

# TRANSIT FIRST!

*Coalition members: Action Committee for Transit, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689, Audubon Naturalist, Society, CASA de Maryland, Clean Water Action, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Crofton First, Greater Greater Washington, MCGEO — UFCW Local 1994, Prince George's Advocates for Community-based Transit, Progressive Maryland, Save Maryland Area Rail Transit*

January 7, 2010

**Contact:** Dennis Jaffe  
T 202 905-1153

Cheryl Cort  
Coalition for Smarter Growth  
T 202-244-4408 x 112

## **Transit First! statement on FY10 Metro budget decisions: Transit coalition calls for public input and preserving service and frequency**

We recognize that WMATA board members and member jurisdictions face difficult decisions about how to close the nearly \$40 million deficit for the WMATA FY10 operating budget. Such significant decisions, however, should not be made without input from the public. We have requested that the WMATA Board convene a public hearing next week before making a decision about service cuts. A public hearing will not create undue delay in implementing cost saving measures.

We believe that the WMATA board needs to consider a broader set of alternatives to meet the \$40 million budget shortfall. Reducing our core bus and rail transit will only undermine the fragile economic recovery and send us back into a deeper recession.

We recommend that the board hold to the principles of (1) preserving peak period capacity and (2) off-peak frequency as the agency makes adjustments to cover the deficit. In particular, we are opposed to the following proposed actions:

- Increasing headways from 20 to 30 minutes after 9:30 pm on Orange, Blue, Yellow & Green lines; and 15 to 20 minutes on Red line.
- Reducing 8-car trains to 6-car trains during rush hour.
- Cutting bus service that will leave many riders waiting long periods in the cold and rain.

We accept the following cost savings measures:

- Closing of select low-use mezzanines on weekends – provided they are reopened as soon as funding is available.
- Shift of some capital maintenance funds to operating funding provided that the jurisdictions commit to repaying the money over the next two year by (a) implementing bus priority treatments on Bus Priority Corridors to achieve cost savings and improved service (b) repay the remainder in cash.

The Metro Board members should call on the JCC and state and local governments to ensure bus priority treatments such as dedicated bus lanes, queue jumpers, and signal priority are implemented.

We ask that the Metro Board members publicly ask their state and local government for the other additional funds to bridge the FY10 operating budget gap, along with exploring federal sources.