

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3A



July 15, 2024

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Administration
300 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

Sent via web portal

RE: Comments on WMATA Better Bus Redesign for 2025

Dear WMATA Board members and staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Better Bus 2025 network. On behalf of all the Commissioners in ANC 3A, I am pleased to submit comments and recommendations from the ANC, and also share additional comments we have received from constituents. Some of them may repeat comments the individuals have also submitted to WMATA during the public comment period, but we are putting them together to give you the most comprehensive view of the perspectives of our community in one document.

We appreciate the intensive work by the planners working on the Better Bus initiative to review all the feedback on the Preliminary Draft "Visionary Network" that was issued for public review in April 2023. We are grateful for the attention the planning team paid to comments made in that initial phase of the project, and the attention they have also given to public questions and comments during the past two months since the Revised Visionary Network and the proposed Better Bus 2025 network were posted for public review.

Many changes were made in the proposed network of bus routes and services to adjust to comments and recommendations submitted a year ago. Some of the plans appear to offer benefits to our Commission area, by maintaining or increasing services that are needed and wanted service. Others eliminate service, reduce frequency or otherwise take away origins and destinations that Metrobus is currently serving for residents and workers in our area. Those are presented below.

They include:

- maintaining high frequency Metrobus service on the Wisconsin Avenue but eliminating the current end points at Potomac Park/State Department and Federal Triangle/Archives
- continuing Metrobus service on Massachusetts Avenue to Dupont Circle but changing the end points of that route (current N4) from Farragut Square to Convention Center, and diverting the other half of N service (N2) to New Mexico and Tunlaw Road, combining it with the Glover Park-Dupont Circle route and changing the end point to Virginia Avenue; and as a consequence reducing the frequency of buses on Massachusetts Avenue south of Wisconsin Avenue
- eliminating all-day and weekend service to Cathedral Avenue between New Mexico Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue

- eliminating service to bus stops in the interior of Glover Park (currently served by D2)
- maintaining cross-town service From Wisconsin Avenue/Tenleytown across Woodley Road to Woodley Park Metro and continuing through Adams Morgan but changing the end point to LeDroit Park/Howard University Hospital instead of the current service to Union Station, Capitol Hill, Stadium Armory, and on to Congress Heights (currently served by the 96).
- maintaining cross-town service on Porter Street from Tenleytown going to Brookland (currently served by H4) but eliminating the H2 which serves Veazey/Van Ness and also Park Road/Mt. Pleasant
- maintaining service on Nebraska Avenue from upper Ward 3 (Knollwood/Barnaby Woods) through Tenleytown to Sibley Hospital (currently M4) but diverting the route to run east on Military Road to Fort Totten
- creating a new weekday rush hour route C85 from Knollwood/Barnaby Woods through Tenleytown, linking to New Mexico Avenue/Tunlaw Road on to Reservoir Road, MacArthur Avenue, and then east to Foggy Bottom, past several middle schools and high schools and two Metrorail stations. This would be the only service to a portion of Cathedral Avenue in ANC 3A, and the only service to Knollwood/Barnaby Woods.

Planning is generally a highly iterative process as additional information and perspectives emerge. We trust that process will continue through your ongoing review of comments and consideration of options for redesigning the region's bus transit network system in the short term and also the longer term refinement of the Visionary Network.

See below for background information on our ANC and Commission area as well as the local public transit services available to residents, workers and visitors to the area, followed by comments on specific details of WMATA's current proposals and then recommendations offered from the ANC.

BACKGROUND

Information on ANC 3A

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3A represents an area at the center of Ward 3 in the District of Columbia, from Tenley Circle on the north, Nebraska Avenue on the west, Cathedral Avenue and Fulton Street on the south, and the Wisconsin Avenue corridor on the east, stretching just over 1.5 miles from north to south. It is the smallest ANC in Ward 3, with 10,000 - 12,000 residents and 5 Commissioner seats. ANC 3A also has some of the most densely populated blocks in the ward. The population has been growing, with several large new developments on Wisconsin Avenue.

The ANC was created to serve the large numbers of individuals and households living in multi-family buildings, both on the main corridors such as Wisconsin Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue and also on smaller streets such as Tunlaw, Cathedral Avenue, and other locations along Glover Archbold Park. Only a handful of blocks in ANC 3A are made up of single family detached or semi-detached homes and row houses.

Our Commission area is also highly dependent on buses for public transportation, because the large majority of people living within the ANC 3A boundaries are beyond practical walking distance from a Metrorail station. In addition, some of the residential buildings do not have parking for all the units, and

many residents and workers do not choose to use a car; with good public transit, they do not need to use cars to get to and from work or other purposes. Consequently, many residents in ANC 3A do not own or lease a personal motor vehicle.

Residents, workers in the area, students, and visitors need and want effective bus service to get to jobs, school, medical appointments, shopping, leisure activities, and other vital destinations.

Public transportation services

Bus lines on Wisconsin Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, Nebraska Avenue, Cathedral Avenue, Tunlaw Road, Woodley Road, and Porter Street, serve our neighborhoods and constituents. That includes the current Metrobus routes 31, 33, 96, H2/H4, D2, N2/N4/N6, D2, and M4.

The closest Metro stations for people in ANC 3A are:

- Tenleytown: 0.2-0.4 miles (5 to 10-minute walk) from the 2 blocks of homes behind the firehouse south of Tenley Circle; 0.5 miles (12-minute walk) from City Ridge and Upton Place at 4000 Wisconsin, largest of the new apartment/condominium buildings in ANC 3A
- Cleveland Park: 0.6 miles from Quebec and 35th Street; 1 mile from Cathedral Commons
- Woodley Park-National Zoo: 1.2 miles from Wisconsin and Garfield

At the farthest southwestern corner of ANC 3A, along Cathedral Avenue near Glover Archbold Park has been described as within two blocks of at least 5 bus lines and 1.5 miles to 4 Metro stations.

The closest stops to ANC 3A on current DC Circulator routes are:

- South Glover Park/North Georgetown (35th and Wisconsin Avenue): 0.6 miles from Fulton and Wisconsin.
- Woodley Park (Connecticut Avenue and Calvert Street): 1.3 miles from Garfield and Wisconsin

The area is generally highly walkable, but in several blocks particularly on Cathedral Avenue between New Mexico Avenue and Massachusetts Ave, the topography is quite steep, up to 40% grade on Cathedral Avenue, which is difficult if not impossible for seniors, people with mobility challenges, and anyone traveling with small children, strollers, market baskets, luggage or packages.

Metrobus Routes currently serving ANC 3A and proposed replacements in Better Bus 2025

We have prepared an outline of local Metrobus routes affected by the Better Bus proposals, including the 31 and 33, N2/4/6, D2, 96, and H2/H4, and how service would be changed for people in our area.

31 and 33 (Wisconsin Avenue): D82 Friendship Heights-Franklin Square would not reach the State Department/Potomac Park (served by 31) or Federal Triangle/Archives (currently served by 33).

N2/N4/N6 Friendship Heights to Farragut Square (Massachusetts Avenue): The proposed D96 Bethesda-Potomac Park route would combine the N2/N6 service with the D2. It would not serve the Idaho Avenue/Cathedral Avenue loop. A separate route D90 would run on the current N4 route to Dupont Circle but then would continue on Massachusetts Avenue to Convention Center. There would be only half the current frequency of bus service on Massachusetts Avenue south of Wisconsin Avenue running to Dupont Circle and Farragut Square compared to the N2 and N4 service today. There would be no links on weekends between Spring Valley and New Mexico/Cathedral Avenue

D2 Glover Park-Dupont Circle: The proposed D96 Bethesda-Potomac Park would maintain bus service from Glover Park to Dupont Circle which is very important (and was not included in the April 2023 Preliminary Visionary Network) but eliminates the service to interior Glover Park west of Tunlaw and 37th, including on Benton, 39th, Calvert, 41st, and Edmunds, making a loop around Stoddert Elementary School (which was included in the April 2023 Preliminary Visionary Network Map as part of DC201). Also by starting in Bethesda, the D96 route would be much longer and likely to be crowded by the time morning buses could get to Glover Park. Weekday peak service every 20 minutes would be far less frequent than on the D2 which operates every 10 minutes in weekday peak, even as WMATA's own market assessment shows Glover Park as one of the densest areas in Ward 3, with a high proportion of lower income families, a high proportion of people with disabilities, and the highest transit propensity in the ward.

