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May 25, 2023

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Vice President Davis and Managing Director Cafiero,

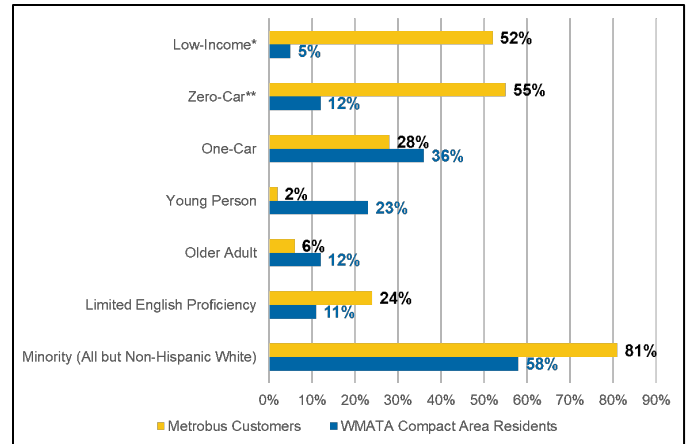
Thank you and your team for soliciting community feedback on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's Draft Visionary Bus Network. I am honored to present and endorse the attached recommendations from a task force of Ward 5 community leaders and residents. These recommendations are based on careful consideration of the Draft Visionary Network as frequent Metrobus riders in Ward 5, and include:

- 1. Ensure that Rhode Island Avenue has frequent and express service downtown;**
- 2. Ensure the Trinidad community does not lose service comparable to the D8;**
- 3. Introduce bus service to New York Avenue NE between Florida Avenue and Bladensburg Road;**
- 4. Adjust the routing of proposed route [DC103](#) through the Washington Hospital, Children's Hospital, and VA Hospital campus to improve transfers and service to Michigan Avenue residents;**
- 5. Restore service between Fort Lincoln and Colmar Manor;**
- 6. Invest in a bus transfer facility at Fort Lincoln;**
- 7. Reduce unnecessary stops at the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metro Station for the [DC302](#) and (if introduced) Rhode Island Avenue express service;**

- 8. Consider adjustments to the routing of buses through Union Market;
- 9. Ensure that downtown bus transfers are efficient; and,
- 10. Continue to coordinate with DDOT on bus priority in Ward 5 and other service enhancements.

I convened this task force to ensure that you had the benefit of detailed feedback from Ward 5 residents impacted by the changes WMATA has proposed. The members of the Task Force reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the Ward. I am delighted that they embraced the task of thinking about the Ward-wide needs of riders and drafting constructive recommendations for you to consider.

Improving the frequency and reliability of bus service in Ward 5 and across the District is my top transportation priority. Compared to residents of WMATA’s service area, Metrobus customers are particularly likely to be a person of color, low income, a non-English speaker, or carless. Riding the bus is one of the safest and cleanest ways for District residents to get around, and it is also accessible to most residents. I firmly believe that the District will only succeed in reaching its goals of eliminating traffic deaths and injuries or securing carbon neutrality if we build and fund a world-class bus system.



Bus Rider Demographics, Bus Transformation Project

I urge you to embrace the recommendations below from the Ward 5 Bus Network Task Force. I look forward to working with you, the WMATA Board, Mayor Bowser, and my Council colleagues to ensure that we invest more in bus service and bus priority in Ward 5. Please contact my Communications Director, Melissa Littlepage, at mlittlepage@dccouncil.gov and my Deputy Chief of Staff, Conor Shaw, at cshaw@dccouncil.gov regarding any questions about the attached recommendations.

Sincerely,

Zachary Parker
Ward 5 Councilmember

Ward 5 Bus Network Redesign Task Force

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on WMATA’s draft visionary network. We appreciate the care and thought went into this map. While our comments focus on adjustments that we hope your team will consider, **we wanted to note support for several elements of the visionary map, including the ideas to:**

- expand service on weekends and evenings—including 24-hour service on some lines and late-night service on many others;
- improve bus connections between the Fort Lincoln community and the SW Waterfront, the Deanwood Metro Station, and Chinatown;
- the restoration of service comparable to the G9 along Rhode Island Avenue in the form of the proposed [DC214](#) route; and
- the introduction of a continuous route along South Dakota Avenue between Fort Lincoln and Michigan Park in the form of the proposed [DC207](#) route.

We know that these and other service improvements are contingent on an expansion of funding, and we look forward to advocating for that outcome. The Ward 5 Bus Network Task Force offers the following comments on WMATA’s draft visionary network:

1. Ensure that Rhode Island Avenue has frequent and express service downtown.

Frequent and reliable bus service on Rhode Island Avenue is a top priority for Ward 5 residents. Before the pandemic, WMATA recognized that need by introducing the G9 MetroExtra service in 2017, which provided limited stop continuous service between Eastern Avenue and Franklin Square.

