

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Action <input type="radio"/> Information	MEAD Number: 101631	Resolution: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
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TITLE:

Blue/Yellow Realignment

PURPOSE:

To obtain approval of the Blue/Yellow Lines service realignment

DESCRIPTION:

Service Plan

In March 2011, the Board was briefed on the Blue/Yellow Lines service realignment proposal that will serve the following purposes:

- Address peak period crowding and service reliability at the Rosslyn portal;
- Realign service to better match changing ridership market; and
- Transition service to address requirements of the future Dulles rail extension.

The Blue/Yellow Lines service realignment will be a major change to the service pattern of the Metro system during the peak A.M. and P.M. service periods. Riders of the Orange, Blue, Yellow and Green Lines will be affected. One-third of the Blue Line trains from Franconia/Springfield station, or three trains per hour, will be shifted to operate via the Yellow Line bridge to the L'Enfant Plaza station and on to Greenbelt station. To offset the shift three Orange Line trains per hour will be added from West Falls Church to Largo.

The Blue/Yellow lines service realignment will provide increased service levels on multiple lines including the Yellow /Green Lines (L'Enfant Plaza station to Greenbelt station) and Orange Line (West Falls Church station to Courthouse station). It is estimated that 108,000 riders (43% of peak period trips) to various destinations within the system will benefit from increased service and reduced travel time. The travel time savings resulting from reduced wait times are expected to total 953 hours during each peak period. The increased travel time for some Blue Line travelers due to increased wait times will total 337 hours, so the net time savings for the service change will be 615 hours during each peak period.

Communications Plan

The service and map changes are the most significant changes to the rail system in a

decade. Therefore, the communications approach must ensure that regular customers understand the change now and in the long-run, as well as being comprehensible for infrequent riders and first-time users of the system.

That said, it is imperative that customers, employees and key stakeholders are involved in the process early. The communications plan is a staged, multi-sensory approach that focuses on rider benefits, communicates in ways the public listens, and reaches customers at all touch points of their journey.

Since 2010, Metro has been conducting customer research that includes reviews of industry best practices, several online surveys and numerous focus groups. In the process, nearly 20,000 people have provided comments or opinions. From this research, Metro obtained information about customer needs and preferences concerning communicating service change information, naming the stations, navigating the system, and designing signage. The results were instrumental in developing the first phase of the communications plan.

Phase one began earlier this year with public input on the map and signage and will continue into the first quarter of calendar year 2012 with the preparation of materials for distribution to the public. Phase two will begin in spring 2012 with elaboration of the changes; advertisement; and business, community, and public outreach. Phase three will be completed during the summer of 2012 and will seek customer and employee feedback, as outreach continues through traditional and social media channels, electronic notifications and advertising.

Map Research

An important part of the Phase 1 work was developing the next generation of Metrorail's map that will depict the blue/yellow realignment service change and will also preview the upcoming service to Dulles. Metro's map designer Lance Wyman was retained to evolve his original design. Map design concepts were tested with customers in focus groups and in an online survey that attracted more than 17,000 participants. Among the research findings were that the map is used for way-finding and navigation versus a source that customers would consult for service changes. Metro customers value the simplicity of the Metro map and want to stay as close as possible to the iconic design. When showing the blue/yellow rush hour service, customers prefer dash lines at the end of the lines, similar to how some other transit properties display rush hour services.

Future Dulles service should be shown as an extension rather than running the "under construction" line through the core before service is in operation. They also see the Dulles extension as the Silver Line rather than the Orange Line or another color.

If customers have a complaint about the existing map it is that the long station names clutter it. To help navigation and simplify the map, they favor a primary/secondary approach to station names. In response to the initial reaction to station names, a review of Metro's station name policy was completed.

Implementation

In addition to the customer communication strategies required, the most significant

implementation tasks will be related to the design and installation of maps and signage. In total, over 2,600 station signs including way-finding, station lists, platform signs, interior directional signage, and pylons will need to be replaced. More than 5,000 system maps will need to be printed and installed in stations and rail cars. Over 1,200 fare charts for fare vending and station kiosks will need to be updated.

The rail service schedules will be developed three months prior to the start of service. Rail operators and station managers will receive training information on the service change in advance of the change. The service is planned to be initiated in June 2012.

FUNDING IMPACT:

<p>This action does not have any new impact on funding. Background information on project funding is provided for information purposes only.</p> <p>Initial funding for this service initiative has been approved as part of the FY2012 budget approval. The operating costs for FY2012 will be \$500,000 for rail start-up costs and marketing and communication expenses. The capital costs for this project to be expended in FY2012 include modified signage, system map, and fare charts totaling \$2.7 million.</p> <p>Funding for the first full-year of operations will be included in the draft FY2013 budget for approval. The operating costs for FY2013 will be \$2,900,000 for additional rail service.</p>	
Project Manager:	Tom Harrington
Project Department/Office:	PLJD/Office of Long Range Planning

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the Blue/Yellow Lines service realignment

PRESENTED AND ADOPTED: October 27, 2011

SUBJECT: BLUE/YELLOW LINE SERVICE REALIGNMENT

2011-44
RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, Staff presented the proposed service change and related project elements for the Blue/Yellow Line Service Realignment to the October 13, 2011 Customer Service and Operations Committee; and

WHEREAS, The service realignment addresses peak period crowding, increases peak period service crossing the Potomac River, and prepares for the transition to rail operations when the Dulles corridor rail extension begins service; and

WHEREAS, The service realignment will affect peak period service only and will shift one-third of the existing Blue Line trains to operate as the Yellow Line service between Franconia-Springfield and Greenbelt, and new Orange Line service will be added between West Falls Church and Largo Town Center; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Blue/Yellow Line Service Realignment is approved and is expected to begin by June 2012; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Carol B. O'Keeffe
General Counsel

Motioned by Mr. Downs, seconded by Mr. Nichols

Ayes: 8 - Mrs. Hudgins, Mr. Downs, Mr. Downey, Mr. Nichols, Mrs. Hynes. Ms. Bowser, Mr. Acosta and Mr. Barnes