



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

January 28, 2010

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

I am pleased to present you with the Riders' Advisory Council report for January 2010.

2010 Budget Shortfall and Service Cuts

Three Metro staff, Matt Brown, Jim Hamre, and Jim Hughes discussed the operational and service cuts proposed to close Metro's projected \$40 million budget shortfall for 2010. RAC Members expressed a variety of concerns, including that

- live customer service late at night may be important for customer safety;
- elimination of first and last buses could burden transit dependent riders, particularly working people, based on public statements at 2009 public hearings;
- the rail system is already crowded at many times of the day and increased crowding due to reduced frequencies and shorter trains would lead to rider frustration and safety concerns;
- bus stop eliminations within DC for budgetary purposes would be unpopular and are likely less feasible in practice than on paper;
- entries at some rail system mezzanines proposed for weekend closures are over one thousand people per day and Metro should consider leaving those entries open and splitting the station attendant among the entries;
- any service changes—frequencies or schedules—should consider coordinating transfers with other services;
- Metro should do more to encourage ridership—and therefore revenue—rather than focus on cutting costs.

Several Council Members attended the January 27th public hearing on proposed cuts and possible fare increase.

2011 Budget

Mr. Brown also provided the Council with an overview of the 2011 budget projections. At the time, he estimated a \$175 million shortfall for the 2011 budget year, and provided estimates that a twenty percent fare increase would generate approximately \$100 million in additional revenue. In his earlier remarks, Mr. Hughes also alluded to deeper cuts to the rail systems as likely necessary to produce a balanced 2011 budget.

Bylaw Amendments

Mr. Benjamin visited the Council to discuss the R.A.C.'s proposed bylaw amendments. He expressed that he needed the Council to elect a Chair that he could work with and that he knew he could work with several Members from Montgomery County. He also suggested that we hold our elections that night.

Elections

At our January meeting, the Council elected Frank De Bernardo Maryland Chair and Chair of the R.A.C., Dharm Guruswamy Virginia Chair (1st Vice Chair) and David Alpert DC Chair (2nd Vice Chair).

Public Comment

One member of the public, Leroy Morgan, commented that he believed Metro should maintain a holiday schedule on all national holidays, regardless of the day of the week the holiday falls on.

Comings and Goings

We look forward to welcoming new Members appointed by the Board at the January 28th meeting.

On behalf of the entire R.A.C., let me express appreciation to Mr. Catoe for all of his efforts on behalf of Metro the past three years and wish him well in his retirement.

Thank you very much for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Diana Zinkl, JD/MCP
Chair, WMATA Riders' Advisory Council