WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

Date: **Tuesday, August 5, 2025**

Location: This meeting was conducted as a publicly streamed video conference. The video recording of the meeting is available at YouTube Recording of August 5, 2025 Public Meeting. Commissioner questions and comments are captured in the video recording.

MINUTES

Order of Events	Items
Attendance	Commissioners present: Chair Christopher Hart, Vice Chair Robert Lauby, Secretary-Treasurer Debra Farrar-Dyke, and Commissioners Bobb, Robinson, and Higgins. Commissioners Robinson and Higgins were voting members for this meeting.
1.	**Call to Order**. Hart. Hart called the meeting to order at 12:39 p.m. WMSC General Counsel Silbaugh called the roll, and a quorum was achieved throughout the meeting.
2.	**Safety Message**. Darrell Braxton, Program Specialist, Operations. Braxton informed about the signs and prevention of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat exhaustion is the precursor to heat stroke, which is a medical emergency. To prevent both conditions, stay hydrated, take regular breaks, wear lightweight and breathable clothing, use sunscreen, and know your limits for remaining outdoors. He also reminded us to check on friends and neighbors during the extremely hot days.
3.	**Approval of the minutes of the June 10, 2025 Public Meeting and Notice of Closed Meetings.** Farrar-Dyke. Farrar-Dyke sought comments on the proposed minutes. Hearing none, she moved for approval of the minutes of the June 10, 2025 Public Meeting. The minutes of the June 10, 2025 Public Meeting were approved unanimously. She also reported on the closed sessions held on June 10, 2025, July 7 and 22, 2025. During these sessions, the Commissioners discussed only issues related to the internal personnel rules and practices of the agency, in accordance with the requirements of United States Code Title 5, Section 552b, Subsection (c)(2).

4.	**Public Comments**. Hart. 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.
5.	**Chair's Remarks**. Hart. Hart provided 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 also updated on the periodic lunches that several Commissioners and he have had with WMATA Board members beginning last fall. He looks forward to continuing conversations with the WMATA Board.
6.	**CEO's Remarks**. David Mayer, Chief Executive Officer. Mayer began with the process for updating the WMSC Program Standard, including meetings he has had with some of the WMSC's jurisdictional partners that provided comments to the draft. He anticipates continued communication to share WMSC work and hear the jurisdictional interests. The Commissioners and staff are working through all comments received and anticipate presenting the draft Program Standard to the Commissioners for review in the coming months. Mayer highlighted the WMSC's continued work on ATO, including the WMSC's concurrence to utilize ATO in revenue service on the Green and Yellow lines on May 20, 2025 and the Blue, Orange, and Silver lines on June 12, 2025.Mayer also shared positive news related to its notice of non-compliance for an overdue corrective action plan. Metrorail was late in finishing the load ratings on its elevated structures. Since the WMSC issued that notice, Metro has completed the 84 remaining load ratings. As a result, WMATA now knows the loading capacity for each of its bridges. Next, the WMSC and Metrorail's Roadway Worker Protection teams continue their collaborative work to meet the requirements of the September 2024 WMSC order on Metrorail's Roadway worker protection program as well as the Federal Transit Administration's Rail Transit Roadway Worker Protection regulation, which was finalized in December 2024. Metrorail has developed parts of its roadway worker protection program and is continuing to submit training and qualification program materials for WMSC review. The WMSC is reviewing these materials for compliance with the WMSC's RWP Order and FTA's requirements. The teams are continuing to meet regularly, and they recently held the third Roadway Worker Protection Program workshop. The WMSC remains optimistic that it will provide approval of WMATA's RWP Program in the coming months. Concerning the current WMATA RWP training and qualification program, during an inspection of Metrorail records as part of the ongoing Track, Structures, and Roadway Worker Protection Audit, WMSC staff found a number of records did not support that some WMATA personnel are qualified to setup and be in charge of roadway worker safety. The WMSC staff informed the Technical Training and Development Manager that day and sent an email to the WMATA Quality team the next morning. The WMSC returned and conducted additional training

	documentation reviews, leading us to notify WMATA of an Urgent Hazard, which is a process set forth in our Program Standard. WMATA responded to each of the WMSC's communications, including a call last Thursday in which WMATA began defining its plan to remedy the training and/or training documentation shortcomings. Last, on August 4, 2025, the WMSC released its first Special Study. Special Studies are an opportunity to focus on a specific process or program, and in this instance, the WMSC reviewed WMATA Metrorail's Radio Band and Infrastructure Replacement Project. The WMSC audits focus on the existing communications processes, whereas this study focuses on the update to WMATA's radio system. This was in direct response to inconsistent and unintelligible radio coverage being a factor in a number of safety event investigations over many years. Specifically, our 2024 audit of Emergency Management and Life Safety Programs found that "Metrorail does not have a reliable communication system for operations or emergencies." WMATA awarded a 5-year contract to upgrade its radio system in 2017. That work is now expected to be completed in 2027. Non-functioning radio coverage creates serious safety concerns. Our study found that WMATA leadership has renewed its focus on this radio modernization project, and for the sake of safety improvement, it is critical that Metrorail maintain this renewed focus.
7.	**Audits.** John O'Donnell, Program Specialist, Audits and Corrective Action Plans. O'Donnell reported that the WMSC is completing its second triennial cycle of safety audits and has begun the third triennial cycle. He reminded, however, that one audit has not progressed, the 2024 Fitness for Duty and Occupational Health Programs Audit. WMATA has not responded to the WMSC's initial requests when WMATA believes that worker safety information is responsive to the request. The WMSC is seeking relief through the courts. Concerning the Control Center and Rail Operations Audit, the draft report was provided to Metrorail on July 10, 2025. Metrorail has until August 11 to provide comments to the WMSC. The WMSC carefully considers all comments, and the final report is issued only after appropriate revisions are made to the report. Next, the Elevators and Escalators Audit report is being reviewed by WMSC staff, with a draft audit report expected to be sent to Metro in August. On July 24, the WMSC completed interviews and on site observations for the Track, Structures, and Roadway Worker Protection audit. As Dr. Mayer stated, our record review for this audit included verifying the compliance of the training and qualifications records for roadway worker protection training. Currently, WMATA has three levels of RWP qualification: level 4-qualified individuals are referred to as roadway workers in charge. As roadway workers in charge, they are responsible for supervising the worksite and directly ensuring the safety of all work taking place in their respective work zones. According to WMATA, as of July 15, there are 1,246 RWP Level 4 employees. When the WMSC staff began its review of records for Level 4 individuals, they found most were incomplete or not in compliance with the training rules. Thus, these records did not support the individual having the stated qualification. On the day this was discovered, the WMSC told WMATA management what it found. The following day, when WMSC personnel returned to continue record review, WMATA personnel were already on site doing the same. WMATA relies on the training records to know that roadway workers have the knowledge and practical understanding of roadway worker protection rules and procedures. However, the WMSC personnel found numerous examples in which these records did not conform with the WMATA's written requirements. In the weeks since this was discovered, WMATA reviewed a larger sample of 294 training records. That sampling breaks down into two primary groups: those level 4 individuals who have only received their initial qualification and those who have received re-qualification training. Of the initial qualification group: 88%, or 130

	individuals, do not have training records that support receiving their level 4 qualification. WMATA has committed to fully retesting all 130 individuals. The second group, those who have received their level 4 re-qualification, WMATA's sampling indicates that 9%, or 120 individuals, do not have records that support receiving their level 4 re-qualification. WMATA is reviewing all 1,200 re-qualification individuals' training records to further evaluate the issue before determining a path forward on this group. Regarding the Communication Systems Audit and the related—but distinctly separate—Special Study of the Safety Impacts of WMATA's Radio Band and Infrastructure Replacement Project. The Communications Systems Audit is the final audit the WMSC completed in the third triennial cycle and focuses on voice and data transmission systems that are presently in use, like radio and public address systems. The audit also focused on inspection, maintenance, engineering, and other practices for those systems. By contrast, the Special Study focused on WMATA's long-planned, future 700-megahertz spectrum radio system that is intended to replace the current 400 megahertz spectrum system. Although both the audit and the study overlap on the topic of radio, they examine different radio systems. Before embarking on the audit and study, the WMSC carefully considered how to reduce and prevent additional burden on WMATA. For example: Interviews were kept to the minimum necessary: only 6 interviews were requested for the study compared to 26 interviews conducted for the audit. Only two individuals were interviewed for both the audit and the study and for those two, that was a total of less than 1 hour of their time for each which was separated by one month; Separating the interviews allowed for focused discussion of each project area; and requested documents were limited in number and focused on the specific project, with no overlap. The result was no substantial burden to WMATA beyond the required audit. The WMSC continues work on the draft communication systems audit report; however, the Special Study's report was published. As recently as the WMSC's 2025 Audit of Emergency Management and Life Safety Programs, continued radio issues were identified including in a finding that "Metrorail does not have a reliable communication system for operations or emergencies." Metrorail has been working on its radio replacement project since 2015, with the major contract for this work beginning in 2017 which included updating infrastructure required for cellphone use as well as radio coverage to benefit both internal WMATA operations as well as local jurisdiction first responders. This work is currently projected to continue into 2027. To date, the project has cost $569.4 million and has experienced repeated delays. These delays directly affect the safety of the system because the long-term radio improvements and fixes will not be realized until the project concludes and there is a full cutover to the new system. The study found four key reasons for the project delays: 1. early in the project, cellular infrastructure took priority over radio update work causing an approximately 2-year delay, 2. an initial lack of fiber redundancy led to fiber design issues and an additional delay of approximately 2-years, 3. initially, fiber work was scoped to include other projects separate from the radio initiative. This work on separate projects added an additional delay of 6-months, and 4. work restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic added an additional 6-month delay.

	The WMSC identified 64 investigation reports that cite radio or communications issues for events that occurred between April 2019 and July 2024. Additionally, between February 1 and April 24 of this year, there were fifteen systemwide radio outages reported, and radio communication challenges complicated emergency response to a person fatally struck by a train in January 2025. Over the last year, WMATA has reprioritized focus on completing radio fiber work prior to other fiber initiatives. This attention has decreased previously projected delays to complete the radio project. The study concludes by recommending that WMATA leadership continue its new focus on prioritizing completion of the radio modernization project to improve radio communications at Metrorail because of the identified safety concerns associated with nonfunctioning radio coverage. In addition, the WMSC recommends relevant oversight authorities such as WMATA's Office of Inspector General take note of issues with this radio project and the project's progress to date and provide any additional oversight necessary. Last, the WMSC began its Audit of Metrorail's Internal Safety Reviews Program. The notification of this audit and initial requests was sent to Metrorail on July 17. Documents are to be received by August 18. Once we have the initial documents, we will plan audit interviews and observations with Metrorail.
8.	**Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).** Ashley Rhodes, Program Manager, Audits and Corrective Action Plans and Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operations Officer. Rhodes and Rajtik reported that six CAPs have been closed since the June 10, 2025 public meeting. There are 77 open CAPs. They provided more detail about the six closed CAPs: C-0072 addressed a finding from the 2021 Elevated Structures Audit, which identified that Metrorail did not have load ratings for all its aerial structures, which initially was 148 structures. Metrorail the load ratings and they are approved by a professional engineer. CAP C-0130 addressed use of fitness for duty records. Rather than maintain these records in paper form, Metrorail created an electronic system to not only better track these records but to use them for trends in medical issues. CAP C-0098 stems from a finding in the 2021 Roadway Maintenance Machines Audit that several of Metrorail's preventative maintenance procedures specified precise values for pressure or other measurements but did not detail acceptable tolerances. For example, instructions for the ballast regulator and core drilling flat car. Metrorail consulted with original equipment manufacturers to get the needed information to update its documents with tolerances which will result in the revision of 60 preventative maintenance manuals to include these values. CAP C-0215 stems from the 2022 Communication System Audit, finding that Metrorail did not have sufficiently detailed instructions for inspecting and maintaining each communication asset. For some assets that lacked procedures, technicians were creating and using their own unapproved versions. Ultimately, Metrorail finalized seven preventive maintenance instructions. Next, CAP C-0278 was developed following the 2024 Railcar Audit to address that car maintenance supervisors not having access to training records for their mechanics unless they requested them. Metrorail created a training dashboard that all supervisors now may access. They also implemented a policy change requiring supervisors to continuously monitor and reference these training records to ensure personnel have the right training for tasks they are assigned. Last, CAP C-0249 developed from the 2024 Roadway Maintenance Machines Audit, which identified that existing operational manuals and trainings do not provide RMM equipment operators with clear, consistently presented, and easily understandable information. Metrorail created a central repository for RMM

