



City of Alexandria, Virginia
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Justin M. Wilson
Mayor

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March 24, 2022

Paul J. Wiedefeld, General Manager and CEO
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Closures related to the Potomac Yard Station and the Yellow Line Tunnel and Bridge Rehab

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld,

Let me first congratulate you on your recent retirement announcement. We have appreciated your leadership of WMATA during a uniquely challenging period in the history of our region's transit system.

We are also appreciative of the dedicated work of your staff and contractors to make the region's transit system safe and effective, which has been made even more difficult during the pandemic.

We are excited about the planned cutover to begin service on the Potomac Yard Metrorail station. The opening of this station is the culmination of a long partnership between the City and WMATA to see this project to completion.

However, I would like to share our feedback on the recently announced Metrorail closures related to WMATA's planned capital improvements, specifically those impacting the Yellow Line Tunnel and Bridge. In 2021, WMATA informed Alexandria that the Yellow Line bridge closure would last 3 to 4 months and that some tunnel work would be involved. The recent announcement that this closure will last at least twice as long, is disappointing to say the least.

Alexandria spent most of 2019 disconnected from the Metrorail system during the Platform Improvement work. Now, as a bookend to the receding pandemic, this service interruption will significantly hamper our ability to return to a new normal. Even with telework, we know safe, frequent, and reliable transit is critical to our economy. These types of closures, and the resulting inconveniences, make it extremely difficult to convince riders to use Metrorail.

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The last year has already been challenging with the ongoing impacts to Metrorail's 7000 series rolling stock and resulting higher headways. We must work as partners to ensure that Alexandria's residents do not lose faith in our region's transit system.

Applying the lessons from 2019, we believe proper mitigation for the loss of the Yellow Line Bridge and Tunnel requires:

- Metro must commit to running Blue Line service at the highest possible frequency, despite bottlenecks elsewhere in the system.
- The measures outlined by the General Manager at the March 24, 2022 Board Meeting to improve frequency, capacity, and reliability of Metrorail service while investigation into 7000 series cars continues must be in place prior to commencing this work.
- The City will expect a **robust** bus mitigation plan that includes additional frequency on local bus routes, express options, shuttles, and the restoration of pre-pandemic WMATA bus routes that remain suspended.

We invite your senior leadership to attend a future City Council legislative meeting to outline the plan prior to finalizing it. Please work with Yon Lambert, Director, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services at 703.746.4025 to schedule a suitable time in May.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. We look forward to working with your team to develop a plan in advance of this summer. Alexandrians cannot return to work without the high-quality transit the rest of the region enjoys, and the City helps to fund.

I look forward to discussing our concerns and welcoming your team to a legislative meeting this spring.

Sincerely,



Justin M. Wilson
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Members of City Council
James F. Parajon, City Manager
Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager
Yon Lambert, Director, Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Paul Smedberg, Chair of WMATA Board of Directors