



Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G

CHEVY CHASE, BARNABY WOODS, HAWTHORNE

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ANC 3/4G Resolution on
WMATA's FY 2021 Budget Proposal to
“Eliminate” the E6 Bus Route
October 13, 2020

1. On September 18, 2020, the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) Board voted to adopt potential service cuts, schedule changes, and other cost-cutting measures in order to balance its operating budget. Among those potential cuts was the “elimination” of the E6 bus route. This bus provides the only public transit service from the Barnaby Woods, Hawthorne, and Chevy Chase neighborhoods to Lafayette School, the Connecticut Avenue business corridor, and the Friendship Heights Metro. The notice of potential service cuts indicated that “service would continue not to operate” on the E6 bus route.¹
2. For almost a decade, ANC 3/4G and the community have repeatedly opposed efforts to reduce or eliminate service on the E6 bus route. Most recently, in response to another attempt to shut down the E6, the Commission adopted a resolution that reviewed this history and again urged WMATA to retain the E6 service.² The Commission showed that the E6 provides a vital service for seniors, students, and commuters and is the only reasonable transit option for many of our residents. WMATA agreed and continued the E6 bus in its FY2021 budget.

¹ “Covid-19 Budget Impacts,” WMATA, available at <https://www.wmata.com/initiatives/budget/>.

² “ANC 3/4G Resolution on WMATA’s FY 2021 Budget Proposals to Combine the E6 and M4 Bus Routes and Capital Expenditures for Historic Bus Terminal Rehabilitation,” February 24, 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/2uyOhBO>.

3. In response to the COVID-19 emergency, WMATA significantly cut back Metrobus service, including suspension of the E6. Given the serious public health concerns, this suspension was necessary and appropriate. More recently, WMATA has begun to restore services in some area, but it continues to experience a revenue shortfall because of significantly lower ridership.
4. The Commission is mindful of the havoc that the pandemic has created for WMATA's budget. Unfortunately, the federal government has done far too little to assist public transit authorities that have been hit hard by a dramatic drop in ridership. Absent additional federal aid, some service cuts are inevitable. WMATA must not lose sight, however, of its core mission — to provide transport service for those who need it most and have few alternatives.
5. It is not clear whether WMATA's current budget reduction proposal to “continue not to operate” the E6 bus means that it will be permanently eliminated or merely eliminated until the public health emergency is over. Either way, the short term impact is the same. Seniors at the Knollwood Military Lifeplan Community, located at 6200 Oregon Avenue, NW., will continue to have no way to get to essential doctors appointments or to pick up their prescription drugs. The front-line health care workers at Knollwood — who risk their own health to care for others — will continue to have no public transit to get to their life-saving jobs. Residents in the Hawthorne and Barnaby Woods neighborhoods will continue to have no public transit options to get to work or school.
6. Our community needs the E6 bus immediately. After postponing needed medical examinations and procedures, seniors are now visiting their doctors, many of whom are in Friendship Heights and accessible on the E6 bus. Students and teachers will be returning to in-person classes at Lafayette Elementary School on November 9, 2020,³ and they need the E6 bus to get to school safely. Commuters are beginning to return to their offices and will use the E6. Caregivers and the essential workers at Knollwood cannot afford to continue using expensive taxis or ride share to get to their important jobs. Rather than eliminating it, now is the time to restore the E6 bus.
7. In making your tough budget decisions about which routes to curtail, the Commission urges the Board to focus on the people who will be affected. If it

³ “DCPS will #ReopenStrong for Term 2,” October 5, 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/371Ishb>.

boils down to a triage decision, the Board should err on the side of providing service to the most vulnerable. Knollwood was particularly hard hit by Covid-19, but it has recovered successfully thanks to the vigilance of its management, dedicated staff, and resilient residents.⁴ It needs the E6 bus now more than ever to make sure that its residents continue to be safe. The E6 bus is a literal lifeline.

8. Similarly, as in-person classes resume, elementary students and their teachers need the E6 bus to get to school. Walking or biking are frequently not viable options, particularly as the weather gets worse. The E6 is a reliable, safe way for younger children to travel to school.
9. The Commission urges WMATA's Board to reject the proposal to "eliminate" or to "continue not to operate" the E6 and to restore service on the E6 immediately.

Approved by ANC 3/4G after a discussion at its regularly scheduled and noticed October 13, 2020 meeting by a vote of 6 to 0 (a quorum being 4).

Randy Speck, Chair

Abe Clayman, Secretary

cc: Mayor Muriel Bowser

Councilmember Mary Cheh

Councilmember Brandon Todd

Councilmember Robert White

Stephanie Gidigbi, WMATA Board First Vice Chair (District of Columbia representative)

Jeff Marootian, WMATA Board Member (District of Columbia representative)

Tom Bulger, WMATA Board Member (District of Columbia representative)

⁴ See "Military-Style Response at One Retirement Community Stymies COVID-19," October 8, 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/3IMRRNH>.