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January 14, 2015

Chairman Downs & WMATA Board Members:

As the newly-elected 2015 Chair of the Riders' Advisory Council, it is my pleasure to make my first monthly report to you. We have a newly-elected Leadership Team: Dan Turk, the District of Columbia Vice Chair; Bob Fogel, Maryland Vice Chair from Montgomery County; and Fred Walker, Virginia Vice Chair from Fairfax County.

At our January meeting, we were excited to welcome 8 new RAC members. They have already demonstrated a passion for public transportation. We owe a special thank you to your newly-appointed Board Corporate Secretary, Jennifer Green-Ellison, and to James Jackson, the RAC Staff Coordinator, for the successful completion of their first annual recruitment cycle. We also thank the Board for its work in appointing the enthusiastic new group of members who represent a broad range of the riding public.

Also at our January meeting, we introduced our membership to a newly developed RAC orientation program, so that they have some basic information and tools that will help them as they begin contributing to the RAC's work. Many thanks to our orientation contributors (Candice Walsh, James Jackson, Carol Walker, Jennifer Green-Ellison, Bob Fogel and Caroline Kim) for delivering this in time to kick off the new year.

We were also briefed on the proposed FY2016 Budget at our January meeting. Dennis Anosike, Chief Financial Officer; Mark Schofield, Director, Financial Planning and Analysis; and Tom Webster, Managing Director, Office of Management and Budget Services, gave us early exposure to the budget process and the financial considerations we face. The RAC's Budget and Finance committee will be working with them so that we can provide timely input on choices to be made.

The RAC is now in the process of developing our work plan for 2015. We have formed our standing committees, and we are exchanging ideas on our priorities for the year. We already have some requests from the Board and Staff to include with our own initiatives, and we fully expect more as the year unfolds.

As we start this new year, I want to thank those who contributed to the RAC's success over the past several years and have recently moved on: Loyda Sequeira and John Pasek from the WMATA staff, and Carol Carter Walker, whose time as 2014 RAC Chair brought new vision and clarity to our work. Because of the foundation they built, the RAC is going strong. Thanks also to others on our 2014 Leadership team: Karen Lynch, Maryland Vice Chair from PG County, and Candice Walsh, DC Vice Chair. They helped us get to where we are today -- looking forward to an exciting and productive partnership in 2015.

Finally, I want to echo the heartfelt message from Board Chair Tom Downs to our riders following the tragic incident on Monday, January 12. The RAC pledges its commitment to partner with the Board and staff as they search for more answers on how to prevent and respond to such incidents.

Sincerely,

/s/

Barbara Hermanson, Chair
Riders' Advisory Council

cc: RAC Members