



21 November 2019

Chairman Smedberg and Members of the WMATA Board:

I am pleased to present you with an update on the activities of the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council (RAC).

I. Discussion of Rush Hour Promise Policy

As was mentioned in the RAC's October report to the Board, the RAC continues to be concerned by the inconsistency between WMATA's Rush Hour Promise policy as written and the implementation of this policy. During last month's Board meeting the RAC was asked to recommend revisions to the policy to avoid confusion among riders and potential customers.

The RAC had a lengthy discussion about the purpose and impact of the policy to date and has requested additional information as to whether the policy is expected to continue beyond the upcoming fiscal year, how much money has been refunded to customers as a result of the policy, and whether data exists suggesting that the policy has helped stabilize or grow ridership.

With regard to proposing changes to the policy as written, rather than seek to align rider expectations with the current approach to implementation, the RAC felt it more prudent to suggest language that aligns the policy with rider expectations. As such, the RAC is recommending a revision to the policy's existing language outlining situations in which Rush Hour Promise credits will not be issued:

However, credits will not be issued under the following limited circumstances:

- *Major capital work projects when customer notification is made in advance.*
- *Severe weather events (e.g. major winter snowstorms) when Metro service is adjusted and/or customer notification is made in advance.*
- *Extraordinary circumstances or "force majeure" events **not due to WMATA's own action or inaction**, such as a region-wide blackout or major security incident, when service is affected.*

The RAC had also committed to reviewing refund policies from other major transit

systems with the hope of developing more comprehensive recommendations for refining WMATA's commitment to its customers.

II. TransDev Strike

The RAC heard from riders impacted by the TransDev strike at the Cinder Bed Road garage, both in person and via email. Customers on affected bus lines continue to struggle to make their daily commutes in a timely and affordable manner and many have expressed a feeling of helplessness.

The RAC is concerned not only for the well-being of affected riders and their families, but also for the damage that this situation may be causing to WMATA's own reputation.

As such, the RAC has encouraged a swift resolution and assurance from WMATA that contingency plans are being followed appropriately to mitigate the impact on riders.

III. FY2021 Budget

During our November meeting, the RAC reviewed high level proposals for the FY2021 budget. The RAC is eager to learn more about the specifics of these proposals, including efforts to improve customer service, proposed changes to bus routes, and fare structure modifications.

In addition to submitting informational requests on the budget proposals to WMATA staff, the RAC is eager to hear from the Board as to which proposals Board members are interested in pursuing and which proposals they would like additional rider input on prior to final deliberations.

We look forward to a fruitful dialogue on these issues in the coming months. Please feel free to contact me at colinreusch+metro@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.

Thank You,
Colin Reusch
Chair, WMATA Riders' Advisory Council