The task force embraces WMATA’s [proposed DC214 service](#),¹ which would establish service similar to the G9 on 24/7 basis. Restoring and expanding service comparable to the G9 would represent an enormous improvement to the bus network in Ward 5.

We encourage WMATA to **consider making DC214 a higher-frequency service, adding an express companion route, or extending another medium frequency Maryland route ([MD249](#) or [MD250](#)) west of Rhode Island Avenue Metro Station** to reduce headways and trip times for folks traveling on the corridor. The task force supports efforts to consolidate stops along Rhode Island Avenue to speed up service and—if express service is reintroduced—skipping the bus turnaround at Washington Place NE.

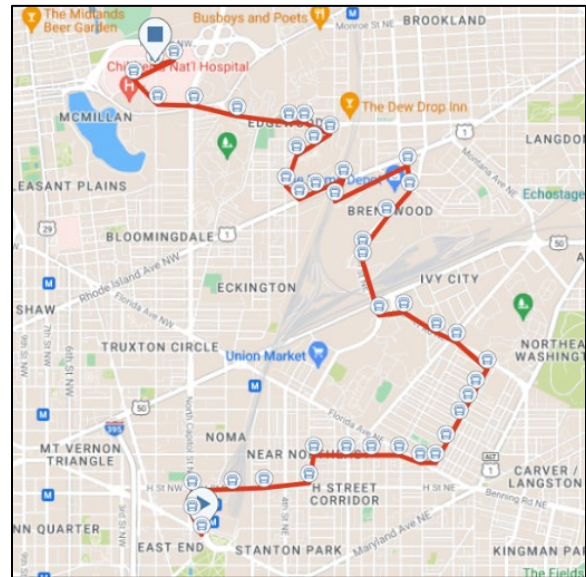


Map of former G9 MetroExtra Route

¹ The route numbers used in the draft Visionary Network are for identification purposes only.

2. Ensure the Trinidad community does not lose service comparable to the D8.

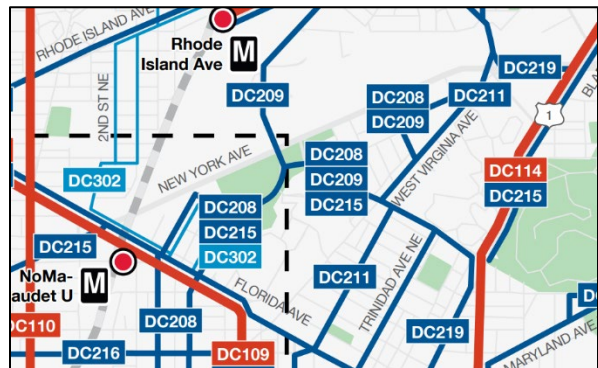
The task force encourages WMATA to ensure that proposed service changes in Trinidad do not reduce service to the neighborhood. The Trinidad community appears to suffer a cut to both coverage and frequency in the draft visionary network. Currently, two lines serve along Montello & Trinidad Avenues (D4 and D8), and the D8 is a high frequency route. However, in the draft Visionary Network, only one line is proposed ([DC211](#)), and it has shortcomings: it is not a high frequency route and, unlike the D8, does not connect Trinidad residents to grocery stores on H Street NE and at Rhode Island Place. Two other proposed routes that WMATA bills as providing similar service to the D8 ([DC208](#) and [DC209](#)) are not routed through the neighborhood.



Map of current D8 MetroBus Route

3. Introduce bus service to New York Avenue NE between Florida Avenue and Bladensburg Road.

New York Avenue is a corridor that deserves bus service, and the task force is excited that the draft Visionary Network proposes the [DC215](#) route along the corridor between 6th Street NW and Florida Avenue NE. We strongly encourage WMATA to **introduce bus service on New York Avenue between Florida Avenue and Bladensburg Road**, which would be consistent with the District Office of Planning’s [draft New York Avenue NE Vision Framework](#). We understand that congestion on this corridor is a stretch; however, the congestion on the NE portion of New York Avenue is not materially different from congestion on the NW segment of New York Avenue. In both cases, the solution is not to deprive residents of bus service but rather to work with DDOT to ensure that buses are given the priority they deserve.



Draft Visionary Network – NY Ave. NE Corridor

Introducing bus service to New York Avenue NE would advance critical equity interests. The District uses hotels on this stretch of the corridor to house people facing housing insecurity—including undocumented migrants. These individuals and families are exceedingly unlikely to have access to other transportation options, and without bus service, they have no way to access critical amenities, many of which are not within walking distance.

