIDE THE METROPOLITAN AREA. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE CREATED THE WMATA TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE TO PROVIDE TRAINING IN THE SKILLS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT THAT IN SOME CASES IS UNIQUE TO METRORAIL AND METROBUS. WE HAVE ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST AGGRESSIVE PROGRAMS OF THIS NATURE OF ANY TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY. FINALLY, WE ARE REVAMPING OUR HIRING PROCEDURES, ENHANCING OUR PROCUREMENT CAPABILITIES, REPLACING OUR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT OUR BUSINESS AND OPERATIONAL TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS, AND REENGINEERING OUR BUSINESS PRACTICES TO MORE EFFECTIVELY MEET THE CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD.

#### CONCLUSION

OVER THE PAST QUARTER OF A CENTURY WMATA HAS GROWN FROM A TRANSIT PLANNING AGENCY WITH VERY FEW EMPLOYEES TO THE SEVENTH LARGEST EMPLOYER IN THE REGION RESPONSIBLE FOR BUILDING AND OPERATING THE SECOND LARGEST RAIL SYSTEM AND SIXTH LARGEST BUS SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE MANY GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO POINT TO OVER THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTING A WORLD-CLASS RAPID RAIL SYSTEM AND BUILDING A REGIONAL BUS NETWORK THAT SERVES A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL AREA. WE HAVE DELIVERED

WHAT THE CONGRESS DIRECTED AND WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE EARNED THE NAME "AMERICA'S TRANSIT SYSTEM".

I REGRET THAT IN THE RECENT PAST WE HAVE HAD FAR TOO MANY CHALLENGES, SOME OF WHICH ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE TWIN DEMANDS OF AN AGING SYSTEM AND GROWING RIDERSHIP. WHILE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES ARE STRETCHED, WE KNOW WE CAN AND MUST DO BETTER. WE ARE COMMITTED TO ACTION IN ORDER TO SWIFTLY RESOLVE AS MANY OF THESE ISSUES AS POSSIBLE. BUT SOME OF OUR CHALLENGES CANNOT BE RESOLVED THROUGH BASIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES. SOME OF OUR CHALLENGES MUST BE ADDRESSED THROUGH LONG TERM PROGRAMS THAT TAKE SUBSTANTIAL TIME AND RESOURCES TO DEVELOP AND COMPLETE.

TO FULLY ADDRESS THE AGING AND GROWTH ISSUES THE ENTIRE METROPOLITAN REGION MUST REMAIN COMMITTED TO REINVESTING IN THE METRO SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY CONGRESS AND EVERY ADMINISTRATION SINCE PRESIDENT EISENHOWER. WE ALSO MUST CONTINUALLY RETOOL AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE AS THIS REGION BECOMES INCREASINGLY CONGESTED AND RELYING MORE AND MORE ON TRANSIT TO HELP RELIEVE TRAFFIC ON OUR HIGHWAYS. WE ARE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING A BLUEPRINT FOR METRO THAT WILL SERVE THIS REGION FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS, AS WE SEE THE PROJECTIONS FOR REGIONAL POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH SKYROCKET.

WE VIEW OUR JOB AS TRANSIT MANAGERS TO TAKE THE NECESSARY DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, TO IDENTIFY THE CAPITAL AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS TO ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM REMAINS HEALTHY IN THE FUTURE, AND TO WORK WITH OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS TO SECURE ADEQUATE AND RELIABLE FUNDING TO ENABLE US TO THOUGHTFULLY PLAN AND CARRY OUT OUR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS. I AM NOT HERE BEFORE YOU TODAY TO SIMPLY CALL FOR FUNDING; BUT RATHER TO PRESENT THE MYRIAD OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT METRO FACES AS WE ARE ABOUT TO COMPLETE THE 103-MILE SYSTEM AND PREPARE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF METRO SERVICE TO THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT WE TAKE OUR ROLE AS PUBLIC STEWARDS VERY SERIOUSLY. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO MANAGE PUBLIC DOLLARS RESPONSIBLY AND TO COMMUNICATE OPENLY WITH THE PUBLIC ABOUT OUR CHALLENGES, AS WELL AS OUR SUCCESSES. WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE SUBCOMMITTEE HAS TAKEN THE TIME AND EFFORT TO CONVENE THIS HEARING IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE STATUS OF METRO TODAY, AFTER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF OPERATIONS. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE.

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NOTES:

- 1) CHARTS 1-8 ARE ATTACHED WHICH WERE USED BY THE GENERAL MANAGER IN HIS ORAL TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE, AND WHICH ARE REFERENCED FOR PARTS OF THE WRITTEN TESTIMONY.
- 2) A DESCRIPTION OF OPERATING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS WHICH WMATA USES FOR MANAGEMENT MONITORING IS ALSO ATTACHED.
- 3) A DESCRIPTION OF HOW WMATA MEASURES CUSTOMER USAGE PATTERNS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IS ALSO ATTACHED.

WMATA OPERATING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

THE AUTHORITY HAS DEVELOPED A VARIETY OF OPERATING PERFORMANCE MEASURES TO MONITOR EQUIPMENT AND SYSTEMS RELIABILITY AND WHICH SERVE AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR TRACKING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS. THE LIST OF INDICATORS WHICH WE USE FOR MANAGEMENT PURPOSES IS SHOWN ON PAGES 36-38.

TYPICALLY, WMATA STAFF PROVIDES UPDATES ON OPERATING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO OUR BOARD'S OPERATIONS COMMITTEE ON A MONTHLY BASIS. THIS ALLOWS US TO ENGAGE IN A DISCUSSION WITH OUR BOARD ABOUT SYSTEM PERFORMANCE, MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND NECESSARY IMPROVEMENT AREAS. OTHER INDICATORS ARE PRESENTED REGULARLY TO OUR SAFETY COMMITTEE.

WMATA PERFORMANCE MEASURES

METRORAIL:

AVERAGE WEEKDAY PASSENGER TRIPS IMPACTED BY DELAYS AND  
OFFLOADS PER WEEK

AVERAGE WEEKDAY SERVICE RELIABILITY INDEX

AVERAGE WEEKDAY DELAYS BY LENGTH OF DELAY

HEADWAY ADHERENCE

AVERAGE WEEKDAY OFFLOADS

AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER CAR PEAK ONE HOUR A.M.

AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER CAR AT MAXIMUM LOAD POINTS FOR PEAK ONE  
HOUR A.M.

AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER CAR PEAK ONE HOUR P.M.

AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER CAR AT MAXIMUM LOAD POINTS FOR PEAK ONE  
HOUR P.M.

FARE COLLECTION EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY FOR GATES, FARE VENDORS

EMPLOYEE INJURIES

METROBUS:

DELAYS PER 1,000 TRIPS

DAILY AVERAGE TRIPS LOST

METROBUS MEAN DISTANCE BETWEEN FAILURES

METROBUS LIFT EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY

METROBUS (CONT.):

ROADCALLS

ACCIDENTS PER 1,000 MILES

HEAVY MAINTENANCE/OVERHAUL PROGRAM PROGRESS

EMPLOYEE INJURIES

PARATRANSIT:

COMPLETED TRIPS

TOTAL CALLS ANSWERED WITHIN 2 MINUTES

PERCENT OF DENIED TRIPS

TOP FIVE COMPLAINTS

CONTRACTOR ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

DENIALS BY JURISDICTION OF RESIDENCE

PLANT MAINTENANCE:

ELEVATOR AND ESCALATOR EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY

EMPLOYEE INJURIES

SAFETY:

RAIL INCIDENTS

RAIL STATION INJURIES

ESCALATOR INJURIES

SAFETY (CONT.)

RAIL ON-BOARD INJURIES

RAIL COLLISIONS

BUS PASSENGER INJURIES

BUS COLLISIONS

EMPLOYEE INJURIES

METROACCESS PASSENGER INJURIES

METROACCESS COLLISIONS

STATION OVER-RUN INCIDENTS

RED SIGNAL INCIDENTS

DOOR OPENING INCIDENTS

ATP CUT-OUT INCIDENTS

METRO TRANSIT POLICE:

CRIME BY CATEGORY

CRIME BY LOCATION

OFFENSES BY LOCATION

ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS

**MEASURING CUSTOMER USAGE PATTERNS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

**WMATA UTILIZES SEVERAL TECHNIQUES TO GAUGE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND TO BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR CUSTOMER BASE. THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

- **ORIGIN-DESTINATION SURVEY**
  - **CONDUCTED APPROXIMATELY EVERY THREE YEARS**
  - **IDENTIFIES TRAVEL PATTERNS FROM AN ORIGIN TO DESTINATION TRAVEL PATTERN, DEMAND GROWTH, UNDERSERVED MARKETS**
  - **BUS STUDY DATA COLLECTION UPDATE JUST COMPLETED**
  - **RAIL SURVEY UPDATE TO BE COMPLETED NEXT SPRING**
  
- **METRORAIL CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY:**
  - **TELEPHONE SURVEY OF 650 SERVICE AREA RESIDENTS WHO HAD RIDDEN METRORAIL WITHIN THE PAST TWO YEARS.**
  - **MOST RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED IN 1999**
  - **EIGHTY-ONE PERCENT OF PAST-TWO-YEAR RIDERS WERE SATISFIED WITH METRORAIL.**
    - VERY SATISFIED (9-10): 35%**
    - SATISFIED (7-8): 46%**
    - NEUTRAL (5-6): 11%**

DISSATISFIED (1-4): 8%

- METROBUS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY
  - TELEPHONE SURVEY OF 1150 SERVICE AREA RESIDENTS WHO HAD RIDDEN METROBUS WITHIN THE PAST TWO YEARS
  - MOST RECENT SURVEY CONDUCTED IN 1999
  - SIXTY-FOUR PERCENT WERE SATISFIED WITH METROBUS.
    - VERY SATISFIED (9-10): 22%
    - SATISFIED (7-8): 42%
    - NEUTRAL (5-6): 24%
    - DISSATISFIED (1-4) : 11%
  
- SERVICE AREA USAGE & ATTITUDE ASSESSMENT:
  - 1,200 PHONE INTERVIEWS OF GENERAL POPULATION - EVERY TWO YEARS
  - EVALUATES SERVICE ATTRIBUTE RATINGS: EASE OF USE, CONVENIENCE, VALUE FOR THE MONEY, AVAILABILITY, RELIABILITY, AND SAFETY
  - 9SURVEY ALSO ASKED "ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, DO YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT METRORAIL (OR METROBUS) IS AN EXCELLENT WAY TO TRAVEL IN THE WASHINGTON AREA, AS COMPARED TO THE AUTOMOBILE?"

- 69% OF RESPONDENTS RATED METRORAIL POSITIVELY OR VERY POSITIVELY VS. 59% POSITIVE OR VERY POSITIVE RATINGS FOR THE AUTOMOBILE
- 42% RATED METROBUS POSITIVELY OR VERY POSITIVELY VS. 59% FOR THE AUTOMOBILE
  
- OUR 2001 PROGRAM FOR 2001:
  - SERVICE AREA USAGE AND ATTITUDE ASSESSMENT UPDATE
  - RAIL ORIGIN/DESTINATION SURVEY UPDATE
  - METRORAIL AND METROBUS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TRACKING SURVEY.



The Washington Metropolitan  
Area Transit Authority

# Issues and Challenges The Washington, D. C. Metrorail and Metrobus System

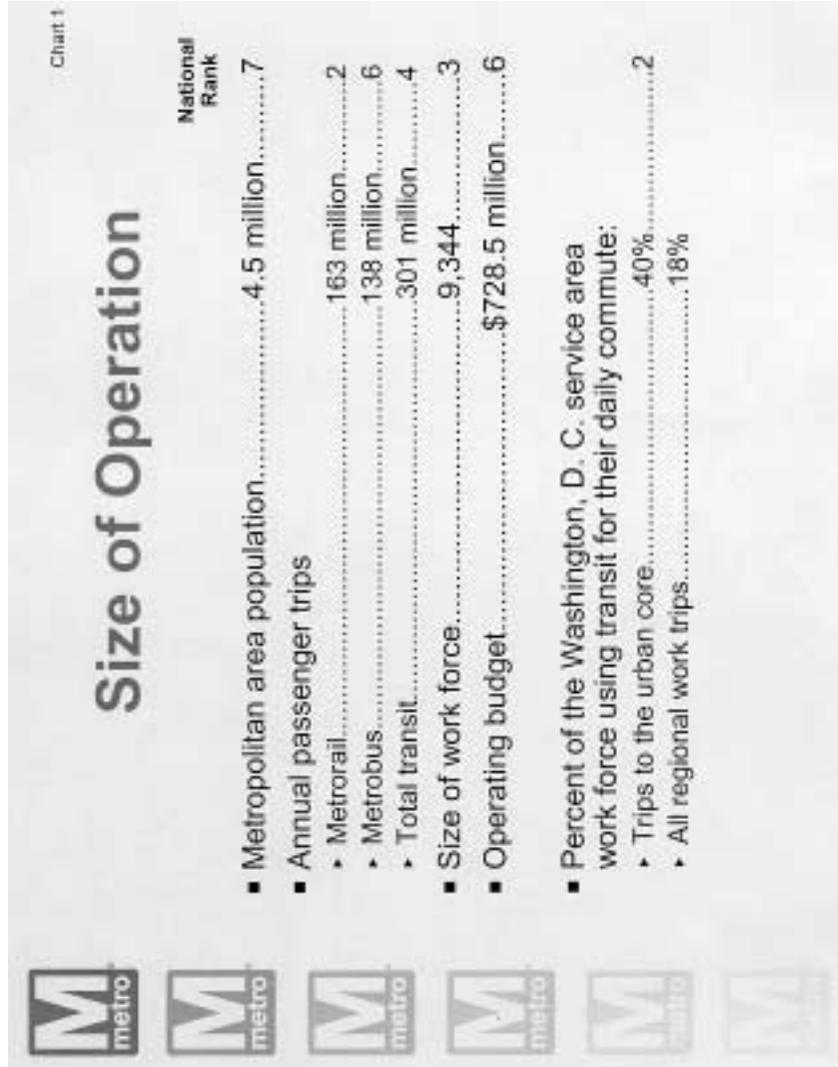
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Richard A. White  
General Manager

Testimony before the  
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia  
Committee on Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives

