



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

"Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C."

October 25, 2016

Ms. Jennifer Green Ellison
Board Corporate Secretary
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
speak@wmata.com

RE: Submission of Written Testimony Presented at WMATA Board of Director's Public Hearing on October 20, 2016 Regarding the Restriction of Metrorail Operating Hours

Dear Ms. Ellison,

At its regular meeting on October 20, 2016, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A ("ANC 2A" or "Commission") considered the above-referenced matter. With five of seven commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (**5-0-0**), after a motion made by Chair Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Schrefer, to submit the following testimony that ANC 2A Chair Patrick Kennedy delivered to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's Board of Directors on October 20, 2016:

- The Commission associates itself with the testimony given by many speakers in encouraging the Board to look at alternatives to the four hours proposals proffered by management. Rather than taking a meat cleaver to the hours of the system across 110 miles of track, we would encourage the Board to consider a more surgical policy of prioritizing limited service reductions -- single-tracks, early shutdowns, etc. -- in discrete locations where maintenance tasks are to be performed. This would require additional effort for planning purposes in order to inform customers and manage impacts on revenue service, but it would carry a significant dividend for riders over a complete service reduction as proposed.
- The Board must consider a more existential question, which is: What does it consider WMATA's role to be? If it considers Metro to be a rapid transit service in the peer group of systems in Atlanta, the San Francisco Bay Area, and even Metrorail in Dade County -- much less New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago -- then it must consider that the proposed service hours in the four alternatives would make the D.C. Metro an outlier. Given the present state of the system, it is perhaps not fair for riders and the region to expect that Metro would perform significantly better than its peer agencies in the short term -- but nor should they be expected to accept a permanent policy that would make aspects of Metro's service significantly worse.



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

- Though the District of Columbia has been perhaps the most vocal about the proposed late-night service reductions, we would encourage representatives from Maryland and Virginia to consider this proposal in the context of protecting the investments that those jurisdictions have made to extend service into the suburbs. When Metro specifies a 12 am closing time now, that effectively means an 11:24 pm closing time for a passenger traveling in from Largo. From someone departing Reston, it means an 11:10 pm closing time. If hours are rolled back to 11:30 pm or even 10 pm, many of your constituents, workers, and tourists would be cut off as early as 9 pm. What will this mean when the system's extension to Dulles Airport is completed and opened? For the many billions of dollars that Virginia taxpayers are investing in that segment, and given how much Dulles' strategy for staunching a decline in passenger traffic is predicated on improving access to the core of the metropolitan region via reliable transit service, what would the impact of this proposal be on the usability of the system as a whole?
- Recently, the general manager signaled in public comments that he would be open to looking at the system hours issue once again in 2018. If this is true, then as a last-resort the Board should consider implementing whatever the preferred hours alternative is with a sunset provision that would require affirmative action by the Board -- similar to this process -- in order to retain the reduced hours. We must consider the pre-SafeTrack hours of the system as our ideal, and the Board's goal as a matter of policy. Implementing new, reduced hours on a permanent basis enshrines those hours as the status quo, and shifts the burden of proof in order to adjust those hours back toward the ideal -- and toward what this system should be capable of. We must not do that.
- Any short-term hours reduction should be specific in duration, and the Board should insist upon standards of accountability in order to ensure that there is a proximate relationship between its policy choice on span-of-service and WMATA's work product as far as improving system reliability and returning infrastructure to a state of good repair. We believe that riders, although not pleased with any service degradation, are willing to accept those that are time-limited with a believable end date, where there is accountability and measurable improvement targeted.
- Finally, without getting into the granular aspects of the alternative bus proposals presented, certainly it should be said that some improvements to late-night bus service must accompany any reduction in hours -- even a temporary reduction. But more than that, we would encourage the Board to consider its fare policies in concert with this specific service proposal -- even though it is not directly a part of it. If Metrobus is to take up the slack for the rail system when maintenance work is being performed or service disruptions



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

"Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C."

make the train an untenable option, then Metro's fare structure must consider the bus to be an equal part of the overall transit system. It is no secret that public perception in the United States relegates bus service to a lower caste than rail service; ungenerous transfer policies only encourage perceptions that Metrorail and Metrobus are separate systems at a higher and lower-tier of service, respectively. While this is generally an equity issue for bus riders not having access to rail, Metro's rail pass products effectively penalize pass holders financially for choosing to take the bus over the train without paying a significant premium for a bundled pass. Therefore, the next time the Board considers a fare adjustment, we would implore it to implement a 1:1 free transfer policy up to the base fare -- similar to systems in New York and Chicago -- with the rider only paying any difference in fare if transferring into the rail system for a commute beyond the base fare level.

Commissioner Patrick Kennedy (2A01@anc.dc.gov) is the Commission's representative in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kennedy
Chairperson

CC: Councilmember Jack Evans, Chair, WMATA Board of Directors
Sherri Kimbel, Director of Constituent Services, Councilmember Jack Evans