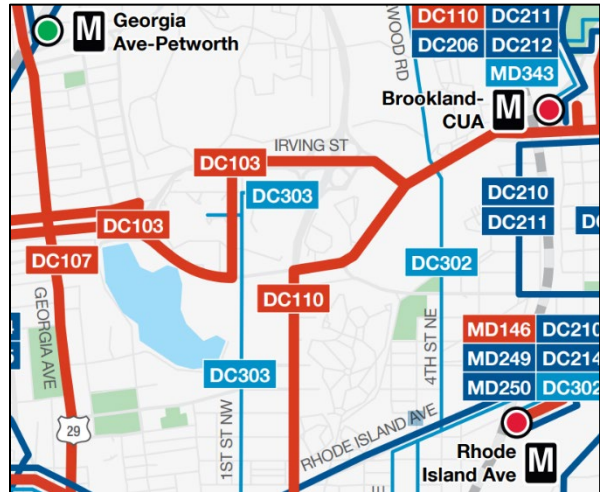
One option WMATA should consider is **routing the DC 215 along New York Avenue to 4th Street NE**, then on Penn Street NE along the top of Union Market, then along Brentwood Parkway and Mount Olivet Road NE, **back to New York Avenue, then along New York Avenue to Bladensburg Road.**

4. Adjust the routing of proposed route DC103 through the Washington Hospital, Children’s Hospital, and VA Hospital campus to improve transfers and service to Michigan Avenue residents.

The task force appreciates WMATA’s proposal to route the DC103 through the hospital complex between Irving Street and Michigan Avenue NW, which would provide employees and patients with 24/7 high-frequency service directly to all three hospitals.

Nonetheless, we ask WMATA to **consider flipping the routing of the DC103 through the hospital complex**. If the DC103 approached the hospital complex along Michigan Avenue from the east and along Irving Street from the west, the residents along Michigan Avenue would enjoy much better access to this route.

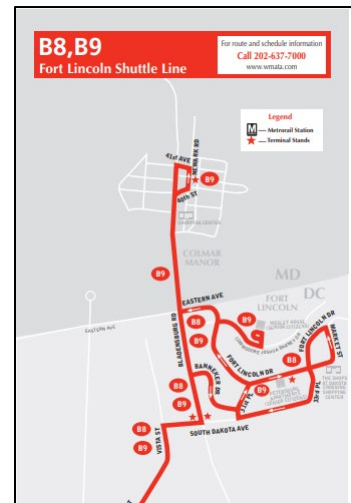
Transfers from the DC110 route would also occur sooner, which would shorten trips for many. There are no residents on Irving Street or Michigan Avenue who would lose access to the DC103 under this proposal; however, pedestrian access to Children’s Hospital from 1st Street NW would likely need to be improved to accommodate this shift.



Draft Visionary Network – Crosstown Corridor

5. Restore service between Fort Lincoln and Colmar Manor.

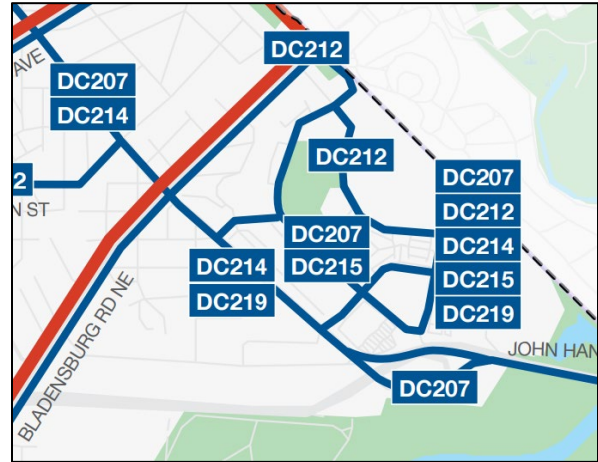
In March 2020, WMATA eliminated the B8 and B9 bus routes that provided critical service between the District community of Fort Lincoln and the Maryland community of Colmar Manor. While this pandemic-era service adjustment was understandable, it should not be sustained in the draft Visionary Network. **Fort Lincoln is home to a large number of seniors who lack alternative transportation options and who depended on the B8 and B9 routes for access to affordable grocery and other retail options in Colmar Manor.** While we appreciate the many service improvements proposed for Fort Lincoln, we encourage WMATA to restore the service gap created when the B8 and B9 were suspended.



