I, Paul Wiedefeld, have read the foregoing pages of a copy of my testimony given during the NTSB investigation into the 10/12/20 derailment in Arlington, VA. (RRD22FR001). These pages constitute a true and accurate transcription of same with the exception of the following amendments, additions, deletions or corrections:

PAGE NO.	LINE NO.	CHANGE AND REASON FOR CHANGE
13	10	"executive management team"; correction
25	2	"Theresa Impastato"; spelling
27	25	"ROCC"; reference to Rail Operations Center
28	4	"track things within the ROCC"; spelling
32	10	"Jayme Johnson"; spelling
7	19	"crew" to new
10	23	"sure" to short
13	13	"mostly" to monthly
13	15	"private" to para
15	3	"to to do
19	3	"attach" to attack
19	9	"trains" to transit
20	3	"applying for" to address
21	25	"rock" to ROCC
28	4	"crack" to correct
28	24	"consummate" to concept

I declare that I have read my statements and that it is true and correct subject to any changes in the form or substance entered here.

DATE: January 5, 2022 SIGNATURE: [redacted]

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:             *
                              *
WMATA METRO TRAIN DERAILMENT  *
IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA,       *  Accident No.:  RRD22LR001
ON OCTOBER 12, 2021           *
                              *
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
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Interview of: PAUL WIEDEFELD, General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Via Microsoft Teams

Thursday,
December 2, 2021

APPEARANCES:

JOE GORDON, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DR. STEPHEN JENNER, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

GREG SCOTT, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

PHILIP HERBERT, Accident Investigator
Federal Transit Administration

DAVID MAYER, Chief Executive Officer
Washington Metro Rail Safety Commission

MAX SMITH
Washington Metro Rail Safety Commission

CARLO SANESI, Project Manager
Kawasaki Rail Car, Inc.

MAURICE WOMACK, Safety Officer
ATU Local 689

MIKE VITALE, Director of Operations Safety Oversight
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

PETER SPRIVACK, Attorney
Hogan Lovells

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I N T E R V I E W

(11:00 a.m.)

MR. GORDON: Good morning, my name is Joe Gordon, and I'm the investigator in charge for this investigation. This meeting is being held virtually via Teams on December 2nd at 11:00 a.m. to conduct an interview with Mr. Paul Wiedefeld, who's the general manager and chief executive officer for WMATA. This interview is in conjunction with NTSB's investigation of the October 12th train derailment with passenger evacuation in Arlington, Virginia. The NTSB accident reference number is RRD22LR001 and the purpose of this investigation is to increase safety, not to assign fault, blame, or liability.

Before we begin the questions, we'll go around the virtual space here and make sure everyone introduces themselves, gives the spelling of their last name, who they're representing, and the title. And then we'll do that with the investigative team first, Paul, and then we'll ask you to do the same. Just remind everyone to speak clearly for the record as we're recording and I'll start off and then send it around to the rest of the investigative group. So, again, my name is Joe Gordon, spelling of the last name is G O R D O N, and I am the investigator in charge for the NTSB and we will go to Steve Jenner.

DR. JENNER: Good morning, my name is Stephen Jenner, S T E P H E N J E N N E R. I'm the operations and human performance group chairman for this investigation with the NTSB.

1 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you.
2 And Greg Scott, did I see you get on?
3 MR. SCOTT: Yes, sir, you did. My name is Greg Scott, last
4 name Scott, S C O T T, and I'm a rail accident investigator with
5 the NTSB.
6 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you, Greg.
7 And to FTA?
8 MR. HERBERT: Good morning, Mr. Wiedefeld, thanks for talking
9 with us. My name is Philip Herbert, P H I L I P H E R B E R T. I
10 am an accident investigator with the Federal Transit
11 Administration.
12 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Phil.
13 And Washington Metro Rail Safety Commission?
14 MR. MAYER: Good morning, all. My name is David Meyer, I'm
15 with the Washington Metro Rail Safety Commission. My last name is
16 M A Y E R and Max Smith is also joining us. He'll be asking any
17 questions from the WMSC.
18 MR. SMITH: Hi, everyone. Well, as David said, Max Smith,
19 M A X S M I T H. Thanks.
20 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you.
21 And Kawasaki?
22 MR. DANESI: Yeah, Carlo Danesi, D A N E S I, project
23 manager.
24 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you, Carlo.
25 I didn't see anyone from ORX and we'll go to ATU.

