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Chairman Benjamin and Members of the Board:

This letter serves as the formal position of the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council on the FY2011 Operating Budget, currently estimated to contain a \$189.2 million shortfall.

First, we recognize and appreciate the efforts of the Board of Directors to solicit meaningful public comment on a wide variety of proposals to address the current budget situation. Providing the public with alternatives has spurred public debate and allowed riders to select from a menu of options to create a sound FY2011 budget.

~~The Riders' Advisory Council recommendation on the FY2011 budget shortfall is not a position we came to easily.~~ Over the past several months, our members have held lengthy meetings devoted purely to the budget, attended public hearings, solicited feedback on their commutes, and debated the merits of the many different proposals put forward by WMATA staff, the Board and other groups.

~~The dire straits of the Authority's current fiscal situation have placed us in a difficult position. It would seem contradictory for a transit riders' council to endorse budgetary provisions that will have a detrimental effect on the riders whom they represent.~~ Yet that is exactly what the harsh reality of Metro's FY2011 budget as presented requires this Council to do. We are faced with two necessary evils, distasteful options— service reductions which could drastically impact the quality of life in our region and/or fare increases that might price some residents out of using our transit system.

To limit the need for these drastic options, the ~~RAC~~ R.A.C. continues to strongly support increased jurisdictional subsidies and dedicated local and federal funding for the Metro system. While budgets are tight, we remain hopeful that local and Congressional leaders will fight to expand Metro funding at the jurisdictional and federal level in recognition of the Authority's role as a unique regional and national asset.

We also recognize that Metro will make changes to MetroAccess service ~~under the guidance of the Accessibility Advisory Committee,~~ continue negotiations with its operating unions to decrease costs, ~~and~~ cut administrative positions, and continue to explore alternative revenue sources in an effort to reduce the budget shortfall in FY2011.

~~Those changes, though, will not fill the \$189.2 million budget gap by any large means.~~

~~To close the final gap once all other budgetary options, including those mentioned above, have been exhausted for this fiscal year, the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council recommends, with great reluctance, the Board institute fare increases and service cuts of the following proportions and priorities:~~

50 If the Board, after it exhausts all other options to close the FY2011 budget gap, finds  
51 that fare increases and service cuts on Metrorail and Metrobus are absolutely  
52 necessary, the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council ~~proposes~~ prefers the following  
53 proportions and priorities for the board's decision-making. We are deferring to the  
54 Accessibility Advisory Committee's recommendations on the proposed changes to  
55 MetroAccess which have already been submitted as part of the public hearing record.  
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58 80 percent through fare increases, should any be necessary, in the following order of  
59 preference: from least to most undesirable:

- 60 1. a) Decreasing the transfer time among all modes from 3 to 2 hours,  
61 b) raising the fare differential for (rail) paper farecards, and  
62 c) instituting a peak-of-peak rail surcharge, *which are preferable to*
- 63 2. a) Increasing late-night weekend fares (after midnight),  
64 b) increasing the reserved parking fee, and  
65 c) increasing airport bus fares (with the consideration that steps be taken to protect  
66 airport workers), *which are preferable to*
- 67 3. a) Increasing bicycle locker rental fees,  
68 b) increasing general parking fees, and  
69 c) increasing express bus fares for non-airport buses, *which are preferable to*
- 70 4. Increasing SmarTrip fare differential on bus, *which is preferable to*
- 71 5. Increasing base bus fare along with an increased transfer discount, *which is preferable*  
72 *to*
- 73 6. Increasing regular (rush hour) rail fare, *which is preferable to*
- 74 7. Increasing reduced (off-peak/weekend) rail fare, *which is preferable to*
- 75 8. ~~A station-targeted capital improvement 5-cent surcharge, which is preferable to~~
- 76 9. a) Any special event fares on rail,  
77 b) peak fare surcharges on crowded bus routes, and  
78 c) increasing base bus fare without increasing the transfer discount.

