

**Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority
Board Action/Information Summary**

Action
 Information

MEAD Number:
99997

Resolution:
 Yes No

PURPOSE

To request Board approval of the staff report and recommendations on the proposed restructuring of regional Metrobus Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, which comprise the Pennsylvania Avenue Line.

DESCRIPTION

The proposed changes to routes and service in Docket No. B08-1 are described below:

- Maintain local Routes 32 and 36 between Friendship Heights and Southern Avenue stations (Route 32) and Naylor Road Station (Route 36) serving all stops and operating seven days a week.
- Implement new peak period limited-stop services on Route 37 between Friendship Heights and Archives stations via Massachusetts Avenue and 22nd/23rd Streets, and on Route 39 between Naylor Road and Foggy Bottom-GWU Stations via Southern and Pennsylvania Avenues.
- Implement new seven-day-a-week neighborhood connectors on Route 31 between Friendship Heights and Foggy Bottom stations and on Route M5 between Naylor Road and Eastern Market stations.
- Eliminate Routes 30, 34 and 35.

Two public hearings were conducted in the District of Columbia on March 17 and 19, 2008, concerning the proposed route restructuring. Twenty-one persons attended each of the public hearings and a total of 23 witnesses testified for the record. In addition, 12 persons submitted written testimony for the record.

The most often mentioned comments from witnesses were general support for the proposals, especially Routes 31 and 37; concerns about the effectiveness of the supervision and monitoring plan to reduce bus bunching and delays; concerns about maintaining adequate frequency of service and capacity in critical areas; and suggestions to speed the boarding process on limited-stop routes by restricting use of cash.

After reviewing the public hearing testimony, staff recommends implementing the restructuring plan as proposed in Docket No. B08-1. Staff further recommends that five additional street supervisors be assigned to oversee the recommended routes in order to improve service reliability. Staff intends to conduct a review of the service after implementation to determine whether it is performing as intended.

FUNDING IMPACT

The annual Metrobus operating cost for the recommended plan to restructure Regional Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36 would be completely offset by implementing minor service reductions under the General Manager's authority on Regional Routes 70 and 71, which are operating with excess capacity due to ridership diversion to MetroExtra Route 79. The \$400,000 annual cost for five street supervisors would be allocated based on the Regional Bus Formula.

	FY09 IMPACT
DC	\$171,480
Montgomery County	\$61,000
Prince George's County	\$66,000
MD	\$127,000
City of Alexandria	\$19,240
Arlington	\$30,440
Fairfax City	\$760
Fairfax County	\$49,400
Falls Church	\$1,680
VA	101,520
TOTAL	\$400,000

If approved by the Board, the changes to the 30s and to the 70, 71 would be implemented in June 2008.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the staff report and recommendations on the proposed restructuring of regional Metrobus Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, which comprise the Pennsylvania Avenue Line, and increase the FY09 budget to add five street supervisors at an annual cost of \$400,000.

PRESENTED AND ADOPTED:

SUBJECT: REQUEST BOARD APPROVAL OF THE STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF REGIONAL METROBUS ROUTES 30, 32, 34, 35, 36 IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PROPOSED
RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Avenue Line (Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36) carries almost 20,000 daily riders but, because of its popularity and heavy traffic along its route, suffers from passenger crowding, bus bunching, poor schedule adherence, and delays; and

WHEREAS, Between June and December 2007, WMATA and the District Department of Transportation conducted a study of ways to improve transit service along this line, which included extensive public involvement; and

WHEREAS, The study recommendations were incorporated into the proposed restructuring of the 30s contained in Docket No. B08-1; and

WHEREAS, Two public hearings were conducted on March 17 and 19, 2008, to obtain public comments with regard to the proposed changes; and

WHEREAS, Twenty-three witnesses testified at the public hearings and 12 persons submitted written testimony for the record; and

WHEREAS, Staff has reviewed the public hearing testimony, which included many statements in support of the proposals; and

WHEREAS, Staff recommends that the proposed restructuring of Regional Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36 be implemented as proposed in Docket No. B08-1; and