1 MR. WOMACK: Good morning, everybody. My name is
2 Maurice Womack, ATU Local 689 safety officer.
3 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Maurice.
4 So, as we spoke earlier in the week, we'd like to record
5 today's discussion, you're -- you understand that, okay with that,
6 Paul?
7 MR. WIEDEFELD: Yes, sir.
8 MR. GORDON: Okay, thank you, and you understand that the
9 transcript with be a part -- eventually be a part of the public
10 docket and as such, we can't guarantee any confidentiality or
11 immunity from legal action?
12 MR. WIEDEFELD: Yes.
13 MR. GORDON: Okay, thank you, and you do have a
14 representative with you today, if he could introduce himself?
15 MR. SPIVACK: Good morning, my name is Peter Spivack,
16 S P I V A C K from Hogan Lovells with Mr. Wiedefeld.
17 MR. GORDON: Okay, thank you. So, I think we've got all the
18 introduction there. If -- Paul, if you could give us -- give the
19 team -- oh, I'm sorry, I forgot WMATA.
20 Mike, thanks for the hand.
21 MR. VITALE: Oh, that's okay, Joe. So, I'm Mike Vitale,
22 V I T A L E. I'm the director of Operations Safety Oversight with
23 WMATA.
24 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you, and I will not forget you
25 when we get around to questions. I just -- I didn't have my list

1 made out clearly.

2 INTERVIEW OF PAUL WIEDEFELD

3 BY MR. GORDON:

4 Q. So, yeah, Paul, if you could just give us kind of an overview
5 of your time there with WMATA, when you came, you know, some of
6 the challenges that you had when you got there, and some of the
7 things that have been done -- things that have been put in place,
8 you know, since you took that position?

9 A. Sure. I've been here six years, I actually this past
10 November 30th. I came in at a very difficult time for the agency.
11 As you know, we had a serious accident several months before I
12 arrived here. Basically, the first few months focused on just
13 where we were -- trying to get an understanding of where we were
14 and to be frank, we had lost credibility with our stake holders
15 and with our customers and had a lot of work to do. So, focused
16 primarily on trying to rebuild that credibility and a lot of that
17 focused on reliability and safety in the system. So, that led to
18 a number of things and it required a revamping of the entire
19 team -- just about the entire team. We brought in some crew, high
20 quality people in our safety office, in our operations office, in
21 our administrative office across the board. So, that was the
22 primary focus.

23 Basically, I was dealing with some critical issues that we
24 had in the system, particularly on the track side and some of the
25 power issues that we had. I had to do some very dramatic movement

in that area to get some of those things moving in the right direction. It had quite a bit of impact on our customers with some of the things we had to do, like safe track. We had a few (indiscernible) that was a very big effort. We have continued that sort of approach and that philosophy as we progressed. The main would be the platform work that we've been over the last two years and we've had to impact our customers, but to do good in the long run. So, that's been the general approach that we've taken and continue to take here at Metro.

Q. Okay, thank you, and you mentioned some issues with track and power --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Joe, you're on mute.

MR. GORDON: Oh, thank you.

BY MR. GORDON:

Q. Yeah, you mentioned some issues with track and power that, you know, took some significant work to correct those issues. How were the issues that required -- you know, required that effort -- how were those issues brought to your attention in the track and power side?

A. It was a combination of things. We had -- there was quite a bit of history on those issues going in, obviously, related to the incidents that we had in the past. So, they were -- a lot of those were sort of known issues that had been pushed off that I felt we could not push off any longer. We had to take, again, the actions needed that -- both from a customer standpoint, the

1 impacts it would have, obviously the financial investment it would
2 take to do it, which also led us to receive our first dedicated
3 revenue because that was driven around the same concept for us to
4 get this system safe and reliable. We've got to invest in it, and
5 we also have to unfortunately cause some pain for our customers as
6 we do that until we pull out of this.
7 So, it was -- a lot of it was -- just about all of it was
8 known things that were out there that just for lots of reasons
9 hadn't been addressed over the years. And so, we sort of took a
10 new approach that we could not push those things down the road any
11 further and even the platforms today is a good example of that. I
12 mean, the crumbling platforms had been known for years, but the
13 pain of getting in there and doing it had, you know, obviously
14 prevented people from doing that. But that was just a change of
15 philosophy and it's a part of the reason to do it.
16 Q. Okay, thank you for that. So, kind of switching over to the
17 7K Series cars, were you aware of any issues with the 7K Series
18 cars prior to the October 12th accident -- and dealing primarily
19 with what we would consider to be a safety issue with the 7K's?
20 A. Now, on the terms of the back-to-back, I learned of that
21 almost simultaneously as you all did, as we worked through this.
22 You know, the derailment, you know, I was looking at it from -- I
23 physically went down and looked at it and all of that, but I think
24 initially we were focusing on the frog issue and then this thing
25 evolved. As we got into it further, we learned more and that's

