



Safety and Operations Committee

Board Information Item III-A

Better Bus Network Update



Board Document

OVERVIEW			
PRESENTATION NAME	Better Bus Network Launch Update	DOCUMENT NO.	300037
ACTION OR INFORMATION	Information		
STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN GOAL	Service excellence; Regional opportunity and partnership; Financial Stewardship and Resource Management;		
RESOLUTION	No		
EXECUTIVE OWNER			
EXECUTIVE TEAM OWNER	Webster, Thomas J.;		
ORGANIZATION	Planning and Performance		
DOCUMENT INITIATOR	Mike R. Collins		
OTHER INFORMATION			
COMMITTEE	Safety and Operations Committee	COMMITTEE DATE	5/15/2025
PURPOSE/KEY HIGHLIGHTS	Provide an update on the Better Bus Network activities to support the launch on June 29, 2025, with a focus on communications, outreach and engagement, and information available on wmata.com/betterbus		
DISCUSSION	<p>New Network Launching June 29, 2025</p> <p>Metro is launching its new bus network on June 29, 2025. As part of the launch, all Metrobus routes will change and our message to customers is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Bus routes are changing. Yes, even yours!· With all this change, we have information to help explain what the new network means for you, your family, and your		



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community.

- Learn the network one trip at a time! You do not need to learn every single change for the network to work for you.

Background

In June 2022, Metro launched the Better Bus Network Redesign to create a bus network to better match when and where people want to travel, provide fast, frequent and reliable service, address inequities, and increase access to opportunity for disenfranchised communities.

Two years of data-driven analysis and public and stakeholder engagement, including 23 weeks of public engagement and comment opportunities, guided the creation of the 2025 Better Bus Network, as well as a Visionary Network, which will be used to guide future service decisions when additional resources are available.

Public engagement occurred in the fall of 2022, spring of 2023, and summer of 2024. Through those efforts, Metro engaged nearly 45,000 customers and potential customers, received over 21,000 comments on the draft 2025 and Visionary Networks, received more than 12,000 survey responses, and held over 130 customer-focused events across the region. In addition to the public, Metro engaged over 1,400 employees, including 820 bus operators and other operations staff, and held over 120 briefings with elected officials, stakeholders, and community representatives.

All routes are being renamed in the new network. Routes will begin with a letter to indicate the area served:

- "A" for Arlington/Alexandria
- "C" (crosstown) or "D" (downtown) for DC
- "F" for Fairfax City, Fairfax County, and Falls Church
- "M" for Montgomery County
- "P" for Prince George's County

The second character is a number and identifies the corridor or neighborhood the route operates on/in. The third character is a specific route identified or will have an "X" to indicate an express or limited stop route.

The WMATA Board adopted the Better Bus Network on November 21, 2024.

Benefits of the New Network

The 2025 Better Bus Network will improve service and connections

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using the resources we have today. The redesigned network coupled with the transition to our new bus scheduling system and a review of longstanding policies enabled Metro to realize significant efficiencies within the same level of planned resources. As a result, the new network:

- Provides 7% more scheduled service for customers for the same cost;
- Uses 3% fewer bus vehicle miles operated due to a substantial reduction in the amount of travel to and from the beginning and end of bus routes;
- Results in a 4% decrease in the peak bus vehicle requirement, resulting in a smaller, more efficient fleet;
- Average resident gains access to at least 5% more key destinations (e.g. hospitals, groceries, entertainment) within 60 minutes at all times during the day/week; and
- Could attract nearly 13,000 more daily weekday trips.

Metro will continue to monitor route performance of the new network, as we do today, to assess ridership, crowding, on-time performance, and other metrics as outlined in our Annual Line Performance Report. When additional investments are available, Metro will also use the Visionary Network to build on the new network with additional improvements in access, frequency, and convenience and attract many more customers. The Visionary Network could:

- Provide at least 30-minute frequency throughout the day for most routes;
- Provide new routes, including more connections between Metrorail branches and emerging activity centers;
- Create a regionwide 24-hour bus network, including overnight connections to the region's airports; and
- Create even more consistent, frequent service all day and all week.

Launching a New Bus Network

Launching a new bus network across the region is a massive effort that requires coordination across all aspects of the Metro organization and with our jurisdictional partners. From digital systems and data to bus stop flags, maps, and signage, to operator and staff training, to preparing for launch day/weekend, virtually all facets of the Metro organization are engaged and working in concert to ensure a successful launch of the new network.

Tools Available

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Visitors to wmata.com can now access comprehensive information regarding the new bus network, including:

- Trip Planner page (www.wmata.com/tripplanner) offers instructions for how to plan trips using both the current and future bus network and the
- Better Bus page (www.wmata.com/betterbus) provides in-depth information about every new route, jurisdictional maps, which include local providers, frequently asked questions, and other information.
 - o Route profiles that provide a map, key destinations, and frequencies
 - o A route crosswalk converter to see how their current route compares to new routes
 - o Neighborhood profiles, which provide a way for customers to learn about changes happening in a specific neighborhood

There are also sections dedicated to explaining new naming conventions for routes and new bus stop sign designs.

