

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
202196

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Covid-19 Recovery Plan & Budget Update

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Staff will provide the Board with an update on WMATA's Covid-19 recovery efforts, including service restoration plans, impacts to the budget, operations, and capital project delivery.

PURPOSE:

This presentation communicates the current status, next steps and anticipated impacts associated with WMATA's Covid-19 recovery efforts.

DESCRIPTION:

This presentation provides the Board with updates regarding how Metro is addressing Covid-19 for customers, employees, and project delivery.

Key Highlights:

- The jurisdictions in the region are moving forward with phased reopening plans, however, some restrictions remain in place.
- Metro's top priority remains the safety and well-being of its workforce and customers.
- WMATA is in the Stabilization phase of its recovery plan; preparations have begun for the Managed Re-Entry phase during which 70-80 percent of normal service levels are expected to be restored.
- The FY2020 operating budget, despite substantial fare revenue losses, will be balanced with CARES Act funding.
- Updated FY2021 financial performance indicates significant impact on fare revenue which is being managed by reducing operating expenses and controlling subsidy requirements through the use of CARES Act funds.
- While some capital projects are delayed due to Covid-19 impacts, Metro is accelerating other safety and state of good repair work, with the net result that overall FY20 capital budget performance remains on target for above 95% investment rate.
- Platform Phase 2 reconstruction on the Orange Line in Virginia is progressing well as are the July Track Work projects.

Background and History:

Strategic Approach

Metro is powered by its employees and their wellbeing is our top priority. For their protection during this pandemic, changes were implemented to work schedules and practices to reduce their risk of exposure to the corona virus. To protect our customers, while providing transportation for essential trips, WMATA decreased service to align with stay-at-home policies and suppressed ridership by reducing bus service to Sunday levels during the week; decreased rail frequency, closed the lowest ridership stations, and launched a public information campaign to encourage use of Metro for essential travel only.

In coordination with federal, state, and local officials, as well as public health experts, Metro is preparing for multiple contingencies and a phased recovery. Best practices are being shared with peer transit agencies domestically and internationally. The planned service recovery levels are based on various workforce availability scenarios and anticipated customer social distancing. While ridership demand is difficult to predict for the next 12-18 months; the goal is to increase service in stages, ahead of demand, to maintain social distancing for customers to the extent possible.

Each stage of the recovery plan addresses twin priorities: protect Metro's workforce and protect customers. The nature of Metro's large operation provides a challenge to quickly increasing capacity. It takes more than two months to develop new service plans, draft daily schedules that connect buses and trains, implement the operator assignment process ("pick") for 4,000 employees under the collective bargaining agreement, modify information systems, and give employers and riders notice of service changes. Recognizing the required advance work, staff is pre-planning three basic levels of service that can be implemented in response to changing conditions in the region. Metro must predict when the region will be ready for increased service and prepare to deliver that service in advance of rider demand.

Social distancing cuts effective capacity by approximately 80% on railcars and buses (reduced to approximately 20-25 people per railcar and 10 people per standard bus), implying the need for five times the level of service to carry the same number of customers as under normal service conditions. While Metro will use these guidelines to inform the timing of service increases, optimal distancing will be challenging even when accompanied by regional efforts to stagger worker re-entry.

Customer Research

Metro has been regularly surveying rail and bus customers to understand their concerns and preferences during the pandemic. We have also reached out to employers through business leadership organizations, a special website, and surveys, as well as our own SmartBenefits employers, to anticipate demand changes from return to work plans.

Ridership remained largely unchanged in June, as customers continued to travel mostly for essential trips to work, food stores, pharmacies and medical appointments. However, both rail and bus customers reported more travel to see and care for family and friends in May, as well as for leisure activities in warmer weather. Customers who ride bus only report making fewer trips during the pandemic, but nearly half are still riding – with two out of three riding three times per week or more. Bus customers who have continued to ride during the pandemic tend to have lower household incomes (69% report <30K) and are more often minorities (82% identify as African American).

One in four customers who use rail, or both rail and bus services, are aware of Metro's recovery plan and most favor the plan. Metro is developing communications campaigns throughout all of the communities it serves to increase awareness of the three-phase plan, as well as new safety protocols to protect the wellbeing of employees and customers.

Customer Focus groups highlighted the need to reduce anxiety about riding Metro by promoting the steps being taken to keep riders safe and reminding riders what they can do to reduce their risk. In August, a new campaign will be launched to reassure riders that Metro is taking proactive measures to help reduce the spread of Covid-19 and to let riders know what to expect when they ride. In-system signage will focus on what riders can do to stay safe (e.g., wear a face covering, maintain social distance (as feasible), wash hands frequently, don't ride when sick, etc.)