1 when it came to light to me.
2 Q. Okay, and since then, have you seen any of the historical
3 information as far as what was known to the car engineering and
4 maintenance side of the house as far as the back-to-back failures
5 that go back to 2017? Have you seen any of that information?
6 A. I've heard different pieces of information, both in terms of
7 some comments have been made publicly by different entities and
8 some of the things in the press where it's been alluded to
9 different things. But in terms of specifics, no.
10 MR. GORDON: Okay. All right, that's what I've got for the
11 first round. I want to get the rest of the team involved there,
12 so we'll go to FTA.
13 Phil, do you have any questions currently?
14 MR. HERBERT: Yeah, you don't want to go to Steve Jenner?
15 MR. GORDON: No, I'll get Steve before the end.
16 MR. HERBERT: Okay.
17 MR. GORDON: Yep.
18 BY MR. HERBERT:
19 Q. Mr. Wiedefeld, you just had mentioned something that kind of
20 piqued my interest. You said a frog issue, can you talk about
21 that and let me know what was that?
22 A. Initial reports -- I thought the initial focus of some of our
23 staff and I thought NTSB was sure of where the derailment
24 occurred, there was a frog that apparently -- that maybe was a
25 suspect of a potential issue that would've caused the derailment.

1 That was within, you know, I think the very immediate
2 investigation when people went out sort of looking at things and
3 that's what I knew about it.
4 Q. Okay, so you weren't aware of a frog issue before the
5 derailment?
6 A. No.
7 MR. HERBERT: Oh, okay. All right, that's all I have.
8 Thanks.
9 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you, Phil.
10 And we'll go to the Metro Rail Safety Commission. Any
11 questions, Max?
12 BY MR. SMITH:
13 Q. I guess just to start just with some follow up just on that
14 question related to the -- what was known back to 2017 and kind of
15 through today. Just to confirm, we were discussing both you
16 not -- this not being raised to you in 2017, but also not at any
17 point prior to the derailment, is that correct?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. And since the derailment, have you gotten any other
20 information about why that was not raised to you?
21 A. No, because that -- I'm leaving that to the investigation.
22 Q. And are -- were you -- I guess as far as when -- just to get
23 a feel for your level of involvement and what other types of
24 things you might've been aware of with the 7,000 Series cars, were
25 there other issues that did get raised to you during your time as

1 general manager?
2 A. Yeah, the biggest focus for me on the 7,000's was
3 contractually, we were basically -- you know, we were -- we
4 should've have gotten a certain amount delivered on the cycle and
5 they weren't being delivered. So, my focus was more on getting
6 the attention of the contractor to meet that contractual need.
7 So, that's where my focus was. Along the way, you know, different
8 issues popped up that we talked about, but my sole focus was look,
9 we have a contract with you, where are you on delivering what we
10 had asked for and what we basically paid for. So, that had been
11 my greatest focus on the 7K's.
12 Q. And when there were those issues that popped up, what level
13 of detail was typically provided to you about the issue or what
14 was being done to address an issue?
15 A. The general -- look, I'm not a -- you know, I'm not an
16 engineer, I'm not a technician, but basically it would be, like,
17 we're having issues with the A/C, right, and then the people that
18 work on A/C are working through that. So, I knew there was, you
19 know, this issue of A/C. So, it was things like that, but it was
20 not -- you know, they were just things that maintenance people
21 were working through it with a new vehicle and they were trying to
22 get it to be right. And again, it was more from my -- from my
23 perspective in particular, it was more this is a product -- it's a
24 brand-new product, why isn't it performing the way I want it to
25 perform and why aren't we getting the delivery that we paid for

1 and that was sort of my focus -- or that is my focus.
2 Q. Okay, and, you know, bringing us forward maybe to 2019, 2020,
3 2021, what -- are there certain types of information, or reports,
4 or data that you get on a regular basis about hazards, or
5 performance, or anything like that?
6 A. From a few perspectives, I get obviously -- you know, I hold
7 weekly meetings with my entire (indiscernible) teams. So, if
8 there's any issues, it's either coming from operations, or from
9 the safety office. They come up there if it's -- again, at that
10 level that not only myself, but these extra-management team needs
11 to understand whether it's some sort of recurring issue that we
12 need to get something moving on something or something like that.
13 We have mostly executive safety meetings that I participate in and
14 again, that's agency wide that we're bringing up a series of
15 issues. So, not just rail, it's private transit, it's bus, and a
16 lot of that's fed through the sort of local safety groups that we
17 have, you know, within the organization. But for me -- for my
18 level, it comes at those executive safety meetings.
19 Q. Okay, and is there -- but I guess as far as hazards or risks
20 and things like that, is that -- is there any kind of document
21 that comes -- has a chart or anything like -- I'm just wondering
22 if there's something that kind of -- document or something that
23 should be looked at here?
24 A. There -- I'm certain there is at different levels, but at my
25 level, that is not what -- you know, that I've asked for, it is

