

**WMATA Budget Hearing
ANC 3/4G Testimony on
Proposed “Elimination” of E6 Bus
October 13, 2020**

I am Randy Speck, Chair of ANC 3/4G. Our ANC has testified multiple times before this Board and the Council urging continued service on the E6 bus that links the Knollwood, Barnaby Woods, and Hawthorne neighborhoods with Lafayette Elementary School and Friendship Heights. We come to the Board once again today to defend this lifeline for many of the most vulnerable members of our community.

We are 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 federal aid, 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.

It is not clear whether WMATA’s budget 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 retirement community will continue to have no way to get to essential doctors appointments or to get prescription drugs. The front-line health care workers at Knollwood — who risk their own health to care for others — will continue to have no way to get to their life-saving jobs. Residents in the Hawthorne and Barnaby Woods neighborhoods will continue to have no public transit options.

In making your tough budget decisions about which routes to curtail, we urge the Board to focus on the people who will be affected. If it boils down to a triage decision, you 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. It needs the E6 bus now more than ever to make sure that its residents continue to be safe. The E6 bus lets the Knollwood staff get to their life-saving jobs and lets residents visit their doctors at Friendship Heights to maintain their health. The E6 bus is a literal lifeline.

Our ANC will submit written comments after we've heard further from our constituents at our meeting tonight, but I want to emphasize the real impact that your decisions have. Please restore the E6 bus service as soon as possible.