



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

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Chairman Zimmerman and Members of the Board:

It is my pleasure to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council's report for July 2008. As you know, our full RAC meeting is held the first Wednesday of the month. Since we met – Metro has experienced six of the top ten record-setting weekdays for ridership – and another two were realized in June, making eight of the ten top days. It's pretty amazing – and many RAC members have commented they feel this is not just an anomaly, but is a trend that will continue. Increased ridership does mean an increased need for Metro staff to continue and perhaps accelerate their good efforts in improving customer communications in the system. I would say these record ridership days are not from seasoned riders – meaning there's a whole new group who are not as educated in the ways of the rails and so the improved communications efforts are critical.

New Railcar Design Plans:

Dave Kubicek, Metro's Assistant General Manager for Rail Operations Delivery, attended the RAC's July meeting and presented an overview of preliminary plans for the next generation of railcars. The RAC greatly appreciated the opportunity to receive an update on the progress staff has made since the series of workshops held in late 2006. As you know, a number of RAC members participated in those workshops, and it is reassuring to know that many of their suggestions made as part of that process are being used as current staff moves forward in developing specifications for the new railcars.

RAC members commented on the durability and strength of the new seating design pictured for the railcars, as well as noting the need for sufficient signage concerning priority seating. We also mentioned the need to make every effort to provide grab-bars and hand-holds in areas not right in front of doors for standing riders. Additionally, staff's proposal to reduce the number of operator cabs per train and instead use that area for passengers was well received, so long as this new configuration would allow Metro sufficient flexibility to assemble trains and to reposition trains during breakdowns or other unexpected mechanical failures. I suspect that there are many rail cars out there that have never been a lead car, and so have never had their cabs used.

RAC members were asked to reflect on the presentation and send in additional comments. We will be getting those to Mr. Kubicek in August. I know I will want to talk a bit more about the issue of hard flooring versus carpet. I continue to believe a hard flooring material would be better operationally for the cars – and probably be healthier (no mold) for riders. However, I did find myself agreeing with comments in Dr. Gridlock's column about the institutional and cold feeling one gets from a huge expanse of one solid colour. I'm sure as design ideas progress, Metro will be able to continue the philosophy of its founders, and find a way to deal with this. One idea would be to make contrasting colour strips at the doors. This is done now

with carpeting and does make for a more interesting interior. It also allows for easier replacement of material that would naturally be worn down more quickly in such a high traffic area.

We also inquired when we could expect to see the long-awaited grab bars installed in all trains and were told that staff was working toward this goal. Speaking for those 5 feet 2 inches and under, I hope this work is indeed progressing apace.

Finally, it is clear the challenge of designing the new cars will be the balancing of many goals - fiscal, comfort, and the founding philosophy of the system.

Capital Improvement Program:

The RAC also received a briefing this month on Metro's proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for 2010-2015. While riders' focus is often on system operations, many of the complaints heard during the last round of fare increase hearings – and at RAC meetings – relate directly to Metro's capital spending. New and more railcars and buses, improved signage, more-reliable elevators and escalators are all dependant on Metro's capital funding plan. We anticipate providing more-detailed comments on Metro's CIP at a later date.

The RAC certainly hopes that the federal government will be an active partner in funding Metro's next capital plan, given the system's unique and critical role in serving the Nation's Capital. However, if the federal government chooses not to be a partner in this CIP, the role of Metro's jurisdictional partners becomes even more critical. The current CIP, "Metro Matters" has achieved success in providing longer trains and newer buses for Metro's riders, and this next iteration of the capital program is just as important in keeping the system in a state of good repair. The RAC looks forward to working with the Board as it tries to reconcile Metro's needs with the region's available resources.

PIDS Messages:

At this month's Rail Subcommittee meeting, staff from the Metro's Office of Strategic Communications previewed a new format for Metro's Passenger Information Display System (PIDS) signs. These changes would allow Metro to provide additional information to customers in the event of an emergency or service disruption, such as more-specific information about the nature of the disruption, an estimated time before the disruption would be cleared and information on alternative transportation available to get around the disruption.

RAC members provided feedback on the new messages and appreciated the opportunity to review them. These new message formats represent an opportunity for significant improvement in Metro's most-criticized shortcoming – its communication with passengers during service disruptions and other events. We support any tool that provides riders with more information that will empower them to make decisions about how to reach their destinations in the most timely manner possible. The best part about this program is that it uses existing infrastructure and requires almost zero additional resources, save for the time required to draft language for the new signage.

It is my understanding that there have been some meetings between the Communications staff OCC staff concerning both eAlerts and PIDS messages. Both departments have great

concern for riders and both have expertise that will complement the other's so that Metro's riders will be the beneficiaries of their good efforts.

16th Street Study Meeting and other Metrobus Improvements:

The RAC is pleased WMATA is continuing to conduct robust public outreach sessions as part of its Bus Priority Corridor Development Plan, with last week's meeting on the 16th Street Line as the latest example. We hope this type of dialogue continues with customers whenever Metro plans for service changes and improvements.

Also, it is wonderful to see the addition of "crawl" alerts on WMATA's webpage concerning bus route disruptions. This is a great additional resource for riders. RAC does encourage Metro to continue its efforts to reinstate an accurate NextBus service as well.

New Members:

Lastly, on behalf of myself and my fellow RAC members, we are pleased that the Board will be appointing new members to fill some vacancies on our council. We look forward to working with them and welcome the various perspectives I know they will bring to the table.

Finally, like the Board, the RAC will not meet in August. I look forward to returning to you in September.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nancy Iacomini, Chairman