

Use of Public Transportation Designated Transit Stops by Private and Non-Local Public Transit Providers

*Discussion Paper for the TPB Regional Bus Subcommittee
September 23, 2008*

“Private and Non-Local Public Transit Providers” consists of shuttles, commuter services and any other Transit service provider not sponsored or funded by the local jurisdiction.

WMATA staff presented to the WMATA Board Finance, Administration and Oversight Committee on July 10, 2008 a proposal: Use of Bus Bays at Metrorail Stations by Non-WMATA Operators to delegate authority to the General Manager regulation “of the use of WMATA bus bays by private transportation providers including:

1. Establishing a fee schedule and appropriate insurance requirements;
2. Maintaining the priority list from Resolution 86-02 (1st Metrobus, 2nd compact jurisdictions, 3rd public agencies, 4th private)”; and
3. Restricting use of bus bays due to safety, congestion and size.

WMATA policy, adopted on January 9, 1986, disallows fees to be charged for use of bus bays to transit providers including who are not members of the WMATA compact. The WMATA staff proposal would allow the General Manager to set fees for non-public transit carriers.

Relevance of WMATA Metrorail Bus Bay Proposal to Local Jurisdictions:

Demand is growing for use of bus stops in local jurisdictions by private shuttles from Metrorail stations and other locations as well as non-local public transit services and bus pools originating from outlying jurisdictions. This demand accrues both from rising commuting costs as well as the increasing concentration of major employment sites and retail attractions near Metrorail stations that do not have bus bays, bus-only transit centers, and major bus transfer points. An added complication is transit congestions at several Metrorail stations that do have bus bays – forcing some transit providers to use local stops one or more blocks away from the metrorail station entrance. Emulation of the WMATA Metrorail proposal would assist those local jurisdictions to safely accommodate new stop requests without impacting traffic flow and use of transit stops by locally-sponsored transit services. To minimize the impact of bus services on local traffic flow, commuters should be encouraged to use local transit services through the regional fare transfer policy.

Local Advantages to Allowing Use of Transit Stops to Private and Non-Local Public Transit Providers

- Enable convenient and accessible transit options which would result in more people travelling to and throughout the jurisdiction without an increase in single occupancy vehicles
- Achieve improved control of the local jurisdiction’s limited curb space

- Further the jurisdiction’s environmental and congestion initiatives by providing additional and more convenient transit options
- Implementing a permitting process would result in fee-collection which could be used to provide bus stop amenities, assist in funding local transit services or at least offset any associated expenses in monitoring bus activity.

Proposal:

1. Encourage use of local transit stops by outside providers at Metrorail stations and transit centers serving as significant peak period destination points or outlying Metrorail transfer points to facilitate ease of transfer to final destinations via Metrorail or Metrobus or the local transit system. Using Arlington County, as an example, this would include the Metrorail stations at the Pentagon, Pentagon City, Crystal City, Rosslyn and Ballston as well as the Shirlington Transit Center. The outlying Metrorail transfer point in Arlington is East Falls Church Metro.
 - a. Prioritize the proximity of transit stops at these locations in the following order:
 - i. Metrobus and the Public Transit Service of the local jurisdiction
 - ii. Public Transit Services of Other Compact Jurisdictions
 - iii. Public Transit services of Non-Compact Jurisdictions
 - iv. Other transit services.
 - b. Require Outside providers to apply for use of local jurisdiction curb space to include submittal of the following information:
 - i. Preferred Intersection(s) or specific building destination of the stop (in each direction)
 - ii. Approximate times that the stop would be served
 - iii. Number of months required for the new service to achieve a minimum goal of 25 boardings or alightings for the day – with a limit of 12 months to achieve the goal
 - iv. Maximum length of the bus providing the service
 - v. Distance from the front bumper to the far end of the rear passenger door on the largest bus to be used (in case the bus stop has a nub into the street)
 - vi. Proof that the service meets the minimum insurance requirements of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission
 - vii. An example of the signage to be used (provided by the applicant)
 - viii. Contact information in case of emergency
 - ix. Contact information for the purposes of developing and monitoring a formal agreement.
 - c. Designate stop locations in accordance with:
 - i. Local policies for curb space management
 - ii. Traffic flow considerations on the streets to be used

- iii. Local policies regarding maximum number of buses per hour by stop, with reference to short-term transit development plans for improved local transit service
 - iv. Absence of a layover at that stop for any bus route serving the stop
 - v. Length of the stop in comparison with the largest bus to serve the stop
 - d. Develop an annual fee schedule weighted by frequency of service and passenger demand. The fee would be used to:
 - i. Amortize the cost of passenger amenities for stops primarily used for boarding purposes to include a shelter, should the stop meet qualifying standards, including ancillary amenities such as heating or lighting and participation in electronic bus stop information.
 - ii. Cover the added administrative burden of the permitting process and monitoring outside bus operations
 - iii. This fee would not be chargeable to Metrobus or the local jurisdiction's transit service and could be waived through a reciprocity agreement.
- 2. The local jurisdiction, after research, may designate use of transit stops at less significant destination point in two situations:
 - a. If the applicant desires the alternate stop and the expected boardings and alightings per trip exceed the minimum standard by 50% or
 - b. Where use of current transit stops by the desired significant destination point is at capacity.
- 3. Public transportation services from other than Metrobus or the local jurisdiction would be forbidden from providing rides exclusively within the boundaries of the local jurisdiction.
- 4. This policy would not apply to bus bays at Metrorail stations.