



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of the County Executive

Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

March 2, 2020

Mr. Paul Smedberg, Chairman
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, District of Columbia 20001

Re: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget and Related Service and Fare Proposals – Docket Number B20-02.

Dear Mr. Smedberg:

Prince George's County appreciates the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Board's commitment to restoring trust in the system and improving safety and reliability on the entire regional transit network. As you are aware, Prince George's County residents rely upon WMATA for work and daily travel needs to Washington, DC and other regional activity centers. Data shows Metrorail attracts approximately 53,000 passengers and Metrobus approximately 70,000 passengers daily among stations and bus lines based in Prince George's County.

A review of your Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget and Related Service and Fair Proposals indicates that you are recommending new Metrorail and Metrobus initiatives starting on July 1, 2020, involving proposed fare changes, both service enhancements and reductions/eliminations as part of the upcoming FY 2021 budget. In reviewing WMATA's initiatives, we found items that we can support and other proposals that we find are deeply troubling, and that frankly speaking, compromise mobility options for our County residents.

Restoration of Late-Night Service – We support the gradual restoration of late-night service as proposed while providing a sufficient adequate preventative maintenance program consistent with our February 2019 letter.

Free Transfers between Metrobus and Metrorail and Discount – We support the proposed free transfers that were a top recommendation from the Bus Transformation Project and one of the requested bus improvements on the system. However, we suggest reducing or phasing the rail to bus discount – local bus operators have concerns about absorbing the additional costs or discounts (because local bus operators will not get a credit).

Improved Weekend Service for Metrobus and Metrorail – While we generally support improved weekend service for both Metrobus and Metrorail services, it should not be at the expense of and create significant gaps in the County's Metrobus system.

Maximum Peak Fare Increase – While we understand the potential need for an increase in Metrorail fares, we highlight a concern and equity issues in that outer jurisdiction users will be asked to pay the higher peak fare than those users in the core of the system. We suggest that WMATA staff evaluate the implementation of a flat fare for Metrorail service.

County Metrobus Service Elimination – We strongly object to the elimination of the Prince George’s County proposed Metrobus routes because they adversely impact our resident’s ability to travel in and outside of the County. We request that the Board defer a final decision about eliminating the following Metrobus routes in the County:

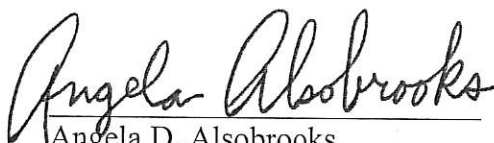
1. Route B29 – New Carrollton to Crofton via Bowie
2. Route B30 – Greenbelt – BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport
3. Routes C11/C13 – Clinton Line
4. Route C28 – Pointer Ridge Line
5. Route F12 – Ardwick Industrial Park Shuttle
6. Route W14 – Bock Road Line


The elimination of these proposed routes will adversely impact many of our transit-dependent residents who connect with the nearest Metrorail station to access jobs, medical appointments, and daily errands. While we recognize that ridership statistics are part of your due diligence in maximizing limited resources, we urge WMATA to work collaboratively with the Compact Jurisdictions to evaluate Metrobus service as the next step in its implementation of the regional Bus Transformation Project.

At a minimum, WMATA staff should evaluate bus lines with low productivity and determine which segments require adjustments to match demand or to meet new travel patterns. Cutting service now will circumvent this process and eliminate our opportunity to determine how certain Metrobus lines can better serve our communities. This is a great opportunity for WMATA to work with the County and community to find win-win solutions in providing better bus service to meet the needs of the patrons.

We know the importance of WMATA to the everyday lives of our residents because it links them with services and employment. Accordingly, we stand ready to work with WMATA on improving and enhancing service patterns rather than reducing or cutting them.

Sincerely,


Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive


Todd M. Turner
County Council Chair

cc: The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor, State of Maryland
Mr. Gregory Slater, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
Mr. Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager, WMATA
Members, Washington Suburban Transit Commission
Members, Prince George's County Council