Friday, October 6, 2000



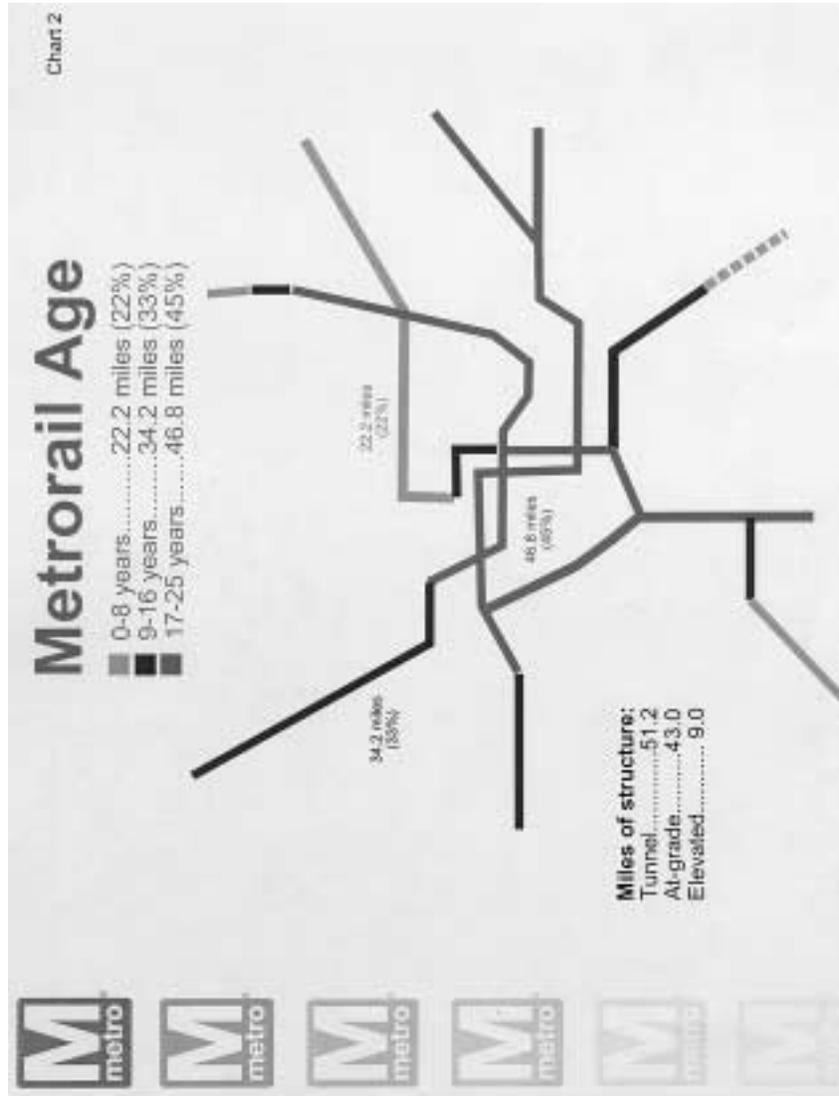


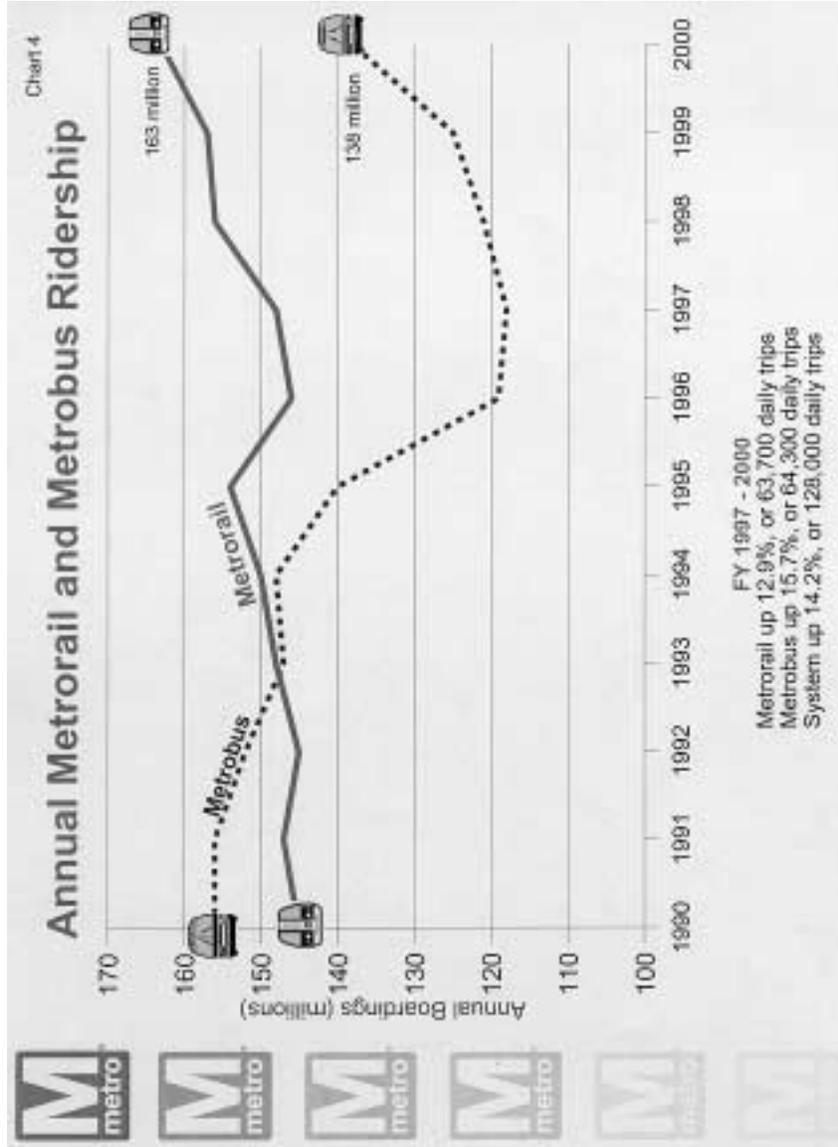


Chart 3

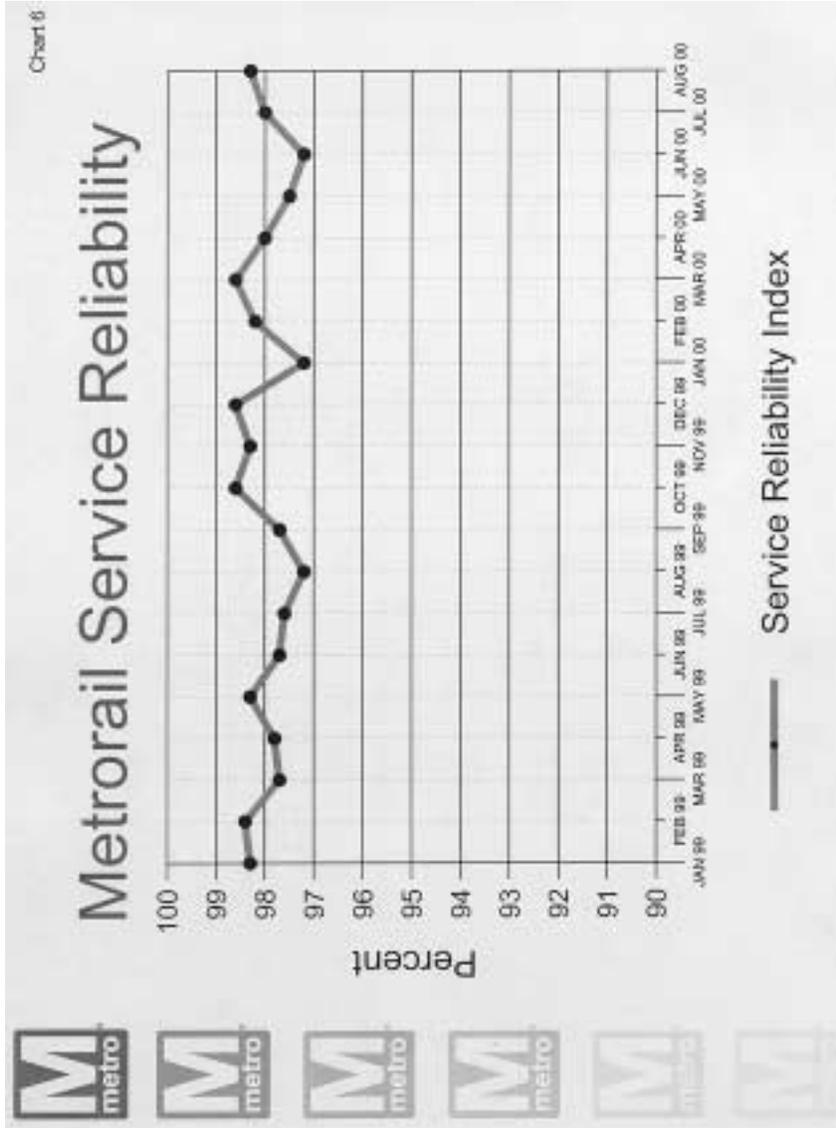
# Metrobus Age

The Metrobus system was established in 1973 as a result of WMATA's purchase of four private bus companies in the region. Some of the facilities being used today were used by the private operators in the early part of the 20th Century. A few were early streetcar barns. Some have been renovated and others are in need of renovation or major repair.

- Current fleet average age..... 7.8 years
- Bus garages
  - Northern..... 1906..... 94..... 70,000
  - Western..... 1909..... 91..... 65,000
  - Southern Avenue..... 1922..... 78..... 58,000
  - Southeastern..... 1936..... 64..... 55,000
  - Arlington..... 1941..... 59..... 75,000
  - Royal Street..... 1945..... 55..... 60,000
  - Bladensburg..... 1962..... 38..... 144,000
  - Four Mile Run..... 1977..... 23..... 75,000
  - Montgomery..... 1983..... 17..... 65,000
  - Landover..... 1989..... 11..... 65,000







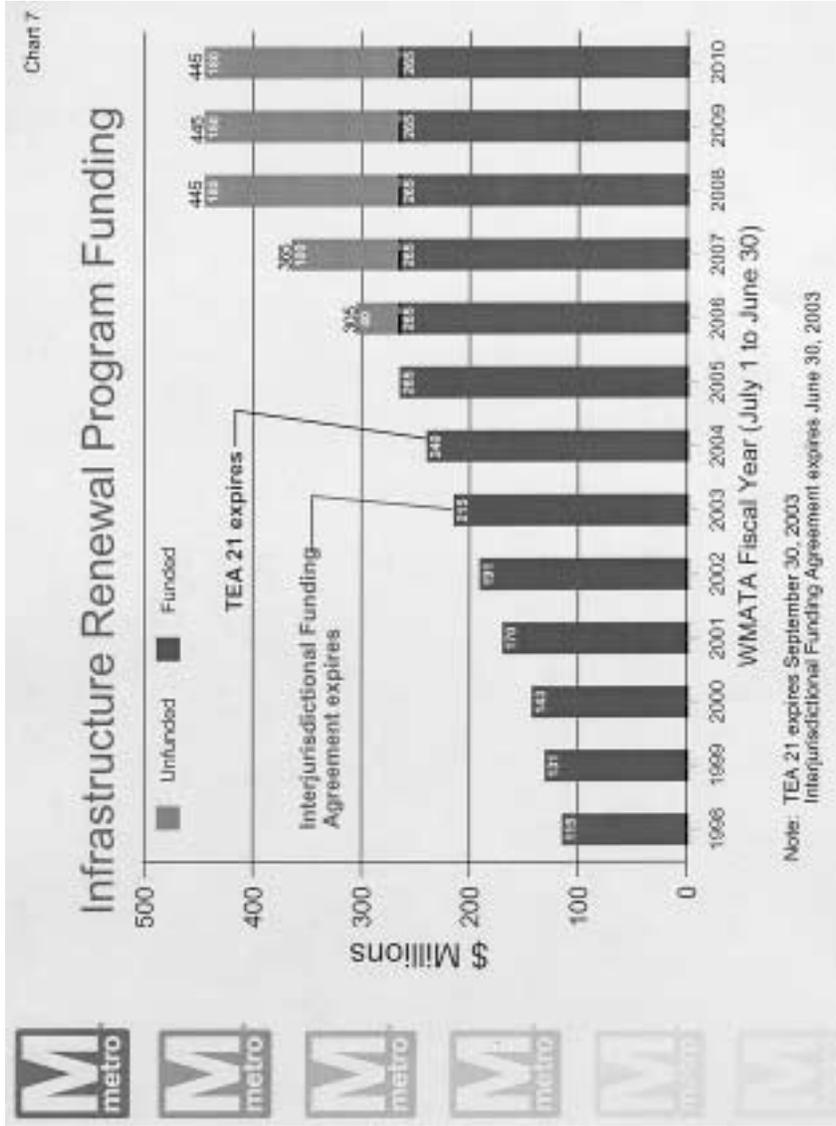









Chart 8

## Key Management Challenges

1. Providing safe and reliable service in the face of
  - a. Growing pains: serving record demand, operating at near capacity
  - b. Aging pains: contending with an aging infrastructure
2. Securing sufficient funding to adequately rehabilitate/replace the WMATA system infrastructure
  - a. \$10 billion investment would cost \$22 billion today
  - b. WMATA now at crossroads
3. Maintaining the reliability of our elevators and escalators
  - a. Most/deepest in the world
  - b. Effects of aging and exposure to the weather
4. Ensuring sufficient rolling stock, systems, and facilities to handle doubling of ridership by 2025
5. Meeting new demands of growing and changing population and employment centers in the metropolitan area.
6. Enhancing and ensuring organizational capacity

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Ms. Dugger.

Ms. DUGGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman Norton. I'm Dorothy Dugger, deputy general manager of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District [BART]. I'm pleased to participate in today's hearings. I hope in exploring some of the issues faced by WMATA and the other systems you've invited here today, the subcommittee will hear some of the common issues confronting rail transit properties such as ours and that those concerns can be further examined in the context of the upcoming reauthorization of TEA-21.

BART operates a 95-mile, 39-station rapid rail transit system that serves four counties and 16 cities on both sides of San Francisco Bay. The nine-member board of elected directors governs the agency and we employ a work force of just under 3,500 people.

In recent years we've undergone tremendous growth and change. We've just completed the first expansion of the original system, adding 24 miles of rail and five stations. Construction of an 8.7-mile, four-station extension to serve San Francisco International Airport is almost 70 percent complete and will add 70,000 trips to our system. We very much appreciate our partnership with Congress, which has yielded a multi-year new starts funding commitment that will cover about half of the cost of that extension.

Since service to the public began in 1972, BART has been a vital part of the Bay Area's transportation network and never more so than today. Our region is experiencing a booming economy. Record low unemployment and tight housing markets have exacerbated the jobs and housing imbalance, resulting in longer commutes and ever growing congestion. Transportation consistently ranks as a top priority in Bay Area public opinion polls, and the newspapers and airwaves are filled with reports of growing congestion.

Against this backdrop more people are riding BART than ever before. Average weekday ridership is up to 330,000 trips per day, a full 12 percent higher than a year ago, and is growing every month. Indeed, we are about 4 years ahead of our ridership forecast at this point. In addition, special events such as this week's division playoffs in the Bay Area swell our ridership on regular occasions. We've just set a new record yesterday of 374,900 trips, which exceeded our prior 1-day record of 357,000, which occurred notably after the Loma Prieta earthquake disabled the Bay Bridge and BART was operating 24-hour service at that time and was the only link across the Bay.

To put this ridership in perspective, BART carries about 50 percent of the peak period, peak direction trans-Bay commute. In other words, without BART the Bay Bridge would need an additional deck to accommodate the morning commute.

This extraordinary increase in ridership is very welcome and contributes to our continued financial health, but it is straining our core system capacity, presenting significant challenges for our aging system and placing a premium on the reliability and quality of the transportation service we deliver.

In the early 70's we were the first of the new generation heavily automated rail systems to be built in the United States in about 60 years. Now we are no longer young. We are in our 28th year

of revenue service. Signs of age have begun to show on virtually every aspect of our system, affecting reliability, maintainability and appearance.

In order to sustain the reliable and quality service that our customers demand and support the growing numbers of riders, it is imperative that there be regular ongoing reinvestment in our existing physical infrastructure. To ensure that we are able to do that, we embarked on an initial 10-year, \$1.1 billion renovation program in 1995 under our General Manager's, Dick White, at the time, leadership. The cornerstone and largest element of that renovation program is the renovation of our original fleet of 439 railcars. It will add about 20 years to the useful life of that equipment at about half the cost of buying new cars. We're also replacing or overhauling escalators, elevators, fare gates, ticket vending machines, and upgrading train control and computer systems and traction power systems. These improvements will help us maintain our schedule, mean fewer train delays, more reliable service and more comfortable facilities for our customers.

This is not, however, a one-time 10-year program. This will be an ongoing requirement as our system continues to age if we are to avoid the experience that Ms. Mack referred to earlier that several older properties have faced before us; namely, underinvestment, service deterioration, loss of ridership, loss of revenue, leading to further service deterioration, and so the cycle continues.

As we are aging, we are also growing, and investment to increase the capacity of our core system to support increased ridership is also required. To understand these needs we are conducting a 30-year system capacity enhancement study to identify, quantify and establish priorities for these core system improvements. We are looking at systems such as vertical circulation in our stations, access parking and other modes, maintenance shop capacity, track flexibility, rolling stock, and so on.

Strategic system expansions to serve new corridors in our growing region are another critical component of BART's program of capital priorities.

And, finally, in our area seismic safety is a major concern. We are looking at the retrofit requirements of our system. In addition to investment, however, maintaining service quality and reliability on an aging system requires an ever greater emphasis on adequate and effective maintenance resources and programs, a keen focus on customer service, as well as operating recovery strategies to quickly mitigate service disruptions when they inevitably do occur.

Given the density of service, closer headways and more crowded trains, when we do have service disruptions, there is less recovery time. More trains and thus more people are unfortunately ultimately affected.

To summarize, we face a number of key challenges in implementing our program of capital priorities to enable us to continue to deliver high quality, reliable, convenient and efficient rapid transit service to the growing San Francisco Bay Area. System renovation, expanded core system capacity, strategic expansions and seismic retrofit are all critical capital needs that must be addressed in order to support growing levels of service.

We recognize that achieving our goals requires regular ongoing investments. One of the key messages I want to emphasize today is the need for a stable, predictable, adequate fund source for rail properties that are being squeezed by high service levels, increased demand for service and an aging physical plant that can't be ignored.

We are extremely fortunate to receive 75 percent of a one-half cent sales tax that is permanently dedicated to fund our operations. That revenue stream combined with a double A bond rating has enabled us to issue bonds to help support the capital reinvestment program. However, our needs, as you heard, exceed available resources and we welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with our colleagues in the industry, with our local, regional and State funding agencies and with Congress to explore potential funding opportunities to meet these needs.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dugger follows:]

**STATEMENT OF  
DOROTHY W. DUGGER, DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER  
BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT (BART) DISTRICT  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**October 6, 2000**

Good afternoon Chairman Davis and members of the Subcommittee. I am Dorothy Dugger, Deputy General Manager of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, also known as BART. I am pleased to participate in today's hearing along with my colleagues representing other properties in the transit industry. I hope that in exploring some of the issues currently faced by WMATA and the other systems you have invited here today, the Subcommittee might also be attuned to some of the common issues confronting rail transit properties such as ours, and that those concerns would be further examined in the context of the upcoming reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty First Century (TEA 21).

BART operates a 95-mile, 39-station rapid rail transit system that serves four counties and 16 cities on both sides of San Francisco Bay. A nine-member Board of publicly elected Directors governs the three-county BART District and BART employs a workforce of just under 3,500 people. The \$1.5 billion original investment in the core system is valued at over \$9 billion today.

In recent years, BART has undergone tremendous growth and change. Between 1995 – 1997, three extensions were completed and are now fully operational, the first expansion of the original system. These extension projects added a total of 24 miles of track and

five new stations to the original BART system. Construction of the 8.7-mile, four-station BART Extension to San Francisco Airport is almost 70% complete and is projected to add almost 70,000 passenger trips per day to our system.

In terms of financial performance and management, our year-to-date system operating ratio is 68.5 percent, one of the highest in the nation. This represents the amount of operating costs, excluding long-term capital program debt service, paid for by fares and other revenue generated by BART. For the past ten years, we have held growth in the operating cost per passenger mile below the rate of inflation. Our AA bond rating from three major investment houses is among the highest in the industry.

For more than a quarter of a century, since service to the public began in 1972, BART has been a vital part of the Bay Area's transportation network and never more so than today. High-quality, reliable and efficient public transportation is especially relevant to our region, which is experiencing a booming economy. Record low unemployment and tight housing markets have exacerbated the jobs and housing imbalance, resulting in longer commutes and ever growing congestion. Transportation consistently ranks as a top priority in Bay Area public opinion polls, and the newspapers and airwaves are filled with reports of growing congestion.