Service Recovery Plan

As the region's leaders relax stay-at-home policies and some riders begin to return to workplaces, three pre-planned service levels -- Stabilization, Managed Re-entry and Recovery -- have been developed to provide as much service as possible within Metro's anticipated workforce availability. Stabilization is the current phase of pandemic service, with some improvements in bus service effective in June 2020.

Metro seeks to maximize service delivered safely and reliably during the Covid-19 pandemic while balancing the needs of employees and customers. From a safety perspective, Metro is aware of capacity limitations the ability to inspect and maintain the equipment and facilities needed to provide service. From an operator perspective we are aware of workforce impacts from Covid-19. For reliability, the focus is on the ability to perform preventive maintenance and capital renewal.

Stabilization Service Plan

A gradual moderate increase in total travel demand is anticipated during this phase. Non-essential work travel resumes on a limited basis; restaurants, bars and evening activities are likely to remain restricted, and large social gatherings and events are prohibited. Most schools and childcare facilities will remain closed. Within this service plan, there is some ability to increase service, particularly for rail, as warranted by the relaxation of stay-at-home orders.

The Stabilization service plan was implemented in May and adjusted in June to improve route efficiency and reduce crowding. Stabilization service maintains similar or better service than what existed in May, but schedule changes for the workforce make it sustainable and predictable. Service patterns during the Stabilization phase represent approximately 35% of normal peak service. In addition to service changes, Metro changed its work environment. Changes include modified work schedules and intense cleaning and disinfection combined with ventilation to protect essential workers. Mobile handwashing stations have been installed and face coverings are required of all employees. Administrative employees continue to perform their duties through telework, which is being maximized to promote social distancing and compliance with stay-at-home orders.

Metrobus. Service is provided on limited routes during this phase and headways are reduced. The span of service is 5am/8am to 11pm and all customers not using the ADA ramp board and alight through the rear door. No fares are collected during Stabilization service and operators are empowered to skip stops when the bus is too full for social distancing.

Metro rail. During Stabilization Metro rail headways are 15 minutes on the Redline and 20 minutes on all other lines. Service hours are 5am/8am to 9pm. All stations are currently open except for west of Ballston and Arlington Cemetery. To promote social distancing and reduce exposure, Station Managers will perform their duties from inside the kiosk when possible and restrooms are closed to the public.

MetroAccess. MetroAccess continues to offer its regular weekday schedule of service to MetroAccess customers, and encourages riders to only book essential trips. MetroAccess has reduced shared-rides, with a goal of scheduling only one registered passenger per vehicle at a time. Subscription trips were canceled except for customers who informed us that their subscription trips were essential trips. MetroAccess increased cleaning to include disinfectant cleaning each day that a vehicle was placed in service, up from once a week. If a customer boarded a vehicle and then informed the driver that they were Covid-19 positive, the vehicle was immediately taken out of service and sent to the base for disinfectant cleaning. Customers confirmed as positive for Covid-19 or suspected exposure to Covid-19 are being transported on a third-party service and not MetroAccess.

Managed Re-Entry Service Plan

As conditions improve, jurisdictions will continue to relax stay-at-home policies and additional businesses, schools and childcare facilities will reopen. Accordingly, more customers are expected to commute to work or travel for other needs. However, large-scale telework and persistent unemployment are expected in this phase, and discretionary activities including dining out and entertainment remain limited.

Continued social distancing measures will be required due to ongoing transmission risk. Frontline Metro staff and contractors will continue to face challenging conditions to deliver essential services, requiring ongoing deployment of personal protective equipment and implementation of physical distancing practices, as well as enhanced cleaning and disinfection. With protection measures in place, stabilization of Metro's workforce is anticipated such that most (~80 percent) workers are reliably available for duty.

Metro's goal in this phase is to provide full connectivity with substantially all stations open and bus routes operating, but with initial service levels less than a pre-pandemic weekday to account for low ridership and reduced workforce availability. Note that the reopening of stations west of Ballston also depends on the completion of those capital programs, expected by Labor Day. As this phase may continue for several months and ridership levels and conditions are likely to evolve, staff will continue to monitor ridership and workforce availability and consider more significant service changes if warranted.

