

September 8, 2020

Paul J. Wiedefeld, General Manager and CEO  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
600 5<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

RE: City of Alexandria's proposed mitigation for Arlington Cemetery shutdown.

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld,

As Alexandria experienced significant impacts from the WMATA Platform Improvement Project with all four of our stations closed last summer, City Council appreciates the opportunity to provide formal input on how WMATA should be mitigating impacts to our customers during the planned spring 2021 shutdown of the Arlington Cemetery station.

The City understands WMATA has planned this shutdown for when ridership will be lower than prior years due to COVID. However, we anticipate it may also coincide with a time in which more workers will be returning to offices and WMATA will be shifting to more normal service levels. We therefore urge that WMATA be very careful in how this shutdown is handled to not result in a greater long-term loss of ridership. We also understand WMATA has allocated a portion of the project budget for mitigation – though the plan has not been finalized – and this will have no budgetary impact to the City.

WMATA and the City have discussed WMATA's proposed mitigation for improved rail service with the Blue Line operating over the Yellow Line Bridge to maintain frequencies of service at our stations, resulting in an increase in an average travel times of 4-12 minutes. We have also explored bus options – an express option from an Alexandria station to Rosslyn, a more traditional Pentagon to Rosslyn shuttle, and increased service on existing routes. WMATA staff have provided thorough ridership and travel time data to help us weigh the pros and cons of different options.

Given the lack of significant travel time benefit for most riders for a shuttle or increased regular bus service, at this time we believe WMATA's proposal for an enhanced rail-only solution is the most reasonable, and likely the most attractive option for the vast majority of our riders. While this is the City's current position on mitigation, we reserve the right to request additional measures if conditions change or this proves inadequate.

The City of Alexandria is a strong supporter of WMATA efficiently addressing its deferred maintenance backlog to improve safety and address customer experience needs at the same time. We are very pleased to be seeing WMATA adjust its capital program in the context of COVID to reduce impacts to passengers as it makes these much-needed improvements.

We thank you for the opportunity to help ensure that our riders have access to appropriate alternatives during this planned closure.

Sincerely,

Justin M. Wilson, Mayor  
City of Alexandria, VA