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May 11, 2023

Chair Smedberg and Members of the Board:

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

Better Bus Draft Visionary Network

At our May meeting, William Jones, from Metro's Planning office, shared highlights of the Better Bus: Network Redesign's Draft Visionary Network with the Council. It's clear that a significant amount of thoughtful work went into the creation of the new network, as well as into the robust public outreach process and materials that accompanied its unveiling. We're especially encouraged by the significant increase in access to frequent, all-day and weekend bus service that would be possible under the Draft Visionary Network.

RAC members had questions about specific proposals in the draft network, and no doubt riders will also have questions and comments as they learn about the possible changes to their bus routes. We encourage Metro staff to remain flexible and open to further changes and refinements throughout the public engagement and study process.

8000 Series Update

Lynn Bowersox, Metro's Director of Rail Transformation, also returned to our May meeting to share some of the insights she and her team, along with members of the RAC and AAC, gained on their recent trip to New York City to view the MTA's new open-gangway cars. In addition, she showed potential designs for new inter-car barriers that would be installed on both the new 8000 Series railcars, as well as refitted to existing 7000 Series railcars.

The RAC appreciates the continued and iterative engagement from Ms. Bowersox and her team, as well as Metro's plans to involve the broader public in the process. Given that railcars have an expected life cycle of forty years, the decisions made now will affect Metro riders for generations to come, which makes it all the more important to include multiple stakeholders in this process. We look forward to continuing to engage with Ms. Bowersox and her team as this process moves forward.

New Appointments:

On the Board's agenda today is appointments to fill vacancies on the Council. We appreciate the Board's action on these nominations, and I'd like to thank our Board Liaison Bryna Helfer for her work in moving this process forward. I'm looking forward to having more and more varied voices join our discussions and deliberations.

Rider Outreach:

Over the past week, riders anecdotally reported to the RAC that they have noticed fewer incidents of fare evasion at Metro stations. In addition, riders reported seeing more instances of enforcement. However, riders expressed ongoing concerns about Metrobus fare evasion. The RAC held a substantive discussion on Metrobus fare evasion, recognizing the inherent difficulties in bus enforcement. RAC members stated that statistical analysis may be helpful in determining an appropriate course of action, if any, on this the issue as new reduced fare programs take effect. The RAC intends on keeping the conversation going.

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