Metrobus will implement in August a new span of service, continue rear door boarding, and continue to empower employees to skip stops where on-bus conditions prevent

social distancing. As of August 23rd, the revised bus schedule will provide the following service operating from 4am to 12am:

Weekday: 73% of pre-Covid Service

- 52 lines operating normal schedule
- 64 lines on reduced frequency
- 37 lines not operating

Saturday: 87% of pre-Covid Service

- 53 lines operating normal schedule
- 30 lines on reduced frequency
- 12 lines not operating

Sunday: 86% of pre-Covid Service

- 73 lines operating normal schedule
- 4 lines on reduced frequency

Metrorail will implement its Re-Entry service pattern on August 16th, re-instituting a peak/off-peak schedule and providing service weekdays from 5am to 11pm and weekends from 7/8am to 11pm. Headways during peak service will be shorter than 10 minutes on all lines and 15 minutes or shorter during off-peak times. It is anticipated that this service pattern will remain in place through December. Metro is also expanding the After-Hours TNC program to provide service Monday through Thursday and Sunday from 11pm to 5am and on Friday and Saturday from 1am to 7am. In addition, the subsidy per trip will be doubled from \$3 to \$6 per ride. Finally, staff will implement a stronger marketing campaign. The program will be monitored, and adjustments made as necessary to balance program costs and participation.

MetroAccess will continue to schedule in a manner that avoids shared-rides and place Covid-19 positive customers on a third-party service. MetroAccess will continue to inform customers of available alternative services and promotions associated with them, to relieve pressure on the dedicated service as it avoids shared-rides and the associated efficiency.

Proactive-Recovery Disinfecting Cleaning by Contractors:

On April 20, 2020, WMATA began deploying contractors to rail stations and facilities that were not required decontamination cleaning as a result of a Covid-19 Presumptive Positive or Positive case.

In August 2020, WMATA will begin the monthly Proactive Disinfecting Cleaning to support the managed re-entry plan. As employees phase back into Metro facilities, contractors will be deployed monthly to disinfect rail yards, bus garages, and other administrative facilities. It is anticipated that 35 proactive recovery disinfecting cleanings will be performed by contractors each month.

Responsive Disinfecting Cleaning by Contractors:

On March 16, 2020, WMATA received notification of the first employee who tested positive Covid-19. From that day forward, WMATA has deployed contractors to decontaminate rail stations and facilities that have been exposed to Covid-19 Positive and Presumptive Positive cases. All cases are reviewed by WMATA's Safety Department to determine what type of disinfecting cleaning is required as recommended

by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

For the period March 16 through June 30, 2020 a total of 516 responsive disinfecting cleanings were performed by contractors.

Recovery Service Plan

The return of pre-pandemic levels of community activities including travel will likely depend on the timing of easy access to testing, a widely-available vaccine and the building of immunity. The CDC suggests this may be the case by some time in 2021. State and local recovery planning suggests that all services may reopen with limited constraints on retail and restaurants, gatherings, and events. Many, but not all, workers eligible to work from home during the pandemic will resume commuting. However, economic recovery will be gradual with lingering impacts to tourism, for example. The Recovery service plan is based on social distancing no longer being necessary.

Financial Update

Ridership remained low in May, with operating revenue favorable to budget by \$51.0M including the \$113M of CARES Act funding. Operating expenses were in line with budget including offsetting savings in energy, utilities and supplies.

No additional changes to the FY2021 Operating Budget are proposed at this time.

Capital Program Plan

Critical to successful recovery, and continuity of safe, reliable service, is maintaining progress on the capital program. The guidance from Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (DHS-CISA) included mass transit and construction as essential, as did regional stay-at-home policies. Therefore, all projects have been authorized to continue working, though many have been impacted by the pandemic.

Metro has been working with its contractors to revise construction protocols to incorporate CDC guidance for hand and tool washing, social distancing and wearing face coverings or masks. The biggest impact to the capital program has been Metro's workforce availability challenges that affect our ability to support capital work, such as providing escorts and establishing work zones. In addition, some projects may see delays due to productivity losses and supply chain disruptions.

The June track work events are complete. The July track work events remain on-schedule and Metro is announcing an additional August track work event.

July 6-18:

U St to Ft. Totten

Closed Stations: Columbia Heights and Georgia Ave

July 19-July 25:

Judiciary Sq to Rhode Island

Closed Station: Union Station and NoMa

July 26-August 1:

Ft. Totten to Silver Spring
Closed Station: Takoma
August 2 – August 14:
Grosvenor to Friendship Heights
Closed Station: Medical Center and Bethesda

Making Metro Stronger and More Resilient

As part of the recovery plan, staff is proactively working to adapt operations to new challenges while still retaining vision to become an employer of choice and the region's transportation provider of choice. Work is ongoing in five key areas:

For Employees: Reform the remote work policy to improve productivity while maintaining accountability; improve safety, health and welfare; review work schedules to reduce risk of exposure; recognize the value of frontline, essential staff.

