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May 24, 2007

Metro Board Members,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to present the May 2007 Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) report to the Board. This written report discusses the progress from our RAC subcommittees; outlines the RAC's initiatives surrounding the fiscal year 2008 budget; and bus, rail, and safety issues.

The RAC will be co-sponsoring with Metro, two "Pedestrian Safety Town Hall Meetings" as follows:

Columbia Heights

Thursday, May 31st, 2007
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Columbia Heights Community Center
1480 Girard Street, NW
Washington, DC
(202) 671-0373

Congress Heights

Tuesday, June 12th, 2007
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
UPO/Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene
Community Service Center
2907 Martin Luther King Ave., SE
Washington, DC
(202) 562-3800

We invite all members of the public and the Board to participate in this very important public outreach opportunity in-light of the MetroBus/pedestrian fatalities this year and the on-going efforts of the dDot Street Smart Campaign and other regional pedestrian safety efforts.

At this month's meeting of the RAC, we received a presentation from the GW Students who were working with the RAC as a Capstone Project. They presented, *Bridging the Gap: Connecting Riders to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority*. As part of their project they developed the RAC Track, a document that begins the analysis and evaluation process, narrows the scope of an initiative being considered, and collects required information for data entry into WMATA's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System. Included in the report is an Appendix showing a sample form and the instructions for its completion. This month, as Chair, I have asked the RAC subcommittees to use the RAC Track to start documenting current initiatives. Hopefully, in the next two months I will be able to generate a report out of CRM as an appendix to this report, to provide the Board with progress on our initiatives.

In order to provide the RAC with additional resources and expertise; and to tap into the energy of “well vetted” riders with an interest in helping the RAC accomplish its mission:

The RAC adopted a policy of allowing non-voting members on Subcommittees, including the following components:

- Appointments would be voted on by the RAC at a monthly RAC meeting;
- Applications would be circulated to RAC members the week prior to the RAC's monthly meeting;
- Criteria for appointing a non-RAC member to a subcommittee shall include but not require:
 - The ability to commit to the monthly Subcommittee meeting schedule;
 - Commitment to and interest in strengthening the regional transit system;
 - Knowledge of particular areas; and
 - Ability to devote time and effort to the work of the Subcommittee;
- Appointments would last for one calendar year;
- Appointees would need to sign and adhere to the RAC's Standards of Conduct;
- There would not be a need to maintain jurisdictional balance of appointees;
- Each applicant must receive the support of a majority of the members of the Subcommittee that he or she wishes to join and be recommended to the RAC Chair by the Chair of that Subcommittee;
- An application for appointment, similar to the application for membership on the RAC must be filled out; the inclusion of a résumé is optional;
- The respective Subcommittee Chair shall discuss with the applicant, in advance of his or her appointment, the expectations for his or her participation; and
- Information about the appointees shall be submitted to the Metro Board of Directors.

We have a past member of the RAC who is interested in serving on two subcommittees, and expect that other Riders from the RAC candidate pools of over 1000 applicants may be interested in participation. The RAC plans to work with Metro to advertise this expanded opportunity for rider participation, and foresee this as an opportunity for the Board to examine some future RAC members.

Also, I ask the Board to appoint a replacement for Mr. Pedro Erviti who has stepped down as a RAC Member from Centerville Virginia due to his relocation from the area.

Budget Subcommittee – The Budget Subcommittee is dedicated to exploring opportunities for Metro to increase non-fare revenue, identify cost saving measures, and

to examine management recommendations for changes in fares and services, with the goal of maximizing customer value in transit services consumed.

Last Month, the Budget Subcommittee focused on the *Riders' Advisory Council "Budget Related" Policy Recommendations* presentation to the Board Finance, Administration and Oversight Committee.

As a recap, the RAC recommended:

- 1) A expansion of the use of SmarTrip by implementing sensible guidelines for purchase, increasing balances, and marketing to allow Metro to recover lost revenue, better track ridership, and offer discounts to increase the use of off-peak system capacity.
- 2) A Fare Policy that is easy to understand; allows easy access to passes; is tied to a wage based economic indicator; and encourages the use of off-peak system capacity to increase revenue.
- 3) Explore using shuttle services to replace some low use, fixed bus routes during periods of low demand, like late-night operations.
- 4) Re-examine the feasibility of retail sales of non-food items within the transit system, and the rental of WMATA facilities for business, commercial or private events.

Bus Subcommittee – The Bus Subcommittee is dedicated to MetroBus service issues including operations, scheduling, safety, and improvements to services for the communities served by this mode of transportation.

Dr. Sharon Conn, Chair of the Bus Subcommittee and Michael Snyder, RAC Chair attended the re-dedication of Next Bus Service at the Pentagon Station. The RAC anticipates recommendations on improvements to the NextBus kiosks in addition to its suggestions of last month on rolling out new service.

Last month, the Bus Subcommittee had presentations on the Proposed 30-Line Restructuring Process, and the Criteria for Wrapping Buses.

The issue with Bus Wraps is that some of the advertisements are so extreme as to make the bus indistinguishable as a MetroBus. As Metro customers we need to be able to tell that the bus is a MetroBus from the side, and not one of the hundreds of other busses that use our region's streets.

The RAC recommends that the Board edit its language from the February 5, 2004 authorization to wrap up to 100 MetroBuses to be clearly identifiable when viewed from all angles. A suggestion is to be sure that the Metro Logo be replaced or supplemented as is required of the MetroBus numbers.

