MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Constance A. Morella (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Morella, Watson, Norton, and Davis.

Staff present: Russell Smith, staff director; Heea Vazirani-Fales, counsel; Robert White, communications director; Matthew Batt, clerk/legislative assistant; Shalley Kim, staff assistant; Victoria Proctor and Howie Denis, professional staff members; Jon Bouker, minority counsel; and Jean Gosa, minority assistant clerk.

Mrs. MORELLA. Good morning. The Subcommittee on the District of Columbia is convening our seventh hearing of the 107th Congress, and I want to welcome all of those who have come here to hear the testimony and the distinguished panel of witnesses who will be testifying. I look forward to receiving the informative testimony in response to the General Accounting Office's July 2001, report, "Mass Transit: Many Management Successes at WMATA, but Capital Planning could be Enhanced," the official title. We'll examine WMATA's efforts to address GAO's recommendations, examine WMATA's responses to operational and maintenance problems, and determine the accessibility of the transit system to customers with disabilities.

I want to welcome our subcommittee members who are here and those who will join us later. We're joined by the ranking member, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, and our newest Member of Congress, Congresswoman Watson. I know that Congressman Davis will be joining us and Congressman Platts has a transportation markup.

As you know, these are unusual and troubling times, and there are duties that are conflicting.

I want to start off by, of course, thanking again the WMATA Board, General Manager Dick White, Metro's managers and employees for their agency's response to the terrible events on September 11th. In times of danger, public transportation plays a pivotal role in getting our citizens back home safely and quickly, and by nearly all the accounts that I've heard Metro accomplished that task very well last Tuesday. As a matter of fact, you continue to

fulfill that responsibility. You show that Government can operate effectively in a crisis situation.

Disaster preparation is just one of the areas that we're going to be discussing today. We'll also be examining the subway system's operational performance, how Mr. White and his management team are preparing for the future, and Metro's accessibility to disabled riders.

Regarding the ability of disabled riders to use the system, I'm particularly interested in learning about the extent of Metro's efforts to make its elevators, escalators, and other infrastructure more user friendly for blind and disabled people.

The General Accounting Office in its July report on WMATA gave the agency good marks for addressing safety concerns and other operational factors. But, as anyone who has visited a subway station lately and maybe had to walk down the stairs because the escalator was out of service, and then waited on a crowded platform, and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with other passengers on the train can testify, Metro faces some significant challenges in its near future. Ridership is growing steadily, and yet the system is showing signs of aging. That means Metro must find a way to make room for many new riders without overworking the system.

Our hearing today will focus on how Metro intends to meet these twin challenges, as well as meet the expectation of its users.

The continued success of WMATA is absolutely critical for this region. A healthy transit system helps reduce congestion on our highways and pollution in our air. It makes employment centers accessible to our workers. And it can help reduce sprawl in our suburbs.

Metro Rail believes its ridership, which is roughly 600,000 passengers a day, could double in the next 25 years. Is the subway system capable of handling such growth? Do we have the capacity to run longer trains? Can we and how do we expand the size of platforms? How can we relieve the awful parking situation at some of our outer stations? Passengers who use the Shady Grove Garage in my District, for example, have to get there before 7 or 7:30 a.m., or they don't get a spot for parking. Also, where does it make the most sense to build new lines and what factors should be driving the decision as to which stations and lines get built?

Finally, there is a pressing question raised by the GAO report. Should Metro change the way it presents its long-term capital program? The GAO came to the conclusion that, in a time of shrinking resources and increasing demands, Metro ought to present various options for its infrastructure funding requests. For example, "If we get 'X' amount of money we will be able to complete Projects A, B, and C. If we get less, we will only be able to do one or two of the three." I think this could be an important change because it will force the region to address dead on the issue of what its transportation priorities are and how much money it should be providing for Metro expansion—how much it should be providing for not only expansion, but maintenance and other non-operational needs. And it would allow the decisionmakers to make informed choices, which is vital at a time when we simply do not have the money to do everything that we want.

It is imperative that Metro has the long-term plans in place to ensure the system can continue to provide adequate mass transit options well into the 21st century. And these are just some of the questions facing us as we open this hearing. But the answers will have substantial impacts on how the region grows over the next several decades, how it handles that growth, how it will pay for that growth, and what the consequences are if nothing is done.

I know Metro has begun working on answers to some of these questions, and I look forward to hearing about the progress that has been made.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Constance A. Morella follows:]

CONSTANCE A. MORELLA
8TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
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CHAIRWOMAN CONSTANCE A. MORELLA
OPENING STATEMENT
SEPT. 21, 2001
"MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION:
MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS"

I want to start out by first thanking the WMATA board, General Manager Dick White and Metro's managers and employees for their agency's response to the terrible events on September 11th. In times of danger, public transportation plays a pivotal role in getting our citizens back home safely and quickly – and, by nearly all accounts that I've heard, Metro accomplished that task very well last Tuesday. You showed that government can operate effectively in a crisis situation.

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I know Metro has begun working on answers to some of them, and I look forward to learning about your progress.

Mrs. MORELLA. And now it is my pleasure to recognize the distinguished ranking member of the District of Columbia Subcommittee, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mrs. Morella.

I want to pause before giving my brief remarks to thank the Chair for continuing with this hearing and for the sense of normalcy she has created in this subcommittee. We have been about the work of the District of Columbia as if there had not been a terrible tragedy on September 11th and have been working closely together on the business of the city, some of which will emerge in a markup to follow this meeting and plans for future markup.

I want also to say that, as the Chair has indicated, that this is a terrible time for the country, and a time for the Congress, when we are not only doing our normal business at the end of the fiscal year, but business that no one ever imagined we'd have to do. I am not going to be able to stay for this entire hearing. I am on the Aviation Subcommittee. We have a hearing as we speak on security for aviation, an issue of utmost concern to this city and this region, because if people can't fly here safely, even if we get National Airport open, they won't fly, so we've got double duty here, both to get it open and to send out a sense of confidence that it is secure so that people will use the airport when it is open, so I've got to be at that hearing for part of the time.

Mrs. Morella knows that we are waiting for the aviation bill to go on the floor, because if we don't do something to make sure that the airlines are in financial shape to get up and fly, then, of course, nothing else matters. No great power has ever remained great or can remain great without airlines in this day and age, so we must find the appropriate and proportionate assistance for the airlines, from whence other things will flow, such as the tourism industry of this city and region.

In addition, I've got to go into the city because the industry, the tourism industry, is having a major meeting with the Mayor and me on the fate of that industry. All of this simply must be done at the same time.

WMATA figures deeply into this concern. WMATA is one of the principal reasons that this is a successful tourist city. It has been a very successful operation.

WMATA, indeed, uncharacteristically had a series of mishaps involving passengers traveling underground on the Metro Rail that drew the attention of the subcommittee in the summer of 2000. Tom Davis, who was then our Chair, Connie Morella, then vice-chair, and I requested a GAO study because of the overwhelming importance of safety to the system and because of the indispensable position of WMATA to the economy of this region and, of course, its central place in the lives of our constituents.

Our hearing today focuses on the GAO findings on safety and on actions taken to remedy the problems that led to the study, and, of course, we are also interested in the overall condition of WMATA and in issues that have been raised about access by disabled residents. Inevitably, as well, following the September 11th attack, we will have questions for WMATA concerning security issues.

We are relieved by the written GAO findings that WMATA has in place procedures to identify and minimize general safety risks

to passengers. However, at the time of our request for this GAO investigation, our subcommittee was concerned with transit mishaps, not the unthinkable events of September 11th. We can only hope that WMATA has used greater foresight to prepare for emergencies than the Federal Government demonstrated during the attack on the Pentagon.

We all recognize how fortunate this region is to have a 103-mile Metro Rail system that is close to state-of-the-art, second-largest in passenger service next to New York City, and the envy of the rest of the country. Already, local jurisdictions here are planning extensions of Metro beyond the original system as envisioned in 1969 when WMATA started building. The District's anticipated New York Avenue Metro stop currently underway may become a model for the region, with one-third of the funds provided by local businesses, one-third by the D.C. government, and one-third by the Federal Government.

The best news about WMATA is the vote of confidence regional riders are showing in the system by the very significant increase in their use of Metro. This use, however, is fraught with irony. I can remember when the region wanted to attract more riders to the system. Now Metro is confronting the challenge of too many riders, given the existing capacity of the system.

Let's do something about that, too. Let's keep Metro not only going but growing.

I look forward to the testimony of today's witnesses to clarify old as well as new issues that Metro must face. I very much welcome each and every one of you to this hearing.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you, Ms. Norton.

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

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

SUBCOMMITTEES

AVIATION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC
BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEES

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CIVIL SERVICE AND
AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSWOMAN ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
D.C. SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING
"MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION:
MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS"

September 21, 2001

WMATA uncharacteristically had a series of mishaps involving passengers traveling underground on the Metrorail that drew the attention of this Subcommittee in the summer of 2000. Tom Davis, who was then our chair, Connie Morella, then vice chair, and I requested a GAO study because of the overwhelming importance of safety to the system and because of the indispensable position of WMATA to the economy of this region and its central place in the lives of our constituents. Our hearing today focuses on the GAO findings on safety and on actions taken to remedy the problems that led to the study, and of course we are also interested in the overall condition of WMATA. Inevitably, as well, following the September 11th attack we will have questions for WMATA concerning security issues.

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I look forward to the testimony of today's witnesses to clarify old as well as new issues that Metro must face.

Mrs. MORELLA. I'm pleased to recognize my predecessor Chair of this subcommittee, Tom Davis, who, as Ms. Norton mentioned, asked for the GAO report with Ms. Norton and myself.

Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Madam Chair, I will try to be brief because I want to get to the panel.

I want to thank you for organizing today's hearing. I want to applaud WMATA's Metro Rail and Metro Bus services for their handling of the sudden influx of riders after the terrorist attacks on September 11th. I understand there was some confusion initially caused by the news media, as there was throughout the city and on Capitol Hill, but WMATA ensured that the systems ran as smoothly as possible under the circumstances. And since that tragic day WMATA has worked with DOD, the Department of Defense, to expand its hours of operation and accommodate the increased ridership in light of the tightened security and blocked roads surrounding the Pentagon.

Last October this subcommittee held a hearing that examined a wide range of issues relating to WMATA's operations, including its budget process, communications system, safety, and its processes for measuring performance standards and gauging customer satisfaction. At that time it was clear that WMATA faced many challenges ahead. The most immediate is still increased ridership, which is putting a strain on the 25-year-old system's resources.

Therefore, I am encouraged by the GAO's reports regarding WMATA's efforts to improve its organization and management. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about the system improvements that are being implemented. I'm still concerned that the organization lacks a fully developed long-term budgeting plan, as highlighted in the GAO report.

Thank you.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you, Mr. Davis.

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

REPRESENTATIVE TOM DAVIS

OPENING STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

OVERSIGHT HEARING

MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS

Good morning. I would like to thank Chairwoman Morella for organizing today's hearing about the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

First, I want to applaud WMATA's Metrorail and Metrobus services for their handling of the sudden influx of riders after the terrorist attacks on September 11th. From the news reports, I understand that there was some confusion initially, as there was throughout the city and on Capitol Hill. However, WMATA ensured that the systems ran as smoothly as possible under the circumstances. And since that tragic day, WMATA has worked with the Department of Defense to expand its hours of operation and accommodate the increased ridership in light of the tightened security and blocked roads surrounding the Pentagon.

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Thank you.

Mrs. MORELLA. And now the newest member of this subcommittee, we welcome her so much, Congresswoman Diane Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

It's a pleasure to be able to sit on this committee. I have been very interested in the District of Columbia and how it progresses. I want you to know back in the 1980's, when I carried a bill in the California State Senate to do a value capture project for our new subway, we went around the world to see the rapid transit systems, the Metro Rail system. The first place we came was here to Washington, DC. I was very impressed with your design, with your efficiency, and we learned a lot.

I have watched it very closely. I have used it when I've come here for long, extensive periods of time, and I am pleased to be a member of this subcommittee focusing on D.C. and looking at WMATA and seeing how I can assist all of our colleagues and you in keeping this system moving forward.

Welcome to those who are going to make presentations. I will be reading the GAO report, several pages here, as my midnight reading.

Thank you so much.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you, Ms. Watson.

Our distinguished panelists include: Jay Etta Hecker, Director of Physical Infrastructure Issues for GAO, accompanied by Rita Grieco, Senior Analyst, Physical Infrastructure Issues, GAO. We have the Honorable Decatur Trotter, who is the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; Richard White, general manager of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority; the Honorable Jennifer L. Dorn, who is the Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration; Honorable Phil Mendelson, vice chair of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board; and Donna Sorkin, appearing in the place of Pamela Holmes, public board member of the Access Board.

It is the tradition and the policy of the full committee and all its subcommittees to swear in those people who will be testifying, so I would ask you to stand, raise your right hands, and I would ask Barry McDevitt, the chief of police of the Metro Transit Police Department, to also stand to take the oath.

If you'll raise your right hands.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mrs. MORELLA. The record will show everybody responded affirmatively. And I'd like to ask you, too, so that we can hear all the panelists and have a chance for some questions, if you would try to confine your comments to 5 minutes. We even have our little lights to signal—the green, yellow, and red. And you don't have to conform to your written statement, which will be included in its totality in the record. You can give a synopsis or change it any way you'd like.

So, starting off that way, let's start off in the order in which you are seated—Jay Etta Hecker. Thank you.

STATEMENTS OF JAY ETTA HECKER, DIRECTOR OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES, GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, ACCOMPANIED BY RITA GRIECO, SENIOR ANALYST, PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES, GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE; DECATUR TROTTER, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY; RICHARD A. WHITE, GENERAL MANAGER, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY; JENNIFER L. DORN, ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION; PHIL MENDELSON, VICE CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD; AND DONNA SORKIN (APPEARING IN THE PLACE OF PAMELA HOLMES) PUBLIC BOARD MEMBER, ACCESS BOARD, ACCOMPANIED BY DAVID CAPOZI, DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL PROGRAMS, ACCESS BOARD

Ms. HECKER. Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning to you, Representative Norton, and other members of the committee.

As you all know, we are here to speak on the report that you requested, and I will summarize it so maybe you don't even have to read it. I think we can really give you the highlights and the essence of it, and then you'll hear the reactions.

Mrs. MORELLA. You're assuming we haven't already read it. [Laughter.]

Ms. HECKER. The report, as you know, and as you requested, focused on three very broad areas: the extent of the safety and security measures and initiatives within WMATA; the operating and maintenance initiatives and challenges facing the organization; and, finally, what kind of planning, selection process, and budgeting was in place for dealing with major capital projects.

I'd like to try to just briefly summarize it and give you the flavor of it before I go into each of them very briefly.

Basically, in all three areas—safety and security, operations and maintenance, and capital budgeting—the organization faces substantial challenges, and most of you have alluded to those. Many of them are pretty clearly evident.

What we did find, because there had been a rash of incidents and there was some concern about the readiness of the organization, we did find that, in fact, significant policies and procedures and initiatives were in place to deal with two of those three areas—basically, the safety and security measures and dealing with the kind of loads of passengers, dealing with operating and maintenance concerns.

However, in the capital investment area we basically did an approach that looked at the best practices of leading organizations and investment and capital, and, while there were many initiatives in place in the organization following those best practices, we found there were some really important opportunities to improve. Let me again go back and recap each of those pretty quickly.

In the safety and security area, the good news was that there really is a rigorous set of policies and procedures in place to deal with both safety and security risks confronting the system. The real problems that had come to light in the 1996–1997 areas, there were several very critical reports, and I have to say that there has been a real commitment within the organization elevating the level

of attention, giving it much more serious commitment within the organization, and really a pervasive commitment to this within the organization. There's a monitoring of stations. There are procedures. And they've invited outside review and basically have both a peer organization and Ms. Dorn's organization have given a very good sign to the organization that they're really very good and, while they continue to confront challenges, they really are among the best in terms of having the critical procedures.

This even covers the terrorism area, which, of course, we all realize is far more serious and it presents more grave challenges than any of us imagined, but in this area, as well, WMATA is really in the lead nationally. They are the only system in the country to be testing the use of sensors to detect and mitigate the possible use of chemical and biological agents in the system. It is an important new initiative. It is still in the testing phases. But it really shows that the organization is in the front line and really providing leadership.

This has actually been evidenced by the fact that they have been sought out by FTA really to help develop national guidelines for being prepared for and mitigating terrorist attacks on transit systems.

So the safety, security area, the challenges are real. They can't ever be totally mitigated, but having those kind of commitments, organizational commitments, the level of commitment in the organization, it's clearly in place.

Now, the organization—the operations and maintenance area, again, you've all outlined the very self-evident challenges that the system faces. The crowds are at crush levels many times. It has grown very rapidly to become the second-largest heavy rail transit system in the country and really has a number of challenges. And while the system, of course, was just completed, much of the infrastructure is actually 20 years old and approaching either requirements for major upgrades or replacement.

Now, when we looked in this area we again found, again within the last few years, major initiatives in place, a comprehensive program called the infrastructure renewal program looking at needs for upgrades to elevators, escalators, rail cars, and also the ordering of new cars. We've seen challenges they've confronted in those new cars, but that has been dealt with. And the system really has been dealing with the fact that there are a number of challenges in this area.

In the longer term, there are more serious challenges, given the projections for the likely doubling of ridership by 2025. This has, again, led to a comprehensive study within the organization. They call it the "Core Capacity Review." And this isn't just the new lines, the expansion that is being talked about in different areas, but really the capacity of the system, itself, the inner system, to absorb the ridership that would result. And this isn't, as I said, fancy new lines. Sometimes it is widening the platforms and other such initiatives.

The challenge there in this core capacity relates to the third area, and that's the planning and budgeting. Again, we found very positive features of their program, but the challenges were that there really wasn't an effective strategic planning in place, there

wasn't the framework for really prioritizing the full range of capital investments, and, as you noted, there really hasn't been an approach that focuses on the anticipated shortfalls.

I see my light is on, so I'm going to skip over perhaps more detail and leave it for questions about this area.

But, in sum, I think the organization is in a very complex environment politically with the multiple jurisdictions. It is one of the very few transit systems that doesn't have a dedicated source of tax revenues to project and plan for long-term investments. But I think we have an organization here that we can be proud of that adapts to changing circumstances, that learns and grows and deals with the significant challenges that they are facing.

That concludes the prepared statement, and, of course, I would be pleased to take any questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you very much. We will have some questions for you. Thank you for the study that you did.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hecker follows:]

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Testimony

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Committee on Government Reform
House of Representatives

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MASS TRANSIT

WMATA Is Addressing Many Challenges, but Capital Planning Could Be Improved

Statement of JayEtta Z. Hecker
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues

GAO-01-1161T

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee:

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on the challenges faced by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). In recent years, WMATA's public transit system has experienced problems related to the safety and reliability of its transit services, including equipment breakdowns, delays in scheduled service, unprecedented crowding on trains, and some accidents and tunnel fires. Moreover, WMATA's ridership is at an all-time high and WMATA managers expect the number of passengers to double over the next 25 years.

Our statement today is based on a report we issued in July 2001.[1] We will discuss (1) the challenges WMATA faces in operating and maintaining its Metrorail system and the steps WMATA is taking to address those challenges; (2) the efforts WMATA has made to establish and monitor safety and security within its transit system; and (3) the extent to which WMATA follows established best practices in planning, selecting, and budgeting for its capital investments.

In summary, we found:

- In operating its Metrorail system, WMATA is examining ways to ease crowding on the system's rail cars and determining whether and how to expand Metrorail's maintenance and repair shop capacity as WMATA acquires nearly 200 new rail cars to help meet increasing ridership demands. WMATA has also undertaken a comprehensive program for infrastructure renewal and it is currently studying what improvements or modifications will be required to Metrorail's "core" capacity to accommodate the agency's goal of doubling ridership by the year 2025.

- WMATA's safety program has evolved since the mid-1990s, when a series of accidents and incidents led to several independent reviews citing the need for program improvements. Since then, WMATA has updated its safety and security plans and upgraded its internal safety organization. Despite a recent rise in the number of rail and bus safety incidents, WMATA has experienced low rates of injury and serious

[1] *Mass Transit: Many Management Successes at WMATA, but Capital Planning Could Be Enhanced* (GAO-01-744, July 3, 2001).

crimes over the years. WMATA monitors safety and crime statistics and has a number of ongoing targeted efforts to reduce safety incidents and deter specific types of crime on its transit systems. WMATA also has formal protocols in place for responding to accidents, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism, but we did not evaluate the adequacy of these protocols.

- WMATA has adopted several of the best capital investment practices used by leading public and private sector organizations, but it could benefit by establishing a more formal, disciplined framework for its capital decision-making process. We note that although WMATA has articulated a goal of doubling ridership by the year 2025, it has not fully developed a strategic planning process that defines long-term, multiyear goals and objectives and clearly links its capital projects to achieving them. We also note that WMATA has incorporated some elements of an investment approach—that is, one that builds upon an assessment of where an agency should invest its resources for the greatest long-term benefit—when evaluating and selecting its capital improvement projects. However, it does not have a formal framework for periodically reviewing, prioritizing, and deciding on capital investments; and it has not developed a long-term capital plan that defines its capital decisions. Finally, WMATA has used a wide variety of innovative financing techniques for capital projects, but it has not developed plans that describe how it would address large anticipated shortfalls in its capital programs. Our report contained several recommendations to strengthen WMATA's strategic and capital planning processes and WMATA agreed with most of them.

Background

WMATA was created in 1967 by an interstate compact that resulted from the enactment of identical legislation by Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, with the concurrence of the U.S. Congress.[2] WMATA began building its Metrorail system in 1969, acquired four regional bus systems in 1973, and began operating the first phase of Metrorail operations in 1976. In January 2001, WMATA completed the originally planned 103-mile Metrorail system that now includes 83 rail stations on 5 rail lines.[3]

[2]Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact, Public Law No. 89-774 (1966).

[3]WMATA operates five rail lines: red, blue, orange, green, and yellow.

WMATA operates in a complex environment, with many organizations influencing its decision-making and funding and providing oversight. WMATA is governed by a Board of Directors, which sets policies and oversees all of WMATA's activities, including budgeting, operations, development and expansion, safety, procurement, and other activities. In addition, a number of local, regional, and federal external organizations affect WMATA's decision-making, including (1) state and local governments, which subject WMATA to a range of laws and requirements; (2) the Tri-State Oversight Committee, which oversees WMATA's safety activities and conducts safety reviews; (3) the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), which develops the short- and long-range plans that guide WMATA's capital investments; (4) the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which provides oversight of WMATA in many areas; and (5) the National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates accidents on transit systems as well as other transportation modes.

WMATA estimates that its combined rail and bus ridership will total 324.8 million passenger trips in fiscal year 2001, making it the second largest heavy rail rapid transit system and the sixth largest bus system in the United States, according to WMATA officials. WMATA experienced dramatic ridership growth over the past year, with systemwide ridership increasing by 7 percent from July 2000 to July 2001. WMATA's proposed fiscal year 2002 budget totals nearly $1.9 billion. Of the total amount, about 56 percent, or $1.06 billion, is for capital improvements; 42 percent, or $796.6 million, is for operations and maintenance activities; and the remaining 2 percent, or $37 million, is for debt service and other projects.

WMATA's funding comes from a variety of federal, state, and local sources. Unlike most other major urban transit systems, WMATA does not have dedicated sources of tax revenues, such as local sales tax revenues, that are automatically directed to the transit authority. WMATA receives grants from the federal government and annual contributions by each of the local jurisdictions that WMATA serves, including the District of Columbia and the respective local jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia. For example, in its fiscal

year 2002 proposed operating budget totaling $796.6 million (for rail, bus, and paratransit[4] services), WMATA projects that approximately 55 percent of its revenues will come from passenger fares and other internally generated revenues, and 45 percent will come from the local jurisdictions served by WMATA. In its capital program for infrastructure renewal, WMATA projects that about 47 percent of its proposed 2002 budget will come from federal government grants, 38 percent from federally guaranteed financing, and 15 percent from the local jurisdictions and other sources. WMATA has also received funding directly through the congressional appropriations process over the past 30 years—totaling about $6.9 billion—for construction of the originally planned subway system. WMATA did not have to compete against other transit agencies for this funding, which ended in fiscal year 1999.

WMATA Is Addressing Significant Metrorail Operations and Maintenance Challenges

One of the key operating challenges facing WMATA's Metrorail system has been the increasing problems caused by the advancing age of its existing infrastructure. The system has experienced vehicle, escalator, elevator, and other system equipment and infrastructure problems over the past several years. These problems have resulted in, among other things, a 64-percent increase in the number of train delays–from 865 in fiscal year 1996 to 1,417 in fiscal year 2000.[5] WMATA attributes these problems primarily to its aging rail equipment and infrastructure. For example, 39 percent of Metrorail's 762-car fleet has been operating since 1976; another 48 percent went into service during the 1980s.

WMATA is addressing Metrorail's equipment and infrastructure problems through a number of projects in its capital-funded Infrastructure Renewal Program (IRP). Under one key IRP project—the Emergency Rail Rehabilitation Program—WMATA has made significant progress in implementing many rail system improvement projects. For example, by August 2000, WMATA had completed almost all of the program's accelerated

[4]WMATA coordinates a regional paratransit system called "MetroAccess" that provides public transit services to individuals with disabilities who either reside in or are visiting the WMATA service area.

[5]According to WMATA officials, non-equipment-related train delays accounted for about 14 percent of the delays in fiscal year 1996 and 18 percent in fiscal year 2000. Such delays increased by 108 percent, from 121 in fiscal year 1996 to 252 in fiscal year 2000. Officials attributed these delays to an increase in ridership and rail fleet miles.

car maintenance projects on such critical components as brakes and doors on over 600 rail cars. In addition, WMATA's statistics show that for the period covering July 2000 through January 2001, the number of passenger offloads had decreased by 15 percent, compared with the same period in the previous year. Furthermore, by June 2000, work was under way to maintain and rehabilitate 170 station escalators.

Metrorail also faces another significant operating challenge brought about by ever-increasing ridership. Metrorail is now operating at near capacity during peak demand periods, causing some uncomfortably crowded trains. WMATA's recent studies on crowding found that demand has reached and, in some cases, exceeded scheduled capacity—an average of 140 passengers per car—during the peak morning and afternoon hours. For example, of the more than 200 peak morning trips that WMATA observed over a recent 6-month period, on average, 15 percent were considered "uncomfortably crowded" (125 to 149 passengers per car); and 8 percent had "crush loads" (150 or more passengers per car). Metrorail's overcrowded conditions are primarily the result of the substantial growth in ridership it has experienced over the last several years, an insufficient number of rail cars to operate more and longer trains on a regular basis, and system and other constraints on expanding trains to eight cars—the maximum size that station platforms can accommodate.

WMATA has several actions under way to ease Metrorail's overcrowded conditions. Most notably, the agency ordered 192 new rail cars that it began deploying in August 2001. Over the next year or so, WMATA plans to deploy the majority of these cars where and when the heaviest ridership is occurring, allowing for adjustments to train sizes. For example, on some lines, the train size will change from four cars to six cars.

WMATA is also studying what improvements or modifications will be required to Metrorail's "core" capacity to accommodate the agency's goal of doubling ridership by the year 2025. Metrorail's core consists of 29 stations located in downtown Washington, D.C., and some of its immediate suburbs in Virginia. Although these core stations serve nearly 60 percent of all systemwide passengers, they contain only 17 to 36 percent of the total system's infrastructure.[6] In the study, WMATA is projecting the extent to which

[6]For example, the core stations have 17 percent of the total system's station interchanges, 19 percent of total trackage, and 36 percent of the total platforms.

passenger demands will exceed the capacity of critical Metrorail elements (e.g., stations, platforms, rail line capacity, etc.) in the coming years and exploring alternative solutions for addressing those capacity constraints. WMATA expects to complete the study by the end of 2001.

Finally, Metrorail's maintenance and repair shop capacity could be challenged as early as the fall of 2001 with the scheduled delivery of the first group of new rail cars. Depending on the number of cars that can be repaired outside of the shops, WMATA could need up to 126 repair shop spaces, or 12 more than the 114 spaces that would be available for scheduled maintenance and unscheduled repairs at that time. Furthermore, Metrorail's repair shop capacity may be exhausted and could become even more of a problem after the fall of 2002, when delivery of the remaining new cars is expected to be completed. In addition, WMATA plans to acquire a total of at least 94 additional rail cars to accommodate new revenue service on the Largo extension to the Blue Line in Maryland (which is currently under construction); increased demand on the Orange Line in Virginia due to service expansion; and service growth on other existing rail lines, thus adding to the maintenance and repair shop capacity problem.