For Customers: Make Metro the cleanest option for customers, facilitate social distancing to gain and maintain public confidence, accelerate and expand plans for becoming a contactless experience; provide customers better real-time information; incentivize travel with innovative fare offers (post-pandemic).

For Operations: Implement cleaning protocols to best protect staff; implement schedules to increase productivity as well as safety; improve systems and data management to support more efficient deployment of service and resources.

For Finance: Ensure balanced budget without additional subsidy contributions; leverage operating expense efficiencies to reduce pandemic cost increases; use CARES Act funding reimbursement to eliminate operating revenue losses; advance readiness for potential federal infrastructure stimulus.

For the Capital Program: Review safety protocols for employees and contractors working on capital projects; identify and prioritize capital projects and programs that allow Metro to recover as a safer system.

Discussion:

The jurisdictions in the region are moving forward with phased reopening plans. These early recovery phases are incremental, and the jurisdictions are continuing to encourage residents and businesses to stay safe, maintain social distancing, continue careful cleaning and disinfecting, wear face coverings and continue to limit non-essential travel. Many businesses remain closed and many employers in the region, including the federal government, continue to use maximum flexibility telework.

WMATA is similarly situated as we continue to protect our employees by supporting remote work where feasible and following applicable CDC Guidelines. Metro has increased cleaning and disinfection and continues to require employees to wear face coverings and encourage good hand hygiene.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Information item only. No impact to funding.

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	May 2020 – Covid Recovery Planning Update June 2020 – Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan & Budget update
Anticipated actions after presentation	August 2020 – Covid-19 Recovery Plan & Budget Update

RECOMMENDATION:

No recommendation is made in this information item.

Covid-19 Recovery Plan & Budget Update

Board of Directors
July 23, 2020



Multi-Phase Approach – Moving to Managed Re-Entry



Stay at home orders in effect

Protect employees and advise most customers to avoid travel

Stay at home orders relaxed

Protect employees, ask customers to protect themselves, deliver trips for essential employment

↑ Today

Schools restart; scale back telework

Office workforce returns in limited numbers

Ramp up service in advance

↑ Begins in August

Treatments and/or vaccine widely available

Restore service for return of economic activity

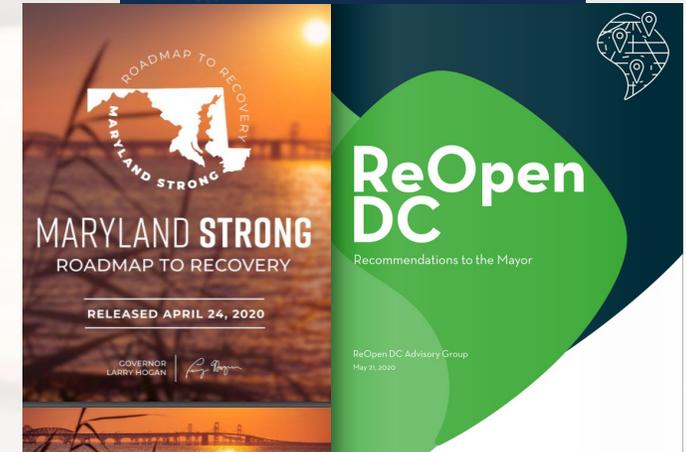
Post-pandemic behavior patterns

Lingering behavioral changes unknown

Lessons from Covid-19 incorporated to make new service more resilient

The Region Today

- DC and MD entered Phase 2 in June 2020
- VA entered Phase 3 as of July 1st
- Federal Government continues maximum telework flexibility
- Monitoring regional conditions and plans
 - Timing of future phases
 - School restart design



Coordinating with federal and regional officials on re-opening plans and guidance