96 Tenleytown-Capitol Heights/Cardozo: The proposed C55 would maintain service from Tenleytown Metro to Woodley Park Metro via Woodley Road but it would terminate at LeDroit Park/Howard University Hospital and would not get to Union Station, Capitol Hill, Stadium Armory, or Capitol Heights, a key crosstown connection for mid-Ward 3.

H2/H4 Crosstown Line Tenleytown to Brookland via Van Ness/Veazey (H2) or Porter Street (H4): Proposed C61 Tenleytown-Brookland would operate on Porter Street (served by the H4) but would not serve the area 6 blocks north on Van Ness/Veazey and along Reno (served by the H2).

ANC 3A Outreach Efforts on Better Bus 2025 Proposals

ANC 3A and the individual Commissioners have been sharing the new maps and route descriptions issued by WMATA with our constituents and will continue to seek input from members of our community so their comments can be submitted to WMATA within the current public comment period. We cooperated with ANC 3D in its online survey of residents within areas served by the current Metrobus routes D6, D2, N2/N4/N6 and M4. We also prepared and circulated our own survey of residents in our own area, in person and via email, to try to reach people to the north and east, served by the 31, 33, 96, and H2/H4, as well as the D2 and N2/N4/N6 and D2. Responses were shared with the ANC by close to 500 residents on all those lines.

ANC 3A Commissioners also participated in the briefing WMATA held for ANC Commissioners across the District on June 6. WMATA's Virtual Hearings on June 18, the Ward 3 public meeting with WMATA on July 9 that was organized by Councilmember Frumin. We have been working closely with Councilmember Frumin and his staff to analyze the Better Bus Proposal and to share perspectives from our community. We have also encouraged our constituents to make use of the opportunities to share comments directly with WMATA online or by mail and to join in other Better Bus outreach events.

The Commissioners have compiled the public comments we have received through today and are attaching them to this statement.

Because our next public meeting is scheduled to be held on the evening of July 16, we have reviewed the comments, gone through draft points to submit to WMATA on behalf of ANC 3A, and voted to designate me to represent the ANC in filing the statements with WMATA by the deadline of July 15.

RESPONSES TO BETTER BUS 2025 PROPOSALS

Among the improvements the Better Bus team made between the Preliminary Visionary Network Map in April 2023 and the maps issued in May 2024, we are pleased to see:

- The proposed Better Bus 2025 map and the Revised Visionary Network Map maintain bus service on Woodley Road between Tenleytown on Wisconsin Avenue, Woodley Park Metro, and Adams Morgan, and beyond (currently served by Metrobus route 96). In the Preliminary Visionary Network, service in Ward 3 was not included
- The proposed Better Bus 2025 map and the Revised Visionary Network Map include bus service between Glover Park and Dupont Circle via North Georgetown through the day, seven days a week. The Preliminary Visionary Bus did not include a bus connection from any part of Glover Park to Dupont Circle (currently served by the D2 Metrobus route).
- Several of the proposed routes in the Better Bus 2025 map would increase frequency of service on weekends, including on the Massachusetts Avenue line (D90, currently N6) and Glover Park (D96, currently D2).

Those changes are appreciated. Our Cathedral Heights residents often use the 96 crosstown service and can also use the service from North Glover Park at the southern edge of ANC 3A.

The ANC Commissioners, building on comments and suggestions from residents in ANC 3A, have some other comments and recommendations for additional adjustments.

- We are glad to see that the very important bus service on Wisconsin Avenue will continue. It is very important for the entire ward and region that high frequency bus service be maintained on Wisconsin Avenue, leading to downtown destinations.

We are also encouraged that WMATA is envisioning increased service on Wisconsin Avenue with the addition of a new high frequency express route D8X in the longer term future.

- The ANC Commissioners and many residents in ANC 3A as well as workers and visitors are concerned that in the Better Bus 2025 proposal, the **Wisconsin Avenue line would not serve either of the current end points**--Potomac Park/State Department (on the 31 route) and Federal Triangle (on the 33 route)--and instead would terminate at Franklin Square. Because the Revised Visionary Network map does include high frequency service on Wisconsin Avenue to both Potomac Park and Federal Triangle/Archives for the longer term future, we are confident that WMATA also believes continuing to operate Wisconsin Avenue buses Federal Triangle/Archives as well as to Potomac Park is important, and we maintain that is an important objective for the short term as well.