In the RAC's recommendation for expanded use of SmarTrip and the goal of eliminating the use of paper transfers to reign-in possible abuse and lost revenue, our discussion focused on the flexibility that paper fares gave bus drivers in offering consideration for traffic congestion, detours, and missed connections. To compensate for the volume of traffic in the Metropolitan Region, and longer commute times experienced by riders, the RAC recommends: *The validity period for transfers should be extended to 4 hours from their present 2-hour limit.*

Rail Subcommittee – The Rail Subcommittee is dedicated to MetroRail, MetroRail Stations, elevator/escalator, and parking-related services, including safety, cleanliness, recycling, lighting, bicycle/pedestrian/special needs accessibility, infrastructure, expansion, and improvement to services for the communities served by this mode of transportation.

Last month, the Rail Subcommittee had presentations on the deployment of the 6000 series railcars, and a review of plans for railcar enhancements. There was also a review of Rail initiatives from the prior month's Rail Workshop.

The Rail Subcommittee discussed the recent evacuation at the Pentagon City Station. The RAC has initiated plans to work with Metro on lessons learned from this and other Rail Station evacuations in an attempt to have better communication of Rail Station Evaluation Plans and procedures for the riders.

Concluding Remarks:

Two months ago, I discussed the RAC's desire to have front line workers take personal responsibility for the vehicle or facility under their purview. An issue I raised was the debris along the rail bed being responsible for fires in the station. I recommended that the station managers scan rail bed in their stations and report concerns to Rail Operations. Last month, I shared photos of two of the offending stations, L'Enfant Plaza and White Flint. White Flint has a problem with pine needles and trash.

On May 6, 2007, one week after my report, the station one stop north of White Flint, Twinbrook Station experienced a fire in the rail bed involving "**burning pine needles.**" On Wednesday, May 16, 2007, I participated in the Red Line Team's customer meet and greet, this time at Rockville Station. I took this opportunity to discuss this problem with members of the Red Line management team and to escort them to see the problem at Twinbrook and White Flint first hand. Unfortunately, they are well aware of this problem and explained that the cleanup occurs during scheduled rail bed maintenance. Waiting for scheduled maintenance

in order to address a safety hazard is all wrong. This is not crying wolf. Problems must be corrected before an incident occurs.

Following are new photos at White Flint:



Figure 1- White Flint Rail Bed 1 of 4



Figure 2- White Flint Rail Bed 2 of 4

Following are last month's photos at White Flint:



Figure 3- White Flint Rail Bed 3 of 4

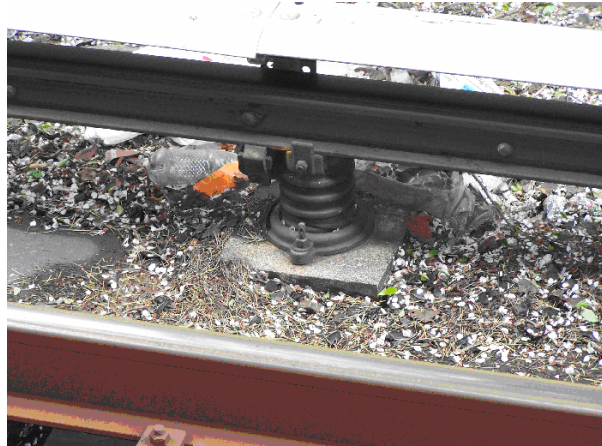


Figure 4- White Flint Rail Bed 4 of 4

Last month, the RAC recommended that Metro move forward with the installation of bumpy domes at all remaining stations, as a safety precaution for all riders.

I brought this recommendation up with the Red Line Team, as well, since there are huge sections of tiles planned for replacement at the above ground stations of White Flint and Twinbrook. I was told that even though Metro would be replacing tiles all the way to the granite edge, they would not be adding bumpy domes on this part of the platform. Additionally, there are no plans to use the new skid-resistant tiles that the RAC approved. Why not take this repair as an opportunity to accomplish both these initiatives?

The RAC membership is eager to continue and expand its interaction with WMATA staff on all issues that affect riders. To date, RAC members have participated in the 7000 Rail Car Preliminary Design Workshop, the Joint Development Task Force, and the Metro Access Ad Hoc Advisory Committee. We would ask that RAC members be given more opportunities to participate in focus groups and workshops -- large or small. We would also ask that events for the Media be announced and open to RAC members for attendance. RAC participation is beneficial to both the media and the Authority -- the Strap Hanger demonstration and the Next Bus Service at Pentagon are good, positive example. The sharing of media notices also provides a ready-made follow up to how staff is implementing -- even on a trial basis -- ideas that have been discussed with the RAC. An example of this is the pilot installation of LED lighting at Foggy Bottom. Our Rail Subcommittee had heard a good report from staff on their awareness of lighting issues and heard ideas on how the issues might be addressed. We did not know the pilot was being installed. RAC has also received reports on other initiatives WMATA is pursuing to assist its riders, including the upgrading of PA systems in rail stations. We are eager to know the status of any initiative that directly affects riders. On behalf of the citizen volunteers on the RAC, I would ask everyone at WMATA involved with the planning and implementation of a new initiative to ask:

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

I. Michael Snyder
Chair, Riders' Advisory Council