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June 28, 2012

Chair Hudgins and Members of the Board:

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

Planned Upgrades to SmarTrip® Cards:

At its June meeting, the Council received an update from Metro staff about planned upgrades to the SmarTrip® system, including Metro's plans to offer rebates to riders who register their SmarTrip® cards, allow for automatic reloading of cards when their balance falls below a rider-specified level and changes to entry rules on the Metrorail system. Council members were encouraged by Metro's efforts to make SmarTrip® cards more convenient and accessible. Members suggested that Metro offer additional locations to vend and reload cards, including major bus transfer points, government facilities, libraries and the region's airports.

Council members were concerned, however, that the card registration rebate will only be offered online, meaning that it will not be available to riders without internet access, who are disproportionately elderly, low-income, or disabled. Members suggested that Metro provide information about the rebate program to staff at libraries, community centers and other locations that provide public internet access so that they can better assist their users, and asked whether the SmarTrip® card rebate could also be offered to individuals who register their cards by mail or over the phone.

Additionally, the Council is concerned that riders may not receive the full benefit of the new SmarTrip® card vending machines and the registration rebate program since they are not scheduled to be implemented until September 1st, a full two months after Metro begins charging a \$1 per trip surcharge for using a paper farecard.

Youth Dialogue:

Staff from Metro's Office of Bus Planning also attended the Council's June meeting to discuss youth safety and behavior issues on Metro and ways that Metro can better work with youth to encourage better behavior on the Authority's trains and buses. As part of developing recommendations on improving youth behavior, the Council plans to reach out directly to young adults that ride Metro to hear their concerns and suggestions by sponsoring a youth transit town hall meeting later this summer. I look forward to keeping you informed of the Council's progress on this topic.

Bus Stop Accessibility:

Council members also met with staff from Metro's Bus Customer Facilities branch at a special meeting to learn more about Metro's plans to upgrade bus stops in the region. Metro will be upgrading bus stops under a \$1.25 million federal grant designed to help improve fixed-route transit accessibility for customers with disabilities. The Council hopes to provide additional input as part of future bus stop upgrades.

RAC Meeting Notifications:

Lastly, on behalf of the Council, I would like to thank Metro's Communications staff for its recent efforts to publicize Council meetings through the Metro website and its social media channels. We look forward to working with the Authority on more continued improvements on RAC meeting outreach, and also look forward to hearing specific feedback on the communications suggestions that we provided to the Board in May, some of which have been implemented.

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