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June 22, 2023

Chair Smedberg and Members of the Board:

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

### **New RAC Members:**

The RAC's June meeting was the first for the four new members appointed by the Board in May. We're excited about the energy and new perspectives these members will bring to the RAC's work.

### **Quarterly Performance Report/Performance Dashboard**

At our June meeting, Jordan Holt, Metro's Director of Performance Improvement, reviewed Metro's quarterly performance and previewed the new Performance Dashboard which will be going live on Metro's website in July. We're encouraged that overall customer satisfaction numbers have continued to remain up and support Metro's efforts to increase transparency. One request RAC members had was to make crime data customizable to a rider's trip, similar to on-time performance and crowding data. Given that rider concerns about safety or the perception of safety can influence whether they choose to take transit, we feel this information could serve to boost rider confidence. In addition, the RAC requested an update on whether the automatic train operation (ATO) system is still scheduled for relaunch on all rail lines by the end of 2023.

### **8000 Series Update**

Earlier this morning, you received an update from Ms. Bowersox on design considerations and changes for the new 8000 Series railcars. We've provided our input previously, so I just want to thank her and her team, not only for their sustained engagement with the RAC and AAC, but also for the very public outreach they conducted at Gallery Place station last month. We appreciate this direct and comprehensive engagement with the public being included as an integral part of Metro's decision-making process.

### **Rider Outreach:**

RAC members have received numerous comments and complaints from riders regarding the rail shuttle service that is currently substituting for portions of the Orange and Silver lines during construction work. These include long wait times, crowding and excessive trip lengths compared with the rail service that they're replacing. The RAC also discussed potential accessibility issues involving the shuttles.

Due to timeliness of these issues, the RAC requested that rider concerns be immediately passed along to WMATA leadership. Through the RAC's Board liaison, the RAC's concerns were heard. The RAC appreciated the prompt attention from WMATA leadership and staff, and believe this

scenario can serve as a model for future communications involving exigent riders concerns. Regarding the shuttle issue, the RAC understands that, unlike the rail system, many factors contributing to poor shuttle performance are out of Metro's control, and also appreciate that Metro made significant changes after the first week of the shuttle's operation that have mitigated some of the issues. However, we remain concerned that issues persist, even after the addition of buses and of limited stop shuttles. Metro has several years' worth of experience running shuttle services, including in this corridor, which makes these shuttles' poor performance all the more troubling.

As Metro makes plans for travel alternatives during other upcoming projects, the RAC encourages staff to think holistically about riders' travel patterns and provide options that may go beyond direct replacement of the impacted rail service to better respond to customer needs. For example, the RAC noted that Metro's shuttle network primarily focuses on filling gaps between closed train stations. Instead, the RAC discussed the idea of not just covering the gaps between stations, but also bolstering gaps in viable public transit alternatives relevant to affected riders. This includes bolstering existing bus lines at Vienna (698) and Reston (599) that are currently limited to certain times but travel straight from large commuter lots to the Yellow Line. Although this suggestion may become moot in the near future, the RAC proposes that Metro conduct a detailed after-action review of the Northern Virginia shuttle system to identify the feasibility and costs for alternative measures for future station closures.

Finally, riders reported to the RAC that it at least anecdotally appears that more unauthorized people are jumping onto the tracks. This includes riders retrieving dropped cell phones and other activities. The RAC was previously informed that Metro Transit Police has a zero-tolerance policy for people interacting with the tracks without authorization. As such, the RAC believes that this policy should be reiterated and enforced, as appropriate, due to the obvious safety and national security ramifications.

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