

## **Title VI Plan**

May 24, 2022



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## Introduction

The Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) is the designated State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrorail system. As such, the WMSC is legally and financially independent of WMATA.

The WMSC serves as the safety regulatory authority for the WMATA Metrorail system, and

the WMSC works in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and WMATA to enhance public safety. The WMSC's State Safety Oversight (SSO) program was certified by the Federal Transit Administration in accordance with the requirements of Title 49 U.S.C. § 5329(e), and the FTA's SSO regulation, 49 C.F.R. Part 674, on March 18, 2019. The WMSC's rail transit experts implement the WMSC's program and focus on verification of compliance with WMATA's safety plans to ensure that WMATA provides a safe environment and transportation service.

The WMSC oversees the safety of WMATA Metrorail through six core functions: its triennial audit program, onsite inspections, safety event investigations, emergency management activities, safety certification, and oversight of WMATA's corrective active plans (CAPs).

The WMSC receives its only federal funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as a recipient pursuant to Title 49 U.S.C. § 5329.

The WMSC does not provide any services or benefits directly to members of the public, and the activities of the WMSC do not confer any obligations or requirements on members of the general public. That said, the WMSC is required to comply with the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552(a)–(d)) and the Government in the Sunshine Act (5 U.S.C. § 552b).

The WMSC is comprised of Commissioners and Alternates appointed by the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each jurisdiction is permitted to appoint two Commissioners and one Alternate, none of whom is a salaried employee of the WMSC. The day-to-day work of the Metrorail Safety Commission is undertaken by a full-time staff of about 18 individuals.

The legal authority for the WMSC is derived from an Interstate Compact, which was authorized by identical legislation enacted by

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each of the jurisdictions served by Metrorail: D.C. Act 21-666, which became law on February 10, 2017; Maryland H.B. 119, which became law on March 30, 2017; and Virginia H.B. 2136, which became law on March 24, 2017. The U.S. Congress granted its consent and approval of the WMSC Compact via H.J.Res.76, which became P.L. 115-54 on August 22, 2017. This legislation is collectively referred to as the "WMSC Compact."

#### **Assurances**

The WMSC carries out its program in compliance with the law and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, and specifically with regard to Title VI and the DOT's Title VI regulations. On an annual basis, the WMSC submits its certifications and assurances in relation to such compliance to the FTA, as required by Title 49 CFR 21.7(a).

## **Title VI Compliance History**

Since the inception of the WMSC, there have been no Title VI investigations, complaints, or lawsuits.

# Pending Applications for Assistance to Other Federal Agencies

No applications to other federal agencies are pending, nor are any contemplated.

### **Title VI Notice**

The WMSC Title VI notice appears prominently on its public website. Additionally, a framed copy of the notice has been placed in the entrance area of the WMSC's office space, and it is visible to everyone who enters the office space. Finally, a poster-size copy of the notice is prominently displayed to the audience at all inperson public meetings of the WMSC

Commissioners. The text of the notice reads as follows:

"Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Other laws have expanded non-discrimination requirements to include sex, age, and disability. The Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) is fully committed to the requirements of Title VI and other laws that prohibit discrimination. The WMSC conducts all of its operations and activities without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, and disability.

"More information about the WMSC's Title VI obligations can be found on our website (www.wmsc.gov) or by calling 202-384-1520.

"Persons who believe that they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by the WMSC under Title VI may submit a complaint to the WMSC. The complaint must be in writing and submitted within one hundred and eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged occurrence.

"To file a complaint, please print the form found on our website and mail the completed form to: Title VI Manager, Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, 777 North Capitol St, N.E., Suite 402, Washington, DC 20002.

"Complaints may also be submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Complaint Team, East Building 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20590."

Finally, information about the WMSC's commitment to nondiscrimination and where to find more information about Title VI is included as part of all public meetings of the WMSC Commissioners,



## **Title VI Complaint Procedures**

Persons who believe that they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory WMSC practice under Title VI may submit a complaint to the WMSC by following the simple instructions on our website. The instructions explain that the complaint must be in writing and submitted within one hundred and eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged occurrence.

A complaint form is available for printing on the WMSC's public website, and the form also appears in Appendix A of this document. The instructions on the website and the form itself indicate that filing a complaint requires printing the form and mailing the completed and signed form to: Title VI Manager, Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, 750 North Capitol St, N.E., Suite 900, Washington, DC 20002.

The instructions further note that complaints may also be submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Office of Civil Rights, Attention: Complaint Team, East Building 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, DC 20590.

