



Calvin S. Hawkins, II
Chair
At-Large Council Member

March 9, 2021

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

Re: Proposed FY2022 WMATA Proposed Metro Service Changes and
Operating/Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budgets
Dockets B21-01 & B21-02

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) 2022 Metro Service Changes and Operating/Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budgets. We appreciate the difficult decisions that the WMATA Board must make as you address the fiscal and operational impacts on transit services as a result of the historic COVID-19 pandemic. We, however, offer the following comments and suggestions for your consideration:

Federal Funding

We understand that the Proposed FY2022 Operating Budget totals \$1.97 billion based on federal funding support from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSA or Relief Act), that reduced Metro's funding gap from an estimated \$724 million to \$210 million. However, the Relief Act funding appears insufficient to close the FY2022 Budget funding gap, requiring additional service reductions that impact customers and Metro's workforce if additional funding is not forthcoming. We understand and appreciate the efforts to lessen the impact to our riders, jurisdictional partners, and employees, with Metro maintaining current Metrorail service levels while enhancing Metrobus service levels through December 2021. We are encouraged by the recent Congressional action on President Biden's proposed American Rescue Plan, including the \$30.5 billion in proposed emergency transit funding, and request that the WMATA Board utilize any additional Federal funding to close the remaining FY 2022 budget gap thus removing the need for any closures, service and other reductions.

Station Improvements and New WMATA Building

The County appreciates and supports WMATA's recent action to move forward in the current and six-year CIP with the Platform Program Improvements and the new WMATA building in New Carrollton. Phases 3 and 4 of the Platform Program, including work on: the Green Line encompassing West Hyattsville, Prince George's Plaza, College Park, and Greenbelt this summer; the Orange Line East of Stadium Armory, encompassing New Carrollton, Landover, Cheverly and Deanwood, and; the rehabilitation of Cheverly Bridge in the summer of 2022. These initiatives are vital to encouraging safety, modern operations and return of ridership on these important County lines.

Metro Service Changes

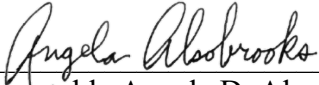
As you are aware, Prince George's County is home to over 60 Metrobus lines and 15 Metrorail Stations, all of which are heavily used by our residents, visitors, and thousands of essential workers, including many who work for WMATA and make transit possible in the Washington Metropolitan Region. According to WMATA's recently completed bus transformation project, approximately 55% of Metrobus riders do not have access to a car and 52% of these riders classified themselves as considered low-income. Given that the Metrobus system covers a vast section of the County, many essential workers – nurses, grocery store workers, nursing care staff, and so many more – rely on public transit to get to their jobs.

The County has reviewed the proposed service reductions, station closures and Metrobus consolidations and is concerned about proposed eliminations in areas without nearby or alternative transit service. Specifically, we cannot support the proposed consolidation or elimination of over 15 Metrobus lines/routes, closure of three County Metro stations (College Park, Morgan Blvd., and Cheverly) of the four proposed station closures in Maryland, and additional headways and reduced operating hours on Metrorail service. The County strongly urges WMATA to retain service in these areas because there are few alternative transit options.

Vital workers will be impacted the most by the proposed cuts since affordable and reliable transit options will no longer be available. The possibility of larger scale unemployment will exacerbate the devastation the pandemic has wrought on our regional economy. More importantly, the loss of permanent employees, many who call Prince George's County home, would have a devastating impact on our local economy. We believe that these proposed cuts would be devastating to Prince Georgians, especially low-income and minority communities, senior citizens and those with disabilities. As we emerge from the pandemic, we should be increasing access to job centers from the communities most in need, not cutting access.

Without a doubt, our region and nation, are facing unprecedented times. The County stands ready to collaborate, within our resources, to make sure that transit service is 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
Tara Jackson., Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Floyd Holt, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Joy Russell, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive
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Terry Bell, Council Liaison, Office of the Cou