WMATA officials pointed out that they are taking steps to ease the capacity problem. For example, in the near term, WMATA has four "blow down pits"—spaces in its largest shops used to clean the underside of a car prior to its scheduled maintenance—that can also be used for maintenance and repair. In addition, WMATA plans to open a new facility in 2002 that will expand its current shop capacity to accommodate 126 rail cars. At the same time, however, WMATA recognizes that it currently does not have the capacity to maintain and repair the additional cars for the Largo extension. WMATA is taking two actions to address this problem. First, WMATA is surveying its existing shops to determine whether their capacity can be expanded. The agency expects to complete the survey in the fall of 2001, possibly beginning expansion efforts as early as 2002. Second, WMATA plans to build a new repair shop in the Dulles Corridor. However, this facility would not be available until about 2010, when construction of the Dulles Corridor extension is to be completed.

WMATA Has Established Safety and Security Programs

WMATA has established programs to address safety and security risks that affect its rail and bus systems. WMATA's safety program has evolved since the mid-1990s, when a series of rail accidents and incidents led to several independent reviews that cited the need for program improvements. For example, in 1997, FTA reported the results of a safety review it performed of WMATA's rail activities in response to several serious accidents and incidents that occurred in 1996. The review concluded that WMATA had not adequately maintained a planned approach to safety program tasks or dedicated appropriate financial and personnel resources to accomplish these tasks. In addition, FTA found that WMATA's safety efforts had been weakened by frequent changes in the organizational reporting level of its safety department and a deemphasis of safety awareness in public and corporate communications. The review also found that WMATA's safety department had been moved from place to place in the organization, making its work difficult, its priorities uncertain, and its status marginal.

WMATA's newly-appointed General Manager responded to these criticisms by upgrading and enhancing the agency's safety activities. For example, the General Manager made safety a priority by reviewing the transit authority's safety function and revising its system safety program plan, which contains detailed protocols for identifying and assessing hazards. WMATA's safety plan also includes requirements for identifying, evaluating, and minimizing safety risks throughout all elements of the WMATA rail and bus systems. The plan also identifies management and technical safety and fire protection activities to be performed during all phases of bus and rail operations. In addition, WMATA's General Manager delegated specific safety responsibilities to the transit agency's Chief Safety Officer, who reports directly to the General Manager and is now responsible for (1) managing system safety, occupational safety and health, accident and incident investigation, and fire protection; (2) overseeing construction safety and environmental protection; and (3) monitoring the system safety program plan. By elevating its internal safety organization and increasing its emphasis on safety activities, WMATA has given safety a higher degree of attention and priority.

More recently, following a serious tunnel fire in 2000, WMATA created a safety task force to review its Operations Control Center's handling of the incident. In addition, WMATA's

General Manager asked the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to conduct a comprehensive peer review of the transit agency's emergency procedures for handling tunnel fires. APTA's findings and recommendations, in several ways, confirmed the findings identified in WMATA's internal investigation. For instance, both investigations supported the need for efforts to formalize and strengthen training for Operations Control Center personnel and ensure that emergency procedures are addressed in the training and certification of operations staff. The two reviews made 32 recommendations concerning, among other things, communications policy and training. At the time of our review, WMATA had taken actions to implement 30 of the 32 recommendations, including providing training to its staff on communicating more effectively with fire authorities and opening a fire training center for WMATA employees and local firefighters. WMATA is in the process of addressing the other two recommendations.

Despite a recent rise in the number of rail and bus safety incidents, which WMATA attributes to the large increase in rail and bus ridership and the recent hiring of many new bus drivers, APTA and FTA now believe that WMATA has a "very good" safety program as evidenced by the low injury rates on both its rail and bus systems. For example, WMATA has experienced low injury rates in its rail stations over the last 5 years—on average, only .37 injuries per 1 million passenger miles. Very few of these injuries were serious or fatal. However, the absolute number of rail station injuries increased from 366 in fiscal year 1999 to 474 in fiscal year 2000, and the rail station injury rate increased slightly during those years. WMATA documents also show that about 50 percent of all rail injuries occurred on escalators. According to WMATA's Chief Safety Officer, the root cause of the majority of these incidents is passenger behavior, not equipment failure, employee performance, or unsafe conditions. In fiscal years 1999 and 2000, for example, WMATA's records show that no escalator incidents were caused by electrical or mechanical failure or unsafe conditions. WMATA is promoting escalator safety by conducting public awareness campaigns and adding safety devices.

Similar to his initiatives affecting WMATA's safety program and plan, WMATA's General Manager has delegated authority to WMATA's Chief of Police to plan, direct, coordinate, implement, and evaluate all police and security activities for the transit agency. WMATA's Chief of Police heads the Metro Transit Police Department, which has an

authorized strength of 320 sworn and 103 civilian personnel. The Department has jurisdiction and arrest powers on WMATA property throughout the 1,500 square mile transit zone that includes Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. WMATA's Metro Transit Police Department addresses security through its system security program plan, participates in external security reviews, and collects and evaluates crime statistics. To emphasize the importance of system security, the Department established a set of comprehensive security activities in its system security program plan. The plan is designed to maximize the level of security experienced by passengers, employees, and other individuals who come into contact with the transit system; to minimize the cost associated with the intrusion of vandals and others into the system; and to make the transit system more proactive in preventing and mitigating security problems.

WMATA has also participated in FTA's voluntary transit security audit program, and FTA officials have concluded that WMATA's overall security program demonstrates a high level of attention to passenger and employee security. WMATA statistics indicate that serious crimes such as homicide and rape occur rarely on the transit system. During the period from 1996 through 2000, no rapes occurred, and there were two murders in the system. Most of the crimes committed in the transit system are far less serious, such as disorderly conduct and trespassing. More of the crimes are committed in the system's parking lots than on the rail and bus systems, and more crimes are committed on the rail system than on the buses. Some crimes, such as motor vehicle theft and robbery, increased somewhat from 1999 to 2000. To address those increases and the problem of crime in its parking lots, WMATA has increased undercover patrols of parking lots and rail stations.

WMATA's Chief of Police and Chief Safety Officer also have protocols and procedures in place for mitigating and responding to disasters and other emergencies involving mass casualties. For example, WMATA has entered into written agreements with local police, fire, and rescue departments to coordinate each organization's roles and responsibilities and define the procedures for responding to incidents. When an incident occurs, WMATA's role is generally one of "crisis management," identifying the level of threat, securing the scene and performing vital first response procedures until the local authorities arrive, and gathering evidence. WMATA officials also participate in numerous local committees and joint training exercises with local authorities and other

transportation providers in the metropolitan Washington region for the purpose of preparing for natural or man-made disasters and emergencies. In addition, WMATA is participating in a joint project with the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Energy to develop and install sensors that can detect and mitigate the release of chemical and biological agents in the Metrorail system.

WMATA Is Addressing its Major Capital Requirements but Could Benefit From a More Formal Capital Planning Process

WMATA operates in a complex environment that makes capital decision-making difficult. For example, unlike most other major urban transit systems, WMATA does not have a dedicated revenue source to fund its capital programs, thus subjecting the agency to the appropriations processes of the federal, state, and local governments that fund its programs. In addition, WMATA's General Manager and staff must achieve consensus and obtain final approvals for the agency's capital projects from many organizations and government levels, including its own Board of Directors; numerous local and state jurisdictions within the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia that the transit agency serves; the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; the Federal Transit Administration; and the U.S. Congress, which has provided WMATA with funding over the years to build its Metrorail system. While WMATA has incorporated some of the best capital investment practices followed by leading public and private sector organizations, we believe that WMATA could benefit by building on these practices by formalizing some aspects of its capital decision-making process and expanding its strategic and capital planning efforts.

WMATA created a Capital Improvement Program in November 2000 to consolidate its ongoing and planned capital improvement activities. This program has three elements to address all aspects of the agency's capital investments, including (1) an Infrastructure Renewal Program (IRP) for system rehabilitation and replacements, (2) a System Expansion Program (SEP), and (3) a System Access and Capacity Program (SAP). First, IRP is designed to rehabilitate or replace WMATA's existing assets, including rail cars, buses, maintenance facilities, tracks, and other structures and systems. WMATA officials have estimated that IRP will cost $9.8 billion over the next 25 years. Second, SEP is

designed to expand fixed guideway services,[7] selectively add stations and entrances to the existing Metrorail system, and improve bus service levels and expand service areas. WMATA has not yet estimated the total costs associated with its planned SEP projects. Third, SAP—which WMATA estimates will cost about $2.5 billion over the next 25 years—was established to improve access to and the capacity of the transit system by providing additional rail cars and buses, parking facilities, and support activities to accommodate ridership growth. Under SAP, WMATA is also studying the modifications needed to Metrorail's core capacity to sustain current and future ridership volumes; WMATA expects to complete the study by the end of December 2001. Estimated costs for SAP could significantly increase as a result of this study.

GAO issued a report in December 1998[8] that identified capital decision-making principles and practices used by outstanding state and local governments and private sector organizations. In order to evaluate the extent to which WMATA followed best practices in planning, selecting, and budgeting for its capital investments, we compared WMATA's practices with those of leading public and private organizations that we studied in 1998. In July 2001, we reported on the extent to which WMATA (1) integrates its organizational goals into the capital decision-making process through structured strategic planning and needs determination processes, (2) uses an investment approach to evaluate and select capital assets, and (3) maintains budgetary control over its capital investments. Appendix I describes the best practices that were applied within each of these three areas.

Strategic Planning and Needs Determination Processes

We have found that leading organizations begin their capital decision-making process by defining their overall mission in comprehensive terms and multiyear goals and objectives. This enables managers to identify the resources needed to satisfy the organization's program requirements on the basis of the program's goals and objectives. To do this, an organization must have identified its mission and goals through a strategic planning process. To assist with identifying any gap between an organization's resource needs and

[7]Fixed guideway services use and occupy a separate right-of-way for the exclusive use of public transportation services. They include fixed rail, exclusive lanes for buses and other high-occupancy vehicles, and other services.

[8]*Executive Guide: Leading Practices in Capital Decision-Making* (GAO/AIMD-99-32, December 1998).

its existing capital capabilities, leading organizations maintain systems that capture and report information on existing assets and facilities. This information is frequently updated and accessible to decisionmakers when needed. Leading organizations also consider a full range of possible ways to achieve the organization's goals and objectives, including examining both capital and noncapital alternatives.

WMATA has articulated an overall organizational mission statement and a goal of doubling ridership by the year 2025 and is beginning to develop a business planning process. It has not, however, developed a formal strategic plan that defines multiyear goals and objectives for the agency, nor does it have annual performance plans that explain the specific ways in which WMATA will attempt to achieve those goals and objectives.

WMATA has completed a comprehensive assessment of its infrastructure renewal requirements, and it is in the process of assessing its system capacity requirements. With regard to its System Expansion Program, however, it has not conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, although it does consider regional transportation needs, costs, and benefits before deciding to support proposed expansion projects. For example, WMATA has established a "Project Development Program" to develop conceptual designs, "order of magnitude" cost estimates, and other information on some of the proposed projects contained in the expansion program.

WMATA plays a limited role in analyzing and evaluating alternatives for meeting its system expansion needs. This limited role stems from its relationships with (1) the Transportation Planning Board, which plays a key role in developing, coordinating, and approving plans for all regional transportation needs and alternatives, including transit, highways, and other transportation modes; and (2) the state and local jurisdictions served by WMATA, which have the lead role in identifying and evaluating transit expansion alternatives within a specific "corridor" or section of the Washington metropolitan area.

Investment Approach to Evaluating and Selecting Capital Assets

After leading organizations identify their strategic goals and objectives and assess alternative ways of meeting their capital needs, they go through a process of evaluating

and selecting capital assets using an investment approach. An investment approach builds on an organization's assessment of where it should invest its resources for the greatest benefit over the long term. Establishing a decision-making framework that encourages the appropriate levels of management review and approval is a critical factor in making sound capital investment decisions. These decisions are supported by the proper financial, technical, and risk analyses. Leading organizations not only establish a framework for reviewing and approving capital decisions, they also have defined processes for ranking and selecting projects. Furthermore, they also develop long-term capital plans that are based on the long-range vision for the organization embodied in its strategic plan.

WMATA has incorporated several elements of an investment approach to evaluating and selecting capital improvement projects, but the agency could benefit from a more formal, disciplined decision-making framework. With regard to its program for infrastructure renewal, WMATA officials told us that all appropriate managers were involved in deciding which projects should be selected after a comprehensive needs assessment was performed in March 1999. WMATA also performed a one-time ranking of those projects on the basis of preestablished criteria, including asset function, condition, and other factors. However, WMATA has not established a formal executive-level review group within the agency for making decisions on capital projects, nor does it have formal procedures or a standard decision package for considering the relative merits of its capital projects each year. Also, WMATA officials told us that they play a relatively small role in proposing, evaluating, and selecting system expansion projects. They said that the decisions on such projects are generally driven by the state and local jurisdictions sponsoring the projects. WMATA has contacted state and local transportation executives from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia to explore ways to increase WMATA's involvement in conducting alternatives analyses for system expansion projects, thereby increasing its influence on those decisions.

Furthermore, although WMATA has performed a comprehensive assessment of infrastructure renewal requirements and has taken a first step in outlining system expansion needs, it has not developed a comprehensive long-term capital plan that defines and justifies its internal capital asset decisions for all of the capital projects falling within WMATA's Capital Improvement Program. Such a plan would allow WMATA

to define its strategy and justification for selecting each capital project and would provide baseline information on each project's life-cycle costs and schedules, performance requirements, benefits, and risks. A more formal long-term capital planning process allows an organization to establish priorities and assist with developing current and future budgets. A well-thought-out review and approval framework can also mean that capital investment decisions are made more efficiently and are supported by better information. Furthermore, were WMATA to develop a more disciplined decision-making framework—with documented support for the alternatives that WMATA favors—the agency could potentially have more influence with the federal government and state and local jurisdictions that ultimately decide whether to provide funding for projects.

Budgetary Control Over Capital Investments

Finally, officials at leading organizations that we studied agreed that good budgeting requires that the full life-cycle costs of a project be considered when an organization is making decisions to provide resources. This practice permits decisionmakers to compare the long-term costs of spending alternatives and to better understand the budgetary and programmatic impact of decisions. Most of those organizations make a commitment to the full cost of a project up front and have developed alternative methods for maintaining budgetary control while allowing flexibility in funding. One strategy they use is to budget for and provide advance funding sufficient to complete a useful segment of a project. A useful segment is defined as a component that (1) provides information that allows an agency to fully plan a capital project before proceeding to full acquisition or (2) results in a useful asset for which the benefits exceed the costs even if no further funding is appropriated. Another strategy used by some leading organizations is to use innovative financing techniques that provide new sources of funding or new methods of financial return.

WMATA uses many of the funding strategies followed by leading organizations. For example, to comply with requirements imposed by FTA and its predecessor agencies, WMATA completed its Metrorail system by negotiating for funding in useful or "operable" segments. Furthermore, the agency has used a wide variety of innovative capital financing techniques to fund its Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and operations activities and to leverage its capital assets to generate additional income. However,

WMATA faces a number of uncertainties in obtaining the funding it believes it needs to meet its capital requirements, and the agency has not developed plans that describe how it would address large anticipated funding shortfalls in its programs for infrastructure renewal and system capacity. For example, WMATA has not developed alternate scenarios of how such funding shortfalls would be absorbed by the various asset categories under the Infrastructure Renewal Program or by the projects identified under the System Access and Capacity Program. The funding shortfalls are anticipated to total $3.7 billion over the next 25 years and represent an average annual shortfall of about $150 million for both programs. Furthermore, the budget shortfall could significantly increase when WMATA completes its ongoing assessment of Metrorail's core capacity by the end of 2001.

In our July 2001 report, we recommended that WMATA's General Manager and Board of Directors take several actions to improve the agency's strategic planning and capital investment practices. These included (1) developing a long-term strategic plan and annual performance plans that clearly define the agency's multiyear goals and objectives and its specific plans for achieving those goals and objectives, (2) developing a long-term capital plan, (3) formalizing WMATA's capital decision-making process by establishing standard procedures and decision packages for analyzing and deciding on projects, and (4) developing a process and procedures for taking a more active role in identifying, analyzing, and evaluating alternatives for expanding WMATA's transit system. WMATA concurred with all of our major recommendations and indicated that it has already taken steps to begin implementing them.

In summary, we found that WMATA has identified its operational and safety challenges and established sound policies, programs, and practices to meet those challenges. WMATA has also incorporated some of the best capital investment practices in its Capital Improvement Program and it plans to strengthen its capital and strategic planning by implementing our recommendations. In our view, WMATA's General Manager and other senior officials have adapted to changing circumstances by taking positive steps to address the challenges they face and they have created an organizational climate that is receptive to change.

Madam Chairwoman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have at this time.

Contacts and Acknowledgements

For further information on this testimony, please contact JayEtta Z. Hecker at (202) 512-2834 or heckerj@gao.gov. Individuals making key contributions to this testimony include Jack Bagnulo, Rita Grieco, and Ronald Stouffer.

Appendix I

Principles and Practices for Planning, Selecting and Budgeting for Capital Investments

Principles	Practices
Integrate organizational goals into the capital decision-making process.	Conduct comprehensive assessment of needs to meet results-oriented goals and objectives. Identify current capabilities, including the use of an inventory of assets and their condition, and determine if there is a gap between current and needed capabilities. Decide how best to meet the gap by identifying and evaluating alternative approaches (including noncapital approaches).
Evaluate and select capital assets using an investment approach.	Establish review and approval framework supported by analyses. Rank and select projects on the basis of established criteria. Develop a long-term capital plan that defines capital asset decisions.
Maintain budgetary control over capital investments.	Budget for projects in useful segments. Consider innovative approaches to full up-front funding.

Source: *Executive Guide: Leading Practices in Capital Decision-Making* (GAO/AIMD-99-32, December 1998).

(544011)

Mrs. MORELLA. I didn't know that you were not planning to testify, Ms. Grieco, but if there's anything you wanted to briefly add at this point, you may.

Ms. GRIECO. I would just point out in the area of capital planning WMATA did do an excellent study of the condition of its existing assets, and it is just in some of the areas of planning for the future, the system expansion projects, we see an opportunity for them to take a more expanded role.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you.

Honorable Decatur Trotter, good to see you again, sir.

Mr. TROTTER. Good morning, Chairwoman Morella and members of the subcommittee. I'm happy to be here. With all those great statements that have been made, very little for me to do, but I am Decatur Trotter and I am the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and with your permission, Madam Chair, I would like to submit my formal statement for the record.

Mrs. MORELLA. Without objection, that will be the case.

Mr. TROTTER. OK. Thank you.

WMATA in many ways is the region. We are a unique, multijurisdictional operating entity. We cut across State boundaries and make decisions based on regional consensus. We must work in partnership with all levels of governments to accomplish our mission of providing quality transportation services to the national capital region.

The Board recognizes as the GAO report stated that WMATA is, in some ways, a victim of its own success. The challenges facing WMATA are largely the result of growing ridership demands, coupled with aging equipment and infrastructure throughout the transit system.

These twin challenges have put tremendous stress and strain on the system. Our very able general manager, Richard White, is going to discuss in greater detail some of the programs and projects WMATA undertook to deal with issues of aging pains and growing pains as we often refer to this phenomenon.

Before I yield to Mr. White, I just want to take this opportunity to make a few statements on behalf of the Board of Directors.

The WMATA Board of Directors is very pleased with the GAO report issued in July entitled, "Many Management Successes at WMATA, but Capital Planning Could be Enhanced." The report has pointed us in the direction that we were already heading. We believe that Metro managers have very capably dealt with unprecedented and unexpected ridership growth, while at the same time rising to the demands of aging infrastructure. The WMATA board has been vigilant in its oversight role in ensuring that the Transit Authority provides safe, reliable, affordable service within available resources.

We have the responsibility to our customers, to the region, to the Federal Government, to the Congress, and to all taxpayers to protect its $10 billion public investment made in the marvelous transit system that we call "America's Subway." An investment, I might add, that would cost $22 billion to construct today. We must ensure that we make the reinvestments necessary for safety and reliability, as well as those investments needed to accommodate the grow-

ing ridership that is occurring and will continue in the foreseeable future. We welcome the opportunity to discuss WMATA's funding needs and look forward to working closely with you and the Congress to make sure that WMATA has the necessary resources to meet the ridership demands of a rapidly growing national capital region.

In closing, I would like to express my personal gratitude to WMATA employees who, with their regional MTA New York, New Jersey Transit, and Path colleagues, provided safe passage for millions of Americans last Tuesday.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address this subcommittee.

Mrs. MORELLA. I thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Trotter follows:]

STATEMENT OF

THE HONORABLE DECATUR TROTTER

CHAIRMAN OF THE 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

MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS

SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

GOOD MORNING CHAIRWOMAN MORELLA AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE.

MY NAME IS DECATUR TROTTER AND I AM CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA). I AM PLEASED THAT YOU HAVE CALLED A HEARING ON THE SUBJECT OF "MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS." I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME COMMENTS ON THIS IMPORTANT AND TIMELY TOPIC.

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. WE MUST WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENTS TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION OF PROVIDING QUALITY TRANSPORTATION SERVICE TO THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, THE WMATA BOARD HAS A TOTAL OF 12 MEMBERS — TWO EACH FROM MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA —

WITH TWO ALTERNATE MEMBERS FROM EACH JURISDICTION. THE WMATA INTERSTATE COMPACT SPECIFIES HOW THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ARE TO BE APPOINTED. ACTIONS BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS REQUIRE AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE FROM EACH JURISDICTION.

THE BOARD MEETS, AS A WHOLE, ONCE A MONTH, AND BOARD COMMITTEES MEET EACH WEEK TO CONSIDER BUDGET, SAFETY, OPERATIONS, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES. THE BOARD TAKES ITS OVERSIGHT FUNCTION VERY SERIOUSLY. BECAUSE WMATA WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE STATE OF MARYLAND, THE COMMONWEALTH OF 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 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.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO RECALL THAT APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR AGO THIS SUBCOMMITTEE CONVENED A HEARING TO DISCUSS OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES CONFRONTING METRO. TODAY, NEARLY ONE YEAR LATER, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO), AT THE REQUEST OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE, HAS PERFORMED A THOROUGH REVIEW OF WMATA'S OPERATIONS AND FINANCES AND GIVEN THE TRANSIT AUTHORITY A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH. THE FREQUENCY OF EQUIPMENT BREAKDOWNS, DELAYS AND TUNNEL FIRE AND SMOKE INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN DRAMATICALLY REDUCED AND ARE NO LONGER SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES, ALTHOUGH THE WMATA BOARD AND MANAGEMENT CONSTANTLY MONITOR AND MANAGE THESE MATTERS.

THE WMATA BOARD OF DIRECTORS SHARES YOUR CONCERNS, AS WELL AS THAT OF OUR CUSTOMERS, AND THAT IS WHY WE MOVED SWIFTLY TO TAKE ACTION TO ADDRESS THESE MATTERS. THE BOARD RECOGNIZES, AS THE GAO STATED, THAT WMATA IS IN SOME WAYS A "VICTIM" OF ITS OWN SUCCESS. THE CHALLENGES FACING WMATA ARE LARGELY THE RESULT OF GROWING RIDERSHIP DEMANDS COUPLED WITH AGING EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE TRANSIT SYSTEM. THESE TWIN CHALLENGES HAVE PUT TREMENDOUS STRESS AND STRAIN ON THE SYSTEM.

OUR VERY ABLE GENERAL MANAGER, RICHARD WHITE, IS GOING TO DISCUSS IN GREATER DETAIL SOME OF THE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS WMATA UNDERTOOK TO DEAL WITH THE SIMULTANEOUS ISSUES OF "AGING PAINS AND GROWING PAINS," AS WE OFTEN REFER TO THIS PHENOMENON. BEFORE I YIELD TO MR. WHITE, I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A FEW STATEMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD.

THE WMATA BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS VERY PLEASED WITH THE GAO REPORT ISSUED IN JULY, ENTITLED "MANY MANAGEMENT SUCCESSES AT WMATA, BUT CAPITAL PLANNING COULD BE ENHANCED." THE REPORT HAS POINTED US IN A DIRECTION THAT WE WERE ALREADY HEADING. WE BELIEVE THAT METRO MANAGERS HAVE VERY CAPABLY DEALT WITH UNPRECEDENTED AND UNEXPECTED RIDERSHIP GROWTH, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RISING TO THE DEMANDS OF AN AGING INFRASTRUCTURE. THE WMATA BOARD HAS BEEN VIGILANT IN ITS OVERSIGHT ROLE AND IN ENSURING THAT THE TRANSIT AUTHORITY PROVIDE SAFE, RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE SERVICE, WITHIN AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

I WANT TO UNDERSCORE "AVAILABLE" RESOURCES. WE MUST ALL REMEMBER THAT WMATA HAS NO INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF FUNDING. PASSENGER AND OPERATING REVENUES COVER APPROXIMATELY 57 PERCENT OF METRO'S OPERATING COSTS, AND NONE OF ITS CAPITAL OR CONSTRUCTION EXPENSES. FOR THIS FUNDING, THE TRANSIT AUTHORITY IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT MAKE UP THE UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP THAT UNDERGIRDS THIS INTERSTATE AGENCY. IN SHORT, THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THE COMPLEX AND SIGNIFICANT CAPITAL INVESTMENT NEEDS FACING THE TRANSIT AUTHORITY IS DETERMINED BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL BODIES AND, AS SUCH, IS LARGELY BEYOND THE CONTROL OF WMATA.

THE FACT THAT IT IS BEYOND OUR CONTROL DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE CAN IGNORE THIS VERY REAL NEED FOR FUNDING. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR CUSTOMERS, TO THE REGION, TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TO THE CONGRESS AND TO ALL TAXPAYERS TO PROTECT THE $10 BILLION PUBLIC INVESTMENT MADE IN THIS MARVELOUS TRANSIT SYSTEM THAT WE CALL "AMERICA'S SUBWAY" — AN INVESTMENT, I MIGHT ADD, THAT WOULD COST $22 BILLION TO CONSTRUCT TODAY. WE MUST ENSURE THAT WE MAKE THE

REINVESTMENTS NECESSARY FOR SAFETY AND RELIABILITY, AS WELL AS THOSE INVESTMENTS NEEDED TO ACCOMMODATE THE GROWING RIDERSHIP THAT IS OCCURRING AND WILL CONTINUE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS WMATA'S FUNDING NEEDS AND LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH YOU AND THE CONGRESS TO MAKE SURE WMATA HAS THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO MEET THE RIDERSHIP DEMANDS OF THE RAPIDLY GROWING NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION.

Mrs. MORELLA. Again I reiterate my agreement with you about the incredible job that WMATA did during that catastrophe. As a matter of fact, I noted last night after the President's message to the country and to the world so many people taking WMATA to go back and forth, as really has become necessary.

The general manager, Richard White, I now recognize you, sir.

Mr. WHITE. Chairwoman Morella, Ms. Norton, Mr. Davis, and Ms. Watson, good morning. My name is Richard White, and I am the general manager of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. I am grateful for this opportunity to appear before you today.

I want to observe first that the events of September 11, 2001, are still with us here today and will be with us for some time to come. I am proud to say that the family of 10,000 WMATA employees is eager to continue contributing whatever we can do to the work that remains in our metropolitan area in the aftermath of the attacks. We are all pained by the devastation that also took place in New York City, and I would like to take this opportunity to compliment the several transit agencies in the New York metropolitan area that did a Herculean job of keeping that area functioning during the immediate aftermath of those tragic events.

Here in the Nation's Capital WMATA has a long history of dedication to moving our region's residents where they need to go safely and securely. Today we stand ready to help Congress, the Federal agencies, and, of course, the State and local jurisdictions we serve to do whatever it takes to achieve preparedness for our Nation and for our region, while still providing safe and reliable transit service to our residents, many of whom are employees of the Federal Government.

Yesterday, at the request of the Department of Defense, WMATA agreed to open the transit system at 5 a.m., a half hour earlier than normal, for a period of up to 30 days to help relieve congestion and parking problems around the Pentagon and elsewhere in the region. In addition, we have established supplemental satellite parking areas and additional bus service to help accommodate more riders.