1 something we're moving forward with that we'll discuss later. But
2 no, that is something that is done within a very large
3 organization that people are monitoring lots of things and I
4 expect them to raise it to me at the executive level when it
5 reaches that part.
6 MR. SMITH: Okay.
7 I think that's it for me right now, Joe.
8 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you, Max.
9 We'll go to WMATA. Mike Vitale, any questions?
10 BY MR. VITALE:
11 Q. Yes, Mr. Wiedefeld, can you discuss sort of what our response
12 to learning about the back-to-back issues has been and sort of the
13 actions we took immediately following the derailment?
14 A. Yeah, so, you know, I think during the conversation we had
15 even prior to I think the -- I think it was a Sunday -- I think
16 the Saturday before or the Saturday we had some issues where we
17 were uncertain where certain things were. And basically, we had
18 suggested this is where we were doing train testing and I
19 think -- if I recall and there was some uncertainty to that and I
20 said no, then we're not going to put those trains back in either.
21 So, that was just -- you know, we have to be extremely
22 conservative and then honestly, during the conversation where we
23 learned more on our Sunday -- I think it was a Sunday evening
24 call -- you know, I was of the same mindset that the WMSC which
25 was okay, we've got to pull this fleet down until we figure out

1 what's going on here. So, since that time, everyone I think has
2 been working together. It's like, now, what are we going
3 to -- how do we move forward, how to we get to just the immediate
4 issue of how are we monitoring what's going on with the fleet and
5 then obviously providing all the assistance we can in getting to
6 the root cause of these issues.
7 Q. Okay, we had a good conversation with Theresa (ph.) yesterday
8 about improvements that would come as a result of this incident,
9 but also that have just been made in the Safety department in
10 general for following the FTA's implementation of SMS and things
11 like that. Can you discuss for us sort of your role in that
12 process maybe for speed development and things like that?
13 A. The thing -- you know, my role, again, at my level is to give
14 support and then basically champion what we're trying to do with,
15 you know, those types of programs. I don't get down into the
16 detail of the programs. But it's basically creating the resources
17 for the safety office to do that, to bring it to the board to make
18 sure that they understand it so that we get the support from them
19 for the financial because a lot of this eventually runs down to
20 getting people and money to do things, getting contractors on
21 board. So, it's more at that level and then I do rely on the
22 professionals we have that know this side of -- this stuff inside
23 and out to do the work.
24 Q. And I know we all know the answer, so just to get it on the
25 record, you assign the agencies that depend on the board for that

1 as well?
2 A. Yeah, of course, yes.
3 Q. Okay, another conversation that we had with Theresa was sort
4 of increasing safety development and safety certification projects
5 moving forward. Can you -- I guess really -- and this can be
6 brief, can you talk about how you're supporting us -- or safety in
7 doing that?
8 A. Yeah, in a number of areas, what I've tried to do
9 is -- safety should be basically the lead on these things and
10 then, you know, the organization has to understand that meaning
11 the operations of the house, the (indiscernible) people that
12 safety is -- you know, they're here to keep everyone safe, and
13 it's their role, and they have the responsibility, and they have
14 the authority of me to do that. So, there's been a number of
15 things we've done organizationally to support that and again, over
16 on the resource side.
17 MR. VITALE: Thank you.
18 Joe, that was all the questions that I had.
19 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you, Mike.
20 And we'll go to Kawasaki, Carlo, do you have any questions?
21 MR. DANESI: No, sir, I have no questions. Thank you,
22 though, very much.
23 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you.
24 And ATU, Maurice?
25 MR. WOMACK: Yes.

1 BY MR. WOMACK:
2 Q. Hey, Paul, how're you doing?
3 A. Good, sir.
4 Q. All right, with the mention of safe track and some of the
5 issues that you ran into once you came in, did -- is there any
6 indication that the 7,000 Series trains wasn't a really good fit
7 for the rail system at that time? Is there any indications of
8 that?
9 A. No.
10 MR. WOMACK: Okay, that's all I have.
11 MR. GORDON: Okay, thank you, Maurice.
12 And we'll go to Steve Jenner, any questions?
13 DR. JENNER: Yes, a few, thank you.
14 BY DR. JENNER:
15 Q. And thank you for taking time to talk with us today.
16 Earlier, you talked about some specific challenges that you faced
17 when you first came aboard six years ago with the track and power.
18 Can you comment on any organizational level challenges that you
19 identified such as communication and coordination between the
20 different offices?
21 A. Yes, quite a bit on the operation side of the house. So,
22 there were significant changes that had to be made there because
23 of both communication breakdown, some of the cultural issues that
24 I saw, some leadership issues that I saw. So, there had to be
25 some changes there that had to be made and then just a new way of

