

June 15 Community Meeting Q and A

Metro has prepared the below questions and answers (Q&A) addressing comments raised at the June 15, 2021 community engagement meeting on the Northern Bus Garage Reconstruction Project.

Construction Activity at Northern Bus Garage

Q: There is a lot happening on 14th Street, with the bus stop, bike lane, retail delivery, trash and recycling pick-up, etc. How will Metro manage potential conflict between all these activities?

A: The intersection at 14th and Decatur will be signalized for vehicle and bicycle traffic to assure safe bicycle movement along 14th street. The designated commercial loading zone will be laid out such that it will not interfere with the bus stop on the east side of 14th street. The traffic movements in and out of the east curb lane will need to be executed with the same level of care as currently required in the presence of a designated bike lane. In addition, all roadway markings that delineate the various functions will be updated to comply with DDOT's latest standards for designated bike corridors.

Q: Is the change in height minimal? What is the building height on 14th Street and is there a higher setback?

A: The planned height of the exit portal at Decatur is lower than the existing portal. There will be no changes to the height of the historic façade which ranges from 18-24' above grade, but the new building will rise to approximately 47' above grade at the midpoint of the block. This increase in height above the historic façade occurs approximately at a 60' further setback. The new administration end of the building near Buchanan Street will be about 10' higher than the current parking deck parapet.

Q: What activities are happening now in the garage? Recently, there has been some noise level increases and disturbance to the community.

A: The construction team was in the garage chipping concrete for test pits and hand excavation. The test pitting process requires us to remove a small section of the concrete slab to access the soil underneath. These activities are taking place during daytime hours, from 6:30 am – 4:00 pm. There is some noise disturbance during the concrete removal, but this process is predominantly hand excavation and is intended to minimize disruption to the community. We are also drilling two test shafts for the new building foundation system. For this process, all drilling is taking place inside the bus garage and all drilling and testing will be completed over the next 45 days.

Q: District law has certain decibel levels that no one can exceed. How do you ensure you comply and what permits do you have to be doing work in the building [Northern Bus Garage]?

A: All current work is compliant with DDOT regulations. As we advance into the demolition and new construction phases of the project, we will be monitoring noise during construction to make sure we remain compliant with District regulations relevant to the construction activities. Noise mitigation measures, if required, may involve the use of special equipment or special noise management barriers. Metro did receive permits for all drilling work from DOEE. The permits are posted on the southern glass entry door on 14th Street.

Q: What is Metro doing about rodent control?

A: Metro has an ongoing contract with a pest management firm for rodent and pest control for the bus garage.

Q: How many retail spaces will be included in the facility, and have the vendors been selected?

A: We are considering several concept layouts and have engaged CB Richard Ellis, a full service commercial real estate firm, to ensure we optimize the use of space. One of the concepts under consideration has four to six retailers between the administrative building and the larger retail space south of the tower. In terms of vendor selection, we do not have any vendors contracted and typically would not until construction is nearly complete.

Environmental Management

Q: For the site assessment, where will the 18 well points be located? And are any of them located on Buchanan Street?

A: The 18 monitoring points are located throughout the building property as well as across the street and down gradient from the bus garage. Four wells will be located inside the building near the intersection of Iowa and Arkansas Avenue and some wells will be placed alongside the Arkansas and Buchanan sides of the facility in the green space. In addition, a series of 4 wells will be installed in the public space along the east side of Arkansas Avenue near the edge of the sidewalk. Metro's goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of contamination originating from the garage property, including prior to Metro's occupancy. In partnership with DOEE, we will investigate all potential sources of contamination, including sources along Buchanan Street. Metro's commitment is to identify and treat all contamination to meet or exceed DOEE standards.

Q: Why are there four wells at Arkansas and Iowa Avenue? Can the plan between WMATA and DDOT be shared with the community?

A: The well point locations were identified in collaboration with DOEE, which specifically requested further investigation into these areas based on the results of the initial sampling program conducted in 2020. We will determine with DOEE if the plan can be shared publicly.

Q: Describe the well points; are they going to be enclosed from the community?

A: There are two different well types being installed. For the monitoring wells (long term) we will drill down to bedrock and collect samples and install PVC pipes with lockable steel covers that will be maintained so periodic sampling can be conducted. These will not be accessible to the community and will be located inside the building. The other excavation activities will include temporary well points, where we will drill to bedrock, collect samples, and re-fill the excavated areas with cement grout per DOEE standards. Any disturbed tuft areas outside the building will be restored. All drill spoils will be collected and stored in steel drums inside the building prior to removal and proper disposal offsite.

Art in Transit

Q: What is the proposed timetable for installation of temporary art banners on the construction site exterior fencing?

A: Currently, we don't have a set timeline. The installation of the art panels is contingent on the construction phase perimeter fencing installation. The perimeter fencing will be erected prior to the start of construction and should take approximately one month to complete. We will not be able to commence construction until we have the Mayor's Agent determination on the related raze permit.