Today, we offer the suggestion that another important way to help facilitate a more orderly movement of people in our metropolitan area would be the formal implementation of a well-defined system of staggered arrival and departure schedules for Federal employees, since some 35 to 40 percent of Federal workers in the region use Metro on a regular basis. This could encourage private employees to follow suit and benefit the road system, as well as the transit system.

Committee members and staff have already received my written testimony, which addresses the three aims for today's hearing in detail. My oral statement today will briefly address each of these three issues.

Almost a year ago I testified before this committee on challenges and opportunities facing our transit system. At the direction of the committee, the General Accounting Office studied WMATA's major programs—safety and security, operations and maintenance, and capital planning and funding—over a period of several months. WMATA is pleased that the resulting report published in July 2001

gives WMATA a clean bill of health overall. The report observes that WMATA has been a victim of its success, that challenges have largely resulted from increase in ridership growth on our bus and rail system during a period of time when our equipment and infrastructure are showing their age. As the GAO report said, Metro is experiencing both growing pains and aging pains.

We welcome the reports four specific recommendations for improvement, which, in fact, point us in a direction in which we are already heading. WMATA's staff and Board of Directors have already moved on these recommendations.

Concerning the first recommendation that the Authority develop a long-range strategic plan, we do, indeed, intend to develop an updated strategic plan. Our last one was done in 1990. And our Board has directed that this effort be completed within a year from now by September 2002.

We have also moved on the GAO's second recommendation, the development of a long-term capital plan that is integrated, properly documented, and linked to WMATA's overall goals and objectives. Our one comment on one element of this GAO recommendation is that almost all of our capital funding depends upon decisions made by others that are beyond our control. In fact, WMATA's funding is provided by other governmental bodies in response to our statement of needs. If we were to present a capital plan that specified a lower level of funding than what was actually required, it would inevitably result in a reduced funding level.

On the third GAO recommendation, formalizing our internal capital decisionmaking process, WMATA has been working toward this end for a series of improvements initiated about 3 years ago and others that are more recently underway.

Addressing the fourth GAO recommendation, WMATA is actively discussing with its jurisdictional partners an expanded role for our agency in regional transportation project and program planning.

The committee's second aim today, examining WMATA's response to operational and maintenance problems, leads me again to the events of September 11th. Last week WMATA showed that it has what it takes to respond quickly and effectively in a major crisis and during a period of heightened anxiety to move our traveling public in a safe and reliable manner. We are proud that on September 11th, when the Federal Government and indeed the entire region, needed our services urgently, we were ready and we delivered. An unprecedented number of customers provided positive feedback to us. To quote one of them, "Never again will I criticize you for running over-crowded trains or any of the other small inconveniences. You were there for us when we really needed you and we appreciate it."

Indeed, as the GAO report noted, the Federal Transit Administration and the American Public Transportation Association rate WMATA's safety and security programs and its performance very good. We believe we proved that last week during the crisis.

The GAO report, itself, speaks favorably of WMATA's intervention strategies and corrective action programs to improve performance and reliability. One the statistic that makes this point is the number of passenger off-loads from our trains, which have declined from an average of 7.2 per day in the fourth quarter of fiscal year

1999 to an average of 4.6 in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2001, even though Metro Rail was carrying almost 100,000 more passengers per day.

The third aim of today's hearing, examining Metro's accessibility for customers with disabilities, offers another area of demonstrable progress at WMATA. Already regarded as one of the most accessible transit systems in the United States, WMATA has paid even more attention to its performance in this area. We have implemented an eight-step plan to address inconsistent performance in our para-transit service known as "Metro Access." In addition, we are rapidly responding to FTA's preliminary findings of its key station assessment report that was recently conducted.

In short, although we have much to be proud of, we know that our record in certain areas of system accessibility can be improved, and we are addressing these areas aggressively and proactively.

In summary, I would observe that WMATA is doing a very good job overall, from the challenges and accomplishments discussed in the GAO report to our improving performance in making Metro more accessible to our success in rising to the occasion on September 11th, Metro continues to be a vital part of the everyday lives of the region's residents and an agency that can and does deliver.

If I leave you today with no other message, I want to make clear that the most urgent challenge WMATA faces today is upward spiraling demand for our service at a time when our system is aging. I can't over-emphasize the fact that the accomplishments I have cited here today have all taken place during a period of time when we have been experiencing the highest growth rate of any major transit system in the United States. This tremendous surge in demand makes it even clearer that we urgently need to address the issue of funding for mass transit in the national capital region.

Using the GAO study and report as an outline for action, we are eager to go forward from this hearing to work with all of our stakeholders, including partners that make up the Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board, to insure that we have the financial resources necessary to serve our national capital region at a level of performance that it has come to expect and demand.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the chairwoman and the subcommittee members for working so closely and constructively with WMATA staff, and I would also like to thank the GAO again for its many months of work with us. I would also like to thank the Federal Transit Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and, of course, the U.S. Congress for the strong support that they have demonstrated over the years. I believe that, as full partners in the policy process, we will continue to make progress toward our vision of a region in which everyone benefits from a well-run and adequately funded transit system.

Thank you again.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you, Mr. White, and thank you for your concise written testimony going into each one of those areas that was represented.

[The prepared statement of Mr. White follows:]

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

"MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS"

SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

CHAIRWOMAN MORELLA AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, GOOD MORNING.

MY NAME IS RICHARD WHITE, AND I AM PROUD TO SERVE AS GENERAL MANAGER OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (WMATA) HERE IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION. I AM GRATEFUL FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY AND TO DISCUSS THE TOPIC "MASS TRANSIT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: MEETING FUTURE CAPITAL NEEDS."

ALMOST ONE YEAR AGO, I TESTIFIED BEFORE THIS SUBCOMMITTEE ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION'S METRORAIL AND METROBUS SYSTEM. IN THE INTERVENING PERIOD, I BELIEVE WE HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN FURTHER IDENTIFYING OUR SUCCESSES AND OUR CHALLENGES AND IN ADDRESSING THEM.

ONE INVALUABLE SOURCE OF CLARIFICATION AND FOCUS HAS BEEN THE REPORT BY THE GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO), REQUESTED BY THIS SUBCOMMITTEE LAST FALL AND PUBLISHED IN JULY 2001. THE REPORT, TITLED "MANY MANAGEMENT SUCCESSES AT WMATA, BUT CAPITAL PLANNING COULD BE ENHANCED," IS THE RESULT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION BY THE GAO OF WMATA'S MAJOR PROGRAMS — SAFETY AND SECURITY, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE, AND CAPITAL PLANNING AND FUNDING — OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE GAO REPORT GIVES WMATA A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH OVERALL. INDEED, THE REPORT OBSERVES THAT, IN MANY WAYS, WMATA IS A "VICTIM OF ITS SUCCESS" IN THAT OUR CHALLENGES HAVE LARGELY RESULTED FROM EVER-INCREASING PASSENGER RIDERSHIP GROWTH, ALONG WITH THE INEVITABLE AGING OF EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE. TO USE THE WORDS OF THE GAO REPORT,

METRO IS EXPERIENCING BOTH "GROWING" PAINS AND "AGING" PAINS.

WE WELCOME THE REPORT'S FOUR SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. WMATA GENERALLY AGREES WITH THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS AND IS ALREADY ENGAGED IN IMPLEMENTING THEM.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE'S LETTER OF NOTIFICATION REGARDING TODAY'S HEARING STATED THREE AIMS: (1) TO DETERMINE WMATA'S EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GAO'S RECOMMENDATIONS, (2) TO EXAMINE WMATA'S RESPONSES TO OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS, AND (3) TO DETERMINE THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES.

I WOULD LIKE NOW TO PRESENT WMATA'S VIEWS ON THESE THREE ISSUES.

II. WMATA'S EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GAO'S RECOMMENDATIONS

IN GENERAL, WMATA ACCEPTS THE GAO RECOMMENDATIONS AND IS MOVING FORWARD WITH A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIC AND CAPITAL PLANNING IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE SYSTEM'S ONGOING REHABILITATION WHILE ALSO CONSIDERING FUTURE EXPANSION NEEDS. INDEED, THE GAO REPORT POINTS US IN A DIRECTION WE WERE ALREADY HEADING.

GAO'S FIRST RECOMMENDATION:

Develop a long-term strategic plan and annual performance plans that clearly define the agency's multiyear goals and objectives and its specific plans for achieving those goals and objectives.

WMATA'S RESPONSE:

ON SEPTEMBER 6, THE WMATA BOARD'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGREED TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN THAT CONFORMS WITH THE GAO RECOMMENDATION AND REFERRED THAT RECOMMENDATION TO THE FULL BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THEIR APPROVAL. THE STRATEGIC PLAN WILL BE

COMPLETED BY SEPTEMBER 2002 SO THAT ITS RECOMMENDATIONS CAN BE USED TO HELP DEVELOP THE FISCAL 2004 WMATA BUDGET. THIS EFFORT WILL DRAW UPON BOARD-APPROVED MATERIALS THAT ALREADY EXIST, INCLUDING AN ASSET CONDITION REPORT PREPARED BY AN OUTSIDE THIRD PARTY; SERVICE EXPANSION PLAN; OUR BUS AND RAIL FLEET MANAGEMENT PLANS, WHICH ARE UPDATED ANNUALLY; THE CONSTRAINED LONG-RANGE PLAN THAT IS ADOPTED BY THE REGION'S TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD AND WHICH IS REGULARLY UPDATED; OUR PARKING EXPANSION PROGRAM; THE WASHINGTON REGIONAL MOBILITY INITIATIVE; AND THE CORE CAPACITY/REGIONAL BUS INTEGRATION STUDY, WHICH IS NOW NEARING COMPLETION. THESE EXISTING PLANS ARE ALREADY USED TO FORECAST ANNUAL AND LONG-TERM CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS TO PROVIDE RESOURCES TO REHABILITATE AND REPLACE VITAL SYSTEMS AND TO MEET MARKET DEMAND FOR BUS AND RAIL SERVICE.

THE FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN WILL BE DIVIDED INTO FIVE-YEAR INCREMENTS DESIGNED TO MEET THE PROJECTED MARKET DEMAND OF DOUBLED METRORAIL RIDERSHIP BY 2025. IT WILL ALSO CLEARLY IDENTIFY AGENCY GOALS AND SPECIFIC PLANS FOR ACHIEVING THESE GOALS. THE PLAN WILL BE UPDATED ANNUALLY OR BIENNIALLY AS PART OF THE BOARD'S BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS. WE WILL BE HAPPY TO BRIEF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OUR PROGRESS.

GAO'S SECOND RECOMMENDATION:

Develop a long-term capital plan that covers all three elements of the consolidated Capital Improvement Program (Infrastructure Renewal Program, or IRP; System Access/Capacity Program, or SAP; and System Expansion Program, or SEP). This plan should:

- *document WMATA's capital decision-making strategy and link it to the agency's overall goals and objectives;*
- *define each project's justification and life cycle costs, schedule, performance requirements, benefits and risks;*
- *Include alternate funding strategies and project outcomes, depending on funding availability from federal, state and local sources; and*
- *be updated annually or biennially.*

WMATA'S RESPONSE:

WMATA IS ALREADY TAKING STEPS TOWARD IMPLEMENTING THIS RECOMMENDATION.

FIRST, WE HAVE TRANSMITTED A $9.8 BILLION, 25-YEAR IRP AND A $2.5 BILLION, 25-YEAR SAP TO THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD (TPB) OF THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (COG).

FURTHER, AS PART OF THE FISCAL 2001 BUDGET, OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS ADOPTED A CONSOLIDATED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AS RECOMMENDED BY THE GAO. AT THE SEPTEMBER 13, 2001, MEETING OF THE WMATA BOARD'S BUDGET COMMITTEE, A STAFF PRESENTATION WAS MADE ON HOW THE STAFF INTENDS TO RESPOND TO GAO'S RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO CAPITAL PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING. OUR FUTURE CAPITAL PLANS WILL, AS THE GAO REPORT RECOMMENDS, LINK DIRECTLY WITH WMATA'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. IT WILL ALSO INCLUDE A CIP PROJECT PRIORITY AND FUNDING SELECTION POLICY PLAN, WHICH WILL ENSURE THAT EACH PROJECT IS DEFINED IN DETAIL, AS THE GAO REPORT RECOMMENDS. IN ADDITION,

UPDATES WILL OCCUR AS PART OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS.

ON THE SPECIFIC GAO RECOMMENDATION THAT WMATA INCLUDE ALTERNATE FUNDING STRATEGIES IN ITS CAPITAL PLAN, I DO WANT TO MAKE ONE IMPORTANT POINT. ALMOST ALL OF OUR CAPITAL FUNDING DEPENDS UPON DECISIONS MADE BY OTHERS THAT ARE BEYOND OUR CONTROL. ACCORDING TO A 1997 CONSULTANT STUDY, WMATA RANKS DEAD LAST AMONG THE 25 LARGEST TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN THE NATION IN THE AMOUNT OF DEDICATED FUNDING THAT IS MADE DIRECTLY AVAILABLE TO THE TRANSIT AUTHORITY; THIS MAKES IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PLAN CAPITAL EXPENDITURES ON A MULTI-YEAR BASIS.

INDEED, FUNDING IS PROVIDED BY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL BODIES *IN RESPONSE TO* A STATEMENT OF NEEDS. A CAPITAL PLAN THAT SPECIFIES A LOWER LEVEL OF FUNDING THAN WHAT

IS REQUIRED WOULD INEVITABLY RESULT IN A REDUCED FUNDING LEVEL.

GAO'S THIRD RECOMMENDATION:

Formalize WMATA's capital decision-making process for the consolidated Capital Improvement Program by establishing and documenting an internal review and approval framework and standard procedures and decision packages for analyzing and deciding on projects.

WMATA'S RESPONSE:

EVEN BEFORE THE GAO STUDY WAS BEGUN, WMATA HAD INITIATED ACTIONS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE THIS RECOMMENDATION. OUR 1999 ASSET CONDITION ASSESSMENT REPORT ESTABLISHED A MULTI-YEAR PROGRAM THAT PRIORITIZED, ON THE BASIS OF NEED AND AVAILABLE FUNDING, REHABILITATION AND REPLACEMENT OF ALL METRORAIL AND METROBUS INFRASTRUCTURE AT DESIGNATED POINTS IN TIME BASED ON LIFE-CYCLE ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM'S COMPONENTS AND A REVIEW OF THEIR CURRENT CONDITION. THIS PROGRAM WAS IMPLEMENTED AND CONTINUES AS THE BASIS FOR WMATA'S ONGOING CAPITAL REHABILITATION AND REPLACEMENT PROJECTS.

WMATA HAS NOW ESTABLISHED A NEW OFFICE OF CAPITAL PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND IS PRESENTLY STAFFING IT. THIS OFFICE WILL ACT IN AN INTERNAL OVERSIGHT CAPACITY FOR OUR CAPITAL PROGRAM, IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT THE FTA USES THE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT (PMO) PROCESS TO ASSIST IT IN MONITORING CAPITAL SPENDING BY ITS GRANTEES. IN ADDITION, A CIP PROJECT PRIORITY AND FUNDING SELECTION POLICY PLAN IS UNDER DEVELOPMENT. THIS PLAN WILL CONSTITUTE THE INTERNAL APPROVAL FRAMEWORK AND DECISION PACKAGES FOR ANALYZING AND DECIDING ON PROJECTS. THE PLAN WILL COMPLY WITH CAPITAL PLANNING GUIDELINES OF THE GAO AND THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB), AND WILL BECOME THE BASIS FOR INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE WMATA BOARD.

THE FIRST BOARD CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW ENCOMPASSING IRP, SAP, AND SEP ELEMENTS IS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT MONTH.

GAO'S FOURTH RECOMMENDATION:

Develop a process and procedures — in consultation with the TPB and the state and local jurisdictions served by WMATA — for taking a more active role in (1) Identifying, analyzing and evaluating alternatives for expanding WMATA's transit system; and (2) proposing the most efficient and cost-effective projects for expanding the system.

WMATA'S RESPONSE:

WMATA AGREES WITH THIS RECOMMENDATION, AND IS ALREADY AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT AT THE TPB POLICY AND TECHNICAL LEVELS. I SERVE AS WMATA'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE TPB. IN ADDITION, SEVERAL OF OUR BOARD MEMBERS WHO ALSO SERVE ON COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS ALSO SERVE ON THE TPB. THIS REPRESENTATION HELPS TO ENSURE THAT VARIOUS TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES ARE COORDINATED AND INTEGRATED.

FURTHER, WMATA RAISED CONCEPTS INCLUDED IN THIS GAO RECOMMENDATION DIRECTLY WITH THE TOP TRANSIT OFFICIALS OF MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA LAST YEAR, PROPOSING THAT:

- WMATA SHOULD BE REPRESENTED ON STUDY POLICY COMMITTEES;
- WHEN REQUESTED, WMATA SHOULD CONSULT ON TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF MIS AND CORRIDOR STUDIES; AND
- WHEN REQUESTED AND WHEN A TRANSIT ALTERNATIVE IS PREFERRED, WMATA WOULD TAKE THE LEAD ON POLICY AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE STUDY, WITH CO-MANAGEMENT BY THE AFFECTED JURISDICTION.

WE ARE ALSO PLANNING TO EXPLORE THESE ISSUES AT THE UPCOMING TPB FUNDING SUMMIT AND THE REGIONAL TRANSIT FUNDING SUMMIT LATER THIS YEAR.

III. WMATA'S RESPONSES TO OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS

THE GAO REPORT COMPLIMENTS WMATA FOR SUCCESSFULLY MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF OPERATING AND MAINTAINING THE FASTEST-GROWING LARGE TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE NATION WHILE SERVING A GROWING METROPOLITAN POPULATION. IN PARTICULAR, THE REPORT NOTES THAT

WMATA'S SAFETY PROGRAM IS RATED "VERY GOOD" BY THE FTA AND APTA.

THE EVENTS FOLLOWING LAST WEEK'S TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE PENTAGON OFFER A DRAMATIC EXAMPLE OF THE LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS AND PERFORMANCE OF WMATA'S SAFETY AND SECURITY SYSTEMS. AT A TIME WHEN MUCH OF THE REGION'S GROUND TRANSPORTATION AND ALL OF ITS AIR TRANSPORT WAS EITHER GRIDLOCKED OR OUT OF SERVICE, METRORAIL AND METROBUS CONTINUED TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY AND TO RELIABLY CARRY ANXIOUS AND CONCERNED RESIDENTS TO WHERE THEY WANTED TO GO.

MOMENTS AFTER THE FIRST WORLD TRADE CENTER CRASH, METRO TRANSIT POLICE ORDERED AN INCREASED THREAT CONDITION LEVEL UNDER ITS GENERAL ORDERS FOR THREAT CONDITION LEVELS. THIS LEVEL COMMITTED THE ENTIRE FORCE TO A HIGHER VISIBILITY OF OFFICERS, ALONG WITH INCREASED ID CHECKS OF EMPLOYEES, 12-HOUR SHIFTS AND

ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTACT WITH THE FBI JOINT TERRORISM TASK FORCE.

JUST AFTER THE PENTAGON CRASH, WMATA CLOSED THE PENTAGON METRORAIL STATION AND BUS TERMINAL. THE SYSTEM VENTILATION FANS AT THE PENTAGON STATION AND TUNNEL AREAS WERE PROMPTLY PLACED IN EXHAUST MODE TO PREVENT SMOKE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS IN THE OUTSIDE AIR FROM ENTERING THE STATION AND TUNNELS.

MEANWHILE, METRO TRANSIT POLICE IMMEDIATELY ESTABLISHED A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COMMAND CENTER AT METRO HEADQUARTERS, CONSISTING OF EXECUTIVE-LEVEL STAFF DECISION-MAKERS. THEY ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE FIELD COMMAND POST AT THE D.C. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, THE METROPOLITAN POLICE JOINT OPERATIONS COMMAND CENTER, AND THE MILITARY REGIONAL COMMAND CENTER AT FORT MYER, VA.

BASED ON ASSESSMENT OF THE NATURE OF THE ATTACKS, JUST AFTER 10:30 A.M. METRO SUSPENDED ALL YELLOW LINE SERVICE BETWEEN L'ENFANT PLAZA AND PENTAGON STATIONS BECAUSE OF THE PROXIMITY TO THE PENTAGON OF THE POTOMAC RIVER BRIDGE. ABOUT 10:40 A.M., TRAINS BEGAN TO OPERATE THROUGH THE PENTAGON STATION, BUT DID NOT STOP THERE. AT APPROXIMATELY 11 A.M., NATIONAL AIRPORT STATION WAS ALSO CLOSED.

BY MID-MORNING, AN ONSLAUGHT OF PEOPLE LEAVING WORK EARLY CAUSED GRIDLOCK ON DOWNTOWN STREETS. WITH LITTLE ADVANCE WARNING, METRO OPERATED THE EQUIVALENT OF TWO BACK-TO-BACK RUSH HOURS VIRTUALLY WITHOUT INCIDENT, AFTER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE REGION'S EMPLOYERS SENT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF WORKERS HOME AT MIDDAY. THE PASSENGER SURGE THAT RESULTED AT MANY METRO STATIONS AND METROBUS TERMINALS WAS HANDLED SAFELY, ORDERLY AND CALMLY, GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

LIKE THEIR COUNTERPARTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION, THE METRO TRANSIT POLICE WERE BUSY THROUGHOUT THE DAY, RESPONDING TO SEVERAL BOMB THREATS AND SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE INCIDENTS. SPECIAL UNITS TRAINED IN COUNTER TERRORISM USED K-9 DOGS TO SWEEP AREAS TO DETECT POTENTIAL THREATS. ONLY TWO INCIDENTS CREATED RAIL DELAYS, AND THEY WERE NOT SIGNIFICANT.

IN THE DAYS SINCE THE INCIDENT, METRORAIL HAS CONTINUED TO OFFER SAFE, RELIABLE TRANSIT SERVICE TO THE REGION. THIS SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROACTIVE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES THE BOARD AND MANAGEMENT HAVE CARRIED OUT TO DEAL WITH OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES DURING UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

BUS SERVICE WAS AFFECTED DRAMATICALLY AS WELL. METROBUS OPERATORS WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY ALL DAY TO

BE OF ASSISTANCE WHENEVER AND WHEREVER NEEDED. WE PROVIDED 20 BUSES TO THE PENTAGON FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION AND ASSISTANCE, MANY OF WHICH WERE USED BY EMERGENCY MEDICAL AND FIRE PERSONNEL AS COOLING-OFF SPOTS WHERE THEY COULD TAKE A WELL-EARNED BREAK. WE ALSO PROVIDED 14 BUSES TO VARIOUS DC POLICE DISTRICTS TO ASSIST THEM IN MOVING PERSONNEL AS A CONTINGENCY TO PREVENT FURTHER TERRORIST ACTIVITY. ON THE DAY AFTER THE PENTAGON ATTACK, WE MOVED PENTAGON BUS TERMINAL OPERATIONS TO PENTAGON CITY IN ORDER TO PROVIDE CONTINUED AND ORDERLY BUS SERVICE FOR THE THOUSANDS OF CUSTOMERS WHO DEPEND UPON THEM FOR SERVICE TO THIS LOCATION.

ALL OF OUR CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS EXPERIENCED A SURGE OF INCOMING REQUESTS DURING THE MORNING HOURS, PEAKING AT 11:30 A.M. OUR CALL CENTER HANDLED 13,700 CALLS, ALMOST DOUBLE THE NUMBER FOR A NORMAL DAY. MOST CALLS REQUESTED INFORMATION ABOUT

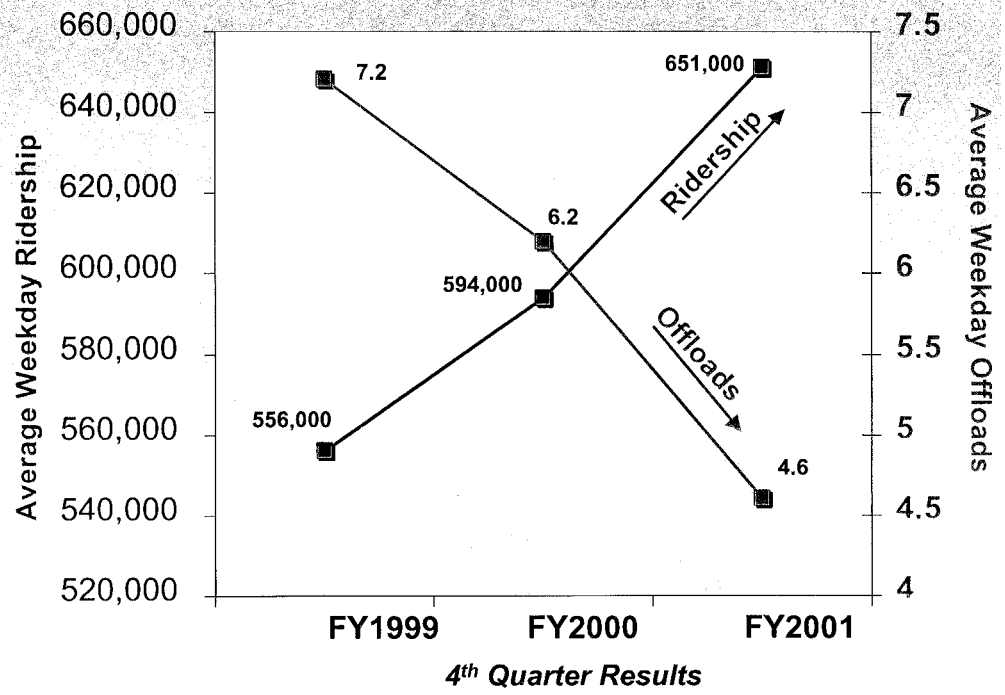
RAIL SERVICE, DETOURS, AND BUS SCHEDULES. CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE RECEIVED 322 CALLS, MORE THAN TWICE AS MANY AS NORMAL, AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE CALLS WERE COMPLIMENTARY, EXTOLLING WMATA EMPLOYEES WHO WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO BE HELPFUL AND COMPASSIONATE DURING THE ATTACK AND THE ENSUING GRIDLOCK. OF THE HUNDREDS OF COMMENDATORY CALLS AND E-MAILS METRO RECEIVED, I WOULD LIKE TO QUOTE ONE THAT I FEEL SUMS UP MUCH OF THE FEELING OF OUR CUSTOMERS: "NEVER AGAIN WILL I CRITICIZE YOU FOR RUNNING OVERCROWDED TRAINS ... OR ANY OF THE OTHER SMALL INCONVENIENCES. YOU WERE THERE FOR US WHEN WE REALLY NEEDED YOU AND WE APPRECIATE IT!"

THE WMATA WEB SITE CONTINUED TO FUNCTION, PROVIDING UP-TO-THE-MINUTE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC; USER SESSIONS ON THE WEB SITE TOTALED 23,400 ON SEPTEMBER 11, COMPARED TO 10,200 ON THE PREVIOUS TUESDAY.

EVEN THOUGH SEPTEMBER 11 REPRESENTED A DARK DAY IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY, WMATA IS PROUD OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN REACTING TO THIS REGIONAL CRISIS.

RETURNING TO THE GAO STUDY, THE REPORT ALSO SPEAKS FAVORABLY OF WMATA'S EMERGENCY RAIL REHABILITATION PROGRAM, WHICH IS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING METRORAIL'S SERVICE RELIABILITY. AS THE REPORT NOTES, THIS PROGRAM HAS DRASTICALLY REDUCED UNSCHEDULED OFFLOADS, WHEN TRAINS STOP BECAUSE OF OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS AND PASSENGERS ARE ASKED TO EXIT. OFFLOADS HAVE DECLINED FROM AN AVERAGE HIGH OF 7.2 PER DAY IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF FISCAL 1999, TO AN AVERAGE OF 4.6 IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2001— EVEN THOUGH METRORAIL IS CARRYING ALMOST 100,000 MORE PASSENGERS PER DAY. THE ATTACHED TABLE, "METRORAIL," TRACKS THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN RIDERSHIP OVER THE SAME TIME PERIOD AS THE DECREASE IN OFFLOADS.

