



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

May 28, 2009

Chairman Graham and Members of the Board of Directors:

I am pleased to present you with the May 2009 report of the Riders' Advisory Council.

Discussion with Board Chairman Jim Graham

Councilman Jim Graham spoke with the Council at its May meeting. The Council appreciates the Chairman taking the time to visit with the R.A.C. as a whole. We discussed recent changes at Metro as well as opportunities for the future.

Follow-up on FY2010 Service Adjustments

The Council was pleased that the final list of bus service cuts approved by the Board as part of the FY2010 budget process was much reduced from the proposals originally put forward at the April public hearings. The Council is also encouraged by members' comments about an earlier start the FY2011 budget process. We believe that an earlier start will provide more opportunity for public input and Board guidance on the budget, as well as on related issues such as fares and fare structure, level of service and funding for support services.

As stated in our Service Adjustments Resolution of March 4, 2009, the Council requests that Metro "widely and unambiguously" communicate any and "all service changes to the public to prevent confusion, delay, and maintain strong relationships with the riding public, taking into account regular users, occasional users, tourists and special needs riders." While this resolution was adopted by the R.A.C. in anticipation of the annual budget process, I would encourage the Board and the Authority to consider this request with respect to all authorized service changes that will go into effect at the end of June – whether or not they are directly related to Metro's FY2010 budget. A copy of this resolution is attached to this report.

Proposal for Retail at Metrorail Stations

Cynthia Jachles provided an overview of Metro's plans to release a Request for Proposals (RfP) for vendors to run retail kiosks at select Metrorail stations. Members of the Council were positive about the concept of Retail outlets on Metro property in and around Metro stations, as we have been as a whole for some time. Particularly, we appreciate that these kiosks would offer additional convenience to Metro riders, especially at stations where there are few local retail options.

There were a range of specific reactions to the proposal, and those reactions were mixed.

- With regard to operational issues, Members were concerned that selling food or beverages would send riders a mixed message about eating and drinking in the system. One of the comments that I have received on several occasions from riders who have experienced other rail systems is high satisfaction with the clean, pest-free environment of our Metrorail stations. Members acknowledged that riders would patronize food vendors when exiting as well as entering stations, and that signage and rider education could help address confusion about “eating and riding,” as well as possibly limiting food sales to packaged foods or to exterior locations.
- Members were concerned about public safety risks associated with vendors attracting crime, either through shoplifting or potential robberies. Metro staff stated that based on discussions with other transit systems and the Metro Transit Police, they understand that by generating more positive activity, introducing retail outlets often results in reduced levels of crime.
- Members asked if vendors would accept credit cards, debit cards or accept payment by SmarTrip® card.
- Some Members thought that Metro should work with large retailers, such as grocery stores, to site full service facilities in locations where there is sufficient Metro owned land to accommodate such outlets.
- Others were concerned that the RfP as written does not have enough room for small businesses, specifically women and minority-owned businesses.
- R.A.C. Members wanted to know how Metro planned to coordinate with local economic development agencies, business improvement districts, and neighborhood business associations to identify appropriate vendors and reach interested applicants.
- Riders also pointed out that in more densely developed areas, these services might be popular with the general public as well as Metro riders.
- There was concern that the program was drawn too narrowly, that the current scope of allowing only one vendor per station in some locations would not generate the consumer interest necessary for the program to flourish, and that multiple outlets should be allowed at each test station.
- Members wanted revenue estimates for the project and were disappointed that none were available.

NextBus System Beta Test:

Beginning May 13th, volunteers from the Riders’ Advisory Council and Accessibility Advisory Committee began “beta testing” the NextBus real-time bus arrival system website that Metro is scheduled to roll out to the public in July of this year. Members appreciate the Board’s interest in this project, and its support of the R.A.C.’s request to see some testing of the system conducted by a rider group in advance of its public launch. We hope that the feedback R.A.C. and AAC beta testers provide to Metro staff will result in a better system for all of Metro’s bus riders. Participant comments so far

include general feedback on use of the system—it seems to be compatible with computers, web browsers and PDAs that participants have used to access the system—as well as some specific system issues—“no prediction” messages at times when a prediction is expected, and missing stops in the NextBus database.