WHEREAS, Staff further recommends that five additional street supervisors be assigned to oversee the recommended routes; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors approves the Staff Report and Recommendations to implement the restructuring of Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36 as proposed in Docket No. B08-1; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the additional operating costs associated with the recommended changes to the 30s will be completely offset by minor service reductions on Regional Routes 70 and 71 in the District of Columbia; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Carol B. O'Keeffe
General Counsel

STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON
PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE LINE
ROUTES 30, 32, 34, 35, 36
DOCKET NO. B08-1

I. BACKGROUND

Between June and December 2008, WMATA, in partnership with the District Department of Transportation, studied ways of improving transit service along the Pennsylvania Avenue Line (Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36). Current 30s line service runs from Friendship Heights to Southern Avenue and Naylor Road Stations generally along Wisconsin and Pennsylvania Avenues.

The 30s line has the highest ridership of any Metrobus line at almost 20,000 daily riders and it provides an important link between Southeast and Northwest, DC. However, because of its popularity and heavy traffic along its route, the line suffers from passenger crowding, bus bunching, poor schedule adherence and delays.

Following extensive public involvement, the study developed many short-term and long-term recommendations for improvements to service, operations, stops and facilities, customer information, safety and security, traffic operations and management, vehicles and vehicle assignments, and fare collection. The recommended changes to routes and service, which were the main subject of public hearings, are described below.

- Maintain local Routes 32 and 36 between Friendship Heights and Southern Avenue Stations (Route 32) and Naylor Road station (Route 36) serving all stops and operating seven days a week.
- Implement new peak period limited-stop services on Route 37 between Friendship Heights and Archives stations via Massachusetts Avenue and 20th/21st Streets, and on Route 39 between Naylor Road and Foggy Bottom-GWU Stations via Southern and Pennsylvania Avenues.
- Implement new seven-day-a-week neighborhood connectors on Route 31 between Friendship Heights and Foggy Bottom stations and on Route M5 between Naylor Road and Eastern Market stations.
- Eliminate Routes 30, 34 and 35.

Enhanced street supervision and service management would be implemented in order to improve service reliability and reduce bus bunching.

II. REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEARING RECORD

The public hearing record consists of the notice of public hearing, the staff statement describing the proposals, transcripts of the proceedings, and written statements submitted for the record.

A. Public notification

The official notice of the public hearings was published in the *Washington Post*, *Washington Hispanic* and *El Tiempo Latino* newspapers pursuant to Article XIII, Section 62(c) of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact. In addition, notices were sent to area libraries in the District of Columbia and posted in all of the Authority's vehicles operating in revenue service over the affected routes, as well as publicized by other means.

B. Review of Transcripts

Public Hearing Number 531 was convened at 7:05 p.m. on Monday, March 17, 2008, at St. Columba's Episcopal Church, 4201 Albemarle Street NW, Washington, DC. Twenty-one persons attended the hearing and 16 witnesses testified for the record. Public Hearing Number 532 was convened at 7:10 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19, 2008, at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, 2800 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Washington, DC. Twenty-one persons attended the hearing and seven witnesses testified for the record.

C. Additional Material Submitted for the Record

The record for the public hearing was held open until 5 p.m. March 26, 2008, to receive additional comments and material from interested parties. Twelve persons submitted written testimony for the record.

III. DISCUSSION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING RECORD

Following are the most often mentioned comments from witnesses during the public hearing process.

- A. General support for the proposals, especially new Routes 31 and 37. There were a number of individual suggestions for modifying proposed Routes 31 in Georgetown, 36 in Hillcrest, 37 via Calvert and 22nd/23rd Streets, and 39 via Naylor Road or Fairfax Village, as well as adding more stops on limited-stop Route 39.

Staff response

The suggested route changes would improve service for some riders, but make service for others less attractive. Staff plans to evaluate the new service after implementation and will consider these suggestions along with other changes that might be needed based on operating experience.

- B. Concerns about the effectiveness of the supervision and monitoring plan to reduce bus bunching and delays.

Staff response

Enhanced supervision and line management seven days per week is expected to result in greatly improved service reliability so that actual headways will more closely match schedules. The supervision and management plan will utilize several techniques, including a dedicated line manager and operations center, tracking vehicles using GPS technology, on-street supervision at multiple points along the line, deployment of strategic buses to fill gaps, ability to hold back and turn back buses when necessary to maintain spacing, and use of a "play book" describing actions to take when situations arise that impact on-time performance or vehicle spacing.