Against this backdrop of growth and congestion, more people are riding BART than ever before. Average weekday ridership is up to 333,000 passenger trips per day – a full 12 percent higher than last year. Peak period ridership is 190,000 about 60% of total

ridership. Special events in our service area swell ridership on given days, as was the case this summer when BART ridership hit an all-time record high for a single day of 353,000. This record is just slightly below the level attained in the month after the 1989 Loma Pieta earthquake when, due to the closure of the Bay Bridge, BART's transbay service provided a valuable lifeline between San Francisco and the East Bay. In fact, ridership levels today are so high that they have already surpassed planning projections for fiscal year 2004 – four years ahead of schedule.

To put this ridership in perspective, the BART system carries about 50 percent of the peak period, peak direction transbay commute. Without BART, the number of cars on the Bay Bridge during the morning commute would double. In other words, the bridge would need an additional deck to accommodate the extra traffic. But, this extraordinary ridership growth is not just a transbay phenomenon. Record growth is occurring on every segment of the system, in both the commute and non-commute directions, in peak and off-peak periods, on weekdays and weekends.

This extraordinary increase in ridership is very welcome and is critical to our continued financial health. But, it is straining our core system capacity, presenting significant challenges for our aging system and placing a premium on the reliability and quality of the transportation service BART delivers. With this surging ridership, we continue to meet our on-time performance goals, delivering customers to their destinations on time over 95 percent of the time. However, in order to sustain this level of reliability and

quality of service, while supporting growing numbers of riders, it is imperative that there be regular, on-going reinvestments in BART's existing physical infrastructure.

Back in the early 1970s, BART was the first major "new generation," heavily automated rail system to be built in the United States in 60 years. Now, in its 28<sup>th</sup> year of revenue service, BART is no longer a new system. Signs of age have begun to show on rail cars, stations and equipment as well as less visible systems, affecting their reliability, maintainability and appearance. Many electronic and mechanical systems are approaching the end of their original design lives.

To ensure that BART continues to operate at a high degree of reliability, in the mid-1990's, we embarked on a ten-year, \$1.2 billion system-wide renovation program that is touching virtually every major element of our original system. The largest single component of the program is the complete restoration of the original fleet of 439 rail cars. While the integrity of the car shells remains intact, the mechanical and electrical components are ready for replacement or a complete overhaul. Remanufacturing will extend the useful life of the cars by 20 years at approximately 50 percent of the cost of purchasing new vehicles.

Other components of the renovation program include track replacement, facility renovation, renovation or replacement of escalators, elevators, fare gates, ticket vendor machines and train control and computer systems. These improvements will mean fewer

train delays, more reliable escalators and elevators, reduced queuing at fare gates and ticket machines, and safer, more comfortable station facilities.

However, this is not a one time, 10-year program. Timely reinvestment will be an ongoing requirement if we are to avoid the experience that several older properties have faced, namely, under investment, service deterioration, loss of ridership, loss of revenue, which leads to further service deterioration and so the cycle continues.

As we are aging, we are also growing, and investment to increase the capacity of our core system to support increased ridership is also required. To address these needs, we are conducting a 30-year System Capacity Enhancement Study to identify, quantify and establish priorities for core system capacity improvement measures. Some of the constraints being assessed by the study are: vertical circulation at stations, station entrances, parking facilities and other modes of access, maintenance shop capacity, track capacity and flexibility (pocket tracks, turnbacks), fare vending and collection equipment, rail cars and the need for new technologies such as the state-of-the-art Advanced Automatic Train Control (AATC) system.

AATC technology is currently being developed and tested to allow trains to run faster and at closer intervals, thereby reducing headways and increasing capacity. The new system will be installed on the most congested portion of the BART system line. This will increase the number of trains that can run through the Transbay Tube, which connects San Francisco and the East Bay. But, if AATC were adapted to the entire

system, BART would get faster run times throughout the system, which would enable better fleet utilization, a critical core system capacity issue.

Strategic system expansions to serve new corridors in our growing region are another critical component of BART's program of capital priorities. Phase One of the BART Extensions Program is nearing completion, which represents the first physical expansion of BART since our core system was built in 1972. One of the important lessons learned in this Phase One program was the impact extensions can have on the core system. Supporting the increased service generated by these extensions has required core system improvements in traction power, track circuitry, radio systems and maintenance shop capacity. As we move forward, in response to strong interest in the region, in exploring potential future extensions, identifying and quantifying these core system capacity requirements will remain a high priority.

Finally, our seismic safety retrofit program is designed to ensure that BART is capable of resuming operations with minimal delay following a major earthquake. At this point, we are working with the California Department of Transportation, Caltrans, to initiate the first phase of this program, a \$200 million project that will address BART structures that cross key streets and roads. Of course, the entire system requires retrofitting, but these later phases of the program are, as yet, unfunded.

To summarize, BART faces a number of key challenges in implementing a program of capital priorities that will enable us to continue to deliver high quality, reliable,

convenient and efficient rapid transit service to the growing San Francisco Bay Area. System renovation, expanded core system capacity, strategic expansions and seismic retrofit are all critical capital needs that must be addressed in order to support growing levels of service, safeguard the substantial public investment in BART and avoid the downward spiral of deteriorating service reliability associated with neglected infrastructure needs. Preserving the integrity of BART will also help to support continued strong economic growth in the region.

We recognize that achieving our goals requires regular, on-going investments in BART's existing physical infrastructure. One of the key messages I want to emphasize is the need for a stable, predictable, adequate fund source for rail properties that are being squeezed by high service levels, increased demand for service and an aging physical plant that can't be ignored. We would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with our colleagues in the transit industry, local transportation agencies, MPOs, state agencies and Congress to explore potential funding opportunities to meet these needs.

BART is an integral part of the Bay Area's transportation network and we are proud of our almost 30-year legacy of service. Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and customer-friendly regional public transit service in order to increase mobility and accessibility, strengthen community and economic prosperity, and preserve the environment in the Bay Area. Implementing our program of capital reinvestment priorities will enable BART to continue to fulfill this mission, to serve more customers,

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provide alternatives to growing traffic congestion, and help to ensure the continuation of our very robust economy.

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**Subcommittee on the District of Columbia  
Committee on Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Subcommittee Questions  
Submitted by Dorothy W. Dugger, Deputy General Manager  
Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) District  
October 6, 2000**

- *What are the key challenges faced by the Bay Area Rapid Transit District in providing adequate, safe, secure, reliable, and customer-friendly transportation services to citizens of the San Francisco region?*

Our first and foremost job is to provide safe, reliable and efficient transit service to our customers. The basic requirements to accomplish these goals are straightforward and include:

- ◆ operating and capital budgets, funded by reliable sources, adequate to support sufficient staffing, material and capital investment levels
- ◆ skilled, well trained and dedicated employees
- ◆ sound, well understood operating procedures
- ◆ well-defined capital plan and priorities

For systems like WMATA and BART, faced with the immediate and substantial challenges of managing record ridership growth simultaneous with the effects of an aging system, the challenges are complex. The implications for service reliability and quality require an ever greater emphasis on adequate and effective maintenance resources and programs, as well as operating recovery strategies to quickly mitigate service disruptions when they do occur. BART's original system design does not provide much operating

flexibility (single tracks in each direction, limited pocket tracks and turnback capability to remove or bypass disabled equipment). Given the density of service, closer headways and more crowded trains, when we do have a service disruption, there is less recovery time. More trains, and thus, more people are affected. To minimize this impact, we focus our recovery strategies on the peak direction travel to minimize this impact.

Maintaining service levels and customer loyalty while carrying out the renovation program on an operating railroad is another key challenge. We are taking equipment out of service for renovation at the very time that ridership levels are demanding more equipment than ever. The number of available rail cars is reduced. Escalators are taken out of service for several months at a time. Customers are clearly inconvenienced. Maintaining their loyalty throughout these long-term programs places a premium on good customer communications and responsive action to address the problems that we can. In asking for their patience, our goal is to effectively articulate the value of this work in terms of sustained service reliability and cost effectiveness.

Renovation work is somewhat more unpredictable than new construction. Despite the best assessments, unexpected conditions can occur when an escalator or train electrical system is opened up. Schedules are more difficult to communicate and maintain.

Funding for renovation programs is challenging. Often the projects are not visible, do not result in expanded service and are tough to sell in a competitive funding environment. They tend to require large, multi-year investments. In my opening remarks, I talked

about the need for a stable, predictable and adequate funding program to meet on-going capital reinvestment in our core system to renovate aging systems and equipment, sustain current service and expand core capacity to meet growth. This is one of our top priorities locally, at the state level and in the reauthorization of TEA 21.

Finally, our employees are key to delivering high quality service. Maintaining a well-trained, motivated, customer-friendly workforce is always critical, but, particularly when service levels are as high as they are and the employment market is so tight and competition for certain skills is high. This puts added demands on frontline employees, as our customers encounter sometimes balky equipment and deal with the inevitable disruption of construction. Equipping employees with the resources they need to do the job well, helping them to effectively communicate with a diversity of customers, motivating them and rewarding outstanding performance is something on which we focus a great deal of energy. Our newly adopted Strategic Plan has helped to give focus and direction to our goal of creating a shared vision throughout the BART workforce.

- *To what extent does WMATA face unique challenges because of its relationship to the federal, state, and local governments that influence WMATA's operations and decision-making authority? What challenges does (BART) face within its governing structure? How does it work with local and state governments?*

BART's governing board is made up of nine directors elected from the three-county BART District. The nine-county San Francisco Bay Area is home to more than two dozen public transit operators. Working with local, regional, state and federal funding agencies to access transportation dollars and arrive at consensus on transportation policy decisions is a real challenge because of the complexity of the region, local preferences

that sometimes conflict with or overlook regional needs, and a competitive, lengthy process for accessing funds.

Even federal transit formula funds that flow to the region are subject to a “bottoms-up,” competitive decision-making process. Federal Section 9 and Section 3 monies primarily fund transit renovation/replacement projects – in BART’s case, track replacement and rail car renovation. However, accessing federal flexible funds under the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) is a highly competitive process because all modes are competing for funding. This process sometimes makes it difficult for a multi-county agency like BART to win approval for a project of regional significance. This is particularly true for renovation projects that tend to be more “invisible” and less than high profile local projects. As a three-county special district, BART works to overcome these inherent challenges through close communication and effective advocacy with local transportation agencies. Our goal is to target resources available to the region to address our dual goals of sustaining and maintaining the existing system and meeting the demands of growing region.

In such a large, diverse region with a plethora of transit operators and trips that span multi-counties, major corridors and modes, we are working in partnership with local, regional and state transportation agencies to deliver safe, convenient and well-coordinated transit service. We have been successful in funding our Phase One Extensions Program as well as a portion of our seismic retrofit needs. A current

emphasis is service and schedule coordination and streamlined ticketing to offer seamless trips for the customer.

- *How does the Bay Area Rapid Transit District fund its operations and capital investments?*

Roughly, half or 49 percent, of BART's operations are funded out of the farebox. Another 42 percent of our operating revenue comes from a permanent dedicated half-cent sales tax in the three BART counties. (BART recovers 3/4 of the half-cent tax) The remainder, 9 percent, comes from: property tax/other financial assistance (4.2 percent), other revenue generated through advertising, leases, etc. (4.6 percent).

Every year, BART updates a ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that lists all of the projects that the District would implement over a ten-year period, if adequate funding were available. Projects are organized into five major categories as follows: system renovation, extensions, seismic retrofit, service improvements, and research, development and demonstration. The entire program totals almost \$7.941 billion. A program of this size is currently beyond the level of funding that can reasonably be assumed to become available through existing sources over the next ten years. Therefore, in accordance with the approach taken by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in its development of the 20-year Regional Transportation Plan, BART's CIP is divided into two "Tracks."

Track One is “financially constrained” and comprises those projects which are essential to the continued safe and reliable operation of the system and for which potential funding sources can be reasonably identified. Track Two includes projects for which projected near-term levels of identifiable funding sources are currently inadequate.

BART pursues a diverse set of capital revenues and funding options in order to implement such a large capital improvement program. These include federal formula and discretionary funds, voter approved state bond monies, voter approved county sales tax funds, sales tax-backed revenue bonds issued by our agency, property tax and bridge toll revenues. For our extension program, we appreciate our partnership with Congress to provide a multi-year New Starts funding commitment that will cover roughly 50 percent of the San Francisco Airport Extension program. County sales taxes and state funds have largely financed the East Bay Extensions.

- *What are the lessons learned and the “best practices” used by transit agencies in addressing key financial, operational, and management challenges?*

Starting at the beginning with original system design and construction, the lesson is: don't cut corners. As described earlier, constraints of BART's original system design, which were partially driven by funding limitations, limit operational and maintenance flexibility. For example, without dual tracks or additional pocket tracks, it is more difficult to remove or bypass disabled trains. The result is a "domino effect" on trains that are backed up behind the disabled train.

An adequate, reliable, long-term funding source is critical to support multi-year, on-going reinvestment. Deferred reinvestment can lead to a downward scenario of poor service, loss of ridership, loss of revenue, etc. Therefore, the timeliness of implementing reinvestment programs to avoid service deterioration is also important.

Listening to what really matters to customers and being responsive is an important “lesson learned.” Establishing measurable goals to track and manage performance is a very useful management tool. Incorporating customer feedback into the decision-making process and directing resources accordingly promotes customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Finally, the use of peer reviews can provide experienced, knowledgeable and “fresh” perspectives in assessing specific areas of concern.

- *Does the Bay Area Rapid Transit survey its riders and potential customers to gauge their opinions and determine customer satisfaction levels?*

BART regularly surveys its riders to gauge their opinions and determine customer satisfaction levels and to help sustain our organization’s focus on customer service. Approximately every six years BART conducts a survey to better understand its customer market on a station by station basis. This Station Profile Study provides travel pattern and demographic data about BART customers. Data on mode of access, frequency of use, and personal characteristics, such as age, and gender, allows BART to evaluate current services and to plan for future needs.

Achieving excellence in customer service is a central goal at BART. To gauge how well we are meeting riders' needs, BART conducts a major customer satisfaction survey every two years. We survey customers on a variety of service characteristics, ranging from on-time performance to station cleanliness and ask customers to tell us not only what they like and don't like about service, but how important each of those characteristics is to the customer. Results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey help us to identify those issues on which customers place the most importance, which are then integrated into our annual budgeting process.

On a yearly basis, a customer satisfaction survey of paratransit riders is conducted. In addition, surveys are performed to assess new markets, such as reverse commute, and focus groups are conducted periodically on emerging issues or new initiatives.

- *How does the Bay Area Rapid Transit District measure its performance in key areas and how did it develop performance measures?*

BART regularly measures performance in key areas and prepares a Quarterly Service Performance Review and a Quarterly Financial Review for the Board of Directors. The Quarterly Service Performance Review reports actual operating performance against set goals in three key areas: equipment and systems performance, safety and customer experience. Operating performance standards measure system and equipment reliability and availability and function as an important management tool for tracking the effectiveness of our maintenance programs, operating strategies and renovation programs. The Review assesses on-time service, car equipment reliability and

availability, elevator, escalator and automatic fare collection equipment availability, the environment inside and outside of stations, station and train vandalism, station service personnel, customer complaints, operating safety, employee safety, patron safety and quality of life issues.

Standards are driven by policy level service goals set by the Board of Directors such as ridership, load factors, and financial performance. Staff develops specific standards and measures that are necessary to meet these goals. Standards are revised as needed to support changes in the goals such as expanded levels of service and to respond to customer feedback.

The Quarterly Financial Review reports on ridership data, net and gross rail revenue financial assistance and a variety of other financial indicators to monitor performance against budget.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Ms. Porter.

Ms. PORTER. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Norton. My name is Kathy Porter. I'm the mayor of Takoma Park and the chair of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board [TPB], at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The TPB is the officially designated metropolitan planning organization for the Washington metropolitan region and is charged with implementing Federal requirements for metropolitan transportation planning. The members of the TPB include local effected officials, the transportation agencies of D.C., Maryland, and Virginia and WMATA.

As a long-range planning organization, the TPB is especially concerned about the challenges facing Metro, which has played a critical role in our regional transportation and development plan since the 1960's. As has been noted, the Metrorail system today has the second highest ridership levels of all metropolitan rail transit systems in the country. Over the next 25 years we are relying on the Metrorail corridors to absorb an even larger number of trips and to act as the backbone of our regional development framework. The Metro system plays a crucial role in regional land use policy and economic development, issues that extend far beyond the needs of riders who depend upon the system every day.

In the Washington Metropolitan Area we are currently facing funding challenges that directly affect the future of the Metro system. The TPB has become acutely aware of these issues in the course of carrying out one of its most important planning functions, the development of the region's long-range transportation plan. One key Federal requirement of this long-range plan is that it can only include projects and programs for which funding is, quote, reasonably expected to be available. This means that no matter how important a new transportation project is, it can only be included in the long-range plan if funding for the project can be identified.

I should reiterate, as has been mentioned before, that this region has no dedicated regional source of transportation funding. The revenues for the region's long-range plan come from Federal, State and local governments and from transit fares. The long-range plan is based on the revenues identified by the agencies responsible for these funding sources over the 25 years of the plan.

We are currently in the middle of our 3-year update of what we call the constrained long-range plan. This update has received considerable attention because the funding identified is not sufficient to include many of the programs and facilities needed to address our growing mobility needs.

The needs of WMATA have received particular attention during this update of the long-range plan. We project that \$76.8 billion will be available for the projects and programs of all modes in the plan over the next 25 years. This is in constant year 2000 dollars. According to current estimates, 52 percent, or \$40 billion, of the total revenues for the plan will be designated for public transit, including local buses as well as WMATA. Of this \$40 billion, \$27.8 billion, or 36 percent, of total plan revenues would be used for WMATA operations and preservation. On the revenue side this is

partially offset by the \$11.5 billion, or 15 percent, that comes from WMATA fares.

