October 8, 2020

Office of the Board Secretary
Metropolitan Washington Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

RF: COVID-19 Budget Impacts: WMATA Proposals
to Balance FY2021 Budget through June 20, 2021

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

As representatives of constituents in Glover Park and Cathedral Heights, ANC3B is alarmed that WMATA is considering extending for the long term the current limited Metrobus services for our community and many others in the District of Columbia, and want to express our strong concerns.

The proposal issued for public comment for the remainder of WMATA’s current fiscal year FY 2021 ending June 30, 2021, includes elimination of the D1 and 37, as well as D2 and 30S/30N cross-town service on weekends. Only the 33 route would serve the Wisconsin Avenue corridor on weekends. Service in the Massachusetts Avenue corridor is limited to the N6 route every day, with no N2 or N4 service. Our neighborhoods need quality Metrobus service every day, including weekends, on all our bus lines, to serve residents, workers, visitors, and businesses.

We urge that you:
- restore weekend service on the D2, 30S and 30N
- offer additional service to get students safely to and from local schools as in-person classes are restored
- supplement service on any lines where demand is creating overcrowding, causing risks to the safety and health of riders, which is an acute concern during the COVID-19 emergency
- commit that once the city emerges from the current COVID-19 emergency, all our Metrobus routes must resume service as agreed last April.

We stand by our position expressed during the budget hearings that to meet the needs of our residents and businesses, our area needs more transit service, not less. The current reduction in Metrobus services from the levels the Board supported in the spring must not be extended beyond the immediate COVID-19 emergency or accepted as the long-term structure of our local transit network.
Glover Park and Cathedral Heights depend on Metrobus for public transit because we are not served by Metrorail. The D2 is the only route currently operating in the interior of Glover Park, as much as 8 blocks from the next nearest Metrobus line on Wisconsin Avenue. Without D2 buses on weekends, many seniors, people with disabilities, and anyone traveling with children, strollers, hand carts, or luggage are left without any practical transit alternatives.

The level of service WMATA is proposing to extend also means that workers traveling across the city to get between work and home on weekends are left without efficient direct transit options. As the volumes of travel on 30-line buses has shown during the COVID-19 emergency, we have significant numbers of workers making those trips every day. The workers and employers need reliable service and protection from added safety risks to keep going at this difficult time.

Many students in our area rely on Metrobus service to commute to Hardy Middle School, Wilson High School, School Without Walls and Basis PCS, among other public schools. With the city beginning to return students to school, we are going to need more service to get students safely back to school.

The current cuts to Metrobus service which the proposal would extend are hurting our community and undermining our ability to recover. We know our residents and businesses and those around the whole region would like to get back to full-time school, full employment, and previous levels of economic health and vitality, and also get back to the full service levels in the FY2021 WMATA budget adopted in April. We are confident that WMATA shares those hopes and we look forward to working with you to get to that goal.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Brian Turmail
Chairman

cc. Councilmember Mary Cheh
    DDOT Director Jeff

This letter was approved by the Commission by a vote of 4-0 at a duly noticed ANC3B public meeting on October 8, 2020, at which a quorum was present (A quorum is three of the five Commissioners.) By this vote, the Commission also authorized the Chairman or his designee to represent the Commission on this matter.