80 10 percent through service cuts to Metrorail, should any be necessary, in the following order  
81 of preference: from least to most undesirable:

- 82 1. a) Reducing holiday service,  
83 **b) Restructuring peak service on the Red Line to have 3 min headways from**  
84 **Grosvenor to Silver Spring and 6 min from Silver Spring to Glenmont and**  
85 **Grosvenor to Shady Grove, and**  
86 c) early morning weekday headway widening, *which are preferable to*
- 87 2. Closing station entrances or mezzanine levels (after a full and transparent independent  
88 review of safety and security issues these closures may cause), *which are preferable to*
- 89 3. Weekend headway widening, *which is preferable to*
- 90 4. A later weekday opening time at 5:30am, *which is preferable to*
- 91 5. A later weekend opening time at 8:00am, *which is preferable to*
- 92 6. Late-night headway widening, *which is preferable to*
- 93 7. a) Earlier weekend closing times and  
94 b) weekend station closures, *which are preferable to*
- 95 8. a) Elimination of peak 8-car trains,  
96 b) elimination of Yellow Line service to Fort Totten off-peak/weekends, and  
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100 c) elimination of Yellow Line service after 9:30 p.m. and on weekends except for a rail shuttle between King Street - Huntington ~~shuttle~~.

102 10 percent through service cuts to Metrobus, should any be necessary, in the following order ~~of preference: from least to most undesirable~~:

- 104 1. a) Reducing and eliminating bus stops spaced more closely than five per mile; and
- 106 b) reductions in holiday service, *which are preferable to*
- 106 2. Eliminating of line segments/local overlap, *which is preferable to*
- 108 3. Peak-period headway widening, *which is preferable to*
- 108 4. a) Weekend headway widening, and
- b) off-peak weekday headway widening.

110 ~~We also encourage the following Metrobus options to be examined on a case-by-case~~  
112 ~~basis, and hope any final decision gives consideration to both distance/accessibility of~~  
114 ~~alternative service during peak and off-peak times and route efficiency metrics:~~

- 114 ~~— Elimination of entire bus lines,~~
- 116 ~~— Elimination of weekend routes or service, and~~
- 116 ~~- Elimination of late-night (after midnight) trips.~~

118 We strongly recommend that any proposals to eliminate entire bus lines, weekend routes or  
120 service, or late-night (after midnight) trips be examined on a case-by-case basis and give  
122 consideration to both distance/accessibility of alternative service during peak and off-peak  
times and route efficiency metrics.

124 Additionally, we suggest the Board find a middle-ground on many of the aforementioned fare  
126 and service changes. Rather than focusing a disproportionate level of service cuts or fare  
128 increases on one sector of Metro riders, if an are necessary, we support strongly prefer a  
130 moderate slate of cuts and increases that is spread more evenly across the entire ridership  
132 base.

130 ~~There are no easy decisions to make, but we believe our FY2011 budget recommendation of~~  
132 ~~moderate cuts and fare increases will be tolerable to the general public, equitable by~~  
134 ~~jurisdiction and rider type, and continue to maintain some semblance of convenient service.~~

134 As you well know, Metro is our communal responsibility. We all reap the benefits when we  
136 commute to work, attend cultural events, and visit friends throughout the region. So when the  
138 Authority faces an unprecedented budget shortfall and jurisdictions are unable to step in, as  
riders, it is our unfortunate and reluctant duty to help preserve transit service that is essential  
to the social and economic fabric of our region.

140 It is this Council's sincerest desire to work with the Board to find more stable funding solutions  
so that a budget situation such as this one never happens again.

142 If you have questions about our proposal or would like to discuss this matter further, please  
144 contact myself or Carl Seip, Chairman of the Committee on the Budget, through John Pasek in  
the Office of the Board Secretary.

146 Sincerely,

*Janis DeBernardo*

148 Frank DeBernardo, Chair

DRAFT