We look forward to using the Interactive Voice Response (phone) service as part of the test once it is available for beta testing. We also look forward to reviewing the web interface that Metro users will review when it is ready. In addition, I was pleased to learn that Metro will develop a set of Frequently Asked Questions and online user guides to assist Metro riders with using NextBus, and that a wider test of the accuracy of NextBus information is being undertaken at the Pentagon bus transfer station.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and District of Columbia

As you all are aware, I testified on behalf of the R.A.C. on Wednesday, April 29, 2009, before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and District of Columbia, along with Mr. Catoe; Chairman Graham; Inspector General Lew; Matthew Welbes, Federal Transit Administration; Craig Simpson, ATU Local 689; and Mr. Benjamin Ross, of the Action Committee for Transit. A copy of my statement is attached to this report.

Public Input

Doris Ray of the Northern Virginia ENDependence Center offered public comment at the May R.A.C. meeting. She expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Board and the R.A.C. to maintain service and support for individuals with disabilities, particularly WMATA’s voluntary expansion of MetroAccess service, and commitment to that service in a difficult budget year.

The R.A.C. also received several emails from the public on specific incidents as well as broader concerns.

This concludes my report. I thank you for your attention and am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Diana Zinkl
Chair, Riders’ Advisory Council

WMATA Riders Advisory Council Resolution on Service Adjustments

Whereas, the Riders Advisory Council recognizes the need for WMATA to achieve a balanced budget,

Whereas, the Authority, the Board and the member jurisdictions should search for additional cost savings and sources of revenue, work to improve efficiency, develop a better understanding of the quantitative and qualitative benefits of the system, strongly consider additional, targeted subsidy increases, and aggressively pursue alternative funding before reducing service;

Whereas, the Advisory Council acknowledges that a balanced budget may require WMATA to achieve cost savings through service adjustments as well as non-service associated cost savings and additional jurisdictional subsidy;

Whereas, the Advisory Council believes WMATA should preserve the quality of the rider experience and not sacrifice the goal of maintaining the best ride in the nation and a high level of civility and cleanliness; now, therefore be it

Resolved, the Advisory Council adopts the following principles for service adjustments should guide any decisions made by the Board or the Authority:

- maintaining basic transportation—recognition that Metro provides a critical service, 24 hours a day, seven days per week, enabling residents of the region to travel to work, school, personal appointments, entertainment and recreation at all hours of the day and all days of the week.
- customer, employee and public safety—service adjustments should take into account direct effects on safety, such as operator training and work hours, and indirect effects on safety, such as availability, frequency and security of evening and late night service.
- interjurisdictional and intermodal equity—service adjustments should be adopted in a manner that distributes service, adjustments and the burden of those adjustments throughout the region and among modes and types of services provided by the Authority, acknowledging that existing service in some areas may already be limited under current scheduling.
- valuing social equity—providing service based on community need as well as efficiency and demand. Recognize that for transit dependent individuals, even limited service provides opportunities to participate in basic community functions that might be out of reach otherwise.

- maintaining alternatives within transit—seemingly overlapping services may provide needed options, prevent overcrowding and bottlenecks, minimize the impact of service disruptions and are not necessarily “duplicative.”
- sensitivity to “day of week” and “time of day” changes in demand—Metro should consider broader use of targeted service adjustments that reflect time of day and day of week variation in demand and minimize the impact of service adjustments on customers (for example the weekend closure of the 17th street entrance to the Farragut West Metro is one example of a “targeted service adjustment”).
- strong communication to the public on service adjustments—
 - transparency at all stages in the development of any and all service adjustments, including detailed information available to the public and open, public, noticed meetings for all discussions of service adjustments, except where directed to do so by the Board.
 - opportunity for public input into service adjustments through public hearings in affected areas for all service reductions.
 - any service adjustments need to be widely and unambiguously communicated to the public to prevent confusion, delay, and maintain strong relationships with the riding public, taking into account regular users, occasional users, tourists and special needs riders.

