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March 27, 2008

Mr. Zimmerman and Members of the Board of Directors:

It is my pleasure to present to you the Riders' Advisory Council's report for March 2008.

I have previously provided you with letters transmitting the RAC's comments on the first two items, so I will keep my discussion of these topics brief:

Communications and Service Plans for Upcoming Events:

Staff from Metro's Department of Corporate Strategy and Communications attended the March RAC meeting to provide an overview of Metro's service and communications plans for upcoming special events – the Washington Nationals games at the new stadium at the Navy Yard and Pope Benedict's visit to Washington and Mass at the Nationals Stadium.

Members of the RAC had the opportunity to provide feedback about the communications to be provided to passengers – both for the Nationals service and for the Pope's visit. We are encouraged and appreciative that Metro staff sought out comments from the RAC and incorporated those comments in preparing the final versions of both their website and pocket guides.

Neutral Host Communications Network:

The RAC also received a presentation from Metro staff regarding the Authority's plan to solicit proposals for the creation of a "neutral host" communications network. This network would allow additional cellular providers access to Metro's underground tunnels as well as provide an infrastructure for public safety communications, the Metro Channel and other operational communications.

In discussing the proposal, RAC members were generally supportive of expanded wireless service in the Metro system. However, several members expressed concerns about the effect additional cell phone usage would have on the rider experience. The RAC hopes that, in conjunction with the expansion of cellular service in Metro's tunnels, Metro will partner with its customers to ensure a pleasant environment for everyone.

Subsequent to our discussion, Steve Cerny, the chairman of the Rail Subcommittee, brought an article from the weekly APTA "Passenger Transport" newsletter concerning neutral hosts on other rail systems. Among those highlighted was Boston's Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which recently rolled out a wireless system similar to what is being proposed by Metro. The MBTA simultaneously launched an ad campaign (signs on platforms and in cars)

aimed at reminding riders to keep their calls brief and their voices low. Those present at the subcommittee felt this type of campaign would be something that should happen with the installation/use of Metro's new neutral host. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest the Board may want to consider using a portion of the revenue provided by the neutral host licensee to fund such a courtesy campaign targeting cell phone usage along with other rider behaviors, such as eating and drinking on buses and trains. This would represent an opportunity to improve travel on Metro for all passengers.

Incident Management Workshop:

The RAC was given the opportunity to submit comments to an incident management workshop that was held on March 12th.

I'm hopeful that RAC members will be able to attend future workshops to offer their comments and to ensure that, as Metro develops plans to address service disruptions or other emergencies, it focuses on providing its riders with the timely, accurate and useful information riders want and need to hear/receive.

I'd like to especially thank Metro's Assistant General Manager for Safety, Security and Risk Management Polly Hanson for her consistent advocacy on behalf Metro's customers during this workshop.

We are looking forward to having Deputy General Manager Gerald Francis at our meeting next month to discuss Metro's plans to improve its communications with customers, especially in the event of an emergency or other service disruption. As Metro's riders, the RAC is encouraged by the Authority's efforts to address the frequently-heard complaint that riders are left in the dark (sometimes literally!) when there are delays or disruptions. We appreciate the opportunity to work with staff to develop improved communications practices and procedures for the benefit of all of Metro's customers.

Finally, I'm pleased to hear the Board's renewed interest in the health and well-being of Metro's elevators and escalators. In almost every instance, a trip on Metrorail begins and ends with a trip on at least one elevator or escalator. Keeping them functioning reliably is a critical part of making Metrorail convenient and accessible.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Nancy Iacomini, Chairman