



600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-2891

November 18, 2010

Chairman Benjamin and Members of the Board:

It is my pleasure to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council's report for November 2010.

WMATA Governance Review:

At its November meeting, the Council approved releasing a draft Report on WMATA Governance in order to gather comments from stakeholders and members of the public. Before the final report is approved, which is anticipated to be discussed and approved at the December Council meeting, we want to ensure that there is ample opportunity for public input on this important topic. The draft report has been made available on the Riders' Council's website and the Council hosted a public meeting on November 17th to provide an additional forum for comments and input.

Letters on Metrobus:

Also at its November meeting, the Council approved two letters (attached) advocating policy changes to improve conditions for Metrobus riders. The first asks the District of Columbia to modify its street closure permitting process to include a mechanism to cover the cost of printing and installing signs to alert bus riders to route detours. The second asks local governments to work with Metro in identifying key bus stops that would be cleared in the event of significant snowfall. Both of these letters underscore cooperation between Metro and the local and state governments that control the region's streets and sidewalks is vitally important in providing quality bus service.

Feedback on 7000-Series Railcars:

I would also like to thank both the Board and staff for their quick response to the Council's letter on 7000-Series railcar design from last month. We look forward to participating in the design process and appreciate Metro's willingness to work with both the Riders' Council and the Accessibility Advisory Council, as well as directly with members of the public, to achieve the best possible outcome.

I thank you for your attention and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Frank DeBernardo'.

Frank DeBernardo, Chairman



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November 3, 2010

Councilman Jim Graham, Chairman
Committee on Public Works and Transportation
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 116
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilman Graham:

We are writing to thank you for your support and ask for additional assistance, in your capacity as Chairman of the Council's Committee on Public Works and Transportation, in revising the District's permitting process for street closures in order to significantly improve communication with Metrobus riders in the District of Columbia. These revisions would require the permit applicant to cover the cost of fabricating and installing signage at bus stops to alert the traveling public to changes to bus service as a result of the street closure.

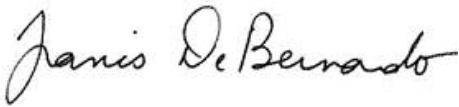
A common rider complaint is that when Metrobus and other bus services are rerouted to accommodate special events or other pre-planned street closures, riders are not given clear information about the location of relocated bus stops and the duration of the street closure and subsequent bus service disruptions. Metro staff have been working collaboratively with the Riders' Advisory Council's Metrobus Committee to improve communications to riders during street closures. For example, based on input from the Metrobus Committee, Metro recently began adding more detailed detour information to its press releases, and is working to add detour information to its interactive voice-response (phone) system. However, we believe that signage at bus stops is critical to effectively communicating with riders impacted by road closures. This signage would directly target the affected stops and riders and would not require riders to seek out information about changes in service; the information would be literally right in front of them.

In order to ensure that these critical communications are funded, we propose that the District include the cost of manufacturing and installing temporary signage in any fees levied as part of the street closure permitting process. This idea has been vetted with staff from both Metro and the District Department of Transportation, who did not raise objections to the approach. Staff suggested that the actual printing and installation of these temporary signs be performed by Metro, to ensure that the signs are consistent both in terms of their appearance and the information that they provide.

The Riders' Advisory Council looks forward to working with you and your colleagues on the Committee on Public Works and Transportation to advance changes to the street closure permitting process to improve public transit in the District of Columbia.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide you with any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank DeBernardo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "F" and "D".

Frank DeBernardo, Chairman

cc: Members, Metro Board of Directors
Richard Sarles, General Manager, Metro
Jim Hamre, Director, Bus Planning, Metro



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November 3, 2010

Dear Local Chief Executive Officer/Chief Legislator:

As winter approaches and public agencies begin to formulate plans to maintain operations during inclement weather, the Riders' Advisory Council urges you to develop plans to clear select bus stops to help get the region moving after winter storms.

During last winter's snow storms, the region's access to transit was severely hampered both by unplowed roads as well as by uncleared bus stops. While roads were cleared relatively quickly given the amount of snowfall, many bus stops remained snowbound for days and weeks after bus service was up and running again, severely hindering riders' access to Metrobus and local bus services.

We understand that local governments have limited resources and that those resources were stretched extremely thin by last winter's record-breaking snow storms. However, even snowfall in amounts less than last year's blizzards can make it difficult for riders to access bus stops and consequently, to use fixed-route bus transit.

In order to improve transit access following future snowstorms, the Riders' Advisory Council asks that you and your staff work cooperatively with Metro and other regional transit providers to identify key locations that would be cleared. Given resource constraints, not all of the region's 12,000 Metrobus stops can be cleared immediately following snowstorms. However, we urge you and your staff to work with Metro to prioritize a specific set of key stops in your jurisdiction that would benefit the maximum number of riders with minimal expenditure of resources. Criteria for such priority stops could include:

- High-volume locations;
- Transfer points between bus lines;
- Bus stops on "core" Metrobus lines that will operate following significant snowfall;
- Bus stops serving populations with special needs, such as hospitals and senior centers.

The availability of transit service helps keep our region moving both during and after severe winter weather. Clearing key bus stops to ensure that the region's residents will have access to buses – the mode that provides the most extensive regional transit coverage – is critical to maintaining regional mobility.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any further information or should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank DeBernardo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Frank DeBernardo, Chairman

cc: Members, Metro Board of Directors