



City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch
City Manager *DJ*

SUBJECT: Proposed FY2010 Metrobus Service Reduction Package

DATE: April 2, 2009

The City has received notice of Public Hearings to be held in April by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) on numerous service reductions in the Metrobus system. Specifically, the WMATA proposal will eliminate the B-27 line and the B-29/31 line serving the City. The notice states that WMATA is facing a significant operating budget shortfall for FY 2010 that begins July 1, 2009. In an effort to reduce their operating funds gap, Metro has eliminated over \$119 million in operating costs, including elimination of 300 positions. In concert with its Board, Metro also revised its revenue estimates by about \$6 million. According to the announcement, every area of the operating budget was scrutinized for efficiency, and actions were taken to ensure that the public gets the most out of each dollar spent. The current budget gap totals \$28.8 million. The proposed service reductions will reduce this gap by \$13.6 million, leaving a deficit of \$15.2 million.

The B-27 line is a direct route between New Carrollton Metrorail and Bowie State University, via Lanham-Severn Road. This is the only WMATA route that serves Old Town Bowie, providing morning and evening service, but no midday service. The service runs every 30 minutes during peak periods and hourly into the evening. The B-29/31 line is an express line from Crofton in Anne Arundel County to New Carrollton Metro. On its way into New Carrollton in the morning and on its way out in the afternoon, the buses from the B-29/31 line stop at the Bowie Park & Ride lot on Northview Drive. There are four (4) inbound buses in the morning and eight (8) outbound buses in the afternoon and evening.

While these lines may not be the most profitable or experience the highest of ridership in the WMATA system, they provide critical links to important areas that would not otherwise be served by transit facilities, including Old Town Bowie, Bowie State University, Bowie Town Center, Bowie Gateway Center, Melford/MSTC and the Crofton area.

Recommendation

Because the alternate routes listed in the public hearing advertisement will not compensate for the transit service that will be completely lost in the above areas and the lines provide critical links to major portions of the City, as well as providing the only connections to Bowie State University and Crofton, it is recommended that the Council send the attached letter in opposition to the proposed service reductions.

MAYOR G. Frederick Robinson MAYOR PRO TEM Todd M. Turner

COUNCIL Dennis Brady ♦ James L. Marcos ♦ Diane M. Polangin ♦ Isaac C. Trough ♦ Geraldine Valentino-Smith CITY MANAGER David J. Deutsch
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DRAFT

April 7, 2009

Office of the Secretary
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001

RE: FY 2010 Metrobus Service Reduction Program

To Whom It May Concern:

The Bowie City Council wishes to express its opposition to two (2) specific service reductions proposed for FY 2010. The current proposal is to eliminate both the B-27 and B-29/31 lines that serve the City of Bowie and surrounding area and institutions.

The B-27 line is a direct route between New Carrollton Metrorail and Bowie State University, via Lanham-Severn Road. This is the only WMATA route that serves Old Town Bowie, providing morning and evening service, but no midday service. The service runs every 30 minutes during peak periods and hourly into the evening. The B-29/31 line is an express line from Crofton in Anne Arundel County to New Carrollton Metro. On its way into New Carrollton in the morning and on its way out in the afternoon, the buses from the B-29/31 line stop at the Bowie Park & Ride lot on Northview Drive. There are four (4) inbound buses in the morning and eight (8) outbound buses in the afternoon and evening.

While these lines may not be the most profitable or experience the highest of ridership in the WMATA system, they provide critical links to important areas that would not otherwise be served by transit facilities. The B-27 is the only line serving Old Town Bowie, a designated revitalization area which has a high number of Zero-Vehicle Households (Census 2000) and is among the lowest income neighborhoods in the City. The B-27 line provides the only transit access between Old Town Bowie and Bowie State University, where the MARC Station was relocated from Old Town Bowie in the late 1980s. Elimination of the B-27 line will disadvantage the University's student population who may want to access to Old Town Bowie and the Metro system. The B-29/31 line provides critical transit service to the City's main retail centers, including Bowie Town Center and Bowie Gateway Center, and is in fact the only transit serving the latter. These areas of the City are among the highest Zero-Vehicle Households per the 2000 Census. The B-29/31 route has been studied for its potential to provide service to the City's most important economic development priorities, Melford/Maryland Science and Technology

Letter to WMATA re: Service Reduction Program

Center, which now includes approximately 1 million square feet of employment use. Additional transit-dependent, mixed-use development is approved at Melford. Deletion of the B-29/31 route will leave this key project unserved by transit facilities. Finally, the B-29/31 line provides the only regular bus connection between Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County, allowing residents to access jobs and shopping.

The alternate routes listed in the public hearing advertisement will not compensate for the transit service that will be completely lost in these areas. Therefore, the City Council finds the proposed changes unacceptable. In an age when our society is becoming more and more reliant on transit service, it is unconscionable that WMATA would consider eliminating these lines serving Bowie. The City has been doing all it can to convince WMATA and Prince George's County to restructure the current routes to provide the most effective service and to expand service to unserved or underserved portions of our City. The proposed service cuts will thwart the good work that has been done to date.

For all of the above reasons, we respectfully ask you to reconsider your decision to eliminate the B-27 and B-29/31 lines serving the City of Bowie and support funding to retain these routes.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
G. Frederick Robinson
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Jack B. Johnson, County Executive
The Honorable Ingrid M. Turner, Prince George's County Council
The Honorable Samuel H. Dean, Prince George's County Council
The Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters, State Senator
The Honorable James Hubbard, State Delegate
The Honorable Marvin Holmes, State Delegate
The Honorable Gerron Levi, State Delegate