Map of former B8/9 MetroBus Routes

6. Invest in a bus transfer facility at Fort Lincoln.

If the draft Visionary Network is implemented, the Fort Lincoln community stands to be an important hub for five medium-frequency routes. We encourage WMATA to **plan for a bus transfer facility in the community** to ensure that transfers between these routes are easy and to provide a single location where riders can access all of the routes that serve the community. Finally, as noted below, we recommend that WMATA pursue bus priority projects in Fort Lincoln to ensure that the proposed bus service is not impacted by congestion there.

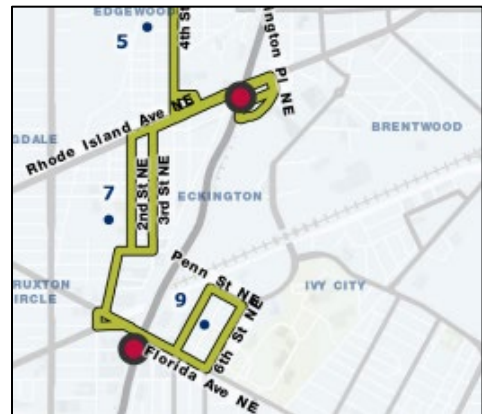


Draft Visionary Network – Fort Lincoln

7. Reduce unnecessary stops at the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metro Station for the DC302 and (if introduced) Rhode Island Avenue express service.

We encourage WMATA to consider eliminating the Rhode Island Avenue/Brentwood NE stop on the proposed DC302 route because of the substantial delays that stop would entail. (If WMATA reintroduces express service on Rhode Island Avenue, we also recommend skipping the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metro Station.)

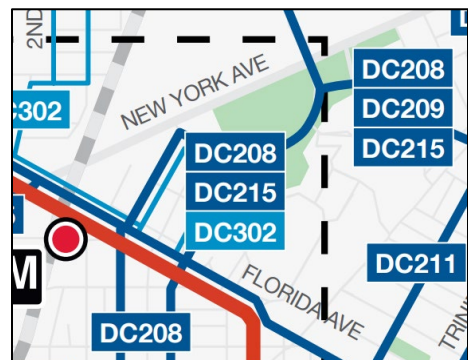
The task force also suggests extending the terminus of the DC302 to Ivy City or Trinidad to further improve bus connections between Ward 5 communities.



Draft Visionary Network Route DC302

8. Consider adjustments to the routing of buses through Union Market.

The task force also has concerns about the proposal in the draft Visionary Network to route the DC208, DC215, and DC302 through Union Market on 4th Street NE. Adding more service to this thriving neighborhood and retail destination is important; however, the routing of buses on 4th Street NE seems particularly likely to expose bus riders to substantial delays. We encourage WMATA to work with DDOT on bus priority improvements if these routes are implemented or to consider alternatives, such as routing buses exclusively on 6th Street between Brentwood Parkway and Florida Avenue or routing the DC215 on New York Avenue instead of 4th Street NE.



Draft Visionary Network – Union Market

9. Ensure that downtown bus transfers are efficient.

If the draft Visionary Network is adopted, downtown bus connections will be critical to ensuring that Ward 5 bus riders have efficient access to important amenities like the Kennedy Center via [DC216](#), GW Hospital via [DC101](#) or DC216, and Arena Stage via [DC107](#). As WMATA refines its Visionary Network, we want to ensure that transfers of riders of the proposed [DC110](#), [DC215](#), and [DC216](#) routes would experience efficient transfers to other parts of the network.

10. Continue to coordinate with DDOT on bus priority in Ward 5 and other service enhancements.

Finally, the task force urges WMATA and DDOT to continue coordinating on efforts to give bus service greater priority on District streets throughout Ward 5 to ensure that the promise of bus network adjustments is realized. The group noted numerous choke points where bus riders currently experience or will experience substantial delays because there is currently no bus priority:

- Florida Avenue NE/NW
- North Capitol Street between E Street and Michigan Avenue
- Michigan Avenue between 1st Street NW and Monroe Street NE
- The entrance to the Rhode Island Avenue-Brentwood Metro Station Bus Depot
- 33rd Place and South Dakota Avenue NE
- New York Avenue NE/NW

We similarly support efforts to **install more bus shelters across Ward 5 and eliminate the bus to rail transfer penalty**, which disproportionately impacts Ward 5 residents who do not live near the Red Line.

Thank you again for the thoughtful work in a needed redesign of WMATA’s Bus Network. As Ward 5 neighbors, bus riders, and advocates, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide comprehensive feedback on the visionary draft. We look forward to the next iteration and the improvements ahead.

Signed,

Members of the Ward 5 Bus Network Task Force, convened by Councilmember Parker

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*Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of Ward 5 Councilmember Parker*

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Geoffrey Hatchard, Trinidad

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