- C. Concern about maintaining adequate frequency of service and capacity in critical areas, including Naylor Road and lower Wisconsin Avenue.

Staff response

Staff has collected ridership data in 2008 on all segments of the existing routes and will develop schedules for the new service that will accommodate current ridership.

- D. Suggestions to speed the boarding process on the limited-stop routes by restricting fare payment to SmarTrip[®] and weekly flash passes only.

Staff response

Staff will continue to explore a number of fare payment options that were suggested during the 30s study.

Following are additional comments from witnesses. Staff will continue to evaluate these suggestions prior to and after implementation.

- Operate service on at least one route 24 hours a day.
- Coordinate schedules where two or more routes operate on the same street in order to reduce wait time.
- Cutback some peak period trips at Tenleytown-AU Station.
- Enforce parking restrictions along the routes to speed service.
- Provide better information to customers about routes and stops when service is detoured.
- Use smaller buses on Route 31 and brand that service.

IV. MINORITY OR LOW INCOME AREA IMPACT

As specified in the Federal Transit Administration's Title VI Circular 4702.1A, WMATA has evaluated the proposed restructuring of Pennsylvania Avenue Line, Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, to determine whether these changes have a discriminatory impact on minority and low-income populations. In a study conducted by the Offices of Civil Rights and Long Range Planning, it was determined that the proposed changes will not have a disproportionate adverse effect on minority and low-income persons.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

After review of the public hearing testimony, staff recommends that the proposed restructuring of the Pennsylvania Avenue Line (Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36) be approved as proposed in Docket No. B08-1.



Notice of Metrobus Public Hearing No. 531 and No. 532

Proposed Restructuring of the Pennsylvania Avenue Line Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, 36

Docket No. B08-1

Notice is hereby given that the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority will hold public hearings on the above service proposals as follows:

Hearing Number 531
Monday, March 17, 2008
St. Columba's Episcopal Church
4201 Albemarle Street NW
Washington, DC 20016
Open House - 6:30 p.m.
Public Hearing - 7 p.m.

Hearing Number 532
Wednesday, March 19, 2008
St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church
2800 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20020
Open House - 6:30 p.m.
Public Hearing - 7 p.m.

These public hearings are being conducted in locations accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual who requires special assistance, such as a sign language interpreter, to participate in the public hearings should contact Ms. Danise Peña at 202-962-2511 or TTY: 202-638-3780 by March 12 in order for WMATA to make necessary arrangements. For language assistance, call 202-962-2384 by March 12.



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth Street N.W. Washington, DC 20001

How to Register to Speak at the Public Hearings. All organizations or individuals desiring to be heard with respect to the proposed service changes will be afforded the opportunity to present their views, make supporting statements and offer alternative proposals. Individuals and representatives of organizations who wish to be heard at these public hearings are requested to furnish in writing their name, address, telephone number and organization affiliation, if any, by noon on the date of the hearing where you would like to speak, to the Office of the Secretary, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 600 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Alternatively, you may fax this information to the Office of the Secretary at 202-962-1133. Please submit only one speaker's name per letter. Lists of individual speakers will not be accepted. Others present at the hearing may be heard after those persons on the witness list have been called and heard. Public officials will be heard first and will be allowed five minutes each to make their presentations. All others will be allowed three minutes each and will be heard in order of registration. Relinquishing of time by one speaker to another will not be permitted. Those who are unable to speak at the hearings are encouraged to submit written statements.

How to Submit Written Statements. Written statements and exhibits may be submitted until 5 p.m. on March 26, 2008, to the Office of the Secretary, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 600 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Alternatively, you may send an e-mail to public-hearing-testimony@wmata.com or send by fax to 202-962-1133. Please reference the Hearing and/or Docket Number shown on the front of this document in your submission. All comments received will be posted without change to www.wmata.com/about/community, including any personal information provided.