Nevertheless, the funding allocated in the long-range plan update for rehabilitation and preservation of the Metrorail and Metrobus system is less than is requested by the WMATA Board of Directors. Further, the funding agencies could not identify the resources requested by WMATA to accommodate ridership growth over the next 25 years, funding that is needed to purchase rolling stock and to improve stations and other facilities. In carrying out the financial analysis that we are required to do under this planning process, we determined that the available funding is not sufficient to meet these WMATA requests without seriously undermining the region's ability to maintain and upgrade other critical elements of the transportation system.

In addition to developing a long-range transportation plan, the TPB is also responsible for certifying that the plan meets air quality requirements. In doing our analysis, we had to consider how WMATA's unfunded needs would affect air quality, assuming that a significant number of additional riders who would otherwise be using the system would not be accommodated after the year 2005 because of the lack of funding for system improvements. Using this assumption, we found that more than 100,000 additional daily trips would have to be absorbed by the highway system in the year 2025, causing an increase in emissions.

Work trips on transit would be particularly affected by this constraint. If Metro ridership growth were constrained because of funding issues, transit work trips would increase by 20 percent by 2025, compared to a 37 percent increase if full funding to accommodate ridership growth were available. Furthermore, our analysis assumed that fares on Metro would rise with the Consumer Price Index after 2002. If fare increases were held below the CPI, ridership could be expected to increase even more substantially, which would create even greater unfunded needs.

The funding shortfalls identified in the long-range planning process have been sobering for members of the TPB who are deeply concerned about growing traffic congestion and its effects on our regional economy and quality of life. Only 2 years ago the TPB adopted a bold policy framework, the transportation vision, that was intended to guide our transportation investments into the next century. One of the goals of the vision is "adequate maintenance, preservation, rehabilitation, and replacement of existing infrastructure." The inadequacy of funding in the long-range plan, which applies to highway maintenance as well as transit, undermines our ability to meet the goals of this vision.

At our October 18th meeting, the TPB will consider final approval of the long-range plan update along with a resolution expressing the TPB's serious concerns regarding the region's inability to meet the goals of our vision due to the shortfall in funding. In addition, in order to begin to address this funding shortfall the TPB is planning a series of intensive meetings and briefings with key stakeholders. Staff from the TPB and COG have already begun meeting with State transportation agencies and WMATA to discuss the transit agency's funding needs. On November 30, we will host a structured briefing and discussion for key State level officials on

regional transportation needs for transit, highways and other travel modes, with the goal of building consensus on actions needed to address these needs.

I have no illusions that the funding challenges we face can be resolved quickly or easily, but we must begin to take steps now to protect the investments we have made in our transportation system, and particularly in Metro. I believe our intensive effort this fall working with the key officials from the State funding agencies and WMATA will ultimately pay off in a renewed effort to address the challenges we all face.

In closing, I also want to mention that the TPB's vision contained another ambitious goal that is very germane to our discussion today. In the vision, the TPB called for "an enhanced funding mechanism for regional and local transportation system priorities that cannot be implemented with current and forecasted Federal, State and local funding." The important point here is that a mechanism or mechanisms need to be established to create a fiscally sustainable transportation system so that we are not simply moving from this year's funding challenge to a new one next year. Throughout the coming months I hope that we can engage in an open discussion with citizens and with our elected leaders, including Members of Congress, that will help us move toward a more permanent funding solution.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Porter follows:]

**Testimony Before the  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia of the  
Committee on Government Reform**

**On**

**Challenges Facing**

**The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority**

Submitted by

**The Honorable Kathryn Porter**

Chairman  
National Capital Region  
Transportation Planning Board  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments  
and  
Mayor, Takoma Park, Maryland

Friday, October 6, 2000  
Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building  
1:00 p.m.

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee. My name is Kathy Porter and I am the mayor of Takoma Park, Maryland, and the chair of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board— the TPB— at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG).

The TPB is the officially designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Washington metropolitan region and is charged with implementing federal requirements for metropolitan transportation planning. The members of the TPB include representatives of local governments, the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, the transportation agencies of the states of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies. The planning area covered by the TPB includes the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Suburban Maryland.

As a long-range planning organization, the TPB is especially concerned about the challenges facing Metro, which has played a critical role in our regional transportation and development plans since the 1960s. The Metrorail system today has the second highest ridership levels of all metropolitan rail transit systems in the country. Over the next 25 years, we are relying upon the Metrorail corridors to absorb an even larger number of trips and to act as the backbone of our regional development framework. The Metro system plays a crucial role in regional land use policy and economic

development— issues that extend far beyond the needs of riders who depend upon the system every day.

In the Washington metropolitan area, we are currently facing funding issues that directly affect the future operations of the Metro system. The TPB has become acutely aware of these issues in the course of carrying out one of its most important planning functions—the development of the region's long-range transportation plan. This plan, which has a 25-year planning horizon, is updated every three years. Included in the plan are transit and highway projects, and by law the plan must meet federal planning and air quality requirements.

One key federal requirement is that the long-range plan can only include projects and programs for which funding is “reasonably expected to be available.” This means that no matter how important a new transportation project is, it can only be included in the long-range plan if funding for the project can be identified.

I should emphasize that this region has no dedicated regional source of transportation funding. The revenues for the region's long-range plan come from federal, state and local governments, and from transit fares. The long-range plan is based on the revenues identified by the agencies responsible for these funding sources over the 25 years of the plan.

We are currently in the middle of our three-year update of what we call the Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP). This update has received considerable attention because the funding identified is not sufficient to include many of the programs and facilities needed to address our growing mobility needs.

The needs of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have received particular attention during this update of the long-range plan. We project that \$76.8 billion will be available for the projects and programs of all modes in the plan over the next 25 years, in constant year 2000 dollars. According to current estimates, 52 percent (\$40 billion) of the total revenues for the plan will be designated for public transit, including local buses as well as WMATA. Of this \$40 billion, \$27.8 billion (or 36 percent of the total plan revenues) would be used for WMATA operations and preservation. On the revenue side, this is partially offset by \$11.5 billion (or 15 percent of the total) that comes from WMATA fares.

Nonetheless, the funding allocated in the long-range plan update for rehabilitation and preservation of the Metrorail and Metrobus system is less than requested by the WMATA Board of Directors. Further, the funding agencies could not identify the resources requested by WMATA to accommodate ridership growth over the next 25 years—funding needed to purchase rolling stock, and improve stations and other facilities. In carrying out the financial analysis we are required to do under this planning process, we determined that the available funding is not sufficient to meet

these WMATA requests without seriously undermining the region's ability to maintain and upgrade other critical elements of our transportation system.

In addition to developing the long-range transportation plan, the TPB is also responsible for certifying that the plan meets air quality requirements. In doing our analysis, we had to consider how WMATA's unfunded needs would affect air quality, assuming that a significant number of the additional riders that would otherwise be using the system could not be accommodated after 2005 because of lack of funding for system improvements. Using this assumption, we found that more than 100,000 additional daily trips would have to be absorbed by the highway system in the year 2025, causing an increase in emissions.

Work trips on transit would be particularly affected by this constraint— if Metro ridership growth were constrained, transit work trips would increase by 20 percent by 2025, compared to a 37 percent increase if full funding to accommodate ridership growth were available. Furthermore, our analysis assumed that fares on Metro would rise with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) after 2002. If fare increases were held below the CPI, ridership would be expected to increase even more substantially, which would create even greater unfunded needs.

The funding shortfalls identified in the long-range planning process have been sobering for the members of the TPB who are deeply concerned about growing traffic congestion and its effects on our regional economy and quality of life. Only two years ago, the

TPB adopted a bold policy framework, the Transportation Vision, that was intended to guide our transportation investments into the next century. One of the goals of the Vision is the “adequate maintenance, preservation, rehabilitation and replacement of existing infrastructure.” The inadequacy of funding in the long-range plan update—which applies to highway maintenance as well as transit— undermines our ability to meet the goals of the Vision.

At our October 18 meeting, the TPB will consider final approval of the long-range plan update along with a resolution expressing the TPB's serious concerns regarding the region's inability to meet the goals of our Vision due to the shortfall in funding. In addition, in order to begin to address this funding shortfall, the TPB is planning a series of intensive meetings and briefings with key stakeholders. Staff from the TPB and COG have already begun meeting with the state transportation agencies and WMATA to discuss the transit agency's funding needs. On November 30, we will host a structured briefing and discussion for key state-level officials on regional transportation needs for transit, highways, and other travel modes, with the goal of building consensus on actions needed to address these needs.

I have no illusions that the funding challenges we face can be resolved quickly or easily, but we must begin to take steps now to protect the investments we have made in our transportation system—and particularly in Metro. I believe our intensive effort this fall working with the key officials from the state funding agencies and WMATA will ultimately pay off in a renewed effort to address the challenges we all face.

In closing, I also want to mention that the TPB's Vision contained another ambitious goal that is germane to our discussion today. In the Vision, the TPB called for "an enhanced funding mechanism(s) for regional and local transportation system priorities that cannot be implemented with current and forecasted federal, state and local funding." The important point here is that a mechanism or mechanisms need to be established to create a fiscally sustainable transportation system so that we are not simply moving from this year's funding challenge to a new one next year. Throughout the coming months, I hope that we can engage in an open discussion with citizens and with elected leaders—including members of Congress—that will help us move toward more permanent funding solutions.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Mr. Carvalho.

Mr. CARVALHO. Chairman Davis and members of the subcommittee, my name is Michael Carvalho, and I both work and live in the District of Columbia. I'm also a member of the Greater Washington Board of Trade and serve on the Board's Transportation and Environment Committee.

I'd like to preface my remarks today by taking this opportunity to thank Chairman Davis for his outstanding leadership in resolving the budget issues associated with the new Wilson Bridge project, which will go a long way in reducing congestion in our region.

Founded in 1889, the Board has a long history of working to improve the quality of life in this area. We have a longstanding support for transit and in 1912 first contemplated the idea of a transit system for the District of Columbia. This led to a series of steps in advocating for transit, with a critical milestone being our 1966 testimony here on Capitol Hill supporting the creation of WMATA.

Throughout Metro's two and a half decades of providing quality public transportation to the citizens of our region, the Board of Trade has been a tireless advocate in promoting Metro's benefits as part of a balanced transportation system. We have helped fight for additional funding and for funding targeted expansion of service. We remain a strong advocate of transit-oriented development, both because it improves system efficiency and leverages Metro's role as a catalyst for job growth and economic development.

The most recent example of this is the New York Avenue Corridor in the District of Columbia that will soon benefit from a new Metro station. In addition, Metro is a key ingredient in our working to revitalize the District of Columbia and in putting brownfield sites back into productive use.

Today, less than 6 months shy of Metro's 25th anniversary, it is still the best system in the world. Our region has the second highest transit ridership nationally and Metro has enjoyed double digit ridership increases on both its bus and rail systems. It has set a number of ridership records this year alone, carrying in excess of 600,000 passengers on a weekday on Metrorail numerous times. Indeed, I personally rely on Metro for my commuting needs on a daily basis, having sold my car 2 years ago.

As you and I know, however, Metro service has recently encountered some challenges. The system has suffered through a spate of delays brought on by malfunctions, smoke and fire. Metro mechanics tried, but could not keep pace with escalator and elevator repairs. In short, while we have an outstanding system, it's a system that is showing its age.

Therefore, the first institutional focus of Metro, as referenced in the 1997 Board of Trade transportation study, must be on maintaining the existing system. "Fix it first" must be the mantra of WMATA. Failure to do so threatens an already stressed transportation network and compromises the region's high quality of life. To maintain what we have, Metro will need funds over the next 25 years to service the buses, railcars, systems and structures that are in place today. While most of these resources are identified, there remains a funding gap that the District of Columbia, Maryland,

and Virginia, along with the Federal Government, must find ways to close.

Last, while investment in the Metro system is necessary to serve future riders, new construction must be balanced and made within a broader framework of other regional transportation needs, including new bridges and roads. Our region still lacks the new Potomac River bridges and parkways required to link suburban activity centers and to address today's predominant suburb-to-suburb trips as well as the daily trips that Metro cannot carry. Additionally, these new corridors will serve future suburb-to-suburb Metrorail or Metrobus service.

In summary, we must maintain our existing system at its highest possible level of service. Future expenditures on transit roads and bridges as our limited funding allows must balance every new investment decision through filters of cost effectiveness, the ability to connect high density activity areas and its impact on the greatest number of the region's residents.

Metro is a shining star of our region, but it needs a serious infusion of investment for the challenges ahead. I respectfully urge to you support Metro's maintenance funding request so it can continue to remain the world class system we are so proud to call our own.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carvalho follows:]

**Statement of  
Michael Carvalho  
Member, The Greater Washington Board of Trade**

**Before The  
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia  
Committee on Government Reform  
United States House of Representatives  
Honorable Thomas M. Davis III, Chairman  
October 6, 2000**

**Regarding  
Challenges to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit  
Authority**

The Greater Washington Board of Trade  
1129 20<sup>th</sup> St., N.W., Suite 200  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202-857-5935

Chairman Davis and Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Michael Carvalho. I am a member of the Greater Washington Board of Trade and serve on the Board's Transportation and Environment Committee.

Founded in 1889, the Board has a long history working to improve our quality of life. We have been a longstanding supporter of transit and in 1912 first contemplated the idea of a transit system for the District of Columbia. This led to a series of steps in advocating for transit with a critical milestone being our 1966 testimony here on Capitol Hill supporting the creation of WMATA.

Throughout Metro's two-and-a-half decades of providing quality public transportation to the citizens of our region, the Board of Trade has been a tireless advocate in promoting Metro's benefits as part of a balanced transportation system. We have helped fight for additional funding and for the targeted expansion of service.

We have remained a strong advocate of transit-oriented development, both because it improves system efficiency and leverages Metro's role as a catalyst for job growth and economic development. The most recent example of this is the New York Avenue Corridor in the District of Columbia that will soon benefit from a new Metro station. In addition, Metro is a key ingredient in our work in revitalizing the District of Columbia and in putting "brownfields" sites to productive use.

Today, less than six months shy of Metro's 25th anniversary, it is still the best system in the world. Our region has the second highest transit ridership nationally and Metro has enjoyed double-digit ridership increases on both its bus and rail systems. It has set a number of ridership records this year alone, carrying in excess of 600,000 passengers per weekday on Metrorail numerous times.

As you know, however, Metro service has recently encountered some challenges. The system has suffered through a spate of delays brought on by malfunctions, smoke and fire. Metro mechanics tried but could not keep up with escalator and elevator repairs. In short, while we have an outstanding system, it is a system that is showing its age.

Therefore, the first institutional focus of Metro – as referenced in the 1997 Board of Trade Transportation Study -- must be on maintaining the existing system. "Fix it First" must be the mantra of WMATA. Failure to do so threatens an already stressed transportation network and compromises the region's high quality of life.

To maintain what we have, Metro will need funds over the next 25 years to service the buses, railcars, systems, and structures that are in place today. While most of these resources are identified, there remains a funding gap that the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia – along with the federal government -- must find ways to close.

Lastly, while investment in the Metro system is necessary to serve future riders, new construction must be balanced and made within the broader framework of other regional transportation needs including new bridges and roads. Our region still lacks the new Potomac River bridges and parkways required to link suburban activity centers and to address today's predominant suburb-to-suburb trips as well as the daily trips that Metro cannot carry. Additionally, these new corridors can serve future suburb-to-suburb Metrorail or Metrobus service.

In summary, we must first maintain our existing system at the highest possible level of service. Future expenditures on transit, roads and bridges, as our limited funding allows, must balance every new investment decision through the filters of cost effectiveness, the ability to connect high-density activity centers, and its impact on the greatest number of the region's residents.

Metro is a shining star of our region but needs a serious infusion of investment for the challenges ahead. I respectfully urge you to support Metro's maintenance funding requests so that it can remain the world-class system we are proud to call our own.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you very much.

Mr. DAVIS. We're going to proceed to questions. I think I'm going to start. Let me start by asking Mr. White. You are probably best equipped to answer this. What's accounted for the increase in bus service, the number of bus ridership in Metro? For a while it was going down as more and more local jurisdictions assumed bus service for various reasons. Now I see it's going back up fairly significantly.

Mr. WHITE. I would say the most significant factor was a rather bold action our Board took not too long ago to approve a fare simplification and integration strategy, which essentially we had one of the most complex bus fare systems in the United States, multiple zones. You really had to know an awful lot to know what the right fare was to pay. We basically simplified that down to one standard fare, for all intents and purposes. We used to charge to transfer, which is a great disincentive. We used to charge a full fare to transfer from bus and rail and we reduced that. So we provided some very significant financial incentives for people to use the bus system and for it to be easy for people to use the bus system, No. 1.

No. 2, we've replaced an awful lot of old buses. We had one of the oldest bus fleets in the Nation. We've been spending a lot of money replacing our bus fleet and of course people are going to find that more attractive. Recently we've been funding that. We have been having enough operating money to start growing our services. One of the things you need to do is to be able to provide enough service and a service frequency for it be convenient for people.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would say that those are possibly three factors that have contributed to that.

Mr. DAVIS. Are local governments continuing—the local governments are not continuing to go out and run their own systems then in increasing numbers? That's stopped at this point and stabilized?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, that trend had been quite acute for a period of time. In 1975 Metrobus ran about 95 percent of the service in the region and recently it's been about 75 percent. Indeed, I think that I had been a reflection of where people saw our service quality as being quite good. They were critical of the cost of delivering that service and made steps accordingly.

Recently, in our last labor contract we made significant improvements in our cost structure. We've actually competed in bids for service even against the private sector and have won several of those to provide service as a contract provider. So I think that has begun to have people look at us with a little bit different eye and with the knowledge that we are more cost competitive than we were in the past.

Mr. DAVIS. You dominate the bus service in the District? How does it rate the District, Maryland and Virginia?

Mr. WHITE. In the District, we provide all of the bus service. The District does not run any service itself except of course for special education. We're actually the school bus system for the District of Columbia as well.

