



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

December 16, 2010

Chairman Benjamin and Members of the Board:

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

WMATA Governance Review:

The Council approved the final version of its Report on Metro Governance at its December 1st meeting. You all should have received a copy of that report, as well as a letter outlining the areas of agreement and points of departure between the recommendations contained in the Riders' Council's report and those in the "Moving Metro Forward" report issued by the Council of Governments and Board of Trade in November.

The Riders' Council report makes 6 high-level recommendations and 25 specific sub-recommendations to improve the governance structure to help address the problems facing WMATA.

The high-level recommendations are:

1. The Board is analogous to a legislature and should include public officials.
2. The Board should set clear, high standards for its members.
3. The Board should focus on high-level policy and objectives.
4. The Board should act as a regional body rather than as individuals.
5. WMATA's top staff member should be a CEO rather than a General Manager.
6. Board decision-making should include a clear and accessible public input process.

On December 2nd, David Alpert, the Council's District of Columbia Vice Chair attended a meeting of officials from Northern Virginia and representatives from the Commonwealth of Virginia to discuss the Council's recommendations.

The Council looks forward to having further dialogue with the Board and other regional stakeholders to advance the issue of Metro governance. We would also like to thank all of the Board members who attended the discussion sessions earlier this year and who provided feedback on the report – your participation greatly improved both the process and the final product.

Elevator/Escalator Discussion:

Also at the December meeting, David Lacosse, Metro's Director of Elevator and Escalator Maintenance, provided an overview of the recent Metro elevator and escalator assessment conducted by Vertical Transportation Excellence, an outside consultant. He explained the steps that Metro is taking to improve elevator and escalator availability and to comply with the consultant's recommendations. We expect to continue discussion on this important issue in the New Year.

Transit Benefits Letter:

The Council also approved the attached letter to members of the region's Congressional delegation asking for their support in extending the current \$230/month transit benefit, which will otherwise revert to \$120/month without legislative action. The current \$230/month maximum is equal to the maximum monthly benefit provided for automobile parking. We are hopeful that Congress will take action to preserve the higher transit subsidy given public transit's positive impact on congestion, air quality and economic development.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Study Meeting:

On December 6th, the Council's Long-Term Projects Committee held a meeting to provide feedback on Metro's Bicycle and Pedestrian Access study and its associated recommendations. We look forward to providing the Board with comments in recommendations following our January meeting.

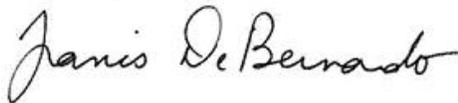
Council Elections/2010 Recap:

On a final note, the Council will hold elections for officers at its January 5th, 2011 meeting; as such, this is possibly my final opportunity to address you as Riders' Council chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your willingness to work with the Council over the past year. This year has brought many challenges to Metro – from last winter's blizzards to the search for a new General Manager to the budget pressures and fare increases exacerbated by the poor economy. It is my hope that during this year, the Council's feedback has assisted both the Board and Metro staff in making decisions on these and a host of other issues that we have discussed.

The Council is looking forward to working with the Board and with Metro staff in the coming year to ensure that riders' voices are included in Metro's decision-making and to continue to advocate for changes that will improve Metro services for all of its riders.

As always, thank you for your time and attention, and best wishes for the holiday season and the New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank DeBernardo".

Frank DeBernardo, Chairman



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December 7, 2010

Dear Representative/Senator:

We are writing to strongly urge you and your colleagues to take action to extend the current transit benefit level beyond its scheduled expiration on December 31, 2010. As rider representatives for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro), we clearly understand the substantial assistance that the current benefits level provides to transit riders across the country, and uniquely to those in the Washington metropolitan area.

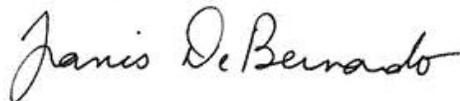
As transit advocates, we applauded when, in 2009, Congress enacted under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) a provision to increase the maximum value of either monthly pre-tax benefits or monthly direct benefits that may be provided to mass transit commuters to \$230. This level is equivalent to the amount that may be provided for commuter parking expenses. In making these benefit levels equal, Congress provided a strong incentive for commuters to use transit for their commutes. If Congress fails to take action, customers may see their commuting costs increase by more than \$1,300 a year.

As residents of the Washington metropolitan area, we recognize the critical role that Metro and the region's other transit providers play in keeping the region moving. The Washington region consistently ranks as one of the most congested areas in the nation – it was the second-most congested metropolitan area in the 2009 Texas Transportation Institute's Urban Mobility Study. This is in spite of public transportation's offset of more than 26 million hours annually that would otherwise be lost to congestion. Any action that would encourage commuters, who generally travel at periods of peak congestion, to return to the region's roadways would be a significant detriment to regional mobility. We also are keenly aware of the negative effect that this change in legislation would have on federal employees who receive monthly transit benefits and represent over 40% of Metrorail's peak period ridership.

We are deeply concerned that legislation mandating the increased maximum value of transit benefits is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2010. If further action is not taken by you and your colleagues, the maximum monthly transit benefit will revert to \$120, while parking benefits will remain at \$230. This would represent a return to a situation of inequity between the maximum benefit for parking and transit use and take us back us to a time when federal tax law favored commuting by private automobile over the use of public transit.

On behalf of Metro's riders, we ask for your support to keep equivalent the benefits available to drivers and transit commuters. We are counting on your action and your leadership as a representative of the residents and transit riders of the metropolitan Washington region to help preserve equity in transit benefit levels.

Sincerely,

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

Frank DeBernardo, Chairman

To: Senator Barbara Mikulski
Senator Benjamin Cardin
Senator Mark Warner
Senator Jim Webb
Congressman Steny Hoyer
Congressman James Moran
Congressman Chris Van Hollen
Congresswoman Donna Edwards
Congressman Gerald Connolly
Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton