



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

October 28, 2010

Chairman Benjamin and Members of the Board:

It is my pleasure to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council's report for October 2010.

WMATA Governance Review:

At its October meeting, the Council reviewed and made comments on a preliminary draft copy of its WMATA Governance Review report. We look forward to soliciting comments from members of the public regarding this report and sharing a final version with the Board and other regional stakeholders after the Council's November meeting. As always, we are appreciative of the participation of so many current and former members of the Board in our discussions to help inform these recommendations.

Letter on 7000-Series Railcars:

Also at its October meeting, the Council approved the attached letter regarding design considerations for the 7000-series railcars, which were approved for purchase in July. It is the Council's hope that during the development process, Metro will provide opportunities for continued customer input, especially regarding interior layout and design issues. As Mr. Sarles described when he introduced himself to the Council in April – the inclusion of rider feedback during the design and construction process of new railcars for New Jersey Transit during his tenure resulted in a better final product. We are hopeful that the same process of engagement here at Metro.

Metrobus Committee:

The Council's Metrobus committee also met this month and discussed Metrobus' proposed Snow Operations Plan and continued its discussion on how to implement practices for Metro to notify customers of planned bus route detours. We appreciate the willingness of Bus Planning staff, especially Bus Planning manager Jim Hamre, to incorporate rider suggestions and feedback into their procedures.

Improving the Council's Feedback:

Lastly, the Council is looking at ways to improve the feedback it provides to both the Board and to Metro staff. Over the coming months, we will be examining our meeting structure, schedule and procedures to ensure that we are able to provide clear, focused feedback in a timely manner in order to aid in Metro's decision-making process. As always, we welcome the Board's guidance on how we can better serve you and Metro's riders.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Frank DeBernardo'.

Frank DeBernardo, Chairman



600 Fifth Street NW
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October 6, 2010

Dear Members of the WMATA Board,

The WMATA Riders' Advisory Council is eager for the 7000 Series railcars to come to the Metrorail system and replace old railcars with known safety weaknesses. At the same time, we encourage you to ensure that adding needed capacity to trains, potentially with features such as longitudinal seating or more doors, also remains a high priority in the cars' final design, and that needs of riders with disabilities receive high priority as well.

Debo Ogunrinde presented the current plans for the 7000 Series cars to the RAC's Long Term Projects Committee in July. We appreciate his taking the time to speak with us and his forthrightness in explaining what options had been eliminated and the staff's rationale for doing so.

Riders raised concerns, however, about the decision to eliminate longitudinal seating (where seats face the centers of cars). Having even a portion of 7000 Series cars with this configuration would significantly add to standing capacity while only reducing seated capacity by 4 seats per married pair. The decision had also been made to design the cars with 3 doors per side instead of the 4 doors common on most other transit systems. More doors could speed boarding and therefore total throughput in the system.

Mr. Ogunrinde informed us that these options had been eliminated because of concerns over crash safety. However, he was not able to quantify this benefit. We are concerned that staff may be making decisions based on a desire to simply "do everything for safety" instead of a rational analysis of the benefits of each alternative. Therefore, we would encourage conducting a rigorous evaluation of the impact of these and other design suggestions during the development of the prototype car.

Platform and train crowding is also a significant safety issue, and crowding is almost certain to worsen as loads increase and the system nears its design capacity. Since the costs of renovating the platforms would be prohibitive, any alternative means of reducing crowding would create a greater safety benefit as well as a service benefit. A logical alternative would be to move passengers into and out of the cars in a more efficient way.

While we agree that safety must be the foremost priority, we are concerned that future generations might regret design decisions made today when the signal system is fully fixed and crowding may replace train collisions as the primary safety concern. Adding capacity now through car design could also reduce the need to spend money on

capacity upgrades, freeing up additional dollars for safety fixes and needed preventive maintenance.

We do not know whether these particular capacity designs are still possible at this stage in the design process. However, we hope the Board will keep in mind these big picture issues when making decisions about the 7000 Series railcars and ask staff to do the same.

In addition, based on feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, we also recommend that Priority Seats be located near center doors but the wheelchair and scooter locations at the ends of cars, so that wheelchairs or scooters have more potential boarding sites and minimize blocking evacuation in the event of an emergency.

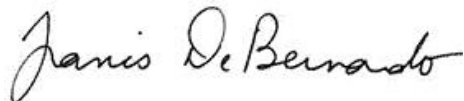
Riders have raised concerns that a fabric covering made partly of wool could become a nesting place for ticks, lice, or bed bugs, absorb bodily fluids, and trigger allergies in some riders. We therefore ask that the final decision of seat covering take these factors into account.

We ask that the choice of flooring strongly weigh the acoustic properties to aid hearing of announcements, resistance to skids and slips, ease of cleaning and sterilizing, and softness for people who fall.

Finally, signals and announcements for stations and doors opening and closing should be understandable for vision- and hearing-challenged riders. The electronic systems should ensure sufficient time for vision impaired and mobility impaired individuals to cross a crowded car and safely exit the train.

The Riders' Advisory Council appreciates the Board's efforts to acquire the 7000 Series in a timely manner, and acknowledges their efforts to ensure both safety and riders' concerns factor prominently into the decision making process.

Sincerely,

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

Frank DeBernardo, Chairman