



Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G

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**ANC 3/4G Resolution and Testimony on
WMATA's Proposed FY 2026 Budget
January 27, 2025**

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE:

1. On January 14, 2025, the Washington Area Transit Authority (WMATA) board authorized a public hearing on its proposed FY 2026 budget, with in-person and virtual public hearings beginning on February 3, 2025, and written comments due on February 10, 2025. WMATA's proposed budget of \$4.9 billion encompasses a wide array of initiatives, such as additional peak service on Red and Silver line trains, extended weekend hours, introducing an open payment fare-system, various capital program investments, and implementing the Better Bus Network Redesign (BBNR). Among these, ANC 3/4G has identified a specific provision that will particularly affect our constituents: WMATA's implementation of the Better Bus Network Redesign.
2. While ANC 3/4G appreciates WMATA's responsiveness to community feedback during the final redesign of the BBNR, we must express our serious concerns regarding its full implementation. In recent years, our community has experienced considerable reductions in bus service,

exemplified by the elimination of the E6 and L1 routes, alongside proposals for additional cuts. These issues have been formally addressed through ANC 3/4G's resolutions¹²³⁴ directed at WMATA, emphasizing our unwavering commitment to advocating for reliable and efficient bus service for our residents. The partial restoration of bus service cuts, particularly the reinstatement of the former E6 route through the new C83 line, has been transformative. This restoration allows residents in Hawthorne, Barnaby Woods, and Chevy Chase to regain direct access to MetroRail and essential medical services in Friendship Heights.

3. We believe our recommendations will assist WMATA in meeting its goal of providing "better bus" service for all Chevy Chase residents who rely on these vital transportation options. Tens of thousands of riders depend on these services to travel from their homes. In 2024, for example, Metrobus ridership for the E4 and M4 lines exceeded 40,000 and 11,000 passengers, respectively, according to WMATA's Metrobus ridership data portal⁵.

¹ ANC 3/4G Resolution Regarding WMATA's Proposed 2025 Better Bus Network on Proposed Changes to the E4, M4, L2 Routes and Reinstating the E6 Route (2024) ANC 3/4G. Available at: https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ANC-34G-Better-Bus-Resolution-SIGNED-6_24_24.pdf (Accessed: 25 January 2025).

² ANC 3/4G Resolution To Urge WMATA to Preserve Critical Bus Service for Chevy Chase (2024) ANC 3/4G. Available at: <https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-03-11-v.final-ANC-3-4G-Resolution-on-WMATA-FY25-Budget-Revised5.pdf> (Accessed: 25 January 2025).

³ ANC 3/4G WMATA FY24 Budget Comments (2023) ANC 3/4G . Available at: <https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-03-15-WMATA-FY24-Budget-Comments.pdf> (Accessed: 24 January 2025).

⁴ ANC 3/4G Resolution Regarding WMATA's Draft Visionary Better Bus Network - Proposed Changes to the M4 and E4 Routes and Reinstating the E6 Route (2023) ANC 3/4G. Available at: <https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023-05-25-v.final-WMATA-BBN-Resolution.pdf> (Accessed: 25 January 2025).

⁵ *Metrobus Ridership Summary* (no date) WMATA. Available at: <https://www.wmata.com/initiatives/ridership-portal/Metrobus-Ridership-Summary.cfm> (Accessed: 23 January 2025).

Better Bus Network Redesign

3. ANC 3/4G has identified several critical shortcomings in the BBNR plan that affect riders in Chevy Chase, DC, which we urge WMATA to fully consider and address prior to the full rollout of new service routes in the latter half of 2025.

- A. Knollwood Retirement Community (Knollwood). Located at 6200 Oregon Avenue, NW, Knollwood is a Continuous Care facility for seniors of all levels of mobility and currently houses 225 residents and 150 employees, many of whom do not drive and rely on public transportation. The BBNR has proposed the elimination of direct pick-up and drop-off service at Knollwood's main entrance, shifting instead to a stop on Oregon Avenue. This change is particularly concerning due to the steep grade of the property, which poses safety issues for elderly residents and staff who may have mobility challenges. Walking up and down the hill to reach the bus stop on Oregon Avenue is not only impractical but unsafe. Moreover, there is no proposed bus shelter at this new location, increasing exposure to the elements for vulnerable individuals. Knollwood management is committed to resolving any congestion issues to facilitate safe bus access, and we urge WMATA to reconsider this essential service change.
- B. Ingleside at Rock Creek (IRC) Retirement Community. Ingleside, located at 3050 Military Road NW, faces similar challenges with the proposed termination of direct Metrobus service to Friendship Heights. This change would require residents to walk three blocks, largely uphill, to the nearest Line C83 stop, which only operates every 30 minutes. Along with the removal of certain nearby bus stops, these changes will adversely affect older residents who would find it too onerous to use public transportation. Over 300 independent living residents, along with staff, contractors and private-duty aides, would also be adversely affected. Residents like Evvajean Mintz, 91, and Robert Marcus, 84, and Mark Eisner, 86, who voiced their concerns at ANC 3/4G's December 9, 2024,

regular public meeting⁶ about the hardships these changes impose, particularly regarding access to medical care and public transportation options that were previously available.