Fairfax, VA, has its own fairly large bus system. Arlington has just recently started one. Alexandria has one. Fairfax City has one. They are all fairly small. In Montgomery County, the largest opera-

tor in the region is the Ride-on service in Montgomery County, and Prince Georges County has a service called the Bus.

Mr. DAVIS. But even in those jurisdictions, it's a combination of both the local and the Metro service?

Mr. WHITE. Yes. All of the jurisdictions utilize the Metro for some large piece of their service, yes.

Mr. DAVIS. I want to briefly address the addition of new stations to the Metrorail system. That must place increased pressure on the capacity of the station, such as Metro Center, which is not only used for making Metrorail connections, but it also serves as the final destination for commuters who work downtown. How does WMATA plan to alleviate that pressure? It's a tough enough financial pressure getting new stakes without the other priorities you have for repairing the Metro Center. What is it going to do to that?

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Chairman, that's an excellent question and one we are just now beginning to try and find the answer to. We are engaged in a very comprehensive review called the core capacity review. It's probably one of the most ambitious ones in the country, which is to examine very much the issue that you speak of. If our goal is to double ridership in the next 25 years, and if we know that goal is largely going to come 60 percent through a normal service growth and 40 percent from capacity expansion, that means that there's going to be enormous pressure put on the core of our system to support that ridership growth.

One-third of our rail customers transfer when they take their trips, so a number of people are moving from one line to the other. Our core capacity study is going to examine the answer to the question, what happens to that core system when the ridership doubles? What happens to our ability to have power distribution systems that can move our trains, signaling systems, vertical movement of people in and out of stations, and all the myriad of things?

So I can't answer your question as I sit here today. Twelve months from now, next September, is the schedule when we have all the answers to these questions. We've assembled a very impressive group of people who have tremendous knowledge and experience around the country and the world dealing with these issues. And I think in about a year from now, we'll know the kinds of things we need to do to our system to have the ability to support that kind of ridership growth.

Mr. DAVIS. Great. Thanks. Anybody else want to add anything to that? All right. I know that there has been a significant delay in scheduling the numerous escalator repairs. What kind of plan have you proposed for eliminating the backlog of escalator repairs? When will this be implemented? Also, are there preventative measures that WMATA can take now to alleviate the necessity for a high volume number of repairs in the future?

Mr. WHITE. We have 205 elevators and 557 escalators. It's the largest number of any transit property in North America and perhaps in the world. To give you an example, the one who is second to us is Los Angeles, 307 versus our combined 762. Another factor is that the vast majority of all of our escalators are exposed to the weather; 119 are unprotected. And the second one in the country is Miami with 76. And places like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta and others have zero.

So in addition to the numbers that we have, they are the deepest in the world also. Our system, as magnificent as it is, was built quite deep because of geological considerations and other considerations, and that has presented us with some challenges because of the depth of the escalators.

What we are doing about it, Mr. Chairman, is we have a multifaceted program. We're under contract now to spend over the next 6 years at least \$120 million. We're going to rehabilitate one-third of our worst performing escalators, 170 of those escalators.

Now it will take us 6 years to complete that task. What we recently did at the Board's urging was to come up with a plan to shorten that to the maximum extent possible, and we found an opportunity for some number of those escalators to reduce what normally takes 16 weeks to rehabilitate a single escalator and move that down to 12 weeks.

So that was an improvement there. The second thing we're doing is going to be putting canopies over our exposed escalators to protect them from the debilitating effects of the weather, particularly water runoff. And in addition, we've been increasing both our own internal capabilities to maintain the escalators by doing things such as creating our own apprenticeship programs to make sure we have people to do this work, but in the interim we are contracting out more of that work. We're right now using two firms who are maintaining those 170 escalators that they are rehabilitating, so we get more resources out there, more maintenance resources than we have today.

So that's essentially the full range of things that we're doing to try to address this problem.

Mr. DAVIS. Thanks. On August 10th you instituted the 60-day action plan that was going to improve rail services and communication with rail customers. What were the specific goals for improving service within that 60-day period? To what extent did you achieve those goals? And what else do have you to do?

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Chairman, this was a program that was designed, in its most basic way, to greatly improve our ability to communicate with our customers. And in your opening statement, you of course referred to a couple of incidents that we had significant difficulty, most especially that July incident on the Red Line. And we have found that we have not been able to perform the way we would like, and our focus has not been where it should be on making sure that our customers are fully informed when we do have these kinds of service delays.

So we are now in the process of retraining all of our train operators, more than 500 of them, and that program will be completed by November, with a really new sense of commitment to communications, particularly when we are experiencing some passenger delays. We've literally adopted a policy called "we stop, we tell," where the customer, if they're on the train, they're going to hear something from a train operator if they're caught in a delay.

Also, our central control office who controls all of our movement centrally, train movements centrally, is also more focused on making passenger announcements to stations and also to remind the operator have you communicated with the customer if they're experiencing a delay?

So those are the major things that we're doing. There are a number of things that are part of our call-to-action program. We are reporting to our operations committee of our board next Thursday, as a matter of fact, with our assessment of how we've done in that 60-day period. We've also conducted some focus group sessions with some of our customers to get their own input. We're going to be reporting back on that to our operations committee next week. I think, by and large, my own personal experience using the system and knowing what I know about the customer, the focus feedback, I think, a good number of our customers are seeing that we're doing a better job with our communications.

Mr. DAVIS. I wanted to ask, Ms. Dugger, BART uses a nine-member board of elected directors. Are they elected directly? Do you like run for chairman of BART, for the BART board?

Ms. DUGGER. They're directly elected by the public from specific districts in the three counties.

Mr. DAVIS. So San Mateo could get a district or the city or however it works?

Ms. DUGGER. San Mateo isn't a member of our BART district. But that is the idea. There are three counties that form the BART district, and some of those are, in some cases, multi-county seats.

Mr. DAVIS. Alameda whatever.

Ms. DUGGER. OK.

Mr. DAVIS. My last question, right for this round, I address it to you again, Mr. White, and if anyone else has any thoughts, as you know we passed our transportation conference report today, and aside from the Wilson Bridge, we had \$217 million contingent commitment authority that allows WMATA to move ahead with construction of the Dulles line. How will that affect WMATA's ability to apply for Federal grant money?

Mr. WHITE. As you may know, right now we're conducting an environmental assessment of this project going through the NEPA process. So obviously, we're not in a legal position to do anything until such time as we get a record of decision. We're expecting that to occur by the spring of 2002. About all those appropriate qualifiers this program in this corridor, a very, very important corridor to be served, is expected to be served with transit investments that phase initially with the bus rapid transit system growing to an extension of the rail system, the Metrorail system, first through Tysons Corner as the second segment, and then finally to Dulles Airport and to Loudoun County as a third segment.

So that's how the project is currently envisioned. Thus far, the Congress has appropriated, assuming that this year's appropriation is approved by the President, which I'm sure we are all confident that it will be, \$86 million will have been appropriated by the Federal Government plus the contingent commitment that you refer to will put that Federal commitment to over \$300 million.

Right now, the Commonwealth of Virginia, who is the sponsor of this project, is projecting that its request will be a 50 percent Federal share for the project. So if we assume that to be the case, that would then generate somewhere around \$600 million for this project at this particular point in time. The bus rapid transit piece of that is expected to cost in the vicinity, if you accept just general references, approximately \$250 to \$275 million. So clearly, this

would be enough to get the bus rapid transit system built and enough to perhaps begin getting us to Tysons Corner. We would need to have additional funds in the next reauthorization bill to complete that rail segment, but this certainly moves the project along, and the bus rapid transit phase, and begins to get to a critical mass on the rail, first phase of the rail extension.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much.

Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. White, pleased to see the improved statistics. They may be hard for the public to translate. That's why, for example, your explanation to the chairman about, "we stop, we tell," was very reassuring, since the lack of communication may be worse than what may have occurred in a given tunnel or at any given time.

But I'd like to ask a question about the first few weeks when there seemed to be a stop and a delay every time we were told someone thought there was a little bit of smoke, that—and we are told in here, I'd like to hear your rendition here as to whether or not this is true, that in response to the fire, that there was an over-reaction, or a sense if there is a little bit of smoke, then the whole works stops, that of course, leads to questions about whether or not management is prepared to make adjustments and changes as needed as opposed to taking a system like this and putting it on hold until you calibrate to the point where you know what you want to do. So let me ask a question, suppose there's a little bit of smoke today when some of these folks go home, how would the system handle a little bit of smoke in a tunnel today?

Mr. WHITE. If I could answer that question, Ms. Norton, by taking you through what has admittedly been some changes in our procedures as we responded to the April 20th tunnel fire, and clearly they have, particularly during the month of June, they had an acute effect on some of our service reliability issues. Let me also preface it by saying that as we have moved in this district, what we have been seeking to accomplish is to find the optimum medium between safety considerations and service reliability considerations. I would say that in June when we made our first procedural change, it was actually June 5th where there was a sense that we didn't have procedures that were sound enough that would govern how we would respond to a set of questions when there were fire and smoke detected. We moved to a procedure that was a very, very conservative procedure, seeking the high ground on the safety side.

And that procedure said that whenever there is any sign of any kind of fire and smoke detected, and I would also say that there is literally almost any number of things that can cause that kind of event. And the vast majority of those are just extremely minor in nature, such as some debris blowing into the tunnel and coming in contact with the third rail, which immediately extinguishes itself, brakes that go on and causing malfunction, and it's really the vehicle that emits a little bit of smoke and sometimes there's a sense that perhaps that's a more serious condition.

So our procedures that any time we saw any fire and smoke, we would stop the train. We would notify the appropriate local fire de-

partment. They would be dispatched and they would then clear the scene.

Well, when that happened we saw a remarkable series of serious delays that occurred for 2 weeks and the vast majority of those were really related to very minor events. We then saw at that point in time that we were probably not where we wanted to be with our procedure. We modified it a second time on June 17, and I would also say that each time we made these changes we did it in consultation with the local fire chief to make sure we were in proper coordination with them. The second procedure recognized that we probably should be capable of diagnosing smoke conditions unless it was obvious that there was a severe, heavy smoke. The fire department said it was OK for us to proceed and to take action on those conditions that were smoke related, and those that were fire related we would yield to the fire department. In all instances we always notified the fire department, even when we're handling the situation, so in case it gets out of control and we've misdiagnosed it, they're there on the scene and they will not be delayed in getting there.

That second procedural change came close to right-sizing us, if we examine the statistics that you were looking at, Ms. Norton. That occurred in the middle of the month of June and we found that was in the beginning to put us in the direction that we needed to go.

The third change we made, which is where we are today, recognizes yet another condition, and that was imposed in July of this year, which indicates that—and also for purposes of education when people hear about a fire in a tunnel we're a system that's basically concrete and steel. There's literally nothing to burn in our system. Most of these conditions are power-related conditions and arcing-related conditions that are classified as a fire condition. We have 50,000 of what are called insulators that work with our power distribution systems and sometimes those, when they're subjected to water conditions and if there's any kind of debris near it, get into a condition called arcing where they're kind of glowing. And under that condition the fire department has recognized that's a power issue. They don't want to deal with that themselves. But they allowed us to start to deal with those conditions on our own and we have found since that month of June that our situations are now literally on the average of only three to four per month, which has been about the average that we had experienced in the year before.

So I think we are now exactly where we need to be as compared to a year ago and we are still working with the fire department to determine whether there are any other circumstances that we can be qualified to handle.

Ms. NORTON. That certainly is reassuring. The notion though that in order to decide what to do, obviously if you didn't know what to do you did the right thing. You're a public carrier and so you're responsible. I mean, the negligence is yours no matter what you do. The notion of shutting it down and finding out what to do is understandable but only because obviously there was not a worst case scenario that in advance would have told you what to do. I think that WMATA lost the part of its reputation that was tar-

nished, not so much from the fire but from the successive shut-downs thereafter, which said to people, my god, this is chronic. They haven't fixed it. So here you were shutting down for precautionary reasons for the most part but the message sent to the public said these guys are burning up now. We expect fires to come time and time again. That, it seems to me, speaks to the failure of management in advance to have foreseen that such matters could arise and to have had in place already a way to deal with them.

What I take it—I understand you all are having—what do you call it? Not raids but—

Mr. WHITE. Surprise audit reviews.

Ms. NORTON. Yes. Does that kind of thing—I call it worst case scenarios, so that people are already trained, so that this could never happen. But suppose it does, this is what we do if the impossible happens so that people immediately go into that. I mean if you're in the military that's how you would have to behave. And I guess when you are a public carrier you either behave that way or you're right, you shut the business down and do worse by yourself than if something had actually happened.

Mr. WHITE. Yes, Mrs. Norton, we do regular emergency disaster testing drills that put us to the test with all of the local fire departments. We actually did one recently that was quite unprecedented. We did it involving Amtrak and the commuter rail services as well to test a worst case event in a common corridor where Metrorail shares the same type of track or adjacent track with passenger and freight railroads.

The other thing we have done recently that in my opinion has proven to be one of the most successful things that we have done is we, each month now, have on a regular basis a set of after-action meetings where we bring in all the fire chiefs from all of the departments and sit down and review what happened that month for after-action reviews and lessons learned. And it used to be that didn't happen very regularly and when it did it only happened with the jurisdiction in which the event took place. Now everybody would like to know what happened there, if it happens in my part of the service territory, did I learn something about how Montgomery handled that that could be a benefit to the District. So that has worked quite well and I think is also another reason why our events have now normalized. I would agree with you the month of June was about as bad as it could get. It was a very difficult month for us and there were a lot of lessons learned.

Ms. NORTON. The chairman and I want to explore these funding problems. The chairman and I were looking at this graph that showed how much you were unfunded. Of course everyone says what everyone always says. We look to the Federal Government to fund us. Well, you know, good luck. Look what it has taken with the London Bridge falling down with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to get what it should have gotten from the Federal Government for a Federal bridge.

I want to explore this dedicated source notion that Ms. Fernandez talked about, that Ms. Dugger talked about, first of all, somebody testified, I think it's Ms. Fernandez, I don't know if this is said with pride or blame, but that WMATA gets more funds from

the box than other systems. Should I applaud or is that part of the problem?

Mr. WHITE. No, that's a good statement.

Mr. DAVIS. It depends on your philosophy, I guess.

Mr. WHITE. That's true. It is a reflection of how much we charge our customers.

Ms. NORTON. Let me go to my next question. Lately—the chairman wants to soak the poor. I am trying to find out how to—I am a Democrat. I am trying to increase ridership.

Mr. DAVIS. She wants to soak the middle class.

Ms. NORTON. I am trying to figure out how to increase ridership. And some of what you've done in recent years has amounted to saying we're going to give up money in order to get more people; for example, your hours that have been lengthened, which costs you more money, but then you get an increase in ridership. Which leads me to why should I applaud that more people, including more poor people in the District of Columbia you know are paying through, are paying through the box and that cost is not being shared more equitably throughout the region, which has one of the highest incomes in the United States. Why should I applaud that people who make minimum wage jobs in the District of Columbia pay a greater amount of the cost of WMATA, are paying through the fare box then, that somehow this cost is spread around the region. So far you have not gotten at least one hand clapping here in the District of Columbia but perhaps you can enlighten me.

Mr. WHITE. Let me try to answer this in one of two ways. The first is that the fair recovery ratio is the product of two factors. One is an expense factor and the second is a revenue factor. So it is the two working in harmony. And a great deal of our improvement is as much related to expense containment as it is to ridership growth and the customer paying a particular share.

Ms. NORTON. You haven't raised fares since what?

Mr. WHITE. 1995.

Ms. NORTON. Any fare increases in the offing?

Mr. WHITE. We have made pledges as an institution to go to at least 2002 before we even consider it, and I would say a good number of the members of our board would like to be able to stretch that commitment much longer than that. So I think from that point of view it is commendable in that it is as much a factor of expense as it is revenue.

The second one, Ms. Norton, is that factor is a combination of two issues. The bus fare recovery ratio is about 35 percent and 45 percent of our riders are district riders on the bus system. So that is subsidized two-thirds in recognition that it's a more labor intensive situation to run a bus situation. The rail recovery ratio is in the vicinity of 75 percent and again most of the District riders are one zone riders. So the rail system being as efficient as it is because of the volume of people it carries and the densities does bring in 75 percent. And again that's a combination of expense and revenue. But you put those two factors together then you get our system percent, but those who use our services who are most in need, and that in many instances is our bus customer, does much better if you will. And beyond that things that we did in recognition of that is until the last fare simplification we used to charge a cus-

tomers every time they transferred from one bus to another. And about 40 percent of our people on the bus system transfer, and even though it was 10 cents that's a major inconvenience. Throwing the cost of that transfer out, which we did, is a major benefit to the people, particularly in the District of Columbia.

Ms. NORTON. That's exactly what I meant.

Mr. WHITE. Maybe I can get one hand, if not two.

Ms. NORTON. Because it paid not to take more money in order to get more riders. I want to know about dedicated sources of income since that is talked about over and over again. First of all, is there any other jurisdiction in the United States that has a Metrorail system that does not have a dedicated source of income or are we unique or fairly unusual in that regard?

Mr. WHITE. The couple who are at the bottom of the list are ourselves, Boston and Miami, I think are the ones who are lowest down on the list on the major urban systems.

Ms. NORTON. Lowest on the list in what way?

Mr. LYNCH. Meaning least amount of dedicated resources that come their way. A number of systems are in the nineties and eighties and those are typically the California systems that Ms. Dugger had referenced, their access to a half cent sales tax and a property tax.

Ms. NORTON. Let me ask Ms. Dugger something.

Mr. DAVIS. Would you yield to me?

Is one of the problems you have to go through Virginia, Maryland and the District to try to get it and if you had one jurisdiction—

Mr. WHITE. It greatly complicates the fact that every year we must go through multiple jurisdictions.