1 doing business and that's sort of why focused on that. It's got
2 to be safety trumps service because we had a mentality that other
3 transit properties have. And my experience up in Baltimore is
4 that the service is what turned everything and that -- you know,
5 the fear of leaving people, you know, at a bus stop or at a rail
6 station overruled safety concerns and we had to get that flipped.
7 So, that's what needed to be done. It required making some
8 significant changes with personnel at that level, and then
9 revamping some of those processes, and then basically, making the
10 commitment to do the work.
11 Q. Okay, thank you, and I apologize for the background noise.
12 Well, as we know, you know, changing something like safety culture
13 doesn't happen overnight; that takes time. Where do you think you
14 are -- it's a very abstract and general term, so however you
15 conceive of that construct, where do you think you are as an
16 organization and where would you like to be?
17 A. I think we've moved it quite a bit over the last few years
18 and we got a ways to go. I don't think you ever quite get to a
19 pure safety culture. I mean, I think there will always be other
20 pressures and we're dealing with humans, right. So -- but I think
21 we've made significant strides in that and I think across the
22 board -- I mean, a lot of my focus has been on talking to
23 employees, you know, trying to get them to understand because
24 that's, at the end of the day, where we need it the most. I do
25 know that there is an appreciation of it. I've seen it from our

1 front-line employees, so that's a good thing to me. Working
2 through the middle management is a whole other, you know, sort of
3 attach that you have to do as well.
4 So, there's a lot of issues there that you have to work
5 through to get them on board. The senior management's there, you
6 know, for sure. So, it's a big organization, a lot of history --
7 excuse me -- but I think we've come quite a bit. But we still
8 have a ways to go and I think the industry as a whole does,
9 personally -- the trains industry. Having been in the aviation
10 industry for a decade, totally different cultures in how we
11 approach safety in the two industries.
12 Q. Again, keeping it at the abstract level, of the challenges
13 that you've discussed, can you talk about some of the barriers
14 that may prevent you or you have to overcome to get these things
15 accomplished that you'd like to get accomplished?
16 A. Yeah, I think some of it is the -- and I mean, this is an
17 industry issue, but it's definitely here is sort of a discipline-
18 based culture in transit and part of it's everything from labor
19 management relations to basically, how people advance in the
20 transit industry. A lot of our managers come from being
21 operators, then become managers and were they groomed to be
22 managers all along or did they just do time, you know, to do that.
23 So, I think that is a big part of it to get everyone to sort
24 of get on the same page in what we're trying to do as you try to
25 tackle those sorts of systemic issues, you know, in the industry.

1 We went away from a discipline-based culture to a justice-based
2 culture. So, okay -- so, the issue is you want a raise or yeah,
3 well there's an issue and not applying for it because you're
4 afraid that you're always three days, six days, or your job,
5 right, which is -- again, I've seen this in the industry, it tends
6 to be the culture of the industry. So, that's the biggest thing
7 and I think it's something that I saw, you know, 20, 30 years ago
8 in the aviation industry, it had a similar approach. So, I think
9 we're all trying to work that. I think -- again, I think we've
10 made strides in it, but we need to continue to work with it.
11 Q. Thank you. In our most recent interviews, as we move up the
12 chain, we've learned from Safety and Certification that they
13 would've liked to have known about the wheel-set issue and did
14 not. We talked to Theresa and same response and you today.
15 If -- hypothetically speaking, if a similar issue occurred maybe
16 with the 8,000 Series cars, can you walk us through how you would
17 like to have seen that issue addressed?
18 A. Yeah, so what I've directed the staff to do is I want a
19 dashboard for all safety critical processes now. Of course, the
20 issue is, you know, where does that end, where do you draw that
21 line? But I think we've got to do an analysis all right, what are
22 those things that reach some level that base -- you know, I need,
23 again, at my level, I need a green, yellow, red. And I -- you
24 know, whether it's every morning that I get on, something pops up
25 and says this is where we are on these things so that I say okay,

1 well, something's happening over here, I've got to go dig into it
2 and make sure that people are focusing on it. That -- again, at
3 the CEO level, that's what I need to do.
4 Then down further, you know, a lot more detail work has to go
5 to support that, and to create that, and to monitor that, and
6 that's why we have, you know, a safety office, and that's why we
7 do that. But for me at my level, what I need is something that is
8 manageable across the agency that says okay, here are the things
9 that are important, where are we, and is anything changing that I
10 need to be aware of. So, whether the 8,000 -- whether it be new
11 bus purchase, new facility, those all have their different
12 elements, you know, that I've got to make sure that we're all
13 keeping our eyes on.
14 DR. JENNER: Very good, I appreciate your responses. That's
15 all the questions I have. Thank you for your time.
16 MR. WIEDEFELD: Thanks.
17 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Steve.
18 Greg Scott, any questions from you?
19 MR. SCOTT: No, sir, I'm good. Thank you.
20 MR. GORDON: All right.
21 BY MR. GORDON:
22 Q. Yeah, I've just got probably one follow up and it kind of
23 just -- you know, kind of just following up on some of the
24 questions that Dr. Jenner was asking. But has anything been put
25 in place -- well, let me talk about the numbers just a little bit

