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Mrs. Mack and Metro Board Members,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to present the January 2007 Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) report to the Board. This written report summarizes the RAC's 2006 accomplishments; outlines specific Bus and Rail Subcommittee goals for the 2007 RAC session; and details the RAC's general goals for Metro concerning budget, safety and security issues.

2006 RAC Accomplishments

Last month, Mr. Jaffe presented the accomplishments from the RAC's inaugural year. These accomplishments include:

- Representing the riders' plight by participating in the process of guiding improvements to MetroAccess, both through workshops and the MetroAccess Ad-Hoc Committee. Hopefully, the door-to-door service and other guidance we recommended will make a difference in the quality of life of those in our community with special needs.
- Helping to set the direction for the 7000-series Railcars to be used as Metro expands towards Dulles Airport, through our participation in a pre-engineering workshop. Workshops like these represent a highly effective use of your RAC volunteers, and I encourage the expanded use of these types of events.
- Starting the process of encouraging improved signage, lighting, sound, and accountability in rail stations by participating in a number of station walk-throughs with both the General Manager's office and the Red Line Team.
- Impacting Metro Bus service by advocating for the continued operation of lines that were not properly studied prior to recommended cuts, and we worked with staff to advance the goal of getting bus schedules and maps into the hands of riders.
- Providing input into the selection criteria for the next Metro General Manager, Mr. Catoe, by participating in a briefing to Ms. Debra Johnson, Metro Board Secretary.
- Passing a number of resolutions and recommendations that have been cited at both Board and Board Committee Meetings, demonstrating a desire by the Board to truly consider our advice.

2007 RAC Goals –

The following is an outline of the RAC's goals for 2007 in the areas of Metro Bus, Metro Rail, the fiscal year (FY) 2008 Metro budget, and system-wide safety and security issues.

Metro Bus: In keeping with last year's "Year of the Bus" theme, the initial goals developed at our first Bus Subcommittee meeting, held on Wednesday, January 10, include the following:

- Provide input into line changes and service improvements, from requests made at Town Hall meetings including, but not limited to: the 30, Z, and S bus lines, and night-time service out to Centerville.
- Enforce consistency in operator announcements on buses that do not have the capability of enunciating next stop information.
- Encourage bus operators to take pride of ownership in their buses, and pride in their customers. Specifically, the RAC encourages Metro to establish a policy on how customers are greeted and how literature (e.g., schedules and system maps) is made available.
- Support and encourage the aggressive implementation of NextBus service, with a target 30% implementation this year
- Rationalize bus stops and encourage the use of a community-based process for sensible consolidation to improve bus flow.
- Improve dissemination of information about RAC, the Metro Board, and other open forums and meetings on Metro Buses, including trains and para-transit.

Metro Rail: At the meeting held on Wednesday, January 10, the Rail Subcommittee identified the following goals for 2007:

- Evaluate and improve the audibility of train operator announcements.
- Improve the reliability and functionality of Metro's web-based Trip Planner.
- Participate in planning for train lengths and rail car deployments; and WMATA's proposal to shift some blue line trains onto the yellow line (for the river crossing) during rush hours and it's impact on the communities served by the Blue Line.
- Improve the newspaper-recycling program in Rail stations and throughout the system. Improve the newspaper recycling program in stations and throughout the system. Metro as a public transit entity with at least one objective, to positively impact the environment, needs to be proactive in its recycling program and support for other regional activities that cut greenhouse gasses.

- Continue to encourage and endorse the expanded use of SmarTrip throughout the transit system and the Washington Metropolitan Region. However, Metro must do a better job of marketing SmarTrip to riders in communities identified with low use of SmarTrip; and improve on the ease of use, reporting, monitoring, and cost of entry.
- Encourage Metro to discover ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to Rail stations.
- Make "Metro FAQs" and other literature available in Rail stations as not all customers have access to the Internet.
- Metro Rail Station Signage: During Station walk-throughs last year, the RAC identified the need for improvements to station signage. Many stations have hand-lettered signs to help address specific needs of that particular station. Although these signs are extremely useful and effective, they detract from the look of "America's Subway System." In discussions with Bob Hester of the Red Line Team and Paul Bumbry of the Blue/Orange Line Team, the RAC Rail Subcommittee recommends that the Board authorize funds to provide A-frame signs, with the ability to temporarily insert pre-printed signage, for use at every rail station. This small improvement, recommended by Station Managers, would empower them to better communicate with customers in the case of an emergency situation, elevator/escalator outages, special events (like Redskins games), and minor construction detours using approved Metro resources. *The RAC believes that this is just one small step in allowing station managers and line teams to be empowered to take pride of ownership in the stations and communicate with the customers they serve.*

FY 2008 budget: The RAC agrees that the last resort for balancing the FY 2008 budget is service cuts, and the second-to-last is a fare increase. The RAC plans to solicit public comments at our February meeting, which will take place on Wednesday, February 7, 2007. The RAC hopes this public forum will generate creative ideas and proposals from Metro Customers to address the \$51M short fall in the draft FY 2008 budget. The RAC also intends to use these public comments during RAC-sponsored budget workshops to be held in February and March. *We believe that through our workshops we can generate innovative and creative ideas that will improve the quality of Metro services, expand peak capacity, increase the use of under utilized resources ... and still balance the budget.*

Safety and security: The RAC believes that Metro should strive to make safety and security your #1 priority. The RAC is saddened by the events of our inaugural year. The deaths of Inspectors Brooks and Cherry, the 41 fatalities from bus collisions, the 2 fatalities from rail platform incidents, the 20 injuries from January's rail car derailment, plus additional injuries within the Metro's facilities all have brought home the reality of our volunteer work with Metro.

The RAC offers our service to participate in safety reviews and workshops as a means of providing customer input into Metro's Safety Policy. A question that has been raised at a number of RAC meetings since the event that took Mr. Cherry's and Mr. Brooks' lives was the rationale for reducing speeds to 20 MPH in inspection

zones. The New York City MTA reduces train speeds to 15 MPH in similar zones. Our question to the Board is: "Is Metro taking proactive and conservative steps to limit train speeds while waiting on reports and recommendations from the NTSB on 5000-series rail cars in single tracking scenarios?" A RAC goal for 2007 is to better understand Metro's decision process for tradeoffs between safety and schedule.

The RAC also seeks to better understand Metro's policy on disaster and incident planning at rail stations.

My goal is to develop the RAC into an organization that is respected, representative of riders, and serves as a "sounding board" for Metro management, Metro staff, and the Metro Board. I want everyone at Metro in the pre-planning phase of a new initiative to ask:

What would Metro's customers on the RAC think of this idea?

I. Michael Snyder
Chair, Metro Riders' Advisory Council