Approved by the Riders’ Advisory Council – March 4, 2009

Statement of
Diana Zinkl, Chair
Riders' Advisory Council
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Before the
Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives

April 29, 2009

Good Morning, Chairman Lynch, Ranking Member Chaffetz and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today. My name is Diana Zinkl and I am the 2009 Chair of the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council (R.A.C.). It is an honor for me to be here today representing the R.A.C. and riders of public transit through the National Capital Region. A list of the names and jurisdictional affiliations of the other members of the R.A.C. is included at the end of this statement.

The Board of WMATA authorized the R.A.C. in 2005 following public requests to create a citizens' advisory group to serve as an institutionalized voice for riders within the Authority. The establishment of the Council was one of a series of initiatives undertaken by the Authority in 2005 to provide additional avenues for rider input into the system. Other initiatives included holding Town Hall meetings and allowing public comment at WMATA Board of Directors meetings. The R.A.C. reports directly to, and is appointed by, WMATA's Board of Directors. Members also work closely with Authority staff to provide customer input.

There are twenty-one (21) seats on the Council, eighteen (18) allotted by jurisdiction—six each from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, and two At-Large seats along with a representative from Metro's Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Council includes members who are Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess users, college students and senior citizens, longtime residents and newcomers, those who prefer to use transit, and those who are transit dependent.

Other transit agencies have rider groups to provide feedback. Of the top ten transit systems in the United States, eight have either riders' or citizens' advisory councils. Many locally run transit services in this region receive public input through more general citizens' advisory committees.

WMATA provides basic transportation to residents of the National Capital Region. It is central to how many residents of the region live, work and play. Some riders depend on alternative transportation by choice, others by design, and others because of economics. It operates seven days a week, 365 days a year, taking people of all income levels and backgrounds to and from work at all hours of the day and night, to religious services, medical appointments, day care, cultural events, evenings out. For some transit dependent individuals, such as the elderly, individuals with disabilities, limited English proficient individuals, low income and very low income individuals, transit can be a lifeline to participation in society, providing them their only means of navigating their communities. It brings people home safely in all weather conditions, when they are alone, and when cars break down. It takes people home when they are too tired or too drunk to drive, protecting not only the rider, but people they may never meet.

We appreciate the key role that public transit and transit workers play in keeping the public safe from everyday threats. Public transit delivers people safely to locations near their destination; prevents drunk, tired, and distracted driving; guarantees all riders—particularly women, children, the elderly and those traveling alone—protection from crime, harassment, fear, bad weather and accidents.

As committed transit riders—and several of us are transit dependent—we are aware of the importance of pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit facilities. We also realize that many of these connections—like many other issues affecting WMATA—are outside the control of the Authority and lie in the hands of member jurisdictions.

Proposed Operational and Service Changes

Recent and anticipated changes to WMATA's operations and service indicate a positive future

for bus service. We hope that this will include a commitment to existing routes and a long term commitment to new service by both WMATA and member jurisdictions.

New Bus Programs

R.A.C. members are very supportive of WMATA's efforts to improve bus service. New, lower profile buses that are easier to board and exit, hybrid buses that should deliver fuel savings in future years, and full implementation of SmarTrip card technology in bus systems throughout the Region are some of the capital improvements that we have welcomed in recently.

Operationally, WMATA has several innovative bus projects that we are excited about. The NextBus program will provide realtime arrival information at all 11,000 bus stops in the WMATA system, allowing riders to make informed choices about when they leave for the bus stop, and which bus line to use. This information will be particularly valuable to bus riders in bad weather and late at night. The Bus Priority Corridor Network will designate high service bus routes that will replicate rail service—hopefully including frequency, leveling the playing field between bus and rail service. As one step in the development of the Bus Priority Corridor Network, WMATA has already restructured the bus service on 16th Street in the District, introducing limited stop express buses. We recognize that many elements of improving bus service require partnership with member jurisdictions and hope that WMATA receives this support as needed to improve bus service.

In addition, the Authority is currently considering a pedestrian and bicycle access study and a bus stop study. WMATA as a regional transit authority is in a unique position to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety, both from traffic and crime, throughout the region, but only with the cooperation of member jurisdictions. Many R.A.C. members, of course, as transit dependent individuals or heavy users of transit, regularly experience their communities on foot. We look forward to contributing to these studies and would ask our jurisdictions to support these efforts.