Ms. NORTON. I was sure that was going to be a great part of the answer, but Ms. Dugger, is the system which deals across jurisdictional lines in California funded by the State or does each of those counties have to somehow come together to decide something with respect to funding?

Ms. DUGGER. There are two pieces of the funding puzzle, if I may. On the operating side we do have access to a portion of a half cent local sales tax that was established by the State legislature with the advocacy and consent of the parties in the region. That contributes to our operating budget where we too have a strong fare box recovery ratio. This year about 68 percent of our operating cost coming from our fares which in turn allows us to use a portion of that half cent sales tax revenue as a revenue stream against which we bond to generate some predictable long term, multi-year funding to support our ongoing capital programs. Typically these projects require up front contractual commitments of a relatively large nature, many of them well exceeding what we might get in an annual appropriation process be it at the local, regional or State or Federal level. So the ability to have that ongoing permanent revenue stream which we can go to the market and say this is reliable and we can issue bonds against it has helped us in managing our capital investment program.

On the capital side we are in a very competitive environment in a nine county Bay Area region with over two dozen transit operators providing service in that environment. So even the formula funds which flow to our region, whether it be from the Federal or

State level, go through a fairly competitive process. I am not familiar, I am not intimately familiar with the details of WMATA but where we too have to get consensus within our region of multiple players, multiple decisionmakers in that funding environment.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. White, what difference would it make, perhaps it doesn't make as much difference as we think, what difference would it make if you had a dedicated source of revenue for WMATA?

Mr. WHITE. I think it's an important point to clarify that there is this notion of dedicated, which says there is a singular form of taxing revenue that comes directly your way, and that's one way some systems go. A way other systems go is access to what I'll call adequate, stable and reliable source of funding, which doesn't necessarily mean it's one singular source. I think—

Ms. NORTON. I'm sorry. You have to give me an example of what you mean by that.

Mr. WHITE. I think the State of Maryland, for example, would say we provide you with a dedicated source of revenue because we have a bunch of taxing revenues that go into our transportation trust fund and then they go out and they make decisions what goes to roads, what goes to transit, what goes to aviation, and although we can't count on the knowledge that we're going to get so much every year it's a source of revenue that is managed through their trust fund. And they might contend that it is some sort of adequate, stable and reliable funding.

Ms. NORTON. A trust fund, just to make sure, a trust fund at the discretion of the local jurisdiction to decide how much money you get is a reliable source of revenue for you?

Mr. WHITE. At the discretion of the State, yes. This is all managed at the State level. But to my way of thinking, Ms. Norton, I think the issue really is how can we with some degree of certainty have a knowledge that there is a predictable amount of funding that is going to come and we know generally what that level is and we know that it's good every year so we can do some long-term planning. And we are hampered a bit in not being able to do long-term planning, working off of hopes and expectations. Now, for example, we do have a funding agreement with our local funding partners to handle this rehabilitation thing through the year 2003 and that is reassuring in that our local funding partners have said we're good for this, this amount of money, during this period of time, but after that we would have to wait and see what happened. So to my way of thinking, what it is is to have some degree of knowledge no matter how the fund sources are applied that it's adequate, stable and reliable.

Ms. NORTON. I don't know what we can do for you because the political leadership in this region as well as it works together is completely bollixed up, I must say, ideologically on this score about how to do it. And perhaps the jurisdictions themselves need to get together if they're serious about things like roads, where the most serious problem exists, and to straighten it out. I recognize that mass transit is doing the best it can. But you are going to reach a problem and I can tell you that Congress is not going to just come up with money to make up for that gap.

Finally, let me say to you, Mr. White, we in the District are pleased that WMATA has appropriated or agreed to buy some natural gas buses instead of all diesel buses. And as you know, I have been trying ever since that decision was made to get some Federal funds to make up for the loss that you would encounter because those buses apparently cost you more. Now that came late. And the money from transportation, the bill that just went through was earmarked up the gazoo and we have not been able to get money from the Federal Government.

I would like to know if at least some natural gas buses nevertheless can be purchased in light of the fact that you are frankly choking to death little children in the District of Columbia. Our asthma rates are some of the highest in the country and your buses have a lot to do with that. We may be able if we keep up, because I think it's \$5 million or more involved, to get some money. But we would hate to see given the emergency nature of the health crisis affecting children in particular with asthma in the District—we don't live in the wide open spaces of Fairfax County. We would particularly want you to spend some of that money on diesel buses and I ask you are you prepared to do that? I mean natural gas.

Mr. WHITE. Ms. Norton, our board has directed me to find out how to finance 100 compressed natural gas buses.

Ms. NORTON. You say what?

Mr. WHITE. The board has by its own policy resolution indicated that we're going to buy 100 compressed natural gas buses as our next purchase and they have directed me to come back to them in the month of November with an assessment of how we're going to finance that. So my job as directed by the board is to figure out how to do it, not whether we're going to do it. And we'll be reporting back in November with what our best hopes are as to how we're going to do that and we'll figure out a way to do it. There may be some financing involved. There may be some additional issues if we're not able to find a singular pot of money, but we're going to find a way to buy 100 compressed natural gas buses.

Ms. NORTON. Oh, my goodness. That's the very best news to come out of this hearing for me, and I very much appreciate what you've just said. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you. Let me piggyback on that question. Natural gas buses cost more obviously to buy because of supply and demand. They're not that much in demand. How about the operations?

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Chairman, our board asked panel of experts from around the country to come and testify in their experiences so that they would have a full benefit of what's going on in the industry. And the answer to that question is that it's largely driven by what the environmental conditions are of each particular area, what the cost of natural gas is, which fluctuates quite dramatically. Depending on where you are in the United States, the price fluctuates. Generally, most people say that it's either fairly equivalent or the differential is not so significant as to warrant a decision on that basis alone. So that's the information we're going with.

Mr. DAVIS. OK.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, could I piggyback on that as well?

We understand that Washington Gas built for Montgomery county a facility for fueling this, but then we heard, we said, well, perhaps we can get that, and we thought that was done, and probably in order, to show that this can work. And then we found out, or at least we were told, and here I am asking for information here that, in effect, Montgomery County was going to end up paying the entire cost at premium rates for it, and therefore, this was not much of a savings one way or the other; is that the case?

Mr. WHITE. Well, maybe. My mother certainly told me that nothing in life is for free, and if it sounds like too good of a deal, it probably is. In some instances what happens, and we did meet with the official of Washington Gas, so that we had the benefit of their perspective on this issue, and there are others who, on a commercial basis, provide a service which says that we'll build, operate and maintain your facility for you. We'll take care of it. You won't have to pay for it. It is clear they need to recoup their investment. They are not in the business of being so generous. So clearly, these arrangements are such that they are repaid in some form or fashion, and that may be in what the cost of the gas is that you purchase.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you. Let me ask a question, unlike the BART system in San Francisco, if I can draw a parallel, I understand Metrorail doesn't run the full-length, eight-car trains during rush hour; is that correct?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, sir. Our system has the physical capability to physically accommodate eight cars in a station, and that would take us literally from almost every square inch of one end of the station to the other. By the way, BART operates 10-car trains and was set up to operate 10-car trains, and also has an added advantage of something called programmed stop in its automatic train operations, which allows the train to be stopped with more precision than ours can.

We know that there is probably only two fundamental ways that we're going to be able to expand our capacity in our core system, and it's going to come from some combination of these two factors, if not one or the other. We are going to have to figure out how to run eight-car trains in order to carry more people through the system and figure out what kinds of things we need to do to support being able to run eight car trains. Or we need to reduce our headways or the intervals between trains by coming up with—accessing some new train technology. And there are those around the country, particularly in New York who are leading the industry right now in evaluating wireless train control technology, which has great benefits in allowing you to run more trains through the rush hour.

So those two things are being studied. Those are two key questions, Mr. Chairman, that are being reviewed in our core capacity study that I referred to you that the answers to those questions would be ready by next year. And it is our staff's preliminary belief that that's where we got to go, in one of those two directions.

Mr. DAVIS. How often do you have however many trains—what's your usual train load?

Mr. WHITE. Most of our trains are six-car trains, some of them we still run four-car trains. And it's only because we don't have enough rail cars to make them—

Mr. DAVIS. So it's not market-determined?

Mr. WHITE. Right now it's driven by the rail fleet at the moment, yes.

Mr. DAVIS. Let me ask, if I can, Ms. Fernandez. Mr. White testified that the FTA recently completed a procurement review system at WMATA and it performed under a contract by Harris Consulting. The Harris report concluded that only 9 of 51 elements were deficient, and 42 elements were not deficient. However, there's a concern that the negative findings might have been downplayed, for example, 23 of the elements found not deficient had at least one deficiency associated with them more over several of the elements; 19, 43 and 48 were determined to be not deficient, even though 25 percent of the files reviewed contained a deficiency of some sort. I wonder if you could explain to us just the criteria Harris used to conclude that elements were deficient or not deficient, and then give us your overall feel and try to make us feel comfortable with the findings.

Ms. FERNANDEZ. Yes, I'll be glad to do so, Mr. Chairman and Ms. Norton. I will say that these reports that were issued by our financial auditor, in fact, was a technical report, and that report was then interpreted to reflect information inaccurately. So I just wanted to make that statement. The procurement systems review is a system review that we conduct of all transit systems across the country. We do them in increments of 20 properties per year and the intent, the purpose is to ensure that the third party contracting requirements of our statute are, in fact, being followed through sound practices as it relates to the hiring of consulting services, the procurement of goods for these transit systems.

In its executive summary, our consultant indicated that, in fact, of the 51 elements, 9 of those elements exceeded 25 percent, which is a threshold that the industry has identified as an average, as a threshold. So 9 of the 51 exceeded 25 percent, and that's what was attempted to be conveyed in the executive summary, and that's what you've been reading in the local media.

Mr. DAVIS. In September 1997 the FTA completed a safety review of WMATA's Metrorail operations that cited serious weakness in the transit agency's safety procedures and practices, have you performed any followup of WMATA's safety operations since then and if so what have you found.

Ms. FERNANDEZ. Well, we have several oversight programs that are in place right now. One of them is our management oversight program of WMATA's capital program, which includes the construction of the light rail system, which is in addition to any projects within the CIP program for the bus services. That oversight is done on a priority basis. The safety oversight that you referred to earlier was one that did, in fact, identify a number of incidences where there were issues with the way that data was being collected and audits were being performed, particularly on the drug and alcohol program. But once we identified those deficiencies to WMATA, they took great strides in completing a corrective action plan. And we are very satisfied with what they have in place, their commitments include everything from training of personnel to hiring additional resources to ensure that these difficulties that were encountered earlier would not be repeated.

Mr. DAVIS. OK. Thank you very much. Let me ask Ms. Dugger a question. Has your reinvestment program at BART led to some of the same public frustration that Metro has experienced.

Ms. DUGGER. One of the biggest challenges I think of delivering a reinvestment program on an operating system, especially when we're carrying record numbers of riders, is that you're taking equipment out of service to repair or overhaul or replace it just at a time when demand for the equipment and the service it provides is at its greatest. So maintaining customer loyalty, keeping focused on communicating with our customers to explain what is occurring is, of course, a critical requirement.

I think the other realities of a renovation and reinvestment program as opposed to new construction is that it is somewhat less predictable. We are in the midst of rehabbing about 120 of our escalators on our system and inevitably, despite the best assessment going in, when you open up the kind of mechanical system, you find different rates of wear and different problems than you anticipated and the work itself can take longer than was estimated, longer than was advised—than the customers were advised of. So yes, it is a challenge. I think we are asking for our customers' patience and in so doing, trying very hard to articulate the long-term benefit and reliability and service improvement that this short-term inconvenience is causing.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you. Let me ask Ms. Porter a question. What are the difficulties you have—I used to serve on that panel that you're chairman of. What are the difficulties you have encountered in working with WMATA's board in key State and local stakeholders to identify funding, and what's the relationship between your board and the other stakeholders? I guess you come out of the same government, and you do the planning, but how does that relate to the funding?

Ms. PORTER. The transportation planning board is, as its name suggests, a planning organization. We don't control any of the funding sources that go for the transportation projects in the long-range plan. WMATA, as well as the local elected governments, are all part of the transportation planning board. We serve an overall regional function in bringing together sources of funding that are identified by these various funding sources and allocated to projects that they have set their priority on.

As I said in my testimony, the problem that we've identified is not that WMATA is getting too small a share of the pie. The problem is the pie is too small. There is, as Mrs. Norton correctly identified, a problem in getting sufficient funding for all transportation projects in this region. WMATA is not the only agency that has a problem with funding. We also have difficulties funding, as you mentioned, road repair and improvement projects, also. So the problem as we have identified it is that there is a lack of adequate dedicated funding for transportation in the entire region.

Mr. DAVIS. OK. Thank you very much. Mr. Carvalho, let me ask you a question. Does the board of trade have an official position or do you have a position on the impact of the Metrorail projects such as Largo and the Dulles lines, which address the need created by expansion in the suburbs, and how do you rank them with the priorities for repair and maintenance of the existing system?

Mr. CARVALHO. The expansion is clearly an important component of the overall transportation system. I think our focus here in what we're trying to convey is a fix-it-first mantra where funds, as they become available, go into maintaining a safe and reliable transportation system.

Mr. DAVIS. Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have only two more questions. One has to do with the later hours, Mr. White. I'd like some notion of what the number, or even better, increased percentage of riders has been relative to what you expected it to be and whether or not you are considering making the hours even later.

Mr. WHITE. Our board has made permanent the extension of our hours from midnight to 1 a.m., so that's now on a permanent basis, and in this fiscal year, we are now operating on a demonstration basis until 2 a.m. So we've extended it that second hour. We're supposed to report back to our board in the spring of next year with an evaluation of how we're doing. I would say right now thus far that the experience has been largely close to what we had predicted it to be in terms of the number of people who use the system during that 2 hour period. It's generally, if I am recalling correctly, approximately 10,000 additional trips each weekend that occurs because of the extra 2 hours of service.

So I think that we've attempted also to try—these things require a little bit of extra time to see where the market is, to be able to experience periods of time when there's good weather and things like that. So I think we will have a very good data base by April of next year to report back to the board, and then it will be their policy decision as to whether we should keep the 2 a.m. in effect on a permanent basis.

Ms. NORTON. It's very important to do it over a space of time so you have a reliable sense that these numbers will reoccur. Do you have any sense of whether the increases in suburbs or city are relative to what you expected?

Mr. WHITE. It tracks largely where you would probably intuitively think where there is the most night life and reasons why people might be attracted to the system from a restaurant point of view and others, but one of the interesting things that we are seeing in a marketplace that is emerging as being an important marketplace are those who are using it to go to work. Those people who are working later hours in service industries and things of that nature find that it is to their benefit now to be able to actually literally work their work shift, which might be the non-traditional work shift, and to be able to get home at night on a late-night shift.

And that's becoming a marketplace that we had not anticipated at the level that we're seeing it. So but generally, to answer your question, it's largely in the District of Columbia, in the Bethesda area, and also in a sections of Arlington is generally where most of this utilization is.

Ms. NORTON. Well, that's where the action is in this city, Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. Right.

Ms. NORTON. Ms. Dugger, what are the hours of BART? Here we're talking about weekend hours here up to 1 a.m. It doesn't sound like much of a night town, I know.

Ms. DUGGER. We go to bed early in the Bay area too, so we can get up early and meet the east coast financial market opening. Our hours of service on weekdays are 4 a.m. until 12 p.m. The last train gets back to its home yard, 1 or thereafter, so if you're in the system anywhere by 12 p.m., we say you can get home. On weekends we start a little later, 6 a.m. on Saturdays and 8 a.m. on Sundays.

The early weekday shift, or shift to earlier weekday openings to 4 a.m. was frankly a move we made after the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 when we were running 24-hour service for a period of months at that point because the Bay Bridge was out of service. What we found at that time—I wasn't at the organization at that time—but what was found at that time was a new market which was the early morning financial commute market; people going into downtown, as I say, to be there for the East Coast start of the financial market.

We've continued that early morning service. Frankly, one of the challenges, we too are getting increasing requests for staying open later at night, in part to support the service industry. The pressure that starts to create for transit systems like ours, and I believe to a somewhat lesser extent WMATA, but with a very inflexible infrastructure, basically with tracks—only one track in each direction, we have a very small maintenance window when revenue service is not operating now.

It's really from 1:30 a.m. until 4. So we have about 3, 3½ hours every day during the week to get the wayside maintenance, the track maintenance, work done that we need to do. So that is one of the balances as we look at extended hours of service.

Ms. NORTON. They learned to do it in New York with a much longer system.

Ms. DUGGER. New York has much greater flexibility in terms of express tracks and being able to isolate one track for work while still operating service. In our case we don't have that flexibility to pass or to shift from one track to another.

Ms. NORTON. Did you say what you all do on weekends?

Ms. DUGGER. We begin revenue service at 6 a.m. on Saturdays and 8 a.m. on Sundays, and we end at the same midnight closing.

Ms. NORTON. I see. Finally, I am intrigued, Mr. White, in your testimony by the increasing indications that you come in under budget in construction. How are you able to do that?

Mr. WHITE. Well, of course, it's good management, Mrs. Norton.

Mr. DAVIS. You have to stop right there.

Mr. WHITE. The last 13½ miles of our fast track segment was a \$2.1 billion budget, and at this stage we are \$250 million under budget for that construction program. It's been applied to things we wouldn't otherwise be able to do, such as purchasing rail cars and building a rail maintenance facility. I would say it is attributed to a few factors. One is the fact that some of our price estimates or our cost estimates were built upon our previous experiences, and we did suffer through some very high inflation years, particularly in the 80's where that was extraordinarily high inflation.

So we've been able to take advantage of lower inflation rates recently. We always try to promote the maximum amount of competition. And of course, as we all know, the more competition, the bet-

ter the pricing. And we've been quite successful at attracting competition.