1 and, you know, we won't get into a lot of the details, but just
2 kind of generally speaking. So, 2017, this back-to-back issue
3 first came to light when they go to load a wheel into a wheel
4 truing machine and they get an indication that the back-to-back
5 measurement's off. In 2017, after identifying that wheel set,
6 they identified another. So, there were two in 2017, two 2018,
7 four in 2019, five in 2020, and then 18 in 2021, so, you know,
8 there was an increase.
9 What we have learned, you know, looking at the
10 information -- all of the data from the previous inspections,
11 these -- a lot of these were very small movements of the wheel on
12 the axel. So, you know, the accident axel, there was some
13 indication that there was over -- right outdoor, over a half an
14 inch of movement that was older movement. You could tell by the
15 discoloration on the axel. And there was another wheel that was
16 identified on a periodic inspection the morning of the accident.
17 So, at 10:00, the morning of the accident, there was another car
18 that had a wheel that was identified to have about a little over a
19 half an inch of movement.
20 So, you know, knowing that there was an increase, but also
21 looking at it as these were small movements to begin with, they
22 were being handled through the warranty replacement with Kawasaki.
23 But one of the things that we heard from early on was that after
24 the back-to-back issue came to the knowledge of the car
25 engineering, that they had requested a failure analysis to be

1 conducted, which is something that you would've expected as
2 opposed to just replacing the wheel sets under warranty. We've
3 not seen anything that documents -- you know, that officially
4 documents that that failure analysis was requested from Kawasaki.
5 So, you know, just kind of based on those numbers and the
6 trend going up, understanding that some of the movement on the
7 wheels was relatively small, but still indicated that there was
8 still some issue going on there, has there been any changes since
9 the accident that would trigger a response? Not necessarily make
10 it to your level, but do you know of anything that's been put into
11 place -- and we talked to -- you know, talked to Theresa yesterday
12 and she gave us some ideas on some things. But have you heard of
13 any change that you feel confident that if there's an issue like
14 this going on in say the track department, or the power
15 department, or the car department, is there anything that's been
16 put in place since the accident that would be sure that this
17 couldn't be held in the department that it's -- you know, that's
18 dealing with it that it would rise to at least Safety's level?
19 A. Yeah, I think -- and that's what I was trying to get through
20 with this dashboard concept. Again, at my level that's, you know,
21 something that I can understand very quickly and that's what I'm
22 basically trying to get to. So, it's not just wheels and it's not
23 just rail in my mind, right, it's across all modes and what are
24 some critical safety features around any of these modes or
25 facilities that we own. What data do we have, what do we need to

1 create this because some of it maybe we have and some of it we
2 maybe don't. That's why I need the safety team to work through
3 that, create what we can with what we have, and then make that
4 much more robust as we learn more to get this, and to basically
5 aim much higher. So, that's what they're doing right now and then
6 obviously, the messaging throughout the organization is if you see
7 anything, obviously, raise your hand and it's not -- again, it's
8 not from a discipline-based perspective, but that we have to get
9 to the bottom of issues and deal with them. And so, that's how
10 I've been moving on it.
11 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you. I think that's the only
12 follow up that I had and I know that was a lot of lead into that
13 question. So, I want to look around to the investigative team
14 again and just make sure that everybody has an opportunity to ask
15 any follow ups and we'll just start with FTA.
16 Phil, any follow-up questions?
17 BY MR. HERBERT:
18 Q. Yeah, just staying with the line of questioning,
19 Mr. Wiedefeld, do you find it troubling in your opinion that this
20 whole matter seemed to be held within a silo and not shared with
21 Safety or Safety Certification?
22 A. Again, I'm going to see what the data shows, what was and
23 wasn't shared, I just don't know now. I want to make sure that we
24 all understand that before I would make any comments.
25 Q. So, let me -- so, from the basis of our discussions, you

1 know, we talked to Safety Certification, we talked to
2 Theresa Empasado (ph.) and they all indicated that no one had any
3 knowledge of these instances of wheel movement in 2017 all the way
4 up until the time of the derailment. Safety Certification was
5 clear that had they been told that this occurred, that they
6 probably would've went back into the certification and perhaps
7 pulled the certification depending on what they found. And
8 Theresa, when we talked to her, she was unaware of any of this
9 wheel movement prior to the derailment. So, that's why I'm posing
10 the question to you, do you find that kind of troubling that this
11 kind of remained in a silo when there were, you know, hot topic
12 meetings -- there were discussions about the delaminated floors,
13 there were discussion about seat backs, there were discussions
14 about out of round ground brush?
15 A. Yeah -- no, obviously, I would've preferred for it to come up
16 much sooner.
17 MR. HERBERT: Okay, that's all I have.
18 MR. GORDON: All right.
19 MR. HERBERT: Thanks.
20 MR. GORDON: Yeah, thank you, Phil.
21 And any follow ups from the Safety Commission?
22 MR. SMITH: Thanks, Joe.
23 BY MR. SMITH:
24 Q. Just a couple. One, just to ask about the dashboard you were
25 talking about. You were referencing that as the safety

