

# TRANSIT FIRST!

*Coalition members: Action Committee for Transit, Alexandria Transit Riders Alliance, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689, Arlington Coalition for Sensible Transportation, Audubon Naturalist Society, CASA de Maryland, Clean Water Action, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Crofton First, DC Night Riders, Greater Greater Washington, MCGEO—UFCW Local 1994, Prince George's Advocates for Community-based Transit, Progressive Maryland, Save Maryland Area Rail Transit, Transit Riders United of Greenbelt*

## Position on Metro's FY10 Budget Deficit Fix

First, we want to thank the WMATA board for listening to the public and soliciting our input before making a decision on the FY10 budget deficit.

In a period of economic hardship, Metro is more vital than ever for the residents of greater Washington. The Transit First coalition believes that preserving and strengthening our Metrorail and bus system is essential for economically healthy communities, a clean environment, and keeping transportation affordable. It would be unconscionable for our state, local and federal governments to allow transit service to deteriorate while they continue to spend billions of dollars to expand the road network.

We urge WMATA to address the FY10 operating budget deficit with the following actions:

- **No cuts in service – we oppose Option 1 of the hearing notice (Hearing no. 547).** We ask WMATA to hold to the principle of preserving (1) peak period capacity and (2) off-peak frequency as the agency makes adjustments to cover the deficit.
- **Balance the remaining shortfall for FY10's operating budget by a combination of borrowing capital dollars and fare increases – Options 2, 3 or 4.** Borrowing from capital funds should only be done with the commitment that the funds are fully repaid over the next few years either in cash or through savings from bus priority treatments.
- **Bus Priority:** Implement cost savings by securing the commitment of state and local governments to more efficient movement of buses. These savings can be used to offset member contributions to the operating budget. State and local transportation departments must cooperate in solving Metro's budget crisis by giving buses priority in movement on the roads. Bus priority treatments include dedicated bus lanes, queue jumpers, and signal priority. Metro board members should call on the Jurisdictional Coordinating Council and state and local governments to ensure bus priority treatments on state and local roads.
- **Increase state, local and federal contributions:** Given the benefit of transit to all the public – transit riders, drivers and others -- increases in jurisdictional contributions to Metrorail and Metrobus should also be pursued. Metro board members should call on state and local governments to increase contributions to meet this and next year's budget operating deficits.
- **Establish a culture of heightened attention to customer service, safety, openness, and accountability.**