Spring and Summer Engagement and Outreach

As of early May, Metro staff briefed 115 elected officials, their staff, and jurisdictional staff to empower them to share information about the network with their constituents and communities. Metro launched Better Bus Partners, a request to community-based organizations, elected officials, businesses, schools, places of worship, and public agencies to help us get the word out about the new network. Partners will temporarily partner and monitor with nearby stops, display and distribute printed materials, and encourage awareness within their communities and constituencies.

Public outreach is also underway as Metro has taken advantage of regional events in April and May (e.g. Petalpalooza, Truck Touch, etc). Starting in June, Metro will focus on in-person engagement, reaching customers and the public through pop-ups, bus stop chats, ride-alongs, and attending community events. An all-hands blanketing of the system will take place starting June 9th to try to reach as many customers as possible just prior to and during implementation. Metro is also planning for back-to-school outreach to school administrators, parents, and students ahead of the next school year.

In addition to our in-person events, the team is extending the reach of our engagement through:

- Distributing a digital toolkit so that partners can easily share

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information about the upcoming network changes in newsletters and on social media;

- Sending informational mailers out to those living in areas with big changes to the network;
- Posting informational signage on buses, in signage, and at other hot spots; and
- Spreading the word through Metro's standing committee meetings.

Other Implementation Updates

Since early 2025, Metro has been training bus operators and support staff on the new routes. All primary training has been completed and staff is now training new operators and those who picked into new divisions. Transit Police, the Integrated Command Center, Call Center, and other key offices have also received training on the network.

In March, Metro began to install over 7,700 bus stops flags. To date, about 47 percent have been installed. In addition, all bus flag removal notices have been installed at the stops that will be eliminated either as part of bus stop consolidation or due to loss of service. Supplemental signs are being added to bus stop poles to provide customers with other information, such as our website and call center number to obtain more information.

Jurisdiction maps have been completed and are available online at wmata.com/betterbus. These include jurisdictional-level maps with the new Metrobus network and local providers, a 24-hour network, and the frequent service network. Bus bay station level maps are also underway, with 94 of the 98 complete, and will be installed after bus flag installation is complete. Similarly, digital signs at Metrorail stations, bus stops, and on-bus screens are also being updated for the new network. The bus stop flags, supplemental signage, and maps are temporary, with permanent wayfinding being developed to improve overall customer experience and create a more integrated, regional transit network.

Our jurisdictional partners have been engaged throughout the entirety of planning and implementation of the new network. In each jurisdiction, bus stop and road infrastructure changes have been identified and our partners are working through their local processes to add/remove/modify bus stops, expand bus stop zones, relocate stop bars, remove parking, and other on-street changes to ensure safe operations. Some changes may not occur until after Launch Day and Metro will implement detours where necessary.



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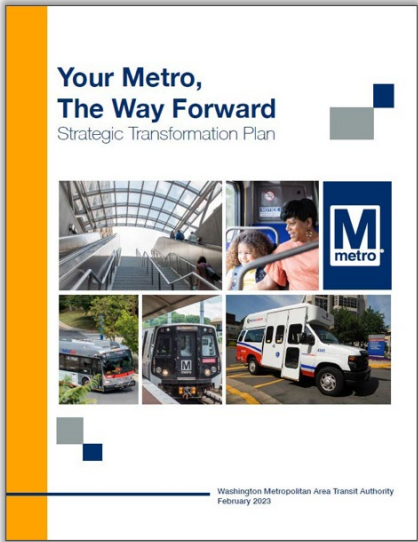
INTERESTED PARTIES	For conflict-of-interest purposes, staff has identified the following contractors and interested parties involved in the Better Bus Network Redesign: Kimley-Horn, Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning, NeoNiche Strategies, and ITA-Idle Time Advertising.
RECOMMENDATION/NEXT STEPS	<p>Efforts will continue to install bus flags and maps, train internal and external partners finalize outreach events and pop-up locations and dates and increase advertising and media activities.</p> <p>Work will continue beyond launch day on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Back to school outreach efforts· Coordination with jurisdictions on bus stop and on-street improvements· Permanent bus flags and maps
FUNDING IMPACT	Planning and launching the Better Bus Network involved a substantial investment in resources and time by Metro, our jurisdictional partners, community groups, elected officials, and customers across the region. Metro is grateful for the ongoing efforts across the region to build a Better Bus system. With the service improvements, we anticipate a return on that investment in terms of more efficient service that provides more customers with better access to where they need to go at times of day/week that they want to travel.

