

DELEGATE C. WILLIAM FRICK
16th Legislative District
Montgomery County

Ways and Means Committee
Education Subcommittee
Revenues Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

December 19, 2008

John Catoe
General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Catoe:

I was dismayed to learn recently that WMATA is currently choosing not to provide Google with data that would enable Google to incorporate WMATA's modes of public transportation in Google Transit.

It goes without saying that Google maps has quickly become an invaluable resource for thousands of travelers. Google Transit promises to make public transportation a more accessible and realistic choice for many. As the Washington region prepares to host as many as 3 or 4 million visitors this January, it is in all of our interests to disseminate information about public transit options as widely as possible.

Based on public statements by WMATA officials, the Authority is withholding this data principally in order to extract or protect ad revenue that it believes would inure to Google's benefit. This is myopic. WMATA is not in the online advertising business. It is in the transportation business. Inclusion in Google Transit will help WMATA perform this core function for many more individuals – and, it bears noting, increase fare collections as a result.

I urge you to reconsider your position.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Frick".

C. William Frick
District 16

cc: David Alpert (via email)
Google Government Relations Department