Improvements to the bus system mimic recent improvements to the rail system. It was not so long ago that rail service ended at midnight every night, did not start until 6am on weekdays, and, particularly on weekends, riders often encountered four car trains. Through a series of pilot projects, WMATA has extended hours on the rail system and equipment purchases have

improved capacity. As WMATA approaches final decisions about the purchase of the next generation of rail cars, we hope that this innovative and forward looking view is maintained.

2010 Proposed Bus Service Cuts

As it has been for many, this year has proven to be a difficult budget year for WMATA. In anticipation of proposed service cuts, the R.A.C. adopted a resolution recommending standards for service adjustments for the benefit of the Board of Directors and the Authority. The first standard requests acknowledgement that WMATA provides basic transportation service to many residents of the region. Other standards request equity—interjurisdictional, intermodal and social—in service adjustments, and that service adjustments reflect how riders use the system, such that the impact of any adjustments have the least possible impact. We asked that the Board, the Authority and the jurisdictions look for any way to avoid service reductions, particularly the elimination of bus routes or reduction of hours of service on the rail system. In addition, our resolution also asked for transparency in the process of any service adjustments. Specifically, we requested detailed information to the public about service cuts and an opportunity for public input.

As WMATA moved forward with proposed bus service cuts, the public testimony of many riders confirmed their dependence on bus service to go about their daily lives—get to work, grocery stores, laundromats, religious services and school, and to do so safely—avoiding areas that are dangerous for walking and biking, either because of traffic or crime. Particularly, many low income and moderate income individuals, single parents, elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities spoke about how their bus is a lifeline for them. Moreover, we are concerned that eliminating bus routes may make current and potential bus riders reluctant to depend on bus service in the future.

R.A.C. members are concerned that the pace of some recent operational changes may be too fast for some riders, particularly transit dependent vulnerable populations, such as low income, very low income, elderly, disabled, the limited English proficient and second shift workers.

Moreover, we feel both the WMATA and the public would benefit from earlier and more meaningful opportunity for public input into such changes. For example, the time frame of the recent public hearings on service cuts was compressed, and, to date, we have not seen a detailed

2010 proposed budget book as has been made public in past years. In addition, the choices put before the public were very limited, each jurisdiction proposed cuts that exactly met the subsidy deficit. Similarly the elimination of paper transfers was done very quickly, shortly after some local bus systems adopted SmarTrip, leaving bus riders in some areas only a few months to adapt to SmarTrip.

Latest Safety and Security Initiatives

The R.A.C. looks forward to engaging in everyday public safety issues. Our input has been sought on both public safety and homeland security issues.

Everyday Safety

Pedestrian and bicycle connections are an important component of public transit access. Some of the public testimony offered during the recent service cuts hearings raised issues of public safety with pedestrian and bike connections to transit. Many witnesses spoke generally about concerns with pedestrian and bicycle safety in their neighborhoods—both from crime and traffic, discomfort during long waits between buses, and the need for bus service to connect them across unwalkable or unbikeable areas. For example, a mother and her teenage daughter spoke of a sense of unsafe conditions at their neighborhood MetroRail station, particularly for women and girls. Additionally, during the early public discussions of the 2010 budget gap, feedback from outlying areas of the MetroRail system was that extending the hours WMATA charges for parking or raising the hourly weekday parking charges was not tenable because of the lack of pedestrian and bicycle connections between the MetroRail stations and the surrounding areas.

Random Bag Search Program

The Authority sought R.A.C. input last fall on one homeland security initiative, its random bag search program. In October 2008, WMATA publicly announced plans to conduct random bag searches at the entrance to rail stations. The R.A.C. heard public comment on this proposal at both the November and December meetings. At our December meeting, we were also briefed by WMATA staff. WMATA staff stated the program implementation was imminent. R.A.C.

members had concerns about the public opposition voiced at our meetings, the lack of opportunity for public input into the project, and some uncertainties on the scope and operation of the program. We adopted a resolution, requesting the Board hold at least one public meeting on the initiative to allow additional opportunity for public input. Our resolution on this program is attached.

Moving forward, I hope the R.A.C. can have a positive influence on public safety issues in several ways.

