

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
COMMITTEE REPORT**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

DRAFT

TO: All Councilmembers

FROM: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Committee of the Whole

DATE: November 2, 2021

SUBJECT: Report on PR 24-359, “Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021”

The Committee of the Whole, to which PR 24-359, the “Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021” was referred, reports favorably thereon, and recommends approval by the Council.

CONTENTS

I.	Background and Need.....	1
II.	Legislative Chronology.....	4
III.	Position of The Executive.....	4
IV.	Comments of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.....	4
V.	Summary of Testimony.....	4
VI.	Impact on Existing Law.....	5
VII.	Fiscal Impact.....	5
VIII.	Section-By-Section Analysis.....	5
IX.	Committee Action.....	6
X.	Attachments.....	6

I. BACKGROUND AND NEED

On February 12, 2021, PR 24-359, the “Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021” was introduced by Chairman Mendelson. The purpose of PR 24-359 is to appoint Ms. Tracy Hadden Loh as a principal member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA Board) for a term to end June 30, 2025.

Dr. Loh is a Ward 3 resident. She received her Bachelor of Science in Computational Math from Brown University and her Doctorate City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Currently, Dr. Loh is a Fellow at the Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution. Prior to that she was a Senior Data Scientists at the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis at the George Washington University, Director of Research at the Rails to Trails Conservancy, and Program Manager at the Transportation Alternatives Data Exchange. She served as the Ward 1 Representative on the City

of Mount Rainier, Maryland City Council. She has an extensive library of writings from her time at Brookings. Dr. Loh is a native Washingtonian from the Friendship Heights area where she still resides, and she is a District of Columbia Public Schools graduate.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is a regional instrumentality that was created in 1967 through an interstate compact between the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia to plan, develop, finance, and operate a regional transportation system in the Washington metropolitan area.¹ Pursuant to the Compact, WMATA is governed by the WMATA Board. The purpose of the WMATA Board is not only to govern WMATA, but to develop policies and provide oversight for the management, maintenance, funding, and operation of the transportation system.

The WMATA Board is comprised of eight principal directors (voting members) and eight alternate directors. The Signatories to the Compact – the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia – and the federal government are required to appoint two voting members and two non-voting members to the WMATA Board.² The members, both voting and non-voting, are appointed by the Council of the District of Columbia (representing the District), the Washington Suburban Transit Commission (representing Maryland), the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (representing Virginia), and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation (representing the federal government).³ Principal and alternate members may be removed or suspended from office only as provided by the law of the Signatory from which he or she was appointed.⁴

In 2012 the Council adopted the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors Act.⁵ The purpose of this Act is to establish requirements for the appointment and service on the WMATA Board for the four members appointed by the Council.⁶ It requires a District appointee: (a) to have experience on issues that would be useful to serving on the WMATA Board; (b) to be a patron of the services provided by WMATA; (c) to limit service to two consecutive four-year terms; (d) to file an annual report with the Council each calendar year regarding his or her attendance record, and an affirmation that the member uses bus, rail, or paratransit services provided by WMATA; (e) to not have been an employee of WMATA within one year of appointment to the WMATA Board; (f) to serve at the pleasure of the Council; and (g) to adhere to the District's Code of Conduct.⁷

¹ See generally Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact, approved November 6, 1966 (80 Stat. 1324; D.C. Official Code § 9-1107.01 *et seq.*) [hereinafter Compact].

² Compact § 5.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ (D.C. Law 19-286; D.C. Official Code § 9-1108.11).

⁶ Committee on Government Operations, Report on Bill 19-744, the “Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors Act of 2012”, Page 2, November 8, 2012.

⁷ D.C. Official Code § 9-1108.11. WMATA Board members appointed by the Council must have experience in one of the following areas: transit planning, transportation planning, land use planning, transit or transportation management or other public-sector management, engineering, finance, public safety, homeland security, human resources, law, or knowledge of the WMATA region's transportation issues.

Table 1: Membership of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Resolution	Member Jurisdiction	Position	Appointee	Term Expiring
<i>PR 23-359</i>	<i>District of Columbia</i>	<i>Principal Director</i>	<i>Tracy Hadden Loh</i>	<i>June 30, 2025</i>
R. 24-90	District of Columbia	Principal Director	Lucinda Babers	June 30, 2023
R. 24-91	District of Columbia	Alternate Director	Tom Bulger	June 30, 2024
	District of Columbia	Alternate Director	Vacant	June 30, 2025
	Maryland	Principal Director	Don Drummer	N/A
	Maryland	Principal Director	Gregory Slater	N/A
	Maryland	Alternate Director	Thomas Graham	N/A
	Maryland	Alternate Director	Vacant	N/A
	Virginia	Principal Director	Paul C. Smedberg (Chair)	N/A
	Virginia	Principal Director	Matt Letourneau	N/A
	Virginia	Alternate Director	Canek Aguirre	N/A
	Virginia	Alternate Director	Walter L. Alcorn	N/A
	Federal Government	Principal Director	Sarah Kline	N/A
	Federal Government	Principal Director	Kamilah Martin-Proctor	N/A
	Federal Government	Alternate Director	Bryana Helfer	N/A
	Federal Government	Alternate Director	Vacant	N/A

During the Committee’s public hearing on PR 24-359, Dr. Loh testified that she is a regular rider of Metro, predominantly MetroBus. She is current in all of her District and federal taxes and has no foreseen conflicts of interest. Should one arise, she would recuse herself. In response to questions about the recent Blue Link derailment and apparent train axle gauge issues that caused it, she testified that the public expects vigorous oversight from the WMATA Board, and that it is critical that she would ask questions to find the cause and prevent such issues in the future. She also testified to safety and frequent, reliable service being the cornerstones of a strong transit system. She also expressed a commitment to racial equity and inclusion ensuring that Metro provides the same level of service to riders of different racial and ethnic groups, using a data-driven approach.

Dr. Loh is a supporter of increased use of electric buses, and as a Board member she would want to push for electrification and learn more about possible constraints on Metro’s part in getting there. She also committed to listening to community members, particularly around the issue of elimination of bus routes in communities that rely on service. She testified that she understands the environmental and health impacts surrounding bus barns in the District, being a neighbor of one herself. She wants to reduce waste and increase revenue by maximizing transit-oriented development on WMATA-owned real estate and wants to work with the District to implement a priority bus network with increased ridership efficiency.

Based on her credentials and her transit advocacy, the Committee recommends the appointment of Dr. Loh to serve on the WMATA Board. Moreover, the Committee believes Dr. Loh meets the requirements to serve on the WMATA Board pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 9-1108.11 as she has experience in transit and planning, transportation planning; and knowledge of the WMATA region's transportation issues; and she is a regular user of the services provided by WMATA. For the reasons stated above, the Committee recommends adoption of PR 24-359.

II. LEGISLATIVE CHRONOLOGY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| October 1, 2021 | PR 24-359, the “Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021” is introduced by Chairman Mendelson. |
| October 5, 2021 | PR 24-359 is “read” at Regular Legislative Meeting of the Committee of the Whole and the referral to the Committee of the Whole is official. |
| October 8, 2021 | Notice of a Public Roundtable on PR 24-359 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> . |
| October 8, 2021 | Notice of Intent to Act on PR 24-359 is published in the <i>District of Columbia Register</i> . |
| October 20, 2021 | The Committee of the Whole holds a public roundtable on PR 24-359. |
| November 2, 2021 | The Committee of the Whole marks-up PR 24-359. |

III. POSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE

Dr. Loh is the Council's appointee to the WMATA Board. The Executive did not submit comments with respect to the appointee.

IV. COMMENTS OF ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSIONS

The Committee received no testimony or comments from any Advisory Neighborhood Commission on PR 24-359.

V. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The Committee of the Whole held a public hearing on PR 24-359 on Wednesday, October 20, 2021. Copies of the testimony regarding PR 24-359 are attached to this report.

David Alpert, Public Witness, testified in support of PR 24-359 and spoke of his work with Dr. Loh during his time at Greater Greater Washington. He testified that she is an incredibly

effective board member of that organization and that he thinks Dr. Loh will be an asset to the WMATA Board.

Tracy Hadden Loh, Appointee, testified and answered questions from Chairman Mendelson regarding her background and experience as it pertains to the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and her interest in serving on the WMATA Board.

The Committee also received written testimony from Laura Miller Brooks of Federal City Council in support of the appointment (attached). The Committee received no testimony or comments in opposition to Dr. Loh's appointment.

VI. IMPACT ON EXISTING LAW

Members appointed by the Council to serve on the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority are appointed pursuant to section 5 of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact, approved November 6, 1966 (80 Stat. 1324; D.C. Official Code § 9-1107.01(5)), and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors Act of 2012, effective April 27, 2013 (D.C. Law 19-286; D.C. Official Code § 9-1108.11).

VII. FISCAL IMPACT

PR 24-359 will have no fiscal impact on the District of Columbia budget or financial plan. Pursuant to section 6 of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Compact, approved November 6, 1966 (80 Stat. 1324; D.C. Official 9-1107.01(6)), members of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority are not entitled to compensation.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| <u>Section 1</u> | States the short title of PR 24-359. |
| <u>Section 2</u> | Confirms the appointment of Tracy Hadden Loh as a member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to serve a term to end on June 30, 2021. ⁸ |
| <u>Section 3</u> | Requires that a copy of the resolution, upon adoption, be transmitted to the appointee, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and to the Office of the Mayor. |

⁸ Dr. Loh takes the seat previously filled by Stephanie Gidigbi Jenkins who asked to not be reappointed to the Board.

Section 4

Provides that PR 24-359 shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in the District of Columbia Register.

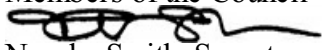
IX. COMMITTEE ACTION

X. ATTACHMENTS

1. PR 24-359 as introduced.
2. Nominee's response to Committee questions.
3. Written testimony and comments.
4. Legal sufficiency determination.
5. Committee Print for PR 24-359.

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20004

Memorandum

To : Members of the Council
From :  Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council
Date : Friday, October 1, 2021
Subject : Referral of Proposed Legislation

Notice is given that the attached proposed legislation was introduced in the Office of the Secretary on Friday, October 01, 2021. Copies are available in Room 10, the Legislative Services Division.

TITLE: "Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021", PR24-0359

INTRODUCED BY: Chairman Mendelson

The Chairman is referring this legislation to Committee of the Whole.

Attachment
cc: General Counsel
Budget Director
Legislative Services


Chairman Phil Mendelson

1
2
3
4
5
6 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION
7
8
9

10
11 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
12
13
14

15
16 To appoint Ms. Tracy Hadden Loh as a principal member of the Board of Directors of the
17 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.
18

19 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
20 resolution may be cited as the “Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
21 Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021”.

22
23 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia appoints:

24 Ms. Tracy Hadden Loh
25 43rd Street NW
26 Washington, D.C. 20015
27 (Ward 3)

28 as a principal member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
29 Authority, in accordance with section 5 of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
30 Compact, approved November 6, 1966 (80 Stat. 1324; D.C. Official Code § 9-1107.01(5)), and
31 the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors Act of 2012, effective
32 April 27, 2013 (D.C. Law 19-286; D.C. Official Code § 9-1108.11), replacing Stephanie Gidigbi,
33 for a term to end June 30, 2025.

34 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,
35 upon its adoption, to the appointee, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and to
36 the Office of the Mayor.

37 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in
38 the District of Columbia Register.

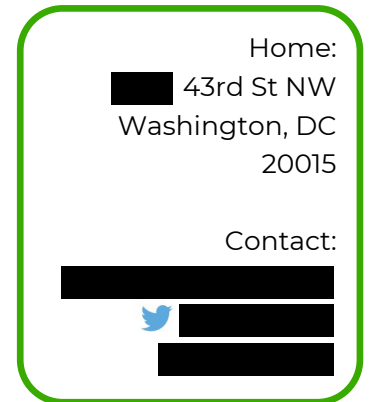
Tracy Hadden Loh, PhD



Fellow
Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking
Metropolitan Policy Program
Brookings Institution

Other Work Experience

- **Senior Data Scientist — Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis**
George Washington University
2016 — 2019
- **Ward 1 Representative — City Council**
[City of Mount Rainier, MD](#)
May 2015 — February 2017
- **Director of Research — [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#)**
2012—2016
- **Program Manager — [Transportation Alternatives Data Exchange](#)**
2008—2012



Select Writing from Brookings

- **Hadden-Loh, T.**, and D.W. Rowlands. (2021) Reinvesting in urban cores can revitalize entire regions. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Available [online](#).
- **Hadden-Loh, T.**, and J. Kim. (2021) To recover from COVID-19, downtowns must adapt. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Available [online](#).
- **Hadden-Loh, T.**, and H. Love. (2021) Why ‘activity centers’ are the building blocks of inclusive regional economies. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Available [online](#).
- **Hadden-Loh, T.**, and A. Goger. (2020) In the age of American ‘megaregions,’ we must rethink governance across jurisdictions. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Available [online](#).
- **Hadden-Loh, T.** and L. Fishbane. (2020) COVID-19 makes the benefits of telework obvious. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Available [online](#).
- **Hadden-Loh, T.**, and J. Kim. (2020) ‘Economic mapping’ can help cities target the best places for density and growth. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Available [online](#).

Fun Biographical Notes

- Native Washingtonian and DCPS graduate
- Two daughters ages 7 and 2, who love riding the bus
- My only viral [tweet](#) ever was about a friend’s Metrorail-themed wedding

Tracy Hadden Loh, PhD



Additional Select Publications

- **Hadden-Loh, T.**, C. Leinberger, and J. Chafetz. (2019) Foot Traffic Ahead: Ranking walkable urbanism in America's largest metros. Washington, DC: Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis. Available [online](#).
- Leinberger, C., and **T. Hadden-Loh**. (2018) Catalytic development: (Re)creating walkable urban places. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Available [online](#).
- Lowry, M., and **T. Hadden-Loh**. (2017) Quantifying bicycle network connectivity. *Preventive Medicine*, Vol. 95(Suppl), pp. S134-S140. Available [online](#).
- Lowry, M., Furth, P., and **T. Hadden-Loh**. (2016) Prioritizing new bicycle facilities to improve low-stress network connectivity. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, Vol. 86, pp. 124-140.
- **Hadden-Loh, T.** and A.L. Smith. (2012) Making the journey a destination. *Public Roads Magazine*, Vol. 75(6). Available [online](#).
- **Hadden-Loh, T.**, Walljasper, J., Sonenklar, D., Mills, K., and D. Levinger. (2011) Active transportation beyond urban centers. Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Washington, DC. Available [online](#).



Education

..... **Ph.D.** in City and Regional Planning
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
December 2012

..... **Sc.B.** in Computational Math
Brown University
May 2004

..... Environmental Protection Agency Science
to Achieve Results (STAR) Fellow, 2007—2010



Service



..... **Contributor and Chairwoman of the Board of Directors**
[Greater Greater Washington](#)

..... **Member**, Standing Committee on Bicycle Transportation, the Transportation Research Board of
the National Academy of Sciences
February 2015—February 2021

..... **Member and Secretary**, Board of Directors, Gateway Community Development Corporation
2015—2017

..... **Member and Chair**, Citizens Advisory Committee, the Transportation Planning Board of the
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
2012—2014

October 14, 2021

Dear Chairman Mendelson,

I am excited and honored to be nominated, and humbled to receive the Council's consideration to represent the District's interests on the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) board.

Below please find enclosed my answers to the prehearing questions from your October 8 letter.

- 1) Please provide a copy of the Financial Disclosure Statement you filed with the Office of Campaign Finance or the Board of Ethics and Government Accountability. If you have not filed a Financial Disclosure Statement, please provide answers to questions 2-8 in lieu of that statement.

I have not filed such a statement; answers to questions 2-8 follow.

- 2) Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business with the District Government in which you have a beneficial interest valued in excess of \$5,000, including publicly traded stock.

None directly; all of the equities and securities that I own are through index funds.

- 3) Please provide the name of each business entity transacting any business (including consulting) with the District Government from which you or your immediate family have received (or are receiving) income for services rendered in excess of \$1,000 during the past two years.

I am a full-time salaried employee of the Brookings Institution, which receives DC Revenue Bond financing. The Institution does not receive contributions or hold any contracts with the DC government. However, employees of the Institution are part of a long tradition of public service to the city, including Alice Rivlin.

- 4) Please provide the name of each business entity transacting business with the District Government in which you or any member of your immediate family serves as an officer, director, partner, or agent. Also list the position(s) held, a brief description of the entity, and any other pertinent details.

None.

- 5) Please provide the name of any lender and the amount of liability for each outstanding liability borrowed by you or any member of your immediate family in excess of \$5,000. Do not include loans from a federal or state insured or regulated financial institution, or from any business enterprise regularly engaged in the business of providing revolving credit or installment accounts.

None.

- 6) Please list the location of all real property located in the District of Columbia in which you have an interest with a fair market value in excess of \$5,000.

My spouse and I own the home we occupy at 5356 43rd St NW, Washington, DC 20015.

7) Please list all professional and occupational licenses held by you.

None.

8) Please list any professional organizations of which you are currently a member.

None.

9) Please list all boards and commissions connected with the District government on which you are or have been a member, and include the term of service for each.

None.

10) Please list any other boards (e.g. Boards of Directors of a non-profit) on which you are a member.

I am the chair of the Board of Directors for Greater Greater Washington.

11) Do you have any outstanding (past due) liability for taxes, fees, or other payments to the District, federal, or other state or local governments, either contested or uncontested? If so, please provide documentation of attempts to pay the amount owed or to resolve the disputed claim.

No.

12) Do you or any member of your immediate family have any interest, financial or otherwise, that may directly or indirectly pose a conflict of interest for you in performance of your duties as a member of the WMATA Board?

No.

13) Please describe any local political activity (i.e. the District of Columbia local elections or campaigns) that you have engaged in over the past five years, including any campaign contributions to a local candidate or political action committee.

Candidate	Race	Date of Contribution	Total amount
Zachary Parker	Ward 5 Council	8/31/21	\$50
Mysiki Valentine	BOE At-Large	8/11/20	\$50
Randy Downs	Ward 2 Council	8/26/20	\$25
Patrick Kennedy	Ward 2 Council	2/28/20	\$50
Janeese Lewis George	Ward 4 Council	8/1/19	\$50
Jeremiah Lowery	At-Large Council	9/19/17	\$100
Eugene Kinlow	Ward 8 Council	1/26/15 & 4/4/15	\$100

14) Are you registered with any local, state, or federal government to lobby? If so, list the jurisdiction(s) in which you are registered.

No.

15) Do you understand how much time will be required of you to serve on the WMATA Board and do you commit to spend that time?

Yes. My understanding is that the minimum time commitment is 5 hours/week, or 20 hours per month, mostly during business hours on Thursdays to participate in board committee and executive meetings. I am very committed to making sure that in me the District has a prepared, vocal representative in the room at each and every meeting.

16) Why have you agreed to serve, and how do you plan to help the WMATA Board fulfill its role and mission during your time on the WMATA Board? Include in your answer what you believe are the most important priorities for the WMATA Board. Your answers should include a discussion of environmental issues and transit needs.

I have agreed to serve because public service is my purpose and I believe sustainable high-quality public transit is both possible and essential for our communities, our region, and the planet. Accessible, convenient, safe public transportation is essential for all DC residents, everyone in the region, and for doing our part to create a more sustainable world. I would be honored to play a role in improving our regional system.

Not everyone is cut out for public service. It is not easy to digest technical briefings, be both an active listener and participant in long meetings, engage with community members, speak decisively on controversial issues, or work productively with people who do not agree with you. I have learned over my life in public service that by training and personality, I am capable of these things, and that it brings me personal joy and satisfaction to put these capabilities to work for my community.

I want to serve on the WMATA board in particular because I believe that there are simple priorities the system can advance that will improve its balance sheet, the rider experience, the number of rides and riders served, and thus ultimately benefit the budgets and constituents of all of the member jurisdictions of the Compact. As a board member, I would be uniquely positioned to push for these changes in two ways:

- 1) As a voice in executive and committee meetings by asking the right questions of staff**
- 2) By facilitating coordination between WMATA, DDOT, the Mayor's Office, and the Council to align strategy**

What are these priorities?

- 1) Reduce waste. There are many ways that we can get more out of the existing system that we already have. I see two main prongs to this: on the asset side, WMATA must step up to world-class Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) on the many un- or under-utilized parcels and buildings it owns. On the operations side, we must end the waste of congestion. Traffic congestion reduces the quality of bus service and makes it more**

expensive, which is a terrible paradox. It also increases emissions and decreases safety. I will work to bring every tool possible to end congestion.

- 2) Balance growth and maintenance. While system expansions and ribbon cuttings tend to attract the most public and media attention, it's often the less noticed work that makes the most important difference to the people who use the system. The baseline should be absolute excellence in our existing network. Existing users of the system are loyal customers that deserve capital and operating investments too.**
- 3) Racial equity. We have the data we need in order to operate WMATA in a way that is racially just. Can we say to ourselves that we know this system provides the same level of service to riders of different racial and ethnic groups? We need to be able to say and do that.**

17) Please discuss any past and present experiences not already mentioned that you believe are relevant to support your appointment as a member of the WMATA Board.

I have been a regular user of the WMATA bus and rail system my entire life. I am familiar with the history of the system and its many branches, having lived in Wards 3, 5, 6, and Prince George's County. Currently, I ride the bus every day to take my older daughter and my neighbor's children to school. When I'm not teleworking, I take Metrorail to my office. I also regularly drive and bicycle for transportation purposes, and I don't believe transportation is a zero-sum game between modes where when one wins, the others lose. We all win when these modes are well integrated together.

I have a PhD in city and regional planning and am an expert on regional governance, land use, and transportation issues, and a fellow in the Metropolitan Policy Program of the Brookings Institution. My core expertise is bringing rigorous data and analysis together to inform public policy. This has many direct applications to WMATA board service. For example: building reasons and frameworks for the Compact jurisdictions to work together; setting WMATA's priorities as a system; and making sure that every day operations and practices are aligned with those priorities.

I lived for three years in Prince George's County in Maryland, where I was active in Maryland politics. I am familiar with the stakeholders and ready to reach out to board members from the other Compact jurisdictions to get things done. That said, every action I take would be while serving as a conduit for a coordinated 'District agenda' on the WMATA board.

Sincerely,



Tracy Hadden Loh

Testimony by David Alpert
PR24-359, Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021
October 20, 2021

Mr. Chairman, good afternoon.

I was very excited to learn of your nomination of Tracy Loh as a District representative to the WMATA Board of Directors. As a longtime resident, regular rider, urban policy scholar, parent, and involved participant in the District's policy conversations, she combines many qualities that are important to members of this important board.

She has demonstrated a deep understanding of transportation policies, an ability to work with regional leaders, and a willingness to speak her mind and challenge practices that need challenging. She understands organizational dynamics and transportation planning principles alike.

I have been following the WMATA Board closely for many years. While serving on the Riders' Advisory Council, I led a committee which made governance recommendations for the WMATA Board in a report in 2010. Those recommendations called for members who were regular riders and who also had a degree of public stature. Both are necessary.

Members need to understand the experiences of riders and not simply focus on moving trains and buses from one end of a line to the other. The board has been very disconnected from riders' experiences, often only hearing information that the General Manager wanted them to hear. As a rider and as a person with strong community ties, Dr. Loh will be well positioned to help the board know what is really going on and hopefully to improve its public input practices.

WMATA is also an agency which is ultimately funded by its component jurisdictions, and so its board cannot simply operate inside a bubble. Board members need strong relationships with the funding entities, such as DDOT and the council, and Dr. Loh brings a proven ability to work well with these.

Her work demonstrates her commitment to equity, something the WMATA Board must hold as one of its highest priorities. Transit service has been subpar in many areas of our region where people most need it, and often fare structures have been unfair, such as with the penalty for those transferring from rail to bus. For many years the WMATA board showed no concern about this greatly inequitable policy. Fortunately, thanks in large part to District representatives like former member Stephanie Gidigbi, that policy has been changed, hopefully forever. Dr. Loh can protect these gains and also continue to fight for the many other ways Metro policies and practices can be more equitable.

The WMATA board must conduct adequate oversight without micromanaging, just as the DC Council provides oversight of government agencies. The agency's safety lapses, as seen most recently with the derailment that led to all 7000-series cars being pulled from service, demonstrate the urgency of this role. Dr. Loh is well equipped to dig into the issues and ask important questions.

I am very enthusiastic about this nomination and encourage the Council to confirm Dr. Loh as soon as possible, so she can immediately set about the critical but difficult task of helping WMATA navigate its significant current challenges. Thank you.

Testimony of Tracy Hadden Loh, Ph.D.
For PR 24-359, Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021
Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole. I am Tracy Hadden Loh, and I am a Fellow at the Brookings Institution. I am also a native Washingtonian, the spouse of an essential worker, and the mother of two little girls. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on my nomination to represent the District of Columbia on the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, WMATA.

Leadership in Crisis

I first would like to take a moment to acknowledge the extraordinary crisis WMATA is facing with the 7000 series car safety issues that the public learned about last week, after a train derailed on the Blue Line. I am not privy to any special information on these unfolding events, but I want to highlight a few key points that come to mind as I observe the crisis unfold:

- Both the public and other elected officials serving in the Compact jurisdictions, such as yourselves, want to see vigorous oversight from the WMATA board at all times and especially in a time of crisis. It is critical that DC's vacant seat on the board be filled as soon as possible, and with a representative who is ready to ask questions. I am ready.

- For example: staff at WMATA have been aware of axle issues with the 7000 series for years. Why were these issues not resolved? What is the responsibility of the manufacturer? Most of the 6000 series is out of service because of the decoupling issue. Can we safely and rapidly get some of these cars back on the tracks? WMATA has a priority bus network already in place. What can we do to increase awareness of this option and maximize its usefulness?

A Bit About Me

I'm a regular user of the WMATA bus and rail system and have been my entire life. In the years I attended the DC public school system, of which I am a proud graduate, I went to the bus barn on Western Avenue to get tokens for the bus - which are probably now collectors' items. I know the whole system: I've lived in Wards 3, 5, 6, and Prince George's County. I've relied on transit while traveling throughout the United States, Central America, Europe, and Asia and I have a global sense of transit system design and practices. I've seen some of the best of what the world can do with transit, from the Hong Kong MTR Corporation's shiny shopping centers to Amsterdam's electric buses. But I have also stood unsheltered in a ditch on the side of a road and waited far longer than 20 minutes for a bus. I've stood in the cold and watched my hair, wet from a shower, freeze. I've had to walk when the bus never came. But I still love and rely on transit every day, and I believe our system in particular can be truly great: extremely convenient; sociable and safe; fiscally and environmentally sustainable; and a literal engine of racial and economic mobility.

Currently, I ride the bus every day to take my older daughter and my neighbor's children to school. When I'm not teleworking, I then take Metrorail to my office. I also regularly drive and bicycle for transportation purposes, and I believe transportation works best when many modes are integrated.

My qualifications

I have a PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in city and regional planning and am an expert on regional governance, land use, and transportation issues, which I use as a fellow in the Metropolitan Policy Program of the Brookings Institution. My core expertise is bringing rigorous data and analysis together to inform public policy.

I also lived for three years in Prince George's County in Maryland, where I was active in Maryland politics. I am familiar with many current stakeholders and ready to reach out to board members from the other Compact jurisdictions to get things done. That said, every action I take would be as a conduit for a coordinated 'District agenda' on the WMATA board.

Why I want to serve

I want to serve on the WMATA board because public service is my purpose in life and I believe sustainable high-quality public transit is both possible and essential for our communities, our region, and the planet. I would be honored to play a role in improving our regional system.

Not everyone is cut out for public service. It is not easy to digest technical briefings, be both an active listener and participant in long meetings, engage with community members, speak decisively on controversial issues, or work productively with people who do not agree with you. I have learned over my life in public service, which has run the gamut from condo board president to church deacon and elder to two years on a small-town city council, that by training and personality, I am capable of these things, and that it brings me personal joy and satisfaction to put these capabilities to work for my community.

I want to serve on the WMATA board in particular because I believe that there are simple priorities the system can advance that will improve its balance sheet, the rider experience, the number of rides and riders served, and thus ultimately benefit the budgets and constituents of all of the member jurisdictions of the Compact. As a board member, I would be uniquely positioned to push for these changes in two ways:

- 1) As a voice in executive and committee meetings asking the right questions, both probing what is presented and exploring what is not presented
- 2) By facilitating coordination between WMATA, DDOT, the Mayor's Office, and the DC Council to align strategy

What are these priorities?

Reduce Waste

There are many ways that we can get more out of the existing system. I see two main prongs: on the asset side, WMATA must plan and develop world-class Transit-Oriented Development

(TOD) on the many un- or under-utilized parcels and buildings it owns. WMATA generates between \$15 million and \$50 million in rent and advertising revenue from its assets annually. It is not out of the question to imagine a world in which WMATA makes 10 times more in revenue from real estate. In a good year, that would be \$500 million, or almost half of WMATA's operating budget. And that's before accounting for increased revenue from new trips to all the newly developed origin points and destinations we could add to the existing system without laying one new inch of rail, building any new stations, or extending any new bus lines.

On the operations side, we must end the waste of congestion. Traffic congestion reduces the quality of bus service and makes it more expensive, which is a terrible paradox. Traffic congestion also increases emissions and decreases safety. District residents, and the District's budget, have much to gain from liberating buses from traffic. We need to bring every tool possible to end congestion: bus priority lanes with enforcement; all-door boarding and easy payment; and appropriately pricing and allocating road right-of-way. By implementing these changes, which have succeeded elsewhere, we can move more people, more quickly, generating more new revenue than the initiatives cost.

Balance growth and maintenance

While system expansions and ribbon cuttings tend to attract the most public and media attention, it's often the less noticed maintenance work that makes the most important difference to the people who use the system. The baseline should be absolute excellence in our existing network. Existing users of the system are loyal riders who deserve capital and operating investments.

The coronavirus pandemic has caused dramatic shifts in the ways that people travel, and it is particularly notable that on some roadway segments, traffic now exceeds pre-pandemic levels while Metrorail ridership does not, much like restaurant revenue in residential neighborhoods and suburbs compared to downtown DC. Revitalizing downtown and rethinking Metro go hand

in hand. As a thought leader in this space I will bring every ounce of expertise, creativity, every connection and relationship, and every data insight I can muster to meet this challenge.

Racial equity

We have the data we need in order to operate WMATA in a way that is racially just. Can we say to ourselves now that we know this system provides the same level of service to riders of different racial and ethnic groups? We need to be able to say and do that. I have lived on both sides of the east-west divide in our region, and transportation has a very important role to play in literally connecting us across that divide, which has tremendous implications for our economic recovery as well as our social and sustainability goals.

