

WASHINGTON METRORAIL SAFETY COMMISSION

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026

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 April 14, 2026](#). Commissioner questions and comments are captured in the video recording.

MINUTES

| Order of Events | Items |
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| Attendance | Commissioners present: Chair Chris Conklin, Vice Chair Devin Rouse, Secretary-Treasurer Don Drummer, and Commissioners Robert Bobb, Chris Hart, and Alternate Member Kitty Higgins. |
| 1. | Call to Order. Chair Conklin. Conklin 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. |
| 2. | Safety Message. Darrell Braxton, Program Specialist, Operations. Braxton spoke about safety considerations that arise in April. Spring rain can bring wet floors, muddy outdoor areas, and fluctuating temperatures, all of which can increase slip, trip, and fall risks. Watch your footing, wear appropriate footwear, and promptly report or clean up hazards. April is also a time for renewed energy. Use that momentum to refresh safe work practices, follow safety procedures, and use proper tools and personal protective equipment. Safety is a daily choice. |
| 3. | Approval of the minutes of the March 17, 2026 Public Meeting. Sec.-Treas. Drummer. Drummer sought comments on the proposed minutes. Hearing none, he moved for approval of the minutes of the March 17, 2026 Public Meeting. The voting Members approved the minutes of the March 17, 2026 Public Meeting unanimously. |
| 4. | Public Comments. Conklin. Conklin invited comments from members of the public who joined the online seminar audience and who identified themselves as speakers. No members of the public offered comments. Chair |

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| | <p>Conklin also reminded viewers that comments may be provided to the WMSC website, through social media, or by email.</p> |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>Chair’s Remarks. Conklin.</p> <p>Conklin began with recognition of former Chair Hart and his contributions to the WMSC. He shared his appreciation for Chair Hart’s leadership and steady guidance of the WMSC, including molding the first group of the commissioners into a collaborative unit where every comment is valued, and doing the same with each commissioner added to the team. He set the tone as the WMSC was formulating its first policies and conducting its first requirements – always reminding of the importance of collaboration and getting input from front line staff. Conklin reported that it is easier for him to take the helm as Chair because of the foundational work of former Chair Hart and thanked him for dedicating his time and talent to the Commission. Conklin opened the discussion to comments from the commissioners, and all contributed their sentiments and words of thanks to former Chair Hart. Next, he highlighted the topics for the meeting and forecast the review and vote on the WMSC’s first strategic plan document.</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>CEO’s Remarks. David Mayer, Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>Mayer began with words of respect and appreciation for former Chair Chris Hart. Mayer remembered that he was thrilled to join the WMSC knowing that Chris Hart was leading it. Mayer then shared his own personal news. Effective June 1, Mayer is resigning from his position as CEO. Personally, he reported the time has come for him to move on to the next chapter of his life. Professionally, he is proud of the oversight work we have accomplished together and the safety improvements that have resulted. He reviewed significant impacts the WMSC has had on the safety of the Metrorail system during his tenure. Mayer also reported that the majority of the WMSC staff, and Chair Conklin, attended the Federal Transit Administration’s annual joint State Safety Oversight and Rail Transit Agency workshop on March 25-27, in Crystal City, Virginia. Tom Zurla and Davis Rajtik contributed to a panel discussion on the use of data visualization efforts to understand safety risk patterns as part of Risk-Based Inspections. Following his remarks, commissioners thanked Mayer for his leadership and wished him well in his next chapter.</p> |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>Audits. Davis Rajtik, Deputy Chief Operating Officer and John O’Donnell, Specialist, Audits and Corrective Action Plans.</p> <p>On March 24, 2026, the WMSC published its audit of Metrorail’s Internal Reviews and Internal Safety Reviews program. The scope of this audit covered the assessment of Metrorail’s internal audit practices and procedures, and associated training for purposes of compliance with plans, policies, regulations, and industry’s best practices. It found positive practices and issued one finding and one resolution. The finding is Metrorail is not conducting Internal Safety Reviews for each element of its Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan as required by U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Part 673. Audits must be done over a three year period and should assess the ASP’s</p> |

