

Summary Minutes MARC Advisory Council Meeting  
Thursday February 18, 2010, 4:30 p.m.  
Acela First Class Lounge  
Union Station  
50 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002-4214

Attendees:

MARC Advisory Council:

Andrea Richardson, Brunswick – Absent  
Carol Oberdorfer, Brunswick – Present  
Chikwe Njoku, Penn & Camden – Absent  
Christopher Field, Penn – Absent  
David Frederick, Brunswick – Present  
Hameed Ahmed, Camden – Absent  
Juan Calvo, Penn – Absent  
Laurence Gross, Brunswick – Excused  
Lynda Clarke, Penn – Excused  
Makeda Scott – Penn – Present  
Mark Dysart, Brunswick – Absent  
Rafael Guroian, Penn & Camden – Present  
Scott Minos, Brunswick – Absent  
Steve Chan, Penn – Present

Staff:

John Hovatter – MTA Director of MARC Train & Commuter Bus Services  
Jim Knighton - MTA Director of External Affairs  
Donna Walsh – Customer Service Superintendent

Guests:

Debbi Benham – AMTRAK District Manager of Commuter Services  
Sean Gordon - AMTRAK  
Brian Gallagher - AMTRAK  
Doug Adams - AMTRAK  
Greg Godfrey – AMTRAK

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chairman Rafi Guroian

Snow Emergency Recap:

- The recent snowstorms of February 5-6 (20”-30”) and February 10-11 (10”-20”) caused adjustments to MARC train service. MARC ran an “S” schedule on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>. Service was cancelled on Wednesday February 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday February 11<sup>th</sup>, due to the heavy snow.
- The high mounds of plowed snow on the parking lots have reduced the number of parking spots, which was a topic of discussion.

Discussion of Possible Use of Buses at Stations with Limited Parking due to Snow:

- MRAC member Makeda Scott, who rides the Penn Line from Halethorpe to Union Station, offered a suggestion that MARC riders be allowed to park in the Owings Mills Metro parking lot, and have a bus bring passengers down to the Halethorpe station. There is a severe shortage of parking at Halethorpe, which has caused friction with the residents who live around the Halethorpe station.

- John Hovatter explained that it would cost the MTA \$200K/year to provide one 55 seat commuter bus running one round trip per weekday. It was mentioned that Baltimore County could try to apply to the federal government for money to run this operation.
- Another proposal is to possibly provide a shuttle from the Park-N-Ride Lot at Rolling Road & I-195 to the Halethorpe MARC train station.
- John also mentioned that the MTA has contracted to have crews with dump trucks pick up snow over the weekend. The dump trucks will take the snow away from the MARC station parking lots.
- Rafi Guroian brought up an email from a MARC rider who reported significant problems with parking at the Perryville station parking lot.
- John Hovatter reported that since the snowstorms, MARC has had a huge increase in the number of riders.
- One of the guests commented that the MTA did a good job of clearing out the Laurel parking lot and the train station platforms at Laurel, but that mounds of snow and ice blocked the route from the Laurel MARC parking lot to the Laurel MARC train station. It was noted that the connecting route had not been cleared by the MTA because it is a city of Laurel issue.
- One of the other guests commented that the Bowie station's parking lots and platforms had been well taken care of.
- The Odenton station's multiple parking lots have a 2300 car capacity. The MTA has been moving the snow to the most remote parking lot.

#### New Member Recruitment:

- New members of the MARC Riders Advisory Council were introduced. The terms of these new members will officially start at the March 2010 meeting. Introduced at the February meeting were:
  - Marla Smith – Penn Line – Bowie State Station
  - Vince Zagorski – Camden Line – Laurel Station
  - Miriam Schoenbaum – Brunswick Line – Boyds Station
  - Ryan Stavely – Penn Line – Odenton Station
- New MRAC members who were not present at the February meeting are:
  - Rick Bartel – Camden Line – Riverdale Station
  - Ellen Mayer – Brunswick Line – Duffields Station
  - Paul Matino – Penn Line – Penn Station
  - Ernest Weiss – Penn Line – Halethorpe Station

#### Construction Updates:

- BWI Station – this project is moving very slowly. Work has been halted due to the snow.
- Halethorpe Station – We are currently waiting for Amtrak. Electrical wires need to be moved before construction can start. This project should re-start in March.
- CSX National Gateway Corridor Project
  - Sixty-two separate construction projects from Ohio to Maryland, and southward to Virginia and North Carolina.
  - The six proposed projects in Maryland are not yet funded.
  - One unfunded project in Maryland involves the bridge at Washington Grove, which is an old and possibly historic bridge.
  - CSX would like to raise the bridge, which would allow room for taller train cars.
  - The local community would like the tracks lowered.
  - MARC has stated that lowering the tracks will cause a much longer multi-month delay in the train schedules, as opposed to raising the bridge.
- CSX/State of Maryland Gateway Project
  - Consists of six construction projects that currently have funding.
  - Construction is due to start during the spring of 2010, and will take approximately 3 years to complete.
  - The six projects are:

- Three universal crossovers on the Brunswick Line. A universal crossover is a set of mechanisms that allow trains to switch from one set of tracks to another set of tracks.
- Installation of a power switch at Dorsey. A power switch enables a control room to remotely throw a switch, enabling a train to switch from one set of tracks to another set of tracks.
- A siding track between Savage and Jessup. A siding track can be used to allow a slow moving train to “pull over”, permitting a faster moving train to “pass” the slower moving train.
- A double-track project north of CSX Transportation Benning Yard. Benning Yard is at 225 33<sup>rd</sup> Street SE., Anacostia, Washington DC. The current track is a single track.

Legislative Update:

- Delegate Saqib Ali of District 39 in Montgomery County has introduced HB 57 Subway and Light Rail Operations Safety Act <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/billfile/HB0057.htm>
- HB 57 synopsis: Prohibit a person from using a text messaging device to write, send, or read a text message while operating a subway or light rail vehicle, defining terms, specifying an exception to contact 911 system, proving a penalty, etc.
- HB 57 may be amended to include the Washington Metro system.
- There are about 12 to 14 different bills that are being processed that will affect wireless communications.
- SB 229/HB 710 Blue Ribbon Commission on Maryland Transportation Funding <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/billfile/SB0229.htm> <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/billfile/HB0710.htm>
- SB 229/HB710 synopsis: Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission on Maryland Transportation Funding, requiring the Commission to review, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning specified issues, specifying the membership and staffing of the Commission, requiring the Governor to designate the chair of the Commission, prohibiting members of the Commission from receiving specified compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of specified expenses, etc.
- Track Work – Penn Line – Track One = Eastern-most track
  - Railroad ties will be replaced between Landover (just south of the New Carrollton Station) and Martin State Airport.
  - Work will start approximately March 15, 2010 in Landover, and will work northward.
  - Significant delays and adjustments in train schedules will be necessary.
  - Towards the end of this project, trains will be “layered”, so one train will not be passing other trains.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the MARC Riders Advisory Council will be Thursday March 18, 2010.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm Thursday February 18, 2010.