

**PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS —
YOUR VOICES ARE NEEDED NOW!
NO TO WMATA PROPOSAL #4!**

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is considering a proposal to **eliminate Metro access before noon on Sundays**. So many parishioners take Metro to St. Matthew's that **our community could not come together without it**. Your participation in the public process is needed now – please urge WMATA not to adopt Proposal #4, and to consider Proposals #1 or #2. To communicate this message, we ask you to 1) write on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/metroforward>, or 2) **send or email to WMATA written comments by October 25** (see page 2 for the written testimony submitted to WMATA by the Executive Director of the Downtown Cluster of Congregations, Mr. Terrance Lynch). You also may take a WMATA survey by October 25: <https://beta.wmata.com/initiatives/proposed-hours.cfm>. Your help is needed to keep our faith community together!

COMMUNIQUE FROM WMATA:

Responding to federal directives, and in an effort to provide sufficient time for maintenance to ensure a safe and reliable transit system, **Metro is asking the public to provide feedback on four proposed changes to Metrorail's hours of operation.**

Each proposal will provide Metro with an additional eight hours of track access weekly to improve safety, reliability and maintain the Metrorail system in a state of good repair and seeks to minimize the number of riders who are affected by the change in operating hours:

	Proposal #1	Proposal #2	Proposal #3	Proposal #4
Monday-Thursday	5:00 a.m.-midnight	5:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	5:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	5:00 a.m.-midnight
Friday	5:00 a.m.-midnight	5:00 a.m.-midnight	5:00 a.m.-1:00 a.m.	5:00 a.m.-3:00 a.m.
Saturday	5:00 a.m.-midnight	5:00 a.m.-midnight	7:00 a.m.-1:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.-3:00 a.m.
Sunday	7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.	7:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.	8:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m.	Noon-11:00 p.m.

Recognizing that many riders affected by these proposed changes work a variety of schedules, Metro is planning a 9.5-hour public hearing to accommodate as many people as possible. Metro is also providing multiple ways for public comment for those who cannot attend the hearing:

- Take an online survey in English or Spanish at wmata.com/hours.
- Email written comments to writtentestimony@wmata.com.
- Provide in-person feedback to staff at various Metrorail stations. For more information about dates, times and locations visit wmata.com/hours.
- Attend an open house (anytime between noon and 9:00 p.m.) and public hearing (anytime between 12:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.) on Thursday, October 20, 2016 at Metro Headquarters, 600 5th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

The public comment period on these proposed changes is open through 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 25. For more information about these proposals, as well as fliers in multiple languages, visit wmata.com/hours.

*The Downtown Cluster of Congregations
1313 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20005*

Date: Oct. 6, 2016

*To: General Manager and Directors
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority*

*re: **Testimony on Proposed Changes to Hours of Operation - No to Option #4***

This agency deeply appreciates the service the staff and Directors provide - not just to the agency and those that use it but to everyone in the region as the Metro system's operation affects everyone. It is understood the urgent need to improve safety and general and on-going maintenance services at Metro.

More than 2 decades ago the Downtown Cluster of Congregations and its members supported an earlier opening time for Metro on Sunday mornings to facilitate the ability of persons to attend worship services. The reasons for this are numerous. Use of metro saves hours of cars operating on the region's roadways. Moreover, more and more persons do not use cars and having metro available provides an effective, smart transit option.

*Indeed, the metro's opening at 7 am on Saturdays and Sundays provides support to congregations that despite increased congestion and numerous road closures have chosen to remain within the city. Over the last 2 decades, many congregations have relocated to the suburbs, often stating in part that the reason is the difficulty to find parking for their members that drive to services. **Hence, the current metro operating hours have become a part of the fabric of the lives of local congregations - the expectation being that hours of operation would expand if anything - not shrink.** Congregations and their members have come to **rely on the opening hours of metro as they are on Saturdays and Sundays.***

Given the reliance that many have come to have on using metro to access worship services, Proposal 4 would certainly be the most onerous and negative for local congregations and their members. Opening 2 hours later on Saturday and 5 hours later on Sunday would drastically impact access to numerous events held by local congregations. It would be a step in the wrong direction for those that seek to attend worship services those days - as well as for others seeking to get to work or return home from work, as well as the many other users who utilize it to go about their lives on those days.

It is urgent that Metro be successful in its goals for improved safety and reliability. It is my understanding the other proposals, proposals 1 - 3, would help achieve those. Hence the Downtown Cluster of Congregations would urge adoption of one of those 3 options and not option 4 given its impacts.

Thank you for your consideration and efforts.

Respectfully,

*Terrance Lynch
Executive Director*