- Two other routes would end at different points downtown: the D96 would end at Potomac Park instead of turning around at Dupont Circle as the D2 currently does and the D90 would end at Convention Center instead of at Farragut Square as the N2/N4.N6 currently do.

- The **frequency of bus service would be reduced** on some of the bus routes heading to downtown locations under the Better Bus 2025 proposal compared to the scheduled frequency the current Metrobus network, especially on weekdays including at peak hours. For example, on the service between Glover Park and Dupont Circle (currently served by the D2) and the service on Massachusetts Avenue between Wisconsin Avenue and Dupont Circle (currently served by the N2 and N4). In both

cases, the proposed “replacement” Metrobus service would run every 20 minutes at weekday peak hours compared to about every 10 minutes on current Metrobus routes serving those locations.

- Several parts of our **area would lose Metrobus service** almost entirely in the Better Bus 2025 proposal, including:
 - **Cathedral Avenue** between New Mexico Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue (currently served by the N2/N6 routes)
 - all the bus stops in the **interior of Glover Park**, on the western side between the intersection of Tunlaw Road and Benton Street and the terminus at Edmunds Street and 39th Street, which is two blocks from our ANC area.

The D2 reaches about 6 blocks west of Tunlaw Road toward Glover Archbold Park, serving about a 20-block area in western Glover Park, including 9 stops from Tunlaw Road and Benton Street north to 40th Street and Calvert Street at Stoddert Elementary School, west to 41st Street and across Edmunds Street from 41st to 39th Street in the westbound/northbound direction (close to 1/3 of the 28 stops in that direction) and 5 stops in the eastbound/southbound direction (close to ¼ of the 21 stops in that direction.)

Both interior/north and west Glover Park and the portion of Cathedral Avenue from New Mexico to 39th Street are areas with higher population density and higher transit dependency than virtually every other nearby part of the ward, including apartments and condominiums, and row houses in Glover Park, with many seniors, families with young children, a higher proportion of people with disabilities than in the rest of the ward, and lower median household income. Many people live in multi-family buildings in those locations, which also have staff members, home health aides and other essential workers who need to reach those destinations daily, often for early or late shifts. Removing their access to effective daily service would be a significant loss for them in mobility, and access to critical services and trip purposes.

- Other cross-town routes are also very important for our ANC area. The replacement route for the **96 cross-town service** under the Better Bus 2025 proposal (replacement route C55) would end at LeDroit Park instead of continuing cross-town to Union Station and on to Congress Heights as the 96 currently does. The current 96 route offers serves ANC 3A along Wisconsin Avenue from Tenleytown south to Woodley Road and then across to Woodley Park, offering vital transit service from the center of Ward 3 across to Woodley Metro and on to Adams Morgan, the U Street corridor, and along Florida Avenue, reaching Union Station and Capitol Hill. That route is the primary way to cut across the long span between Metrorail lines and avoid the deep “U” formed by the Red Line through downtown, as well as providing options for people who are not within practical walking distance of Metrorail. We recognize that the current 96 is among the longest routes in the District, and WMATA has been working for years to try to divide long routes into shorter segments to improve reliability.* But having a bus to Union Station fills an important gap in the cross-town network and losing that service would also be a serious loss for many workers, students and travelers including those who use Union Station as an intermodal hub for longer trips.
- Some other proposed routes used by people riding to or from ANC 3A would not reach some of the origins and destinations that are most valued by ANC 3A residents in the current network, including the **cross-town H2 bus**. Service would be eliminated along Veazey and Van Ness and Connecticut Avenue on the H2, and points on Park Road and through Mount Pleasant farther east on the H2 line. The proposed replacement route (C61) would consolidate H2 and H4 bus service on the H4 route, with a slight

deviation to get to the Washington Hospital Center, but would leave no service to riders going to and from those key points in the middle of the H2 route. Mount Pleasant is a high density residential and commercial area with businesses, workers and students who need to get back and forth, and it is a 5 to 6-block walk to get to bus stops on the H4. NOTE: Of the 37 bus stops that WMATA proposed to eliminate in Ward 3, 15 (40%) are on the H2 line. That doesn't count the 7 additional bus stops that would be eliminated on the H2 route on the sections outside Ward 3.