Protecting Metro’s Employees – Covid cases

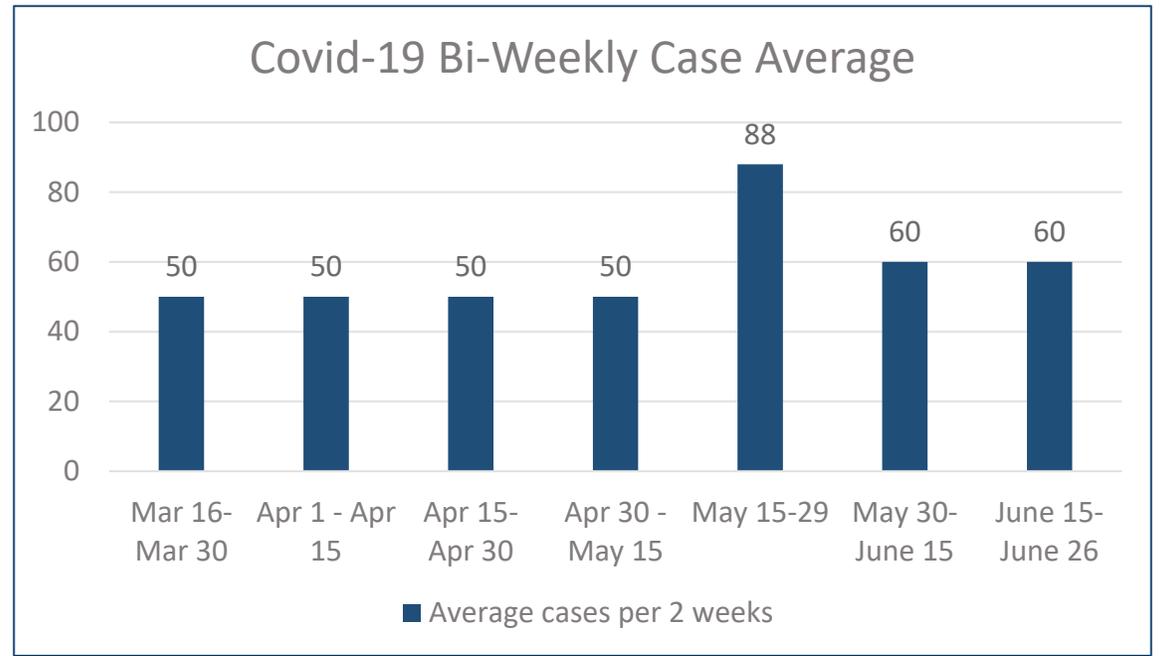
- 12,300 employee workforce
 - Total Covid-related reports: 1,185
 - Total return to work: 1,080

- Metro Trends
- Two cases from June 26 to July 2

Metro Employees Covid-19 Cases

Confirmed Cases	Returned to Work	Currently Hospitalized
210	186	1

WMATA Employee case data as of July 14, 2020



Protecting Employees and Customers

Office-based work force

- Continue remote work to maximum extent practical
- Begin phased office re-entry this fall
- Establishing new occupancy limits

Maintenance Forces

- Manage crew sizes
- Staggered start times
- Increased direct reporting
- Establishing new occupancy limits

Operations

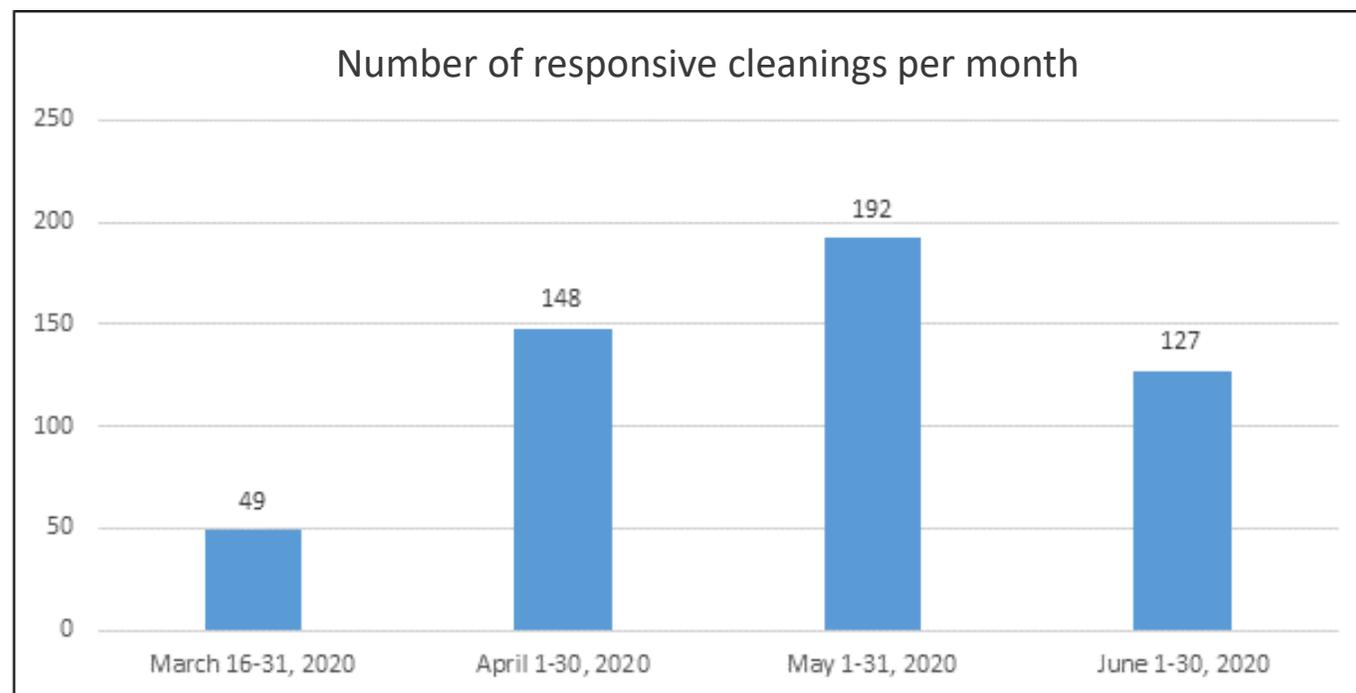
- Social distancing
 - Required for employees
 - Encouraged for riders
- Face Coverings required for employees and customers
- Establishing cleaning standards