And the other things we do as well is we take very seriously doing value engineering, which takes a critical look at all the elements that go into your system, and do you need all of those elements? You, of course, never want to sacrifice something that you really need, but if there are things that are not quite necessary, or if there's cheaper ways to do them, we take advantage of value engineering. And finally, we use the most advanced tunneling techniques that are available in the world to try to minimize the cost.

Ms. NORTON. I recognize some of this may be the good economy, but it's very nice to hear about underbudget other than cost overruns for a change. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you very much. Anything anyone wants to add on the panel before we adjourn? I want to thank all of you for participating today. I want to enter into the record the briefing memo distributed to the subcommittee members. We will hold the record open for 2 weeks from this date for those who may want to forward submissions for possible inclusion, and these proceedings are closed.

[Whereupon, at 3:25 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[The prepared statement of Hon. Constance A. Morella and additional information submitted for the hearing record follows:]

**Congresswoman Constance A. Morella  
District of Columbia Subcommittee  
October 6, 2000**

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this timely hearing examining the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the current management, operational, and budget challenges facing this agency.

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, Congressman Davis, Congressman Wolf, and I submitted legislation that encouraged President Clinton to issue an executive order to direct federal agencies to expand commuting alternatives for their employees. On April 21, 2000, Executive Order 13150 was signed by the President directing federal agencies to implement, on October 1<sup>st</sup>, a transportation fringe benefit program. This program offers qualified federal employees the option to be compensated for commuting costs incurred through the use of mass transportation and vanpools.

An integral part of our request and the Executive Order was for federal agencies in the National Capital Region to implement a “transit pass program” for their qualified employees. Since last Sunday, transit passes, in amounts approximately equal to employee commuting costs and up to the \$65 dollars per month allowed by law, are to be provided to federal employees.

The expansion of the Metrochek program to all federal employees in the Washington region is a testament to the region's faith in the great tradition of safety and reliability of WMATA's Metrorail and Metrobus systems.

While many area commuters sit in stop-and-go traffic for hours at a time contemplating why the traffic light is green and no one is moving, WMATA provides commuters the option to collect their thoughts and read the paper as they travel to and from their jobs. These transit passes truly are a benefit for federal employees... and, perhaps, the Washington Post.

Recently, however, WMATA has struggled to maintain its renown reputation as it expands its services to meet the needs of the growing Washington metropolitan area population. As the region's economy continues to boom, it is predicted that Metro's ridership will increase by as much as 50% over the next 20 years. The recent occurrence of fires in the metro tunnels, broken escalators, and overcrowding of buses and trains are discouraging to the commuter that is considering the use of mass transit.

This hearing will help WMATA get back on the “right track.” Hopefully real changes will take place as a result of this hearing that will forever prevent commuters from being stopped in a dark tunnel with no explanations.

In 1998, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority was awarded the “Best of the Best Award” by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation for its efforts over the past decade. It is my hope that by listening to this Subcommittee’s suggestions and those of our panelists, WMATA will be the recipient of this award in 2008.



October 5, 2000

Honorable Thomas M. Davis III  
Chairman, District of Columbia Subcommittee  
Committee on Government Reform  
B349-A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

It is with great regret that I must inform you that I will not be able to attend the congressional hearing, on the challenges facing the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, scheduled for Friday, October 6, 2000.

As you may know, Miami-Dade County has been declared under a "state of emergency" due to the heavy flooding created by the severe storms that hit South Florida early this week. As part of the County's Emergency Response Team, working hand-in-hand with FEMA, I am responsible for coordinating all emergency logistical transportation operations. The flooding has placed 40% of our bus fleet out-of-service and created a staffing shortage.

Although I am not available to attend the October 6<sup>th</sup> hearing, it is my hope that you may extend another invitation in the future to discuss the many challenges facing the transit industry.

Once again, please accept my most sincere apologies.

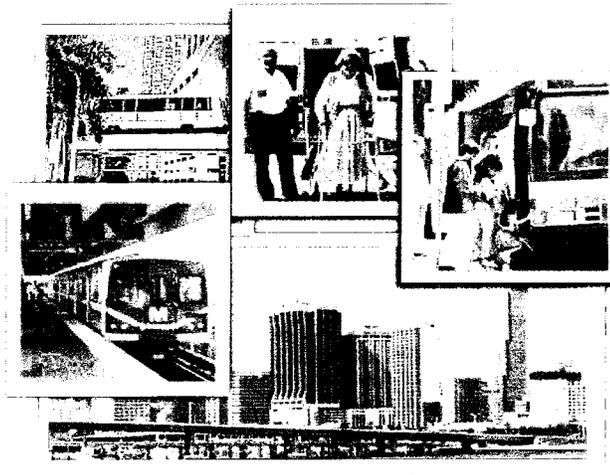
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danny Alvarez', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Danny Alvarez  
Director

# Miami-Dade Transit Testimony

Committee on Government Reform



**TESTIMONY**

**MIAMI-DADE TRANSIT**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Government Reform Subcommittee:

As Director of Florida's largest public transit system, I thank you for this opportunity to speak today on the management, operational and budget difficulties facing the public transportation industry.

South Florida, and Miami-Dade County in particular, is ranked the fifth most congested urban area in the nation by the prestigious Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), with a growing population estimated at 2.5 million by the year 2005. According to the 1994 Census Bureau Survey, we are the sixth poorest metropolitan county in the United States with 26% of our residents living below the poverty line.

After last year's defeat of the County's Penny Sales Tax referendum dedicated to fund transportation projects, Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) faces \$8 billion in unfunded transportation projects over the next 20 years. It is difficult and disappointing to know that major transportation projects that would create jobs, capital investment, and improve mobility for our residents and commerce alike, will not be realized for the simple reason that we could not identify a secure source of funding.

Two of the top 30 transit properties are without a dedicated source of funding – and they are WMATA and MDT. The lack of a dedicated source of funding limits our ability to provide adequate, safe, reliable, and customer-friendly service. Transit properties with a recurring and reliable funding source are better equipped to deal with

operational and capital needs. Without a dedicated source of funding, our projects cannot compete with places like Seattle, who have a dedicated source of funding (i.e. sales tax) where the federal match for major capital projects is only 18%.

The rules have changed at the federal level and the message to local government is loud and clear. In order to receive federal funds for capital expansion, transit properties must have a reliable and re-occurring source of funding for the local match and be able to operate and maintain the projects upon completion. Under TEA-21's established criteria, with the exception of the South Miami-Dade Busway, the balance of our capital projects, the East-West, North, Northeast and Kendall Corridors, would be considered "NOT RECOMMENDED". The reason, once again, no stable and reliable source of funding.

Since 1994, MDT's expenditures have risen an average of 2.5% annually, while operating revenues have remained relatively constant, at approximately \$65 million annually. Aggravating the situation are cuts in transportation operating funds at the federal level and the lack of a dedicated source of recurring reliable revenues at the local level. MDT currently receives operating assistance from FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Fund, Miami-Dade County's General Fund, Miami-Dade County's Capital Improvement Local Option Gas Tax funds, Florida Department of Transportation State Block Grant funds, farebox recovery and sundry other discretionary grants. FY 2000 operating assistance totaled \$13.2 million from the state and another \$113.4 million from local coffers. MDT's source for capital projects are derived from FTA Section 5307 and Section 5309 Formula and Discretionary funds, Miami-Dade County's Capital Improvement Local Option Gas Tax, and Florida Department of Transportation funds which accounted for approximately \$32.6 million during FY 2000.

Although the State has played a significant role in funding capital projects, such as the South Miami-Dade Busway, the emphasis remains with funding highway projects. Just recently, the state put forth a plan to invest \$700 million to \$1 billion in a 7-mile stretch of interstate highway without contemplating alternative forms of transportation, such as mass transit. More disheartening is that state funds are expected to decline further with the new EPA ruling that disqualifies the Miami Metropolitan area from receiving CMAQ funds.

The funding situation has placed MDT in the precarious position of funding capital and operational needs through deferred maintenance, staff reductions, attrition and fare increases. Our governing authority, the Board of County Commissioners and the public we serve does not look upon these options favorably. As a County Department, we compete with other county departments (i.e. Fire & Rescue, Police, Corrections, Parks, etc.) for a limited share of the general fund.

The lack of commitment to finding a stable and reliable source of funds for public transportation has created a long list of unmet needs for both WMATA and MDT. The preservation of any public infrastructure investment typically represents a challenge to those responsible for its stewardship. The public (customers and elected officials) becomes accustomed to the service that it provides and is typically focused on investment decisions regarding new or enhanced services, while management and line personnel are challenged with keeping the system in proper running condition. It is sometimes easy to lose sight of the constant reinvestment that is required to keep any asset in good condition. Unfortunately, WMATA, with MDT in close pursuit, is now faced with having to fund years of deferred capital re-investment of their infrastructure. While MDT is fast approaching the mid-life of their rail and mover vehicles, WMATA finds itself with the

prospect of funding the rehabbing of rail vehicles, which have gone beyond their useful life of 40-years. Age, wear and obsolescence are taking their toll on both our organization's ability to provide service. For now, the age of the system has not seriously affected customer service, thanks in some part to the plain tenacity of the WMATA and MDT staff to do whatever it takes to ensure service proceeds with little or no interruption. As WMATA has done, we are now in the process of documenting our overall capital and infrastructural needs and developing a 5-year approach to deal with them.

As MDT quickly reaches the mid-life of their rail and mover cars, plans are underway to renovate once the vehicles reach one million service miles or 20 years, whichever comes first. Restoration will upgrade and modernize the cars, as well as avoid the increased levels of obsolescence, which are now being experienced, primarily in locating replacement parts, which are no longer manufactured. The estimated additional funding required to complete the restoration over a six-year period is approximately \$61 million. From our bus fleet, fare collection system to our transit facilities, our ability to fund any significant capital improvements, expansion or maintenance has been seriously hindered by the lack of available funds. We can document and plan all we want, but without the necessary funds for reinvestment the situation will continue to get worst. As of today, we have yet to identify the funds that will enable MDT to proceed with the 6-year plan of restoring our rail and mover vehicles.

As it stands, we are losing our competitive edge within our State. Everyday we lose companies and jobs to less congested areas. Each community must deal with its own unique transportation challenges. To that end, like WMATA, we continue to explore creative and innovative venues to fund public transportation, such as through joint development at our stations and leverage lease deals, as well as service efficiencies.

Given the situation, all aspects of administration, operations, and maintenance have been scrutinized for efficiencies and cost reductions.

By emulating the WMATA's economic development strategies, we have achieved noteworthy successes through joint development, public/private ventures, and capital leasing. Similar to WMATA's effort, we held a workshop to invite develop joint development activities at nine of MDT's rail stations which resulted in the submittal of ten proposals for five of the stations. The proposals range from residential to mixed-use projects including retail, hotels and office space. On just one agreement, the County, which receives both, guaranteed minimum rent and approximately 5% of gross income from the project, will realize between \$40 and \$100 million dollars in new revenue over the term of the lease.

Service improvements have been achieved through interlocal agreements with municipalities promoting neighborhood circulator service, in cities such as Miami Beach, North Miami Beach, Aventura, Sunny Isles and more. In fact, we have leased transit vehicles to several smaller municipalities within the county, thereby expanding the neighborhood circulator concept. These municipal circulators feed county operated fixed route service.

Providing public transportation services which is of critical importance to the poor and most especially to the working poor, play a very important role in the county's "Welfare To Work" program. Various social and civic groups have been brought to the table to devise effective and efficient transportation programs for our "Welfare to Work" clients. These efforts have already lead to the creation of new bus routes for these clients and the working poor.

The number of people who need our transit services is not limited to the poor. Our large numbers of tourists, business travelers, retirees, persons with disabilities, and winter residents, all tend to be more dependent upon public transit. So much so that over 50% of all transit trips in Florida are provided by Miami-Dade Transit.

We are coming to terms with the prospect of offering regional transportation services, as illustrated by our financial support of South Florida's only commuter service, Tri-Rail, which operates throughout Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade County. Negotiations are underway for a regional transportation information network, as well as bridging bus services within the tri-county area.

We have also changed our approach in requesting federal funds. For the first time, Florida's transit agencies agreed to proceed with an aggregate request for bus purchases in the FY 2001 congressional earmarks. Funding received will be allocated on an agreed upon formula. This strategy appears to have paid off as the House Appropriations Committee recommended an earmark of \$28 million toward Florida's Bus Replacement program.

Given the financial constraints in providing and maintaining service, passenger feedback plays a major role when implementing efficiencies. Nearly 300,000 times a day someone boards one of our buses, trains, or peplemover cars. Miami-Dade County buses travel over 27 million miles a year, supported by 21-miles of heavy rail, 8.5 miles of exclusive bus rapid transit lanes, and 5 miles peoples mover.

In order to keep track of our passenger base, tracking studies (surveys) are conducted every three years, with the last one released in 1997. Preliminary results of the Year 2000 tracking studies show that the majority of our riders are very or mostly satisfied with our services. Approximately, 80% are satisfied with the current fare structure (regular fare and transfers: \$1.25 and \$.25, respectively; and discounted fares and transfers; \$.60 and \$.10, respectively). Over 45% of the operating costs of our bus services are obtained from the farebox, despite the fact that we have not had a fare increase in over nine years. Our 45% bus revenue recovery ratio is among the highest in the country. However, dissatisfaction levels are significantly up among bus passengers with frequency and on-time performance. Over 42% of respondents are dissatisfied with our 47% on-time performance. However, 60% to 70% of our transit riders perceive that MDT is doing a good job with the tax money it receives versus only 38% of non-riders.

Additionally, on a quarterly basis, we measure passenger complaints, on-time performance, fare recovery ratio, miles between road calls, and ridership per mode and compare them to national standards.

We have taken our cue from WMATA in developing and implementing innovative financing, leasing, and service efficiencies to off-set the impact created by the deferment of maintenance and capital re-investment in our infrastructure. However, without adequate funding you will start to see the decay of America's public transportation system. As Members of the Government Reform Subcommittee, you know from personal experience that these are real problems currently being played out in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity to speak about not only the many issues facing our industry, but the positive steps taken under difficult times to provide the best possible service to the public. Through your leadership and support, WMATA can overcome the many challenges discussed here today. Although the outcome of these hearings may not directly impact the well-being of MDT, I have great hope that our elected officials will take your lead and offer the support and vision needed to move ahead with our critical and worthy public mobility projects.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE D.C. APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF  
ALVIN / JACQUELINE R. MITCHELL & FAMILY  
TO BE INCLUDED IN THE OCTOBER 6, 2000, METRO HEARING

Re: Northern Metro Bus Barn

We are the Mitchell's; we live at 1314 Decatur Street, N.W. Our home is located 75 to 100 feet east of the Northern Bus Barn, which puts us directly behind the barn at the open end or close to the ramp where many buses exit and enter 24 hours of the day, often idling continuously for long periods of time before leaving the bus barn yard. We moved into this property in 1993. At the time we moved into this house we considered it to be a wonderful home. However, we now see it as only a house, prisoner to Metro's Diesel Buses and perhaps even a death trap for our family. We moved into this property in October of 1993, but D.C. has been our home for well over 33 years. When we moved here, we were not a family attempting to capture the American Dream of owning a home, our goal was to comfortably accommodate three children of a cousin who died of AIDS in 1992, which included a very special 9 year old who died after moving into this house. We also had a 13-year-old, Lashawn youth who, was being considered for a Residential Treatment Facility, which could have cost the District over \$100,000 per year. He now has a job and hope. We have paid our dues to this city, why must we suffer.

One of the children was ill but was very stable at the time we moved into this house however, shortly after moving in this house she had a tremendous increase in respiratory problems. She was later placed on a nebulizer and asthma medicines. Subsequently dying of a respiratory problem that was never truly defined.

My, (Jacqueline), Dad moved with us in 1995 after being diagnosed with lung cancer, he was given two years to live, he didn't live two months, with the best of care. The information released by the National Resource Defense Council I (NRDC) revealed that diesel fuel definitely caused cancer. Sucking in diesel fumes and particulates for 24 hours was not the environment for a person already infected with cancer. We certainly were not aware that we were moving the environmental health hazards of the Metro Bus Barn nor were we aware that our quality of life and especially the ill members of the family was deteriorating because of the diesel exhaust. The lady who owned the house before us also died of lung cancer. Cancer and respiratory related illness have contributed to the overwhelming majority of deaths on this block and in this ward. The American Cancer Society provided the information for the ward. Jacqueline collected the information for the block from the neighbors. Many persons around the bus barn suffer from asthma and other respiratory illness again this was information collected by Jacqueline. We live and breathe 164 diesel buses, which makes approximately 500 trips daily.

We have two adorable grandchildren, a 3-year-old grandson and a 4-year-old granddaughter. Our grandson is in our home on a daily basis, we are his babysitters, and he has now developed asthma and is also on a nebulizer. Our granddaughter who lives with us all of the time, is developing a night cough. We all suffer from being fatigued, sleepiness and drowsiness when we know we have had enough sleep/rest. We are constantly faced with the clean up of heavy dust and soot throughout the house and porches from the Bus Barn. Our 29-year-old daughter, who was once very energetic and full of vigor, zoomed through college before we moved into this house, now she complains about being tired most of the time.

At the time we moved into the Decatur Street house, we had no dream that we were moving in what we now strongly believe is a death trap, this was brought to our attention in September 29, 1998, when one of my cousin children and I were sitting in our home library/office working on his junior high school science project. We saw a huge burst of white smoke that came with a very bad odor. Initially, we all thought our house was on fire, however, we later discovered that the white smoke and fumes came from the Northern Bus barn which is housed approximately 75 to 100 feet from three of our bedroom windows, our dining room, lounge, and library/ office windows.

