

August 29, 2013



The Honorable Roger Berliner
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Suite 600
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Councilmember Berliner:

Thank you for your August 24 letter to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) concerning the news reports about water infiltration in the tunnels around Medical Center Station.

First, and foremost, I want to assure you that this is not a safety issue, but is instead, a long-term reliability concern. Second, while we have not yet determined the best course of action, I want to emphasize how important it is to develop a long-term solution that will reduce the recurring issues that impact Red Line riders, and that will also extend the life of our infrastructure.

We are advancing engineering work to do just that. Recognizing the need to minimize any impacts on our riders, Metro plans to consult with a peer group, including experts from the U.S. and possibly specialists from London and Hong Kong, to ensure that we consider the latest that advancements in the field.

Once the best repair method has been determined and well before any work begins, Metro will meet and consult with jurisdictional partners, business leaders, our Congressional delegation, communities and, most importantly, our passengers and ask for comment and adjust as appropriate. Please note that minimizing inconvenience to customers will be a critical factor as we evaluate potential solutions.

As background, the water infiltration in this area has been a challenge for many years since the tunnel that extends from Dupont Circle to Grosvenor was designed and constructed at a time prior to more advanced tunneling techniques, such as the New Austrian Tunneling Method, that protect tunnels from water infiltration. The tunnel section does not have a water protective lining.

Without a protective membrane, water infiltration in these tunnels is natural and expected. For many years, Metro has used a "maintenance/mitigation" approach during non-revenue hours that was conventional and relatively non-disruptive to riders. This was an acceptable practice during an era of lower

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ridership and shorter trains, and at a time when we were not rebuilding the rest of the system.

More recently, we have seen an increase in wayside incidents (arcing insulators, corrosion), leading Metro engineers to consider long-term solutions to improve reliability and position the infrastructure to handle future ridership growth. In addition, engineering solutions that could address this problem have matured to a point where their consideration is now appropriate, which is why we are consulting our peers. In the end, this effort is about improving service to our customers over the long term.

In the meantime, as we move forward, we are committed to involving the community, and all those who will be impacted, especially our customers who rely on us each day.

Sincerely,



Richard Sarles
General Manager and
Chief Executive Officer

cc: All Montgomery County Council Members