

Item: 8

Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus

Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus

Executive Summary ACTION ITEM

Recommendation

Programmatic approval to implement a Regional Demonstration Project for FY07, Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus (Metrobus Route 79), in the District of Columbia effective September 2006, and (1) amend the FY07 operating budget by \$1.3 million in cost, \$0.2 million in revenue, and \$1.1 million in operating subsidy that will be paid entirely by the District of Columbia; and (2) authorize additional expenditures of up to \$884,000 from the capital budget.

Background

- The Regional Bus Study recommended the development of new Rapid Bus service in the Washington region. Rapid Bus service is generally limited-stop service in corridors with priority running-way improvements, unique branded identity, and enhanced customer facilities.
- The Metro Matters Bus Customer Facilities program has been created to support the development of priority bus corridors, including new Rapid Bus service. Other priority corridors are currently in development on Pennsylvania Avenue in the District of Columbia, University Boulevard corridor in Maryland, and Jefferson-Davis Highway (Crystal City-Potomac Yard) in Virginia. Other bus stop improvements in Alexandria and Fairfax are also part of the program.
- Georgia Avenue-7th Street Line, Metrobus Routes 70, 71, is one of the top two lines in the system for ridership, averaging over 18,000 weekday passengers on 241 trips.
- Service currently operates every 7-8 minutes during AM and PM peak periods and every 10 minutes off-peak using articulated buses.
- Due to heavy ridership and frequent stops, one-way travel time between Silver Spring and Archives approaches 60 minutes.

Project Overview

Service Characteristics

- New limited-stop weekday route between Silver Spring Station and Archives via Georgia Avenue and 7th/9th Streets NW
- 10-minute headway in both directions during AM and PM peak periods only
- 15 stops in each direction (vs. 55 stops in each direction on Routes 70/71 local).
- Estimated running time savings 25 percent (38 vs. 50 minutes local AM and 45 vs. 60 minutes PM)
- Estimated ridership=1,000 new riders after 18 months plus 2,500 diversion from local service

Vehicle Requirements

- Route 79 would require 11 peak scheduled buses, 13 operators and 4 mechanics. Including three spares, 14 existing buses would be branded and assigned for use on Route 79.

Branding & Marketing

- Vehicle branding will be used to give the service a unique identity and to alert customers that the Rapid Bus does not stop at all bus stops in the corridor.
- WMATA's Planning and Marketing Departments are currently working with DDOT to develop the "Metro Rapid" branding concept and complementary marketing strategy to include bus stop flags, timetables and other promotional items and programs.

Customer Facilities

- 30 special flags added to Rapid Bus stops.
- New bus shelters provided through the District Adshell contract.
- New bus maps available through WMATA's bus map project.
- Real-time bus information on electronic displays will also be added to the new bus shelters in the corridor. A Next Bus display sign will also be posted at Silver Spring station.
- Sidewalks and streetscape will be improved through the District's Great Streets program.

Running-Way Improvements

- Use existing bus lanes on 7th and 9th Streets between Archives and Mount Vernon Square
- DDOT will be implementing a pilot project for transit signal priority along Georgia Avenue between Rhode Island Avenue and Eastern Avenue beginning Summer 2006.

Public Involvement

- Community workshops scheduled to get public feedback on the proposed Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus Implementation Plan and other corridor improvements is planned for June 29th at the Emory Recreation Center

Budget Impacts

	FY 2007 (9 months)	Annual
Operating cost	\$1.3 million	\$1.8 million
Revenue	\$0.2 million	\$0.2 million
Subsidy	\$1.1 million	\$1.6 million

The capital costs associated with this project total \$884,000 and will be used for fareboxes and radios, painting and decaling buses, bus stop flags, traffic signal priority equipment, electronic destination signs, and real time information displays.



