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May 23, 2013

Chairman Downs and Members of the Board:

It is my pleasure to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council's report for May 2013.

Police Chief Introduction: The RAC welcomed Transit Police Chief Ronald Pavlik, who outlined his department's ongoing efforts to deter and respond to criminal activity on the Metro system. Chief Pavlik noted the agency's response to youth crime on the system, and was encouraged by members of the RAC to further engage directly with youth and the institutions that serve them in an effort to curb criminal activity. Improving response times and enhancing physical police presence throughout the Metro system continues to be a high priority for riders. RAC members once again encouraged the Transit Police to change its emergency number to an easily remembered word or three digit extension.

Emergency Communications and Incident Communications: The RAC debated and approved two letters from the Safety and Security Committee which respond to tasks directed by the Board. The first letter offers concrete suggestions for ways Metro can improve communication with riders in an emergency situation and help to educate riders about emergency procedures before they occur. The second letter responds positively to the Board's proposal to continue the discussion on incident communications. The RAC looks forward to facilitating further interactions on these topics between the Board and Metro riders.

Virginia Listening Session: On April 24, the RAC held its first "listening session" for Metro customers in Alexandria in an effort to directly engage riders on their concerns and priorities. Riders clearly voiced the need for better communication from Metro, especially more timely and accurate information on service adjustments and incidents, particularly through more frequent use of WMATA's Twitter accounts. Track work remains an annoyance which deters weekend and late night riders in particular. The impact of overcrowding in certain stations during peak periods was also a frequently raised theme. The RAC is compiling information it received during the listening session and will report to the Board in the near future with suggestions derived from rider feedback. The RAC intends to hold similar events in Maryland and the District of Columbia in the coming months, and welcomes members of the Board to attend.

I look forward to answering any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Ben Ball, Chair
WMATA Riders' Advisory Council