



March 9, 2021

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Board of Directors
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
c/o Ann Chisholm
Government Relations Officer - District of Columbia
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Via email: achisholm@wmata.com

Re: ANC 6B Opposition to FY2022 Proposed WMATA Budget and Service Cuts

Dear WMATA Board of Directors,

At a regularly scheduled, properly noticed, meeting on March 9, 2021, with a quorum present, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6B voted 10-0-0 to send you comments on the proposed FY22 budget and service cuts.

ANC 6B, which covers the Southeast portion of Capitol Hill, is home to approximately 27,000 DC residents. Thousands of others visit ANC 6B for work, school, or to visit our neighborhood businesses. Metro, both Metrorail and Metrobus, is an essential method of transportation for ANC 6B residents and visitors. Thousands of our constituents depend on Metrobus and Metrorail to get to work, school, healthcare appointments, grocery stores and more. Additionally, thousands of residents of the DC Area depend on Metrobus and Metrorail to get to their places of employment in ANC 6B, to attend schools in ANC 6B, or to visit our restaurants and businesses.

The Capitol South, Eastern Market, Potomac Avenue and Stadium-Armory Metrorail stations are located within ANC 6B and are served by Metrorail's Blue, Orange and Silver Lines. ANC 6B is served by numerous Metrobus lines, including, but not limited to the 30N, 30S, 32, 34, 36, 90, 92, 96, 97, B2, D6 and V4. These bus and rail services are vital transportation links for our communities, providing access to job centers and schools as well as mobility within our neighborhoods.

The Commissioners of ANC 6B believe that Fiscal Year 2022 is a critical time for our region to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that drastic cuts to transit service would cut off our residents from their jobs, healthcare, and schools at a time when the DC region should be working to reopen and recover.

Proposed WMATA Service Cuts in ANC 6B

In the FY2022 budget, WMATA proposes to reduce Metrorail service to every thirty (30) minutes on the Blue, Orange, and Silver line trains and to end service at 9:00PM each night. WMATA proposes to eliminate the 30N, 30S, 34, 97, D6, M6, and V4 Metrobus routes and to eliminate the portion of the B2 route serving ANC 6B.

These cuts are scheduled to go into effect in the second half of FY2022, beginning in January 2022.

ANC 6B notes the following anticipated impacts of the proposed cuts to Metrobus and Metrorail service in our area.

The proposed cuts would eliminate low-cost, environmentally friendly modes of transit for essential workers living and working in ANC6B.

Many of the employees of businesses located in ANC 6B, including essential workers at the Eastern Market Medstar clinic, grocery stores, and restaurants along Pennsylvania Avenue and in the Barracks Row and Eastern Market areas rely on WMATA service to get to and from work. Closing the Metrorail system at 9:00PM nightly would eliminate an affordable, environmentally friendly option for these workers, many of whom are not high-wage earners.

The proposed cuts would cut off residents from area schools and hospitals.

In January 2022, mid-way through 2021-2022 school year, WMATA proposes to eliminate a number of bus lines that students at area schools rely heavily on. Notably, WMATA proposes to eliminate the section of the B2 bus that serves ANC 6B, cutting off a route that many Eastern High School and Eliot-Hine Middle School students use to get to school and home, and that residents of areas in ANC 6B such as Potomac Gardens take to Anacostia High School in Ward 8. WMATA offers no alternative route for these students at a time when DCPS will likely be asking them to return to in-person learning. The reductions in frequency of Metrorail service in January 2022 will also impact our area students who rely on Metrorail to get to school, particularly those transferring from another Metrorail line, who would have to endure lengthy delays in their commutes to school.

In addition, WMATA proposes to eliminate the D6 bus, which provides an important link between ANC 6B, downtown DC and Sibley Hospital. Reductions in the hours and frequency of Metrorail trains on the Blue, Orange and Silver lines would also make it more difficult for ANC 6B residents to access medical services at area hospitals such as Medstar George Washington Hospital.

The proposed Metrorail cuts will lengthen commutes for ANC 6B residents and increase traffic congestion in our neighborhoods.

WMATA proposes a reduction in Metrorail service to 30% of pre-pandemic levels starting in January 2022. Many residents of ANC 6B anticipate returning to work within the next year, and rely on Metrorail as a mode of transportation to their places of work. The reduction in frequency and of Metrorail trains, the proposed 9:00PM closure time, and the closure of Metrorail stations such as Federal Center SW, Federal Triangle, Mount Vernon Square, Archives, and Judiciary Square, which are in close proximity to a large number of office buildings and businesses will harm our residents and our local economy as our region works to rebound from the pandemic.

The proposed WMATA cuts would harm businesses in ANC 6B.

Starting in January 2022, WMATA proposes to cut five bus lines serving the commercial corridor that includes of Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Eastern Market and Barracks Row, and to dramatically reduce the frequency and hours of Metrorail service to this same corridor. These cuts would make it difficult for low-wage workers in the hospitality industry, whose shifts often end after the proposed 9:00PM close of Metrorail service, to return home after work. The cuts would also make it more difficult for DC area residents and visitors to travel to ANC 6B to visit our local shops and restaurants, thus prolonging the recovery time for these industries that have been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ANC 6B Recommendations

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B urges the Washington Area Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to adopt a FY2022 budget that preserves and expand access to transit wherever possible. Specifically, the Commission:

- Urges WMATA to take measures to seek additional funding of service - including seeking the full 3% subsidy increase allowed under the compact from partner jurisdictions - especially as jurisdictions continue to report budget surpluses.
- Supports the proposed restoration of service, including late-night service, to the 90 bus lines and the preservation of current service levels on the line.
- Opposes the proposed cuts to or the elimination of the 30N, 30S, 24, 97, M6, B2, D6, and V4 lines, and urges WMATA to seek additional subsidies from the appropriate jurisdictions to continue to serve those routes to the extent possible.
- Opposes the FY 2022 proposed reduction in frequency of in Metrorail service on the Blue, Orange, and Silver Lines that many 6B residents, essential workers, students and people patronizing 6B businesses rely on as a mode of transportation.
- Urges WMATA to consider publishing rail timetables as a low-cost, customer-friendly improvement as rail levels of service have declined.
- Urges WMATA prioritize bus routes for service preservation that have no feasible alternative for communities on that route and that serve essential facilities like hospitals, shelters and schools.
- Urges WMATA to prioritize bus routes that serve large numbers of students in the District of Columbia who will depend on Metrobus as schools reopen and to publish their analysis in support of these routes.
- Urges WMATA to reopen the public comment period for the FY2022 budget before the final six months “fiscal cliff” budget period that results in substantial service cuts in January 2022, especially if there is a possibility of additional federal or jurisdictional funding.

Please contact Commissioner Kirsten Oldenburg, ANC 6B Transportation Committee Chair at 202-546-8542 or 6B04@anc.dc.gov, or Alison Horn, Commissioner 6B09, 6b09@anc.dc.gov, if you have any questions about these comments or need further information.

Sincerely,



Brian Ready
Chair, ANC 6B

CC Councilmember Mary Cheh
Councilmember Charles Allen
Councilmember Vincent Gray
Andrew deFrank, DDOT