

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 24, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO#66: STATUS OF WMATA ROUTE 7B

This is in response to a question raised by Councilman Krupicka, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Smedberg regarding WMATA's proposed cancellation of Metrobus route 7B.

Route 7B is a bus route operated by WMATA that starts at Seminary Towers, and travels via Seminary Road, Beauregard Street, Braddock Road, North Hampton Drive, King Street, and I-395 to get to the Pentagon. Route 7B is a peak hour only route which has five trips in the morning and five trips in the evening approximately 35 minutes apart. It does provide very fast transit access from its service area to the Pentagon, traveling from North Hampton and Hunton Place to the Pentagon in approximately 13 to 15 minutes. Since ridership for the route is not high (approximately 154 daily), a proposal was developed that substitutes revised Routes 25A and 25C service for Route 7B.

Proposed Route 25A would operate from Ballston to the Pentagon through a number of roadways to Seminary Road, Fillmore Avenue, Beauregard Street, Braddock Road, Van Dorn Street, Menokin Drive, King Street service roadway (Bradlee Center), Dearing Street, South Wakefield Street, 34th Street, South Utah Street, 36th Street, South Stafford Street, 32nd Street Quaker Lane, Shirlington Road, Shirlington Rotary, I-395, or the HOV Lanes to Pentagon and return. This service would operate all day on weekdays and on Saturday and Sunday. Proposed Route 25C would start at the current 7C and 7P terminal at Park Center and operate via Park Center Drive, Ford Avenue, North Hampton Drive, Braddock Road, Van Dorn Street, Menokin Drive, 34th Street, South Utah Street, 36th Street, South Stafford Street, 32nd Road, Quaker Lane, Shirlington Rotary and I-395 HOV Lanes to the Pentagon. This is a weekday peak hour only service. The proposal provides more frequent service (buses every 10 to 15 minutes) than is currently provided in the area it serves, but the trips would take longer to reach their destination (4 to 7 minutes according to WMATA estimates).

On March 22, 2007, WMATA held a public hearing and proposed that Routes 25A and 25C substitute for the existing Route 7B. Approximately 18 citizens came to the public hearing, all indicating their opposition to this proposal. Their contention is that the change would lengthen their trips by at least 20 minutes, and they found this to be unacceptable. Further, the Mayor's Office received 22 e-mails from neighbors and users of Route 7B, only one in favor of the proposal. In light of the comments the City and WMATA have received about Route 7B, a WMATA has decided through their service review and adjustment process not to implement the changes as proposed in June, and cancel changes in this route indefinitely, until a better service plan can be developed.

In order to get a better idea of the needs of the communities near Route 7B , WMATA and the City will hold a public meeting in late April, in order that a service plan can be developed that better meets the needs of the community. One of the factors that will be considered is the opening of two large condominium complexes along the route in the near future.

The changes as originally proposed would have provided the City with a reduction in its WMATA subsidy of approximately \$100,000 from what is estimated in the FY 2008 proposed budget. Since a new plan is under development, it is premature to revise the City's budget at this time.