Review Of Testimony And Approval Of Proposals Outlined In The Public Hearing Docket. The proposals outlined in this docket are not final and are subject to change in response to testimony received during the public hearing process and local jurisdictional review. Following the public hearing, WMATA staff will review all testimony presented, both written and oral, and prepare a report with recommendations in regard to the proposed service changes to the WMATA Board of Directors for its consideration and appropriate action. The Board may change or reject the proposals or staff recommendations with or without alternatives being provided. Implementation of the proposals outlined in the public hearing docket is dependent upon approval of the Board of Directors.

PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE LINE METROBUS ROUTES 30, 32, 34, 35, 36

DOCKET NO. B08-1

BACKGROUND

The Pennsylvania Avenue Line (referred to henceforth as the 30s Line) runs from Friendship Heights Metrorail Station at Wisconsin & Western Avenues NW across the District of Columbia to terminals at Southern Avenue Metrorail Station (Route 32) and at Naylor Road Metrorail Station (Routes 34, 35, 36), both of which lie just beyond the District boundary in Prince George's County. Route 30 trips terminate at Potomac Avenue Metrorail Station or at Archives. The primary streets served by these routes are Wisconsin Avenue NW, M Street NW, Pennsylvania Avenue NW and SE, Independence Avenue SW, Naylor Road SE, Alabama Avenue SE, Branch Avenue SE, and Southern Avenue SE.

The 30s Line service has long suffered from continuing performance-related issues, including schedule adherence, bus bunching, traffic congestion, delays, passenger crowding, detours and incident response. In 2006, a proposed reconfiguration of this long line into two component parts was presented to the community at two public meetings. Significant feedback was received from riders who did not believe that a route change would solve the performance issues and who were concerned that required transfers would be disadvantageous to passengers. In response, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) partnered with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to conduct a more comprehensive study of the 30s Line that included opportunities for public participation throughout the planning process in order to develop recommendations that would be widely supported by bus riders and the general public.

This study was conducted from June through December 2007. The primary purpose of the study was to perform a comprehensive review of methods for improving the performance of transit service along the 30s Line and to develop an improvement strategy that includes service, operations and customer information enhancements. The line was chosen for study by WMATA and DDOT for several reasons. Its average weekday ridership of 20,000 and average monthly ridership of nearly half a million make it the most heavily used line in the Metrobus system. The transit corridor is an important link to downtown for residents in Southeast and Northwest, but because of the popularity of the service and heavy traffic along the line, it often suffers from overcrowding, bus bunching, and delays.

Drawing on public input from a rider survey and six public meetings, the study developed recommendations for short-term and long-term enhancements in each of the following areas:

- Service plan
- Service monitoring and management
- Customer information
- Bus stops
- Traffic management strategies
- Running way improvements
- Vehicles
- Fare payment strategies

More information about the study and the recommendations related to each of these areas may be found on the project website at www.metrobus-30s-dc.com. This public hearing docket will focus just on the proposed service plan as it relates to changes to existing Routes 30, 32, 34, 35, and 36.

PROPOSED METROBUS SERVICE

The proposed Metrobus service plan creates a family of services with routes that address the various travel markets in this corridor. These routes can be categorized as follows:

