

February 15, 2022

Mr. Paul C. Smedberg, Chair
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Proposed FY 2023 WMATA Proposed Metro Service Changes and
Operating/Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budgets
Dockets B22-01 & B22-02

Dear Mr. Smedberg:

We would like to take this opportunity to provide written comments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) on its Proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Operating/Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budgets. As the region emerges from the pandemic and returns to a “new” normal, we are encouraged to see innovative proposals and service enhancements that directly benefit our residents.

First, we would like to thank the WMATA Board’s support of the County’s request to change the name of the Largo Town Center Metrorail station to “Downtown Largo” last month. This is part of a County focused multi-year effort to rebrand the area around the Metro station as a mixed-used area along the Blue Line corridor.

With nearly two years of pandemic related service reductions, we are excited to see the proposed new and temporary fare adjustments, including limited pass discounted promotions to reduce the cost of using Metrorail, free transfers between rail and bus services, flat Metrorail fares after 9:30 pm and during the weekends, and longer-term discounts on Metrorail and Metrobus passes. We encourage WMATA to promote these new programs so that our residents, especially low-wealth and auto-less households, and visitors can take advantage of them to restore both rail and bus ridership levels.

We also support increased service frequencies on the Metrorail system and 20-minute or better service on Metrobus lines serving the County and adding trips during weekdays and weekends to address overcrowding. We look forward to expanded Silver Line Metrorail service to Dulles Airport because it provides additional opportunities for our residents, and thousands of essential workers, to access new activity centers, jobs, and medical appointments.

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Correspondingly, it enables a wider universe of non-County residents and visitors to access amenities in Prince George's County, including the emerging multi-modal center at the New Carrollton Metrorail Station.

While the FY 2023 budget offers great news for our residents, we also understand that WMATA will be facing additional financial challenges and pressures with the expiration of Federal COVID-19 assistance. Therefore, we urge that these initiatives be sustained in the next budget fiscal year and beyond, without drastically reducing lower ridership – but critical – transit services in the jurisdictional partners and communities.

With respect to the proposed capital budget, we support the continuing funding efforts to improve operations by the purchase and maintenance of both Metrobus and Metrorail vehicles and equipment, track and station rehabilitation over the course of the six-year CIP. In addition, we call upon WMATA to safely expedite, working with appropriate oversight agencies, the return of the 7000 series railcars to address current overcrowding and any expected increase in rail ridership.

The County again stands ready to collaborate to make sure that transit services are preserved for our residents in the County and region.

Sincerely,

Honorable Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

Honorable Calvin S. Hawkins, III
Council Chair

cc: Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld, General Manager/CEO
Council Members, Prince George's County Council
Members, Washington Suburban Transit Commission
Ms. Tara Jackson, Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Mr. Floyd Holt, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Ms. Joy Russell, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive
Mr. Martin Harris, Acting Director, Department of Public Works and Transportation
Ms. Terry Bell, Council Liaison, Office of the County Executive
Mr. J. Kenneth Battle, Committee Director, Prince George's County Council