



Riders Advisory Council July 2020

Chairman Smedberg and Members of the Board:

I am pleased to present you all with an update on the activities of the Riders' Advisory Council.

Metrobus Recovery Plan

During our July meeting, we had the pleasure of meeting with Jim Hamre for an update on the Metrobus Recovery Plan.

RAC members are deeply concerned about ongoing reports of severe crowding on numerous routes--especially those serving lower income communities in our region. While we appreciate Mr. Hamre's detailed explanation of WMATA's plans to increase Metrobus capacity, it is important to note that daily bus ridership has long been well above the socially distanced capacity of 85,000 trips as specified in WMATA's Pandemic Recovery Plan.¹ Even in the "managed reentry" phase expected to begin in the coming weeks, Metrobus capacity is only planned to be 110,00 trips, wholly insufficient for current ridership. Per WMATA's COVID-19 Public Information Page, daily Metrobus ridership reached first crossed 110,000 trips on June 29th. Weekday ridership since that day has never been less than 122,000 trips on June 30th, with the sole exception of the Friday preceding the Fourth of July holiday.²

Members also took note of the fact that WMATA recently received thousands of masks from the Federal Transit Administration. We strongly encourage WMATA to follow the steps taken by other major transit agencies already using any number of means to distribute masks and hand sanitizer. We also urge WMATA to follow the lead of transit agencies like Pittsburgh's Port Authority which use the same technologies from the same vendor (Clever Devices) to provide real time bus capacity updates. These updates allow riders to make informed choices about social distancing.

Riders' Advisory Council Outreach and Membership

The RAC also considered ways to become more actively engaged in community discussions on transit issues across the region. RAC Members agreed that speaking with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and similar bodies are one possibility and we will continue to seek

¹ "COVID-19 Recovery Plan" as presented to the Finance and Capital Committee on 2020-05-14. <https://www.wmata.com/about/board/meetings/board-pdfs/upload/3A-COVID-19-Recovery-Final.pdf>

² <https://wmata.com/service/covid19/covid-19-public-information.cfm>

opportunities in our respective areas. We also welcome the chance to engage with organizations like the Maryland Suburban Transportation Commission, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, and individual jurisdictions' transportation commissions and advisory bodies.

We are also excited to welcome the new members due to be appointed at this meeting and for the energy and new ideas. The RAC also looks forward to the appointment of a new board member to serve as liaison following the resignation of our previous board liaison.

Future Meetings in Calendar Year 2020

Following our August recess, the RAC would like an overview of the planned customer service improvements that were approved in the FY21 Budget, including but not limited to the roll-out of a new mobile payment system and improved customer training for front line employees. We would also welcome the chance to meet with Chairman Smedberg and General Manager Wiedefeld.

Officer Elections

Following our annual elections, Rob Cavese (District of Columbia) and Wil White (Maryland) were elected Vice-Chairs and Andrew Kierig (Virginia) was elected Chair.

As always the RAC welcomes the active engagement of all board members in our deliberations. We look forward to a productive and thoughtful relationship with the Board as we work to safely manage the consequences of this difficult period.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Kierig", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Kierig
Chair