

February 28, 2019

Board of Directors  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
600 5th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Restoring late night service hours – not yet; and additional recommendations

Dear Board Members:

Thank you for your commitment and that of the General Manager and WMATA staff to restoring Metro. We were pleased to be a leading advocacy group in the successful campaign for the first-ever dedicated capital funding for WMATA, and look forward to significant progress in replacing and modernizing the system's aging infrastructure, and the improved safety and reliability must result.

### **Service hours and maintenance**

We urge you to treat Metrorail and Metrobus as the essential backbone for an environmentally sustainable and economically competitive future for the DC region. It is NOT simply a commuter system, but one which enables walkable, car-free/car-lite living, provides affordable transportation, and supports the competitive transit-oriented development that has attracted major companies like Amazon, Nestle, Hilton, and Marriott, and 120,000 new residents to DC. **This means we hope to see restoration of longer service hours as well as more frequent service.**

**However, if the General Manager and independent experts in safety and maintenance have established that WMATA continues to need more time overnight for both rehabilitation/replacement and for preventative maintenance, then we should not restore late night customer service hours at this time.** We recommend the following:

- 1) Maintain current service hours to allow for maintenance, rehabilitation, and safety improvements.
- 2) Set a date for the next review of service hours (in one year or two years) and make clear that you do not intend for the current shorter hours to be permanent.
- 3) Request and release more information about the maintenance being achieved using the extended service time and provide a plan for when longer customer service hours can be restored.
- 4) Plan, fund and implement late night bus service similar to what other cities have achieved – this is particularly important for the service workers who support the late-night economy and who clean and maintain office buildings and other infrastructure.
- 5) Make the case and win the additional operational funds for this late-night service.
- 6) Release and explain the mid- to long-term capital investment strategy and timeline to fully restore the system, as well as the preventative maintenance program.

## **Increasing operating funding and frequency, and expanding transit for our future**

In addition to the above, we support the General Manager's recommendations for additional daytime frequency and urge local and state governments to provide the operational funding necessary. We also urge evaluation of the annual 3% growth cost cap – while we do need to see where operations can be made more cost-efficient, it must be recognized that transit service is an essential public utility and providing more service and frequent/reliable service is necessary. Transit is a key means for access to jobs and working out of poverty, and increasingly demonstrated to be one of our top economic development assets. Moreover, we cannot reduce our greenhouse gas emissions without the combination of expanded transit and transit-oriented development. We have just 11 years to make major reductions according to the scientific consensus. **For these reasons, we request analysis of the limitations imposed by the 3% cost cap and a plan for increasing operating funding for transit.**

We also urge the Bus Transformation Study to conclude with a robust, expansive plan for bus transit – ensuring frequent, reliable service across an extended network that supports our transit-oriented future.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stewart Schwartz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Stewart Schwartz  
Executive Director