



**Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

CHEVY CHASE, BARNABY WOODS, HAWTHORNE

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**ANC 3/4G Comments on WMATA's
Proposed Rehabilitation of the
Chevy Chase Bus Loop Facility
5720 Connecticut Avenue, NW
February 26, 2019**

1. Since at least January 2014, ANC 3/4G has expressed concerns about the condition of the Chevy Chase bus loop¹ facility at 5720 Connecticut Avenue, NW and the acute need for its restoration. The Commission has heard presentations on the history of the facility, the steps that could be taken for historic landmark designation, the prospects for federal funding to restore the facility, and potential adjunct uses for the facility.
2. The Commission heard a presentation at its January 27, 2014 meeting on a possible use of the bus loop facility for a proposed garden center. Although the Commission and WMATA agreed that this particular use would not work well in that location, the Commission urged WMATA to consider ways that the facility could be used to benefit and enhance the community. Shortly after that meeting, the Chevy Chase Citizens Association wrote WMATA's Director, Office of Real Estate and Station Planning, joining the Commission in urging WMATA to repair the building and suggesting that "it would be beneficial if the building could be put to some additional use, whether commercial or non-commercial."

¹ This facility has been variously referred to in the past as the "bus turnaround," "bus turnout," or "bus depot."

3. The Commission further discussed the condition and the future of the bus loop facility at meetings in March 2015, June 2015, and May 2017. The Commission also wrote letters to the District Department of Transportation urging it to execute a Memorandum of Understanding so that Federal Highway Administration funding would be available to restore the facility. During this time, the bus loop buildings have deteriorated further.
4. Stephen Powers, a Senior Program Manager at WMATA, presented its plans for rehabilitation of the bus loop facility at the Commission's February 11, 2019 meeting. (The presentation materials are available at <http://bit.ly/2SR8OfP>.) With respect to the exterior of the building, WMATA plans to replace all doors and windows, replace the portico columns and roof, replace and repair the canopy and lighting, replace the existing windscreen, and repair the slate roof and drainage gutters. The interior rehabilitation of the building will include installing a new restroom and upgrading the plumbing system, installing a new janitor room where there is an existing alcove, and installing new lighting and security systems. WMATA also plans to replace the asphalt pavement and concrete sidewalks with the same materials, install concrete pavement bus pads, and install new landscaping. WMATA indicated that the exterior lighting will be replaced with downward-facing LEDs with a color temperature of 3000 Kelvins.
5. WMATA indicated that it had worked with the District's Historic Protection Office, which was reviewing the proposed plans. The project's "historic architect," Jeff Winstel, indicated that the facility is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Preservation, but WMATA does not plan to seek historic designation. The restoration work will be done, however, under a Federal Highway Administration grant that requires restoration in accordance with the Department of the Interior's historic preservation standards.
6. In response to Commission questions, Mr. Powers said that plans for the facility are limited to its use as a rest stop for drivers. The building will only be accessible to WMATA personnel. They are simply replacing in kind and restoring deteriorated parts of the facility and are not making any accommodations for possible auxiliary uses. Any decision about other uses for the facility will be made by WMATA's Director of Real Estate.
7. The Commission commends WMATA on moving forward with plans for restoration of the bus loop facility and for following historic preservation standards. The Chevy Chase community strongly supports rehabilitation of the facility so that it will again be a source of pride in the neighborhood's past and a positive contribution to its present and future.

8. With respect to the design, the Commission urges WMATA to consider eliminating the windscreen, which creates a dark and potentially dangerous place. It is not needed, serves no purpose, and could be eliminated.
9. The Commission also urges WMATA to consider using permeable pavers or pavement when replacing the existing asphalt pavement and concrete sidewalks. The District is required to reduce stormwater runoff from its impervious surfaces, and this facility should do its part as well. WMATA may also be able to install other “green” features in the landscape design — consistent with historic preservation guidelines — to reduce the adverse impact of the facility on the environment.
10. The Commission has actively advocated for street and parking lot lighting that conforms to the community’s needs. On July 26, 2017, the Commission approved a resolution calling on DDOT to use 2700 Kelvin LEDs to replace streetlights (available at <http://bit.ly/2SAMJSC>). The Commission urges WMATA to abide by this recommendation for the new exterior lighting at the facility.
11. Finally, the Commission urges WMATA to study the possibility of using the facility for some additional purposes. This facility was built 78 years ago when land was not at the premium that it is today. Merely rehabilitating the building and loop for its original use would be a missed opportunity to design the restoration for mixed uses. Its location at the north end of the Chevy Chase business district could make it an attractive space for community or commercial uses — e.g., as an art gallery, a mini-historical museum, or farmers’ market. The Commission requests that WMATA consider in its design sufficient flexibility so that the facility can be adapted to serve a more community-oriented use in addition to serving as a relatively infrequent rest stop for WMATA drivers.

Approved by ANC3/4G after a discussion at its regularly scheduled and noticed February 25, 2019 meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

Randy Speck, Chair

Abraham Clayman, Secretary