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus



Presented to the Board of Directors:

Budget Committee

by

BUSV / BPPD / OPAS

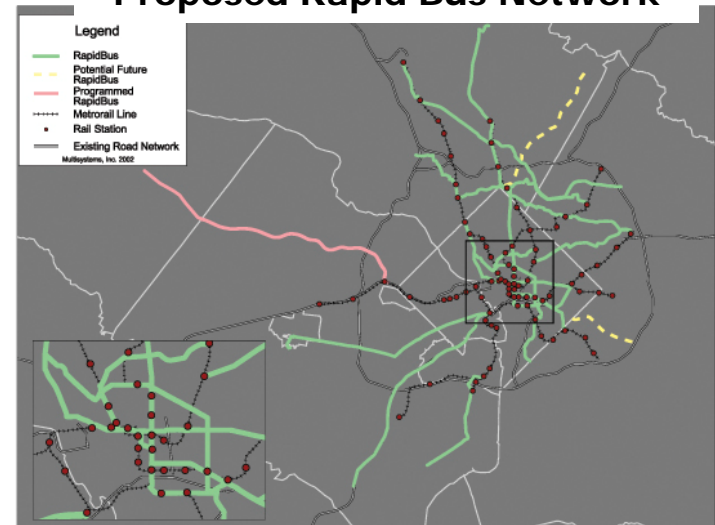
July 6, 2006

Background

- Regional Bus Study recommended the development of priority bus corridors, including new Rapid Bus service on Georgia Avenue NW.
- Georgia Avenue/7th Street (Routes 70,71) is one of heaviest ridership bus lines with over 18,000 daily riders, but crowding and slow travel speed impact quality of service.
- The Metro Matters Bus Customer Facilities Program includes funding for improvements in priority bus corridors and for bus branding, to develop Rapid Bus projects across the region.

Regional Bus Study

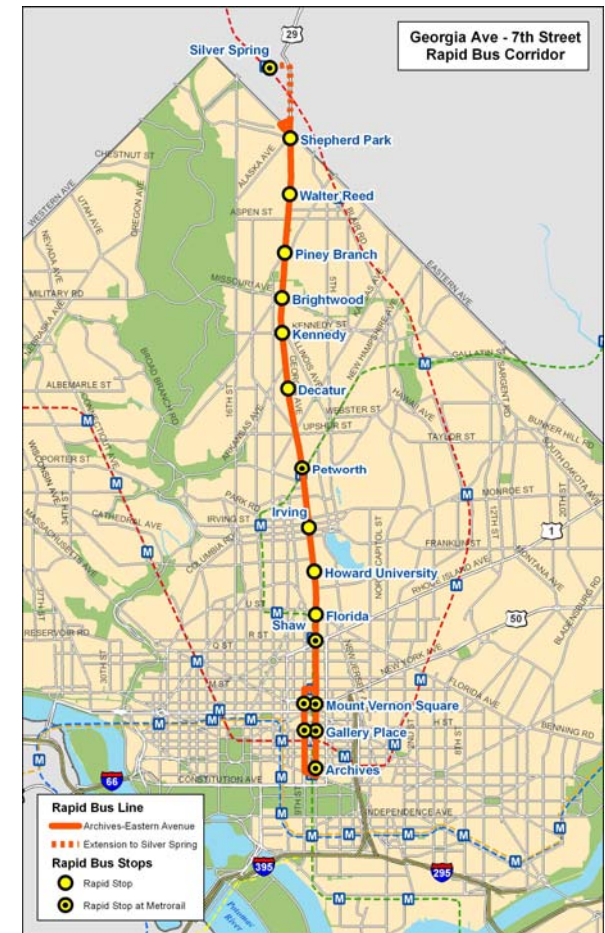
Proposed Rapid Bus Network





Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus

- New Rapid Bus Route 79 would operate every 10 minutes during weekday AM and PM peak periods
- 15 Rapid Bus stops in each direction (local bus serves 55 stops in the same corridor)
- 14 existing fleet buses and bus stop flags will be branded with regional "Rapid Bus" logo
- New bus shelters provided through DC Adshell contract
- Traffic Signal Priority pilot project
- Estimated travel time savings due to limited stops, bus lanes, and signal priority of up to 25%

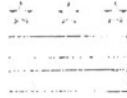




Recommendation & Next Steps

- Programmatic approval to implement a Regional Demonstration Project for FY07, Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus (Metrobus Route 79), in the District of Columbia effective September 2006, and
 - (1) amend the FY07 operating budget by \$1.3 million in cost, \$0.2 million in revenue, and \$1.1 million in operating subsidy that will be paid entirely by the District of Columbia;
 - (2) authorize additional expenditures of up to \$884,000 from the capital budget.
- September P&D Committee: Report on implementation plans for other priority corridors and seek approval to initiate additional bus capital improvements in FY07.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Office of Mass Transit

June 22, 2006

Dan Tangherlini
Interim General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
Authority
600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Dan;

This letter authorizes WMATA to implement reimbursable Metrobus limited-stop service between Silver Spring (or Eastern Avenue) and Archives via Georgia Avenue and 7th/9th Streets at 10-minute headways during AM and PM peak periods. This new route would provide better reliability, improved frequency, additional capacity and faster service in this heavily used transit corridor.

