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October 26, 2023

Chair Smedberg and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Riders' Advisory Council's report for October 2023.

Better Bus Improvements/Network Redesign:

As part of the RAC's ongoing effort to make informed recommendations as required by the RAC's bylaws, our October meeting featured Jeffrey Hiott (Bus Transformation) and Melissa Kim (Office of Bus Planning). They provided updates on efforts to improve and redesign the bus system. The RAC expressed its appreciation that buses are now being prioritized on equal footing with rail. During the presentation, the RAC raised several concerns with the staff members, including efforts to unlock better access to parks and other amenities without needing to get into a car. The RAC also asked how Metro's concept of equitable transit extends to caregivers and the LGBTQ community, who are subject to safety concerns. Mr. Hiott and Ms. Kim were receptive to the RAC's concerns.

As the bus network redesign process moves forward, the RAC will consider bus route naming convention ideas presented by staff, and will speak with RAC members' respective outreach communities with the ultimate goal of presenting an informed recommendation to the Board.

Wayfinding:

Because the October RAC meeting was intended to be mostly informational, the RAC also invited Brian Anderson, Director of Metro's Innovation and Digital Communications, to speak about Metro's efforts to improve rider wayfinding and navigation throughout the system. Mr. Anderson presented various navigational improvement ideas involving potential revised signage and wayfinding models implemented in other cities throughout the world.

As the wayfinding process moves forward, the RAC will use this presentation and rider outreach to formulate informed recommendations to the Board.

IT Security and Rider Data Protection:

As previously raised by the RAC following Office of Inspector General reporting, riders expressed concern about potential data breaches or cybersecurity incidents that could affect riders in ways big and small. As such, the RAC invited Joel Waugh, Metro's Senior Director of Cybersecurity, to speak at its October meeting. Mr. Waugh was extremely open and candid as he addressed RAC questions. Among other items, Mr. Waugh addressed cybersecurity efforts pertaining to the 8000 Series train procurement process and efforts to streamline cybersecurity operations. Based

on the presentation, the RAC commends current Metro leadership for facilitating substantial improvements and increased momentum in securing rider data and the overall network.

FY2025 Budget:

Although the October meeting was mostly informational, the RAC continued to move the ball forward on its rider engagement plans regarding the FY2025 budget. The RAC remains very concerned about the prospect of drastic service cuts and the many ways those cuts will detrimentally affect riders. Recent discussions about legislative hurdles, e.g. the 3 percent cap in subsidy growth, were eye-opening to RAC members.

Based on its rider outreach, the RAC notes that many riders are not aware of the specific legislative hurdles – hurdles out of WMATA's control – that make the current budget deficit detrimentally different from past annual budget decisions. For example, the RAC identified a sense of rider apathy toward the budget issue in part because of the general sentiment that "it's just more of the same." Riders need to be informed that legislative caps and other hurdles may cause uniquely dire circumstances for the upcoming budget that have a very real potential of upending regional transit.

As always, thank you for your time and attention, and I remain available for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Mike Lebowitz

Mike Lebowitz, Chair
Riders' Advisory Council