



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E

TENLEYTOWN

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

CHEVY CHASE

WAKEFIELD

FORT GAINES

c/o Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home 5425 Western Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015

<https://anc3e.org>

WMATA Better Bus Visionary Network

Better Bus is Metro's overarching initiative to improve Metrobus for the region. In the coming years, Better Bus will mean a lot of things for the region, including new facilities, bus electrification, improved bus communications, and more bus lanes and transit signals. Metro has launched the network redesign as a critical piece of Better Bus.

Proposed Elimination of North Massachusetts Avenue and Western Avenue Bus Service is a Barrier to Access.

ANC 3E zip code (20016) with accompanying feeder areas 20815, 20816, 20817, house nearly 115,000 residents, many of whom use single occupancy vehicles to commute to work or for other daily activities. While part of this area is served by the red line, many households south/west of Wisconsin (as well as those on the Maryland-DC border) are currently poorly served by public transportation.

Public transportation is scarce in the ANC 3E and 3D area and, in some cases, non-existent. As a result, our DC roads are frequently clogged with out of state drivers particularly headed in and out of town during rush hour. Additionally, there is little interconnectivity (and under the proposal no interconnectivity) along Western Avenue that would enable residents to access either the bus interchange or metro stop at Friendship Heights or simply head downtown along Massachusetts Avenue with any meaningful frequency.

There are many bus route changes that likely warrant adjustment, however of greatest concern to ANC 3E are the proposed changes to the Massachusetts Avenue bus line(s). The changes eliminate the ability of residents living near Massachusetts Avenue to use Metrobus for commuting to work.

Previously, the N2, N4 and N6 lines ran between Farragut Square and Friendship Heights along Massachusetts Avenue. These bus lines were exceptionally popular pre-pandemic. Those statistics showed:

- 1) Approximately 90,000 monthly riders in 2017 and 2018;
- 2) The lines were the 26th busiest of all 63 lines operating in DC in overall ridership;
- 3) The lines were the third busiest of 10 lines operating in western DC;
- 4) Rush-hour frequency of buses was between 10 and 15 minutes.

Over time, WMATA decreased the frequency and reliability of the N lines. The Better Bus redesign is the final nail in the coffin. WMATA proposed to replace the [N4 and N6](#) lines with the [DC202](#) and [DC300](#) lines.

Harmful changes under this proposal include:

- The DC202 is only a [Medium Frequency](#) line (meaning arrivals every 20 minutes) and no longer goes south of Dupont Circle.
- The DC300 is a [Low Frequency](#) line (meaning arrivals every 30 minutes) and only goes to Woodley Park.
- The DC202 turns at Ward Circle (to Tenleytown) instead of Westmoreland Circle (to Friendship Heights).

This means the stretch of Massachusetts Avenue from Ward Circle to Westmoreland Circle is only served by the Low Frequency DC300, effectively preventing it from being used for commuting. Additionally, the elimination of bus service along Western further exacerbates the transportation desert.

WMATA should not move forward with these changes that nearly eliminate bus transportation for many families on both sides of Massachusetts and Western Avenues.

WMATA Should Provide A Reliable Cross-Area Route in the Farthest-Northwest of the City.

Under the proposed framework, there is little (to no) connectivity along the Western Avenue Corridor. Riders need a way to get along the length of Western to Friendship Heights to access connections, which under the proposal is difficult if not impossible. WMATA should consider making Westmoreland Circle a transfer point for people who wish to head up or down Mass Ave (or across to Friendship or toward Sibley/MacArthur). The ANC does commend the new 200 route for providing connection with AU and Sibley with areas east of Rock Creek Park, but for those who live north of AU, connectivity has been eliminated and should be reinstated.

Connections Needed for the New MacArthur High School.

The opening of the new MacArthur High School in Palisades presents an opportunity to improve connectivity between that area and Friendship Heights. Given the school has purposely been established to serve students from across the city, providing public transportation connections for students and families to this area is critical.

Redesign Should Seize this Opportunity to Remove Maryland Commuters from the Roads.

This WMATA Better Bus redesign presents a unique opportunity to remove drivers from the road in Northwest DC (which will trickle down to reduce congestion in the downtown area as well) and provide climate-friendly alternatives to sole-occupant driving. There are two ways this can be effectuated:

- (1) Expanded access to service north of Ward Circle (and into Bethesda) will enable drivers to leave their cars at home and get downtown. Unfortunately, this current WMATA proposal does not take this opportunity and instead eliminates service in this portion of Massachusetts Avenue. WMATA should reconsider and expand, not contract service in this area.
- (2) WMATA should ensure that all 30 buses continue into Bethesda. Currently, only some of the busses would continue on to Bethesda.

Both of these changes would help reduce congestion on Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue and assist commuters and residents in finding non-car options for transport.

WMATA Should Work With the District of Columbia to Improve Bus-Only Lanes and Remove On-Street Parking. More broadly, on-street parking is a scourge on downtown DC, blocking travel and creating unnecessary congestion. There is ample underground parking as well as ample parking off of the main arterials District-wide. WMATA must work with the District to remove on-street parking in core areas of the city and on arterials, and implement a robust network of bus-only and protected bike lanes.

Therefore, be it resolved that,

ANC 3E strongly supports robust public transportation options including better bus routes, increased bus frequency, protected bike lanes, and metro;

ANC 3E finds the current redesign proposal inadequate for both our constituents' ability to access bus service and in terms of removing single car drivers from local roads (particularly Maryland commuters who clog our streets);

ANC 3E requests

1. Restore bus service along the length of Western Avenue to promote connectivity
2. Restore bus service on Massachusetts Avenue north of Ward Circle. Extend the DC202 from Ward Circle to Westmoreland Circle and have the line terminate at Friendship Heights instead of Tenleytown (like the N lines do currently). This will serve northern/eastern Spring Valley and southern/western AU Park, including the Spring Valley shopping area, medical complex, and the AU building in the former law school all of which are on Massachusetts Ave;
3. Preserve bus service along Western Avenue to ensure connectivity for the more than 115,000 residents in this area;
4. Provide high frequency bus from Maryland into the District during rush hour along River Road and Wisconsin and Massachusetts Avenues;
5. Ensure all 30 route busses continue into Bethesda;
6. Consider adding bus-only lanes to River Road to Western (or Friendship), and Massachusetts Avenue from Maryland to downtown during rush hour;
7. Increase the frequency of the DC202 from Medium Frequency to High Frequency (meaning arrivals every 12 minutes) so that the line can again be used for commuting.

ANC 3E approved this resolution at its meeting on May 11, 2023, which was properly noticed and at which a quorum was present. The resolution was approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

Commissioners Jonathan Bender, Matthew Cohen, Jeffrey Denny, Rohin Ghosh, Amy Hall and Tom Quinn were present.

ANC 3E

By Jonathan Bender, Chairperson