



Adams Morgan Partnership BID ★ Capitol Hill BID ★ Capitol Riverfront BID ★ Coalition for Smarter Growth
Destination DC ★ Downtown DC BID ★ Dupont Circle BID ★ Events DC ★ Federal City Council ★ Georgetown BID
Golden Triangle BID ★ Greater Greater Washington ★ Greater Washington Partnership ★ Mt. Vernon Triangle CID
NoMa BID ★ Rosslyn BID ★ Sierra Club DC Chapter ★ Southwest BID ★ Washington Area Bicyclist Association
1440 G Street NW ★ Washington, DC 20005 ★ 202-681-0509 ★ info@dcstcoalition.org

Dear General Manager Wiedefeld and members of the WMATA board,

DC Sustainable Transportation (DCST) is a nonprofit organization which works to make DC a global leader with frequent, rapid, safe, affordable, and reliable transportation to, from, and around DC job centers. DCST brings together business, advocacy, and government entities around shared priorities for DC transportation.

Our members include eleven Business Improvement Districts in DC and Arlington; business groups including the Federal City Council and Greater Washington Partnership; and advocacy groups like the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the Sierra Club DC chapter, and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

We wish to provide the following feedback on proposals for the FY 2021 which have been advanced for public hearing.

We support restoration of late night service. Cuts to late night service have caused significant hardship for workers in late-night businesses, particularly workers who live in Maryland and Virginia and have few or no affordable other options for getting home late at night. We appreciate WMATA's efforts to find ways to restore some late-night service while still ensuring time for needed maintenance, and urge that this proposal be adopted in the FY 2021 budget.

We support free transfers between bus and rail. Free transfers were a top recommendation from the Bus Transformation Project and the second-most requested bus improvement after bus lanes in the survey (first among low-income riders). Among top transit systems, WMATA has the highest penalty for transferring between bus and rail operated by the same agency. This transfer penalty discourages bus ridership by workers and visitors and also leads many lower-income riders to take long bus rides instead of a faster train without good reason. Our buses and trains should be seen as part of a holistic transportation system rather than as silos.

We oppose a cash surcharge for bus boardings and SmarTrip loading. While cash does slow down buses, many riders lack a viable alternative to cash when they cannot afford to carry a significant

SmarTrip balance and/or lack places to load them. Riders not near a rail station or certain participating stores cannot reload easily, and other riders have challenges affording or safeguarding SmarTrips. We support broader analysis by WMATA on ways to ease barriers to SmarTrip, but do not support a cash surcharge at least until more progress is made in this area.

We oppose a \$1 surcharge for MetroExtra. Encouraging people who can use limited-stop lines to do so is in the interests of not just riders but the agency and the public. Greater ridership on limited-stop lines saves operating dollars by putting riders on the most efficient routes, not to mention ones that best help many people get where they need to go more quickly. A surcharge would reverse this and, worse, promote a disparity between lower-income and higher-income riders which is counterproductive.

We support keeping pass costs low. For those who can purchase them, passes increase the usefulness and usage of our transit system. Getting riders toward a subscription model for most riders is a valuable trend for WMATA's budget predictability and ridership, and we applaud proposals that would continue this progression.

We ask for more information about proposed bus changes. The manner of roll-out for the proposed bus changes has caused a great deal of consternation and did not best serve stakeholders or the the public's ability to intelligently weigh in. We are open to the possibility that some bus changes may be necessary or even desirable if they benefit riders, or may have some logic if done in combination with free transfers between bus and rail when a bus largely duplicates rail service. However, there is not sufficient information provided thus far to effectively evaluate this, and we ask that the agency provide easily understandable maps and text to inform riders and help everyone to form a useful opinion.

We also continue to have significant concerns about some of the changes. Frequent bus service is an important component of enabling people to travel to commercial centers by transit, and many workers and visitors depend on late-night bus service which would also see reductions under this proposal.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Alpert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "A".

David Alpert
Executive Director
DC Sustainable Transportation