Funding for the operating subsidy associated with this requested service, not-to-exceed \$1.1 million in FY07, will be provided by the District.

It is our understanding that this service would be implemented in September 2006.

Sincerely,

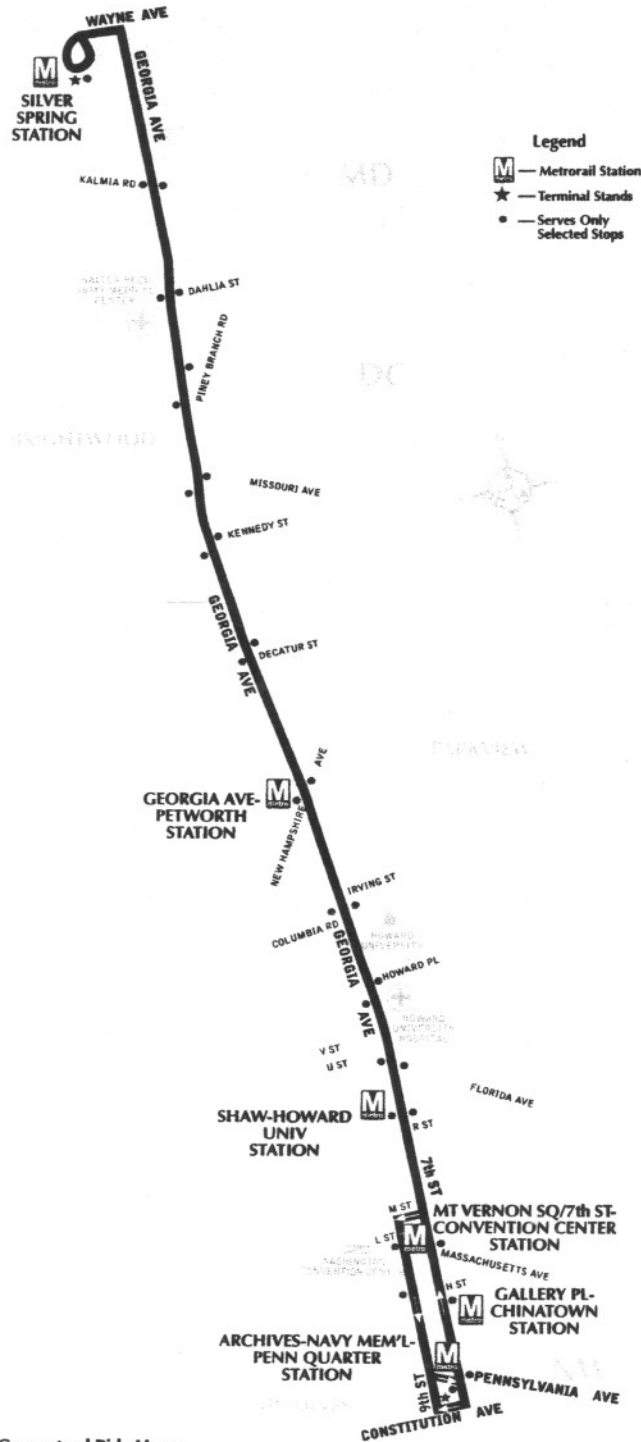

Rosemary Covington
Administrator

Cc: Michelle Pourciau
Catondra Noye
Karen Meacham
David Erion

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Georgia Avenue Limited Line Route 79

For route and schedule information
Call 202-637-7000
www.metroopensdoors.com



- Legend**
- Metrarail Station
 - Terminal Stands
 - Serves Only Selected Stops

Guaranteed Ride Home
When you take Metrobus or Metrorail to work, you are eligible to participate in the free Commuter Connection Guaranteed Ride Home Program. The program will get you home in the event of a personal emergency or unscheduled overtime. To register and to receive program details, call Commuter Connection at 1-800-745-RIDE.