METRORAIL


660,000
640,000
620,000
600,000
580,000
560,000
540,000
520,000
Average Weekday Ridership
7.5
7
6.5
6
5.5
5
4.5
4
Average Weekday Offloads
7.2
6.2
4.6
651,000
594,000
556,000
Ridership
Offloads
FY1999
FY2000
FY2001
4th Quarter Results

THE GAO REPORT ALSO RECOGNIZES THAT THE AUTHORITY IS UPGRADING THE CAPACITY OF ITS MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR SHOPS. ONE NEW FACILITY, THE BRANCH AVENUE YARD, SCHEDULED FOR OPENING IN 2002, WILL EXPAND SHOP AND STORAGE CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE ADDITION OF THE 192 RAIL CARS CURRENTLY BEING DELIVERED.

AS PART OF ITS STANDARD REVIEW PROCESS, WMATA HAS DEVELOPED SERVICE RELIABILITY GOALS. EVERY WEEK, SENIOR MANAGERS IN THE OPERATING DEPARTMENTS TRACK PERFORMANCE STATISTICS FROM RAIL, BUS, AND PARATRANSIT OPERATIONS AGAINST THESE GOALS. WE ANALYZE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS AND DEVELOP CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND RELIABILITY OF ALL OUR SERVICES. WE PROVIDE MONTHLY REPORTS TO OUR BOARD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE ON OUR BUS, RAIL AND PARATRANSIT AND OUR PLANT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS. WMATA'S PERFORMANCE LEVELS HAVE BEEN SET BY ITS BOARD AND MEET OR EXCEED NATIONAL AND INDUSTRY NORMS.

IV. TRANSIT SYSTEM ACCESSIBILITY

SINCE WMATA'S EARLIEST DAYS, THE AUTHORITY HAS COME A LONG WAY IN MAKING ITS SERVICE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CUSTOMERS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES. WE ARE PROUD THAT WE ARE ONE OF THE MOST ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES. WE RECOGNIZE THAT WE STILL NEED TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THIS AREA, BUT WE ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PROGRAMS WE HAVE RECENTLY INSTITUTED.

EVEN BEFORE ENACTMENT OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT IN 1990, METRO WAS ALREADY ACCESSIBLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER MAJOR URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEMS. WE HAVE HAD AN OFFICE OF ADA PROGRAMS SINCE 1993 AND HAVE MOVED STEADILY TO COMPLY FULLY WITH ADA REGULATIONS. WE ALSO HAVE A LONGSTANDING GROUP OF CUSTOMERS FROM THE DISABLED COMMUNITY, THE "ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE," WHICH MEETS MONTHLY TO BRING THEIR CONCERNS TO OUR ATTENTION AND TO ADVISE US.

RAIL ACCESSIBILITY

METRORAIL HAS BEEN ACCURATELY CHARACTERIZED AS THE MOST ACCESSIBLE SUBWAY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES. ALL 83 RAIL STATIONS HAVE ELEVATORS, AND ALL 762 METRORAIL CARS ARE ACCESSIBLE. BY VIRTUE OF A NEW DESIGN STANDARD ADOPTED BY METRO, ALL NEW METRORAIL STATIONS WILL FEATURE ELEVATOR REDUNDANCY — WHEN ONE ELEVATOR IS OUT OF SERVICE FOR REPAIR, ANOTHER WILL BE AVAILABLE.

WHEN AN FTA ASSESSMENT IN 1998 IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS IN CERTAIN ELEVATORS, WMATA ELECTED TO MODIFY ALL KEY STATION ELEVATORS TO BRING THEM INTO ADA COMPLIANCE. WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN ON THIS PROJECT AND SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY NOVEMBER 2002.

WMATA HAS INSTALLED CERAMIC TILES BEARING SMALL "BUMPS" ON PLATFORM EDGES TO HELP VISION-IMPAIRED PASSENGERS SENSE THAT THEY ARE NEAR THE EDGE. THE TILES WORK TOGETHER WITH THE ORIGINAL GRANITE EDGE AND FLASHING-LIGHT SYSTEM TO PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT WARNING SYSTEM. WE ARE ALSO INSTALLING BARRIERS TO PREVENT PASSENGERS FROM MOVING DIRECTLY BETWEEN CARS — AND WE'RE INSTALLING THEM ON ALL CARS, NOT JUST NEW OR RE-MANUFACTURED CARS, AS REQUIRED BY THE ADA.

IN ADDITION, ALTHOUGH THE DESIGN OF METRO'S RAIL CARS ALREADY MET ADA SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE GAP ALLOWED BETWEEN THE PLATFORM EDGE AND THE SILL OF THE CAR DOOR, WE HAVE INSTALLED CAR-THRESHOLD GAP-REDUCERS ON ALL METRORAIL CARS (ON MORE THAN 4,500 DOORS). THESE DEVICES, WHICH EASE ACCESS FOR CUSTOMERS IN WHEELCHAIRS, ARE NOT FOUND IN ANY OTHER SUBWAY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES.

TO ENSURE THAT CUSTOMERS USING WHEELCHAIRS HAVE THE FULL RANGE OF FARE MACHINES AVAILABLE TO OTHER CUSTOMERS, WE ADDED ACCESSIBLE FARECARD MACHINES AND FAREGATES ADJACENT TO EXISTING ELEVATORS. WE HAVE RETROFITTED 14 SUCH ELEVATOR LOCATIONS.

NEW RAIL CARS, INCLUDING THOSE WE ARE NOW INTRODUCING INTO SERVICE, PROVIDE OVERHEAD ELECTRONIC SIGNS THAT DISPLAY THE NEXT STOP, ALLOWING HEARING-IMPAIRED RIDERS TO KEEP TRACK OF THEIR LOCATION IN THE SYSTEM.

WE BELIEVE THIS RECORD OF CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS AND UPGRADES SPEAKS FOR ITSELF AS EVIDENCE OF WMATA'S COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN OUR REPUTATION AS THE MOST ACCESSIBLE RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE NATION.

BUS ACCESSIBILITY

WE SEE A SIMILAR RECORD WITH METROBUS ACCESSIBILITY. DESPITE THE LARGE SIZE OF THE METROBUS SYSTEM, IT IS

APPROACHING 100 PERCENT ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, A UNIQUE ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR AN URBAN BUS SYSTEM.

ADA REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT ALL NEWLY PURCHASED FIXED-ROUTE BUSES HAVE LIFTS OR RAMPS, SYSTEMS TO SECURE WHEELCHAIRS, A PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM AND PRIORITY SEATING SIGNS. OTHER HARDWARE ITEMS TO ASSIST THE DISABLED INCLUDE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS ON VEHICLE LIGHTING, FAREBOX POSITIONING, STOP-REQUEST DEVICES, STANCHIONS, AND DESTINATION AND ROUTE SIGNS. ADA REQUIRES THAT STOP ANNOUNCEMENTS BE MADE.

OF METRO'S 1,445 BUSES, A TOTAL OF 1,211 ARE EQUIPPED WITH LIFTS OR RAMPS, AND ONLY THESE BUSES OPERATE DURING OFF-PEAK PERIODS. MOREOVER, SINCE ALL NEW BUSES PURCHASED BY WMATA WILL BE FULLY ACCESSIBLE, RETIREMENT OF OLD BUSES WILL EVENTUALLY MAKE THE ENTIRE BUS FLEET 100 PERCENT ACCESSIBLE. IN ADDITION, METRO'S

BOARD RECENTLY ADOPTED A STANDARD OF LOW-FLOOR BUSES WITH RAMPS, MAKING OUR BUSES MORE RELIABLE. SINCE 1999, METRO HAS BEEN ADDING THESE BUSES, AND NOW HAS IN SERVICE 100 OF THE 40-FOOT LOW-FLOOR BUSES AND ANOTHER 42 OF THE 26-FOOT BUSES.

METRO HAS ALSO ADOPTED "TALKING BUS" TECHNOLOGY AS A STANDARD TO COMPLY FULLY WITH ADA ANNOUNCEMENT REQUIREMENTS. EVERY NEW BUS ORDERED WILL FEATURE THIS TECHNOLOGY — AT A COST OF APPROXIMATELY $10,000 PER BUS. IN ADDITION, METROBUSES COME WITH A SPECIAL DOCKING DEVICE FOR WHEELCHAIRS THAT SUPPLEMENTS THE RESTRAINT SYSTEMS REQUIRED BY ADA.

TO ENSURE THAT METROBUS OPERATORS MEET THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT OF ADA'S "TRAIN TO PROFICIENCY" RULE, A NEWLY REVISED ADA TRAINING COMPONENT HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE METROBUS DRIVER TRAINING AND RETRAINING MODULE IN CY2001.

PARATRANSIT

WHEN THE ADA LEGISLATION TOOK EFFECT, METRO, ALONG WITH EVERY OTHER TRANSIT SYSTEM AROUND THE COUNTRY, WAS FACED WITH A SUBSTANTIAL MANDATE TO PROVIDE A PARATRANSIT SERVICE THAT SUPPLEMENTS OUR EXISTING RAIL AND BUS SERVICE. PERSONS ELIGIBLE FOR PARATRANSIT ARE PERSONS WHO ARE UNABLE, DUE TO THEIR DISABILITY, TO INDEPENDENTLY USE AVAILABLE ACCESSIBLE BUS OR RAIL SERVICE. PERSONS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO USE THE SERVICE ON THE BASIS OF AGE ALONE. FULL COMPLIANCE WAS REQUIRED BY 1997.

SOME 17,572 AREA RESIDENTS ARE REGISTERED METROACCESS CUSTOMERS. TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE, WMATA CONTRACTS WITH AN OUTSIDE FIRM, WHICH IN TURN CONTRACTS WITH A VARIETY OF OPERATORS FOR THE ACTUAL SERVICE DELIVERY. SERVICE IS AVAILABLE SUNDAY THROUGH THURSDAY FROM 5:30 A.M. TO MIDNIGHT AND UNTIL 2:00 A.M. ON FRIDAY AND

SATURDAY NIGHTS. THE FARE IS $2.20 PER TRIP, AND TRIP LENGTHS VARY FROM ONE OR TWO MILES TO 30-MILE INTERSTATE TRIPS. IN THE PRESENT FISCAL YEAR, ABOUT 70,000 TRIPS ARE BEING SCHEDULED EACH MONTH — 65 PERCENT IN THE METROACCESS DEDICATED FLEET, AND THE BALANCE IN SUPPLEMENTAL VEHICLES AND TAXIS. THE METROACCESS FLEET CONSISTS OF 110 SPECIAL-LIFT VANS AND 28 SEDANS. SERVICE AVERAGES 90 PERCENT ON-TIME.

THIS SERVICE HAS EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN DEMAND OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, WITH A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN REQUIRED SUBSIDY LEVELS, AS SHOWN IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE.

METROACCESS PASSENGER GROWTH

FISCAL YEAR	ANNUAL TRIPS	SUBSIDY LEVEL
1994	Start Up	$ 2.1 million
1995	43,774	3.6 million
1996	123,404	5.7 million
1997	202,375	8.8 million
1998	262,367	9.8 million
1999	340,802	12.6 million
2000	453,617	16.7 million
2001	557,397	19.4 million

ACHIEVING TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY IS NOT AN EASY TASK, AND CERTAIN PROBLEMS WITH METROACCESS SERVICE HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN RECENT MONTHS. THE BACKGROUND CIRCUMSTANCES, WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN WIDELY REPORTED, ARE COMPLICATED. FIRST, WMATA ASSUMED THREE NEW SERVICE AREAS WITHIN THE PAST YEAR: FAIRFAX, MONTGOMERY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTIES. AT THE SAME TIME, SCHEDULED TRIPS HAVE INCREASED, FROM 49,000 IN JANUARY 2000 TO 60,000 IN JANUARY 2001 — AND PRESENTLY STAND AT MORE THAN 70,000.

OUR RECENT LEVEL OF SERVICE TO METROACCESS CUSTOMERS HAS NOT MET OUR SERVICE STANDARDS ON A CONSISTENT BASIS. I WOULD GENERALLY STATE THAT THE QUALITY OF OUR PARATRANSIT SERVICE IS GOOD, BUT IN THE INDIVIDUAL INSTANCES WHEN IT IS NOT, IT CAN PRESENT GREAT HARDSHIP FOR PEOPLE WHO DEPEND UPON THE SERVICE. AS A RESULT, WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED AN EIGHT-STEP PLAN TO ADDRESS

CONCERNS RAISED BY OUR CUSTOMERS. THE EIGHT STEPS ARE DESCRIBED BRIEFLY BELOW:

1. OUR CONTRACTOR HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED STAFFING, INCLUDING HIRING A CUSTOMER-FOCUSED PROJECT MANAGER, A SUBCONTRACTOR MANAGER, AN FTA EVALUATION MANAGER, AND AN OMBUDSMAN. IN ADDITION, WMATA PARATRANSIT STAFF WILL SHARE OFFICE SPACE WITH THE CONTRACTOR TO BETTER MONITOR THE SERVICE. WMATA HAS ALSO HIRED ITS OWN CONSULTANT TO OVERSEE SERVICES AND RECOMMEND FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS.
2. THE CONTRACTOR IS RETRAINING ALL DRIVERS IN BASIC PROCEDURES, COMMUNICATIONS REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIAL PROCEDURES IN CASES WHEN A DRIVER BEGINS TO RUN LATE.
3. THE CONTRACTOR IS WORKING TO IMPLEMENT TECHNOLOGY ALLOWING AUTOMATED LOCATION OF VEHICLES. THIS WORK IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF THIS MONTH.
4. TO DECREASE OVER-RELIANCE ON TAXIS, WMATA HAS AUTHORIZED 20 VEHICLES TO REDUCE OVERALL USE OF TAXI SERVICE AND AN ADDITIONAL 18 VEHICLES TO ALLOW FOR GROWTH OF THE SERVICE.
5. TO INTERCEPT LATE TRIPS, THE CONTRACTOR HAS CHANGED SCHEDULING AND DISPATCH PROCEDURES TO SHIFT TRIPS TO OTHER BACK-UP SERVICE, INCLUDING SELECT TAXIS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED TO BE RELIABLE.
6. WE WILL CONDUCT PERIODIC RE-EVALUATIONS OF THE VARIOUS OPERATORS THAT PROVIDE THE DAY-TO-DAY SERVICE UNDER CONTRACT TO OUR PRIME CONTRACTOR.
7. THE CONTRACTOR IS WORKING TO IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN PHONE RESPONSE TIME TO ANSWERING 90 PERCENT OF ALL CALLS WITHIN TWO MINUTES.

8. TO IMPROVE METROACCESS CUSTOMER INFORMATION, WMATA HAS DRAFTED AND WILL SEND A LETTER TO METROACCESS CUSTOMERS EXPLAINING OUR CURRENT EFFORTS IN DETAIL. WE ARE ALSO REVISING THE METROACCESS CUSTOMER HANDBOOK.

WE EXPECT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS IMPROVEMENT PLAN WILL ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF OUR PARATRANSIT SERVICE FOR OUR ELIGIBLE PATRONS.

IV. CONCLUSION

I BELIEVE I HAVE PRESENTED A FAIR AND BALANCED VIEW OF WMATA'S CURRENT STATE OF OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT AND OF OUR CAPITAL PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. AS I SAID AT THE OUTSET, THE GAO STUDY HAS HELPED THE AUTHORITY FOCUS ON ESSENTIAL AREAS WHERE WE ARE CLEARLY SUCCEEDING, AND OTHERS WHERE WE COULD IMPROVE. THE GAO REPORT LARGELY COMPLIMENTS WMATA FOR THE STEPS WE ARE TAKING TO ADDRESS THESE AREAS.

IN FACT, I THINK WE CAN FAIRLY SAY THAT IN THE YEAR SINCE THE GAO STUDY WAS COMMISSIONED, THE KINDS OF ISSUES IT WAS INTENDED TO EXAMINE ARE NO LONGER MAJOR CONCERNS. RATHER, THE MOST URGENT CHALLENGE WMATA FACES TODAY IS UPWARD-SPIRALING DEMAND FOR OUR SERVICE AT A TIME WHEN OUR SYSTEM IS AGING.

HERE, TOO, METRO HAS BEEN PROACTIVE IN IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO THE RISE IN DEMAND, THROUGH ACTIONS SUCH AS PURCHASING NEW RAIL CARS, MOST OF WHICH WILL BE DEPLOYED IN SERVICE AREAS THAT ARE EXPERIENCING THE HEAVIEST RIDERSHIP INCREASES.

WMATA'S THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF METRORAIL'S CORE CAPACITY NEEDS IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING PRESENTED TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS. THIS MAJOR STUDY, FULLY INTEGRATED WITH OUR REGIONAL BUS STUDY, WILL EXAMINE VARIOUS OPTIONS FOR INCREASING WMATA'S CAPACITY DURING PEAK DEMAND PERIODS.

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT OUR STRATEGIC PLAN, AS WE DEVELOP IT, WILL SUCCESSFULLY INTEGRATE OUR VARIOUS EXISTING PLANS TO HELP US FOCUS OUR OVERALL PLANNING EFFORTS.

WE BELIEVE WE HAVE A GOOD CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS, BUT WE KNOW IT WILL BE ENHANCED BY ADOPTING THE "BEST PRACTICES" CAPITAL PLANNING GUIDELINES RECOGNIZED BY THE GAO AND OMB.

I WOULD EMPHASIZE AGAIN THAT OUR COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON OTHERS FOR OUR FUNDING COMPLICATES ALL OF OUR CAPITAL PLANNING. THIS IS ESPECIALLY CHALLENGING WITH THE LEVEL OF THE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SHORTFALL THAT EXISTS FOR OUR REGION. TO USE THE WORDS OF THE GAO REPORT ITSELF, "WMATA OPERATES IN A COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT THAT MAKES CAPITAL DECISION-MAKING DIFFICULT."

FINALLY, WE LOOK FORWARD TO PURSUING THE GAO'S RECOMMENDATION OF WORKING TOWARD ESTABLISHING A STRONGER REGIONAL PLANNING PRESENCE FOR WMATA SO THAT ALL OF THE STAKEHOLDERS IN OUR REGION CAN MAKE BETTER AND MORE TIMELY DECISIONS ON HOW TO EXPAND TRANSIT SERVICE. IN ADDITION TO MYSELF, SEVERAL WMATA BOARD MEMBERS ALSO SERVE ON THE TPB IN THEIR CAPACITY AS ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR COUNTY BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS. THEIR PRESENCE SERVES TO STRENGTHEN THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND COORDINATION PROCESS AND ADDS TO OUR ENTHUSIASM ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THE UPCOMING TPB SUMMIT AND THE REGIONAL TRANSIT SUMMIT LATER THIS YEAR.

I DO WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE CHAIRWOMAN AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR WORKING SO CLOSELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH WMATA STAFF. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE GAO AGAIN FOR ITS MANY MONTHS OF WORK WITH US. I BELIEVE THAT, AS FULL

PARTNERS IN THE POLICY PROCESS, WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD OUR VISION OF A REGION IN WHICH EVERYONE BENEFITS FROM A WELL-RUN — AND ADEQUATELY FUNDED — TRANSIT SYSTEM.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

Mrs. MORELLA. Ms. Dorn, it is a pleasure to welcome you to our hearing. Congratulations on your appointment.

Ms. DORN. Thank you very much.

The committee has a copy of my written testimony, so I would, as my colleagues before me, like to summarize several of the key points.

As all of this committee is aware, being part of the city that hosts WMATA, public transportation in the United States is blessed with diversity across the country. It is geographically dispersed within communities everywhere, it is diverse in its delivery mechanisms, and, most of all, it is shaped to meet the unique features of the areas it serves. That is both a blessing and a challenge, and on September 21st, shortly after one of the greatest tragedies that America has faced, this diversity means that we regulate at the Federal Transit Administration and provide important service in transit agencies throughout the country in rail and bus systems, but also electric trolley systems, cable cars, street cars, ferries, and taxi-like systems.

We provide 9 billion trips collectively on public transportation every year. The hallmark of the Nation's public transportation system is—has, in fact, been the freedom that they provide to an America on the go. Unfortunately, that means that many of us in every aspect of American life has to look again at the paradigm that we have perhaps, on some occasions, taken for granted.

Indeed, while public transportation is the safest mode of travel, this historic freedom and openness that we've enjoyed in a system like this comes with a special set of security concerns.

Obviously, airports are in a relatively closed environment. They are more readily controlled. And though we know even that is difficult to constrain, the security measures can be more focused than they can in the Nation's public transportation system.

As the members of this committee know, the Federal Transit Administration is not involved in the day-to-day operations in that regard. Those functions have historically been operated by the local citizenry.

For public transportation then en masse, there is a unique set of countermeasures required when we face a situation of the security type of 2 weeks ago. And, indeed, all of the major transit systems, from the FTA's perspective, are in a high state of alert. The security plans do take into account some potential terrorist attacks. FTA has talked with every major operator in the country within 48 hours of the tragedy and found, again, that all of the major transit systems had immediately deployed security personnel at key areas, whether they be bus or rail. They have increased the inspection of their facilities and their infrastructure, including bridges and tunnels and tracks. They are reinforcing critical transportation systems such as electric substations, operation control centers, signal rooms. All of this has been and will continue to be critical to the safe operation of our system in public transportation.

A few short hours after the tragedy, I had the opportunity to speak with the chairman of the New York Metro, Peter Calico, and he said to me, "If I had known that 24 hours after this tragedy, when two of most significant structures of New York had fallen, that the major transportation system throughout New York, with

the exception of one small area, would be in full operation, I would never have believed it." He also said that's the wonderful thing about New York, and I would agree with that.

I would also maintain that the kind of readiness and drills, preparedness plans, leadership that WMATA has displayed, both in the recent past and immediately past, demonstrates that this system is up and ready, and I'm confident that could handle any security matter that was brought to their attention.

On the other hand, we have to recognize that nothing can be completely rid of risk, and we are, unfortunately, living in a new reality. We're not going to be able to guard against every risk, and we must make improvements and refinements, and I think all transit agencies would agree, especially those in high alert, because they are probably more alert to the fact of risk.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of security training and awareness to combating terrorism, and we at the FTA, and I know in agencies throughout the country, are redoubling our efforts there. The Secretary has charged every mode to be looking ahead in this new area of vulnerability, and FTA is an eager and has been an eager participant in that respect.

Public transportation needs to keep communities safe and moving, and we intend to do that in partnership with the many fine transit agencies across the country.

With respect to the issue of WMATA's overall performance, I wanted to make a couple of comments about FTA's perspective.

First of all, as has been echoed by my colleagues before me, even those who do not run the system, it is, in fact, a very excellent and effective system, particularly in rail. They have been growing by leaps and bounds and have handled the growth well, from our perspective. And that is in no small part as a result of the outstanding leadership and the innovative ideas that have been brought forth by that leadership. With respect to innovative financing and a businesslike approach, that is what is required, and it is our hope that every system across the country could be so proactive in that sort of arena. It's particularly important for a system like WMATA that does not have the benefit of a predictable source of funding.

And so, while FTA agrees with the recommendations of the GAO and we, indeed, are confident that WMATA is making a concerted effort to accomplish these goals, they do so in a very difficult environment, which is, of course, no secret to this subcommittee.

From an oversight perspective, then, we believe they are doing—that WMATA is doing a good job in using the funds we provide in meeting the requirements as the law has required.

In the past 2 years, we know that WMATA has begun serious long-range financial planning and planning for capacity expansion this year. These are tremendously important efforts, and we know there is more to be done, and we're working closely with the Transportation Planning Board. I know how critical that has been to other systems across the country that you have a seamless fabric of community, public, and private agencies that seek to provide public transportation.

With respect to the para-transit service, I would like to briefly comment about this. Obviously service to the disability community continues to be a challenge, not only to WMATA but to systems

throughout the country. I am not convinced that FTA has it right yet in terms of ensuring that we do the best job of oversight and the best job of problem solving, and I view that both of those efforts are imperative from our agency's perspective. We have every evidence that there is a spirit of cooperation and problem solving in WMATA, and we're eager to pursue vigorously the challenge that we face in providing effective transportation for the disability community.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you very much, Ms. Dorn.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dorn follows:]

Statement of Jennifer L. Dorn
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

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

September 21, 2001

Madam Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Federal Transit Administration regarding the management, operational and budget challenges facing the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the accessibility of the WMATA system to customers with disabilities. You have asked me to provide a Federal perspective on the state of the public transportation industry, the challenges and opportunities it faces over the next several years as well as how the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority fits into this overall picture.

First, I would like to say a word about the terrible events of last week. On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, terrorists struck two of the strongest symbols of our democratic society – the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, just across the river from the very building in which we sit today. We all watched in horror as the New York City skyline lost its symbol of commerce and the Pentagon was engulfed in flames. And just when we wondered how to bear the magnitude of these tragedies, we learned of the tragic plane crash in Pennsylvania.

September 11th was a day that will forever change America. It was also a day that will change transportation in our country.

I would like to spend just a few moments to share with you how public transportation systems across the country responded to the aftermath of those horrific events.

Grounded some 3,000 miles away in Los Angeles, I spoke with Peter Kalikow, chairman of the New York Metro Transit Authority, 36 hours after the crash. He said to me, "If you were to have told me that 24 hours after the World Trade Center building had collapsed, New York City transit would be almost completely operational in the rest of the city, I would not have believed it."

We all saw the images of devastation on our television screens. It is a tribute to the transit leaders and workers in New York, and the thousands of people who helped, that mobility and access in New York City was restored within days. By Monday, commuters returning to work in New York City had several transit options, including frequent service on PATH trains, the New York Waterway ferry and buses.

Elsewhere in the country, transit systems took steps to further ensure the public's safety. In Boston, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority began running special observation trains, staffed by their own police, throughout all of the subway tunnels to check for bombs. Security was immediately increased and employees were put on a heightened state of alert. At SEPTA in Pennsylvania, in coordination between state and local police, rail transit tracks were swept for several nights in a row and police were stationed on board the first trains out in the morning. The Maryland Mass Transit Administration initiated their terrorism plan. The Chicago Transit Authority significantly beefed up its security. In Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority

activated its Emergency Operations Center. Guards stood at each entrance and exit of subway portals in San Francisco.

Here in Washington, D.C., Metrorail continued to operate effectively, while most of the region's ground transportation and all of its air transport were either gridlocked or halted.

The national picture of public transportation today is indeed one of very good news. Public transportation is a true success story. In community after community we see greater ridership, increasingly efficient operations and key public support for its services. It is also due to some very hard work by transit managers and employees, and to the investment of substantial resources by local and state governments, as well as the Federal government. Transit agencies are also increasing their use of innovative marketing techniques and other modern business management practices.

Public transportation has not yet reached its full potential, however. It is poised for even greater growth and improvement – as it must be. There has never been a more important time for communities to ensure public mobility by expanding choice and enhancing accessibility through public transportation. While there is more to be done, transit has made major strides in promoting access to transportation for people with disabilities, including access to jobs. In order to enhance these goals, the Administration has requested $145 million in fiscal year 2002 for its New Freedom Initiative.

As has been noted here today, WMATA has reported record ridership in each recent month. Metrorail ridership last month was more than 16 million for the third consecutive month – an 8.8 per cent increase from last year and a 31 per cent increase from five years ago. By comparison, I recently saw a report from the American Public

Transportation Association that indicated public transportation ridership up 2.8 per cent in the first quarter of this year over last year and 19.9 per cent over the same quarter five years ago.

As good as all this is -- and in part because of these successes – Washington and the nation face great transit challenges. One of the biggest challenges will be to secure the resources necessary to meet the increasing demand for transit and to ensure that the transit infrastructure is up to the task. The Department of Transportation's biannual report on the conditions and performance of the nation's surface transportation systems, released last year, noted that record levels of Federal highway and transit investment -- $34.5 billion in 2000 alone -- have greatly improved safety and enhanced system conditions, but further progress is necessary.

The estimated average annual total capital investment from all sources (Federal, state and local) required to simply maintain the current conditions and performance of transit systems is $10.8 billion. Capital spending, again from all sources, on transit nationally would need to increase 28 percent from the 1999 level of $8.4 billion to reach the $10.8 billion projected cost to maintain transit systems, although over the life of TEA-21, this difference has declined and is expected to decline further. If we are to improve the conditions and performance of transit systems by eliminating deficiencies, however, a total of $16 billion would be needed annually.

Some of our transit systems are 100 years old. Some are brand new. Some, like the Washington area Metro system, are still under construction, studying expansion to meet increasing demand, while undertaking very large capital maintenance and rehabilitation programs. Regardless of age, every bus, every heavy rail car, every light

rail and paratransit vehicle – and the shops and yards that maintain them -- need investment in their upkeep every day so that safe, efficient and convenient transportation is available to the people of America.