- looking generally at public safety issues impacting riders and the Authority;
- participating in the Authority's pedestrian and bicycle and bus stop studies;
- ensuring a sense of security for riders at MetroRail stations.

Pending Capital and Improvement Projects and Funding Updates

With regard to funding, R.A.C. members would like to see WMATA achieve a stable funding situation, both from a capital and operational standpoint. This is a matter of both actual funding, as well as policy, practice and information.

Budget Process

The lack of authority for WMATA to develop and maintain an operational reserve fund or carry over operating excess from one year to another contributes to financial instability. It creates incentives to take on additional operating expenses in years when the Authority is flush with funding and then makes it more difficult to make ends meet in later years. For example, in many years, the jurisdictions receive a "rebate" on their annual subsidy payment—that is, at the end of the fiscal year, WMATA returns any operating excess to the jurisdictions. Early indications are that 2009 will be no different. It would be a shame to eliminate bus routes and reduce frequencies in 2010, only to find at the end of the year that the Authority had generated an operating excess. If the Authority was allowed to keep some operating excess, this would allow a mechanism to stabilize both the operating and capital budget.

We encourage the Authority to create an open process for fiscal planning—both operational and

capital. This year, the public has not had access to a line by line budget proposal, which would allow public input to a budget funded with public money. This has limited the ability of the public, including the R.A.C., to participate meaningfully in the dialogue over the Authority's 2010 budget. Similarly, the allocation of the WMATA fiscal stimulus funds was allocated to capital projects with no opportunity for public input.

Future Challenges

Future challenges will likely create additional pressures on WMATA's budget, both capital and operating. Current projections show increasing demand for MetroAccess, increasing ridership on existing MetroRail and MetroBus routes, need for new services in growing parts of the region, aging capital infrastructure in the core system, and demand for new capital facilities. Suggested solutions include creating a dedicated funding source for WMATA, such as a sales tax increment; an infusion of capital funding in exchange for federal participation in WMATA governance; and developing the WMATA owned land adjacent to transit rail and using the revenue to fund WMATA needs.

As has been said often in recent times, we must do more with less, or even more with more. The budget discussions of recent years are likely a bellwether for the future, calling for longer term solutions and requiring multiple responses to stabilize the Authority's funding situation and allow the Board, management and riders to focus on operational issues rather than budgeting. For instance, increased demand for MetroAccess is inevitable as the Baby Boomer generation ages and the first generation of individuals raised under the Americans with Disabilities Act enters the workforce. Creating opportunities for public input by partnering with the disability community to explore making the Bus and Rail systems more friendly and accessible to individuals with disabilities might reveal solutions, such as constructing redundant elevators in Rail stations, more space on buses for passengers using wheelchairs, universal design concepts, automated stop announcements throughout the system and fully accessible pedestrian facilities. I would also suggest here that WMATA as a regional entity is well positioned to partner with state and local governments to holistically address the needs of individuals with disabilities such that mass transit is a more feasible lifestyle option for individuals with disabilities.

Finally, the member jurisdictions of WMATA, the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland,

and the Commonwealth of Virginia, all have a responsibility to the system. This system is available to all residents of and visitors to the National Capital Region, and takes them where they need to go, seven days a week, 365 days per year, safely and quickly. It is in the hands of the General Manager and the Board to manage the Authority efficiently and exhibit fiscal responsibility. It is incumbent on the jurisdictions to provide adequate support based on the work of the Authority leadership. It is the duty of both to meet the needs of their own residents as well as the residents of other jurisdictions and visitors to the area.

In conclusion, I would encourage you, if you have not already done so, to try riding MetroRail and MetroBus, as well as transit systems in your home Districts and throughout the United States. Further information about the R.A.C., including meeting minutes, handouts, and bylaws can be found at http://www.wmata.com/about_metro/riders_advisory_council/.

