

Summary Minutes MARC Riders Advisory Council Meeting
Thursday October 20, 2011, 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:

Amy Bernstein – Present
Andrea Richardson, Brunswick – Absent
Chikwe Njoku, Penn & Camden – Absent
Christopher Field, Penn – Absent
David Frederick, Brunswick – Absent
David Plazak – Present via Teleconference
Ellen Mayer – Brunswick – Absent
Ernest Weiss – Penn – Absent
Jeff Crooks – Present
John Scarpone – Present
John Stamatakos - Absent
Laurence Gross, Brunswick – Present
Makeda Scott – Penn – Absent
Mark Dysart, Brunswick – Absent
Marla Smith, Penn – Present
Matthew Quarrick - Absent
Miriam Schoenbaum, Brunswick – Present
Paula Sind-Prunier - Absent
Rafael Guroian, Penn & Camden – Present via Teleconference
Russell Lawrence – Present
Scott McClure - Absent
Scott Minos, Brunswick – Absent
Shailaja Rabindran - Present
Stephen O'Connor – Present via Teleconference
Steve Chan, Penn – Absent – Work Conference with Senior Management
Theresa Leftwicht – Absent
Vince Hodge - Present
Vince Zagorski, Camden – Absent

Staff:

Patrick Fleming - MTA Director of External Affairs - Oct
Dave Johnson – MARC Trainmaster

Guests:

Rob Surgeoner – CSX Director Passenger & Commuter Operations
David Motz – CSX -
Mike Tierney – Amtrak Assistant Manager Station & Customer Service
Jarrod Eierman – Amtrak Road Foreman
Doug Hardigan – Amtrak
John Morris – Montgomery County Transit, Retired

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM Thursday October 20, 2011 by Council Member Larry Gross.

Welcome and Introductions:

Stations and Parking – Topic of the Month

- Patrick Fleming - MTA Director of External Affairs presented handouts of the Station Boarding figures for all stations on the Brunswick, Camden, and Penn Lines.
- Also handed out was a spreadsheet of parking facilities at all MARC Train Stations that included the ownership of the parking lots, number of handicapped/non handicapped spaces, whether parking was free or cost, number of bike lockers/racks, and the number of occupied spaces.
- Overcrowded parking lots and the shortage of available parking spots were discussed.
- West Baltimore – Penn Line – will be getting an additional 250 spaces, for use in early 2012.
- Resealing/Repaving and Restriping of the parking lots is done approximately once every 10 years or so, as necessary.
- Restriping at Germantown will yield an increase of about 40 additional parking spots.
- Restriping at Martin Airport will yield about 20-25 additional parking spots.
- In many cases, parking at MARC Train stations has expanded to the maximum possible without building a garage, which is very costly.
- It was noted that the cost of a parking structure is about \$12,000 per parking spot.
- Work is being done to improve coordination between bus service to MARC Train stations and the MARC Train schedule.
- It was noted that Montgomery County and Frederick County are much better than other bus services in coordinating their schedules.
- Use of Mass Transit to get MARC passengers to the MARC Train stations would reduce the stress on existing parking lots.
- Parking challenges and developing conditions at specific stations were discussed.
- Coordination between Light Rail schedules and MARC train schedules were discussed.
- The proportion of handicapped parking spaces to total number of spaces was discussed.
- The possibility of premium parking spots at an additional cost was discussed.
- The possibility of remote parking lots with a shuttle bus was discussed.

CSX Train Delays – Brunswick Line #873 and #891 – Tuesday October 18, 2011

- Rob Surgeoner – CSX Director Passenger & Commuter Operations - explained what occurred on the evening of Tuesday October 18, 2011.
- CSX had maintainers performing routine maintenance on the track, and accidentally cut wires that are used to remotely control the electric switches at Buck's Lodge.
- This resulted in each train stopping, the conductor getting off and throwing the switch by hand, driving the train through the switch, getting off the train, going back to the switch and throwing the switch back to the original position.
- It was noted that the delay to a 120 car freight train is much longer than the delay to a Brunswick line passenger train.

- It was noted that the trains were restricted to a speed of about 15 miles per hour for about 15 miles.
- Complaints were made reporting that the CSX conductors did not get enough information as to what was occurring, and were therefore unable to keep the passengers informed.
- It was also noted that CSX does not permit conductors to use cell phones, so updates were done via 2-way radios.
- Larry Gross noted that it took about four hours for him to get home.

Old Business

- Dave Johnson – MARC Trainmaster – reported:
- Clearer Link to the MARC Email Alert system
 - The MTA Website is being overhauled.
- Signage on Trains promoting MARCTracker
 - Dave Johnson is working with the MTA Sign Shop to develop stickers that can go on the trains.
 - “Do Not Cross the Track” signs will be placed at Muirkirk.
- Announcements of Penn Line Express Trains
 - It was noted that the conductors on the Penn Line Express Trains have been diligent about announcing on the public address systems which stations each train does and does not stop.
- eNotifications – the new email notification system - is up and running.
 - <http://mta.maryland.gov/enotifications>
- MTA Information Line
 - Dave Johnson met with the people who run the Information Line.
 - Concerns were expressed.
 - They pledged to improve service.
 - A one-pager with the key MARC information that an agent needs to know is being developed.
- MARC Riders Guide – work is in progress on next year’s version.
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 - A total re-write is in progress, rather than pasting in corrections/updates.
 - Riders Guides from Metrolink, SEPTA, Long Island Railroad, Virginia Railway Express, and other similar agencies are being examined.

New Business

- New Passenger Cars
 - Fifty-Four new Bombardier Rail Cars are being purchased.
 - This order is being tacked onto an existing New Jersey Transit order that is already in the pipeline.
 - Expected capacity is about 127 to 142 seats, and are bi-level cars, similar to the existing bi-level cars.
 - Expected delivery is early 2013.
 - These cars are shorter than the existing bi-level cars, as they were designed to go through the tunnels to Penn Station in New York City.
 - This will enable the MTA to moth-ball the oldest of the single level cars.

- With this moth-balling, the net increase to the fleet is thirty-four passenger rail cars.
- New PA/LED (Public Address/Light Emitting Diode) System
 - Eleven stations were turned on Monday October 17th.
 - The stations in West Virginia on the Brunswick Line will follow.
 - Rockville and Silver Spring will require the cooperation of WMATA.
 - The Camden Line will be next, with an estimated duration of six months.
- Railroad Tie Replacement
 - November 13th to December 1st working Monday-Thursday 0830 to 1600 hrs.

Next Meeting

- 4:30 PM Thursday November 17, 2011
- Hall of States, Room 283

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 PM Thursday October 20, 2011