

## WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

**Date:** Tuesday, May 13, 2025

**Location:** This meeting was conducted as a publicly streamed video conference. The video recording of the meeting is available at [WMSC Public Meeting of the Commissioners May 13, 2025](#). Commissioner questions and comments are captured in the video recording.

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### MINUTES

| Order of Events | Items   |
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| Attendance      | Commissioners present: Chair Christopher Hart, Vice Chair Robert Lauby, Secretary-Treasurer Debra Farrar-Dyke, and Commissioners Rouse, Conklin, and Higgins. Commissioner Higgins was a voting member for this meeting.  |
| 1.              | <p><b>Call to Order.</b> Hart.</p> <p>Hart called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. WMSC General Counsel Silbaugh called the roll, and a quorum was achieved throughout the meeting.</p>   |
| 2.              | <p><b>Safety Message.</b> Darrell Braxton, Program Specialist, Operations.</p> <p>Braxton shared that May is the Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Water Safety Month. Drowning is the leading cause of death for 1-4 year-olds and the second leading cause of preventable death through age 15. Safety precautions for swimmers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not go in the water unless you know how to swim; swimming lessons are available for all ages</li><li>• Never swim alone</li><li>• Learn CPR and rescue techniques</li><li>• Make sure the body of water matches your skill level; swimming in a pool is much different than swimming in a lake or river, where more strength is needed to handle currents</li><li>• If you do get caught in a current, do not try to fight it; stay calm and float with it, or swim parallel to the shore until you can swim free</li><li>• Swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard</li><li>• Do not push or jump on others</li><li>• Do not dive in unfamiliar areas</li><li>• Never drink alcohol when swimming; alcohol is involved in about half of all male teen drownings</li></ul> |
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| 3. | <p><b>Approval of the minutes of the April 8, 2025 Public Meeting.</b> Hart.</p> <p>Hart sought comments on the proposed minutes. Hearing none, he moved for approval of the minutes of the April 8, 2025 Public Meeting. The minutes of the April 8, 2025 Public Meeting were approved unanimously.</p>  |
| 4. | <p><b>Public Comments.</b> Hart.</p> <p>Hart invited comments from members of the public who joined the webinar audience and who identified themselves as speakers. No members of the public offered comments. Chair Hart also reminded viewers that comments may be provided to the WMSC website, through social media, or by email.</p>   |
| 5. | <p><b>Chair’s Remarks.</b> Hart.</p> <p>Hart began his comments with an overview of the meeting, which included updates on the WMSC’s ongoing safety oversight activities and the actions that are taken daily to ensure that Metrorail upholds its safety commitments and strives to continuously improve the safety of its system. He acknowledged the ongoing communication and coordination that the WMSC staff conducts with Metrorail at all levels of both organizations. He thanked the WMSC staff for its effective oversight work, and thanked Metrorail for its efforts to comply with its safety requirements that provide for the safety of Metrorail riders and workers.</p> <p>He forecast that in the meeting, staff would discuss updates on other oversight activities including those related to audits, inspections, investigations, and oversight of Metrorail’s safety certification. He reminded the Commissioners that they would review and discuss the proposed WMSC fiscal year 2026 workplan and budget.</p>  |
| 6. | <p><b>CEO’s Remarks.</b> David Mayer, Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>Mayer started with an update on the safety certification review for use of Automatic Train Operations in passenger service on the Yellow/Green Lines. At the April public meeting, he recounted that the WMSC informed Metrorail in early April that the WMSC could not concur that Metrorail’s safety certification process adequately identified and mitigated the station overrun hazards seen on the Red Line, and that until it does, ATO may not be used for passenger service on any other rail line. He reported that since that public meeting the WMSC and WMATA engaged in many discussions regarding alternative paths to safely expanding ATO to the rest of the Metrorail system. Also, the WMSC and Metrorail participated in another workshop – the fourth in the series of ATO workshops – to collaboratively discuss how to move forward safely on ATO activation. Based on the discussion between the WMSC and Metrorail, the WMSC understands that Metrorail will provide items WMSC has required to demonstrate that it has accomplished the necessary mitigations. Mayer stated that Mr. Paul Smith will provide more details about our communications with Metrorail, and the next steps to oversee Metrorail’s planned expansion of ATO. He then moved to a review of the FTA Workshop held during the first week of May. Thirteen WMSC staff and Commissioner Conklin attended at least part of the FTA’s annual Workshop for State Safety</p> |