The WMSC will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 business days. Upon receipt of the complaint, WMSC staff will refer the matter to the General Counsel who will determine its jurisdiction, acceptability, and need for additional information, as well as investigate the merit of the complaint.

Every effort will be made to obtain early resolution of complaints through informal means rather than formal proceedings. However, the option of informal mediation meeting(s) between the affected parties and WMSC staff may be utilized for resolution at any stage of the process. WMSC staff will make every effort to pursue a resolution to the complaint. Initial interviews with the complainant and the respondent will request information regarding specifically requested relief and settlement opportunities.

A complaint may be dismissed for the following reasons: The complainant requests the withdrawal of the complaint; the complainant repeatedly fails to respond to requests for additional information needed to process the complaint; or, the complainant cannot be located after reasonable effort.

Once the WMSC decides to accept the complaint for investigation, the complainant and the respondent will be notified in writing of such determination within five calendar days. The complaint will receive a case number and will then be logged in the records of the WMSC, identifying its basis and alleged harm, and the race, color, national origin, and gender of the complainant.

The WMSC will provide the respondent with the opportunity to respond to the allegations in writing. The respondent will have 10 calendar days from the date of the WMSC's written notification of acceptance of the complaint to furnish his or her response to the allegations.

Within 40 calendar days of the acceptance of the complaint, the General Counsel will prepare an investigative report for review by the CEO. The report will include a narrative description of the incident, identification of persons interviewed, findings, and recommendations for disposition.

The General Counsel will discuss the report and recommendations with the CEO within 10 calendar days of the date that the CEO receives the re-port, and the report will be finalized for release.

## List of Public Transportation-Related Title VI Investigations, Complaints, or Lawsuits Filed

There have been no such investigations, complaints, or lawsuits filed.



## **Public Participation Plan**

Appendix B provides a plan that explicitly describes the WMSC's proactive strategies, procedures, and desired outcomes of the its public participation activities.

## **Limited English Proficiency**

It is important to provide meaningful access to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP persons), and it is also important to avoid imposing an undue burden on a very small organization such as the WMSC. To balance meaningful access for LEP persons with the resources available to the WMSC, the organization conducted a four-factor analysis, which is summarized below.

(1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee:

The WMSC is not a service provider, so no LEP persons are eligible to be "served" by the WMSC. That said, the WMSC serves as the SSOA for the Metrorail system, which provides service to the National Capital Region.

In the National Capital Region, about 30% of the population speaks a language other than English at home, and 11% of the population speaks English less than "very well." The languages other than English most often spoken at home are Spanish, Other Indo-European languages, Other and unspecified languages, Chinese and other Asian and Pacific Island languages. Consequently, Spanish is by far the most prevalent language other than English spoken at home; however, non-English speaking

<sup>1</sup> Language information cited in this paragraph comes from data summarized by the Metropolitan Washington Council of groups are numerous and dispersed throughout the region.<sup>1</sup>

As noted above, although the WMSC is not a service provider, there are a number of LEP persons in the region. Although it is not expected to be a large number, some LEP persons may be interested in the public meetings or publications of the WMSC. Per the information above, such persons are likely to be Spanish speakers, but they may also be speakers of a variety of other languages.

(2) The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program:

Although, the work of the WMSC to promote and assure the safety of the WMATA Metrorail system is important, few LEP persons in the National Capital Region are likely come in contact with the WMSC or its activities. This is because the WMSC does not provide any services or benefits directly to members of the public, and the activities of the WMSC do not confer any obligations or requirements on members of the general public. That said, some LEP persons may be interested in attending public meetings of the WMSC and/or reading some of the publications of the WMSC.

(3) The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to people's lives:

Although the work of the WMSC to continually improve the safety of the Metrorail system is of benefit to the National Capital Region as a whole, the WMSC does not provide services to individuals or families. The program consists of technical inspections and audits of the Metrorail system's infrastructure and operations, and periodic reports regarding its safety. Metrorail customers and other members of the general public derive no direct benefit or assistance from

Governments (MWCOG) in its March 2018 Language Assistance Plan (LAP).

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any interaction they may have with the WMSC, nor is there any requirement for them to have any such interaction.

In sum, the program of the WMSC benefits the region, but it does not provide services directly to the public. Consequently, for purposes of this question and the program's importance relative to other programs, the WMSC is a program of low importance to people's daily lives.

(4) The resources available to the recipient and costs:

The WMSC is one of 31 SSOAs in the U.S., all of which provide state safety oversight of the rail transit systems in their jurisdictions. The FTA makes formula funds available specifically for this purpose under 49 U.S.C. § 5329.

Unlike all of its 30 sister SSOA organizations, the WMSC is the only one that is not housed within a larger "umbrella" organization such as a state DOT or a public utilities commission. As such, the WMSC does not have access to administrative programs and services (e.g., procurement teams, civil rights specialists, or administrative support) provided by such an umbrella organization. Further, these large agencies that "house" SSOAs may receive funds from several federal assistance programs and other sources; however, the § 5329 program is the only federal assistance available to the WMSC.

The WMSC is a very small organization created specifically and solely to provide technical safety oversight for the Metrorail system. Most WMSC staff members are technical experts in various aspects of rail transit safety. When administrative programs and services such as those described in the above paragraph are required, the WMSC relies on support contractors. Unlike our sister SSOAs housed in larger organizations, when the WMSC needs these services, they deplete § 5329 funds, because there is no umbrella organization to provide such services. Consequentially, the

WMSC has limited resources available to it and is resource-challenged relative to its sister agencies.

Given the above four-factor analysis, the WMSC has determined that there are limited resources available for serving LEP persons who may be interested in the work of the WMSC, and that the number of such interested persons is expected to be low. Nonetheless, the next section provides the WMSC's Language Assistance Plan.

## **Language Assistance Plan**

The WMSC can support the needs of LEP persons through a mix of free services (such as Google Translate) and paid services (such as language interpretation and document translation). Consequently, the Commissioners have adopted an Accessibility Policy designed to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to the WMSC's public meetings and publications upon request. The WMSC's Accessibility Policy appears in Appendix C.

Since the inception of the WMSC, no LEP persons have sought assistance or otherwise contacted the WMSC regarding attending WMSC public meetings or reading WMSC publications or for any other purpose. Nonetheless, the WMSC includes information about the WMSC's commitment to nondiscrimination and where to find more information about Title VI as part of all public meetings of the WMSC Commissioners, and WMSC staff are periodically reminded about the importance of providing timely and reasonable language assistance to LEPs.

WMSC activities designed to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons will be continually informed and guided by any future actual experience.



## Minority Representation on Planning and Advisory Bodies

The WMSC does not have or operate any planning boards or advisory councils or committees, and the WMSC does not serve as such a body. Consequently, the WMSC does not select members of planning boards or advisory councils or committees. Therefore, the WMSC is not required to have a plan for encouraging minorities to serve on such bodies.

## **Subrecipient Compliance Plan**

The WMSC does not and will not have subrecipients, and is therefore not required to have a subrecipient compliance plan.

## **Equity Analysis for the Location of Facilities**

The WMSC has not constructed any qualifying facilities, nor does it contemplate ever doing so. Therefore, the WMSC is not required to conduct an equity analysis.

## **Contract Provisions**

All contracts awarded by the WMSC contain, and future contracts will contain, language related to Title VI compliance on the part of third-party contractors performing work for the WMSC to assure their compliance with this plan and with all provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et seq., and with U.S. DOT regulations, "Nondiscrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act," Title 49 CFR Part 21.

## Additional Information and Investigations

The WMSC recognizes the authority of the FTA to request information beyond what is required by its Circulars for the FTA to investigate complaints of discrimination or to resolve concerns about possible noncompliance with Title VI regulations. The WMSC will respond promptly to all such requests.

## Title VI Plan Adoption by the WMSC Commissioners

The WMSC Commissioners function as the governing body of the WMSC. In that capacity, the Commissioners adopted this Title VI Plan by adoption of Resolution R-2022-01 at their public meeting held on May 24, 2022. The adopted resolution appears as Appendix D.

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# Appendix A: Title VI Complaint Form



Please mail your completed and signed form to: Title VI Officer, Washington Metrorail Safety Commission, 750 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 900, Washington, DC 20002. Note that a complaint must be submitted in writing within 180 calendar days from the date of the alleged occurrence.

**Section I** 

Address :  Telephone Numbers:	
Telephone Numbers:	
(Home) (Work) (Mobile)	
Electronic Mail Address:	
Accessible Format Requirements?	
[ ] Large Print [ ] Audio recording [ ] TDD [ ] Other:	_
Section II	
Are you filing this complaint on your own behalf?	
[ ] Yes [ ] No If you answered "yes" to this question, go to Section III.	
If not, please supply the name and relationship of the person for whom you are filing	
Please explain why you have filed for a third party.	
If you are filing on behalf of a third party, have you have obtained the permission of that party to file the complaint? [] Yes [] No	nis

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## Section III

court? [ ] Yes [ ] No	y otner tederal, sta	ate, or local agency, or with any federal or stati	е
If Yes, please list:			
Federal agency:	<del>-</del>		
State Agency:			
Local Agency:			
State Court:			
Federal Court:			
Have you filed a lawsuit regarding thi	is complaint?[]Y	es []No	
	nding regarding th	stions, please provide a copy of the complaint he same issue or issues, the WMSC defers to	
Name of office or official you believe	discriminated agai	inst you:	
Office name:			
Individual (if applicable):			
Address:			
City:	State:	Zip code:	
Telephone:			
Basis for complaint, check all that ap	oply: []Race []C	Color [] National Origin	
dates, times, witnesses, and any other	er information that rother information	ou should include specific details such as nan would assist us in our investigation. Please al that may be relevant to your complaint. Note:	lso
Please sign here:		Date:	



# Appendix B: Public Participation Plan



## **Overview**

The WMSC is committed to transparency and inclusive public participation in carrying out every aspect of its program. To this end, the WMSC is responsive to the public and the media, maintains a public website that contains a plethora of information about its activities, and holds regular and substantial public meetings.

The WMSC does not provide any services or benefits directly to members of the public, and the activities of the WMSC do not confer any obligations or requirements on members of the general public.

The WMSC is required to interact with the public in specific circumstances:

- The WMSC Compact requires the WMSC to comply with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)–(d);
- The WMSC Compact requires the WMSC to hold public meetings, keep minutes of these meetings, and to comply with the Government in the Sunshine Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552b;
- The WMSC Compact and 49 C.F.R. Part 674.39 require the WMSC to make annual reports publicly available; and,
- The WMSC is required by 49 C.F.R. Part 674.25(c) to investigate allegations of noncompliance with WMATA Metrorail's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.

The next section describes the strategies and procedures and desired outcomes that the WMSC uses to invite and respond to public participation in the above circumstances.

## **Strategies and Procedures**

**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).** The WMSC is committed to the letter and spirit of the FOIA and to transparency in all its activities. The WMSC demonstrates this commitment, in part, by using its website to proactively make public audit reports, safety investigation reports, inspection reports, and other safety oversight documents prepared as a result of the WMSC's safety oversight program.

The WMSC is required to comply with the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552(a)–(d)) and the Commissioners have adopted a FOIA policy and that policy is posted on the WMSC's public website. The WMSC's overall commitment to transparency and use of its public website to communicate program documents tends to reduce the number of FOIA requests received, because the information is already available to the public. When FOIA requests are received, the WMSC's strategy is to execute this commitment by careful adherence to its policy and all relevant law. The desired outcome of this process is overall transparency, timely resolution of FOIA requests, and establishing and maintaining a reputation for transparency.

**Public Meetings.** As part of its overall commitment to transparency, the business of the WMSC is transacted at regularly-scheduled public meetings. Because of this commitment and because the WMSC is required to comply with the Government in the Sunshine Act (5 U.S.C. § 552b), each public meeting is noticed to the public on the WMSC's public website. These notices are posted no less than one week before each meeting, and they contain the date, time, location, and agenda for the meeting. This information is also featured prominently on the WMSC's social media outlets. The WMSC has procedures to invite members of the general public to make comments, within certain limitations, during a portion of each of its public meetings.



In the fall of 2020, the WMSC began livestreaming each of its public meeting, and the WMSC provides real-time English-language subtitles during the broadcasts. Meeting video recordings are maintained on the WMSC's YouTube channel. Maintaining these captioned meeting videos for on-demand public access could be of assistance to persons of low English proficiency (LEP persons) because the videos can be replayed at reduced speed. The number of views of each public meeting video have increased substantially over the number of in-person attendees before the WMSC began livestreaming its public meetings.

The WMSC's strategy is to provide complete and technically-accurate information to the public about its activities during well-attended public meetings. The WMSC execute this strategy by regularly planning and delivering topical and timely public meetings and by careful adherence to all relevant law in that regard. The desired outcome of this process is to provide information about the WMSC's safety oversight activities and WMATA Metrorail safety issues, which establishes and maintains a reputation of overall transparency.

**Annual Reports.** Each year, the WMSC prepares and publishes a report of the safety of the WMATA Metrorail system. The WMSC also prepares and publishes an annual report on its programs, operations, and finances. These reports are made public each year. Additionally, the WMSC Compact requires an annual independent audit report of its financial accounts. Although not specifically required by law, the WMSC also makes this report available to the public.