My husband, a neighbor, (Mr. Johnson) and I went to the Northern Barn to investigate the problem. At the bus barn a female manager who was on duty at that time, said that a rocker arm had caused the motor to blow. I was further informed that there were some indication that the engine was having trouble inside of the mechanical repair area and the bus was pulled on the outside of the building, the side close to our windows, to continue the process of the explosion. When I arrived on the lot I saw the bus, which was still smoking, parked inside the yard, along side the back wall of the Bus Barn, again about 75 to 100 feet from my windows. Mr. Johnson and I call Mr. Jack Requa a few days after the incident, his response was that the bus barn was here first. The community has had many meetings with metro, which has proven to be fruitless. Mr. Requa seems very nonchalant and heartless about our community concerns.

As you are aware The NRDC has released a study that strongly suggests that diesel fuel cause cancer, asthma and respiratory related problems. If you need copies of the report you may find it on the web site [www.nrdc.org/nrdc](http://www.nrdc.org/nrdc). A New York Study revealed that children in schools in area with Bus Barns have much higher incidents of asthma and respiratory problems than children who did not live near or attend schools in areas near bus barns. The NRDC states that Children are at a higher risk because the rate of breathing is much greater than adults.

Being very proud new Grandparents, we went out and purchased a yard play set, sand box, sprinkler and many others outside activities for our grandchildren. Because of our Grandson's asthma and the outside conditions created by the bus barn, we cannot Enjoy our outside any longer, therefore the purchases are no longer of use to us. We have also purchased other outside equipment for outside enjoyment, which is no longer of use to the family.

The Northern Metro Bus Barn has robbed us of our legal rights as homeowners. Our rights of quiet enjoyment at our house (inside and out) are constantly being violated by *the heavy metal dumping, often through out the night, the soot particulates, and noise from the diesel exhaust.* The Northern Metro Bus Barn is constantly contaminating the air space around our house. As a result we are unable to enjoy our house or yard.

We do appreciate the plan for Metro to upgrade its buses to cleaner buses; however, the plan is to purchase 100 hundred CNG buses that would not be placed in one area is quite *disturbing. The problem is that the residents in this area breathe in one hundred and sixty-five buses that emits diesel in our air space.* Again, these buses make approximately five hundred trips daily. I think it was suggested that the buses to distributed equally around the metro area. From my investigation it appears that the northern barn is closest to residential sleeping area than any of the other facilities in the D.C. area. The barn on Bladensburg Road is in a highly commercial area and it has a wonderful tree buffer between the homes and the barn located in the rear. *The Bus Barns in S.W. D.C. and on Wisconsin Ave are also in a high commercial area.* Should a bus barn be imbedded in a largely residential area as this on? My answer is, No!!

We would like to thank Ms. Jarvis for being very responsive to this matter when she was notified.

We are asking that Our Rights as Home Owners be restored. We ask that Metro purchase this house, 1314 Decatur Street, N.W., and bare all of the expense of our family relocating.

# **DIESEL EXHAUST CAN KILL**

- **CAUSE CANCER**

**AGGRAVATE RESPIRATORY ILLNESS SUCH AS:**

- **BRONCHITIS**
- **EMPHYSEMA**
- **ASTHMA**

**ASSOCIATED WITH PREMATURE DEATHS FROM  
CARDIO-PULMONARY DISORDERS**

**PERSON'S MOST AT RISK ARE:**

- **CHILDREN**
- **ELDERLY**

**PERSONS WITH PRE-EXISTING HEART  
AND LUNG DISEASE**

**WARDS 4 & 5 HAVE THE HIGHEST CANCER RATE IN THE  
CITY**

**BUS BARNs ARE IN BOTH WARDS**

**EXPOSURES ADD UP OVER A LIFETIME**

**THIS INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL REESOURCE DEFENSE COUNCIL,  
& THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY  
FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK [WWW.NRDC.ORG/NRDC](http://WWW.NRDC.ORG/NRDC)**

Reports

## Exhausted by Diesel

How America's Dependence on Diesel Engines Threatens Our Health

[Top of Report](#)

### Chapter 3

#### WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Most of the human studies on the health risks of diesel exhaust looked exclusively at healthy, adult men. To extrapolate from male worker studies to the general population may not adequately protect women, children, and the elderly. Furthermore, worker studies provide little information about health effects in people with chronic illnesses or depressed immune systems. We do know something about the susceptibility of some of these groups from research on the health effects of fine particle pollution.

#### Children

Children represent the largest subgroup of the population susceptible to the effects of air pollution.<sup>21</sup> Compared with adults, children spend more time outdoors, particularly at midday and during the afternoons when air quality is poorest, and engage in more vigorous physical activity.<sup>22</sup> As a result, children average a higher breathing rate, and receive greater relative doses of any pollutants in the air. At rest, an infant's metabolic rate and air intake is about twice that of an adult.<sup>23</sup> A forty-five pound child inhales over 9,000 liters of air per day.<sup>24</sup>

Children also have narrower airways and their lungs are still developing. Irritation caused by air pollutants that would produce only a slight response in an adult can result in potentially significant obstruction in the airways of a young child.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, children have more frequent respiratory and other illnesses, perhaps due to incompletely developed immune protection.

Elevated levels of particulate pollution have been linked with an increased incidence of respiratory symptoms in children.<sup>26</sup> In an ongoing study comparing air pollution in six U.S. cities and the respiratory health of individuals living in those cities, the frequencies of coughs, bronchitis, and lower respiratory illnesses in preadolescent children were significantly associated with increased levels of acidic fine particles.<sup>27</sup> Illness and symptom rates were twice as high in the community with the highest air pollution concentrations compared with the community with the lowest concentrations. Rates of chronic cough, bronchitis, and chest illness during one school year were positively associated with particulate pollution.<sup>28</sup> One study suggested that though all children are at risk for increased respiratory symptoms due to particulate pollution, children with preexisting respiratory conditions (wheezing, asthma) are at greater risk.<sup>29</sup> In a diary study of 625 Swiss children between birth and five years of age, respiratory symptoms were associated with particulate concentrations, while the duration

<http://www.nrc.org/water/energy/air/air.htm>

of symptoms was associated with levels of nitrogen oxide. Symptoms included coughing, upper respiratory episodes, and breathing difficulty.<sup>21</sup>

Hospital admission for respiratory illness is strongly associated with particulate air pollution and the association is stronger for children than adults. During months with peak particulate pollution levels, average hospital admissions for respiratory illness in children nearly tripled, whereas for adults comparable hospital admissions increased by 44 percent.<sup>21</sup> Several studies have demonstrated that children living near major roadways have poorer lung function than children living in cleaner areas.<sup>22</sup> The same studies showed that girls were more affected than boys. Lung function in both sexes was correlated with estimated levels of diesel exhaust measured in the schools.<sup>22</sup>

### The Elderly

Substantial scientific evidence suggests that the elderly and those with pre-existing heart and lung disease are at greatest risk of premature mortality due to particulate air pollution. Several important studies have shown that those over 65 years of age are at greater risk of requiring emergency room services on days with higher particulate pollution.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the relationship between particle exposure and death was about three times greater in the elderly.<sup>23</sup> Because cardio-pulmonary disease is more common in older people, and cardiovascular and pulmonary function declines with age, the elderly are likely to have heightened sensitivity to particle exposure. To the extent that the elderly and chronically ill are slower to remove particles from deep lung tissues, they are likely to have greater risk from diesel exhaust exposure, because the time needed to clear small particles from the lungs appears to increase the risk of tumor development.<sup>24</sup>

### Exposures Add Up Over a Lifetime

Cancers induced by diesel exhaust involve a latency period of a number of years between damaging exposure and development of cancer: risk increases with increasing duration of exposure.<sup>25</sup> Exposure to diesel exhaust for nearly every human begins at birth and lasts throughout our lifetime. Neither animal, nor worker studies on diesel exhaust adequately capture this feature of the general public's exposure. Most of the animal studies involving diesel exhaust inhalation begin exposure with "adolescent rats."<sup>26</sup> For these reasons, direct extrapolation from traditional animal exposure studies as well as extrapolation from worker studies are likely to underestimate the risk to the public, whose exposure to ambient diesel exhaust begins in early childhood and lasts for many decades.

#### Focus #3: "Clean Diesel is Still Dirty"

Some industry advocates argue that 1996 model year and later diesel engines using new diesel fuel are "clean diesel" and are not a health threat. However, diesel engines—new and old—continue to pose cancer threats. In fact, recent studies suggest that, despite a substantial reduction in the total weight of particulate matter, the total number of particles in emissions from the more advanced 1991-model diesel engine is 15 to 35 times greater than the number of particles from the 1988 engine when both engines were operated without emission control devices. Thus, newer diesel may be emitting smaller particles but not fewer particles.<sup>27</sup>

# 1000 FRIENDS OF METRO

Statement of John L. McCormick

Founder and President of 1000 FRIENDS OF METRO

Before the U. S. House of Representatives

Committee on Government Reform

Subcommittee on the District of Columbia

October 6, 2000

Chairman Davis and Members of the Subcommittee;

The 1000 FRIENDS OF METRO is a newly created public interest organization dedicated to educating and motivating citizens of the Greater Washington Metropolitan area to utilize and support the Metrobus and Metrorail systems and to choose mass transit as their primary mode of commuting.

We thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to share our views on Metro's 35 years of growth, its record-setting ridership, public demand for system improvement and, most important, the need for the federal government and Metro jurisdictions to recognize this period of transition the system is entering.

From its creation in 1967 to the completion of the 103 mile rail system, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority has given this Capital city and the nation a public transit network that ranks among the best in the world. It has struggled through a cumbersome web of political management shared among Maryland and Virginia legislatures, District City Council, counties, cities and the Congress; each having a role in its planning, funding and operation. In its brief history, WMATA has overcome huge expansion challenges, regional bus-line competition that threatened to bankrupt Metrobus, public indifference to its importance to the region's economy and now, its remarkable success -- perhaps the biggest challenge of all.

The area's healthy economy, a mild summer, increased tourism, fare simplification and Smart Fare technology have all contributed to the recent highest annual ridership levels in Metro's history. 302 million Metrobus and Metrorail trips were taken in FY 2000 -- an increase of 22 million trips over FY1999. In June 2000, Metrorail average weekday ridership exceeded 610,000 for the first time. In July, Metrorail broke that record with 616,233 passenger trips.

Metrobus enjoyed a dramatic 13 percent increase in June's monthly ridership compared to last June. Weekday ridership averaged 494,000, or 12.8 percent more than last June. Saturday and Sunday ridership also increased with Sunday riders totaling 149,000, 36.7 percent more than last year.

In June, Metrorail's morning peak ridership rose to a record-breaking 188,000 - about 8,600 more than last June; a 4.8 percent increase. Then, on October 2, the first day the federal government's rider subsidy program went into effect, Metrorail counted 202,000 riders during the morning rush; an increase of 13,500 more than the June record.

Clearly, Metro has been on a roll. But, this rapid growth in demand is not all good news. The system is operating under stress. Older equipment is now running longer and harder. Maintenance demands are increasing as the load factor of rail cars and buses is pushed higher. Parking areas are filling up faster and earlier. More passengers are crowding elevators and escalators that Metro constantly struggles to keep running. The system can respond to the new demand on a day-to-day basis for only so long. It must have a rapid infusion of new rail cars and buses as well as increased maintenance of its current rolling stock. Escalator and elevator repair schedules are wholly separate problems only time and grim determination can resolve.

Providing high quality service to customers using the system in unprecedented numbers is a managerial challenge made more difficult because of the deferred maintenance needs weighing heavy on Metro. One estimate puts that figure above \$3 billion. And, while the dollar amount is staggering, at this stage in Metro's development, it is not surprising.

With a public demand for traffic congestion relief so strong, Metro has accelerated its capital expansion schedule at the expense, one could argue, of repair and rehabilitation. Safety has not been compromised, however, and the daily volume of travelers arriving safely can attest to that fact.

Metro is undergoing a systemwide audit of its infrastructure to determine what additional equipment and improvements are needed today to maintain quality service. That list of needs will add to the already identified capital improvement needs reported in the Harris Report issued last year.

It was a snapshot view of the system that determined capital needs of Metro over a twenty year period and related those needs to available funding through a prioritization system that would maximize a return on investment. The report is the "blueprint" for the transition of the system from one in a startup mode to one in a rebuild, renewal mode. It should be required reading for all those concerned about maintaining and increasing Metrorail and Metrobus ridership. We believe it presents a common sense strategy to get the job done. It does carry a

huge price tag of about \$9.6 billion spread over 20 years. **However, it does not include the additional \$1.5 billion estimated need to accommodate anticipated growth in rideship -- some of which has already been witnessed recently.**

The Report assessed the Metro's physical plant as being "in safe and reasonable condition, but aging and in need of increasing reinvestment. The system infrastructure has transitioned from a new condition to a generally well maintained, mature system. Certain assets are suffering from under-investment." It then analyzed each system and ranked its condition as being like new, in good repair ( functional, though requiring increasing investment) or under-invested (in a state of distress and degradation due to insufficient investment, age, use and other factors). Finally, the Harris Report devised a 3-tiered Prioritization Model that reconciles need with available funding, identifies critical projects and maximizes the value of the reinvestment dollars.

**Tier I** (primary assets providing safe and reliable service and degraded assets suffering from under-investment or harsh conditions) included the following projects: Breda railcar mid-life overhaul; rail car purchase; bus overhaul; bus procurement; Comprehensive radio system; ITS systems ; bus fare collection; leak mitigation; and, Escalator/elevator overhaul.

**Tier II** (primary support assets that directly support continued good function of primary assets) included: Station enhancement/rehab; structural rehabilitation; escalator canopies; Station chiller rehab; environmental assets; and, work equipment rehab.

**Tier III** (secondary support assets that support the primary support systems) included: non-revenue vehicles; miscellaneous bus and rail support; and, other facilities rehab.

If a program such as this was given the priority and funding it deserves, there is little doubt that Metro could look to the next 25 years with confidence that it can accommodate the kind of ridership increases forecasted by the regional Council of Governments. And, it would achieve the necessary policy objectives the WMATA Board adopted in the Metrorail Revenue Vehicle Fleet Management Plan. It would allow for complete rehab of each bus at 7 years so as to extend its service life to 15 years. It would also allow Metro to lower the passenger load factor (number of railcar passengers divided by 73 seats) from its current high of 2.12 passengers per seat to a load standard objective of 1.44 passengers per seat. This is one of the most important improvements WMATA can make to encourage more drivers to ride Metro.

The Capital Improvement Program cannot be fully funded with ridership fares. Though Metrorail has one of the highest percentage of operating revenue to cost ratios in the nation, ridership, at any level, cannot generate those funds. It remains for the federal government and the Metro jurisdictions to provide the capital.

The region has no real alternative. Rehabilitation and replacement of components of Metrorail must be accelerated and completed soon. Bus service must be improved by adding more and better services vehicles to the fleet. There will be little or no slack in the budget for large and much-needed parking capacity at outlying stations. And, expansion of the rail system must be given a lower priority in the early years of the CIP because the current ridership

demands and accommodating the steady increase in customers must come first. To encourage building beyond the Largo expansion plan would cause even more pressure on an already stressed system and likely cause a reduction in quality of service and consequent loss of dissatisfied customers that have the option to drive.

**1000 FRIENDS OF METRO** urges this Subcommittee to consider this moment in time as Metro's finest hour despite the recent headlines and reports that have prompted this hearing. Yes, serious problems and life-threatening system breakdowns have been witnessed in the past few months. But, it is not the fault of Metro's leadership and its Board. Rather, it is the simple engineering fact that increasing demand on a system not designed for the heavy use in harsh environmental conditions that Metro has recently experienced requires large scale, rapid repair and replacement of equipment. Think about the demands on the system in ten and twenty years when population in the region grows by 1.5 million. Think about the limited, almost non-existent, road and highway expansion options available to the region and it becomes clear that the costs of the capital improvement program are not excessive. **They are the lifeblood of this most vital public infrastructure.**

Congress, and particularly Congressman Frank Wolfe, had the foresight, in 1997, to authorize the U.S. Department of Transportation to make available resources to WMATA to commission an independent study to analyze how to meet current and future bus transportation needs for the Greater Washington metropolitan region through the year 2020. That Act thus created the Regional Mobility Panel comprised of civic leaders, citizens, regional politicians and State and local government officials. The Panel sought to unscramble and reassemble a regional bus service that threatened to bankrupt the Metrobus system. It exceeded everyone's expectations and made sweeping recommendations that have since been implemented by WMATA and the regional private bus systems. By most accounts, the results have been amazing and increased ridership on improved bus service is proof of that fact. As General Manager Richard White said, in a recent news story, "We are witnessing a literal rebirth of our bus system that seemed completely improbable three years ago. And this rebirth is happening in harmony with the growing success of our Metrorail system". The Panel's Second Vice-Chairman of the Panel, John P. Davey was also quoted as saying, " We couldn't be more pleased with what has been accomplished over the past two-and-a-half years Metro was a dinosaur heading for extinction. Today, we're approaching a time when nearly as many people will ride the bus on an average workday as ride the train. If you don't think that's dramatic, you haven't been paying attention."

Mr. Chairman, we think it is a most appropriate time to reconvene the Regional Mobility Panel and ask its members to take a fresh look at this next big challenge: reconstructing the system. The Final Report of the Transit Funding Subcommittee, chaired by Ken Sparks, Executive Vice President of the Federal City Council made several excellent and timely recommendations on how to assure long-range funding for the system. The Panel, in 1997, was looking at a \$100 million per year shortfall of required funding in order to perform essential rehabilitation and replacement of Metrorail and Metrobus facilities and vehicle. That figure is now an archive because we know the amount has grown considerably higher. Turn them loose on today's CIP funding problem and they will provide the Greater Washington area with a plan to continue Metro's greatness.