



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

KENYAN R. McDUFFIE
Councilmember, Ward 5
Chair Pro Tempore
Chair, Committee on Business and
Economic Development

Committee Member
Finance and Revenue
Labor and Workforce Development
Transportation and the Environment

May 4, 2018

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

Re: Ward 5 Metro Station Closings

Dear Mr. Wiedefeld,

On February 13, 2018, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) released the schedule of impending capital projects, some of which require that the Rhode Island Avenue and Brookland stations close for 45 days this summer. These closures concern me if they are not accompanied by practical solutions and a robust public outreach campaign. According to WMATA's statistics, the Rhode Island Avenue and Brookland stations serve 5,552 and 5,672 riders daily respectively.¹ A prolonged closure of these locations without appropriate measures will, undoubtedly burden my constituents.

In Fiscal Year 2018, I along with my Council colleagues, funded the G9 express busses that currently run every 15 minutes during rush hours from 6 am to 9 am and again 3 pm to 7 pm. WMATA should consider upgrading to a more comprehensive schedule during the 45-day closure to alleviate compounded traffic brought about by the metro station closings. In addition to expanding schedules of existing routes, please also consider implementing recommendations from the *Comprehensive Transportation Solution*, which suggests installing temporary "pop-up" bus lines during construction.² If you consider this option, please be sure to include the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5E who advocates testing the program's efficacy by launching a pilot program prior to its official activation.

Additionally, I understand the closure of the Brookland station is a result of lack of cross-overs between the two directions of track between the Rhode Island Avenue and Brookland stations. I would like WMATA to explore running "shuttle" train service on one track from Brookland to Fort Totten, allowing riders to continue using the Brookland station to access the entire WMATA network at Fort Totten.

¹ Metrorail Average Weekday Passenger Boarding's,
https://www.wmata.com/initiatives/plans/upload/2016_historical_rail_ridership.pdf

² Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5E Resolution 2018-01
https://resolutions.anc.dc.gov/AttachmentsFiles/25/ANC5E%20Resolution%202018-01_TM_20180120122828PM.pdf

As the Councilmember for Ward 5, my concern is that WMATA has prioritized the needs of out of town guests over residents and reliable commuters. WMATA's media release frames the strategic timing of rail construction around the height of tourism including the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Independence Day and Major League Baseball's All-Star Week. However, the proposed scheduling directly interferes with the return of students and teachers to DC Public Schools.³ WMATA stated, "for many visitors, Metro is the best way to get to all the attractions...[it] is a convenient, affordable option."⁴ Construction is set to commence immediately after Major League Baseball's All-Star Week. As the Chair of the Committee of Business and Economic Development, I value the vast economic benefits of the tourism industry, but not at the expense of Ward 5 families. Our hard-working Washingtonians deserve the same convenience and affordability promised to visitors, if not more. Furthermore, the proposed station closures are not on the green line that serves Nationals Ballpark. In fact, baseball fans coming from the northeast suburbs would not likely come through those stations, as they would transfer at Fort Totten to the green line.

This is a critical opportunity for WMATA to tackle temporary challenges as it seeks to advance its long term sustainable goals. Residents require a tailored message which addresses their everyday concerns with realistic solutions. I look forward to a constructive dialogue and I welcome the opportunity to discuss my recommendations with you.

Should you have any questions, please contact my Communications Director, Nolan Treadway, at ntreadway@dccouncil.us or 202-724-8028.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K.R. McDuffie".

Kenyan R. McDuffie

³ DCPS 2018-2019 Traditional School Calendar

https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/DCPS%20SY18-19%20Proposed%20TY%20Calendar%202-14-18%20Option%20A_0.pdf

⁴ <https://www.wmata.com/about/news/022018-Metro-prepares-for-busy-tourist-season-announces-capital-project-schedule.cfm>