	equipment operators to access manual materials in case they ever need that information. Metrorail also created a detailed design plan template for all RMM equipment operator courses. The design plan lists the minimum requirements for course content, expected training format, delivery methods, and a core curriculum component guide to help make all training courses more consistent with a uniform, complete set of information. This was done in parallel with Metrorail independently pursuing a centralized structure for all trainings, so the RMM trainings are now similarly structured to training in other parts of the organization which provides a uniform structure and content that can be expected by personnel.
9.	**Safety Certification Status Report**. Paul Smith, Director, System Engineering. Smith discussed three key safety certification projects, the activation of Automatic Train Operations in passenger service, Metrorail's Automatic Wayside Inspection System, and the design of the 8000-series railcars. He started with an overview of the WMSC's oversight of Metrorail's activation of ATO. After extensive collaboration to confirm Metrorail had instituted the hazard mitigations it, and we, identified for the use of ATO on the Red line, on May 20, the WMSC concurred on the use of ATO in passenger service on the Green and Yellow lines. That concurrence letter included notice of follow-up oversight and Metrorail's reporting obligations as ATO continues in use. This follow up information provides the necessary safety information for the WMSC to evaluate further expansion of use of ATO on Blue, Orange, and Silver lines. Metrorail continued to comply with the requirements in the concurrence letters. Therefore, on June 12, 2025, the WMSC granted our concurrence for the activation of ATO in passenger service on the Blue, Orange, and Silver lines. The WMSC has actively monitored station overruns using data reported by Metrorail, followed by regular meetings, onsite observations, and detailed reviews of Metrorail's continued efforts to minimize and eliminate overruns. The Red Line, which began ATO Service last December 2024, has experienced the highest number of overruns at 322, in part because it has been operating in ATO longer than any of the other lines. The Silver Line recorded 93 overruns, the Orange 88, and the Blue Line 53 since ATO activation on June 15th. The Yellow and Green Lines, activated in May 2025, have had 54 and 45 overruns, respectively. Smith also reported on data for a more focused time frame, from July 01 through August 01. During that period, the Silver Line saw 53 overruns. The Orange Line reported 45. Red and Blue Lines followed with 34 and 28, respectively. The Yellow line had 17 and the Green Line had 15 overruns. WMATA is using this information to prioritize corrective actions to reduce overruns and improve ATO performance. Some examples of corrective actions undertaken include third rail adjustments, marker coil adjustments, railcar OEM support for software and hardware modifications, operating policy adjustments, operator training, and the implementation of temporary speed restrictions at platform locations with a higher incidence of station overruns. In some cases, these temporary speed restrictions become permanent where they have proven effective, and WMATA believes they have had the intended effect of reducing station overruns. In addition, WMATA has corrected the positioning of marker coils within the track bed. This effort led to the development of a specialized jig, a tool for maintenance crews to use, ensuring more accurate alignment of the marker coils during installation and maintenance activities. The WMSC is closely monitoring these corrective measures—particularly the permanent speed restrictions—in anticipation of formal engineering modification instructions specific to those changes. WMSC is also tracking these developments closely to ensure that WMATA's efforts are achieving the intended outcomes, using a data-driven assessment and prioritization approach. The WMSC is monitoring WMATA's efforts to eliminate incorrect operator use of the "Station Stop Cancel" button that lets the train operator