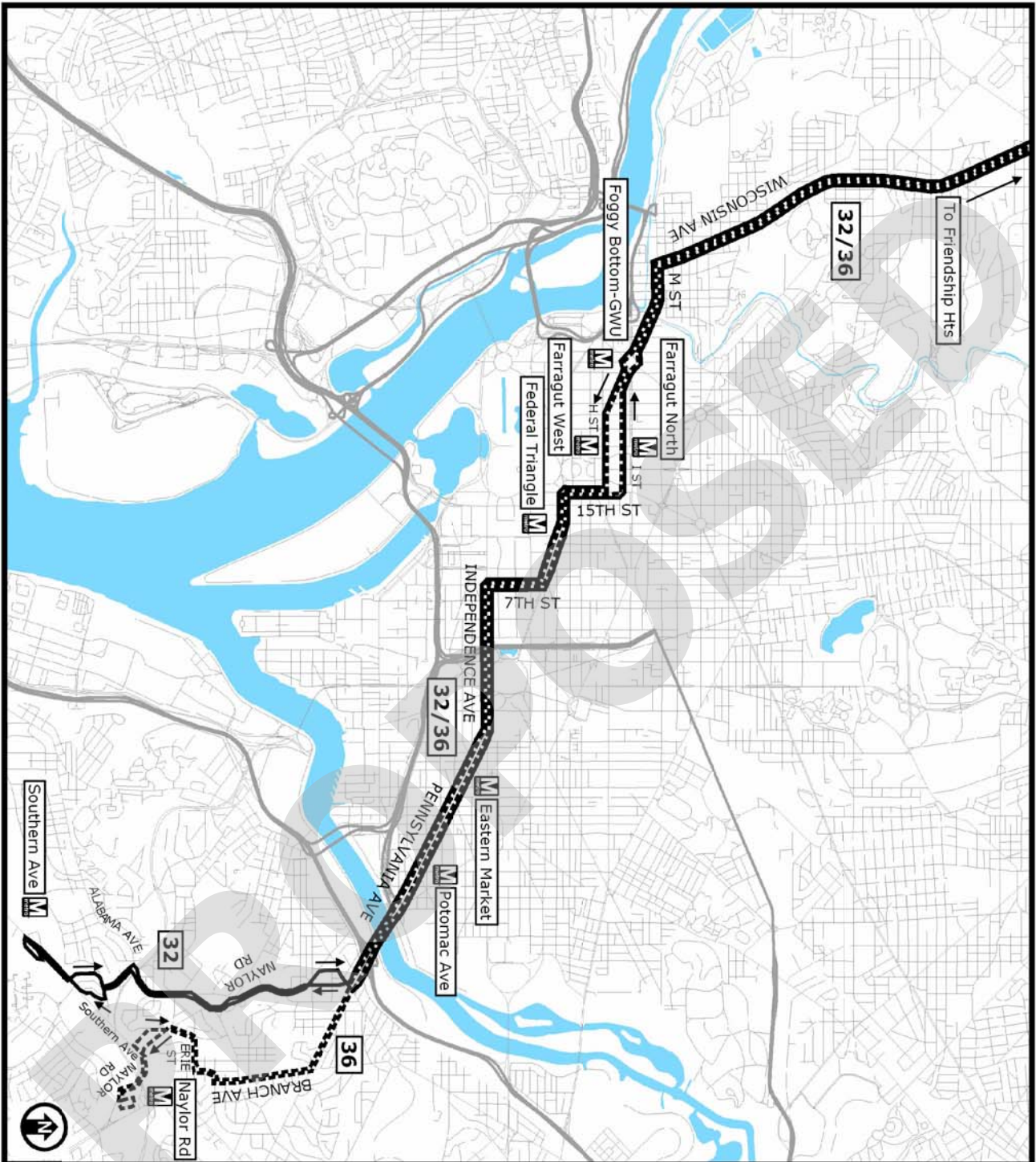
- Maintain regular local bus service along the existing Routes 32 and 36 with the capability of providing a one-seat ride from Southern Avenue and Naylor Road Stations to Friendship Heights.
- Implement new neighborhood routes in the Naylor Road (Route M5) and Wisconsin Avenue (Route 31) corridors to provide direct services connecting residential areas to nearby commercial centers and other regional transit services.
- Implement new peak period limited-stop routes to provide faster service connecting Friendship Heights Station (Route 37) and Naylor Road Station (Route 39) with the downtown employment area.
- Discontinue existing Routes 30, 34, and 35. However, all stops currently served by these discontinued routes would continue to be served by one or more of the proposed routes.

Enhanced street supervision and service management would be implemented in order to improve service reliability and reduce bus bunching.

Details of each of the proposed routes are shown on the following pages.

(Blank page)

PROPOSED



Proposed Routes 32 and 36



PROPOSED PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE LINE, ROUTES 32 AND 36

Route Descriptions

Route 32 (Southern Avenue Metrorail Station - Friendship Heights Metrorail Station)

Same as existing Route 32 operating from Southern Avenue Station via Southern Avenue, 22nd Street, Savannah Street, 23rd Street, Alabama Avenue, Naylor Road, 23rd Street, Minnesota Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Independence Avenue, 7th Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, 15th Street, I Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, M Street and Wisconsin Avenue to Friendship Heights and return.

