

Summary Minutes MARC Advisory Council Meeting  
Thursday May 15, 2007, 4:30 p.m.  
Hall of the States, Room 283  
444 North Capitol Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001-1512

Attendees:

MARC Advisory Council:

Carol Oberdorfer, Brunswick – Present  
Chikwe Njoku, Penn & Camden – Absent  
Christopher Field, Penn - Present  
David Frederick, Brunswick - Present  
Deborah Foster, Brunswick – Present  
Evelyn Anderson, Brunswick – Present  
Hameed Ahmed, Camden – Present  
Josh Friedman, Camden - Absent  
Juan Calvo, Penn – Absent  
Laurence Gross, Brunswick – Present  
Lynda Clarke, Penn – Vacation  
Makeda Scott – Absent  
Mark Dysart, Brunswick - Present  
Rafael Guroian, Penn & Camden – Present  
Steve Chan, Penn – Present

Staff:

John Hovatter – Director of MARC Train & Commuter Bus Services  
Jim Knighton, MTA Director of External Affairs

Guests:

Emery Hines, Baltimore County

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 PM by Vice-Chairman Larry Gross. Chairman Lynda Clarke was on a business trip.

John Hovatter, Director of MARC Train & Commuter Bus Services, talked about the possibility of producing “On Your MARC” more frequently with fewer pages. This will allow for more timely delivery of news to the riding public.

In contrast, Virginia Railway Express distributes a new newsletter every couple of weeks, versus MARC distributing “On Your MARC” once every several months.

To improve communications, Rafi Guroian will check in once a month with Frank Fulton, Deputy Director of MARC Train & Commuter Bus Services, on the status of upcoming issues of On Your MARC.

Improvements to the LED display signs and the PA systems were discussed. The new systems will be compatible with the existing T1 communications lines, and will also allow the use of fiber optics. It is anticipated that these improvement will occur by spring 2009.

Also discussed was the Deep Cleaning Program, during which the Kawasaki passenger cars will also have the seats replaced. This work is done in a local shop near Martin State Airport.

To offer insight into other commuter rail systems, Rafi Guroian talked about the MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) rail system [http://www.mbta.com/schedules\\_and\\_maps/rail/](http://www.mbta.com/schedules_and_maps/rail/) MBTA has 12 lines, owns the tracks for 11 of their 12 lines. CSX owns the tracks for the Framingham/Worcester Line. MBTA also offers free WiFi on their rail cars [http://www.mbta.com/riding\\_the\\_t/wifi/](http://www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/wifi/)

In contrast, MARC owns only 3.2 miles of the Frederick branch for the Brunswick Line. AMTRAK owns the tracks for the Penn Line, and CSX owns the tracks for the Camden and Brunswick Lines.

John Hovatter reported that Governor Martin O'Malley and Secretary of Transportation John Porcari are not in favor of MARC ticket prices going up.

Discussions were held on variable ticket pricing, based on peak versus non-peak usage. This would primarily affect the Penn Line, as CSX does not offer significant amounts of non-peak service.

Complaints were received about the failure of conductors to make announcements regarding arriving stations and which cars/doors to use to exit the train. Other complaints were received about late trains, when stopping at stations, were failing to properly announce which train they were to passengers waiting at the station.

Complaints were received on the Brunswick Line about trains by-passing the Dickenson and other smaller stations, even when passengers were visibly standing on the platform, and the train was scheduled to stop at that station.

John Hovatter reported that the on-time performance of Penn Line Train #415 = 7:40 AM out of Baltimore and the Penn Line Train #419 = 9:05 AM out of Baltimore was 100% in April 2008, and 90% year-to-date.

Council members noted that the Penn line is generally fast between New Carrollton and Union Station, but is often late out of Baltimore Penn Station. Generally, trains are considered on-time if they arrive within 5 minutes and 59 seconds of the scheduled time between the start point and the end point of their run.

John Hovatter reported that the targeted completion date of the renovations to the Halethorpe Station on the Penn Line is scheduled for December 2010, with an estimated budget of approximately \$17 million.

It was mentioned that the 84 Lumber Store next to the Seabrook Station on the Penn Line has gone out of business. MTA management will be visiting the property on Friday May 16<sup>th</sup>. There is a possibility it could be purchased to supply additional parking for MARC passengers.

The next meeting of the MARC Riders Advisory Council will be on Thursday July 17, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:51 PM Thursday May 15 2008.