- WMATA also has not included any adjustments for prospective elimination of **DC Circulator** service, which the District approved as part of the FY 2025 budget deliberations after the Better Bus 2025 proposal was developed. The proposed Better Bus routes were designed with the assumption that DC Circulator routes would be continued. Circulator service currently runs every 10 minutes throughout the day 7 days a week, for a maximum fare of \$1. When WMATA has reduced bus service in Ward 3 in the past, some riders have shifted to the DC Circulator. Without Circulator service on the 6 current routes, including 2 routes that reach Ward 3, more riders will be seeking service on Metrobus routes. It would seem likely that WMATA would need to adjust its Better Bus proposals to accommodate those changes.

At the June 6 briefing WMATA scheduled for ANC Commissioners, WMATA staff said that they were expecting to have a series of meetings about how to deal with the District's decision to discontinue its operation of DC Circulator service, but there was no indication that those meetings would be open to the public or that any local elected officials would be included. Instead the implication was that WMATA staff would incorporate some adjustments in the revised Better Bus 2025 map and route proposals that are planned to go to the WMATA Board in the fall, for "final approval" over the winter and implementation in the new year, without any further public review or public comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Maintain key services and frequency to local routes that were proposed to lose all service

A. The frequency of service shown in the Better Bus 2025 proposal would be significantly reduced from the current frequency for people using several key routes serving ANC 3A, including on the Glover Park-Dupont Circle route and the Massachusetts Avenue line.

* NOTE: As a result of WMATA's decision to cut out long cross-town routes, our area lost the 30N and 30S routes on Wisconsin Avenue, which provided a lifeline between distant quadrants of the District, for access to jobs and maintaining connections between people across the city. Despite intensive efforts from people in our area and in Wards 7 and 8 in 2020 which successfully saved the 30N and 30S in March 2020, and their effective service during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the routes were canceled with little fanfare in September 2021. If WMATA doesn't pay attention to the long-time commitments since its founding to maintain that kind of regional and cross-cultural service, then we cannot have much hope to preserve remaining routes in a similar position. Maybe someday the local officials will work out better options for relieving congestion and allowing public buses to get priority as they work their way through busy blocks of our urban core, but in the mean time, we would urge that cross-town service not end at points that are not logical hubs, and get people at least to some important destination points such as Union Station.

B. Maintain service to Cathedral Avenue and interior Glover Park

These areas of dense population and high transit dependency, including for seniors, families with young children, and people with disabilities, who would be losing virtually all their bus service, where hills are steep and other bus alternatives That should not happen. Services for those key areas and populations should be maintained with acceptable frequency.

Findings:

- The D96 route is too long to provide acceptable reliability.
- The extension from Friendship Heights to Bethesda Metro adds considerably to the length of the route, and duplicates Metrorail service.
- Riders in Glover Park have filled buses operating every 6-10 minutes in weekday peak hours.
- Combining the high frequency D2 with two medium frequency routes N2 and portions of the M4 and running the consolidated route at only medium frequency suggests either that WMATA anticipates a very heavy loss of ridership and/or extremely crowded buses for the foreseeable future.
- The combination of the N2 and D2 also means that people traveling to or from points on Cathedral Avenue are left without service.
- The proposed option for rerouting the proposed D90 bus route on Massachusetts Avenue would route the bus on Cathedral Avenue from Massachusetts Avenue to the Westchester on Cathedral Avenue (presumably using 39th Street westbound, Idaho Avenue eastbound).

-- Option A (See ANC 3D statement) would not serve the steepest parts of Cathedral Avenue, such as 4100 and 4101 Cathedral, or the large condominium buildings at 4200 Cathedral and The Towers/4201 Cathedral at the corner of New Mexico Avenue, which also would lose direct service to Dupont Circle via Massachusetts Avenue under Better Bus 2025 route proposals:

- Distance 4100 Cathedral Avenue to 39th Street: 0.2 miles (6-minute walk)
Idaho Avenue bus stop: 600 feet (>0.1 mile)
- Distance 4101 Cathedral Avenue to 39th Street: 0.2 miles
Idaho Avenue bus stop: 500 feet (0.1 mile)
- Distance 4200 Cathedral Avenue to 39th Street: 0.4 miles
Idaho Avenue bus stop: 0.3 miles

Dozens of residents throughout the block between Cathedral, Idaho and 39th Street and staff and families from the Annunciation School on 39th Street have protested that having a bus on those two narrow one-way blocks of 39th would create serious safety risks to the students (pre-K to 8th grade) as well as families and staff trying to navigate the street. NOTE: They were expressing concerns about the C85 route proposed to operate every 30 minutes in weekday peak hours from 6 - 10 am and 2 - 7 pm. A rerouted D90 would operate at least every 20 minutes every day.)

