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September 27, 2012

Chair Hudgins and Members of the Board:

It is my pleasure to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council's report for September 2012.

Proposed Rail Service Standards:

At its September meeting, the Council received a presentation from staff on Metro's proposed standards for rail service which included targets for rush hour headways, proposed passenger loads per railcar during peak periods and span of service. Council members appreciated that Metro was developing these standards and felt that the standards could prove a valuable tool to guide the Board's and management's decision-making about how to allocate resources. Members were concerned that the standards, as currently proposed, only speak to rush hour service and do not address elements that riders consider critical components of their trips on the rail system, such as escalator availability.

Members also had questions about how information about Metro adherence to these standards would be made available to riders. While performance information is available on Metro's website, it was suggested that the information be made available in locations where riders would encounter it as part of their travels.

The Riders' Advisory Council will be working with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to discuss additional criteria that the groups would like to see incorporated into the rail service standards as they are refined and expanded. I look forward to providing you with additional input at a later date.

Incident Communications Panel:

The Council also discussed the proposed Incident Communications Panel that is planned to take place at the October 11th Safety and Security Committee meeting. Members were pleased by the Board's willingness to work with the Council to highlight this important issue. Members did have some concerns about the timing and format of the panel, which were shared with you previously. The Council wants to ensure that members of the public will have opportunities to be engaged in the discussion and that the panel will clearly identify areas where riders and Metro staff can work together to suggest and implement improvements.

The Council looks forward to a productive discussion on October 11th and a thoughtful follow-up process that will make headway in addressing riders' concerns.

Youth Transit Town Hall:

On July 30th, the Council, in conjunction with the Mayor's Youth Leadership Institute, hosted a Youth Transit Town Hall, which was attended by approximately 200 young adults from the District of Columbia and Montgomery County. This event gave attendees the opportunity to discuss their concerns with the transit service as well as the opportunity to think about ways which they could advocate for improvements. The young adults who participated had many concerns in common with the broader population of the region's transit riders – concerns about service reliability, crowding, frequency and span of bus service and customer service. However, the students who participated also had unique concerns related to student fares and passes and coordination between transit providers and the region's school systems.

The Council was very pleased by both the turnout and the quality of the discussion at this meeting. We look forward to working with participants from the town hall to identify opportunities for young adults to advocate on their own behalf for improvements to the transit service on which they depend heavily.

Airports Access Working Group:

The Council's Airport Access Working Group met with a representative of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority on September 25th to discuss opportunities to make the existing transit service to Dulles Airport more user-friendly. While the planned completion of the Silver Line will greatly enhance transit access to Dulles Airport, members feel that there are opportunities for improvements to existing service.

Quarterly Meeting with Board Leadership:

Lastly, the Council appreciates the recently instituted quarterly meetings between its and the Board's leadership. My colleagues and I see these meetings as a valuable opportunity to strengthen communications between the Board and the Council on matters of concern to riders. We look forward to our meeting after today's Board meeting.

Thank you, as always, for your attention. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelsi Bracmort". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelsi Bracmort, Chair