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Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
**METRO ELECTRONIC ACTION
 DOCUMENT**

IDENTIFICATION			
MEAD ID:	99592	ACTION:	Initiate & Award Transit Service Change
AWARD VALUE:	(Not yet awarded)	CONTRACT: (Proposed)	
FUND SOURCES: (View)		CONTRACTOR:	
LAST MODIFIED:	06/28/2006		

DESCRIPTION	
SUBJECT:	Implementation of Regional Demonstration Project Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus, Metrobus Route 79.
PURPOSE:	To obtain programmatic approval to implement a Regional Demonstration Project for FY07, Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus (Metrobus Route 79), in the District of Columbia effective September 2006, and (1) amend the FY07 operating budget by \$1.3 million in cost, \$0.2 million in revenue, and \$1.1 million in operating subsidy that will be paid entirely by the District of Columbia; and (2) authorize additional expenditures of up to \$884,000 from the capital budget.
TRANSIT SERVICE CHANGE CATEGORIES	

ORIGINATION					
INITIATOR			DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL		
THOMAS HARRINGTON on 06/21/2006			Approved by REQUA , JOHN 06/21/2006		
PHONE:	202-962-2294	OFFICE:	BPPD	DEPT:	Planning and Strategic Pr

COORDINATION (ROUTING)		
OFFICE	NAME	ACTION/DATE
COOB (3211)	REQUA, JOHN	Approved 06/21/2006
(8110)	THOMAS, EDWARD	Approved 06/21/2006
PRMT (7410)	JACKSON, LUCY	Approved 06/21/2006

FINAL APPROVALS	
OFFICE	NAME/ACTION
BUDGET_CMTE	Approved for CFO1 by HARRY WOODRUFF on 06/22/2006
JOINT_DEV	Approved for by EMEKA MONEME on 06/22/2006
OPER_CMTE	Approved for OPAS by JAMES HUGHES on 06/22/2006
BEMR	DEBRA JOHNSON (Not Yet Approved)
GM	GMGR CEO (Not Yet Approved)
BOARD	BOARD WMATA (Not Yet Approved)



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
**METRO ELECTRONIC ACTION
DOCUMENT**

NARRATIVE

Discussion

The Regional Bus Study recommended the development of priority bus corridors, including new Rapid Bus service in the Washington region. Rapid Bus service is generally limited-stop service in corridors with priority running-way improvements, unique branded identity, and enhanced customer facilities. A number of new Rapid Bus corridors are currently in development – Georgia Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue in the District of Columbia, University Boulevard corridor in Maryland, and Jefferson-Davis Highway (Crystal City-Potomac Yard) in Virginia. The Rapid Bus service would have a regional brand identity shared by multiple corridors in the region including a common name, logo, vehicle paint design, and bus stop flag.

The first corridor to be implemented as part of this regional Rapid Bus program is the Georgia Avenue corridor between Silver Spring Station and Archives. This new limited-stop service will complement the existing local bus service. Rapid Bus service on Georgia Avenue was recommended in the Regional Bus Study and the D.C. Transit Alternatives Analysis plans.

The Georgia Avenue-7th Street Line, Metrobus Routes 70, 71, is one of the top two lines in the system for ridership, averaging over 18,000 weekday passengers on 241 trips. Service operates every 7-8 minutes during AM and PM peak periods and every 10 minutes off-peak using articulated buses. There are 54 bus stops along the 7.5 mile route between Silver Spring Metrorail Station and the Archives at 7th & Constitution Avenue NW. Due to heavy ridership and frequent stops, one-way travel time between Silver Spring and Archives approaches 60 minutes.

The Georgia Avenue/7th Street corridor between Silver Spring and downtown Washington contains a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional land use. Major activity centers include Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Howard University, Washington Convention Center and Verizon Center. Transit travel in the corridor includes multiple purposes, including connections to Metrorail Red, Green and Yellow Lines, transfers to major crosstown bus lines at Kennedy Street, Irving Street/Columbia Road, Florida Avenue, and H Street, and access to downtown employment, shopping, and entertainment.