1 department's kind of task for whatever. I just wanted to try to
2 understand, you know, obviously, the operational departments
3 have -- are the ones that are seeing these things, so what -- is
4 there some action to bring all of that together, could you just
5 explain that a little bit more?
6 A. Yeah, I want the operations people to understand that these
7 things are safety driven and that's why I want Safety to
8 basically go in there and say we are going to make some
9 determinations of what some of these critical safety elements are
10 and not come in from the operations side of the house. So, that's
11 why I tasked the safety offices to create this dashboard because
12 you're the safety experts. Tell me what you feel needs to be
13 monitored and then we will have the rest of the organization
14 monitor it and create the mechanism for monitoring it and then
15 bring it up to a level that I can understand it and react to it.
16 Q. So, the -- in your mind, the safety -- the people in the
17 Safety department are the ones who have that -- they have the
18 level of subject expertise in each of those areas to identify
19 those safety issues or is it the people in the departments who
20 would have -- who are kind of those other workers who would have
21 that knowledge to identify what those safety issues are? That's
22 why I'm trying to see where that line is.
23 A. Yeah, I think it's probably both. But I think it's important
24 for safety to sort of be the arbiter and make sure that we're
25 leaning more towards the safety side. An operations person,

1 again, is generally going to have more of a mindset of all right,
2 I got to physically get something out there so it's out there and
3 I want the safety -- this sort of safety trumps service aspect
4 brought to the table. And that's why I think they should be the
5 lead in this because if not, my concern is that they -- the
6 operations people -- the folks in operations, they may just not
7 even know or not even recognize what they're looking at and that
8 could be critical -- safety critical. So, that's why I want
9 safety to do this and in fact, it would sort of view -- you know,
10 setting those standards that way.
11 Q. Was that just an example, or do you have reason -- anything
12 that suggest that, you know, maybe there were people who didn't
13 recognize how safety critical this back-to-back was?
14 A. Just the way I was thinking is that, you know, just for me
15 from a logical standpoint, you know, I'm working all day, I'm
16 doing something, I may just miss this larger picture.
17 Q. Okay, and then before you were speaking about the information
18 kind of leading to what you need to do as the accountable
19 executive and kind of having that information in front of you. Do
20 you have, other than this dashboard item, any areas where you feel
21 that you're getting, you know, really great information that you
22 need or missing information that you could use to kind of carry
23 out that role?
24 A. I think -- I mean, a good example where getting information
25 is with some of the things we're doing at the Rock, you know, we

1 set up very detailed processes. So, I go to those -- you know, I
2 get the updates on those, but there's -- really, I'm getting
3 updates on tremendous amounts of work that people are doing to
4 crack things within the Rock. So, that's what I want to -- in
5 effect expand that, right, to the whole agency. We have it in
6 different places, but I want it broader across the whole agency.
7 Q. Are there other things that either you're doing or you think
8 you've identified where you could kind of break down those
9 barriers across departments, or things that you have in the works,
10 or you think might be worthwhile in the future?
11 A. I'm sorry, Max, I don't quite understand --
12 Q. You know, to bring these across the agency -- to bring the
13 information across the agency to, you know, prevent -- sorry, I
14 forget whether it was Joe or Steve who was asking about, you
15 know, how something stays in one department, how to get it -- get
16 those issues addressed in that kind of more comprehensive way?
17 A. Yeah, I think that gets a little bit to the culture issue,
18 right, and getting at some of this sort -- you know, some of the
19 discipline aspect. I think it's working closer with the labor,
20 you know, because there's obviously some issues there as well that
21 we've got to work through so that people are all on the same page,
22 they're all on the same team. So, I think there's a number of
23 things from -- again, from a high level that I've got to do to
24 sort of -- to reinforce that consummate, so that's what we're
25 trying to do.

1 Q. Okay, and my last question was just, you know, we've
2 obviously talked a lot specifically about the 7,000 Series cars.
3 As you noted, the investigation's still looking at what kind of
4 group, and probable causes, and what all of those things might be,
5 are there any other safety issues, you know -- I don't know,
6 track, or anything like that that have been raised to you that
7 you're aware of that you've dealt with or addressed in any way
8 that are significant?
9 A. Not recently that I can think of. But as you know, there's
10 quite a bit of history of things we -- you know, everything from
11 the (indiscernible) to -- you know, that goes back quite a while.
12 MR. SMITH: Okay, thank you.
13 Thank you, Joe.
14 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Max.
15 And WMATA, Mike, do you have any follow up?
16 MR. VITALE: I do not, Joe, thank you.
17 MR. GORDON: Okay.
18 And still no questions, Carlo?
19 MR. DANESI: No, sir, thank you very much.
20 MR. GORDON: All right, how about Maurice, ATU?
21 MR. WOMACK: No, good to go. Thank you very much.
22 MR. GORDON: Okay, and from the NTSB team, anything from
23 Dr. Jenner or Mr. Scott?
24 DR. JENNER: Yes, sir.
25 MR. GORDON: All right, Steve.

