



600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-962-2891

April 19, 2010

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. We strongly encourage the Board and the Authority to review the FY2011 budget and reduce administrative spending as much as possible to close the projected budget gap.

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.

This Council is faced with two 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 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, continue negotiations with its operating unions to decrease costs, cut administrative positions, and continue to explore alternative revenue sources in an effort to reduce the budget shortfall in FY2011.

We are deferring to the Accessibility Advisory Committee's recommendations on the proposed changes to MetroAccess, which have already been submitted as part of the public hearing record.

If the Board, after it exhausts all other options to close the FY2011 budget gap, finds that fare increases and service cuts on Metrorail and Metrobus are absolutely necessary, the WMATA Riders' Advisory Council prefers the following proportions and priorities for the Board's decision-making:

If any fare increases should be necessary, we prefer the Board implement them in the following order from least to most undesirable:

1. a) Decreasing the transfer time among all modes from 3 to 2 hours,
b) raising the fare differential for (rail) paper farecards, and
c) instituting a peak-of-peak rail surcharge, *which are preferable to*
2. a) Increasing late-night weekend fares (after midnight),
b) increasing the reserved parking fee, and
c) increasing airport bus fares (with the consideration that steps be taken to protect airport workers), *which are preferable to*
3. a) Increasing bicycle locker rental fees,
b) increasing general parking fees, and
c) increasing express bus fares for non-airport buses, *which are preferable to*
4. Increasing the SmarTrip fare differential on bus, *which is preferable to*
5. Increasing base bus fare along with an increased transfer discount, *which is preferable to*
6. Increasing regular (rush hour) rail fare, *which is preferable to*
7. Increasing reduced (off-peak/weekend) rail fare, *which is preferable to*
8. a) Any special event fares on rail,
b) peak fare surcharges on crowded bus routes, and
c) increasing base bus fare without increasing the transfer discount, *which are preferable to*
9. Reducing the age at which children ride free, from under five years of age to under three years of age.

If any service cuts to Metrorail should be necessary, we prefer the Board implement them in the following order from least to most undesirable:

1. a) Modifying headways and train lengths on four holidays: Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday and Presidents' Day;
b) Restructuring peak service on the Red Line to have 3 min headways from Grosvenor to Silver Spring and 6 min from Silver Spring to Glenmont and Grosvenor to Shady Grove, and
c) early morning weekday headway widening, *which are preferable to*
2. Closing station entrances or mezzanine levels (after a full and transparent review of safety and security issues these closures may cause), *which are preferable to*
3. Weekend headway widening, *which is preferable to*
4. Late night headway widening, *which is preferable to*
5. A later weekday opening time at 5:30am, *which is preferable to*
6. A later weekend opening time at 8:00am, *which is preferable to*
7. a) Earlier weekend closing times and
b) weekend station closures, *which are preferable to*
8. a) Elimination of peak 8-car trains,
b) elimination of Yellow Line service to Fort Totten off-peak/weekends, and
c) elimination of Yellow Line service after 9:30 p.m. and on weekends except for a rail shuttle between King Street - Huntington.

If any service cuts to Metrobus should be necessary, we prefer the Board implement them in the following order from least to most undesirable:

1. a) Reducing and eliminating bus stops after a full and transparent review of cost, safety and security measures that these changes may cause, and
b) reductions in holiday service, *which are preferable to*
2. Eliminating of line segments/local overlap, *which is preferable to*
3. Peak-period headway widening, *which is preferable to*
4. a) Weekend headway widening, and
b) off-peak weekday headway widening.

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

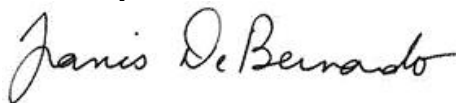
Additionally, we suggest the Board find a middle-ground on many of the aforementioned fare and service changes. Rather than focusing a disproportionate level of service cuts or fare increases on one sector of Metro riders, if any are necessary, we strongly prefer a moderate slate of cuts and increases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

If the Board must make fare increases and service cuts, we prefer that service cuts represent a very small percentage compared to fare increases. As noted above, we hope that increased jurisdictional contributions and other savings measures can reduce as much as possible the need for fare increase or service cuts.

As you well know, Metro is our communal responsibility. We all reap the benefits when we commute to work, attend cultural events, and visit friends throughout the region. 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.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank DeBernardo".

Frank DeBernardo, Chair