New Rapid Bus Route 79 would operate every 10 minutes in both directions during weekday AM and PM peak periods using standard, 40-foot CNG buses. The Rapid Bus route would serve 15 stops in each direction, for an average stop spacing of ½ mile. These 15 stops would be placed at the busiest locations, including transfer points to Metrorail and other bus routes. It is estimated that travel time would be reduced by up to 25 percent compared with local service on Routes 70 and 71. No public hearing is required for this service change because there is no reduction in existing service.

It is estimated that 1,000 new riders would be attracted to this faster service after 18 months. Also, it is anticipated that 2,500 daily riders would switch from local service to the Rapid Bus. The regular \$1.25 fare would be charged on Route 79.

The Rapid Bus service is designed to take advantage of existing bus priority lanes on 7th and 9th Streets between Mount Vernon Square and Archives. Other anticipated corridor improvements that would enhance this service include:

- DDOT's transit signal priority pilot project along Georgia Avenue between Eastern Avenue and Rhode Island Avenue
- New bus shelters provided through the District's Adshell contract
- Real-time bus information on electronic displays in the new bus shelters

- New bus maps available through WMATA's bus map project
- Special flags to identify the Rapid Bus stops
- Sidewalk and streetscape improvements through the District's Great Streets program

PRIOR APPROVALS

None

IMPACT ON FUNDING

Operating Budget

Implementation of new Route 79 would have the following impacts on Metrobus operating costs, revenue, and subsidy. As a reimbursable route, the District would pay the full operating subsidy.

	FY 2007 (9 months)	Annual
Operating cost	\$1.3 million	\$1.8 million
Revenue	\$0.2 million	\$0.2 million
Subsidy	\$1.1 million	\$1.6 million

Route 79 would require 11 peak scheduled buses, 13 operators and 4 mechanics. Including three spares, 14 existing buses would be branded and assigned for use on Route 79. These impacts are not included in the approved FY07 budget.

Capital Budget Information

Budget Program	Metro Matters Bus Customer Facilities
Current Budget:	\$9,800,000
This Action:*	\$884,000
Prior Actions:	\$4,659,539
Subtotal:	\$5,543,539
Remaining Budget	\$4,256,461

*Total capital budget of \$884,000 will be used for fareboxes and radios, painting and decaling buses, bus stop flags, traffic signal priority equipment, electronic destination signs, and real time information displays. These expenditure will be funded from the Metro Matters Bus Customer Facilities program created to support the development of priority bus corridors, including the Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus service.

RECOMMENDATION

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Programmatic approval to implement a Regional Demonstration Project for FY07, Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus (Metrobus Route 79), in the District of Columbia effective September 2006, and (1) amend the FY07 operating budget by \$1.3 million in cost, \$0.2 million in revenue, and \$1.1 million in operating subsidy that will be paid entirely by the District of Columbia; and (2) authorize additional expenditures of up to \$884,000 from the capital budget.

PRESENTED AND ADOPTED:

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECT AND AMENDMENT OF
FY07 OPERATING BUDGET

RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, Metrobus Routes 70 and 71 along the Georgia Avenue, NW corridor are among the top lines for ridership in the Metrobus system, averaging over 18,000 riders each weekday; and

WHEREAS, The Regional Bus Study provided to the Authority in September 2003 recommends the implementation of a series of Rapid Bus corridors including one for Georgia Avenue, NW to supplement the existing service on Metrobus routes 70 and 71; and

WHEREAS, The FY07 Operating Budget does not contain funds for the operation of the Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus project; and

WHEREAS, To accelerate the creation of the Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus as a regional demonstration project for FY07, the District of Columbia will pay the operating costs of the Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus project for FY07; now, therefore be it

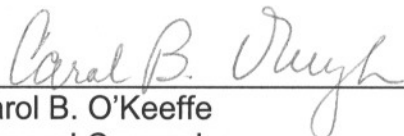
RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors hereby approves of the addition of the Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus project to the FY07 Operating Budget as a regional demonstration project; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the FY07 Operating Budget is hereby amended to add \$0.2 million in additional revenue, \$1.3 million in additional expenses, and \$1.1 million in additional subsidy to be paid by the District of Columbia; and be it further

RESOLVED, That \$884,000 in capital funds from the Metro Matters Bus Customer Facilities Budget will be expended in support of the George Avenue Rapid Bus project; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Carol B. O'Keeffe
General Counsel