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Reroute Northbound Mount Pleasant Street buses to 16th Street

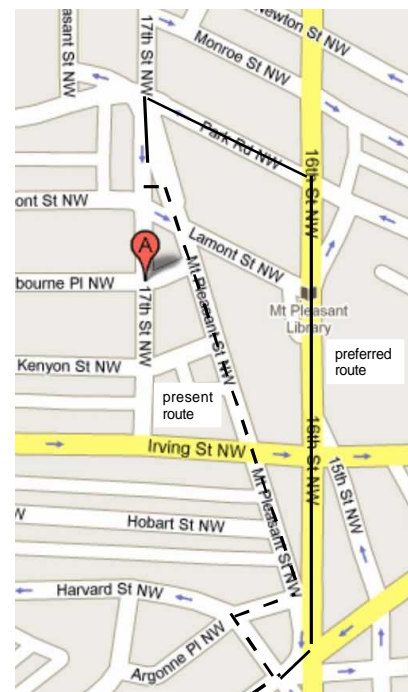
Resolved, that ANC1D advises the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and the District Council Committee on Public Works and the Environment, to reroute the northbound buses on Mount Pleasant Street Northwest north of Irving Street, to 16th Street.

Why: Mount Pleasant Street is a neighborhood commercial area, featuring numerous restaurants and a couple of small parks. This is a “town square” where residents should be able to socialize outdoors with their neighbors and patronize their neighborhood businesses. Sidewalk cafes are a means of combining neighborhood socialization with neighborhood business patronage, and enhances the environment of Mount Pleasant Street through the visibility of people on the street, as opposed to traffic, vacant sidewalks, and parked cars.

The heavy bus traffic on Mount Pleasant Street significantly degrades this neighborhood outdoors experience. Besides the number 42 bus, which originates in Mount Pleasant, this street is used by H8, H3, and H4 buses as an east-west through route. During the evening hours when residents might like to enjoy sidewalk dining, or music in the park, buses pass by at a rate of 25 or more per hour, roughly one bus every two minutes. The stopping and starting at every bus stop, and every intersection, adds to the noise pollution that makes it impossible to enjoy the sidewalk cafes, and our neighborhood park, in peace.

The background noise level on Mount Pleasant Street is under 70 dB(A), low enough for easy conversation. Each passing bus imposes an 85 dB(A) noise burst on occupants of the adjacent sidewalks. Conversation stops, and musical performances in the park are interrupted. Lamont Park is especially hard hit, as the 42 bus executes a complete circuit of the park, imposing its noise on the occupants of the park four times in succession.

This unpleasant noise burden could be significantly reduced simply by putting the northbound and west-bound buses on 16th Street, turning left onto Park Road into Mount Pleasant, instead of using Mount Pleasant Street as a neighborhood through route. Sixteenth Street, being a major arterial, is wide, and already used by numerous trucks and buses, so the incremental noise burden of additional buses on this street will be insignificant, compared to its dominance of the ambience of Mount Pleasant Street.



The bus stops along the east side of Mount Pleasant Street could then be converted to parking, which is much needed by residents and commercial establishments.

It could be argued that the bus stops on the east side of Mount Pleasant Street are a convenience for users of the bus. But 16th Street is only a block away, not so distant that walking to bus stops on 16th would be a great inconvenience. Furthermore, riders of the H buses passing through Mount Pleasant may be just as likely to originate in nearby Columbia Heights. On the whole, the benefits of shifting these bus routes from Mount Pleasant Street to 16th Street will greatly outweigh the costs.

Passed by 5 to 0 vote at the legally noticed, public meeting of ANC1D on April 20, 2010, with a quorum present. Voting "yes": Commissioners Edwards, Scott, Lepanto, Bosserman, McKay.