



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

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

February 26, 2020

Mr. Paul Smedberg
Chairman, Board of Directors
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
boardofdirectors@wmata.com

RE: The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s Draft FY 2021 Budget and Associated Bus Service Change Proposals

Dear Chairman Smedberg,

At its regular meeting on February 19, 2020, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “Commission”) considered the above-referenced matter. With seven of eight commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Harnett, to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is soliciting public comments on the Authority’s proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget, to include potential changes to fares and Metrobus services.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that ANC 2A takes the following positions with respect to the changes proposed:

- The Commission strongly supports the proposal to introduce a full transfer credit (i.e., \$2) between bus and rail trips. This change will have considerable equity benefits for those previously double-charged if they wanted to transfer from the bus to Metrorail, and it will encourage better overall utilization of the network as a whole. This change is a necessary precondition to evaluating the bus network as a whole with the goal of introducing more frequent, reliable service that complements the Metrorail system.
- ANC 2A supports the implementation of a flat fare for all weekend trips in order to encourage off-peak ridership and discourage additional automobile trips into the District, however such fare should not exceed \$2.50 in order to provide an equitable saving to most District residents and match the base fare for peak-hour rail service.
- The Commission supports the incremental restoration of late-night service (to midnight between Tuesdays and Fridays and 2:00 am on Saturdays and Sundays). The ANC strongly encourages WMATA to restore at least one



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hour of service to each end on Sundays however, as the present span of service (8:00 am to 11:00 pm) is too limited for both morning riders (particularly those traveling from overnight employment or traveling to early church service) and evening riders (those working or out late).

- ANC 2A opposes the implementation of peak fares on rail service after midnight, as it will disincentivize use of the Metrorail system during low-ridership times, encourage additional ridehailing-driven congestion in popular nightlife areas, and potentially increase the incidence of intoxicated driving. Furthermore, service frequency at these hours is generally so low that charging peak fares will reduce the perceived rider value of Metrorail service as compared to other alternatives.
- The Commission opposes the implementation of a cash surcharge on Metrobus routes, in view of the fact that this concept was tried previously and phased out based on the minimal impact it appeared to have on rider behavior. Rather than encouraging additional SmarTrip use, it is likely that this change will merely amount to a regressive tax on generally low-income riders.
- ANC 2A strongly opposes the implementation of a \$1 fare surcharge on MetroExtra routes due to negative equity impacts and the reality that the surcharge will amount to a disincentive for riders to embrace more efficient, limited-stop service both now and in future service planning efforts. Many bus routes have already seen their local line trips reduced in order to provide more limited-stop trips. If this surcharge is implemented, that will amount to a large cut in affordable bus service and make most MetroExtra trips in the District of Columbia more expensive than comparable Metrorail service.
- The Commission supports the advocacy of Commissioner James Harnett and the students of the George Washington University in advocating for a Metro pass program (U·Pass) for university students and that the program should be available to all university students in the District of Columbia. Further, the DC Council and universities in the District of Columbia are encouraged to work with student leaders to implement such a program, especially for low-income students.
- **D5:** The Commission opposes elimination of the D5 bus, which provides a direct connection for residents living in the Palisades neighborhood and inner parts of suburban Maryland along or near MacArthur Boulevard to Foggy Bottom and the K Street NW employment core. The alternative service available (mainly the D6), takes a much longer and less direct route toward Farragut Square and misses the Foggy Bottom neighborhood entirely. What’s more, WMATA’s own statistics show that a quarter of the



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riders utilizing the D5 do so at bus stops that are not presently served by other buses heading downtown.

In order to not encourage additional automobile trips into the Foggy Bottom neighborhood, the Commission recommends two alternatives to eliminating the D5 be studied:

- Evaluate the feasibility of routing D5 buses to the K Street NW corridor via the Whitehurst Freeway and the Washington Circle underpass in order to provide a quicker, “express” trip that avoids M Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW in Georgetown, where redundant service is provided by the 38B. A quicker trip time could translate into additional riders.
- Extend some D6 trips along the D5’s present route into Maryland in order to ensure no complete loss of downtown-oriented bus service for commuters in that area.
- **30s:** The Commission supports conversion of 30N and 30S trips to 31, 33, 32, or 36 service based on the potential benefits to on-time performance and user intuitiveness, but bases its support on the following conditions:
 - That WMATA’s Board of Directors fulfills its intent to implement a full fare credit (i.e., free transfer) between bus and rail trips coincident with any change so that there is no substantial cost or convenience burden imposed on riders due to the new service pattern.
 - That WMATA maintains full 30N and 30S service during overnight hours and at all times that the Metrorail system is not operating, hours during which traffic congestion and trip time reliability are not major concerns. Having a longer, one-seat ride that serves many activity centers during these hours is significantly more convenient (particularly given reduced service frequency during this time) than forcing a transfer between routes that may or may not be well-timed in practice downtown. Additionally, continuous night service that eliminates the need to wait outside, vulnerable to weather elements and in dark and potentially isolated locations, is safer for riders.
 - That WMATA evaluates the feasibility of extending the 33 to Archives or Capitol Hill in order to fully serve commuter trips and establish a seamless connection between buses and the Green and Yellow lines.
 - That WMATA implements some form of managed dispatch on the 30s line and considers further route series consolidation in order to properly space departures and produce more consistent, reliable, and frequent service along the whole of the existing line.



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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: Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager and CEO, WMATA
Ann Chisholm, District of Columbia Government Relations Officer, WMATA
Jim Hamre, Metrobus Planning, Scheduling and Customer Facilities, WMATA
Jeff Marootian, Director, DDOT
Raka Choudhury, Deputy Associate Director for WMATA Coordination, DDOT