	skip a station stop. WMATA reported at our July in-person meeting with the ATO project team that its attempt to disable the "Station Stop Cancel" button through a software update on the 3000- and 6000-series cars did not produce satisfactory results. Subsequently, Metrorail established an Engineering Modification Instruction and are now taking steps to physically disable the "Station Stop Cancel" button that Metrorail has identified as having no operational use within its current operating process on those series of railcars. Next, Smith updated on the Automatic Wayside Inspection System or AWIS project. When fully operational, the AWIS system monitors train wheel alignment, specifically the back-to-back wheel measurements which were a critical factor in the October 2021 derailment of a 7000-series railcar and the subsequent removal from service of the 7000-series railcars. These measurements will be taken as trains pass designated checkpoints along the track. Although AWIS can capture additional wheel and axle-related parameters, WMATA chose to implement the AWIS system following the 7000 series railcar derailment event to enhance monitoring and early detection of alignment issues. When fully constructed the AWIS system will consist of six inspection sites. These AWIS sites consist of several cabinets along the right-of-way as well as some track bed mounted components. However, the project continues to face delays related to calibration, power supply, and other technical challenges. Importantly, WMATA has not yet started work on resolving the 25 outstanding items listed in the safety review that identifies and evaluates potential risks. These items must be addressed before the system can be Safety Certified. To support our oversight, the WMSC will be attending an Automatic Wayside Inspection System training session during which WMATA and their contractor (Ensco formerly KLD) for this system will demonstrate how the data is collected, stored, and analyzed when railcars passing through these automatic wayside inspection system sites. Last, concerning the safety certification process for the 8000 series railcars, Metrorail sent several preliminary engineering materials surrounding its 8000 series rail car safety certification. The WMSC team is reviewing these materials. We will communicate our feedback to Metrorail once that review is complete. The WMSC also is requesting a full set of Preliminary Design Review documents, which are needed to review the preliminary safety certification documents.
10.	**Safety Event Investigations.** Adam Quigley, Manager, Safety Investigations and Natalie Quiroz, Investigations Analyst. The reports referenced below may be found at the following link: https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/. Quigley began with an overview of improper door operations events. In 2024, there were 25 improper door operations events reported by Metrorail to the WMSC. As of July 15, 2025, there have been 18 such events reported, an increase from the 10 events reported during the same time period last year. The events being presented today all occurred while trains were required to be operated in Automatic Door Operation. As a result of these investigations, Metrorail implemented corrective actions including requiring involved personnel to attend refresher training on applicable rules and procedures, including door operations. Metrorail redistributed a Personnel Notice reminding all the train operators to utilize the point-and-call method and developed a Rail Vehicle Operator Outreach Program to increase rule compliance regarding door operations. The causes and contributing factors to the improper door operation events being presented today include loss of focus and situational awareness, non-compliance with written operational rules

	and procedures, and including those related to door operation and station servicing procedures. None of the events presented resulted in injury or damage. 1. W-0384 Improper Door Operations at Vienna/Fairfax GMU Station – October 6, 2024 2. W-0385 Improper Door Operation at Fort Totten Station – October 10, 2024 3. W-0386 Improper Door Operation at Downtown Largo Station – October 29, 2024 4. W-0387 Improper Door Operation at King Street/Old Town Station – November 25, 2024 5. W-0388 Improper Roadway Worker Protection at Shady Grove Station – October 10, 2024 6. W-0389 Automatic Train Protection Safety Event at Addison Road Station – November 14, 2024 7. W-0390 Collision at Federal Triangle Station – April 28, 2024 Commissioners moved to adopt the seven reports. The motion passed unanimously.
11.	**Adjournment**. Hart adjourned the public portion of the meeting at 2:41 p.m.