I would like to thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to speak today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Attachments

Attachment A—List of Current R.A.C. Members

Attachment B—Recent Policies and Resolutions

Attachment C—WMATA Board Resolution creating R.A.C. and R.A.C. Bylaws

Attachment A—WMATA Riders' Advisory Council Members

District of Columbia

- David Alpert
- Dr. Kelsi Bracmort
- Patricia Daniels
- Kenneth DeGraff
- Carol Carter Walker
- Diana Zinkl (Chair)

Maryland

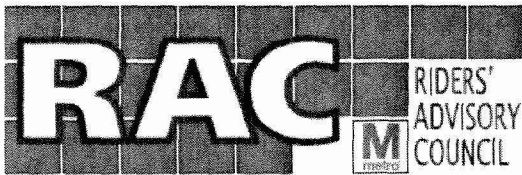
- Dr. Sharon Conn - Prince George's County
- Francis DeBernardo - Prince George's County
- Mary Kay Dranzo - Montgomery County
- Christopher Farrell - Montgomery County
- Susan Holland - Prince George's County
- Lora Routt - Montgomery County

Virginia

- Penny Everline - Arlington County (2nd Vice Chair)
- Evelyn Tomaszewski - Fairfax County
- Lillian White - City of Alexandria
- Robin White - Fairfax County
- Vacant - Arlington County
- Vacant - Fairfax County

At-Large

- Dharm Guruswamy
- Carl Seip
- Patrick Sheehan - Accessibility Advisory Cmte. representative (1st Vice Chair)



600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

April 23, 2009

WMATA Board of Directors
600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Public Docket B09-3

Dear Board Members,

We are writing in response to the Board's express solicitation of comments from the R.A.C. on proposed service cuts, the General Manager's 2010 proposed budget and the public hearings in the March 26, 2009, resolution authorizing public hearings on those proposals.

Summary

We are concerned that the currently proposed bus service cuts will affect only one mode, harm transit-dependent riders, remove vital connections, reduce safety and increase other costs such as MetroAccess. We urge the Board and member jurisdictions to continue to explore other alternatives to cuts. To increase public participation in the budget process, we also request that Metro make public the complete 2010 budget proposal before further decisions are made.

Further, we believe that the public's involvement in these hearings was needlessly compressed in time and limited to a small range of topics. In the future, we hope the Board will allow more time for hearings, avoiding the need for multiple hearings on the same night, and permit the public to weigh in on a broad range of potential budget solutions that span rail, bus, parking, and other services, instead of a predetermined single choice. We also urge the Board to begin the open process of discussing the 2011 budget gap very soon after concluding the 2010 budget process, providing time for a thorough debate of all alternatives.

Service Cuts

Aware that service cuts might be part of the WMATA 2010 budget process, the R.A.C., at its March 4, 2009, meeting, adopted a resolution on service adjustments. This resolution encourages the Board, WMATA and member jurisdictions to pursue service cuts as a last resort and, if cuts are necessary, outlines principles to guide those decisions. A copy of the resolution is attached.

Our comments in this letter are based on the principles in that resolution which we strongly re-affirm. Additionally, the feedback comes from our personal experiences using the various modes of the WMATA system, from our discussions with other riders and among ourselves, from the information which WMATA staff has provided, and from our attendance at all of the public hearings held from April 13 to 17, 2009.

We maintain the strong belief that WMATA should not balance the budget on the backs of bus riders. The burden of the cuts falls exclusively on one subset of riders who use the target services.

In particular, we have serious concerns that:

- These cuts eliminate needed connections to jobs, houses of worship, grocery stores, laundromats, health care and child care options;
- Headway lengthenings, reroutings and reductions in hours of service will increase safety risks to riders;
- Some of the services slated for elimination lack realistic alternatives, and
- Many supposed alternatives require transfers, which are especially burdensome to senior citizens and persons with disabilities;
- The cuts will increase unemployment rates and, thus, social service spending;
- Elimination of bus service may increase use of MetroAccess, neutralizing some or all potential cost savings.

The R.A.C. welcomes a holistic and community-based reexamination of the bus network, and opposes cutting individual routes annually in the budget process and in response to shortfalls. R.A.C. members are encouraged by the Board's recent interest in improvements to bus service and hope this signals a lasting commitment to creating equity between bus and rail service.

Transparency in the Public Process

We are disappointed in the lack of transparency in the decision-making process for these service cuts, despite the recommendations for such in our resolution. We feel the Board should allow ample time for the public to meaningfully comment and for management to advertise any service changes. For example, the public hearings scheduled for the week of April 13, 2009, featured two sets of hearings at the same time and day. In addition, we are concerned that the testimony at hearings did not accurately represent the working poor, some minority groups, and individuals with limited English proficiency, who are disproportionately affected by bus service cuts. Finally, the R.A.C. feels that the Board should have presented the public with a full slate of budgetary options, including fare increases, rail service adjustments, and parking rate increases, rather than just asking for public input on a pre-selected list of cuts.

In the event that WMATA moves forward with service cuts, we believe it should conduct a very intensive public information campaign, so that riders have specific and explicit information about how their service is affected.

Finally, in recent weeks there has been general discussion about the Fiscal Year 2011 budget, but with little specific information available to the public. Given the compressed and hurried nature of our process this year, the R.A.C. encourages the WMATA to seek public input about the 2011 budget immediately, rather than waiting until late in the fiscal year.

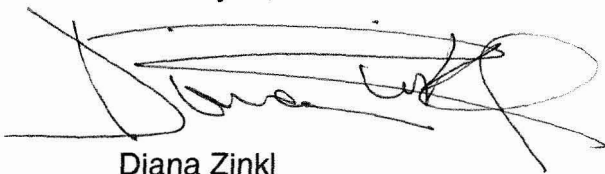
The 2010 Budget

In past years the R.A.C. has reviewed WMATA budget proposals—both operating and capital—and provided input to the Board and the Authority. To date, the R.A.C. has yet to receive a copy of the 2010 General Manager's budget proposal. A series of PowerPoint presentations available on the WMATA website provided only vague information on the upcoming budget cycle, lacking the detailed and systematic information available in a complete

and thorough budget proposal. An accessible copy of the detailed budget on the WMATA website would make this publicly available to many at minimal expense. Without a detailed budget to review, the R.A.C. is unable to comment on the 2010 budget, but we look forward to doing so once it is available.

While we are aware the Board, WMATA and jurisdictions have gone through a lengthy process to reduce the original budget gap, we ask that you continue to examine this budget for further opportunities to reduce costs. We would also urge the jurisdictions to apply the subsidy rebate from 2009 to the 2010 budget and increase contributions. Finally, we continue to encourage creative solutions to bring in additional revenue.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Zinkl', written over a horizontal line.

Diana Zinkl
2009 Chair
WMATA R.A.C.

Patrick Sheehan
1st Vice Chair

Penelope Everline
2nd Vice Chair

Carl Seip, At-Large

Carol Carter Walker, Washington, DC

Francis DeBernardo, Maryland

David Alpert, Washington, DC

Dharm Gururwamy, At-Large

Evelyn Tomaszewski, Virginia

Robin White, Virginia

Dr. Kelsi Bracmort, Washington, DC

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 - opportunity for public input into service adjustments through public hearings in affected areas for all service reductions.
 - any service adjustments need to be widely and unambiguously communicated to the public to prevent confusion, delay, and maintain strong relationships with the riding public, taking into account regular users, occasional users, tourists and special needs riders.

Approved by the Riders’ Advisory Council – March 4, 2009

WMATA Riders Advisory Council Resolution on Real-Time Bus Information

Whereas, the NextBus system allows riders to access real-time information about bus arrivals on the Web and on mobile devices;

Whereas, real-time information is extremely valuable to riders, allowing them to better time their actions to catch a bus or make decisions about which bus to choose;

Whereas, according to a UK study, real-time information also improves riders' perception of bus reliability and frequency;

Whereas, WMATA has been working with NextBus to set up a new and more accurate real-time information system for Metrobus;

Whereas, some Metrobus riders have been using NextBus at their own risk for several months, and many have found it useful despite its limitations; now, therefore be it

Resolved, the Riders' Advisory Council urges WMATA to work with NextBus to complete and officially release the system as soon as practical, and

Resolved, the Riders' Advisory Council requests that WMATA explore opportunities for RAC members and interested members of the public to start using the NextBus system in a "beta test" before it is officially launched, and as soon as possible, to receive feedback and benefit riders.

Approved by the Riders' Advisory Council - March 4, 2009