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1-23-10

Subject: DASH FY2011 Budget & Metro bus and rail service

Hi, my name is Christopher Der. I am a proud resident of the West End, and I would like to offer my concerns and suggestions in regards to the FY2011 budget shortfall for the DASH bus system. As it stands now, the Office of Management and Budget is talking about proposing a decrease in DASH transit subsidies of approximately \$600,000. Even though these are rough times for our City's economy, I do not want to see a fare increase or reduction in DASH service for FY2011.

There are many City residents that rely on DASH as their only mode of transit. Cutting service, even if it is one trip at the service margins, could mean that someone has lost their only way of getting around.

I could choose to drive to work, but I still use DASH a couple times every week. I enjoy the experience I have on the system. The operators are courteous, the service is safe, reliable and expansive, and the buses are clean. Service reductions will put a dent in the high regard I hold for DASH. Even if service reductions do not affect me, I know it will affect someone's commute, and as a City resident, I must look out for the collective well-being of every resident.

That being said, I will reluctantly agree to a fare increase to avoid service cuts. I will support up to a 25 cent increase in fares, and an increase in the price of the DASH Pass.

If fare increases are not enough to close the budget shortfall, I will reluctantly agree to service restructuring. Of the available service reduction options that were presented by DASH, I reluctantly support the restructuring of weekday midday Old Town service. It was suggested that every other trip on the AT-2 and AT-5 would not serve Old Town. This is the least disruptive plan out of all the options, since the two lines are very close in proximity to each other, and there would still be a sufficient level of alternative service in the area.

I also believe that it is important for the City to adequately fund Metro bus and rail service. Metro transports thousands of people into our City every day, and like DASH, many people rely on Metro as their only viable transportation option. In addition, I believe that the City should advocate for increased accountability and improved customer service at Metro.

It was noted at a December 16, 2009 ATC meeting on the FY2011 budget that DASH is a vital service in the City's Master Transportation Plan, and that the system is a core city service. DASH service reduces traffic congestion, improves air quality, and encourages City residents to be efficient commuters. Cutting service on DASH will go 100% against these philosophies.

I would be happy to meet with Council members to further discuss your ideas on DASH and Metro. Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Christopher Der
chriskder@gmail.com
301-518-2942