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February 7, 2019

Chairman Evans, WMATA Board members, and WMATA staff:

At our RAC meeting on Wednesday, February 6, Lora Byala of Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning, one of the lead consultants on the bus transformation study, spoke to the group, along with Julie Hershorn, Assistant Director of Planning and Scheduling for Buses.

While members of the TPB Citizens Advisory Council and WMATA's Accessibility Advisory Committee are part of the Strategy Advisory Panel for the Bus Transformation Project, no RAC members are part of this panel. **RAC members request that we be included in the panel**, as we are the group that most directly represents WMATA rider interests.

During the discussion, one of RAC members' recurring themes was that lack of frequency (every 30 minutes or more) is a major hindrance for many people using the bus.

Relatedly, buses that don't adhere to schedule are a significant challenge for riders to use. Buses that are late are an obvious problem, but buses that leave early are equally troublesome for riders. In both cases, the rider has missed the bus and often has a long wait until the next one.

Operational suggestions include improvements to transit signal priority, bus lanes, and front boarding/rear alighting. RAC members urge WMATA to work closely with necessary partners such as DDOT to prioritize these options. RAC members also encourage WMATA to take action on the operational changes that are entirely within their control. Given that the bus transformation study has found that bus speeds are one of the largest issues facing metro-area bus systems, any opportunities to increase speeds and reliability should be taken.

Finally, RAC members mentioned that environmental concerns may be a motivating factor for some people to shift to transit instead of driving, which could factor into later marketing efforts.

Sincerely,

Katherine Kortum  
Chair, Riders' Advisory Council