How is the nation and how are transit agencies around the country coping with these challenges? Congress has provided record levels of transportation investment in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st 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 $1.6 billion was "flexed" in fiscal year 2000, as well as $1.291 billion so far in fiscal 2001 with over $7 billion flexed since the start of ISTEA. In fact, WMATA received about $13.3 million in flexed funding in fiscal year 2000 and $25.6 million so far in 2001.

Congress has also provided a range of innovative financing tools, which, I am pleased 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. Indeed, the recent GAO report commends the agency for its use of innovative financing. WMATA was the first transit agency to receive a loan guarantee of $600 million under the Transportation Infrastratucture Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), earlier this year. This loan guarantee will help to expedite WMATA's rehabilitation plans over the next several years.

Perhaps one of the most important things 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), have dedicated sources of funding. State funds dedicated to BART include general taxes, transit dedicated taxes, and a variety of statewide bond sources that are typically specific to an activity, such as 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. The Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transportation Authority (MARTA) receives a one-cent sales tax from Fulton and DeKalb Counties of which no more than 50 percent can be used for operating assistance. In contrast, and as the GAO report highlights, WMATA has no directly dedicated funds, but relies on federal sources for capital assistance and state and local jurisdictions for both capital and operating funds.

The most important lesson here is for transit agencies to develop an understanding of their needs and develop plans to deal with them. FTA's financial planning guidance dealing with how we would review the financial plans which we require for candidate New Starts projects 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 Starts 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. While this guidance applies specifically to New Starts projects, the principles apply just as well to any transit agency project.

While FTA does not specify particular measures to be used in assessing local performance, we are bringing service quality measures, such as wait time, system speed, and reliability, into our definitions of transit performance used in FTA's report to Congress on Transit Conditions and 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, in cooperation with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), is designed to provide 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. We continue to look at a variety of service quality factors in our reviews of transit agencies' paratransit transit service and are addressing questions of transit accessibility to persons with disabilities in the performance goals in FTA's Strategic Plan. 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.

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. I believe that FTA has made significant strides in improving our oversight role in order to be careful stewards of the Federal

funds we provide. The General Accounting Office has testified "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." However, FTA recognizes its continuing management and oversight challenges, particularly in the New Starts program area.

We have raised the bar on accountability in use of federal transit assistance. WMATA, like other transit agencies, is being reviewed more often and 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.

Briefly, I would like to provide an overview of how we review transit agencies' compliance with FTA 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, procurement, and civil rights. I should note again that, to date, our oversight of WMATA's federally funded activities shows no major deficiencies in these areas. In addition, and of particular interest to the subcommittee at this hearing, is WMATA's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

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 statutes, regulations and policy. Compliance reviews and assessments are conducted and complaints from the public are addressed to determine if the grantee's efforts are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (including aspects of Environmental Justice), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) programs, the ADA, and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

In particular, FTA continues to monitor the implementation of the ADA to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to mass transit services, including those of WMATA, as required by law. FTA oversight concentrates on three primary areas: the provision of ADA Complementary Paratransit Service, the accessibility of the fixed route service, and the accessibility of rail service as required for existing designated key stations, newly built stations and those undergoing major alterations. In addition to the triennial review, and other oversight activities, we also investigate complaints from riders regarding the ADA. When FTA identifies a deficiency, it is our experience that the transit agency will voluntarily correct the problem.

The provision of ADA complementary paratransit continues to be a challenge for WMATA, as it has been for the industry at large. For example, there have been recent news articles highlighting complaints about Metro Access, WMATA's ADA complimentary paratransit service, involving late pickups, excessive trip lengths, over-scheduling, improperly trained drivers, and inadequate telephone capacity. Be assured that FTA understands that its grantees must provide transportation services to people with

disabilities as required in statute and regulation and we seek to ensure that these obligations are met through our continuing oversight activities of WMATA and other transit operators throughout the nation.

That being said, FTA acknowledges WMATA's efforts to provide accessible transportation for persons with disabilities. They, like most other transit providers in this nation, continue to find ways to meet the requirements of the law. For example, following a series of complaints about excessive gaps between the platform and the train door, which caused accessibility difficulties for wheelchair users, WMATA installed rubber gap reducers to bridge those gaps. In addition, to ensure safe accessibility to visually impaired riders, FTA worked with WMATA to install truncated domes along the platform edges in its key rail stations. And, as WMATA states, all 762 its rail cars are accessible, over 1,200 of its 1,445 buses are equipped with lifts or ramps, and all 83 of its rail stations have elevators. While WMATA has had difficulty with maintaining elevators and escalators, they are addressing all of these issues in a comprehensive manner through their elevator renovation project, to be completed in 2002.

WMATA faces the same challenges as virtually all of our grantees in major metropolitan areas, such as increasing demand for transit, 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. Operating in the nation's capital, WMATA faces the challenge of dealing with the Federal government as the single largest employer in the area. In some ways, however, this is easier than operating in markets with many smaller employers. For example, 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.

Madam 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. The events of last week present new challenges and new opportunities for public transportation. I am confident that we will meet those challenges, and will emerge with a public transportation system that is even stronger, safer, and more accessible to the people of this great country.

I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Mrs. MORELLA. Now I am pleased to recognize the Honorable Phil Mendelson, the vice chairman of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board. Welcome.

Mr. MENDELSON. Thank you and good morning, Madam Chairman and members of the subcommittee. I am Phil Mendelson. I am first vice chair of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board. Mayor John Mason of Fairfax, who chairs the Transportation Planning Board, could not be here today.

The TPB is the metropolitan planning organization for the Washington region. We are responsible for implementing Federal requirements for transportation planning. Our members include elected officials from the District, Maryland, and Virginia; representatives from the three Departments of Transportation; WMATA; and others.

The Washington region is facing a crisis in transportation funding. This is a crisis that even now is affecting our economy and quality of life. Unless we take action, the situation will get worse. Our region needs an increase of more than 50 percent in funding for highways and transit. We are facing a gap of at least $1.75 billion per year—that is, $43 billion over the next 25 years. This is a gap between the funding we have available and what is needed both to maintain our current transportation system and to accommodate the growth in travel that will be generated by our increasing population and growing economy.

The Washington area is unusual in that we have no dedicated regional sources of funding for regional transportation improvements. We are one of the very few metropolitan regions in the country without a dedicated source of funding for its rail transit system. Because of this, we have strived to put the need for enhanced funding mechanisms on the front burner of regional concerns. It is our goal of our TPB vision adopted in 1998 that was the focus of a regional transportation summit we convened last November. It was reiterated in a TPB resolution adopted this past spring, recognizing that WMATA's preservation, rehabilitation, and expansion, and the funding therefor are a regional priority, and we will emphasize it again this November 28th in a second regional transportation summit.

Finding adequate funding for WMATA is crucial because WMATA is a critical element in the viability of our transportation system. WMATA has the second highest ridership in the country. Our system of roads and highways would fail utterly without WMATA. We could not possibly attain compliance with the Clean Air Act without WMATA. Indeed, I chair the TPB's Task Force on Conformity with our Clean Air Act Attainment Plan. Virtually every proposal to reduce pollution in the mobile sector involves increasing the use of public transit.

The kind of security measures we are seeing now at Federal garages and parking lots is going to put further demands on WMATA, which we have already seen with the Defense Department's request for earlier Metro Rail hours. We must recognize that all of WMATA's funding needs relate to and affect capacity.

First, there is long-term maintenance, the infrastructure renewal program. WMATA must maintain its system adequately so that it is reliable. Unreliability reduces demand and indirectly capacity.

Second, WMATA must expand its capacity to meet projected or desired ridership growth on the existing system.

Third, there are numerous proposals to expand the system, such as rail extensions, that would also expand capacity. Yet, according to the current 25-year constrained, long-range plan, the three States have committed to fund only 90 percent of the costs to maintain the system, to fund zero percent of the cost to accommodate ridership growth, and to fund 100 percent of already-adopted system expansion projects, but there are many more expansion projects that have not been adopted, and so funding is critical.

We are aware that in July—that the July GAO report suggests that WMATA develop contingency plans for potential funding shortfalls. On this I would like to make two points.

First, although this has not been formally discussed by the TPB, I think most of if not all of us agree with WMATA that, because its funding is provided by other governmental bodies in response to a statement of needs, a capital plan that provides a contingency—i.e., a lower level of funding than what is actually required—would inevitably result in a reduced funding level.

Second, WMATA is a key player in the regional transportation planning process, a process that establishes priorities and is coordinated through the TPB. Although this process can appear complex and unwieldy at times, it is, in fact, an effective method for determining which transportation solutions will best serve the public and for obtaining the political and financial support that capital projects need to move forward.

For instance, our planning process includes corridor studies, which examine a variety of options, including public transit, to meet transportation needs. These corridor studies are typically undertaken by the States in partnership with WMATA, local governments, and the TPB. Once a project is recommended by a study, funding sources are identified. That is the only way the project can be included in the constrained, long-range plan, the region's federally required 25-year long-range transportation plan.

In short, it is our view that, in facing WMATA's uncertain long-term capital funding, the solution is to press harder for the funds rather than to urge WMATA to develop contingency proposals.

We greatly appreciate this opportunity to testify.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you, Councilman Mendelson.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mendelson follows:]

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

On

Mass Transit in the National Capital Region:

Meeting Future Capital Needs

Submitted by

The Honorable Phil Mendelson

Vice Chairman
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
and
Member, Council of the District of Columbia

Friday, September 21, 2001
Room 2247 Rayburn House Office Building
10:00 a.m.

Good morning Madam Chairman and members of the subcommittee. My name is Phil Mendelson and I am a member of the Council of the District of Columbia and first vice 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 (WMATA), and non-voting members from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and federal agencies. I should note that the TPB's membership includes five elected officials who are also members of the WMATA board, as well as Richard White, General Manager of WMATA. The planning area covered by the TPB includes the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Suburban Maryland.

We are very pleased to be here to speak about the future capital needs of WMATA. For more than 25 years, the Metrorail system has played a critical role in our region's transportation development. The system has also been a crucial element in regional land use policy and economic development—issues that extend far beyond the needs of riders who depend upon the system every day. With the second highest ridership in the country, WMATA deserves our hearty congratulations for the excellent service it provides and the reputation it has worked to build and maintain. In particular, we are pleased that the recent report from the General Accounting Office (GAO), which is a main subject of today's

hearing, commended WMATA for its responsiveness in addressing problems that are linked to the system's rapid growth in ridership in recent years.

As a long-range planning organization, we want to ensure that WMATA's next 25 years are as successful as the past twenty-five. Last October, former TPB Chairman Kathryn Porter had the opportunity to speak before this subcommittee about challenges facing WMATA. At that time, Chairman Porter noted two important facts about transportation funding in the Washington region, which remain relevant to the discussion today. First, she highlighted the fact that we are facing a financial shortfall for transportation—for both transit and highways—that is far greater than we had previously known. During the 2000 update of the region's long-range plan, we found that we need an increase of 50 percent—or an additional $1.74 billion per year—to meet our transit and highway needs.

Second, Chairman Porter noted that an enhanced funding mechanism —or mechanisms— is needed to provide a level of financial certainty for regional transportation priorities. The TPB Vision, our regional transportation policy framework adopted in 1998, called for the establishment of such a funding approach.

Clearly, one of the region's top transportation funding priorities is Metro. In April, the TPB adopted a resolution that recognized Metrorail's preservation, rehabilitation and expansion to be a regional priority. This resolution said, in effect, that the success of the Metro system is an essential part of the broader regional challenge of coming to grips with a set of transportation priorities and ensuring that funding is provided to them on an ongoing basis.

As you may know, Washington is one of very few metropolitan regions in the country that does not have a dedicated source of funding for its rail transit system. During last year's update of the region's long-range transportation plan, we found that only 88 percent of rehabilitation and maintenance on Metro could be funded. Moreover, the region's transportation funding agencies identified none of 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. WMATA General Manager Richard White recently told TPB members that those funding needs are probably even greater than we had concluded last year.

In a presentation at a TPB special session in July, Mr. White laid out three levels of funding priorities, which provide a logical framework from which to approach capital needs. First, he said the region ***must*** rehabilitate and replace Metro vehicles and facilities. Second, he said, we ***need*** to purchase vehicles and facilities to accommodate new riders. Third, he said the system ***should*** be expanded. We applaud this basis for prioritization and investment, which recognizes a primary commitment to fixing and maintaining the system that is already in place.

With regard to the third priority—expansion—we are aware that the recent report from the General Accounting Office suggested that WMATA develop contingency plans for potential funding shortfalls. On this point, I would like to call your attention to the fact that WMATA is already a key player in the regional transportation planning process, which establishes priorities and is coordinated through the TPB. This process includes corridor studies, which examine a wide variety of options—including new rail lines—to meet

transportation needs. These corridor studies are generally performed by the states in partnership with WMATA, local governments and the TPB. Once a project is recommended by a study and funding sources are identified, the project is included in the region's 25-year long-range transportation plan, which is developed and approved by the TPB. While this regional transportation prioritization process can appear complex and unwieldy at times, it is in fact an effective method for determining which transportation solutions will best serve the public and for obtaining the political and financial support that capital projects need to move forward.

WMATA is currently undertaking several studies of its own, which we believe can have a positive impact on effective long-term planning and the types of projects that receive priority funding, including the Core Capacity Study and Regional Bus Study. We are pleased that WMATA's leadership is looking at a variety of transit solutions, including improved bus services. I would like to emphasize that many citizens—low-income and elderly people in particular— are dependent upon our region's extensive bus network.

Since the magnitude of our funding crisis was revealed last year, the TPB has taken steps to address the challenge, although we are limited in the direct action we can take because we are not a funding agency. Last November we convened a meeting with federal and state legislators at Union Station to lay out the seriousness and the immediacy of the problem, which by that time was being commonly called a funding "crisis." We were very pleased that Chairman Morella and Congresswoman Norton were in attendance at that event. The message from the meeting resonated during the state legislative sessions earlier this year as officials in Annapolis, Richmond and here in Washington recognized that the funding crisis

must be addressed. While lawmakers and policy officials have identified some additional funding sources for transportation, much more is needed.

This year we will again bring together regional leaders for a second "Annual Report to the Region on Transportation" on November 28. We understand that a summit will be convened in December by the governors of Maryland and Virginia and the mayor of the District of Columbia to identify long-term solutions to WMATA's funding needs. The combination of these two events present an unusual opportunity to make real progress on our funding challenges.

Neither we on the TPB— nor any other single agency or board— can solve this funding problem on our own. But at the same time, we on the TPB recognize our responsibility to keep this issue on the "front burner" of regional concerns and challenges. This is a regional problem, so let me close by again stating that we need a regional solution. As called for in the TPB Vision, we need 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." We hope the members of the subcommittee can lend their support as we seek to achieve more permanent funding solutions.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Mrs. MORELLA. Now we shall recognize Donna Sorkin, who is the public board member, Access Board.

Ms. SORKIN. Good morning, Madam Chairman and subcommittee members. I'm Donna Sorkin, and I'm executive director of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and a Presidential appointee to the Access Board. I am pleased to testify this morning in the absence of the Board's Chair, Pamela Holmes, on the accessibility of WMATA to people with disabilities.

The Access Board is a small, independent Federal agency dedicated to accessibility to people with disabilities comprised of 25 members, 13 of whom are Presidential appointees like me and most of whom have disabilities. I am hard of hearing.

The Board has a staff of 30 people and responsibilities under separate laws for separate laws that require accessibility to buildings and facilities, transportation vehicles, telecommunications, and electronic and information technology. WMATA is directly impacted by two of these laws, which I will focus on today.

First, the Access Board is charged with developing accessibility guidelines for and enforcing the Architectural Barriers Act [ABA], which requires that certain federally funded buildings and facilities be accessible.

Second, the Access Board is charged with developing the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessible Guidelines [ADAAG], and I'd like to begin with the Architectural Barriers Act.

In order to understand the Access Board's enforcement activities under the ABA in relation to WMATA, a brief bit of history is in order. The ABA was the Nation's first Federal accessibility law and was enacted in 1968. In 1970, Congress amended the ABA to specifically require that facilities constructed under the National Capital Transportation Acts of 1960 and 1965 and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Compact be accessible.

Despite this legislation, WMATA's transit stations were not designed to be accessible and did not have elevators, accessible paths of travel, and other accessibility features. A lawsuit was filed in 1972 directed by the situation, and in 1973 the court enjoined WMATA from opening any transit stations until they complied with the current accessibility standards.

The applicable standards then were developed—that were developed in 1961 and reaffirmed in 1971 as a private consensus standard through the American National Standards Institute [ANSI]. The ANSI standards were very minimum and consisted of only six pages. Today ADAAG is 71 pages long and requires greater accessibility than the old ANSI standards.

The Access Board began processing ABA complaints in 1977, and since then we have received 28 complaints involving WMATA's transit stations. The complaints usually concern accessible parking, accessible routes, and elevators.

For example, one complaint about the Van Dorn Street Station involved several accessibility features which are delineated in the Board's written statement. As a result of the Access Board's investigation of the complaint, WMATA made improvements in these accessibility features.

Another complaint involved elevator buttons. The complaint was filed by a quadriplegic with limited arm strength who noticed that

WMATA was installing new elevator buttons that were recessed into the face of the panel. Such buttons are difficult if not impossible for individuals with limited strength and dexterity to operate, and, as a result of the Access Board's investigation, WMATA took action to ensure that all elevator buttons in its transit stations are either flush with the face of the panel or raised above the panel.

The Access Board has also received complaints about elevators frequently being out of service. For people with disabilities, this is more than just an inconvenience. It is equivalent to closing the station to them. Imagine the public reaction if all riders were told that Metro Station or Gallery Place was closed for a few days or weeks and they had to use another station. This is a common experience for people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], requires that key stations in existing transit systems be accessible. Each transit authority is responsible for designating its key stations, and then must submit a plan to the Federal Transit Administration [FTA], that establishes milestones for bringing those stations into compliance with ADAAG. WMATA submitted its key station plan to the FTA in 1992, designating 45 of its 85 transit stations as key stations.

ADAAG requires greater accessibility at key stations than provided under the old ANSI standards. For example, the old ANSI standards had no provisions for making public address systems accessible to people who are deaf and hard of hearing. When public announcements in transit stations are made, I cannot understand them. ADAAG requires that, when public address systems are used to convey information to the general public in transit facilities, a means must be provided for conveying the same or equivalent information for people who cannot hear the information. WMATA has now installed additional electronic methods of conveying that information.

Public text telephones, or TTYs, and telephones with volume control now must be required in stations to provide greater accessibility, and these were not required under the old ANSI standards.

ADAAG requires that detectable warnings be placed on platform edges of transit stations. Detectable warnings are small, truncated domes designed to alert people who are blind or visually impaired that they are approaching the edge of the platform. The old ANSI standards did not require detectable warnings. In 1998, WMATA began installing detectable warnings, and they are now in all of the key stations.

The ADA has resulted in improvements in accessibility and at WMATA's key stations. People with disabilities use WMATA to get to work and to enjoy the many activities available in the Washington metropolitan area. Think for a moment of the visually impaired mother who can now take her child to the Smithsonian using WMATA without fear of inadvertently getting too close to the platform station. And consider the deaf or hard-of-hearing executive who is running late for a meeting and needs to call her colleagues to tell them that she's on her way. The ADA and ADAAG have benefited them and millions of other people with disabilities who use WMATA and other transit systems across the country to live their lives like other Americans.

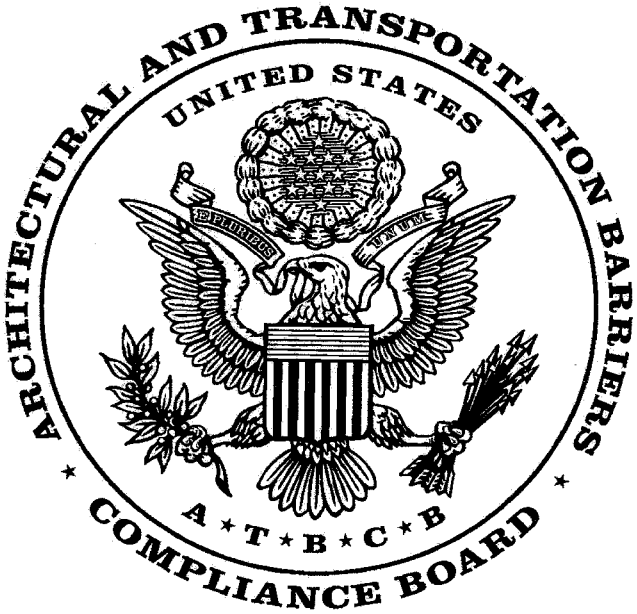
Thank you, Madam Chairman, for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Mrs. MORELLA. I want to thank you very much for the excellent testimony.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Holmes follows:]

Testimony before the House Subcommittee on the District of Columbia

September 21, 2001



Ms. Pamela Holmes, Chair
U.S. Access Board

Testimony of Pamela Holmes, Chair of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board Before the House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on the District of Columbia

Introduction

Good morning! I am Pamela Holmes, Chair of the Access Board. It is a pleasure to testify this morning on the accessibility of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) transit system. The Access Board is a small, independent federal agency dedicated to accessibility for people with disabilities. The Access Board is comprised of 25 members, 13 of whom are Presidential appointees like me, and has a staff of thirty people. The Access Board has responsibilities under four separate laws that require accessibility to buildings and facilities, transportation vehicles, telecommunications, and electronic and information technology.

WMATA is directly impacted by two of these laws, which I will focus on today. First, the Access Board is charged with developing accessibility guidelines for and enforcing the Architectural Barriers Act, or the ABA, which requires that certain federally funded buildings and facilities be accessible. Second, the Access Board is charged with developing accessibility guidelines under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the ADA. The ADA requires that transit stations which are newly constructed or altered after January 25, 1992, and existing "key stations" be accessible. The ADA also requires that new transit vehicles used in fixed route systems be accessible, and that public transit authorities provide accessible paratransit as a complement to fixed route service. The Board's Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, or ADAAG, describe how to make transit

stations and vehicles accessible.

Architectural Barriers Act

In order to understand the Access Board's enforcement activities under the ABA in relation to WMATA, a brief bit of history is in order. The ABA was the first federal accessibility law and was enacted in 1968. In 1970, Congress amended the ABA to specifically require that facilities constructed under the National Capital Transportation Acts of 1960 and 1965, and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Compact must be accessible. Despite this legislation, WMATA's transit stations were not originally designed to be accessible and did not have elevators, accessible paths of travel, and other accessibility features. A lawsuit was filed in 1972, before the Access Board was created, to rectify this situation. Washington Urban League v. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Civil Action No. 770-72. In October 1973, the court enjoined WMATA from opening any transit stations until they complied with the accessibility standards in effect at that time. The applicable standards back then were originally developed in 1961 and reaffirmed without change in 1971 as a private consensus standard through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The old ANSI standards were very minimal and consisted of only 6 pages. ADAAG is 71 pages and requires greater accessibility than the old ANSI standards.

The Access Board began processing ABA complaints in fiscal year 1977. Since then, we have received 28 complaints involving WMATA's transit stations. The complaints usually concern accessible parking spaces, accessible routes, and elevators. For example, a complaint about the Van Dorn Street

station on the Blue line involved accessible parking spaces which were not located closest the station entrance; a curb ramp which was blocked by a taxi cab loading zone; problems with the accessible routes which connected both the accessible parking spaces and the passenger loading areas to the interior of the station; an entrance gate which required excessive force to open; and an elevator cab that was too small to allow wheelchair users to turn around in order to reach the elevator buttons. As a result of the Access Board's investigation of this complaint, WMATA relocated the accessible parking spaces; moved the taxi cab loading zone so that the curb ramp was not obstructed; corrected the problems with the accessible routes, including the installation of signage indicating where the accessible routes are located; and reduced the tension on the entrance gate so that it only required five pounds of force to open. WMATA requested a waiver from the applicable elevator standards. Under the ABA, the General Services Administration (GSA) is authorized to issue waivers and modifications of the accessibility standards, subject to review by the Access Board. GSA and the Board discussed this request and agreed that a waiver of the elevator standards was inappropriate. Instead, the Board and GSA agreed on a modification of the standards to permit an additional control panel to be installed in the existing elevator so that someone in a wheelchair could use the elevator even if they were unable to turn around. WMATA installed the additional control panel.

Another complaint involved elevator buttons. The complaint was filed by a quadriplegic with very limited arm strength who noticed that WMATA was installing new elevator buttons that were recessed into the face of the panel. Recessed buttons are very difficult– if not impossible– for individuals with limited strength and dexterity to operate. As a result of the Access Board's investigation of this

complaint, WMATA took action to ensure that all elevator buttons in its transit stations are either flush with the face of panel or raised above the panel.

The Access Board has also received complaints about elevators frequently being out of service. For people with disabilities, this is more than just a mere inconvenience. It's tantamount to closing down the station for them. Imagine the public reaction, if all riders were told that Metro Center or Gallery Place was closed for a few days or weeks and they had to use another station. This is a common experience for people with disabilities. The Access Board does not have jurisdiction under the ABA over complaints involving the operation and maintenance of facilities. We usually refer such complaints to the Department of Transportation to resolve under the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

American with Disabilities Act

As indicated earlier, the ADA requires that "key stations" in existing transit systems must be accessible. The Department of Transportation is responsible for enforcing the transportation provisions of the ADA. Each transit authority is responsible for designating its "key stations" and must submit a plan to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that establishes milestones for bringing those stations into compliance with ADAAG. WMATA submitted its "key station" plan to the FTA in September 1992, and designated 45 of its 85 transit stations as "key stations." As noted under the ABA, when most of WMATA's transit stations opened in the 1970's, they complied with the old ANSI standards. ADAAG requires greater accessibility at WMATA's "key stations" than provided under the old ANSI

standards. I would like to provide a few examples of how ADAAG requires greater accessibility.

The old ANSI standards had no provisions for making public address systems accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. ADAAG requires that, when public address systems are used to convey information to the general public in transit facilities, a means must be provided for conveying the same or equivalent information to people who do not hear. I understand that WMATA has installed Passenger Information Display System signs that convey visual messages in all of its stations.

Text telephones– or TTY's as they are sometimes referred to– are another example of how ADAAG provides for greater accessibility. The old ANSI standard stated that "an appropriate number of public telephones should be equipped for those with hearing disabilities..." This provision was not mandatory and few, if any, facilities that were designed using the old ANSI standards provided text telephones. ADAAG requires that if an interior public telephone is provided in a transit station, there must be at least one public text telephone in the station. Where four or more public telephones serve an entrance to a transit station and at least one is in an interior location, ADAAG also requires that there must be at least one public text telephone serving the entrance. Signage must be provided indicating the location of the text telephones.

ADAAG requires that detectable warnings be placed on platform edges of transit stations. Detectable warnings are small truncated domes which are designed to alert people who are blind or visually impaired that they are approaching the edge of the platform. The old ANSI standards did not

provide for detectable warnings. WMATA has experienced several tragic accidents where passengers have fallen off the platforms of its transit stations. Some of these passengers were blind or visually impaired, and these accidents may have been prevented if detectable warnings had been provided. WMATA initially took the position that the existing granite edges on the platforms of its transit stations provided sufficient visual cues to people who are blind or visually impaired, and requested that it not be required to install detectable warnings at its "key stations." The FTA did not grant the request. In 1995, WMATA proposed to install an infrared warning system along the platform edges as an "equivalent facilitation," and the FTA granted the request. ADAAG permits the use of other designs and technologies as "equivalent facilitation," where those means provide substantially equivalent or greater accessibility than provided under ADAAG. Under the WMATA proposal, passengers who are blind or visually impaired would have to carry a receiver to pick up signals from the infrared warning system in order to alert them about the platform edge. After testing the infrared warning system, WMATA concluded that it was not feasible. In 1998, WMATA began installing detectable warnings at its "key stations" stations after the FTA granted WMATA another "equivalent facilitation" request allowing the detectable warnings to be placed behind the granite edge of the platforms, rather than directly at the platform edge as specified in ADAAG. Detectable warnings are now in all of WMATA's "key stations," as well as all new stations.

The ADA and ADAAG have resulted in improvements in the level of accessibility provided at WMATA's "key stations." People with disabilities use WMATA to get to work and to enjoy the many activities available in the metropolitan area. Think for a moment of the visually impaired mother who can

take her children to the Smithsonian using WMATA without fear of inadvertently getting too close to the platform's edge, or the deaf executive who is running late for a meeting and needs to call his colleagues to tell them he's on his way. The ADA and ADAAG have benefitted them and millions of other people with disabilities who use WMATA and other transit systems across the country to live their lives like all other Americans. Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Mrs. MORELLA. I want to thank all of you.

Now we'll start our round of questioning, and try to keep our questions to about 5 minutes and back and forth until we appear to have the major questions answered.

I think I'm going to get right into the center of things in terms of preparedness for emergencies and security, so I guess I would start off with the GAO and ask, you know, Metro—we've all said that Metro acted in an exemplary fashion with the recent disaster. I just wondered what your assessment is of Metro's emergency preparedness to handle different kinds of threats, you know, like terrorist attacks on stations.

I'm going to direct that to you, Ms. Hecker, and then I will expand the question for Manager White.

Ms. HECKER. What we did was we looked at the procedures and we didn't rigorously evaluate them, so we're really talking about what kind of procedures were in place.

What we did find is that they clearly had a lot of preparedness activity. There were exercises and there were initiatives across the board to deal with the full range of both safety and security risks, and activities continue to identify new risks, as we've heard today. So it was really a question of an attitude and a posture of preparedness and a constant learning and putting appropriate procedures and improvements in place.

Mrs. MORELLA. Did you want to add anything, Ms. Grieco? I could tell.

Ms. GRIECO. I would just add that WMATA does have very detailed procedures for instructing its employees as to how they should determine the threat level, what actions they should take when an incident occurs. I mean, WMATA's role is generally one of crisis management, so they would secure the scene and make sure passengers are evacuated, but it's really the local fire and police authorities who would have to respond if there were, you know, a terrorist attack.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. White, that gets into the whole question of looking at last Tuesday. There was a great exodus from Federal buildings, tourist attractions, etc., and many people, including some members of my own staff, didn't know whether or not Metro was going to be operating, whether it had been closed. The District of Columbia didn't hold a press conference until later that afternoon to advise people. And I just wondered, did WMATA attempt to notify the public about their status of operation before the city had its press conference?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, Madam Chair. We had, within minutes of the first crash into the World Trade Center, increased our level of preparedness under our police standard operating procedures to a threat level Charlie, and immediately upon the crash into the Pentagon had activated our command center.

And when we do that, we bring all of our—all of the various parts of our organization together into one command center location. We have all of our safety and security personnel, our operations personnel, our media relations personnel, our physical—people who take care of our physical plant personnel all working in one room accessing the same information that comes from a multitude of sources, and we have televisions, of course, in these

rooms, and we have cameras in our stations that broadcast back to these rooms.

When we immediately heard the first erroneous report—I'm not exactly sure what the initial source of that erroneous report was—that we were closed down, our media relations people instantaneously contacted that news media outlet, and then others, that those reports were false reports and that we were, indeed, operational. So I think that, although there was a period of time, I think it was a very brief period of time where there were some outlets that were reporting that we were closed, and we made it clear. And, for the record, we were open the entire time.

We did have, of course, a couple of our stations that were closed, and some people were confusing that message with the message that the system was closed. Obviously, the Pentagon Station was closed, and then that closed immediately upon the incident at the Pentagon, and then at 11 a.m., National Airport Station was closed.

Other things that we did, for example, we stopped our service over the Potomac, our Yellow Line service over the Potomac, the bridge that we have that goes over the Potomac, based upon information we had that was going on at that moment in time of additional threats of airplanes on their way into the metropolitan area.

So I think there was some confusion. We responded immediately to try and correct the confusion, to let everybody know that we were fully functional, and I think the organization did an outstanding job in that regard, and everything comes from our access to information. And not only do we set up our own command center, we immediately sent out personnel over to the Metropolitan Police Department's command center, Chief Ramsey and all the folks that he gathers over there, and then, once the Emergency Management Agency created their command center, we sent somebody over there. And also the Pentagon had its own field command center under the jurisdiction of the military, but we had people over there. And we also have a full-time officer who is assigned to the FBI Counter-Terrorism Task Force on a full-time basis.

So we had all the information there was to be had, quite frankly, and more than most people in our metropolitan area had when they were making decisions, so we were the best informed entity, I believe, to make the decisions. Unfortunately, there were some—was some misinformation that the media spread, but I think we got it corrected pretty quickly.

Mrs. MORELLA. I'm pleased to hear that. And I wondered also, in the event of an emergency which disrupts the flow of bus—of traffic buses, their routes, and they have to be altered, how is that information conveyed to passengers and to the bus drivers?

Mr. WHITE. Well, of course, we've got to hear it ourselves, first.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes.

Mr. WHITE. And I think there was some confusion. I know Chief Ramsey was concerned that they didn't get quick notification on things like the 14th Street Bridge being shut down and HOV lanes being shut down, and we have buses that run in HOV lanes, so obviously we had our share of difficulty navigating through it.

But, you know, we were able, through our command center structure—and, I might add, although others suffered from communica-

tion failures, we had no communication failures, based upon the types of equipment that we use, including our own portable radio system, where we're able to communicate over the radio waves to our people in our locations. But we have our internal phone system that operates through the Authority's internal switch, so we were not accessing and competing with the phone capacity that goes in or outside, and many people did have difficulty using land lines and even cell phones, as well, so we did not experience any of those kinds of problems.

So we were fully communicative to all of the aspects of our organization. We were both receiving instant information from them and communicating it out.

A person staffs our bus desk, and that's the chief operating officer for the bus system, so we had all of our executives who were in there, and he was making sure that information on street closures was passed to our people, detour information was passed to our people. Our people were reporting to us street closures, and we were passing that information on.

So yes, our bus system did experience the same kind of trouble that people driving their automobile experienced, but I must say that our operators were enormously creative in their ability to navigate through that, and a fair amount of the positive feedback we got were from customers who were on our buses who were, quite frankly, amazed at how well our bus drivers did in the middle of all that traffic chaos.

Mrs. MORELLA. You're pleased with your working with or the cooperation that you get from the Police Department. I know we've got Barry McDevitt here. And the communication, you are satisfied with that stream of communication?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, Madam Chair. We immediately, as I said, sent our personnel under the regular procedures to the MPD Command Center the moment the MPD Command Center set up their operation, and they get a number of the other authorities, largely the large number of Federal law enforcement authorities that we have, and, of course, they have, you know, FBI, Secret Service participation in their Command Center, as well. So we had our person over there immediately, and that was very useful. We had—as I said, we had our person later in the morning, when the city's Emergency Management Agency set theirs up, that was close to noon, so that was a little bit later. But yes, I am very pleased that those procedures worked well. And, of course, people's complaints are around what information they did or did not know, you know, with respect to our communications.

Mrs. MORELLA. And fortunately this tragedy will never happen again, but it does give us an opportunity, also, to look at what we've got in order to come up with some kinds of improvements, too, to even—even despite the fact that you've done extraordinarily well, to even improve it for the future.

My time has expired for this round.

Ms. Watson.

Ms. WATSON. I want to thank all the presenters for their presentations. And mass transit is just that, and I was very concerned on Tuesday because I live diagonally across from the Pentagon, and they closed the 14th Street Bridge. I never did get home that night.

But I was very, very concerned about mass transit, particularly your underground. You had mentioned, one of the first presenters, that you were now looking into the biological emissions and so on. I'd like you to elaborate. And I'm not sure which person made that statement. Yes? And if you could elaborate, I'd be very appreciative.

Ms. HECKER. I would be happy to, but I think Mr. White would be in a much better position.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. What was referred to is about more than 3 years ago we entered into an interagency agreement first with the Justice Department, and then subsequently party to a broader agreement in the Government, not only with Justice but the Department of Energy and the Department of Transportation, as well.

Our National Laboratories that worked under the auspices of the Department of Energy, such as, you know, Sandia, Livermore, Argonne, and those labs, have been working with the Federal Government to redeploy military technology, you know, into our, you know, domestic economy, and one area that they have had a keen interest in, of course, is our urban transit systems, and they have—we installed a little over a year ago now a sensor that those labs develops, and so these are some of the best minds, literally, in our country that are working on this, and they've spent multiple millions of dollars already in this process of doing this, and these first sensors are now installed in the initial part of our system at Smithsonian and its connection to the next adjacent station to Federal Triangle. And these sensors are now under test, and obviously the theory here is that you are able to detect, immediately upon the smallest presence of such a chemical agent being released, the ability to detect that with alarms going off and then trying to have the ability of first responders to have access to good information to make decisions on what to do.

This also includes the ability to remotely look into those stations through our CCTV cameras off of laptops that police officers, fire personnel, emergency personnel, and WMATA personnel would be able to do so we wouldn't have to send somebody in there without some sort of visual indication of other things that are going on.

The next step in this process is additional money is being appropriated, as I understand it, again through the Energy Department, to expand this to another five stations in the Metro system. The technology thus far is limited to chemical releases. Biological releases, the technology is not quite there, but people believe we are close to that technology. And our sensors have been set up so that they would be modular, so when biological is ready it just gets added to the sensors we already have so we don't have to go out and get all new sensors.

This offers—we're the only ones, not only in this country, but in the world that is doing this. Others in Europe have already experienced tragedy in our urban subway systems, Asia, as well, you know, Paris, Munich, Tokyo have all experienced unfortunate situations, yet they are not even as far advanced as we are in this effort.

So I know there are many, many people who are very hopeful that our testing of this will develop a technology that can be usable

in our country. It is going to require a considerable amount of money, should we choose to make these investments, but there is obvious great potential to this.

And the corollary to that is on the issue of preparedness. We are also the only transit system that has quick masks or gas masks for our operating personnel, so that gives them 20 minutes to be able to get out of harm's way the minute that there's a detection of the initial presence in small quantities. So if the alarms can detect small quantities and we can get people out of there, our employees and our customers, before they become deadly, then that's what this system is hopefully intended to do.

The ultimate of this system is to develop a set of engineering controls so that not only is the release detected, but it is controlled through some set of engineering controls to collect that which has been released and then to disburse it to some other place where it could safely be done so.

So this is quite advanced kinds of things that are going on with that.

Ms. WATSON. Let me just suggest this. As we know, if there is any kind of biological matter released, it is borne on the airways. You've got passengers by the hundreds and thousands on your cars in a tube. And this has been a concern because I don't think the terrorism is over yet, and I think probably the next attack will be something biological emitted into a canister, one of your Metro Rail cars or so on. You might have a sensor go off indicating the presence, but it doesn't protect the passengers. You just can't move that fast.

Mr. WHITE. Well, the——

Ms. WATSON. So is there any thinking? What do the airlines do? If the cabins become depressurized, immediately something drops out so people can then put on a mask. Maybe this is something that could be looked at in terms of the second step. You can sense something has been emitted, but what do passengers do until you can get them off of those cars?

So this might be something you will want to research, take into consideration, since the airlines have dealt with that, too.

Mr. WHITE. Yes. I mean, that's a very good point. I mean, we do know that we need to, you know, get people out of harm's way immediately, and this is now—you know, you have literally minutes to be able to do that, and I think we will certainly investigate the idea that you have with respect to the airlines about its feasibility. I mean, we've got as many as 1,000, you know, people, you know, on our train system, you know, moving in and out of that train system with much more regularity than, you know, an airline. Once you get on a plane, you're on that plane until you get where you want to go. But it's certainly an idea that needs to be explored. There's no doubt about it.

Ms. WATSON. Well, that dovetails right into my second concern, and that is trying to design some kind of way to finance the Metro service. And I know you are within a region. You have several States involved. But we look—we have to look at some way where you can project into your next fiscal year how you are going to finance and what your revenues will be, because I think you have

an excellent program, but you've got to be able to address the concerns that have been mentioned here around the table.

Is it feasible to look at some way that the States involved and the Federal Government might increase the cost of ridership or assess those services along the way so that you could anticipate a certain amount of money annually that you could be—that you could count on for maintaining the ridership, maintaining the mechanics, maintaining your program?

Mr. WHITE. Well, we have been attempting, to the best of our abilities, to move people in that direction. Several of the people who have testified have indicated how complex our political and funding decisionmaking process is in our metropolitan area. We get money that comes not only from the Federal Government to States and the District of Columbia, but about five or six other local jurisdictions, as well, and it is—and there is no overall regional approach that is in place right now. It is a matter of, quite literally, each year, certainly in the operating budgets, trying to define your needs and passing your hat and going to 8 or 9 or 10 different places, hoping that everybody will come up with their fair share.

We have all these nice little formulas in place to determine fair share. The problem becomes when one jurisdiction, for whatever reason, has other competing priorities or has fiscal conditions that don't allow it to get to that level, and they say we can't do that. Everybody retreats down to their percentage share of reduced level. I call it "lowest common denominator budgeting." It provides enormous challenge to us. And that's just on the operating side. And then, when you throw the capital side in place, as well, we do have 6, 10, and 25 capital plans, so we are trying to tell people what's coming with a pretty high degree of, you know, accuracy to the extent that one can predict that far out.

The problem really seems to be—and as Mr. Mendelson has already indicated—the size of what this metropolitan area is dealing with is about $1.7 billion per year for its transit and road system that it needs on top of the $3 billion per year that it is spending. So these are very, you know, big numbers.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you.

Mrs. MORELLA. I'm going to—thank you very much. I know Mr. Davis has been very patiently waiting. I'd certainly like him to have an opportunity to ask some questions.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Thank you.

Ms. Dorn, let me ask a question. Has FTA reviewed WMATA's emergency evacuation plan?

Ms. DORN. Yes. Yes, we have. In the context of our regulatory authority, we have done so.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. How does it compare to other mass transit systems nationwide?

Ms. DORN. Well, it is a good plan. It's very difficult to make comparisons because there are so many differences and uniqueness, as is the case in public transportation across the country. There are ever different situations, whether you have a tunnel, whether you have a new subway, an old subway, whether it is primarily bus system, all those sorts of things, so that's why it is very important that we have security audit teams who have familiarity who can come in and give an assessment about where we are.

It is particularly important that those plans be revisited, as we have, unfortunately, seen in the last couple of weeks. It also is very tempting, I think, to yield to the opportunity or the thought that there is some magic formula of technology that would reduce the risk when, in fact, there are useful pieces of technology that have been discussed by Mr. White.

Perhaps even more important than that is the aspect of training and awareness of all the people and looking at the system that you employ in a holistic way. You can have the best technology in the world, and if the people are not acquainted with it or they're not trained and aware of how to react when they see a problem, then the whole system fails. So it really needs to be a holistic look, and it must be done by experts in the context of that local community and what the risks, both geographic and technological, are.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Let me ask Mr. White, I mean, I know you drill on these things occasionally, because I read about it in the paper. This is a heightened awareness in terms of the importance where you don't want to have somebody reading from a book when this comes. You want it drilled into them where they kind of act instinctively. How do you feel about the plan at this point? Are you looking to update it, and maybe some different perspectives after the last couple of weeks?

Mr. WHITE. Well, I think one always can look back over an event, no matter how well one thinks that they've performed, and say, "This could have been better and that could have been better," and we are certainly doing that ourselves right now, and the extent to which we see things that make sense to change our procedures, we'll do that, but, you know, I do believe that we have the best set of procedures that exist in this country and that we are the most prepared transit system in this country.

But, having said that, that doesn't mean that we can guarantee anybody that——

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Well, the passenger first——

Mr. WHITE [continuing]. We can keep things from happening. We do have to be able to respond if and when they do happen. But I do believe that we are very well prepared. We have annual exercises that we conduct under the coordination of Metro where we take all of the jurisdictions and all of their fire and emergency rescue personnel and we replicate a significant tragical event, and then we test how well everybody responds to that, that tabletop exercise, and then we debrief and critique how well everybody did and what issues are human factors, what issues are procedures and training, and then we work to improve ourselves.

I meet annually with all of the fire chiefs in the region to review what we're doing and to determine what the next steps are with respect to our coordination and preparedness. Our police officers are probably the only ones in the country who get annual terrorist training.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Is WMATA's core capacity study complete?

Mr. WHITE. Well, from the point of view of staff development, it is largely done. We are——

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. So it's not complete, but it is well on its way?

Mr. WHITE. Yes. To expand what this is, we've talked a lot about the issue of capacity, and we have now, for the last year now, been engaged in a very comprehensive review of the issue of when we reach capacity in our system, what kinds of investments we need to make in order to provide additional capacity in the system.

We've put everything under the microscope, from cars to stations to our power distribution and signaling systems.

Next Thursday, Mr. Davis, will be the first presentation the staff makes to the committee of our Board of Directors who has jurisdiction in reviewing this, and we've got at least two workshops scheduled with the Board, and we are hopeful that, within the next several weeks, the staff and the Board will have come to a single mind as to what our go-forward plans and programs need to be to deal with this phenomena of accommodating ridership growth, and we're breaking this down into 5-year increments looking out over 25 years.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. So that will then, obviously, impact your long-range planning?

Mr. WHITE. Very much so, yes.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. But you don't have anything at this point you've been able to share with GAO or anyone else, because it is still being done internally?

Mr. WHITE. We have been able to share with the GAO everything that we have presented to our Board to date, and it is largely—what I will call it, it's the framework for the analysis. It's the background date for the analysis.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Right.

Mr. WHITE. But it is not the plan. And we will certainly commit ourselves, as we always have in our coordination with the GAO, to take them through this analysis, and we'll probably be able to do that next week with them.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. OK. GAO has—I guess you don't have any reaction yet until you've seen the total plan?

Ms. HECKER. No. We did have detailed briefings that will be part of the discussion, I think, with the Board. I think the magnitude of the expenditures will really bring into relief the concern we have, though, about the current budgeting situation, and I think at that point the critical urgency of really getting some long-term commitments within the region really come to fore.

Mr. DAVIS OF VIRGINIA. Thank you. My time is up. I appreciate your responses.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you very much, Mr. Davis.

Going back to the security issue—and you mentioned the police, Mr. White—do you traditionally have security training? Do you have your employees who are trained for security? How do you do that?

Mr. WHITE. We have, I believe it's approximately 325 sworn police officers and about another 100 additional personnel in our Police Department, and that is now being augmented by another 37 hires in this year's budget, and they go through, before they step foot on our property, a very lengthy training program, and the uniqueness of the requirements of our police officers is they need to know the laws of three States.

Mrs. MORELLA. Right.

Mr. WHITE. So they are probably the most educated officer in this metropolitan area with respect to compliance with the law and other training efforts that they undertake. It's really an extraordinary level of training. So that when they get here, they are extremely well prepared, and, you know, should you have a desire to know in greater detail what is involved with that training, I'm sure our chief could answer a question for you.

And then on top of that we have annual types of refresher training for our officers, and a few years ago we introduced, before really people—anybody was really talking about the issue of terrorism, certainly in our country, a program each year for refresher training on responding to terrorist types of acts——

Mrs. MORELLA. Really?

Mr. WHITE [continuing]. On the Authority with our police officers.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes.

Mr. WHITE. That also has been a byproduct of our participation, full-time participation on the FBI's Counter-Terrorism Task Force.

So we have been, in my opinion, quite, quite leading edge as an agency in the preparedness of our police officers to kind of be aware of these issues and to be able to both have the intelligence to prevent something from happening, access to high-level intelligence information——

Mrs. MORELLA. This morning's paper mentions that some passengers had complained that they had not seen police anywhere on the Metro in the days after the attacks. Is that incorrect? Are they just not looking, or in the wrong places?

Mr. WHITE. I mean, obviously, all of us know how we all individually respond after an event like that, and people have a high level of anxiety and insecurity, and my own—and I know we had all of our personnel out. The chief, you know, canceled vacations, brought people back, put them out there. They were in high-visibility vests to try and even draw more attention to them. And, you know, a number of people in a very crowded station, even with an officer in a very loud-colored vest, may not see that officer and think that there are not, you know, police personnel out there, but, you know, I think that is both a product of the heightened anxiety that an individual has in the aftermath of this and——

Mrs. MORELLA. How many police—I don't know, maybe I should be asking this to Mr. McDevitt, but how many police do you traditionally have in the Metro stations?

Mr. WHITE. Let me ask the chief to answer that.

Mrs. MORELLA. And on active duty. I don't mean in—maybe you'd break it down, administrative versus——

Mr. MCDEVITT. Yes. We have on a daily basis probably 40 or 50 uniformed officers on patrol in the Metro Rail system, and they are augmented by bicycle patrols in our parking lots, motorcycle patrols, and vehicular patrols where the car is parked at various—patrols various parking lots and subway stations.

Mrs. MORELLA. But you only have, what, 40 or 50 altogether?

Mr. MCDEVITT. It's usually one officer per three stations, in general, but they can overlap and, depending on transfer stations and different problems that we have throughout the day, they combine

and work together on the situation, depending on what we're trying to do.

Mrs. MORELLA. Is that an adequate number?

Mr. MCDEVITT. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. MORELLA. I mean, I don't know. That—you find that's working efficiently? They're in the station, they're in the parking lot, they communicate with each other?

Mr. MCDEVITT. Yes, they do.

Mrs. MORELLA. And so—and each one has a good two, three stations, right?

Mr. MCDEVITT. They have a minimum two or three stations, but they do—like I said, they do have overlaps. The cars overlap the foot-beat officers, the bicycles overlap and the motorcycles overlap, also, so it is very difficult to say, but usually the high-volume stations is where you are obviously going to have more presence.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes. I'm pleased that you think it's adequate. I don't really know whether that's the case or not. I rely on you.

Director White, you are asking—Mr. Manager, you are asking for, like, $20 million I noticed from the appropriation that Congress approved. And could you give us just a simple breakdown of how you see that money being used?

Mr. WHITE. We have—and this is based on a very quick assessment in order to see if there is an opportunity to access this funding source—we have looked at the kinds of things that we think should be done to kind of shore up our bus garages, our rail stations, and our rail maintenance facilities to prevent unauthorized access into those facilities, so a portion of the funding is set up to put physical devices—jersey barrier and other types of physical devices to try to secure our physical assets.

Another chunk of the money is set up to provide for a higher degree of accuracy in what is known as an intrusion detection system. We already have the capabilities to know when people are—unauthorized people are in our system, but what we'd like to do is to be able to narrow it down to a very precise location so people can be dispatched very quickly to the precise location for which an alarm is tripped. So there's about $9 million of the $20 million that has been identified for that purpose. There's 5.5 million is identified for the perimeter fencing concept that I just explained to you. Another $2 million is to complete the work we're attempting to do. We have 1,400 cameras in our system, and we've identified 30 of our stations as being our high-traffic, high-profile stations, and we would like to not only have video capabilities but to be able to have recording capabilities. Right now we cannot record those cameras so that the recording can take place if people are being—if there are people who are being looked at from the FBI's list in terms of people who need to be—and we need to check to see whether people are moving in and out of the system. That would help give us the capability to do that, and then to bring all that information back to a central location on a real-time basis so it could be accessed with dispatch. There's $2 million associated with that.

Some additional closed-circuit TV and motion detector alarms and fencing in our rail yard, $2 million. And then some employee ID and access at our central office building and other locations to take advantage of the smart card technology that we have that our

customers now use to pay for our rail system, to be able to use that accept—that smart card as an employee ID and a building access card so that—you know, to restrict access through our facilities by the use of a smart card.

So those are the five ideas that we have advanced, the sum total of which is $20 million.

Mrs. MORELLA. Ms. Dorn, that must make them a model for the Nation, doesn't it?

Ms. DORN. You mean by asking for the money? [Laughter.]

Mrs. MORELLA. Somehow, that's something that wherever you are, whenever you are there, you always get that kind of request. But in terms of all of the procedures that they are looking toward——

Ms. DORN. Absolutely. A number—first of all, they do have an incredibly model system in many respects, and I would also add to what Mr. White has said in terms of the importance of the training courses and having people be aware, and there are a number of—hundreds, actually, of courses that are available out there, the need to modify plans to do security audits.

In addition to the capital needs, there are some more, perhaps, basic needs of other systems and the need to take a look at the security plan in a new environment.

So the administration is currently looking through all of those needs. We recognize that we are in a new day and a new paradigm.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes.

Ms. DORN. And with respect to public transportation, we have to very quickly prioritize where the needs are and which systems have those needs, so we look forward to working with WMATA and others to help determine and focus those anticipated dollars.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes. I visited a company in my District just recently who has come up with a smart card. I'm sure a number of others have, too. But it is remarkable the kind of information that can be put on them and that there can still be privacy.

Ms. Watson.

Ms. WATSON. Just a quick question. We were concerned about some of your stations that have only—this is directed to Mr. White—only one exit, and in an evacuation mode would that be efficient, effective? So can you comment on this, particularly one station. Why don't I not mention it at this time. But you might want to comment.

Mr. WHITE. Yes, you are correct in your observation that some number of our stations are single entrance stations. It is the way they were designed and how they were sized. You know, one of the things that we have been examining and is a part of our core capacity study is to take a look at whether we need to expand the capabilities of our stations in some regard, including putting additional access entrance points into the station at some of the high-volume stations. As you would imagine, that's a pretty expensive proposition to undertake. It is usually at least $20 million to do at a particular location.

We have been steadily moving in that direction. We've put some new entrances in at the Gallery Place Station when the MCI Center was built. We're putting some new entrances in at our Mt. Vernon location to support the new convention center—actually, I'm

sorry, widening and expanding that one single entrance. In Virginia there are two or three locations that we are working with Arlington County on to build additional entrances into those locations and pursuing separate State funding for that purpose.

So clearly it is something that needs to be done, both for evacuation purposes as well as just for, you know, access to our system and to deal with the crowding of the system, so we are doing our level best to identify where we could benefit from doing things such as that, but there are obviously costs associated with it.

Staff does remind me that each of our stations does have, in addition to the regular public entrance into that location, emergency exits in those stations under emergency conditions, and people would also be evacuated should there be such a requirement through the emergency exit at those station locations.

Ms. WATSON. Is it anticipated that someone could get into the station, get down on the tracks, and some way put some kind of device that would, I guess, explode and cause some damage to the linkages? Has that been anticipated? And if that were the case, what would happen from there in terms of the passengers and the movement of the trains?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, I mean, obviously that is what we are probably best equipped to deal with at this stage right now in terms of being prepared to be able to inspect our assets. You know, we have so much train services moving through the system, all of our train operators and other personnel who are in the stations who are not just our police personnel have special training on the kinds of things to look for, unusual things that are on the track bed. Standard operating procedures have governed how we respond if there's something in our track bed with respect to helping our trains until we can determine what it is.

We have sent all of our personnel who are in our stations doing various types of job activities, they are all trained in how to alert on suspicious packages—there's probably no other system in the country that does that, either—so that if there is some suspicious package that is dropped and we have a person who is cleaning the station or a station manager is in there or some other individual, they can—they're trained to alert on that.

And, quite frankly, we have had, you know, several instances where we've actually closed the system down and evacuated the stations based upon suspicious packages, and have responded accordingly.

So, you know, again, you know, everybody who is responsible for public safety and security—and none of us can make guarantees to people, but what we can say is that we are as prepared as we can possibly be, and forever looking at other things that we should be doing, and attempting to do that so that we can minimize the possibility or probability of anything taking place in our system. But our employees are very well trained to do this, and it's not just the police who have the responsibility.

Mrs. MORELLA. OK. Ms. Sorkin, I would like to ask you, you know, as we talk about emergency preparedness, I would like to ask you if you are cognizant of plans that would deal with people with disabilities in the event of any emergency.

Ms. SORKIN. I'd like to ask the staff to assist me with that question, because I'm not——

Mrs. MORELLA. Indeed.

Ms. SORKIN [continuing]. I'm not aware of any such plans.

This is David Capozi. He's director of technical programs for the Access Board.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Capozi, could I ask you to be sworn in? Would you raise your right hand.

[Witness sworn.]

Mrs. MORELLA. Thank you, sir.

Mr. CAPOZI. I think that's an area that Metro could do a better job in informing passengers as to the procedures to evacuate. They do have information on the trains as to emergency evacuation. It's not particularly spelled out well for people with disabilities. And one of the concerns that I would have, as a disabled rider, is when the elevators are shut down or when the escalators are shut down what procedures are in place to allow an individual in a wheelchair to evacuate that particular station.

We've had problems at our building, in particular. We have evacuation chairs so that individuals can be moved out of our building, but we know where those chairs are, we know where our employees are. That's not always going to be the case for Metro. And in the stations that's particularly more difficult than for a bus would be, and I think Metro needs to—I'm sure that they have procedures in place, but the passengers are not aware of the ways in which they can be safely evacuated from stations.

Mrs. MORELLA. I know that Mr. White wants to respond, but before he does is there any other issue? I mean, the elevator issue is a question not only during an emergency, but if it's just not working also, right?

Mr. CAPOZI. Right.

