



2018 Annual Report Washington Metrorail Safety Commission

to the

Commonwealth of Virginia

President of the Senate of Virginia and the Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates

This report was prepared by the professional staff of the WMSC and is being provided in compliance with Code of Virginia § 33.2-3101. Article V., A.1, which requires an annual status report on the activities of the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC).

Overview. In accordance with 49 CFR Part 674, to become fully operational, the WMSC must receive certification of its safety program from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by April 15, 2019. Once the program is certified, the WMSC will be the entity responsible for conducting rail safety oversight of the WMATA Metrorail system, thereby returning control of this function back to the region.

Activities. On March 13, 2018, the WMSC conducted its inaugural public meeting of the Commissioners. The WMSC has met regularly since that time, enacting policies and procedures, as well as conducting various workshops and training sessions to ensure that the entire board has the information necessary to carry out the WMSC's statutory mission. Several WMSC members underwent WMATA Metrorail roadway worker protection training to enable them to have the required training and credentialing to be escorted on various parts of the Metrorail right-of-way. WMSC members also participated in leadership workshops conducted by the FTA to understand the current practices and to gain lessons learned from the FTA oversight team as well as the Tri-State Oversight Committee. Each of these organizations currently has a role in overseeing WMATA Metrorail, until WMSC's safety program is certified.

Commissioners. The following is a roster of the WMSC Commissioners.

Virginia

Greg Hull

Mark V. Rosenker, Vice Chair

Alternate: Barbara Reese

District of Columbia

Robert Bobb

Christopher Hart, Chair

Alternate: Chris Geldart

Maryland

Debra Farrar-Dyke, Secretary-Treasurer
Howard Roberts
Alternate: John Contestabile

Staffing. Following a nationwide search that initiated in October 2017, on May 8, 2018 the WMSC hired David L. Mayer, Ph.D., as the organization's Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Mayer was trained in experimental psychology as a human factors specialist, and he holds a doctorate from Rice University in Houston, Texas. Dr. Mayer has several decades of experience in transportation safety, including seven years as a member of the Senior Executive Service at the National Transportation Safety Board, serving for five years as the agency's Managing Director. Dr. Mayer was most recently the Chief Safety Officer of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

In order to scale and resource itself appropriately with technical experts to credibly and independently execute its sanctioned work program, the WMSC launched an effort to attract a combination of full-time internal staff and consultant support. The WMSC has hired senior staff and subject matter experts as internal hires and sought to expand its technical capabilities by awarding contracts to two rail safety oversight consultant firms whose services will be employed for ongoing support as well as staff augmentation for targeted efforts such as special studies and larger investigations when the need arises. These technical consultant staff will be used at the discretion of the WMSC subject matter experts.

Certification application. On September 25, 2018, the WMSC submitted its application package to the FTA seeking certification of its safety oversight program. This submission is the product of years of work amongst federal and regional transit officials and is a crucial milestone in the WMSC's efforts to assume oversight of the WMATA Metrorail safety. Once FTA has concluded its completeness review of this application package, which the WMSC understands that FTA plans to accomplish by mid-October 2018, transition activities will be kicked off by FTA, the WMSC, WMATA and the Tri-State Oversight Committee (TOC). Transition activities are designed to ensure that the WMSC staff are knowledgeable about all the requisite program activities and are fluent in deploying the program activities. Once transition activities are concluded, FTA will issue a final determination of certification to the WMSC.

Funding implications. Per 49 USC 5329(e) and 49 CFR Part 674.21(a), FTA is prohibited from obligating federal financial assistance apportioned under 49 U.S.C. 5338 to any entity in the state that is otherwise eligible to receive that federal financial assistance if the WMSC is not certified by April 15, 2019. Given that the WMSC is a multi-state approach to meeting the federal mandate, this condition applies uniformly to the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The WMSC is confident that it will receive certification of its program in advance of the April 15, 2019, deadline.