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May 19, 2021

Mr. Paul Wiedefeld
General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld:

The COVID-19 global pandemic has proven that the bus transportation network provided by the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) and the local jurisdictional bus system operators – such as Prince George’s County’s The Bus and Montgomery County’s RideOn – is a critical service for residents and workers in and around the National Capital region. While ridership has declined as a result of the pandemic, the bus network continued to provide a critical link to jobs, medical care, food outlets, and other necessary destinations. With this in mind, the current low ridership provides WMATA and the local bus operators with an opportunity to reimagine the region’s network of bus services to best fit the future needs of both the ridership and the bus system providers.

The Washington Suburban Transit Commission (WSTC) supports the concept of creating a more efficient regional bus system that optimizes the resources of the region’s multiple bus providers while improving service for the system’s ridership. This project moves forward one of the major goals of the Bus Transportation Project, a two-year effort completed by WMATA in 2020.

This will be a difficult, complex task with many moving parts. A redesign of the regional bus network must take into account changes in ridership levels and travel patterns made evident by the pandemic, as well as reflecting service equity for populations which rely on public transit. While great care must be taken to ensure that the newly redesigned bus system satisfies these varied needs, it also important to recognize that the project should be completed within a reasonable time period. A realistic project timeline should be developed and observed so as to not unnecessarily delay the end result. To accomplish this, it will be critical for the jurisdictions and local bus operators to be integrally involved in the project at all steps and, in the end, any recommended changes to the regional bus system should be made only upon their full consideration and agreement.

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The Washington Suburban Transit Commission looks forward to future updates as the Bus Network Redesign project continues through the development process. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Mr. Pat Pscherer, Jr., MDOT Washington Area Transit Office Director, at 410-807-6931 or ppscherer@mdot.maryland.gov. Mr. Pscherer will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



Thomas Graham
Chair



Hon. Tom Hucker
Vice Chair



Hon. Todd Turner
Secretary-Treasurer



Secretary Greg Slater
Commissioner



Michael Goldman
Commissioner



Donald Drummer
Commissioner

cc: Mr. Shyam Kannan, Vice President, Office of Planning, WMATA
Mr. Peter Cafiero, Managing Director, Intermodal Planning, WMATA
Ms. Allison Davis, Director, Strategic Planning, WMATA
Mr. Albert Himes, Assistant Director, Bus Service Planning and Scheduling, WMATA
Mr. Terry Bellamy, Director, Dept. of Public Works & Transportation, Prince George's Co.
Mr. Christopher Conklin, Director, Dept. of Transportation, Montgomery Co.
Mr. Pat Pscherer, Jr., Director, Washington Area Transit Office, MDOT