Mrs. MORELLA. Is there anything else in terms of the Access Board concerns that you would like to pose?

Mr. CAPOZI. The other issue also is that, not just for people who use wheelchairs, but for individuals who can't hear the announcements that are made on the stations or on the trains.

Mrs. MORELLA. OK.

Mr. CAPOZI. To get that information to individuals. There have been cases where you could be at the end of the line and the train is out of service, and there is a person who is deaf or hard of hearing on that train and they're not aware that train is out of service, and they get taken into the yard and have difficulty getting off the train. So think of that in terms of an emergency.

Mrs. MORELLA. Right.

Mr. CAPOZI. How is that information imparted to people who can't hear, as well.

Mrs. MORELLA. Right. Thank you.

Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. Well, a variety of issues here.

The issue of elevators is certainly a challenging issue, as is the issue of escalators. We have 180 elevators and about 570 or so escalators. We have the longest and deepest and highest quantity number of elevators and escalators of any transit system in the country, so it certainly is a challenging effort to deal with that.

We are engaged in—first of all, all of our original stations, as we've heard from Ms. Sorkin, the first plans were to build them without an elevator until we were sued some, whatever it was, 20-something years ago, and forced to do that. And now at least one of the things we're trying to do with our updated design standards is for each of the new stations that we are now building we are putting in two elevators. It is expensive to do, but we are putting two elevators into each station rather than the one, so on a go-forward basis we even have a new set of standards for our stations that would hopefully in the future and over time help address the issue of a non-functioning elevator in the station.

We are spending an awful lot of money trying to rehabilitate both our escalators and our elevators. We have engaged in the first part of that process. We've recently rehabilitated 21 elevators with another 11 to go. All of the things that were identified with our elevators that needed to be done to put us in compliance with the accessibility of the ADAAG accessibility guidelines that were described already all plotted out, and we've now made all the commitments to the kinds of things that we're going to do. We've reported it back through the Federal Transit Administration as to when each and every one of these things would be accomplished, and in all—with respect to the things that need to be done with our elevators, all of those will be completed in our key stations by November of next year, so considerable progress has been made there.

On evacuation, we have actually designed a special transport device. It's an ETAC—an Emergency Transport Accessible Cart, or something of that name, nature—which is actually designed to try to be used to evacuate individuals who are in wheelchairs, and we actually test the use of those ETAC carts out each year during our annual disaster recovery drill. Our community of people that we bring into that disaster recovery drill is the disabled community. There are some number of disabled people who participate in our drill, and then we exercise and test ourselves with respect to our ability to evacuate disabled individuals from our trains, and then to be able to move them off our trains and along our tracks during emergency conditions. So we have those kinds of things that we do.

We do have monthly meetings. We have an Accessible Committee that meets with us every month that's got a very long list of agenda items that we deal with mutually with our Accessibility Committee to try to understand what the interests are of disabled individuals and the kinds of things that need to be done, and we have a very good forum, and there's a committee that's set up to deal with that.

And other things that we have done to try and help out in the areas of announcements is to try and have multiple sources of access to information for people. We have our new passenger information display signs known as PIDS in all of our rail stations where we can put up that information for people who have hearing disabilities to utilize the PIDS information. We have Web sites. Our Web page has proven to be an enormously successful thing that people access quite frequently—we have a very technological-savvy group of people who live in our metropolitan area—and our Web page has lots of information on it with respect to the status of ele-

vators that are out in the system and other kinds of things that people need to know in terms of navigating the system.

I might add that the Web page was something else that proved to be quite successful on September 11th. We had twice the amount of normal hits on that Web page for people who were looking for quick, instant information about our services as to what was going on on that day of September 11th, and our call center also fielded twice the number of calls that it would normally field on that same day, as well, for people who were accessing information.

So I'm not here telling you that we're perfect, and I know we have things that don't always work as well as they should, but we are not neglecting those. We are doing our level best to be proactive and responsive to those things that need to be addressed, and then we just keep on chipping away, and the Federal Transit Administration is quite vigilant in looking over our shoulder with great regularity on all of the things that we as a grantee are responsible for doing. As a matter of fact, have a new—their updated compliance review on accessibility issues that's scheduled for next week, so they are very vigilant in making sure that we are fulfilling all the responsibilities that we need to do.

Mrs. MORELLA. Keep chipping away.

Ms. Watson.

Ms. WATSON. One more final question.

Could your tunnel sustain a dive bomber similar to the planes that went into these buildings, and should they want to use that same kind of missile, could your tunnel sustain a dive bomb? And could your tunnels be used as safe havens for people who are escaping the streets?

Mr. WHITE. I think, as deep as we are under the ground, hopefully it is not a probable event that we'll have a large jumbo jet full of flammable——

Ms. WATSON. Anything is probable since September 11th.

Mr. WHITE. I think the one area that we would be more at risk concerned about is our aerial structures would be the thing that would cause us the greatest concern. And, for example, during that particular day on September 11th we do have the one bridge I said that crosses the Potomac River, the Yellow Line Bridge, and what we would need to do is just to be prepared to divert our service or to hold our trains or stop our service in any event under which there are heightened security conditions associated with it.

I can't—I could followup with you, Ms. Watson. I can't sit here. I'm not an engineer and I can't give you load standards and other things associated with how our structures have been constructed. I do know that each and every time we have been building, we are always using the strictest engineering and technical standards that are in existence at that point in time to make sure that we have the, you know, the strongest possible infrastructure that we build. We are not California, like you are, where we have earthquake standards that are in place, but we certainly use all of the other strictest engineering and architectural design standards that are in existence. But I could followup with you later on on some of these——

Ms. WATSON. I raise that question because it was a matter of concern when we were building our system in Los Angeles. Could

these tunnels and these tracks sustain a quake measuring 6 to 7 points? And so if these diabolical intelligent minds that figured out a way to destroy our towers and the Pentagon, anything is probable with them, and I think this is information we need to know from the engineers, so I can put that in my note to you with some other questions I have, and if you could respond I'd appreciate it.

Mr. WHITE. Absolutely.

Mr. TROTTER. May I add to that, we asked that question some months ago. We had an engineer down from, I think from New York City. What would happen if the tunnels were full of water, how would we deal with an issue like that. And he indicated that in Boston, I think, that they had these steel doors that if, in fact, there is an attack inside the tunnel these doors would close, and it would close off a section that would allow water to run into one section but it would be dry in another, so those are questions that we asked.

And most certainly we anticipated some months ago situations like this, and this is why the general manager is talking about how we train, how we anticipate any kind of activity. But most certainly I would think and I think the general manager would also say that you have opened our eyes to one thing that I don't think that we discussed, and that was, in the event of an attack of poison gas, that airplanes, something dropped out of the ceiling, you put the—I don't think we discussed that, but that's something that we could look at.

Mrs. MORELLA. And that's a very good question. I'd like you to keep us all apprised of that, too, Mr. White. Thank you.

Mr. Trotter, I want to ask you a question.

Mr. TROTTER. Yes, ma'am.

rs. MORELLA. WMATA has established, I understand it, Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Advisory Committee. Does the Advisory Committee report to WMATA or does it report to—does it have an executive director, reporting to the executive director? What is the responsibility or responsibilities of that Advisory Committee? How large is it? Can you give us some background information on it?

Mr. TROTTER. Well, I'm not aware of that committee. Mr. White can answer that question.

Mr. WHITE. The committee is a committee to the staff, not a committee to the Board, so I think——

Mrs. MORELLA. Oh, I see, to the staff. OK.

Mr. WHITE [continuing]. Your question was what's the status of the committee. It is not a Board-appointed committee. It is a staff-appointed committee. So the Elderly and Handicapped Committee—and, again, you're challenging my recollection of exactly how many people are on that committee and we probably need to follow-up with you on it.

Mrs. MORELLA. It's a rather new committee though, isn't it?

Mr. WHITE. It has been in existence—here staff is going to bail me out here. It has got its own Chair and 16 representatives, and they have a process that they utilize to determine representation on that committee, and also they self-determine the chair process to that committee.

That committee meets regularly on every single month, and we do it at times and locations that the committee asks for to try and make sure that it is convenient for people to be able to participate in the committee. There really are no limits on the kinds of items that the committee brings to the staff and asks for the staff to either provide information on or to challenge the staff about its performance in certain areas.

There is a regular agenda that is created for each meeting. We make sure that, based upon what the interests are of the committee, that we bring all the other appropriate staff into those committees so that we can make sure that the right people with the best knowledge are actually engaging in the discussion with the committee. And, again, staff points out that we have had this in existence for 15 years, so it has been in existence for 15 years and it's a pretty sizable group and it meets quite regularly.

Mrs. MORELLA. So it's certainly not new, and I would imagine it works with the Access Board, does it not? No? Maybe that's something that we should look into.

Ms. SORKIN. I've actually not heard of it until now, so it might be a good idea to have greater publicity about it and approach some of the local organizations that are involved in disability access to get involved.

Mrs. MORELLA. Good. So maybe you'll do something about that—15 years old. Good.

Mr. WHITE. We'll re-advertise, Madam Chair, and try to make sure——

Mrs. MORELLA. Excellent. That will be good. It just seems like——

Mr. WHITE [continuing]. That more people are aware of it.

Mrs. MORELLA [continuing]. Some coordination would be very helpful.

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Did you want to ask another question right now? Then I'd just like to ask a couple of others, and then I would like to ask all of the panelists if they would be willing to respond to questions that we submit to you in writing. There are just so many questions and just really so little time, and I hate to hold you all up, also.

To GAO, Metro fears that by adopting your recommendations that they should prepare various scenarios on how funding shortfalls would be absorbed by various, you know, asset categories under the infrastructure renewal program or by the system access and capacity program would result in funding sources not funding the optimal capital requirements of Metro.

What I want to know is: do other transit systems prepare capital budgets? How are they funded? And how do you respond also to Metro's concern about, you know, preparing the alternate scenarios about funding shortfalls and prioritizing?

Ms. HECKER. Well, that's a very important question. We did not look at lots of other systems. We do have pretty reliable information, though, that WMATA is one of the very few systems that has no reliable, continual source of revenue. That source of revenue clearly is a key factor for other organizations to do long-term capital planning. They know how much money is coming in. They can

make projections. They can give representations to FTA about the reliability of local matching funds for the Federal share. And, therefore, it can be a more coherent and strategic approach to long-term planning.

I think right now the estimates are that they are about $3.7 billion short in the current plans that are underway for system expansion and system access and capability program. These are two different initiatives, and there's shortfalls there.

Basically, there's a plan every year to just try to get incrementally the most they can from each of the entities. Our concern is that this will—it not only precludes the good kind of decisionmaking that's needed for a long-term view of capital investments, but it will be severely exacerbated once they start looking at these core capacity requirements. They are of enormous magnitude, and really any good system needs a long-term projection source of capital, and we are very concerned about how that would impede good strategic planning and good appropriate decisionmaking.

And, in fact, right now most of the major decisions on expansion are just done by a locality. The WMATA strategic view is really not a key factor, and that was one of our recommendations—that it needs to be a system-wide view and expansion not just by one locality saying, "Well, we're going to fund an expansion." Well, what about the core system where they all come into? Where's the commitment to be able to accommodate those expansions on the outskirts to be able to be accommodated within the core system?

So this is a very severe problem, and while we agree that the current system is that their only hope is to basically cry "chicken" every year and say, "We've got to get the money," at some point there needs to be a long-term solution to this with a reliable source of funds.

Mrs. MORELLA. That gives me an opportunity to let Mr. Mendelson know that we haven't forgotten the Transportation Planning Board. In your testimony you stated that an enhanced funding mechanism or mechanisms are needed to provide a level of financial certainty for regional transportation priorities.

Now, if WMATA suffers shortfalls in funding from its primary sources, shouldn't there be alternative plans that should be implemented immediately? And what would be your suggestions?

Mr. MENDELSON. Well, I did point out in my testimony that the funding is one of the critical problems——

Mrs. MORELLA. Right.

Mr. MENDELSON [continuing]. And the need to find enhanced funding is a priority, one of our priorities. And I also point out in my testimony that the process that the Transportation Planning Board uses is a very complex, complicated process, and it is one that is a combination of factors. It is—first of all, it incorporates all of the decisions that have been made to date regarding what projects, what funding is needed for maintenance operations and so forth. It incorporates—where there are new projects, funding has to be identified for those projects before we include them in the constrained long-range plan, or the subset of that constrained long-range plan, which is the TIP—the Transportation Improvement Plan. And so we don't—there can't be a project that goes forward unless there is funding that is identified for it.

We are—and then the third factor that comes into play is air quality, and, although the Transportation Planning Board is not directly responsible for air quality, we are responsible for ensuring conformity with the air quality attainment plan that is developed by the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee at COG. The—and, in fact, we are right now going through some pain over this because we are seeing that, having looked at the revised or updated emission estimates from the mobile sector—and when I say "mobile sector," I am talking about all motor vehicles on the road—we see preliminarily that we may be exceeding the limits that we have been permitted through our air quality attainment plan, and so we are going back and looking at how we can reduce emissions, and that process—and this may be illustrative of answering your question—that process is one of identifying which ways we can reduce emissions and then seeing whether the States—and when I say "States," I include the District of Columbia—will agree, will commit to fund what those initiatives are, and only at that point do we include them in our formal plans, which begin with the constrained long-range plan, because there is that commitment for the funding. And it is only the projects that are part of the constrained, long-range plan that can go forward.

That was a little bit of a complicated answer.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes.

Mr. MENDELSON. It's a complicated process.

Mrs. MORELLA. You actually got into another question I was going to ask about, the air quality in the Washington region having deteriorated and our danger of being put into a non-attainment classification, and in terms of not being in compliance with the Federal clean air regulations and what that impact would have on WMATA's short and long-range funding for capital improvements.

Mr. MENDELSON. Let me correct the premise of your question slightly.

Mrs. MORELLA. OK.

Mr. MENDELSON. We are a non-attainment area, very serious non-attainment area, and we have been all along. We are required, under the Clean Air Act, to come into attainment—that is, to attain compliance with the Clean Air Act—and we have a plan for doing that, and that plan shows that we will attain clean air under the Federal standards for ozone by 2005.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes.

Mr. MENDELSON. So this is not something new.

Mrs. MORELLA. Yes.

Mr. MENDELSON. We do have this plan. The plan was approved earlier this year by the EPA, and it is also being challenged in court.

The issue is, for us, on the regional level, is ensuring that we continue as we get new data, ensuring that we continue to comply with the requirements of our plan.

The plan requires substantial reduction in emissions from various categories. For instance, if I remember correctly, point sources, which are power plants, the plan requires that there be a reduction of about 70 percent of emissions of nitrous oxides between, if I remember correctly, 1999 and 2003. In the mobile sector—again, that's motor vehicles—the reduction is not as great, but, if I re-

member correctly, it's from about 200 tons per day of nitrous oxides to about 160 tons per day between now and 2003.

And so—and WMATA is a critical part of this because WMATA is not polluting. If we cannot achieve attainment, then we do jeopardize Federal funding, and that was the other part of your question. We jeopardize Federal transportation funding.

What the impact of that is for WMATA is not crystal clear, and Mr. White may be able to answer this better than I. My understanding is that some public transit projects are conformity exempt. They go forward. And other projects would have to argue that they should be conformity exempt.

Mrs. MORELLA. I'm going to ask you in writing to give me your comments about whether there should be a regional transportation group to deal with, as a central piece, transit and WMATA to get your opinions on all of that.

I look forward to sending you a list of some possible questions that you can respond to. Look forward to also particularly hearing about the improvements that are being made and about the planning that you will be doing.

I can understand the challenges and the difficulties of actually prioritizing so that the world knows, in terms of what that might do to the funding level, but it is also critically important.

I probably will be asking you in your questions also about whether you do anything with child care centers. It seems to me I remember one at Shady Grove. I don't know. And as we look to trying to reduce the cars on the road and the use of transit, which is increasing, seems to me if you can cut back on people's need to drive from one place to another, that also helps. So I look forward to hearing about that.

[The information referred to follows:]

November 20, 2001

The Honorable Constance A. Morella
Chairman
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20015

Dear Mrs. Morella:

Enclosed are the responses from Decatur Trotter, Chairman of the Board, and Richard A. White, General Manager, of the Washington Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to the questions for the record from the September 21, 2001 hearing on Mass Transit in the National Capital Region: Meeting Future Capital Needs.

If you need additional information on these responses or have further questions, please contact Charlotte Hrncir, Intergovernmental Affairs Officer at 202 962-1639.

Sincerely,

Shiva Pant
Acting Director
Office of Government & Community Relations

Enclosures

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
202/962-1234

By Metrorail:
Judiciary Square-Red Line
Gallery Place-Chinatown
Red, Green and Yellow Lines

A District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia Transit Partnership

Responses for the Record from Decatur Trotter, Chairman of the Board of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

1. WMATA has established an "Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Advisory Committee." Does the Advisory Committee report to the WMATA or the executive director?

The Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Advisory Committee is an independent body that selects its own membership and elects its own chairperson. The Committee sets its own agenda. WMATA provides staff support to the Committee and meeting space.

What are the responsibilities of the Advisory Committee?

The Committee advises WMATA on transportation issues which affect the transportation of the elderly and disabled and provides consumer participation in the transportation planning process

How large is the Advisory Committee and who are the members?

The Advisory Committee selects its own Members. The current 18 members are:

District of Columbia (2)
Alan J. Blume
McKinley Young

Maryland (10)
Deborah Brown
Renee Gordon
Richard Heddinger (Member Emeritus)
John Jackson
Doris Matchett
Berl Neurman
Frank Serene
Patrick Sheehan
Scott Vining
Susan Holland

Virginia (7)
Adolf J. Bennett
Tom Dowling
Edith Hebblethwaite
Margaret Jemmott
Larry Pelkey
Beth Scholze
Timothy Scholze

Does it review performance of the WMATA in providing services to elderly and handicapped passengers?

Each month the Committee reviews WMATA performance for Metrobus, Metrorail and Metroaccess service for the elderly and disabled.

2. The interstate compact creating Metro is 34 years old and the original 103-mile Metrorail system has been completed.

What changes do you think need to be made in the interstate compact as we move to the next stage of Metrorail?

The Board of Directors is not currently considering any amendments to the Compact.

3. How do the different fare box policies affect WMATA's fare structure of the member jurisdictions?

There are no differences in fare structure across jurisdictions.

For Metrorail, fares are based on time of day and distance traveled, with allowances at all times for the elderly and disabled.

For Metrobus, fares are based on the type of service (express/local), again with allowances at all times for the elderly and disabled. In addition, through the use of transfers, multiple-leg trips on Metrobus can be taken for less than the price of multiple individual full fare trips.

What is the process for the elderly and disabled to become eligible for fare discounts?

WMATA provides two methods for senior citizens to demonstrate eligibility for discounts, by WMATA Senior ID or by Medicare card. To receive a WMATA ID, senior citizens, 65 years of age or older, must provide proof of age such as a birth certificate, driver's license or passport to any local public library or any Metro sales office and fill out a Metro Senior ID application. The WMATA ID or Medicare card (and additional photo ID card if requested) will allow the holder to buy specially encoded Metrorail fare cards and to receive a discount on Metrobus.

Those with disabilities also have two methods for becoming eligible for discounts on Metrorail and Metrobus, by Disabled Patron ID card, or by Medicare card. To receive a Disabled Patron ID card, individuals with transportation disabilities must complete a Disabilities Application, have it certified by the appropriate health care professional, and present it in person to Metro ID Card Office. The Disabled Patron ID or Medicare card (and additional photo ID card if requested) will allow the holder to buy specially encoded Metrorail fare cards and to receive a discount on Metrobus.

MetroAccess is provided for those who are unable as a result of physical or mental impairments to use Metrorail or Metrobus. To utilize this service, the individual must complete the Application for ADA paratransit eligibility and have their disability verified along with its effect on their ability to use regular fixed-route transit by the appropriate health care professional. Once MetroAccess receives a complete application form, an in-person assessment will be scheduled when a licensed therapist will evaluate the applicant's functional abilities related to use of public transit.

What are the discounts and/or special fares?

WMATA's Regular fare is $1.10 (0-3 miles) with a maximum fare of $3.25. Regular fares are charged from 5:30-9:30 a.m. and from 3 to 7 p.m. weekdays. Reduced fares of $1.10 (0-7 miles), $1.60 (7-10 miles), $2.10 (10+miles) are in place at all other times.

Seniors and the disabled with appropriate identification may buy Metrorail $3 and $10 farecards, or SmarTrip cards, that deduct one-half the regular fare for each trip not to exceed $1.60. In addition, Metrobus offers $5 Senior and Disabled passes that entitle the holder to unlimited travel on all routes for a full week. The Metrobus fare for seniors and the disabled is 50 cents on all routes at all times.

The MetroAccess fare is $2.20 per trip.

Responses for the Record from Richard A. White, General Manager, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

1. **WMATA had hoped to begin deploying the first of the 192 new rail cars it had on order this summer, but it had to delay delivery until the rail car contractor corrected technical problems.**

   What was the nature of the technical problems and how were they detected and how were they corrected?

New rail cars must complete a rigorous test program prior to being placed in passenger service. The most important elements of the testing program are the qualifications and acceptance tests, and the safety certification. The car builder's difficulties, primarily with propulsion, braking, and doors, were detected during the qualification and acceptance tests. The car builder corrected the hardware and software deficiencies, and the cars passed the subsequent safety certification.

   What is the current status of your plans to deploy the new cars–exactly when and where will they be deployed?

WMATA currently has twelve of the new cars for service on the Green Line and expects to accept approximately eight cars per month. The first 18 cars will be deployed on the Green Line to provide all six car trains during peak periods. After deployment of the first 18 cars, the cars will be deployed to lines based on heaviest ridership. The WMATA Board has directed that the new cars be allocated as follows: 42 for the Red Line; 40 to replace cars to be rehabilitated; 36 cars to restore the system's ratio of 20 percent for maintenance spares; 30 for the Green Line; 14 for the Orange Line; 12 cars to restore the level of "gap"cars needed to limit service interruptions; 10 for the Blue; and 8 for the Yellow.

   Is there the possibility that there may be similar problems once the new cars are phased into service?

Due to the complexity of the various systems employed on a rail car, problems do surface as the cars are exposed to the rigors of peak period service. For that reason, new car contracts have reliability standards that must be achieved over a three-year period, in addition to the new car warranty which varies by component system from two to five years.

   Why does WMATA continue to order more new rail cars, even though there are not proper repair facilities to service them?

The current order of 192 cars will be delivered over the next two years. The dual use of current specialty-function spaces in four repair shops will enable WMATA to effectively maintain the cars, however, space will be marginal. The delivery of the next order of rail cars will require the construction of additional repair shop facilities in existing rail yards. This issue is currently under

study and a plan will be in place prior to advancing the next rail car procurement.

2. Please explain the purpose and scope of your "core capacity study", what tasks have been completed so far, and what remains to be done. When will the study be completed?

The purpose of the WMATA Core Capacity Study is to identify both the physical limitations of existing facilities (what is the maximum capacity of the existing system) and the Authority's ability to respond to future growth in passenger demand.

The study goals are:

- To determine the capacity limits of the existing Metrorail system.
- To relate projected ridership growth rates to capacity limits of Metrorail and Metrobus.
- To develop prioritized and phased recommendations to incrementally achieve necessary Metrorail and Metrobus capacity enhancements (to accommodate future passenger demand).

To meet these goals the following tasks were completed:

- Development of WMATA ridership profiles for the future,
- Creation of formal definitions for system capacity,
- Integration of the Regional Bus Study with the Core Capacity Data,
- Determination of when ridership will exceed capacity,
- Identification of potential improvements to Metrorail and Metrobus to maximize the existing system, and
- Identification of new connections and line construction beyond the existing system to meet forecasted demand.

The Study is complete, and the initial findings were presented to WMATA Board of Directors for their consideration in September and October of 2001. The Board will continue its consideration of the Study material through the end of the year.

3. What are the key assumptions underlying your future ridership estimates and to what extent do those estimates drive your capital programs for system expansion and system access and capacity?

Key assumptions underlying our future ridership estimates include:

- 3% annual growth in transit ridership, which incorporates
  - Completion of New York Avenue Station (2004)
  - Completion of the Largo Metrorail extension (2004)
  - Completion of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail extension (2010)

The 3 percent ridership growth rate is a conservative estimate of annual ridership increases through 2025 and is supported by both the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) regional travel demand model forecasts, and by historical Metrorail ridership growth (1981-2001). In the past two years, however, Metrorail weekday ridership has increased 14 percent, well above the forecast level.

The future ridership estimates are the foundation for the set of system access and capacity (SAP) improvements presented to the WMATA Planning and Development Committee September 27, 2001.

In addition, the future ridership growth is the basis for proposing a new core line being considered as part of Part III of the Core Capacity Study to accommodate ridership demand forecast which cannot be handled within the capacity of the existing system. If adopted by the WMATA Board of Directors, the capital required for this new line would be in addition to the capital required for the 19 projects outlined in the Transit Service Expansion Plan.

4. How is WMATA addressing the rehabilitation and repair of Metrorail's elevators and escalators? What percentage of total elevators and escalators are currently out of service?

WMATA has an ongoing program of elevator and escalator rehabilitation. On average there are between two to four percent of the escalators and three to five percent of the elevators out of service (OOS) for rehabilitation at any given time.

For the month of September 2001, overall elevator availability was 93.67%. The WMATA goal is 95.3%. Overall escalator availability in September was 88.26%. The goal is 89.5%.

5. In commenting on GAO's report, you said that you generally agreed with GAO's recommendations, but that you disagreed with the recommendation that calls for developing alternative capital funding strategies and project outcomes, depending on the availability of funding from federal, state and local sources.

What is the basis for your disagreement with GAO in this area?

WMATA does not have a dedicated or assured source of funding. The result is that our funding is generated in response to, rather than independent of, our statement of needs. Therefore, to publish a program at a level lower than required for safe, reliable and adequate service would result in a lower level of funding.

Although you have not yet completed your core capacity study, it seems that the costs of improving and modifying the core of the rail system could be very significant and

beyond the reach of the local jurisdictions you serve. What will you do if the local jurisdictions are unable to fully fund your core capacity requirements?

If investments are not made to increase capacity, WMATA would not have sufficient rail cars, buses or facilities to accommodate increasing ridership, leading to increased crowding during peak ridership periods, degraded service quality and ultimately our inability to meet the stated goal of doubling bus and rail ridership by 2025. Doubling ridership over 25 years is necessary merely to retain transit's current market share of travelers.

6. **As the GAO report and testimony states, WMATA operates in a very complex environment and its decisions are subject to final approval by numerous players within the region. In your view, how difficult is it to plan for capital improvements in this environment, and what can be done to redefine the funding process so that longer-term commitments can be made?**

It is extremely difficult to plan for capital improvements except over a short time frame (two years or so). This makes it almost impossible to plan and implement a program for five years or more, which many capital investments require. Two possible solutions to this problem are binding, long-term commitments for increased funds by the federal, state and local governments or the institution of a dedicated source of funding for WMATA.

7. **What type of funding techniques did WMATA use to obtain long-term commitments for funding the construction of the original subway system? Could such techniques be used to fund the core capacity improvements?**

Construction of the 103-mile system was funded through direct appropriations from the federal government and a series of binding commitments from the state and local governments. The same technique could be used to first fund the rehabilitation and replacement requirements and then the core capacity improvements.

8. **Concerns have been raised in the past about WMATA's ability to effectively communicate with local fire and police authorities during emergencies. What steps have been taken to improve your communications and what remains to be done in this area?**

Since the April 2000 tunnel fire, interagency communications have vastly improved. As of January 2, 2001, the District of Columbia (DC) Fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Department began using its analog 800 MHZ radio system within the WMATA underground tunnels. This allows for effective communications between responding surface and subsurface units. The DC Fire

and EMS Department has developed a communications procedure for all subsurface incidents. This procedure has been used/tested on several occasions and has been effective. The basic process is to use the 800 MHZ channel for all unit-to-unit subsurface radio communication, as well as the surface-to-kiosk links.

The radio system is backed up by the WMATA Command Line and by use of wireless telephones. The WMATA Command Line is restricted to select command-level personnel at the scene of an emergency, and is staffed by the Assistant Rail Superintendent on duty in the Operations Control Center (OCC). Most of the underground tunnel system has been wired for cellular telephone capability. As emergencies occur, WMATA and DC Fire and EMS Department are constantly working to address any issues of communication.