- C. Impact on Students, Schools, and Our Local Communities. The proposed changes also impact students and staff at Lafayette Elementary School, who will lose direct bus access to their neighborhood school located at 5701 Broad Branch Road, NW. Furthermore, the decision to limit service on Line C85 (rush hour only) and Line C83 to every 30 minutes, will adversely affect hundreds of students traveling to nearby schools, including Alice Deal Middle School and Jackson-Reed High School located at 3815 Fort Drive, NW, and 3950 Chesapeake St. NW, respectively, and scores of working adults who ride the M4 line to the Tenleytown-AU Metro stop, and from there, travel to and from downtown DC and throughout the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Timely access to transportation is crucial for students, and these proposed cutbacks raise significant concerns about their ability to arrive at school punctually.
- D. Requirement for In-person Office Work; Rush-hour Frequency Cutbacks and Route Elimination. On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued a memorandum⁷ "Return to In-Person Work," mandating "heads of all departments and agencies in the executive branch of Government" to "take all necessary steps to terminate remote work arrangements and require employees to return to work in-person...on a full-time basis..." This transition marks a significant shift as many employees who previously commuted via Metrobus to Friendship Heights or along Connecticut Avenue from Chevy Chase now face new challenges. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, employees took Metrobus to the Friendship Heights metro station, or rode down Connecticut Avenue from Chevy Chase to points

⁶ ANC 3/4G December 9, 2024 Regular Public Meeting (2024) YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu3Ae_X0dIQ&t=473s (Accessed: 24 January 2025). Time stamps 9:34 and 14:47.

⁷ *Return to in-person work* (2025) The White House. Available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/return-to-in-person-work/> (Accessed: 27 January 2025).

downtown and Potomac Park. The demand destruction for bus ridership resulting from the pandemic has left such employees with a paucity of rush-hour bus service to Friendship Heights and along Connecticut Avenue, at a time when many who have been working at home will shortly be required to commute to work. WMATA intends to eliminate or has already eliminated essential rush-hour frequencies on Line C83, crucial for students and professionals traveling down Connecticut Avenue; direct service to Potomac Park via Line L1 will require multiple transfers; and express services on Connecticut Avenue, skipping all stops between N Street and Porter Street, previously provided by the former Lines L1, L3, L5, L7, and L9. This situation presents WMATA with an opportunity to adapt to the evolving work environment. By enhancing transit options and reinstating critical services, WMATA can support the return to in-person work mandate, making the transition smoother for countless workers in our community and ensuring that the region can thrive in this new era.

Funding Challenges

4. ANC 3/4G understands addressing these service deficiencies will likely require additional funding. We are encouraged that WMATA is not proposing any additional Metrobus service changes beyond those already approved by WMATA's Board of Directors as part of the 2025 Better Bus Network Redesign (BBNR) process. However, we remain concerned about future funding challenges for bus service in the District of Columbia, especially considering WMATA's ongoing structural operating deficit⁸, which has been reduced but not eliminated. Factors such as inflation or funding constraints from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia could lead to service cuts in the future.
5. We support WMATA's decision to maintain current fare levels and its ongoing efforts to achieve cost savings. Additionally, ANC 3/4G is eager to collaborate with WMATA to ensure a budget for FY26 and beyond

⁸ *FY2026 operating budget discussion*. Available at: <https://www.wmata.com/about/news/upload/FY2026-Operating-Budget-Discussion.pdf> (Accessed: 24 January 2025).

that provides robust Metrobus service for all. Our resolution⁹ passed on November 25, 2024, suggests exploring potential revenue sources, including the collection of unpaid traffic citations, which totals approximately \$1.3 billion¹⁰. We urge WMATA to consider this recommendation as a means to fund necessary service improvements without diverting resources from essential public services like education, housing, or public safety.

6. ANC 3/4G again expresses deep gratitude to WMATA for considering community feedback in this redesign process. The preservation and restoration of bus service are vital to our community, and your actions have fostered greater public trust in WMATA's engagement with residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

7. ANC 3/4G urges WMATA to adjust its FY26 budget to correct the above-mentioned deficiencies prior to implementing its BBNR as proposed in 2025;
8. ANC 3/4G is including in its resolution community comments as submitted in its Public Comments Form (Personally Identifiable Information will be redacted); and
9. The Commission authorizes Commission Chair, Lisa R. Gore to submit this resolution as ANC 3/4G's written testimony on WMATA's FY26 proposed budget and use the same as verbal testimony.

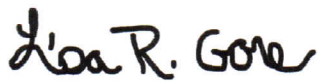
⁹ 2024 11 25 Resolution Recommending DC Council Increase WMATA Funding Through New Revenue for Improved Bus Service (no date) ANC 3/4G Documents and Resolutions Portal. Available at: <https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/3G-Resolution-Funding-Bus-Service-Increases-final54.pdf> (Accessed: 24 January 2025).

¹⁰ Dil, C. (2023) *Unpaid traffic tickets in D.C. stack up to nearly \$1.3 billion* - *axios Washington D.C.* Available at: <https://www.axios.com/local/washington-dc/2023/05/18/unpaid-dc-traffic-tickets> (Accessed: 24 January 2025).

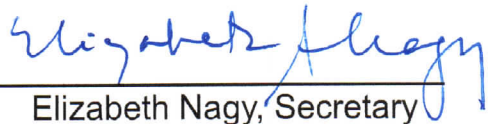
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

10. The Commission designates Commissioners Lisa R. Gore, ANC 3/4G-01, Bruce Sherman, 3/4G-02, and Carol Grunewald, ANC 3/4G-03 to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this resolution.

APPROVED at a regular public meeting notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of four (4) of seven (7) members was present on January 27, 2025, by a vote of 7 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions.



Lisa R. Gore, Chair



Elizabeth Nagy, Secretary