

WMATA Public Hearings
Docket B14-03: Proposed Metrobus Service Changes
Summary



600 Fifth Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 962-2891

Barbara Hermanson, Vice Chair, VA, City of Alexandria
Meeting Attended: Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Metro Headquarters Building
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

In Attendance:

WMATA Board of Directors: Tom Downs, Chair (DC), Mortimer Downey, First Vice Chair (Federal Government)

WMATA Staff: Representatives from Bus Operations Scheduling Department, Metro Transit Police Department, Office of Media Relations, and the Office of the Board Secretary

Riders' Advisory Council: Carol Carter, Chair (DC) and Barbara Hermanson, Vice Chair (VA)

Public: Approximately 15-20 individuals

Presider: Tom Downs, Chair (DC)

Chair Downs opened the public hearing and provided information about the public hearing and the feedback process.

Mr. Jim Hamre, Director, Bus Operations Scheduling, provided a brief overview of the proposed Metrobus service changes including the following background information:

- Recent route adjustments had yielded over 9 percent more ridership
- Proposed changes came from many sources, including AAC and RAC
- Objectives include added capacity, increased hours of service, and meeting demand

Chair Downs recognized members of the public who were signed up to speak. 13 members of the public were provided with an opportunity to speak. Several customers commented about proposed MetroAccess cuts. Mr. Downs and Mr. Hamre clarified that the proposals in question included no service changes to MetroAccess. Other suggestions and complaints were related to specific bus stops, routes, frequency and crowding. One customer suggested that the digital signs inside buses eliminate month, day and year time information, when riders simply want to know the next street and possibly the current time. As there were no other members of the public who were signed up to speak, Chair Downs adjourned the public hearing.

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Barbara Hermanson, Vice Chair, VA, City of Alexandria

Meeting Attended: Monday, September 22, 2014

Fairlington Community Center
3308 South Stafford Street
Arlington, VA 22206

In Attendance:

WMATA Board of Directors: Mortimer Downey, First Vice Chair (Federal Government), Mary Hynes (VA)
WMATA Staff: Representatives from Bus Operations Scheduling Department and the Office of the Board Secretary
Riders' Advisory Council: Barbara Hermanson, Vice Chair (VA) and Lorraine Silva (VA)
Public: Approximately 10-15 individuals

Presider: Mary Hynes (VA)

Ms. Hynes opened the public hearing and provided information about the public hearing and the feedback process.

Mr. Jim Hamre, Director, Bus Operations Scheduling, provided a brief overview of the proposed Metrobus service changes including the following background information:

- Previous proposed Metrobus service changes increased ridership 9 percent and reliability 5 percent
- The final proposals will be presented to the WMATA Board of Directors on November 20, 2014

Ms. Hynes recognized members of the public who were signed up to speak. Five members of the public were provided with an opportunity to speak. Three individuals discussed Park Place access, one individual about Park Fairfax, and one individual encouraged more bus service going downtown. As there were no other members of the public who were signed up to speak, Ms. Hynes adjourned the public hearing.

Debra MacKenzie, At-Large, Arlington, VA

Meeting Attended: Monday, September 22, 2014

Westwood College – Annandale Campus
7619 Little River Turnpike
Annandale, VA

In Attendance:

WMATA Board of Directors: Catherine Hudgins (VA)
WMATA Staff: Representatives from the Bus Operations Scheduling Department, the Office of the Board Secretary and the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity
Riders' Advisory Council: Debra MacKenzie (VA)
Fairfax County Government: Randall White, Comprehensive Transit Plan Project Manager
Public: Approximately 7-10 individuals

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Presider: Catherine Hudgins (VA)

Ms. Hudgins opened the public hearing at approximately 7:15 p.m. and provided information about the public hearing and the feedback process.

Ms. Hudgins recognized members of the public who were signed up to speak. Five members of the public were provided with an opportunity to speak.

Several customers commented about the changes to the Metrobus route 29. One member from the public made several inquiries of staff including maps, routes and proposed changes at all stops, the presence of Metro Transit Police and the use of cash to purchase fares.

Another customer commented that he and other riders would experience great difficulty getting to work if service changes were made to Metrobus route 29. He stated that this particular route was his only source of transportation. Several other customers noted that there was frequent overcrowding on route 29 and that the service changes would only create bigger problems. It was also suggested to change the Metrobus route slightly at Edsall Road to avoid routine backups and the coordination of routes 29 & 17.

A customer who identified himself as a representative of the Ravensworth Neighborhood stated that the proposed 16L would take much longer than the 29H. He commented that the commute times would worsen and that customers in the neighborhood really needed this route. A customer also stated that WMATA was attempting to fix something that was not broken and that the reduced number of buses would increase wait times, therefore make commuting by Metro not as feasible.

Several customers also commented that the proposed Metrobus service changes were presented with a "positive spin" to sneak a reduction of service to the public. The majority of those who provided feedback requested that WMATA not to make the proposed service changes.

As there were no other members of the public who were signed up to speak, Ms. Hudgins adjourned the public hearing at 7:30pm.

Carol Carter Walker, Chair, District of Columbia
Meetings Attended: Tuesday, September 16, 2014
Metro Headquarters Building
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Thursday, October 2, 2014
Dorothy I. Height/Benning Neighborhood Library
3935 Benning Road, NE
Washington, DC 20019

I attended two of the six public hearings held this fall and read the transcript of a third, regarding the proposed, revenue-neutral changes to bus service in METRO's service area.

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These hearings are wonderful opportunities for the public to interact and make their views, concerns known. I applaud WMATA for going to the public through geographically dispersed hearings. Here are my takeaways:

- Increase pre-publicity even more by outreach to both transit-oriented and community-based neighborhood organizations; circulate the final report to those same organizations
- Use the detailed knowledge of bus routes and related issues relating to specific Metro Stations expressed by the public to follow up and engage them in planning for the next round of bus changes
- Refer to speakers by their honorific; i.e., use Ms., Mr., etc., instead of by first name. Use full name when called and honorific thereafter
- Have a sign posted at the meeting space when the meeting ends, letting those who arrive after the hearing ends know how they may submit testimony; at least one person arrived after the WMATA Headquarters meeting ended