9. I understand from the GAO testimony that WMATA is participating in a project to develop and install sensors that can detect and mitigate the release of chemical or biological agents in the Metrorail system.

What is being done under this project and when will it be complete?

The Program for Response Options and Technology Enhancements for Chem/Bio Terrorism (PROTECT) is an integrated approach that addresses current and developing chemical and biological weapons detection technologies and the emergency response to chemical and biological incidents. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority was chosen as the test site for subway protection settings and will serve as an evolving laboratory which, hopefully, will lead the way to worldwide benefit. Other transit properties will be included as the program unfolds.

PROTECT is a cooperative effort among transit authorities, federal/state and local emergency response agencies and government officials. It includes key federal organizations with an active interest, including the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Department of Transportation (FTA) and the U.S. Department of Justice (NIJ).

There are seven major elements of the PROTECT Program: Modeling and Simulation; Engineering – Flow Control; Testing and Evaluation; Detection of Chemical and Biological Agents; Human Factors; Emergency Management and Training; Decontamination and Recovery.

The initial test station is connected and will be fully tested by response agencies and WMATA in November and December 2001. The next phase will include installation of detectors at several more underground stations. Final tests for that phase will be completed and exercised by a full scale response drill by the end of CY 2003.

Has the current emergency situation heightened the need for faster implementation of this project?

Yes. WMATA recently sent a letter to the Administration requesting funding to complete the project.

Is WMATA working with other local jurisdictions and with the various law enforcement agencies to coordinate this project and also have emergency drills?

WMATA is working closely with local agencies, including their representatives on the Council of Governments (COG) to develop this system. Single station response drills are scheduled for November and December of 2001 for District of Columbia-WMATA exercises. Due to its sensitive nature, the drill will test the primary response agencies' interaction with a simulated chemical attack, and it will ensure that WMATA OCC, Transit Police, Safety and Operations personnel become familiar with this cutting edge technology. Federal overview of the drills is in place.

When all "lessons learned" are documented, a full presentation will be made to local response agencies. A presentation on the system, the drill and the response will be developed by the Department of Energy and sent to other locations and transit properties.

10. As ridership increases, the likelihood of injuries on metro trains and in stations increases as well. What measures has the WMATA taken to deal with this problem?

WMATA is committed to safety.

To maintain an appropriate level of safety the Office of Safety has in place a Passenger Safety Awareness Program for both Metrobus and Metrorail. Elements of this program include twice yearly escalator and elevator passenger safety awareness campaigns and the monitoring of systemwide injury statistics for the development and implementation of safety intervention strategies. Safety awareness programs are presented in area schools, and special safety materials is available for young riders.

The Office of Safety has issued, for passenger distribution, a new pamphlet entitled ***Metrorail Safety***. This brochure tells passengers what they should know about safe Metrorail travel. Topics detailed in the circular include escalator use, platform safety, railcar safety, use of the intercom system (both station and railcar), use of fire extinguishers, and the use of emergency doors. In addition, patrons are instructed to report potential safety hazards via the Safety Hot Line (202-962-1057). Patrons are asked to report all emergencies to the Metro Transit Police at 202-962-2121.

In addition, to assist passengers by providing directions, monitoring safety and facilitating passenger flow within the station and system, Customer Assistance Representatives(CARS) are located in every station during peak ridership hours.

11. Could you comment on the downtown circulator transportation service and the Downtown Circulator Partner Group and its impact on the future of our city?

The downtown circulator bus transportation service is now in the planning stages. The Downtown Business Improvement District, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation are developing plans for this service. It is designed to enhance mobility within the core of the District, encouraging tourist and worker travel within this revitalized downtown.

12. The WMATA Board and Mr. White are to be commended for the action during the September 11th disaster that struck this country. Does WMATA have emergency preparedness plans and how often are they tested?

WMATA's response plans take the form of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), General Safety Rules, Special Orders and Police General Orders. Monthly local fire department drills are conducted by the WMATA Office of Safety to hone incident command and response to a broad range of situations.

Response procedures are in place for command of major incidents, bomb situations, chemical and biological attacks and suspicious unknown substances.

13. In the event of an emergency which disrupts the flow of traffic, bus routes are altered. How is that information communicated to passengers and bus drivers?

When an emergency creates the need to alter bus routing, Bus Central Control develops alternative routing. This routing is then disseminated to Street Supervisors, who are sent to key locations to inform the bus operators of the changes.

The routing changes are also provided to the appropriate offices in the communications department to ensure the information is available to passengers through the Customer Service phone line, the internet and regional media outlets.

14. The District of Columbia became a scene of chaos after the terrorist attacks last week. There was a general exodus from federal buildings, tourist attractions, downtown, public buildings, and out of the city. Many people, including members of my own staff did not know if Metrorail was operating or whether it had been closed. The District of Columbia government did not hold a press conference on the situation until later in that afternoon, when the public was informed about the status of the city's services.

Did WMATA attempt to notify the public about their status of operation before the city's press conference?

WMATA informed the public of Metrorail and Metrobus status through constant communications with the media. This was handled directly from the Media Relations office, the Emergency Command Center and the radio and traffic reporters who talk to Passenger Operations every 15 minutes. The same information was posted in the rail system on the Passenger Information Display System (PIDS), on WMATA's website and through the customer service call center.

How does WMATA communicate with the public during times of emergency?

The usual ways of communicating with the public in time of emergency are as stated above. WMATA's media relations department has contacts at each print, news and television venue that they call pro-actively in this type of circumstance. At this point, operating status is communicated through TV and radio broadcasts. Operations will make train and station announcements in the system and create messages on the Passenger Information Display Systems (PIDS) to advise customers of delays, incidents and plans of action. These are also entered on the Customer Hotline (202-962-1212) and on the Internet in the service alert section, when serious, on the home page.

How long did it take Metro to put additional trains into service to immediately accommodate a rush hour passenger load?

Immediately following the notification of government, business and school closings and throughout the hours that followed, WMATA put additional trains and personnel into service to accommodate passenger loads.

When the public is told to leave the District of Columbia during an emergency, such as last week, does WMATA still charge people the same fares?

The appropriate fare for the time of day on September 11th was charged which was non-peak fare.

15. What is the current ridership for rail and buses?

Current Ridership:

	Total FY01 Ridership	FY01 Average Weekday Ridership	First Quarter FY02 Average Weekday Ridership
Metrorail	177.268 million	607,000	634,000
Metrobus	145.540 million	502,000	521,100

How many trains and buses does WMATA have and what is their age?

The currently fleet sizes:
Rail Fleet:

Manufacturer	Series	Number Available	Years Purchased
Rohr Industries	1000	294*	1974-1978
Breda Costruzioni Ferroviarie	2000/3000	364*	1983-1988
	4000	100	1992-1994
Total	[redacted]	*758*	[redacted]

*Note: Four additional Roar cars are dedicated for revenue collection and two were "accident destroyed"; two additional Breda cars were "accident destroyed" and will be repaired.

In addition WMATA has 192 rail cars on order from CAF, which are anticipated to be delivered by end of 2002

Bus Fleet:

Currently WMATA operates 1445 buses. WMATA buses are rehabilitated at 7.5 years or 325,000 miles. The average age of the bus fleet is 7.8 years. WMATA also has on order 185 new buses that will be in service by summer, 2002.

What agency is charged with promulgating safety standards for trains and buses?

Responsibility for promulgating safety standards for trains and buses is charged to a number of federal and state agencies, as well as industry groups. A summary of responsibilities can be found in the Federal Transit Administration July 5, 2001 Report entitled ***Transit Bus Safety Program***.

16. Critical to developing your multi year goals and objectives will be reliable population growth, residential trends, and business. Do you develop those projections or do you rely upon other agencies?

Ridership projections are based both upon historical experience and upon the population and employment forecasts developed by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). MWCOG utilizes a cooperative forecasting process that uses land use, population, and commercial development projections by each of the local jurisdictions in the region to develop a balanced regional forecast.

17. You have developed service reliability goals.

What are those goals, what has been your performance against those goals, and how does that performance compare to national and industry standards for the last two years?

WMATA has fourteen Core Business performance indicators to measure its delivery of Bus, Rail and Paratransit service as well as elevator and escalator availability. The indicators were established to provide managers and decision makers with information that measure the success of operations management and new initiatives. The indicators also serve to inform customers of the quality of service they can expect to receive from the Authority.

The fourteen performance measures, their associated calendar year 2001 goals, last calendar year twelve-month actuals and this year's actual performance averaged for the first nine months of the year through September 2001 are shown below.

The fourteen goals listed below are WMATA-specific as determined between discussions with WMATA Board members and the General Manager and his staff.

WMATA Performance Goals

Rail Performance Goals

1. Service Reliability Index

   Definition: The total number of weekday passengers carried on the rail system without being delayed by more than four minutes or offloaded as a percent of total passengers carried or (Total weekday trips - (passengers impacted by delays or offloads)) divided by total trips.

   CY 01 Goal: 97.3%, CY 01 Actual 98.3%, CY 00 Actual 98.0%

2. Average Number of Weekday Delays

Definition: Total number of weekday delays four minutes or more regardless of cause divided by the number of weekdays in a month
CY 01 Goal: 4.5, CY 01 Actual 4.7, CY 00 Actual 4.8

3. Average Number of Weekday Offloads
   Definition: Total number of weekday offloads divided by the number of weekdays in a month
   CY 01 Goal: 5.0, CY 01 Actual 4.6, CY 00 Actual 5.7

4. Mean Distance Between Car Related Malfunctions
   Definitions: Total revenue miles operated divided by car related malfunctions that cause delays of four or more minutes.
   CY 01 Goal: 66,000, CY 01 Actual 67,805, CY 00 Actual 55,000.

5. Injuries per Million Passenger Miles
   Definitions: Any passenger or employee injury on the rail car or in the station per one million passenger miles.
   CY 01 Goal: 0.53, CY 01 Actual 0.67, CY 00 Actual 0.59

Bus Performance Goals

6. Roadcalls per 1,000 Scheduled Trips
   Definitions: Average number of roadcalls (dispatch of maintenance truck to broken down bus in revenue service) per 1,000 scheduled trips.
   CY 01 Goal: 1.90, CY 01 Actual 1.93, CY 00 Actual 2.14

7. Lost Trips per 1,000 Scheduled Trips
   Definitions: Average number of lost trips (trips not completed or dispatched) per 1,000 scheduled trips.
   CY 01 Goal: 4.00, CY 01 Actual 3.92, CY 00 Actual 4.70

8. Mean Distance Between Failures
   Definitions: Total scheduled miles divided by roadcalls and change-offs caused by bus mechanical failures.
   CY 01 Goal: 6,000, CY 01 Actual 5,455, CY 00 Actual 4,910

9. Accidents per 100,000 Scheduled Miles
   Definitions: Any collision between the bus and another object (regardless of the amount of damage caused) or any injury to a passenger or employee divided into schedule miles operated
   CY 01 Goal: 3.60, CY 01 Actual 3.28, CY 00 Actual 4.25

Paratransit Performance Goals

10. On-Time Performance
    Definitions: Percent of trips within (plus or minus) fifteen minutes of the scheduled passenger pick-up time.
    CY 01 Goal: 92.0%, CY 01 Actual 90.2%, CY 00 Actual 90.0%

11. Total Complaints
    Definitions: Total passenger complaints (mail, e-mail or phone) received by Communications department regarding any facet of paratransit service. This indicator will be rated against passenger trips next year due to the increasing ridership volume.
    CY 01 Goal: 350 per month, CY 01 Actual 483 per month, CY 00 Actual 447 per month

12. No-show Complaints
    Definitions: Total passenger complaints (mail, e-mail or phone) received by Communications department about a scheduled vehicle not arriving for pick-up. Like total complaints, this indicator will be rated against passenger trips next year due to the increasing ridership volume.
    CY 01 Goal: 80 per month, CY 01 Actual 72 per month, CY 00 Actual 101 per month

Elevator / Escalator Performance Goals

13. Elevator Availability
    Definitions: Percent of time elevator equipment is available for use during revenue hours or ((Number of elevators x revenue hours) - (Hours elevators out of service for preventive maintenance, corrective maintenance or overhaul/rehabilitation) divided by (the number of elevators x revenue hours)).
    CY 01 Goal: 95.3%, CY 01 Actual 94.7%, CY 00 Actual 96.7%

14. Escalator Availability
    Definitions: Percent of time escalator equipment is available for use during revenue hours or ((Number of escalators x total revenue hours) - (hours escalators are out of service for preventive maintenance, corrective maintenance or overhaul/rehabilitation) divided by (the number of escalators x total revenue hours)).
    CY 01 Goal: 89.5%, CY 01 Actual 87.8%, CY 00 Actual 88.7%

Industry Performance Standards

The Federal Transit Administration provides standard performance reporting through the National Transit Database (NTD), formerly Section 15. The most recent NTD data available for all properties is 1999 with 2000 information coming out in February 2002. (It should be noted that performance

reporting by various properties can be inconsistent based on interpretation of instructions provided by FTA.)

NTD Definitions:

Major Failures - A failure of some major mechanical element of the revenue vehicle that requires assistance from someone other than the revenue vehicle operator or operating crew (other transit agency personnel working on board the vehicle, such as ticket takers and conductors in rail operations) to restore the vehicle to an operating condition, and prevents the vehicle from completing the trip because actual movements is limited or because of safety concerns.

Collisions - Recorded in the categories with other vehicles, objects, and with people.
Other Vehicles - An incident involving one or more transit agency vehicle and any other vehicle.
Objects - An incident involving one or more vehicles from a transit agency with an obstacle buildings, shopping carts and other objects on right-of-ways - other than vehicles or persons.
People - An incident in which one ore more persons are involved in a collision with a transit agency's vehicle or attempted/successful suicides.

Personal Casualties - A non-collision reported by the location.
Parking facility - An incident in a transit agency parking facility that one or more persons within the parking facility are injured or die.
Inside vehicle - An incident (sudden braking, unexpected swerving) in which one or more persons within the transit vehicle are injured or die.
On right-of-way - An incident on transit agency right-of-way in which one or more persons on the right-of-way are injured or die.
Boarding and alighting vehicle - An incident boarding or alighting a transit agency vehicle (slips, falls, door closings, lifts) in which one or more persons are injured or die. A boarding or alighting incident must involve physical contact between the passenger and the vehicle.
In station/bus stops - An incident (involving stairs, escalators, elevators, passageways, platforms) at a station or bus stop in which one or more persons are injured or die.

Source: National Transit Database Seminar Handbook For The 2000 Report Year.

Insert printed charts.

18. How does the amount of Metro fares compare to the amount of fares of other jurisdictions?

WMATA Metrorail fares are based on time of day and distance traveled ($1.10 - S3.25). Metrobus fares are based on they type of service: express/local ($1.10 - $2.00). Bus fares for local jurisdictional operators are the same as WMATA's except for passes and special discounts.

Fares of other jurisdictions:

- MTA (New York City) Subway and Bus fares are on a flat-fee basis ($1.50).
- CTA (Chicago) Subway and Bus fares are on a flat-fee basis ($1.50).
- MBTA (Boston) Subway fares are flat ($1.00) except for premiums to long-distance suburban stations ($0.25 - $1.50). Bus fares are based on distance traveled ($0.75 - $3.00).
- BART (San Francisco) Subway fares are based on distance traveled ($1.10 - $4.65).

All transit properties offer discounts to the elderly and disabled. Some offer discounts to children under 12.

Are fares used by jurisdictions to support capital projects?

WMATA does not use passenger fares to fund capital projects. Since operating costs exceed fare revenues for all transit systems in the United States, passenger fares would be insufficient to pay operating costs and also contribute to capital projects.

19. How often does WMATA gauge user satisfactions with respect to safety and other operational issues? What were the results of the last assessment?

The Authority began a program to measure and track customer satisfaction in 1997. Earlier this month, the Authority awarded a contract to conduct the *WMATA Customer Satisfaction Measurement,* which provides continuous tracking of customer satisfaction with regard to safety and other operational issues. The study consists of 600 telephone interviews with customers conducted each quarter. Results will be tracked and reported each quarter, with the first quarter, beginning in January 2002, providing a benchmark index.

The 1999 Metrorail Customer Satisfaction Research, indicated that eighty-one percent of past-two-year riders were satisfied with Metrorail. Thirty-five percent of these riders gave Metrorail a rating of "very satisfied," and another 46% gave it a rating of "satisfied." An additional 11% of the riders surveyed indicated a "neutral" rating, and 8% were "dissatisfied" with Metrorail overall.

These ratings vary based upon riding frequency, with the most frequent riders rating their satisfaction with Metrorail the highest.

The 1999 Metrobus Customer Satisfaction Research, indicated that 64% percent of past-two-year riders were satisfied with Metrobus. Twenty-two percent of these riders gave Metrobus a rating of "very satisfied," and another 42% gave it a rating of "satisfied." An additional 24% of the riders surveyed indicated a "neutral" rating, and 11% were "dissatisfied" with Metrobus overall.

As with Metrorail, these ratings vary based upon riding frequency, with the most frequent riders rating their satisfaction with Metrobus the highest.

Has there been an assessment of the MetroAccess program?

A quantitative research effort designed to benchmark customer satisfaction with MetroAccess service was completed in December 2000. The WMATA FY 02 budget includes funding to replicate this research. *The 2000 MetroAccess Customer Satisfaction Benchmark* indicated that, among customers, the perceived value of MetroAccess service is very high. User ratings of overall satisfaction with the service are also high, with a mean score of 7.2 on a 10-point scale. The majority of users (54%) indicated that MetroAccess service had improved in the past year.

20. Does WMATA maintain records of complaints by category of complaints?

Detailed complaint data is maintained and reported each month. The four major categories for which complaints are tracked include Bus, Rail, Other and MetroAccess. In addition, general inquiries, commendations and suggestions are tracked.

Could you share those statistics with the Subcommittee?

Over the past 12 months (September 2000 through August 2001), Customer Assistance received 27,221 complaints that break down as follows:

12,579 Bus complaints
5,990 Rail complaints
2,402 Other complaints
6,250 MetroAccess complaints

In addition, Customer Assistance received 21,249 inquiries, suggestions and commendations, and 6,957 inquires through e-mail and online consumer comment card.

21. What is the anticipated expansion in the system in the next five years and how will that expansion be funded?

Three expansions are anticipated in the next five years: the New York Avenue station on the Red Line is expected to be completed in 2004, the extension of the Blue Line to Largo Town Center is scheduled for completion the same year, and the extension of rail from the Orange Line to Tysons Corner in 2006. The capital costs associated with each of these expansion projects are funded by the sponsoring jurisdictions (the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia) and the Federal government. Once an expansion project becomes an operating part of the regional system, operating costs are fully paid by passenger fares and non-federal subsidies.

22. On Thursday, September 6, this year, the doors of a crowded Red Line train opened on the wrong side of the train – toward the track bed and electrified third rail – at Farragut North. The train was taken to Brentwood rail yard for inspection. The news item said that doors open on the wrong side about two or three times a year. At that time Metro did not know what caused this malfunction. Also, it was reported that the operator did not keep the passengers informed about the problem. Would you please give us an update of the incident?

What causes the malfunctions? Have any passenger accidents occurred because of such malfunctions?

The cause of this incident was determined to be train operator error. There have been no passenger accidents in the history of Metrorail resulting from train doors opening off the station platform.

What should the operator have done and is WMATA instructing the operators of safety procedures as a result of this and other malfunctions of machinery?

The train operator, upon recognizing that the doors had been opened on the incorrect side of the train, should have immediately informed the passengers that the train movement would be delayed until the train and track area had been inspected to ensure passenger safety. The inspections were performed and no one was injured.

WMATA is very serious about safety, and train operators receive extensive training and are re-certified every two years to ensure proficiency.

23. The National Transportation Safety Board recently recommended that there should be increasingly tight standards for medical exams that bus (and truck) drivers must pass every two years and for procedures to allow a prospective employer to ascertain whether the applicant has a drug problem.

What is the medical standard for Metro train and bus drivers?

WMATA applies the standards set by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations, 49 CFR 391.43, for issuance or renewal of commercial drivers license to bus operators. WMATA's collective bargaining agreement with the Amalgamated Transit Union requires that all operators, including train, must qualify as bus operators. The FMCSA regulations require that all operators submit to a medical examination, have a negative drug screen before a commercial drivers license is issued or renewed, and submit to random drug testing.

The Department of Transportation (DOT), 49 CFR 40.25, requires that WMATA request the previous drug test history for safety sensitive applicants for the past two years from DOT-regulated employers within 30 days of the employee performing the safety sensitive function.

Is there a problem recruiting qualified personnel?

Yes, WMATA does have difficulty filling positions although the difficulty is not necessarily related to the drug or alcohol history of applicants.

24. Disabled passengers face several barriers when using Metrorail, among them the malfunctioning of the elevators. You have heard the testimony from the Access Board comparing the inconvenience a disabled person suffers from an out of service elevator to closing down a station for nondisabled customers. This is a powerful image and one that should urge WMATA to keep all elevators in working order, or at least fix them in less than a day. How will you address these concerns?

When elevators are out of service (OOS) due to rehabilitations or extended outages, a "Bus Bridge" is formed and maintained until the elevator is back in service. Signage informing potential elevator passengers that equipment is OOS is displayed and maintained, and the website elevator/escalator outage page is updated automatically when a maintenance order is called in or updated.

When an elevator is removed from service for repairs, the station manager can call "On demand" for a reserve bus which is used temporarily until the elevator(s) can be returned to service.

WMATA's goal is to dispatch a mechanic within one hour of notification of an outage to the Elevator Operations Center (EOC). This individual can pass on pertinent information to our EOC

which can expedite repair and return to service.

25. We have heard many concerns and complaints from the disabled community in reference to the MetroAccess program. First, would you please quickly explain the structure of the program?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires public entities providing public fixed route transportation to provide complementary paratransit to qualifying persons with disabilities. In the metropolitan area this would include the member jurisdictions of the Washington Area Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and WMATA itself. The jurisdictions that operate transit service include Prince George's and Montgomery Counties in Maryland and, in Virginia, the City of Alexandria and the Counties of Arlington and Fairfax. WMATA has been chosen by all these jurisdictions and the City of Falls Church and the District of Columbia to provide ADA paratransit on behalf of the entire region.

WMATA accomplishes this task by contracting for the regional paratransit service, known as MetroAccess, with Logisticare, Inc. Logisticare directly operates the paratransit call center which takes MetroAccess ride reservations and schedules trips. Logisticare subcontracts with a number of local transportation companies, such as Battle, Inc. in the District, Challenger in Montgomery County, Faith in Prince George's County and Answers, Inc. in Northern Virginia to operate the vans used in the service. WMATA reimburses Logisticare for all services provided under the MetroAccess contract and Logisticare reimburses the various subcontractors. The WMATA Department of Operations, ADA Programs Office, provides contract administration for this project, currently in the second year of a four-year contract.

Do the individual counties run programs differently than the program administered by WMATA? (Users of both programs give kudos to the non-WMATA programs and have complaints about your programs.)

Some local programs do offer features above and beyond the MetroAccess public transportation regulatory requirement of next day reservation curb-to-curb lift van service. Individual counties may operate paratransit programs which severely restrict use based on age, income, trip purpose, service availability, destinations and time of service. Some local programs provide escorted door-through-door service, stop and wait service, personal drivers, no fare service - basically chauffeur type service features. MetroAccess is an extension of Metrobus and Metrorail and does not offer chauffeur type services.

How are you addressing the complaints about lengthy holds when calling Logisticare?

Additional staff to answer phones has improved phone performance from 80.3 percent of all calls answered in less than two minutes in FY2001 to 91.0 percent of all calls in less than two minutes in FY2002.

How are you addressing: overcrowding (double-booking) of manifests; lack of efficient plan to notify a rider when the schedule is over-booked and delay of arrival at the destination is inevitable; lack of an efficient plan to notify the rider when the vehicle is running late or notification when the vehicle has arrived early (and late arrivals and pick-ups)?

Manifests are being double checked to ensure that routes are not over scheduled. Vehicles are monitored and drivers are required to report as soon as possible if it appears that they will be late for a trip and need assistance. A replacement van is sent to put the original van back on schedule. If it is not possible to send a timely replacement, customers are called as soon as it is known that their trip will be late.

There appears to be a lack of plans to communicate to riders when schedule/manifest does not permit the direct destination of their trip (drivers often do not tell riders what route they are taking or where they are going). I would suggest that this be corrected.

Customers are advised each time they reserve a trip that their trip may be ride-shared and that extra time, up to 50 percent longer, than a direct trip may be required. It is not possible to tell customers if their trip will be shared until all trip reservations are received.

We have been alerted to discrepancies in documentation of pick-up and arrival time when a rider is asked to sign the manifest. What are the standards?

WMATA is reauditing trip records to determine if drivers are deliberately or inadvertently recording incorrect trip times. Previous audit results indicate that errors are small in the one to two percent range. In the meantime, all drivers are going through refresher training. If a customer notes an incorrect time, the customer should report the incident to WMATA.

We have been informed about the lack of proper seatbelts and the lack of knowledge on the proper way to tie-down wheelchairs and scooters. Would you please comment?

Drivers receive training on securing wheelchairs and scooters. All drivers are receiving refresher training.

Additionally, your customers have commented on the unprofessional appearance of many drivers, especially on weekends; the lack of adequate number of vehicles to maintain the large volume of trip requests; and the lack of proper working air conditioners, heaters, and lifts on many vehicles. We would appreciate it if you would comment on these observations and try to rectify these complaints.

All drivers are required to wear uniforms. Additional service monitors are checking drivers. WMATA provides quality assurance on vehicle maintenance. To ensure vehicle conditions, WMATA will inspect equipment at WMATA facilities.

26. You indicated that MetroAccess service averages 90 percent on time.

What performance standards has WMATA developed for its MetroAccess contractors? Are those standards linked to any financial penalties?

The MetroAccess contract provides a $10,000 monthly incentive for 93% on-time performance. The MetroAccess contract provides a $100 disincentive for every validated complaint made about MetroAccess as well as a $10,000 monthly disincentive for any month that on-time performance falls below 87%. Each complaint is investigated.

The CY2001 MetroAccess on-time performance goal is 92%. In FY2001, $175,200 in disincentives were assessed.

27. What is the status of the installation of the Passenger Information Display Systems? Do all stations have such signs?

The Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) signs are currently installed and operational in all stations.

28. Are there instances when both the escalator and the elevator have been inoperable at the same time at a station? If so, what measures did Metro take to accommodate those that were handicapped and elderly? What would happen if there was a tunnel fire and the elevator and escalator were not working? What is the plan to evacuate the handicapped and the elderly?

As stated in the answer to Question #24, when an elevator is OOS for either extended repairs or rehabilitation a "Bus Bridge" is formed and maintained. When both the elevator(s) and the escalator(s) is OOS at a particular station and there is a tunnel fire or some other emergency, WMATA's Standard Operation Emergency Response Procedures will take effect to evacuate people from stations.

What is the reliability of elevators and escalators in the Metro system and how does Metro compare to other systems. That is a long walk when the elevator and escalator do not work at Dupont Circle station?

How many elevators and escalators do you have and what is their reliability?

WMATA has 576 escalators and 218 elevators. As mentioned in the response to question 17,

WMATA has set reliability goals for escalators and elevators. The reliability goal for elevators in CY 01 was 95.3%. The actual rate of reliability in CY 01 was 94.7%. The reliability goal for escalators in CY 01 was 89.5%. The actual rate of reliability was 87.8%.

29. When Metrorail experiences its highest levels of ridership, usually during rush hour, many cars have "crush loads", where there are more than 150 passengers. These crush loads often threaten the safety of riders.

Is it fair to say then, for those who are handicapped, that these situations become extremely dangerous?

Crush loads make entry and exit difficult for all customers. There is no evidence that crush loads cause an unsafe condition for customers with disabilities.

How can someone with a wheelchair or a seeing-eye dog function in a rail car filled with more than 150 people?

Wheelchair users and customers with seeing eye dogs normally use the open areas at doorways to park their chairs allowing them to egress. This area is open in part to meet federal requirements and is the same area where priority seating for elderly and disabled is made available.

Mrs. MORELLA. And, Mr. Mendelson, maybe more people could also drive hybrid cars. Since I have one, I say that. That, indeed, cuts down on the pollution by, like, 90 percent.

Ms. Watson, do you have any final questions you would like to ask?

Ms. WATSON. No.

Mrs. MORELLA. You've all been very patient. It is a very important issue. I appreciate your being here, and we'll continue to be in touch with you.

Thank you all very much. Our subcommittee is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

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