1 BY DR. JENNER:
2 Q. Just a follow up and we've been discussing safety and culture
3 in our discussion here, when we talk about cultural issues, can
4 you talk about -- I think you already have to some degree, but how
5 does a safety culture that is not where you would like it to be,
6 how does that manifest itself in the organization? So, what part
7 of the organization most suffers, do you think, because the safety
8 culture is not where you would like it to be?
9 A. Sort of rephrase that if you can or let me just make sure I
10 understand it?
11 Q. Yeah, we talk about safety culture, which is a very abstract
12 term, but if we're not happy with the culture, then there was some
13 behavior or some performances that are suffering because of the
14 culture -- you know, lack of a strong culture. So, what
15 performance deficiencies within the organization do you think are
16 occurring because the culture is not where you would like it to
17 be?
18 A. I guess I would come at it a little differently. I'm trying
19 to get my head around it. But it's how you keep reinforcing the
20 culture in an acceptable, believable manner. I know when I got
21 here, for instance, first year we had some major snowstorms and I
22 pulled the busses down. I remember going out and speaking to bus
23 operators and they were like thank you, we finally have somebody
24 that gets it, right. So, it was that -- so, that was just a
25 decision in my mind, but the way that they interpreted was oh,

1 then these guys really do mean safety because they're saying like
2 why would you have me leave my house to get around a 40-foot bus
3 to slide all over the road, right?
4 So, it -- I guess -- I mean, are you looking for where's the
5 problem because -- I'm coming at it from the other way, how do you
6 reinforce -- you know, how do you keep making decisions that
7 support that culture is where I'm trying to get. So, then
8 it's -- obviously that's a simple example, but it's really -- a
9 lot of it's about again, how do we train, how do we discipline,
10 how do we -- you know, so an issue comes up, how do you bring them
11 to the next level, how do we recruit? I mean, to me, that's how
12 you change this culture thing. It's not through posters, you
13 know, it's this huge effort that has to occur every day in every
14 part of the organization, right, and I've got to lead that and,
15 you know, reinforce that. And then it gets down to some specific
16 type of money, and resources, and making decisions along those
17 lines too. So, I guess I'm coming from the other angle. You're
18 coming from where's the problem; I'm coming from we're going to
19 keep trying to push this.
20 DR. JENNER: Right, I appreciate your response. Thank you
21 very much.
22 And that's all the questions I have.
23 MR. WIEDEFELD: Okay.
24 MR. GORDON: All right, thank you. So, we're getting near
25 the end. I don't have any questions, but I do have, you know,

1 just a couple of comments that I'd like to share. Number one, I'd
2 like to thank you and thank your team for the work that they've
3 been doing in supporting the investigation. Everybody is
4 definitely pulling the wagon in the same direction and, you know,
5 it's been a very challenging -- you know, this isn't an easy
6 issue. The failure analysis on these wheel sets is continuing,
7 you know, and nothing -- there haven't been any doors that have
8 been closed right now. I mean, we've got to look at the way that
9 the cars are interfacing with the infrastructure. So, you know,
10 the work that your team has done and Jamie Johnson (ph.) as our
11 party representative and the coordination between him and everyone
12 that got assigned to the team on the WMATA side has been great, so
13 I want to thank you for that.
14 And, you know, I want to secondly just point out that yeah,
15 there was a trend of back-to-back failures, but we all need to
16 keep in mind that we've got the benefit of hindsight, right? they
17 were catching these wheel sets in their periodic inspections and
18 this is the first wheel set that was out there that ran to
19 failure. So, you know, we had the incident, we had an accident
20 where fortunately, there was no loss of life, there were no
21 injuries. Everybody identified that it could've been much worse.
22 But, you know, we need to -- I think everyone needs to keep in
23 mind that that's -- the hard part is identifying what is the
24 safety risk, right?
25 Your dashboard idea and getting tings bubbled up to your

1 level that need your help to remediate, that's a great idea. It's
2 just finding out what gets fed into that because until we had
3 October 12th, we knew we had a maintenance issue, but the safety
4 issue manifested itself in that derailment. So, you know, it's
5 definitely something to keep in mind as we move forward. Though,
6 the problem becomes identifying what truly needs to be brought to
7 your level and, you know, that's going to be the challenge going
8 forward. But with that, I'm looking around the room, if anybody
9 has any other questions if you'll shoot a hand up real quick? And
10 I'm seeing none, so we're going to go ahead and go off the record.
11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:	WMATA METRO TRAIN DERAILMENT IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA ON OCTOBER 12, 2021 Interview of Paul Wiedefeld
ACCIDENT NO.:	RRD22LR001
PLACE:	Via Microsoft Teams
DATE:	December 2, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber