



Bus Stop Customer Information Study

Summary Report Findings 5/29/09



Purpose

The main purpose of the Bus Stop Customer Information Study (BSCIS) is to:

- Provide a consistent, reliable and effective customer information system
- Improve the customer experience

Project Methodology

- Evaluate Metro's Bus Stop Information program
 - Solicit input from Metro's staff
 - Solicit input from Metro's jurisdictional partners and stakeholders
 - Conduct public meetings to solicit information about needs and market condition
- Conduct nationwide best practices review
- Review available technologies and softwares
- Prepare recommendations

Project Goals

- To provide critical information for customers and make them comfortable with at-stop information
- Present WMATA's service as an integral part of the local community
- Change the on-street information system to a more consumer oriented design
- Streamline the internal production process for maximum efficiency

Metro's Bus Stop Information - Overview

Comprehensive in coverage

- Over 12,300 stops with flags and poles,
- Over 7,000 bus stop information cases
- Over 3,100 bus stop shelters

Challenges - Overview

Readability

- Lots of stops served by many bus routes
- Use of standard sized schedule boxes and showing all timepoints leads to extremely small type sizes (4 points at some stops)
- In many stops no room for displaying schedules for all the routes

Challenges - Overview (Cont.)

Complex multi-system regional environment

- A variety of carriers operate
- Little regional design coordination
- Each carrier uses different formats
- Creates a confusing array of flags, schedule displays and other information
- Creates clutter for bus stops and confusion for users

Metro Environment Overview



Challenges – Overview (Cont.)

Old technology base

- Based on generations of old software and a logistic process
- Labor intensive and requires numerous manual steps to translate that database information to what actually appears on the street
- Little or no significant updates in over five years
- Compromises reliability and clarity of on-street information

Challenges - Overview (Cont.)

Maintenance of on-street information system

- Many steps required to produce and post schedule
- Posting of information done by outside contractors
- No incentive for contractors to update or improve the provision of on-street information.
- Process is cumbersome, creates disconnect in responsibility and leads to control and efficiency problems.

Challenges - Overview (Cont.)

Design Issues

- Current on-street signage system is graphically out-of-date
- Not designed to be integrated with the latest technologies (PDAs, real time GPS or digital display systems.)

Best Practices Review – Key Findings

- There is a diversity in solutions agencies use to address their on-street passenger information
- All have formal on street information systems
- All have a minimum of flag and route I.D's
- Bus stops are a key point of purchase location
- Stop-specific schedule displays are more common
- On-street information is viewed as an important component of a multi-tiered information system

Key Findings (Cont.)

- Map information displays available in about 50 percent of systems
- 25% of systems are experimenting with applications of new technologies (LED, PDA and cell phone solutions)
- Most systems keep operation of on-street information system in-house. A few contract out the production of paper schedule inserts.
- Virtually all the systems had larger flag displays than Metro allowing for bigger type size displays.

Key Findings (Cont.)

- **Key Information Elements at Bus Stops**
 - **Flag**
 - **Phone Number**
 - **Nextbus/LED**
 - **Route Number and Schedule**
 - **Stop Location**
 - **How to Ride Information**
 - **Unique Bus Stop Number**
 - **Logo**
 - **Website Address**
 - **Telephone/Website**
 - **Maps**
 - **Accessible I.D.**
 - **Fare Information**

Lessons Learned

- Multiple ways to provide useful information
- Commitments to readability
 - Type sizes of 12 points (or higher) on schedule displays
 - 2 to 3 inches route number displays
- Critical information first
- Stop specific schedule information more common than full timepoint displays

Lessons (Cont.)

- Strong branding is important (logo etc.)
- Use of integrated software packages enables system to work more efficiently
- Technology is evolving on ways of passing information to customers (GPS, Nextbus, PDA)
- Maintain operation of bus stop information in-house

Recommendations

- Adopt new readability standards
 - 12 point type minimum – Schedule/
Time Point info
 - Flag type sizes of 2.5 inches or higher
- Provide integrated stop signage solution for multiple carriers (Standardize)

Recommendations (cont.)

- Adopt standardized but multiple format stop displays
 - Standard flag and schedule box
 - Design kiosks to accommodate multiple routes
 - Electronic LED/LCD options
- Make the information system more efficient by fully integrating software interface

Recommendations (cont.)


- Use modular flags that use individual insets for each specific route. This will allow
 - Update information easily
 - Support the brands of different Metro services as well as other carrier IDs.
- Brand bus stop flags with the Metro brand system. Current signs don't carry the Metro logo.

Recommendations (cont.)

- Use stop specific schedule information with timepoint chart
- Incorporate Next Bus as an integrated feature of new sign design.
- Adopt new technological approaches to produce bus stop information
- Bring bus stop information distribution function in-house

Suggested New Format Type

- Critical information only
- Larger ADA friendly type size 12pt min.
- Running time chart replaces need for full timepoint displays
- Stop specific times

BUS STOP SCHEDULE			
P6 Anacostia – Eckington Line			
Destination: Rhode Island Ave. Brentwood 			
• Operates on Friday (Sat. AM) Only			
Weekdays Only			
Counterclockwise – Northbound			
5:10 AM	9:40	3:40	8:45
5:30	10:10	3:58	9:20
5:51	10:40	4:18	9:54
6:11	11:10	4:40	10:28
6:31	11:40	5:00	11:03
6:49	12:09 PM	5:20	11:37
7:09	12:39	5:40	12:07 AM
7:30	1:09	6:00	12:37
7:50	1:39	6:22	1:07
8:10	2:09	6:45	1:37
8:30	2:39	7:10	2:07
8:50	3:01	7:37	2:37
9:10	3:16	8:11	
Saturdays Only			
Counterclockwise – Northbound			
5:48 AM	11:06	4:36	10:19
6:18	11:36	5:06	10:52
6:48	12:06 PM	5:36	11:23
7:18	12:36	6:06	11:54
7:48	1:06	6:32	12:24 AM
8:08	1:36	7:04	12:54
8:36	2:06	7:37	1:24
9:06	2:36	8:10	1:54
9:36	3:06	8:43	2:54
10:06	3:36	9:16	
10:36	4:06	9:47	
Sundays Only			
Counterclockwise – Northbound			
6:50 AM	11:17	4:01	8:41
7:20	11:52	4:37	9:10
7:50	12:27 PM	5:13	9:43
8:20	1:02	5:49	10:16
8:57	1:37	6:25	10:49
9:32	2:13	7:01	11:22
10:07	2:49	7:35	11:55
10:42	3:25	8:08	
Travel Time For Route 32/36			
Approximate travel times to next destinations			

Suggested New Flag Type

- Critical information only
- Larger ADA friendly type size 2.5 inch min.
- Modular multi-piece approach
- Include route destination or name
- Include stop number for electronic identification
- Stop Location
- Reflective





Questions?