

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3B
GLOVER PARK AND CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS



February 10, 2022

Mr. Paul J. Wiedefeld, General Manager and CEO,
and other members of the WMATA Board
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ANC3B Requests for WMATA Consideration in FY2023 Budget

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld and the WMATA Board members:

Our area of Washington, DC, has no Metrorail station or convenient access to Metrorail service and is therefore highly dependent on Metrobus for public transportation services. During the past two years spanning the COVID-19 emergency, several key Metrobus services to our area have been discontinued (including the important 30N/30S cross-town buses and the D1 weekday peak hour route), others have been suspended, and all have been reduced or otherwise adjusted in ways that have left residents and visitors without expected service.

People in our area depend heavily on effective Metrobus service to travel between local residences and their places of work; to get to and from school; visit shops, restaurants, other commercial businesses; go to essential medical appointments and access other health care; get from residences outside the area to travel to and from work places on and around the Wisconsin Avenue corridor; use recreational facilities; and visit friends and family. ANC3B has submitted comments at each opportunity to preserve and maintain the local Metrobus services, which are so important to the accessibility of our community and the quality of life.

In the proposed FY2023 capital and operating budget, WMATA intends to:

- make some improvements (Metrobus routes 31 and 33 would be part of the bus network operating with 12-minute frequency)
- make other changes “permanent” (elimination of the 30S/30N)
- continue operating some routes and services as they are today (D2, N2/4/6)
- and not restore or improve services as we have urged (D1 and 37)

From that foundation, we want to share our comments on behalf of residents and businesses in our area:

1. We appreciate the inclusion of the 31 and 33 Metrobus routes in a high-frequency category. Headways of 12 minutes on each route would provide service every 6 minutes on Wisconsin Avenue, which means longer headways than WMATA had been offering on that Priority Corridor during peak hours prior to March 2020, and is also less frequent during non-peak hours and weekends, especially when only the 33 route is operating. Particularly as activities resume and demand rises, we would like to see increased bus service on Wisconsin.
2. We strongly support full restoration of the N2 and N4 services; the N6 which normally operates during evenings and weekends is not an adequate substitute for weekday travelers and leaves many residents without the services they need and have been relying on.

3. Maintaining the current D2 schedule without any changes is totally inadequate for riders during the morning peak hours, who need to travel eastbound from Glover Park to get to work, school, or other destinations. Between 7:30 am and 9:00 am, the D2 is scheduled to run at close to 45-minute intervals. Westbound service on the D2 calls for buses every and even during the day and weekends, buses are running close to every 20 to 25 minutes. Those are prime times for commuters and for students trying to get to Hardy Middle School, at 34th Street and Whitehaven at the south end of Glover Park. It is unimaginable that planners would find it adequate to have buses operate that infrequently at peak hours. The westbound D2 buses operate every 18 minutes during peak hours. No other part of the day has service that poor, in either direction. The Glover Park-Dupont Circle run formerly had buses running an average of every 6 or 7 minutes on the combined D1/D2 schedules. We recognize that the volumes of commuter travel is far lower than it was before the COVID-19 emergency, but many riders are still hoping to resume their travel to work and WMATA cannot possibly expect to serve that need with buses only every 45 minutes at the peak of the peak hour.

4. Residents across the District, from Wards 7 and 8, Ward 6, and Wards 1, 2 and 3 all relied on the cross-town 30N/30S bus service, and in the FY2021 budget season, that route received the strongest support of any route in the District. We participated in testifying and filing comments with the 1,500 other citizens to maintain the 30N/30S in that budget cycle, and later joined in a petition to continue the 30N/30S which drew 450 signatures. In spite of the support for preserving that service, WMATA persisted in cutting that route in September 2021.

Even during COVID-19, the volume of riders on that route was higher than on the parallel bus routes that do not run all the way across town. Many workers and students living and working in our community depend on that service for one-bus ride to their destinations, from very early morning to late at night. Dozens of employees make the daily journey to work at shops and businesses along the Wisconsin Avenue using WMATA services, and they have been forced to make transfers, add to the length of their commuter, turn to other modes of travel, or suffer long delays, late arrivals, and loss of paid time because they can no longer count on unreliable Metrobus service to our area. That is hurting workers and businesses along the entire route.

