

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ORDER NO. 1217

IN THE MATTER OF:

Served June 6, 1972

Investigation of A. B. & W. )  
Transit Company Route 18. )

Docket No. 244

Order No. 1198, issued February 9, 1972, granted Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington Transit Company (A. B. & W.) Application No. 745 for, among other things, authority to change and extend Route 18 operations in West Springfield, Virginia.

Since the inception of Route 18, service in West Springfield has taken the form of a loop through the Cardinal Forest region, proceeding over Greeley Boulevard and Carrleigh Parkway. Application No. 745 proposed to serve new high density developments along Forrester Boulevard by diverting Route 18 from Carrleigh Parkway at its junction with Forrester and proceeding over Forrester to Rolling Road and then resuming its established route. Opposition to that application was expressed by riders from the section of Carrleigh Parkway which would lose service, and A. B. & W. amended its application to route service up Forrester Boulevard as originally proposed, but then to return to Carrleigh Parkway via Oakford Drive, Roxbury Avenue and Winslow Avenue (O-R-W). The application, as amended, was approved by Order No. 1198.

On March 8, 1972, an application for reconsideration of Order No. 1198 was filed by Thomas Kerester on behalf of area residents seeking adjustment of the changed Route 18. That application was denied by Order No. 1206, served March 8, 1972. However, in view of the public concern over bus service in this area, we did institute, in Order No. 1206, an investigation of the O-R-W portion of Route 18, and set a public hearing for March 27, 1972, to consider alternative bus routes within the Cardinal Forest-Walden Glen area.

Opposition to the route as it now exists comes mainly from persons living on Oakford Drive, Roxbury Avenue and Winslow Avenue. They have asserted that these streets are not satisfactory for bus transportation and that superior alternate routes exist.

Proposed alternate routes include the Forrester-Rolling route originally proposed, a return to the Carrleigh Parkway service as it existed before Application No. 745 was filed, use of the Queenston Street loop as a turn-around off Forrester and back to Carrleigh Parkway, and the Forrester-Rolling route with a detour at Traford Lane to return to Carrleigh.

At hearing, it became apparent that none of the proposed routes was without disadvantage.

The Commission staff had conducted a thorough investigation of the area, including examination of all possible route configurations in the area. It found:

(a) The O-R-W streets are somewhat narrow and hilly with several turns, but no worse than similar streets over which bus operations are safely conducted. It had contacted the Virginia Highway Department which also certified these streets suitable for bus use. Particular problem areas included a small park on Roxbury Avenue and a portion of Oakford Drive in poor repair. The streets, however, were entirely residential and most homes had off street parking, thus giving the buses adequate maneuverability. Traffic was generally light with visibility sufficient for operation at lawful speed limits.

(b) The Forrester-Rolling route would seriously inconvenience residents near Carrleigh Parkway, but would adequately serve the largest number of citizens in the area.

(c) The detour from that route over Traford Lane would be unduly time consuming due to traffic on Rolling Road.

(d) The turn-around on Queenston, through a high density townhouse development with heavy on-street parking, would be

unfeasible as buses would have difficulty maneuvering and traffic delays could be expected.

(e) The former route along Carrleigh Parkway would be unacceptable as it would not give adequate service to the large number of residents along Forrester Boulevard.

A. B. & W. reiterated its desire to serve the residents near Forrester Boulevard and submitted passenger counts showing that substantial ridership had been generated in that area in the short time that the new route had been in use. Those counts also showed that as of February 14, 1972, 22 persons were boarding and alighting in the O-R-W corridor itself. Finally, they showed significant patronage continued to use service on Carrleigh Parkway. The company further expressed its belief that the current route was best able to serve the bus riding public in the area in question, and that the O-R-W corridor was adequate for bus travel.

Residents from the O-R-W area who appeared at the hearing strongly opposed the existing route. They emphasized the hilly, winding nature of the streets and testified that several danger spots, in particular twisting roadways beyond the crest of hills, existed. They presented posed photographs to show the difficulties of maneuvering when on-street parking existed, with particular reference to the environs of a local park which has no off-street parking. Finally, they argued that the buses had greatly aggravated road condition problems and that they constituted a large unnecessary increment of heavy vehicles to inadequate residential streets.

The staff found that the O-R-W corridor was suitable for transit buses and recommended that strictly from a transportation engineering point of view the route along O-R-W should be retained. However, it suggested an additional possible alternative to the existing route. It proposed splitting Route 18 operations with approximately two-thirds to serve the Forrester-Carrleigh Parkway service. This proposal had several possible drawbacks. First, it would reduce frequencies for all passengers. Second, there are people living on or near the present route who have communicated to us their preference for retention of the status quo. They argue that non-bus riders should not prevent provision of the most attractive bus service possible, and that the present route has been building ridership steadily. We agree with the importance of making bus service as attractive as possible, and we realize that the proposed route change would make service somewhat less

convenient for some current riders, but we believe that as adjusted, the service will remain convenient for Walden Glen residents and attractive to possible future patrons as well.

Another objection to this route split lies in the nature of Rolling Road itself. Rolling Road is a divided four lane main arterial with heavy traffic and no pedestrian crossing signals. Both A. B. & W. and members of the general public have spoken of the difficulty for prospective passengers in crossing Rolling Road. We do not believe, however, that this is an insurmountable problem. Numerous school children presently cross Rolling Road in this area to attend West Springfield High School.