Q: What happened to the historic artwork that was previously proposed? Why is there such a focus on buses?



A: As a reminder, the artwork on the fencing is temporary. The artwork presented at previous meetings was placeholder content and did not represent proposed artwork. Metro's Art in Transit team is in the design phase for the artwork on the perimeter fence the design presented during this meeting is only associated with the perimeter fence. These fabric panels will be installed as the long-term perimeter security fencing is installed prior to the start of construction. Panels will be installed around the entire project perimeter and will remain in place throughout construction. The idea behind the design for the proposed, temporary art panels is to highlight the neighborhood, and the evolution of transportation in the context of the garage and its connection with the city, through a series of scenes that will be installed on the construction fencing. The intent of the panels to help screen some of the construction activities. These art panels will be removed at the end of construction. We hear the community's concerns and we will be sure to take them into consideration as we move forward with planning. Metro will work with the ANC to create a panel of community representatives to review the proposed graphics before they are finalized. Long-term art installations at the site will be discussed more in-depth at our next community meeting.

Q: Will there be a URL or QR codes on the artwork, where people can find out more information about the project?

A: Yes, it is something that we are planning to include.

Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Strategy

Q: Has Metro taken into consideration the uptick in personal vehicle registration in D.C.? People are opting out of public transportation due to COVID concerns. Has that been factored into the four key points?

A: Ridership has dropped due to COVID-19, but we expect it to recover over time. Because fleet management is a long-term planning exercise, Metro must keep the fleet and necessary support in place to sustain service and support ridership when it returns to normal levels.

Metro conducts a fleet planning exercise every five years. Over the next two to three years, Metro may conduct additional planning exercises and updates which will take into consideration customer demand, level of services needed, and any continued impacts from COVID-19.

Q: In your presentation, you classified Metro's peer groups – one of those classifications is the "Wait and See" group. Is that the group Metro is in?

A: Metro is committed to transitioning to a zero-emission bus fleet. Preparations are ongoing as a part of Metro's Electric Bus Test & Evaluation program, which will see its first electric buses join the fleet in 2022. So, Metro is not in the wait and see group. We are eagerly doing the work now to make sure we have the right infrastructure in place to support a fully electric bus fleet.

Q: Of the proposed \$375 million to reconstruct the bus garage, roughly how much of that will be spent on underground tanks for fuel, oil, transmission fluid, etc.? How does Metro justify that spending?

A: To maintain service levels and ensure no disruption to customers, we need some redundancy in the fueling systems. The diesel fueling system investment is only approximately 2% of the overall project costs. For example, if there is an extended network wide power outage, it is not possible to recharge the electric buses with emergency backup generators. That's why we continue to invest in diesel storage; those investments do not impact Metro's commitment to achieving a fully zero-emission fleet by 2045.

Q: Does this mean more construction down the line? Will Metro need more construction in 2040 to remove the tanks and make room for electric buses?

A: The bus garage will be able to support electric buses with no effect on the fuel delivery system of underground diesel tanks. Additionally, we will need to maintain some diesel-fueled buses at the garage, which can be used in emergency scenarios, so we do not plan to remove the UST when the building is running a ZEB fleet. To comply with current UST regulations, double wall tanks will be used that will be installed in a secondary concrete containment vault that has removable covers. This facilitates removal and replacement in the future when the tanks have reached the end of their useful life, without the need for extensive construction excavation.

As the electric buses are purchased and brought on-line, they will be a one for one replacement with existing diesel buses from a storage standpoint at NBG and no more room will need to be made for them. The bus facility is also being designed to accommodate the additional equipment that will be needed to support the electric bus fleet including charging stations and overhead layouts for the charging pantographs and the rooms needed for the additional electric switchgear.

Q: What assurances do we have that Metro is moving away from diesel fuel? What are Metro's commitments to the neighborhood, how can we be sure that diesel buses won't remain status quo for the bus garage?

A: The world is moving towards electrification, and Metro's sustainability goals and bus fleet strategy reflects its commitment to the community. On June 24, Metro's Board of Directors approved a major change to its Metrobus fleet that supports the region's clean air goals and is consistent with the planning for the Northern Bus Garage project. Click [here](#) to access the full news release.

Q: How do bus emission numbers compare with car emissions in the area?

A: Every trip taken with Metro instead of a car reduces greenhouse gas emissions and helps to ensure cleaner air in the region. Bus trips emit approximately 25% less carbon dioxide per mile compared to a single-occupancy car and rail trips emit approximately 65% less per mile in comparison to a single-occupancy car.

Q: How can community members participate in Metro's Board meetings?

A: Metro's Board of Directors meetings are broadcast on the Metro website and YouTube channel. Public comments may be submitted through 9:00 am on the Wednesday prior to a scheduled Board meeting. There are three ways to submit a comment:

- **By phone:** Call us at 202-962-1901 to record your comment.
- **Video selfie:** Record a video message, two minutes or less, and email to speak@wmata.com.
- **Email:** Fill out the webform [here](#). Please limit your comment to 300 words or less.