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|    | <p>Oversight and Rail Transit Agencies. The FTA’s primary focus of this workshop was providing implementation guidance on the requirements of the FTA’s roadway worker protection regulation issued in December 2024. The regulation establishes minimum safety standards to prevent safety events, fatalities and injuries to transit workers who may access the rail transit roadway in the performance of their duties. The regulation also requires State Safety Oversight agencies to evaluate the rail transit agencies RWP programs for approval. Mayer reminded that in September of last year, in anticipation of the FTA’s RWP regulation, the WMSC issued an order to WMATA providing requirements to Metrorail regarding its Roadway Worker Protection Program. He also shared that while many members of the state safety oversight community were in the national capital region attending the FTA Workshop, the WMSC hosted an annual membership meeting of the Transit Safety Oversight Association, or TSOA. TSOA is the national professional association that the WMSC helped to create to serve professionals in the transit safety oversight field. The TSOA meeting drew more than 40 state safety oversight professionals to our office space to learn about TSOA and exchange ideas and best practices. Last, Mayer reiterated Chair Hart’s comment about presenting the proposed WMSC Fiscal Year 2026 budget and work plan. Mayer shared his support for the WMSC team’s continued safety oversight work, and the Commissioners’ approval of this important item will enable the WMSC to continue its important work.</p>  |
| 7. | <p><b>Audits.</b> John O’Donnell, Program Specialist, Audits and Corrective Action Plans.</p> <p>O’Donnell reported that the WMSC is completing its second triennial cycle of safety audits, and in June, it will begin the third triennial cycle. He reported that the Control Center and Rail Operations audit that the team reviewed additional information received after the January 14, 2025 exit conference and has revised the report, and conducted a second exit conference with WMATA on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Next, an exit conference was held on March 28, 2025 for the Elevators and Escalators audit, after which Metrorail provided additional information, which is being reviewed and, where appropriate, being added to the draft report. Additionally, the WMSC reviewed the initial document responses for the audit of Metrorail’s Communication Systems, and began interviews and on-site observations. The audit’s scope focuses on Metrorail’s voice and data transmission systems that are presently in use or available for use, such as radio and public address systems. Last, on April 30, 2025, the WMSC sent notification and the initial document requests for the Metrorail Track and Structures audit. The initial documents are due by the end of May, and the WMSC will conduct interviews and on-site observations in June. This audit will include the annual audit of Metrorail’s compliance with its Roadway Worker Protection Program required by the Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection Regulation, 49 CFR Part 671 published on October 31, 2024. Earlier, Dr. Mayer mentioned that this regulation calls for the WMSC to review and approve the Metrorail roadway worker protection program and it also requires the WMSC to oversee and enforce Metrorail’s implementation of the program.</p> |
| 8. | <p><b>Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).</b> Ashley Rhodes, Program Manager for Corrective Action Plans.</p> <p>Rhodes reported that three CAPs have been closed since the April 8, 2025 public meeting. There are 81 open CAPs, and 5 CAPs under development stemming from the Emergency Management and Life Safety Audit. Metrorail has submitted 41 new deliverables for the open CAPs since the April meeting. Next, she provided more detail about the three closed CAPs: C-0134 addressed a finding from the 2021 Revenue Vehicle Audit, which identified that Metrorail’s 6000-Series</p>  |

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|    | <p>rehabilitation program, including coupler overhaul work, was implemented without appropriate safety certification and approvals required by WMATA’s Safety and Security Certification Program Plan. To address this gap, Metrorail revised its 6000 series Scheduled Maintenance Program or SMP Certified Items List and received Safety Certification Review Committee approval. Metrorail then updated its Safety and Security Certification Training Program materials and provided corresponding training to over 300 applicable personnel. To close this CAP, Metrorail submitted the Certificates of Compliance for the 6000 series SMP and Coupler Change Out Project for all 182 6000 series cars as evidence of implementation of the safety certification process. CAP C-0212 was based upon the WMSC’s May 17, 2022 Order on Metrorail’s Improper Power Restoration, which resulted from ongoing WMSC monitoring of recorded systems and investigations that found that Metrorail was putting its personnel at risk of serious injury or death by repeatedly bypassing safety redundancies in power restoration procedures that Metrorail has deliberately designed for the safety of its employees, contractors and first responders. To address this CAP, Metrorail instituted both short-term and long-term mitigations to address immediate hazards while creating an improved system to address power energization including retraining roadway workers in charge in conducting work safely in the vicinity of third rail power infrastructure, staffing the power desk adequately, gradually increasing the number of overnight work locations requiring power management as other criteria were met, and safety certification of the power desk activities at the new Metrorail control center. Last, CAP C-0239 addressed a finding from the 2023 Structures Audit. This finding demonstrated that Metrorail’s Structures Maintenance and Inspections department had not formalized and documented its on-the-job training process for structural inspection. To address this finding Metrorail developed a formalized and documented process for the On-the-Job Training of Structural Evaluation Technicians, including newly defining the standards, curricula, selection criteria, and training requirements and recordkeeping processes for those serving as OJT Training Mentors.</p> |
| 9. | <p><b>Safety Certification Status Report.</b> Paul Smith, Director, System Engineering.</p> <p>As Dr. Mayer stated, the WMSC continues to conduct its oversight of Metrorail’s activation of ATO. The WMSC team and the Metrorail project team met in-person on April 28, 2025, for an ATO workshop, the fourth such in-person meeting WMATA has invited us to attend. Continuing with past practice, there was productive dialog between WMSC and the Metrorail team. Metrorail provided details of a multi-layered ATO governance body that has been established to provide the needed day to day expertise as well as executive level oversight and resource mobilization to identify station overrun causes, possible mitigations and the implementation and evaluation of these mitigations as Metrorail plans to expand ATO to the rest of the rail system. There was also information provided that WMSC was already aware of based on our ongoing oversight of Metrorail, such as roadway worker protection scenarios in ATO, and Temporary Control Plans to provide additional mitigations to control station overruns. WMATA also shared up-to-date insights on the anomalous signal issue that is affecting station stopping at Judiciary Square Station and likely next steps to mitigate the Judiciary Square Station overrun causes. The WMSC team has continued to meet with the Metrorail team at least once each week to share incremental and new feedback, share insights, and hear about progress on Metrorail’s safety certification of ATO activation. As I have briefed the commissioners at the last two public meetings, the WMSC’s focus regarding this project has been two-fold. The two areas are to assess if the safety mitigations for Red Line ATO are having their intended effect, and, using our own lessons learned from overseeing the safety certification of the Red Line ATO, to inform our continuing in-depth review</p>   |