All employees continue to stay home if sick; jurisdictional testing is available.

Protecting Employees and Customers – Cleaning

■ Responsive Cleaning

- March to June: 516

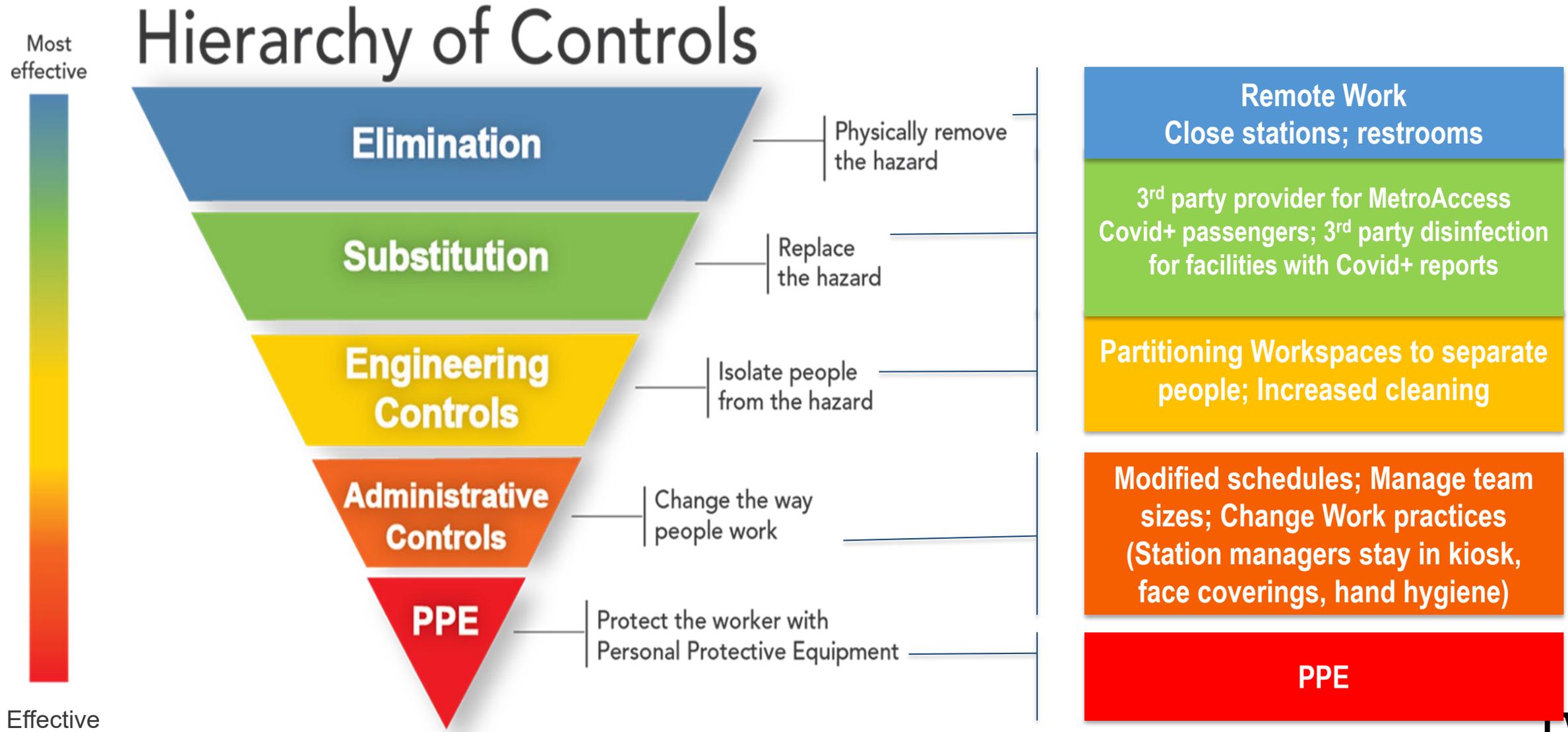


■ Recovery Cleaning

- April to June: 35 total
- Aug. 1: Increase frequency to monthly
 - Rail yards
 - Bus garages
 - Administrative facilities

■ Additional Actions

- Metro-performed cleaning
- Hand sanitizer and facial coverings for customers



Customer Communications Plan



- July - Second round customer message testing
- Aug - Launch rider reassurance campaign
- By Labor Day - in system signage – masks, social distancing

June Survey Results



- Of the Metrobus customers still teleworking full time, approximately 1 in 4 plan to use **Metrobus** when they must commute again
- Of the Metrorail customers still teleworking full time, approximately 1 in 3 plan to use **Metrorail** when they must commute again

Would ride Metrorail/Metrobus when they return to workplace



28%

Metrobus Customers
(n=230)



32%

Metrorail Customers
(n=435)

Note: Based on a weighted sample that includes respondents with registered SmarTrip cards and those without registered cards.

wmata.com/returntowork

BIDs outreach

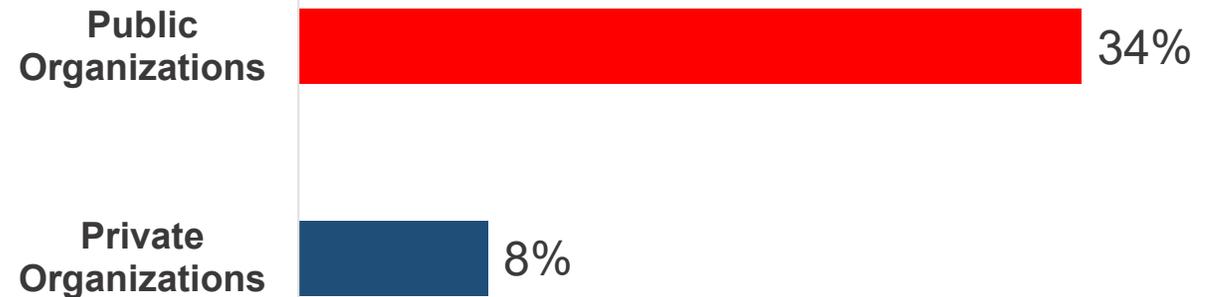
- Addressed small business concerns about hours with expanded Lyft

Return-to-Work Website

- 271 responses since July 1st
 - 115 with 100 or fewer employees
 - 63 with 101-500 employees
 - 68 with > 500 employees
- 104 public sector
- 167 private sector

Public agencies are summoning their employees back to the workplace at a much faster rate than are private businesses

Percent of Organizations with more than 40% of Employees Traveling to Physical Work Locations (n = 212)



Service Planning Criteria

- Maximize Service Delivered Safely and Reliably
- Safety
 - Protect employees and customers
 - Inspect and maintain infrastructure and vehicles
- Operator availability
 - Increase “extra-board” to cover absences
 - Reduce swing shifts
- Reliability
 - Meet anticipated demand
 - Resume Preventative Maintenance and Capital Renewal

Managed Re-Entry Plans assume
~80% workforce availability
(Versus Stabilization availability of ~50%)

- Results
 - Increase span of hours
 - Increase service frequency

Bus Service Managed Re-Entry: August 23rd

- Span of hours: 4a-12a
- Continue rear-door boarding, per CDC guidance
- No fare collected
- Weekday: 73% of pre-Covid Service
 - 52 lines operating normal schedule
 - 64 lines on reduced frequency
 - 37 lines not operating
- Saturday: 87% of pre-Covid Service
 - 53 lines operating normal schedule
 - 30 lines on reduced frequency
 - 12 lines not operating
- Sunday: 86% of pre-Covid Service
 - 73 lines operating normal schedule
 - 4 lines on reduced frequency



Rail Service Managed Re-Entry: August 16th

- Return to Peak/Off Peak Service
- Weekdays: 5am-11pm
- Weekends: 7/8am-11pm
- 90% of pre-Covid-19 Service
- Resume charging for parking
- Expand After-Hours Ride-hailing Program

Managed Re-Entry Service Plan					
Increased Peak, Wider Base					
Weekday Service	PEAK	8 min	BL OR GR YL SV	5 min	RD
	OFF PEAK	15 min	BL OR GR YL SV	12 min	RD
Weekend Service	SAT & SUN	15 min	BL OR GR YL SV	12 min	RD