Route 36 (Naylor Road Metrorail Station - Friendship Heights Metrorail Station)

Same as existing Route 36, except as noted, operating from Naylor Road Station via Naylor Road, Southern Avenue, 30th Street, Erie Street, 33rd Street, Camden Street, Branch Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Independence Avenue, 7th Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, 15th Street, I Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, M Street and Wisconsin Avenue to Friendship Heights and return. The existing loop south of Erie Street via 33rd, Gainesville, and 31st Streets would be discontinued.

Frequency and Span of Service

Route 32 service would operate between Southern Avenue and Friendship Heights Stations every 30 minutes from 4:30 AM to 2:30 AM weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

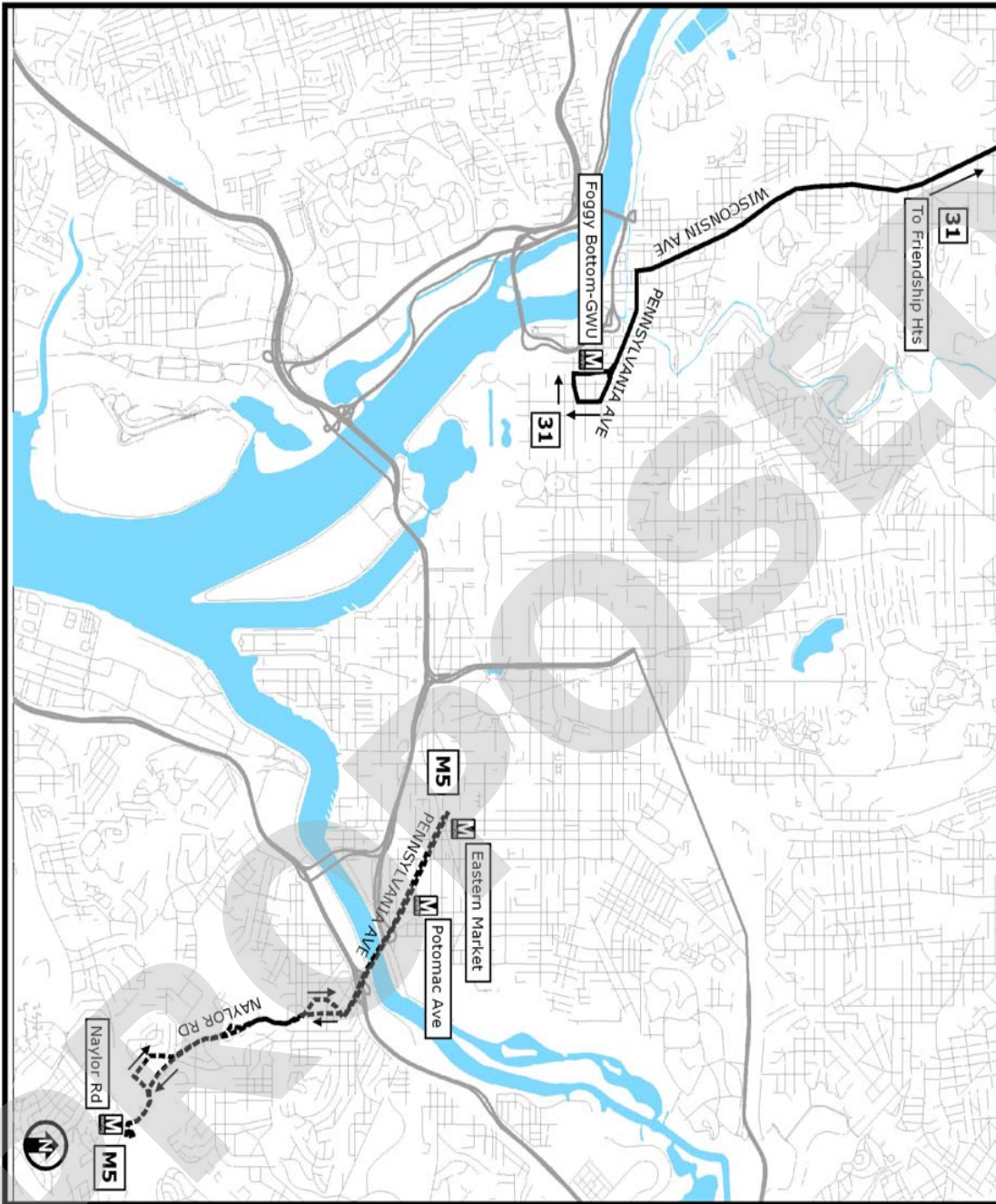
Route 36 service would operate between Naylor Road and Friendship Heights Stations every 30 minutes from 4:45 AM to 2:15 AM weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Between L'Enfant Square (Pennsylvania & Minnesota Avenues) and Friendship Heights, where both routes operate on the same streets, the combined frequency of service would be every 15 minutes.

During AM and PM peak periods, additional short trips would be scheduled to operate between Southern Avenue Station and Foggy Bottom-GWU Station, between Naylor Road Station and Foggy Bottom-GWU Station, and between McLean Gardens and Archives as necessary in order to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate passenger demand.

Benefits

These routes respond to public and rider requests to maintain some continuous local bus service from SE to NW. The proposed 32 and 36 routes would provide this connection without requiring passengers to transfer in order to complete their trips. The 32 and 36 routes maintain existing service from Southern Avenue and Naylor Road Stations to Friendship Heights and serve all stops along the routes.



Proposed Routes 31 and M5



**PROPOSED NAYLOR ROAD LINE, ROUTE M5
PROPOSED WISCONSIN AVENUE LINE, ROUTE 31**

Route Descriptions

Route M5 (Naylor Road Metrorail Station - Eastern Market Metrorail Station)

Same as existing Route 34 operating from Naylor Road Station via Naylor Road, Southern Avenue, 30th Street, Naylor Road, 23rd Street, Minnesota Avenue, and Pennsylvania Avenue to Eastern Market and return.

Route 31 (Friendship Heights Metrorail Station - Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station)

Same as existing Routes 30-36 operating from Friendship Heights via Wisconsin Avenue, M Street, and Pennsylvania Avenue to Foggy Bottom-GWU Station and return.