Another angle relates to WMATA's diverse workforce. The system is facing unprecedented challenges, but it is operated every day by experts who are close to the system's problems when it comes to issues like safety, fare enforcement, accessibility, and reliability across different routes and jurisdictions. As a board member, I would like to see both WMATA riders and workers engaged in creating a just and prosperous mass mobility system for our city and region.

In conclusion, I am very committed to making sure that, in me, the District has a prepared, vocal representative in the room at each and every meeting. I thank you for your time and consideration.



FEDERAL CITY COUNCIL

**Testimony by Laura Miller Brooks
Senior Transportation & Infrastructure Associate
Federal City Council**

Committee of the Whole

[PR 24-359](#), Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Tracy Hadden Loh
Appointment Resolution of 2021

October 20th, 2021

Dear Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole,

My name is Laura Miller Brooks, and I am the Federal City Council's Senior Transportation and Infrastructure Associate. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the passage of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021. This would appoint Ms. Tracy Hadden Loh as a principal member of the Board of Directors of the 16 Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

The Federal City Council (FC2) is a business-led non-profit civic organization dedicated to the improvement of the District of Columbia. Founded in 1954 to harness the resources and creativity of the public, private sector, and philanthropic sectors, to address the District's biggest problems, the FC2's work around transportation and the environment has historically focused on long-range transformational investments that enhance the vitality and resiliency of the District. Examples include the founding and continued funding of the Metro system, Union Station and Pennsylvania Avenue's redevelopment, and many other projects driven by our community. Recently, the FC2's transportation work has focused on increasing access to opportunities for more District residents by transforming the bus, and enhancing last mile connections. Over the course of the COVID crisis, the FC2 has focused on the fact that today's actions around reopening and recovery will have long-range impacts, especially in the realm of transportation, use of public space, and infrastructure.

None of us will have succeeded if a recovered DC looks the same as the DC that existed before the pandemic. This is especially true in the realm of transportation and infrastructure. At the heart of this is, what does WMATA's future hold? What will Metrorail and Metrobus look like next month, next year, next decade, or in 2050?

The WMATA board will have immense influence over the future of the District and region. They will have to face maybe WMATA's biggest existential threat in the system's existence -- the return of ridership after the pandemic, and the system's long-term sustainability -- with bravery. And in the same budget cycle, they have to engage with some of the most transformational infrastructure projects our region has seen

in more than a century -- Union Station's next century transformation, the Blue/Orange/Silver line expansion, and the Bus Transformation Project are just a few of the projects on the docket for the next two years. The future of downtown DC, the region's ability to create more affordable housing, increase access to high quality jobs and education, stimulate economic growth, and combat the climate crisis are wholly connected to (and dependent upon) the future of Metro.

Tracy Hadden Loh knows all of this, and so much more. She's not just professionally one of the most qualified people in the country for this role, she's personally committed to the District, and to making Metro everything it can and should be. The Federal City Council is thrilled with the nomination of Tracy Hadden Loh to the WMATA board. We trust she will bring the insight, expertise, passion, and love of the District and transit riders to this seat. We appreciate her commitment, and we look forward to supporting her and the District's priorities in this role.

I am available to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue.

1 **DRAFT COMMITTEE PRINT**
2 Committee of the Whole
3 November 2, 2021
4
5
6

7
8 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION
9

10 23-359
11
12

13 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
14
15
16
17

18 To appoint Ms. Tracy Hadden Loh as a member of the Board of Directors of the Washington
19 Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.
20

21 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
22 resolution may be cited as the “Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
23 Authority Tracy Hadden Loh Appointment Resolution of 2021”.

24
25 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia appoints:

26 Ms. Tracy Hadden Loh
27 43rd Street NW
28 Washington, D.C. 20015
29 (Ward 3)

30 as a principal member of the Board of Directors of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
31 Authority, in accordance with section 5 of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
32 Compact, approved November 6, 1966 (80 Stat. 1324; D.C. Official Code § 9-1107.01(5)), and
33 the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board of Directors Act of 2012, effective
34 April 27, 2013 (D.C. Law 19-286; D.C. Official Code § 9-1108.11), replacing Stephanie Gidigbi,
35 for a term to end June 30, 2025.

36 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia shall transmit a copy of this resolution,
37 upon its adoption, to the appointee, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and to
38 the Office of the Mayor.

39 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately