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October 24, 2024

Chair Santos and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Riders' Advisory Council's report for October 2024.

The RAC focused this month's meeting and discussion on Metro's efforts around providing a safe and welcoming atmosphere for riders.

During the public comment portion of our meeting, one rider shared their thoughts on the new initiative on busses to provide space for strollers. The RAC has thus far been supportive of this initiative and we hope to hear more from WMATA staff during our November meeting about this initiative and other bus-related items.

RAC members also heard from riders who did appreciate the steps WMATA is taking to provide service to riders impacted by the DC Circulator shutdown over the next few months. The impact on riders of that service and their desire for better and frequent connections to the places that matter most to them is another demonstration of why WMATA's services are so critical to residents throughout the region. We look forward to seeing how the Better Bus initiative may help to restore some of these lost transit connections.

Public Safety Update:

Metro Transit Police Chief Anzallo and Deputy Chief Nader joined the RAC's October meeting to provide an update on public safety, including strategies that have significantly reduced crime on the bus and rail system and changes to staffing to provide more robust coverage throughout the bus and rail system. Our discussion also focused on how the Transit Police is balancing the perceptions of crime in the system compared to the demonstrated decrease in crime.

Members appreciate the strides the Transit Police, along with Metro's jurisdictional partners, have made in reducing crime in the Metro system, and are interested in how Metro will highlight those accomplishments to riders and potential riders across the region. Members are also interested in the steps Metro is taking to address fare evasion on Metrobus, which is, by design, a more sprawling system with less physical barriers to access. The RAC encourages Metro to continue working with jurisdictions' public safety agencies to collaboratively address safety concerns both on and off Metro property.

Railcar Cleanliness

Also, in recognition of the increase in customer satisfaction driven by more consistent railcar cleanliness, staff invited Chief Vehicle Officer Shushil Ramnaress and his team to provide a deeper dive into recent process improvements around railcar cleaning.

Members appreciated Metro's methodical and thoughtful approach to cleaning railcars as well as the enhancements to the oversight processes to ensure that scheduled cleanings are completed thoroughly. As Metro plans for new railcars and buses, the RAC urges Metro to consider design choices that make these new vehicles easier to keep clean.

The RAC is also continuing to work with our Board liaison, Dr. Helfer, and staff on recruitment to fill vacancies and to broaden its opportunities for rider engagement.

As always, thank you for your time and attention; I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Cole Staudt

Cole Staudt, Chair
Riders' Advisory Council