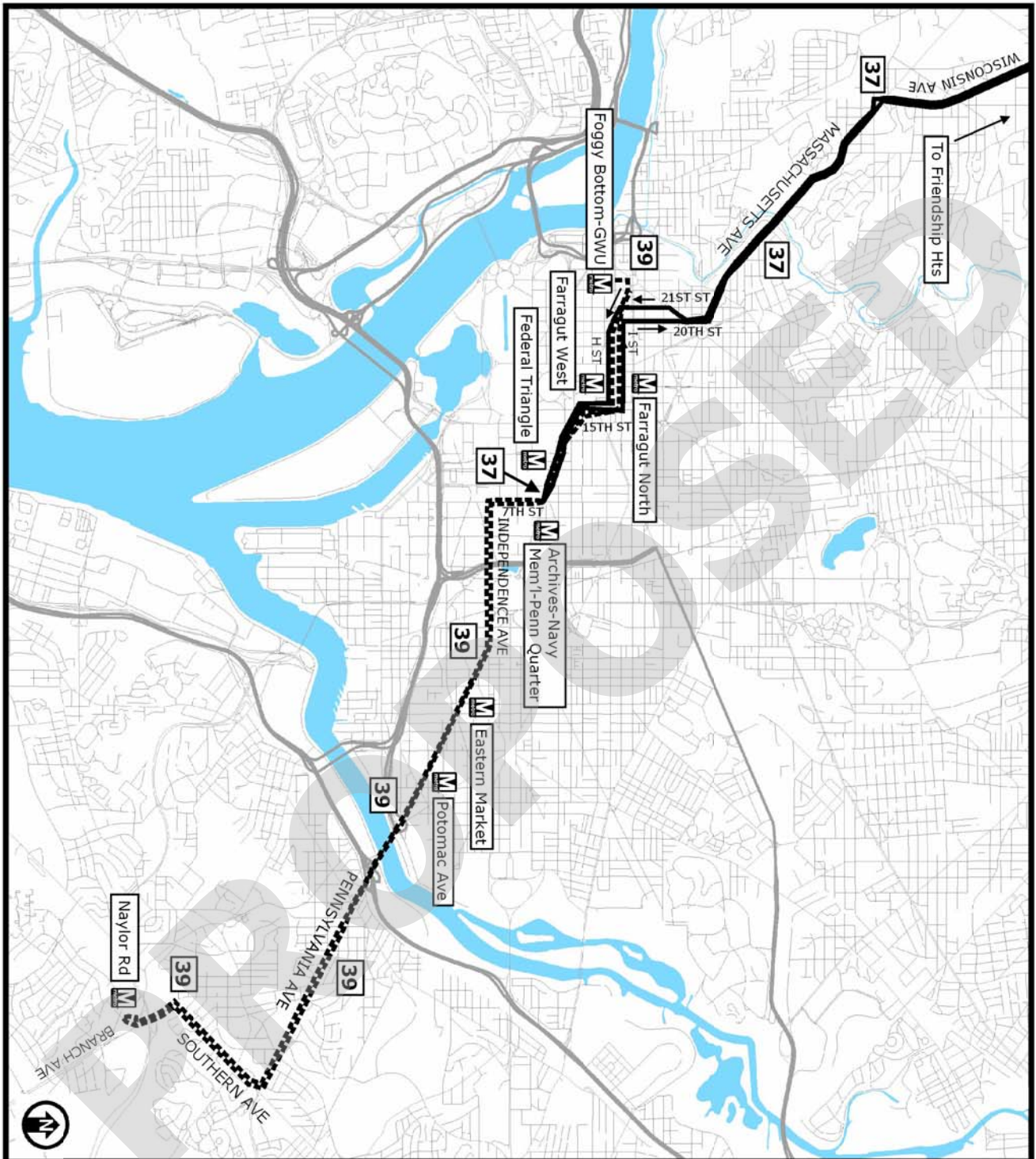
Frequency and Span of Service

Route M5 would operate between Naylor Road and Eastern Market Stations from 5 AM to 1 AM every 15 minutes during AM and PM peak periods and every 30 minutes at all other times.

Route 31 would operate between Friendship Heights and Foggy Bottom-GWU Stations from 5 AM to 1 AM every 15 minutes during AM and PM peak periods and every 30 minutes at all other times.

Benefits

These routes would provide more reliable all-day service between residential neighborhoods, retail shopping centers and employment opportunities, as well as connecting with Metrorail and major bus routes. The relatively short length of these routes would make them easier to manage and reduce the potential for bus bunching.



Proposed Routes 37 and 39



**PROPOSED WISCONSIN AVENUE LIMITED LINE, ROUTE 37
PROPOSED PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE LIMITED LINE, ROUTE 39**

Route Descriptions

Route 37 (Friendship Heights Metrorail Station - Archives)

From Friendship Heights via Wisconsin Avenue, Garfield Street, Massachusetts Avenue, 20th Street, New Hampshire Avenue, 21st Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, H Street, 15th Street, and Pennsylvania Avenue to Archives and return.

Route 39 (Naylor Road Metrorail Station - Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station)

From Naylor Road Station via Branch Avenue, Southern Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Independence Avenue, 7th Street, Pennsylvania Avenue, 15th Street, I Street, and Pennsylvania Avenue to Foggy Bottom-GWU Station and return.

Frequency and Span of Service

Route 37 would operate every 15 minutes weekdays from Friendship Heights to Archives between 6:30 and 10 AM and every 15 minutes from Archives to Friendship Heights between 4 and 7:30 PM.

Route 39 would operate every 15 minutes weekdays from Naylor Road Station to Foggy Bottom-GWU between 6 and 9:30 AM and every 15 minutes from Foggy Bottom-GWU to Naylor Road between 3:45 and 7:15 PM.

Stops

Routes 37 and 39 would only serve certain widely spaced stops along the routes. The distance between stops would vary, but on average they would be approximately one-half mile apart. The selection of stops would be based on a number of key factors, including the number of passengers boarding and alighting, transfer connections to Metrorail and other bus routes, and key trip origin and destination points.

Benefits

The limited number of stops would result in up to 25 percent faster service than regular local bus routes. Route 37 would bypass traffic congestion in Georgetown, reducing the potential for delay and bus bunching. Route 39 would provide a shorter and more direct route between Naylor Road Station and downtown as well as serving the full length of Pennsylvania Avenue SE in support of the District's Great Streets Program.