Finally, there was testimony concerning advantages of frequent service over a base route in order to attract and maintain ridership. While acknowledging that a split route can in fact have disadvantages, we must state that we do not believe this deficiency to be debilitating. Numerous routes in the Washington Metropolitan area are presently successfully operating with less service than either of the two legs suggested by the staff which would have an A.M. peak schedule of seven trips along Carrleigh Parkway between 6:30 and 7:50 and 14 trips over Forrester Boulevard between 6:15 and 8:25.

A more serious problem would be in the varying destinations of service. In order to establish a consistent method for splitting the service, the staff recommended that all the Farragut Square express buses be sent via Forrester and all the local buses destined for 12th and Pennsylvania Avenue precede via Carrleigh Parkway. In addition, the two Southwest Mall express buses would go via Carrleigh while service to the Pentagon would be split between the two routes. This would deprive Carrleigh Parkway residents of direct service to the Farragut Square employment area. Adequate service to both Washington and the Pentagon would remain, however, and we believe that routing the express service via the higher density Forrester-Rolling route is proper.

The record in this case was held open for a week after the hearing for interested parties to attempt to compromise the issues involved. Within that period, the Northern Virginia

Transportation Commission, which had previously supported the existing route although it had suggested rerouting non-rush hour service off O-R-W, communicated to us its support of the split routing proposal of the staff. We respect the aims and opinions of that Commission, which is sponsoring the express service on Route 18, and we too find that the split route proposal as presented by the staff will provide convenient service for the residents in the Cardinal Forest - Walden Glen area. The staff trip designations and schedule adjustments for the A.M. peak period appear sound and we shall instruct the staff to meet with A. B. & W. officials to coordinate the adjustment of evening service along those lines.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

1. That the Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington Transit Company Route 18 be, and it is hereby, to cease operations on Oakford Drive, Roxbury Avenue and Winslow Avenue in West Springfield, Virginia, effective July 3, 1972.

2. That Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington Transit Company Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity No. 11 be, and it is hereby, amended by incorporating Thirteenth Revised Page 15, cancelling Twelfth Revised Page 15, attached hereto and made a part hereof, effective July 3, 1972.

3. That Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington Transit Company Route 18 be split in West Springfield, Virginia, with Farragut Square express buses serving Forrester Boulevard and Downtown Terminal local buses serving Carrleigh Parkway, as described in this order. The Commission staff and company management shall jointly plan the operation of this adjusted routing.

4. That the Commission staff contact appropriate Virginia State Highway officials concerning the need for pedestrian traffic signals on Rolling Road.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION:

  
DOUGLAS N. SCHNEIDER, JR.  
Executive Director

- No. 114 Between junction Eastside South Four Mile Run Drive and South George Mason Drive, over South George Mason Drive to junction Westside South Four Mile Run Drive, thence over Westside South Four Mile Run Drive to junction Virginia Highway No. 244 (Columbia Pike) and return over the same route.
- No. 115 From junction Virginia Highway No. 235 (Duke Street) and Braddock Road, over Braddock Road to junction Southhampton Drive, thence over Southhampton Drive to junction Parliament Drive, thence over Parliament Drive to junction Rolling Road, thence over Rolling Road to junction Braddock Road, thence over Braddock Road to junction Twinbrook Road, thence over Twinbrook Road to junction Pickett Road, thence over Pickett Road to junction Braddock Road and return over the same route.
- No. 116 From junction Columbia Pike and Maple Street, over Maple Street to junction Annandale Road, thence over Annandale Road to junction Virginia Highway No. 236 and return over the same route.
- No. 117 From junction Telegraph Road and Willowood Lane, thence over Willowood Lane to junction Appletree Drive, thence over Appletree Drive to junction Rose Hill Drive and return over the same route.
- No. 118 From junction Jefferson Davis Highway and ramp to Virginia Highway No. 233, East, right on ramp and via overpass Route No. 233, East to Abingdon Drive, thence over Abingdon Drive to Warehouse Road, thence over Warehouse Road to T-7 service road, thence over T-7 service road to Abingdon Drive, thence over Abingdon Drive to Smith Boulevard, thence over Smith Boulevard to Abingdon Drive, thence over Abingdon Drive to Virginia Highway 233, thence over Virginia Highway 233 to Jefferson Davis Highway and return over the same route.
- No. 119 From junction South Walter Reed Drive and South Four Mile Run Drive, over South Four Mile Run Drive to junction South 16th Street and return over the same route.
- \*No. 120 From junction Keene Mill Road and Hanover Avenue, thence over Keene Mill Road to junction Greeley Boulevard, thence over Greeley Boulevard to junction Carrleigh Parkway, thence over Carrleigh Parkway to junction Forrester Boulevard, thence over Forrester Boulevard to junction Rolling Road, thence over Rolling Road to junction Greeley Boulevard, thence over Greeley Boulevard to Keene Mill Road and return over the same route.
- \*No. 120A From junction Carrleigh Parkway and Forrester Boulevard, thence over Carrleigh Parkway to junction Keene Mill Road, thence over Keene Mill Road to junction Rolling Road and return over the same route.