Option B (see ANC 3D Statement)

- Rerouting the D96 from New Mexico Avenue onto Cathedral Avenue up the hill to 39th Street and from there right/south on 39th Street, Watson Place and/or Fulton Street on local residential streets would further increase concerns about the narrowness and safety risks on those streets and create difficulties for Metrobus equipment in navigating some of the turns.
- In addition, the D96 is not the route that residents on Cathedral Avenue would choose to use. It would take longer and much more crowded and circuitous route to get to Dupont Circle, whereas the N2/N6 carry them directly down Massachusetts Avenue to Dupont Circle and Farragut Square. (The proposed routes would not get them to Farragut Square at all.)

Recommendations:

1. Maintain a separate medium to high frequency route serving Massachusetts Avenue, including medium frequency service daily to Cathedral Avenue between New Mexico Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue.
2. Maintain service on the Massachusetts Avenue line to Farragut Square if possible. The end point at Virginia Avenue seems to add additional time, circuitry, and reliability issues, but may also be a trade-off for the elimination of Metrobus 31 to Potomac Park. See below.
3. Maintain a separate route serving the points on the D2 from Glover Park-Dupont Circle every day with high frequency at weekday peak hours, including interior bus stops as much as possible as D2 currently serves, working with the local ANCs and the community to develop alternatives.
4. Maintain the eastern end point for the Glover Park-Dupont Circle route as close to Dupont Circle as possible, to allow for faster turnaround and higher frequency service.
5. Maintain the northern/eastern end point for the Massachusetts Avenue line at Friendship Heights. Do not extend Metrobus service from Friendship Heights to Bethesda Metro in the current Better Bus phase, as the D96 was proposed to do.

II. Adjust truncated routes to reach key destinations

Several routes in Ward 3 would be replaced with proposed new routes that are redirected to new terminus points, and would not provide direct service to areas that have been important for riders:

- 33 Wisconsin Avenue line that currently goes to Federal Triangle/Archives is proposed to end at Franklin Square
- 31 Wisconsin Avenue line that currently serves Potomac Park/State Department would be eliminated.
- 96 crosstown route from Tenleytown via Woodley Road that currently goes to Union Station, Capitol Hill, Stadium Armory and across the Anacostia River to Congress Heights is proposed to end at LeDroit Park/Howard University Hospital.

A. Maintain service to Federal Triangle/Archives on Wisconsin Avenue line

Because this is the current (and long-time) route and WMATA has also included a recommended service on the Wisconsin Avenue line to Federal Triangle in the Revised Visionary Network (actually two lines, since the added D8X would also reach Federal Triangle/Archives as the terminus), this appears to be the most logical route. It would be unfortunate to lose riders in the short term who want to get to that destination, when that is the planned and hoped-for terminus in the longer term.

The D82 proposed in Better Bus 2025 would terminate at Franklin Square, 5 to 6 blocks north of current terminus of Metrobus route 33. The points on Pennsylvania Avenue NW from 15th Street to 9th Street NW along Freedom Plaza and throughout the Federal Triangle/Archives area are important for multiple purposes and large numbers of current and prospective riders. Destinations include the John A. Wilson Building which is the center of DC government including the Mayor's Office and DC Council; the U.S. Department of Treasury, Commerce, and Justice; National Theatre, Warner Theatre, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Studies, National Archives, Navy Memorial, and a short walk away the National Gallery, the federal and District courthouse complex, and the busy 7th Street shopping and restaurant area.

The 9th Street bus hub and a large number of other connecting routes on Pennsylvania Avenue and nearby streets also mean that many riders from other part of the District and the region can make convenient transfers to the Wisconsin Avenue line at that location, which is significant for many workers in upper Northwest Washington, students, and visitors.

B. Consider better options to serve Potomac Park/State Department area

A large number of riders on the Wisconsin Avenue line have been using the 31 to get to and from their work places and residences. Previously, there was service on the Massachusetts Avenue line to get to those destinations. Please consider the most efficient options to meet those needs.

