

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

☒ Action ☐ Information

MEAD Number:
202049

Resolution:
☒ Yes ☐ No

TITLE:

Extension of Rush Hour Promise

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Provide information about the proposed six-month extension of the Rush Hour Promise program, which recognizes Metro's improved reliability and builds customer confidence in weekday rail and bus service.

PURPOSE:

Request that the Board approve a six-month extension of the Rush Hour Promise to align the program with Metro's fiscal year.

DESCRIPTION:

The Rush Hour Promise provides a trip credit to customers with registered SmarTrip® cards who experience a qualifying delay. To demonstrate continued confidence in rail and bus service in 2019, Metro proposes to extend the Rush Hour Promise for an additional six months. The terms of the program, which are set by the General Manager, also would be enhanced to reduce the time of a qualifying delay from 15 minutes to 10 minutes.

Key Highlights:

- Metro's Rush Hour promise was approved by the Board of Directors in January 2018 to demonstrate confidence in weekday rail and bus reliability and was established through the end of Calendar Year 2018.
- Since the program launched, 89 percent of all rush hour trips on Metrorail have arrived on time (as of November 1).
- In recognition of the fact that rail and bus service is more reliable, Metro proposes to continue the Rush Hour Promise through at least June 2019 and enhance the terms of the program to include delays of 10 minutes or more.
- If extended, the program would remain in effect for an additional six months, with the future of the program beyond June 30, 2019, determined in the FY20 budget.

Background and History:

On January 25, 2018, the Board approved Resolution 2018-03 establishing a Customer Confidence Program through the end of Calendar Year 2018. Now referred to as the “Rush Hour Promise,” the program demonstrates to customers that Metro is dedicated to delivering reliable service and holds the Authority accountable for lengthy delays.

The Rush Hour Promise is a first-of-its-kind service guarantee in the transit industry because it provides automatic credits to qualifying customers on rail. Delayed customers on Metrobus can request a credit by contacting the Customer Service call center.

Through November 13, 2018, the Rush Hour Promise credited back nearly \$1.0 million for 263,000 trips with delays greater than 15 minutes. This amount represents approximately 0.3 percent of all rush hour trips during this period and is 50 percent lower than original projections.

Discussion:

Improving service delivery and demonstrating accountability is critical for retaining customers and bringing back those who left in recent years. Metro’s “Back2Good” efforts have resulted in notable improvements to service reliability and the overall customer experience. For example:

- Railcar performance is now the highest in eight years, with railcars traveling more than 100,000 miles on average between a problem resulting in a delay
- New rail preventive maintenance programs have cut infrastructure-related disruptions in half
- Rail fire incidents down nearly 40% in the past year
- Bus on-time performance improved to its best year-to-date performance since reporting began in 2010 (79%)
- Several major safety & reliability capital improvement projects completed in 2018:
 - Rebuilt decades-old track infrastructure at the tightest curve, outside McPherson Square on the Blue/Orange/Silver lines
 - Completed structural repairs and improved platform boarding for customers at Rhode Island Ave Station
 - Replaced switches and installed new grout pads that support the rails on the aerial structure at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Station
 - Conducted structural repairs and rail infrastructure improvements (such as grout pad reconstruction and fastener replacement) along the entire Yellow Line bridge

Because of these and other improvements, and to align the program with the fiscal year, Metro proposes to extend the Rush Hour Promise for an additional

six months, through the end of June 2019.

In addition, the General Manager intends to adjust the terms of the program to include more customers who are delayed in the system. The minimum threshold for a qualifying delay would be reduced from 15 minutes to 10 minutes beginning January 1, 2019.

Since its implementation, the Rush Hour Promise has helped leverage improved service to support customer retention and new ridership. Customer survey results indicate that the Rush Hour Promise has restored confidence in reliability, which attracts new and return trip making. In contrast to past trends showing customers were dropping off after poor service experiences, most of the customers who received delay credits continue to ride Metro. Over the last nine months, 93 percent of the unique riders who received delay credits are back using the system.

FUNDING IMPACT:

No additional funding anticipated beyond the program's initial budget.	
Project Manager:	Lynn Bowersox
Project Department/Office:	Customer Service, Communications and Marketing

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	July 2016: Launch of MyTripTime July 2016: 15-minute entry/exit grace period for Metrorail customers goes into effect November 2016: Back2Good initiatives announced January 2018: Rush Hour Promise Begins
Anticipated actions after presentation	January – June 2019: Rush Hour Promise program extension

RECOMMENDATION:

Board approval of a six-month extension of the Rush Hour Promise

SUBJECT: EXTENSION OF CUSTOMER CONFIDENCE PROGRAM (RUSH HOUR PROMISE)

RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, In Resolution 2018-03, the Board of Directors established the Customer Confidence Program, known as the "Rush Hour Promise," and authorized the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer (GM/CEO) to provide customers with credits for fares paid for trips experiencing excessive delays pursuant to guidelines, terms and conditions, and exclusions established by the GM/CEO through December 31, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Over the last nine months of Rush Hour Promise, 93 percent of the riders who received delay credits are back using Metrorail and, therefore, staff recommends extending the program through June 30, 2019; and

WHEREAS, No additional funding will be needed to extend the program for an additional six months because the program has \$1.5 million remaining of its original \$2.5 million budget; NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors authorizes the GM/CEO to continue the Rush Hour Promise through June 30, 2019, with terms and conditions established by the GM/CEO; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That, in order to continue the Rush Hour Promise without interruption, this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Patricia Y. Lee
General Counsel