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|     | <p>of Metrorail’s systemwide ATO activation efforts. As ATO was activated on the Red Line, there was a large number of station overruns. There are safety consequences of station overruns, including the possibility of roadway workers being struck by the train. For the past five months, the WMSC has expressed to Metrorail that it must understand the location specific and global causes of these station overruns and find sound engineering and other mitigations for them. Additionally, the WMSC has asked Metrorail to provide evidence of several items which it identified as actions undertaken to mitigate station overruns on the red line. These include evidence that the cancel station stop button on the rail vehicles have been disabled or a performance schedule to do so, along with the governing procedures for accomplishing this change; a schedule to verify that the normalization procedure software update is in place on the 7000 series rail cars; Metrorail’s readiness to conduct a systemwide rules compliance program to ensure train operators, rail traffic controllers and roadway workers are complying with the necessary rules and procedures; evidence that Metrorail has either reinstated the necessary mitigations to keep roadway workers safe during ATO operations based on its own hazard identification at the start of the ATO project; and the codification of the ATO Governance Committee and its operations. The WMSC has also required that WMATA submit a detailed analysis, produced by the ATO Governance Committee, of the station overrun events that occurred during the ATO activation. Such an analysis verifies that systemic issues are identified and addressed, and that safety remains the top priority throughout the transition to ATO. This requirement also ensures that WMATA identifies and corrects potential design, operational, or environmental issues contributing to overruns, and provides Metrorail and WMSC with the information necessary to make an informed, safety-focused decision about ATO safety performance. Once we receive these items, both organizations will have the information needed to consider the use of ATO on other Metrorail lines. Moving on to other projects that have been identified for WMSC’s in-depth review, the WMSC designated the 8000 series rail car for safety certification and asked for access to the railcar planning documents so that the WMSC may provide safety input at the earliest points possible. Metrorail said it will provide the preliminary design document once it is complete. The WMSC trusts that if there are outstanding safety considerations, Metrorail will not assert that the time has passed for changes to be made to the design.</p> |
| 10. | <p><b>Safety Event Investigations.</b> Adam Quigley, Manager, Safety Investigations and Natalie Quiroz, Investigations Analyst.</p> <p>The reports referenced below may be found at the following link:<br/> <a href="https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/">https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/</a>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. W-0368 Employee Injury in the West Falls Church Rail Yard – March 8, 2024</li> <li>2. W-0369 Rail Train Operator Rule Violation (Improper Use of Electronic Device) noted at Braddock Road Station – April 11, 2024</li> <li>3. W-0370 Loss of Communication with Rail Train Operator near Friendship Heights Station – May 9, 2024</li> <li>4. W-0371 Red Signal Overrun at New Carrollton Yard – January 21, 2024</li> <li>5. W-0372 Red Signal Overrun at Dulles Rail Yard – May 13, 2024</li> <li>6. W-0373 Red Signal Overrun at King Street-Old Town Station – June 6, 2024</li> <li>7. W-0374 Red Signal Overrun at Brentwood Rail Yard – July 16, 2024</li> <li>8. W-0375 Red Signal Overrun at Downtown Largo Station – August 30, 2024</li> </ol>   |

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|     | <p>9. W-0376 Red Signal Overrun at West Falls Church Rail Yard – September 28, 2024</p> <p>Commissioners moved to adopt the nine reports. The motion passed unanimously.</p>  |
| 11. | <p><b>Resolutions and other actions.</b> Hart and Kyle Ange, Chief Financial Officer.</p> <p>Chief Financial Officer Ange explained the Finance and Operations Committee’s actions in reviewing the final proposed FY 2026 Budget and Work Program, including the jurisdictional input and unanimous agreement on their contributions. The Committee recommended adoption of the Budget and Work Program. CFO Ange explained the budget total and largest expenses, and that the formulation process complied with the Master Funding Agreement.</p> <p>Commissioners moved for the adoption of the FY 2026 Budget and Work Program. The motion passed unanimously.</p> |
| 12. | <p><b>Adjournment.</b> Hart adjourned the meeting at 2:14 p.m.</p>  |