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| | <p>effectiveness in driving continuous safety improvement. Recommendation one states that Metrorail should review its record retention policies and assess these policies in relation to its internal audit cycles. To conduct thorough internal reviews and internal safety reviews, Metrorail should ensure that it maintains all business records necessary to permit those reviews to be adequately conducted. Metrorail’s internal audit findings identified four instances when they could not complete the audit because emails had been purged. Thus, the WMSC recommends Metrorail review its retention policies and how they are formulated to ensure that relevant documents exist for the intended audit cycle. During the audit, Metrorail also resolved an inconsistency in the documentation of Root Cause Analyses for safety review findings, including providing documentation of root cause analyses for all findings. Moving to ongoing audits, on April 7, the WMSC presented the preliminary findings and recommendations for the Revenue Vehicles and Roadway Maintenance Machines audit. Metrorail may provide additional information through April 17, after which the WMSC will draft the report. On April 10, the WMSC sent notification of the Automatic Train Control, Signals and Communications Systems audit along with the Roadway Worker Protection annual audit.</p> |
| <p>8.</p> | <p>Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). Ashley Rhodes, Program Manager, Audits and Corrective Action Plans and Bruce Walker, .Operations Specialist</p> <p>Rhodes focused on the WMSC’s 2024 Train Operator Certification order that was effectively addressed through two corrective action plans. In 2024, WMSC identified that Metrorail was not following its train operator certification procedures and was certifying individuals to operate trains who should not have received that certification. This is a safety issue because the certification process is designed to ensure that train operators have the required operational skills to safely operate trains. This led the WMSC to review certification records for all personnel who may operate trains—as these requirements apply to more than just train operators themselves, but also to rail supervisors, and interlocking operators. The Rail Vehicle Operators certification process was completely reviewed and updated. It now features definitions for each task that must be completed and the proficiency standards for each including the allowable time for each task, requirements for corrective actions on failures, requirements for re-training and re-certification and Quality control requirements. The new certification program’s written procedures include specific criteria and training for Certification Officers, who are tasked with conducting the exams of Rail Vehicle Operators. Metrorail executes this certification program using a new electronic examination platform, new electronic recordkeeping system, and data dashboard. The WMSC reviewed several months' worth of certification records, for approximately 245 Rail Vehicle Operator initial or re-certifications and conducted field observations of ongoing train operator certifications. The WMSC will continue to monitor Metrorail’s Rail Vehicle Operator certifications as part of our safety oversight.</p> |
| <p>9.</p> | <p>Safety Certification Status Report. Paul Smith, Director, System Engineering.</p> <p>Smith provided an overview of the safety certification oversight opportunities. He then focused on Automatic Train Operations. Train stopping accuracy and station overrun trends have been areas of attention for both the WMSC and Metrorail. Station overruns carry clear safety implications,</p> |

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| | <p>including risks to roadway workers, potential equipment impacts, risks to passengers when a train overruns the platform and cannot properly service the station, and complications during emergency response where train positioning is critical. Since ATO implementation, both Metrorail and the WMSC have observed an increase in station overruns compared to historical experience. This has not been a short-term fluctuation; it has been a sustained condition, and it remains an active area of technical engagement between WMSC staff and Metrorail engineering, operations, and vehicle teams. Since ATO became active systemwide in June 2025, Metrorail has averaged 216 station overruns per month, with 199 of those occurring specifically in ATO mode. The overwhelming majority involve the 7000-series fleet. Metrorail is currently collecting post-implementation data for this software update in addition to providing the evidence for Metrorail’s purposes, this data will allow the WMSC to continue to evaluate whether mitigation measures such as this software update are producing measurable improvement. Next, concerning the 8000-series railcars, the WMSC is focused on whether the certification process is working. whether safety risks are being accurately identified and addressed. At this time, the WMSC does not have sufficient documentation to trace selected hazards from identification through verification, confirm how mitigation decisions are implemented in the design, or evaluate whether subject matter expert comments have been appropriately resolved. The WMSC received the targeted documentation requested earlier this year. We now will return to seeking the required conformance checklists for design, construction, and testing that have not been provided in a manner that supports review. The WMSC is ready to perform a meaningful Preliminary Design Review assessment but needs the documentation to do so.</p> |
| <p>10.</p> | <p>Safety Event Investigations. Adam Quigley, Manager, Safety Investigations and Natalie Quiroz, Investigations Analyst.</p> <p>The reports referenced below may be found at the following link: https://wmsc.gov/oversight/reports/.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. W-0419 Red Signal Overrun at Eastern Market Interlocking – April 20, 2025 2. W-0420 Evacuation for Life Safety Reasons near Van Ness-UDC Station – May 16, 2025 3. W-0421 Collision at New Carrollton Yard – July 1, 2025 4. W-0422 Collision at Brookland-CUA Station-July 5, 2025 5. W-0423 Derailment near Mount Vernon Square Station-June 9, 2025 <p>Commissioners moved to adopt the five reports. The motion passed unanimously.</p> |
| <p>11.</p> | <p>Resolutions and Other Business. Conklin and David Mayer, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Resolution R-2026-02: Commissioners reviewed the draft Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The plan outlines the organization’s mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals and objectives through 2030. As the WMSC’s first strategic plan, it establishes a clear foundation for aligning our regulatory responsibilities, organizational priorities, and long-term vision for safety oversight. Mayer explained that the plan’s drafters worked at all levels of our organization to ensure that the plan aligns with the WMSC Compact that establishes our independent oversight and enforcement authority. This new strategic plan is focused on a set of oversight priorities that reflect the WMSC’s responsibilities, operational experience, and the evolving safety environment</p> |

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| | <p>of the Metrorail system. The WMSC’s Vision is to be the model of safety oversight, inspiring confidence in the Metrorail system. Our core values are transparency, independence, integrity, collaboration, continuous improvement, and safety excellence. Our mission is to advance the safety of the Metrorail system through independent oversight and effective enforcement. We have developed four strategic goals to help us achieve that mission: Enhance safety oversight and mission capabilities, Foster strategic stakeholder engagement, Promote transparency, integrity, and accountability, and Strengthen WMSC organizational capacity and excellence. The next step is implementation, which will include a collaborative rollout, both internally and externally, with our stakeholders including WMATA, the FTA, and other entities around the region.</p> <p>Bobb moved for the approval of Resolution R-2026-02, adopting the WMSC Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The motion passed unanimously.</p> |
| 12. | <p>Adjournment. Conklin sought a motion and second to adjourn the public meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.</p> |