C. Maintain cross-town service from Tenleytown via Woodley Road at least to Union Station.

The full cross-town route may be overly difficult because of congestion and reliability problems but running as far as Union Station provides valuable service to key destinations, a better location for transfers if connections are needed, and far better intermodal connections.

III. Consider options for maintaining service to other areas that would lose service or have lower frequency service

A. Review alternatives for the M4 and E4 routes, to provide better service to Knollwood/Barnaby Woods and connections to Friendship Heights, Tenleytown and Sibley Hospital.

B. Review alternatives for maintaining current access and connections on the cross-town route from Tenleytown through Cleveland Park to Mount Pleasant currently provided by the H2.

IV. Review possible adjustments to accommodate loss of DC Circulator services in spring 2025

We would recommend that WMATA come back to local officials and communities with a revised plan for public review, including those adjustments and all responses to the current phase of comments on Better Bus 2025.

We are also concerned about the absence of information on how the DC Circulator routes would be maintained or replaced in the WMATA Better Bus Network Map and 2025 service plans for 2025. Network. WMATA's maps were developed before the District proposed to eliminate/sell the DC Circulator so the maps assume the Circulator service would continue and have not been modified to accommodate that prospective change. These routes matter to several parts of Ward 3 in supplementing Metrobus service. WMATA representatives at the briefing noted that they will have a separate set of meetings within WMATA and with DDOT to work out the situation with the DC Circulator, but those would not be part of the public process. WMATA does not anticipate that any resulting map adjustments would be subject to public review and comment. That should not happen.

This is a huge change that WMATA is proposing, affecting many neighborhoods and thousands of riders in all four quadrants of the District, and merits full analysis and comment by the affected public. We would urge the WMATA Board to come back to the public for comments on a new revised network map incorporating consideration of the DC Circulator as well as feedback received in the current round of Better Bus comments for full public review potentially in the fall, before the Board takes a vote.

Finally, we are concerned that even with all the efforts at outreach, large numbers of bus riders and others who would be affected by the proposals do not yet know about WMATA's Revised Network Map and plans for 2025. Though WMATA has provided multiple options for sharing feedback via the website, virtual hearings and in-person events, and we hope large numbers of people will take those opportunities, not everyone has access to a computer with a large enough screen to view the maps and other materials or effective internet service to connect to the digital information and virtual meetings. Like WMATA, all organizations face a challenge in reaching the broad range of people who care about their services and would like a chance to share their views. That includes many seniors, people with

disabilities, essential workers and others who work long hours including day and night shifts, as well as those who do not have good transportation options to get to in-person meetings.

Bus riders more often have lower household incomes and less access to personal motor vehicles or advanced technology to review and submit comments on things like the better Bus proposals. We would wish for more extensive outreach to other constituencies who have been missed in WMATA's recent community engagement efforts. We are not aware of any community organizations in our area that have hosted WMATA representatives who could give a presentation to local residents, and the ANCs have also not had the option to have speakers from WMATA participate in a public meeting and present the proposals to our communities and constituents. A very small number of people participated in the virtual hearings, especially compared to annual budget hearings and previous proposals for changes at the neighborhood level when even one individual route was proposed to be adjusted. The dates and options for participating were shared in the emails and on the website for more than a month, which seems like an indication that the communications were not reaching the expected audience or the intended number of stakeholders. The proposals are a lot to take in, and we have tried to do that to inform our own deliberations and to inform our constituents. It was clear to us that much more of that was needed.

The lack of broader participation in the discussions is an unfortunate gap when the proposed restructuring and renaming of all the region's bus routes will mean dramatic change for so many people who already use WMATA services or could use them in the future. WMATA must make additional efforts to reach constituents who are not aware of the prospective changes to their bus lines, have not participated in the engagement processes to date, but would be significantly affected.

It is our understanding that the current proposals under Better Bus 2025 could be covered within the 2025 and 2026 budgets, using funds available from the three jurisdictions, and it would also be possible to maintain the existing services through WMATA's current fiscal year, if Better Bus was not adopted.

With the large number of comments on the current proposals, the large number of current and prospective riders who have not been engaged in the discussion, gaps in data available for measuring existing and future trends, and the broad and deep changes that are still occurring in local business and travel patterns, it would seem like a wise and informed course for the WMATA Board to take the additional time needed to review the requests you have already received and undertake at least one more round of community engagement.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ann Lane Mladinov
Commissioner, ANC3A05

Attachment