



## Fund Metro!

Our groups support world-class transit and agree that funding WMATA (Metro) should be our region's #1 transportation funding priority but not at the expense of other transit. Virginia, Maryland, and DC should put ALL transit and green, sustainable transportation first, and shift funds from highway expansion to transit.

### Metro's benefits to our region include:

1. Shaping a more sustainable region through walkable, bikeable, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities and reducing greenhouse gas emissions – households in walkable, transit-rich areas of our region generate 1/3 to 1/2 the climate pollution from transportation compared to those in sprawling areas with limited transit.<sup>1</sup>
2. Affordable access to jobs and opportunity – within the Metro Compact Area, the land within 1/2 mile of the system's Metrorail stations and Metrobus stops contains 60% of the region's population, 70% of jobs, and 50% of businesses.<sup>2</sup>
3. An effective alternative to sitting in traffic that benefits everyone by reducing congestion.<sup>3</sup>
4. An essential service underpinning a competitive and growing economy – attracting companies and the next-generation workforce. The DC area ranks #3 nationally in walkable urban places, which deliver outsized economic performance and are supported by the Metrorail system.<sup>4</sup> Within Maryland, the 28 Metro stations across 6 corridors in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties are key components of the counties' economic development strategies. In Virginia, Amazon cited Metro as a key factor in their decision to locate in Arlington.
5. An important contributor to tax revenue – Metrorail station areas are only 3% of the region's land area, but contribute 30% of its property tax revenue. Metro generates \$1 billion in tax revenue to the Commonwealth of Virginia, 5% of the state's general fund, and \$1.60 for every \$1 invested by the state.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coalition for Smarter Growth analysis using data from the [Center for Neighborhood Technology. Housing + Transportation Index](#) based on geographic areas in the COG HCT Station Areas [map tool](#) October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> WMATA, Future Financial Planning FY2025-2035, Finance and Capital Committee presentation, June 22, 2023, slide 5.

<sup>3</sup> Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, [Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth](#), June 2023 report. Without transit in Northern Virginia, there would be almost 300K more car trips and 64% more delay due to congestion.

<sup>4</sup> Smart Growth America/George Washington University, [Foot Traffic Ahead](#), 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, [Value of Northern Virginia Transit to the Commonwealth](#), June 2023 report. Similar data is not available at this time for Maryland and DC.

6. Lower combined housing and transportation costs, particularly when combined with affordable housing – Washington metro area commuters can save over \$13,000 per year by using transit instead of driving.<sup>6</sup>
7. Reduced consumption of land, saving farms and forests, and leaving room for parks and protected stream corridors.

### **Failure cannot be an option:**

Failure to address the \$750 million annual operating budget gap cannot be an option. It would lead to a 60% cut in service.<sup>7</sup> Trains would run only every 20 to 30 minutes, with no service past 9:00pm. It would lead to a transit death spiral, as reductions in service cause riders to desert Metro and other transit services, and fare revenue plummets.

### **We support:**

1. Frequent, reliable, affordable transit service and all-day, seven-day-a-week service to make transit the mode of choice and enable car-light and car-free living. High-frequency service should be every 5 minutes or better for Metrorail, and every 10 minutes or better for buses, bus rapid transit and light-rail.
2. At a minimum, the region must maintain existing frequent service levels which have been key to Metro's recovery since the pandemic, with significant rebounds off-peak and on weekends.
3. Metrobus and local bus network redesign to support faster, more frequent and reliable service.
4. Accelerated conversion of road lanes to dedicated transit lanes which speed buses, save operating costs, and increase ridership.
5. Inclusive transit-oriented development as the most sustainable way for our region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

### **We urge regional elected officials to:**

1. Outline an agreement ahead of the start of the 2024 legislative sessions to:
  - a. Combine Metro's identified cost savings with additional funding necessary to close the \$750 million operating gap in both FY25 and FY26; and
  - b. Reach the necessary three-state legislative/executive agreement on funding by April 2024.
2. Eliminate the shift of capital funds to operating needs by providing the public funding it will take to close the gap.
3. Solve the long-term dedicated funding challenge once and for all and do so by the end of calendar year 2024 to allow for legislative action in the 2025 sessions.
4. Standardize WMATA's reporting to the three states, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, and Federal government on finances, operations, maintenance, and safety

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<sup>6</sup> American Public Transit Association, *Transit Savings Grow*, Sept. 2023.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wmata.com/about/board/meetings/board-pdfs/upload/3A-FY2025-Service-Fares-and-Capital-Planning-Update-vF.pdf>

to provide more transparent and accessible reporting and reduce the administrative burden on all parties.

5. Analyze options to improve efficiency including dedicated bus lanes, consolidated bus purchases, and consolidating bus operators.
6. Identify all options for dedicated funding, including land value (“split-rate”) taxation for transit-oriented development areas.
7. Continue Metro’s progress in improving safety, preventative maintenance, operations, cost controls, financial reporting, and communications with decision-makers and the public.
8. Ensure that people with the greatest need for nearby access to transit are provided with frequent, reliable, safe, and affordable transit.