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May 20, 2008

Dear Mr. Zimmerman and Members of the Board of Directors:

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with the Riders' Advisory Council's comments on Metro's proposed FY2009 Budget. Annual budgets offer the chance for an organization to reflect on its priorities and take actions to translate these priorities into concrete results. As you continue your deliberations and discussions on the Authority's budget over the next month, we ask you to remember the customer testimony you heard during the fare increase hearings in December from riders concerning service.

The RAC offers the following comments:

1. The Riders' Advisory Council recommends that Metro improve its annual budgeting process to make it smoother, more transparent and more open for public review by taking the following steps:
 - a. Consult the RAC in the development of Metro's annual Budget Guidelines;
 - b. Publicize widely a calendar that provides a timeline of the annual budget process;
 - c. Consider fare increases only within the context of each fiscal year's budget adoption process, not separately, as was done with fare increases this year; and
 - d. Continue rider outreach on its annual budget to include public hearings, town hall meetings and budget presentations.
2. The RAC recommends Metro assess its need for additional transportation planners and schedulers to respond to increased ridership and to provide more timely adjustments to routes and schedules. Such planners would work to directly address customer concerns about on time bus and rail performance raised at the November fare hearings.
3. The RAC recommends Metro continue to work to restore NextBus service as soon as possible. Again, this is an important customer service component that many riders used.
4. The RAC recommends Metro reconsider its revenue and ridership forecasts for FY09 to better reflect increased ridership due to service improvements such as new bus routes, added railcars during off-peak and weekend service, the extension of Yellow Line trains to Fort Totten, elimination of Grosvenor turn backs during off-peak and weekend hours.
5. The RAC recommends Metro continue to seek additional revenue from non-fare sources, specifically the pursuit of dedicated funding from federal and non-federal sources.

6. The RAC recommends Metro continue with capital improvements that have an affect on reliability and safety including:
 - Upgrade of public address systems in rail stations;
 - Repairing and rehabilitation of escalators and elevators;
 - Continue the canopy installation program over escalators; and
 - Install truncated domes on the platforms of all rail stations.

7. The RAC recommends that Metro continue to evaluate and implement its Solar Equipment project and also recommends that Metro work to reduce its electric consumption.

On behalf of Metro's riders, the RAC appreciates the opportunity to offer our comments on the FY09 Budget.

I would also like to specifically thank Lynn Rivers, the chair of Metro's Jurisdictional Coordinating Council, Rick Harcum, Metro's Budget Director, and Lillian White, Chair of the RAC Budget Subcommittee for their assistance in providing an overview of the budget to members of the RAC.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nancy Iacomini, Chairman