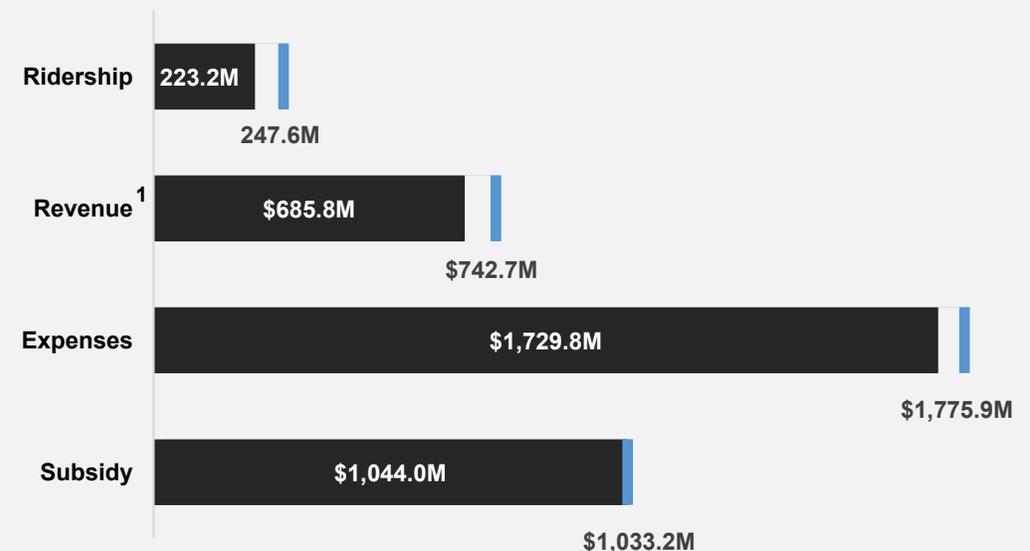
Financial Performance and Outlook

Significant fare losses offset with Management Actions and CARES Act funding

- Ridership was off 89% in May compared to same period last year
- Passenger Revenue is down by \$61M; with \$113M of CARES Act funds leading to Total Revenue favorability of \$51M
- Operating Expense in line with budget; with offsetting savings in energy, utilities and supplies
- FY2021 outlook remains subject to Covid-19 trends and impacts

Forecasting FY2020 Year-end Budget Balance

FY2020 YTD Actuals vs. Budget (Through May)



1. Includes CARES Act reimbursement of \$113M as of May 31, 2020

Capital Program

FY2020 Capital Budget

- Some Covid-19 Impacts on Project Delivery
 - Supply chain & manufacturing
 - Changes to execution of work
- Some projects temporarily slowed/delayed to FY2021
- Accelerated investments in station platforms and track work
- 95-100% of \$1.74B budget invested

FY2021 Capital Budget

- Investment focus remains:
 - Safety
 - Reliability
 - State of Good Repair
 - Projects that reduce future operating subsidy
- Accelerating priority projects while ridership remains low
- Update FY2021 capital budget in Fall 2020
 - Adjust for Covid-19 project delivery impacts

June/July Track Work Completed

- Yellow Line Bridge
 - New grout pads
 - Replaced nearly 900 rail fasteners
- Communications and cellular project
 - 30,000 feet of radio/cellular cables
 - 3,000 feet of cabling infrastructure
- Fire/Life Safety
 - Replaced 3,500+ feet of fireline standpipes
 - Installed 20+ new standpipe connections
- Replaced electrical panels and transformers



July/August Track Work Plan

- **July 19-July 25:**
 - Judiciary Sq to Rhode Island
 - Closed Stations: Union Station and NoMa
- **July 26-August 1:**
 - Ft. Totten to Silver Spring
 - Closed Station: Takoma
- **August 2-August 14:**
 - Grosvenor to Friendship Heights
 - Closed Stations: Medical Center and Bethesda



Metro is accessible.

Recovery Planning: 90-Day Look Ahead

▪ August:

- August 16th
 - Rail Managed Re-Entry Service Plan
 - Silver line and West Falls Church will re-open
- August 23rd
 - Bus Managed Re-Entry Service Plan
- Schools restarting
- August 28th March on Washington
- Inauguration Countdown Meeting
- Ensure employees have access to testing

▪ September:

- Labor Day: Re-open Vienna, Dunn Loring, East Falls Church (all stations are open)
- Begin Re-Entry for administrative employees with business critical need for access to Metro property
- Inauguration Countdown Meeting

▪ October:

- Start Recovery service planning for delivery in early calendar 2021
- Inauguration Countdown Meeting