To discontinue the 30N/30S and other services essential to residents without efficient options is unacceptable when you have emphasized that equitable bus service for essential workers must be a priority, even if the routes do not meet WMATA's usual efficiency and revenue standards. This is a matter of equity that has guided the WMATA bus system from the beginning, when local leaders joined transit officials in committing to continue the cross-town buses for the long term, even after Metrorail stations opened to Southeast Washington. We urge WMATA to reinstitute the 30N/30S, especially in early morning, midday and late night when congestion is low.

We are grateful to have Metrobus services to our neighborhood. The 30-line and the D-line have been essential transportation links for our area for all the decades that WMATA has existed. We are glad to work with WMATA and DDOT to share the needs and interests of our residents, businesses and visitors. Many people in ANC3B are not located close to a Priority Transit Network and face difficult walks, up and down hills in all weather and conditions, even to use to existing bus services. With cuts or missed buses and unreliable service, our constituents are not meeting the accessibility standards that WMATA has said it is aiming to achieve.

We would hope to see adjustments in bus operations and expenditures in the FY2023 budget to address these requests. We look forward to continuing to work with WMATA to discuss continuing improvements in Metrobus services, and we will be pleased to meet with WMATA and DDOT planners on these matters, as we have requested in a separate resolution. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Turmail
Chairman

This letter was approved by a vote of 4 - 0 at a duly noticed public meeting of the Commission at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five Commissioners make a quorum.) By the same vote, the Commission designated the Chairman or his designee to represent the Commission on this matter.

Weekday and Saturday timetables for D2 Metrobus service (Glover Park-Dupont Circle) February 2022

I. Regular D2 weekday operating timetable resumed on Monday, February 7:

A. Morning peak hours

- 5 buses eastbound between the starting time (7:07 am) and 9:36 am, with only 13 minutes between the first two buses, but much lower frequency after that, ending with 30 minutes between the last two buses before 9:30 am (at 8:58 am and 9:28 am).
- 9 buses westbound between the starting time (7:07 am) and 9:36 am, averaging 19 minutes apart

B. Morning peak of the peak hours

- Headways for eastbound buses of 43 minutes and 45 minutes between 7:30 and 9 am. As noted above, the last two buses before 9:30 operate 30 minutes apart, at 8:58 and 9:28 am. That is far worse than the 18-minute headways called for in the Saturday schedule which was operating on weekdays from January 10 through February 6 (see below). It is also worse than the regular weekday schedule after the morning peak (24-minute headways for the rest of the morning, starting at 9:49 am and continuing for most of the day, through 8:37 pm).
- After opening service with headways for westbound buses of 20 to 25 minutes between 7:07 am and 7:50 am, the time between westbound buses then drops to much shorter headways after 7:50 am (four buses in 20 minutes, spaced 2 minutes, 10 minutes, and 8 minutes apart, for an average of 6.3 minutes apart). After 8:10 am, westbound buses are scheduled 25, 32, and 24 minutes apart through 9:31 am. Those buses are less frequent than through the rest of the morning, but still more frequent than the eastbound buses during those times.

II. D2 Saturday schedule and also the weekday operating timetable during COVID-19 service “reduction” due to staffing shortages (when weekday service followed “Saturday schedule”) from Monday, January 10 through Sunday, February 6, 2022:

A. Morning peak hours

- 11 buses eastbound between the starting time (6:33 am) and 9:36 am
(9 buses eastbound between 7:07 am and 9:36 am)
- 10 buses westbound between the starting time (6:54 am) and 9:36 am
(9 buses westbound between 7:07 am and 9:36 am)

B. Morning peak of the peak hours

- Headways for eastbound and westbound buses are a fairly consistently 18 minutes between 7:30 and 9:30 am, with occasional deviations of 2 or 3 minutes at most.