



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Office of the Governor

W. Sheppard Miller III  
Secretary of Transportation

June 2, 2023

The Honorable David W. Marsden, Chairman  
Senate Transportation Committee  
Post Office Box 10889  
Burke, Virginia 22009

The Honorable Terry L. Austin, Chairman  
House Transportation Committee  
Post Office Box 400  
Buchanan, Virginia 24066

Dear Senator Marsden and Delegate Austin,

*Virginia Code* § 33.2-3102 requires the Secretary of Transportation to provide a quarterly update on Virginia's efforts to work with its counterparts in Maryland and the District of Columbia, as well as the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), on necessary reforms of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to support a viable transit system. This letter serves as the update on the following topics for the quarter ending March 31, 2023.

**Financial and operational improvements necessary to ensure that WMATA's performance is at least as efficient as its closest comparable transit system in the United States**

WMATA Budget: On March 23, the WMATA Board Finance and Capital Committee held a work session on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 operating and capital budgets, each totaling \$2.4 billion. Public hearings on the FY24 budget, including the required Virginia public hearing, were also completed this quarter. For FY24, the \$330.2 million Virginia operating subsidy includes a base increase of \$9.3 million and \$7.8 million in proposed legislative exclusions and complies with the 3% legislative cap on the annual growth in Virginia operating assistance.

Additionally, in late January, I met with WMATA General Manager Randy Clarke and Virginia's WMATA Board Members to discuss Metro's direction and financial situation. They informed me that while ridership growth has picked up and the budget for FY2024 is structurally sound due to federal funding, WMATA expects to face significant operating deficits of at least \$500 million beginning in FY 2025. Resolving this financial challenge will be a chief concern of the authority in the coming year.

I have similarly met with, or will soon be meeting with, other key stakeholders to discuss the issue, including DDOT Director Everett Lott, Maryland Secretary of Transportation Paul Wiedefeld, the Greater Washington Partnership, Washington Board of Trade, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance. These conversations are centered not only on how to improve WMATA's financial position in the short term, but also how to get the authority on a successful trajectory for the decades to come.

Strategic Transformation Plan (STP): On February 23, the WMATA Board adopted the STP, a five-year plan to “transform one of the nation's largest mass transit systems and propel it into the next era of transportation.” The long-term strategy sets four goals and orients specific initiatives around achieving them:

- Goal 1. Service Excellence: We'll deliver safe, reliable, convenient, equitable, accessible, and enjoyable service for customers.
- Goal 2. Talented Teams: We'll attract, develop, and retain top talent where team members feel valued, supported, and proud of their contribution.
- Goal 3. Regional opportunity and partnership: We'll design transit service to move more people and equitably connect a growing region.
- Goal 4. Sustainability: We'll manage resources responsibly to achieve a sustainable operating, capital, and environmental model.

WMATA held the required STP public hearing on February 9 with an in-person component at the offices of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) in Arlington. Approximately 30 people attended the hearing—including DRPT staff—and 12 people submitted comments. The comments encouraged WMATA to improve service, be fiscally responsible, promote environmental sustainability, address rider safety and security, and promote transit-oriented land uses. The STP is required to be updated every three years by Virginia legislation and Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) policy. CTB guidance directed WMATA to focus on safety, operating costs, service optimization, and ridership recovery in this update.

Office of Inspector General (OIG): On March 9, the OIG submitted its semiannual report. The OIG's 39 audits were able to identify \$1.9 million in savings in the term of this report.

### **Measures Necessary to Better Ensure the Safety of Riders and Employees**

Crime Trends on Metro: Alarmingly, year-to-date crime on the WMATA system increased significantly through March compared to the same period in 2022. The number of serious crimes (“Part 1” crimes, including robbery, aggravated assault, other thefts, and homicide) totaled 439 through March, an increase of more than 2.5 times compared to 2022 (167 crimes). Less serious “Part 2” crimes, such as vandalism and simple assault, also more than doubled through March compared to 2022.

Chairman Marsden & Chairman Austin

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Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD): On February 8, District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser and General Manager Randy Clarke announced a joint MTPD partnership with DC's Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to patrol five Metrorail stations with high crime activity and a high number of rider complaints. On March 24, WMATA announced that MTPD officers would begin wearing body-worn cameras in April 2023. Additionally, on January 4, WMATA announced that MTPD officers will begin carrying Narcan to treat overdoses that happen on the Metro system.

Washington Metrorail Safety Commission (WMSC): On January 13, the WMSC issued a directive requiring WMATA to remove 54 rail operators from service and update their training. WMATA completed the updated training by the January 24 deadline.

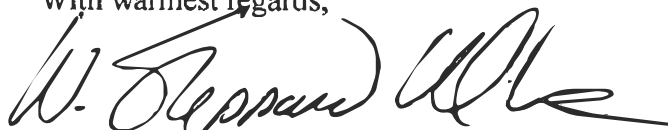
7000 Series Railcars: On January 20, the WMSC formally concurred with WMATA's updated plan to move into Phase 3 of its 7000 Series Return to Service plan and allow seven-day inspection intervals, compared to four-day intervals in the previous phase.

**Composition and qualifications of the WMATA Board of Directors and the length of terms of its members**

Board Bylaws: On June 28, 2018, the WMATA Board adopted bylaws with governance changes required by the Virginia 2018 dedicated funding legislation. The bylaws are still in effect. The WMATA Board Secretary has certified that no violations of bylaws occurred during the previous fiscal year (FY22) via letter to me on June 30.

Thank you for your continued support. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Sheppard Miller, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a long, sweeping underline.

W. Sheppard Miller, III