The WMSC's strategy is to provide complete and technically-accurate information to the public about the activities and operation of the WMSC, its stewardship of public funds, and – most importantly – the results of its mission to oversee the safety of the WMATA Metrorail system. The WMSC execute this strategy by regularly carefully planning and authoring these reports and delivering as required by law and to the public in general. The desired outcome of this process is to provide information about the WMSC's safety oversight activities and WMATA Metrorail safety issues to all interested parties, and particularly to an audience that might not otherwise be reached by the WMSC's other transparency activities. These annual reports also establish and maintains a historical record of the WMSC's work.

Allegations of Noncompliance. Like all SSOAs, the WMSC is required by 49 C.F.R. Part 674.25(c) to investigate allegations of noncompliance with WMATA Metrorail's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. Such noncompliance could result in a safety deficiency; consequently, the FTA recommends that each SSOA clarify how the public can participate in its work. The WMSC complies with this regulatory provision and the FTA guidance by prominently soliciting safety concerns from the general public. Specifically, the WMSC uses its public website, public meetings and its social media outlets to ask the public to submit any safety concerns, and the WMSC provides a web-based form and dedicated email address for doing so. Additionally, the public may use social media to send (e.g., Tweet) safety concerns to the WMSC.

The WMSC's strategy is to encourage the public to report WMATA Metrorail safety concerns and allegations of noncompliance so that the WMSC can take appropriate action to resolve concerns and mitigate any safety deficiencies. The WMSC executes this strategy by promptly and appropriately acting on the safety information it receives from the public. The desired outcome of this process is to continually improve WMATA Metrorail safety and to promote WMATA Metrorail adherence to its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.



## **Desired Outcomes**

Considering the above requirements and activities, the WMSC promotes and encourages public participation by its compliance with the FOIA, holding public meetings, publishing annual reports, and soliciting and acting on any safety information it receives from the public.

The desired outcome of this process is to provide information about the WMSC's safety oversight activities and WMATA Metrorail safety to establishes and maintains a reputation of overall transparency and a historical record of the WMSC's work. More critically, these activities are part of the WMSC's work to continually improve WMATA Metrorail safety and to promote WMATA Metrorail adherence to its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan.

To drive its own continuous improvement, the WMSC frequently assesses the impact and success of its public activities and the participation of the public in these activities, and the WMSC uses these evaluations to make appropriate adjustments and improvements to its processes and operations.



# Appendix C: Accessibility Policy



## **Policy**

It is the policy of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC) to provide access for individuals with disabilities and those with limited English skills to our meetings and publications. The WMSC will provide reasonable accommodations upon request and with reasonable advance notice. These accommodations may include translation services, modifications, or adjustments to a publication or activity to enable an individual with a disability or someone who does not speak English to participate. Examples include:

- Providing sign language interpreters or other language interpretation services. The WMSC will make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests for such services.
- Providing meeting materials in alternative formats (such as translated materials in languages other than English, large print or electronic copies);
- Providing tables that are suitable for people using electric wheelchairs; or.
- Alerting security staff that persons with disabilities will need assistance to the meeting room;

## Meetings

All public meetings webcasts include closed captioning in English. Translation services in sign language and languages other than English are available upon request with reasonable advance notice for meetings that are open to the public. Other accommodations, such as special seating requirements, can also be arranged. Please allow up to seven business days to process such a request. The WMSC will make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests. This assumes that the WMSC is given adequate time to secure those services and that services in a particular language are available within the requested time period.

## **Publications**

All WMSC publications are made available on the WMSC's public website. Alternative formats of publications, including translated documents, can be made available upon request.



# Appendix D: Resolution Adopting Title VI Plan



WMSC R-2022-01 May 24, 2022

#### WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

#### RESOLUTION ADOPTING UPDATED TITLE VI PLAN

WHEREAS, the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission ("WMSC") is a recipient of federal grant funds provided by the Federal Transit Administration ("FTA");

WHEREAS, recipients of federal grant funds are required to manage their programs in accordance with applicable law and federal rules;

WHEREAS, Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title 42 United States Code § 2000d et seq., provides that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal grant funds;

WHEREAS, the FTA requires that all recipients document their Title VI compliance by preparing and submitting a Title VI Plan for approval by the FTA every three years;

WHEREAS, the WMSC Title VI Plan that was approved by the Commissioners on May 14, 2019, via Resolution No. R-2019-06 is due for revision;

WHEREAS, WMSC staff have consulted applicable regulations and guidance materials and prepared an updated Title VI Plan for submission to the FTA;

WHEREAS, the FTA requires that a Title VI Plan be approved by the recipient's board of directors or similar governing entity before it may be submitted to the FTA for review and approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION:

Approves the attached updated WMSC Title VI Plan.

Adopted by the Metrorail Safety Commission at its meeting on May 24, 2022.