



Chairman

Hon. Paul C. Smedberg

October 22, 2018

Vice Chairman

Hon. Matthew F. Letourneau

Ms. Jennifer Ellison

Board Corporate Secretary

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

600 Fifth Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20001

Secretary/Treasurer

Hon. Katie Cristol

City of Alexandria

Hon. Timothy B. Lovain

Hon. Paul C. Smedberg

Re: Comments on Parking Programs (Docket B18-05)

Dear Ms. Ellison:

Arlington County

Hon. Katie Cristol

Hon. Christian Dorsey

Hon. Libby Garvey

I submit this letter to you as part of WMATA's public comment period on parking programs (Docket B18-05). The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) appreciates WMATA's efforts to optimize revenue sources in order to keep operating subsidy increases within the 3 percent cap as required by recently-passed transit funding legislation. At meetings of our newly created Interim WMATA Committee and our Commission, we have reviewed publicly available material provided by WMATA on the Parking Programs and wish to convey our comments.

Fairfax County

Hon. Sharon Bulova

Hon. John C. Cook

Hon. John W. Foust

Hon. Catherine M. Hudgins

Hon. Jeffrey C. McKay

NVTC supports WMATA's general efforts to generate revenue through paid parking, including additional weekday hours of revenue collection. While the Commission has concerns about charging for weekend parking, we support the application of weekend parking fees for special events.

City of Fairfax

Hon. David Meyer

City of Falls Church

Hon. David F. Snyder

NVTC also supports the concept of lowering weekday parking fees at stations with low ridership and parking utilization. However, the Commission recognizes that this may draw away existing transit riders rather than attract new riders and we acknowledge the need for additional analysis to illustrate the potential revenue and ridership tradeoffs.

Loudoun County

Hon. Matthew F. Letourneau

Hon. Ron A. Meyer

NVTC recognizes that there are ongoing revenue and budgetary implications related to WMATA's parking programs. We question whether charging fees for parking on weekends, in light of existing weekend rail service and parking fees, would negatively impact fare and parking-fee revenues due to a potential loss in ridership. We support additional research and analysis before any policy decisions are made.

Commonwealth of Virginia

Mr. Jim Corcoran

Virginia General Assembly

Senate

Sen. Adam Ebbin

Sen. Jennifer Wexton

House of Delegates

Del. David LaRock

Hon. James M. LeMunyon

Mr. M. David Skiles

Mr. Raul "Danny" Vargas

Through additional consultation with our jurisdictions, NVTC has identified the potential for disparate parking policies along existing and planned Silver Line Metrorail stations with parking facilities. At the Wiehle-Reston East Station, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has the authority to set parking policies. For planned stations to the west, the Loudoun County and Fairfax County Boards of Supervisors will have the authority to set parking policies at stations in their jurisdictions. To avoid any unintended consequences, NVTC encourages WMATA to coordinate parking policy decisions with Loudoun and Fairfax counties.

Executive Director

Katherine A. Mattice

Non-Rider Fee

While not part of the compact public hearing docket, NVTC has additional comments regarding the non-rider fee that were generated while discussing the parking programs. The Commission recognizes the non-rider fee is a tool to generate additional parking revenue while prioritizing transit riders as users of the facilities. At present, Metrorail riders pay the regular parking fee, while other transit riders, with the exception of recently exempted VRE and MARC riders, pay the higher non-rider fee.

It is our understanding that WMATA has agreed to exempt Metrobus riders from the non-rider fee so that those riders would pay the regular fee should they park at a WMATA parking facility and ride Metrobus. Given the diversity of transit service providers in Northern Virginia, NVTC supports this direction and asks WMATA to extend this exemption to relevant local transit providers that utilize SmarTrip. NVTC is willing to engage with WMATA and local transit providers to further explore this concept.

NVTC would like to express its gratitude for finding a solution where VRE riders can pay the regular parking fee and park at the Franconia-Springfield station. Over the last 30 years, transit options in Northern Virginia have grown in diversity and complexity, and the Commission appreciates the resolution of the unintended consequences borne by VRE riders that resulted from the extension of the non-rider fee at this station.

Lastly, noting our concerns with implementation of the non-rider fee and in accordance with NVTC's regional goal of improving access and mobility throughout Northern Virginia by connecting the regional and local transit systems, we ask that you coordinate with us before considering extending the non-rider fee to additional stations in Northern Virginia to avoid any additional unintended consequences.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to a WMATA Board decision on parking programs in the fall so that WMATA can provide riders and funding partners with stability and certainty regarding parking policies and their relevant impacts.

Best regards,



Paul C. Smedberg
Chairman