Better Bus Launch Update

Safety and Operations
Committee



Strategic Transformation Plan: Guides long term strategy and day-to-day decision making of Metro over the next five + years



Guiding



Day-to-day decisions

- Customer interactions
- Service schedules
- Communications



Long-term strategy

- Budget allocation
- Capital improvements
- Priority projects

Goals — Our priorities to achieve the vision

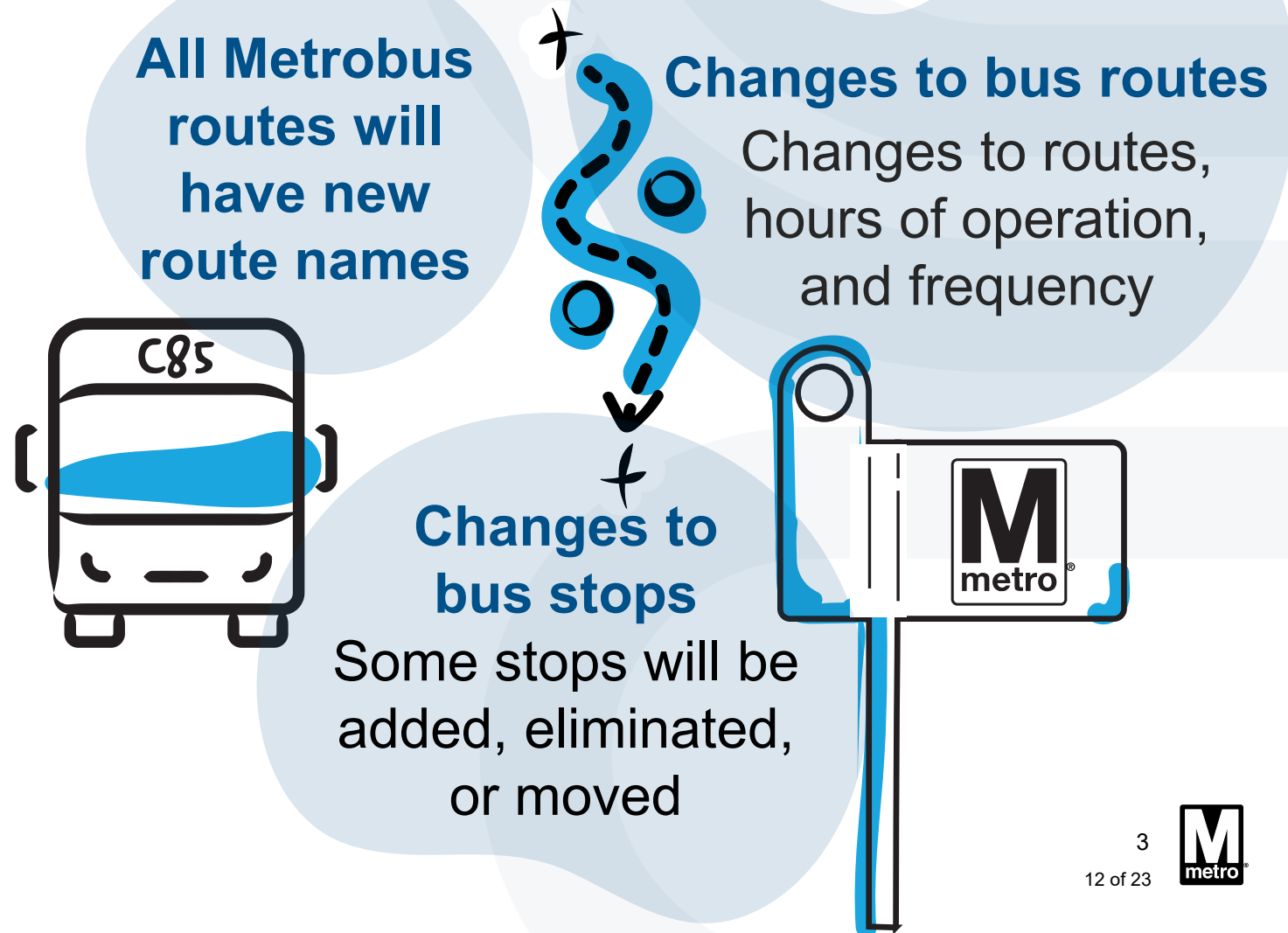


Our Message to Customers: Your Route is Changing on June 29!

**Bus routes are changing.
Yes, even yours!**

With all this change, **we have information** to help explain what the new network means for you, your family, and your community.

Learn the network one trip at a time! You do not need to learn every single change for the network to work for you.



The Network Was Built on 2 Years of Planning & 23 Weeks of Engagement **Regionwide**



45,000+ interactions
at **225 events**

21,000+ total
comments received

12,000+ survey
responses received



120+ briefings with public,
stakeholder, elected official,
and community group
member attendees



820+ interactions with **bus**
operations employees at **32 events**

590+ interactions with **Metro**
employees at **6 coffee chat events**



111,000+ unique website visitors

3,600+ e-newsletter subscribers

2,490,000+ impressions on social
media, Transit App, and online ads

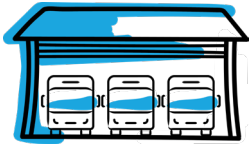
New Network is More Efficient and Effective Using the Same Resources



7% more bus service for the same projected cost



3% fewer bus vehicle miles operated due to a substantial reduction in the amount of travel to and from the beginning and end of bus routes



4% decrease in the peak bus vehicle requirement, resulting in a smaller, more efficient fleet

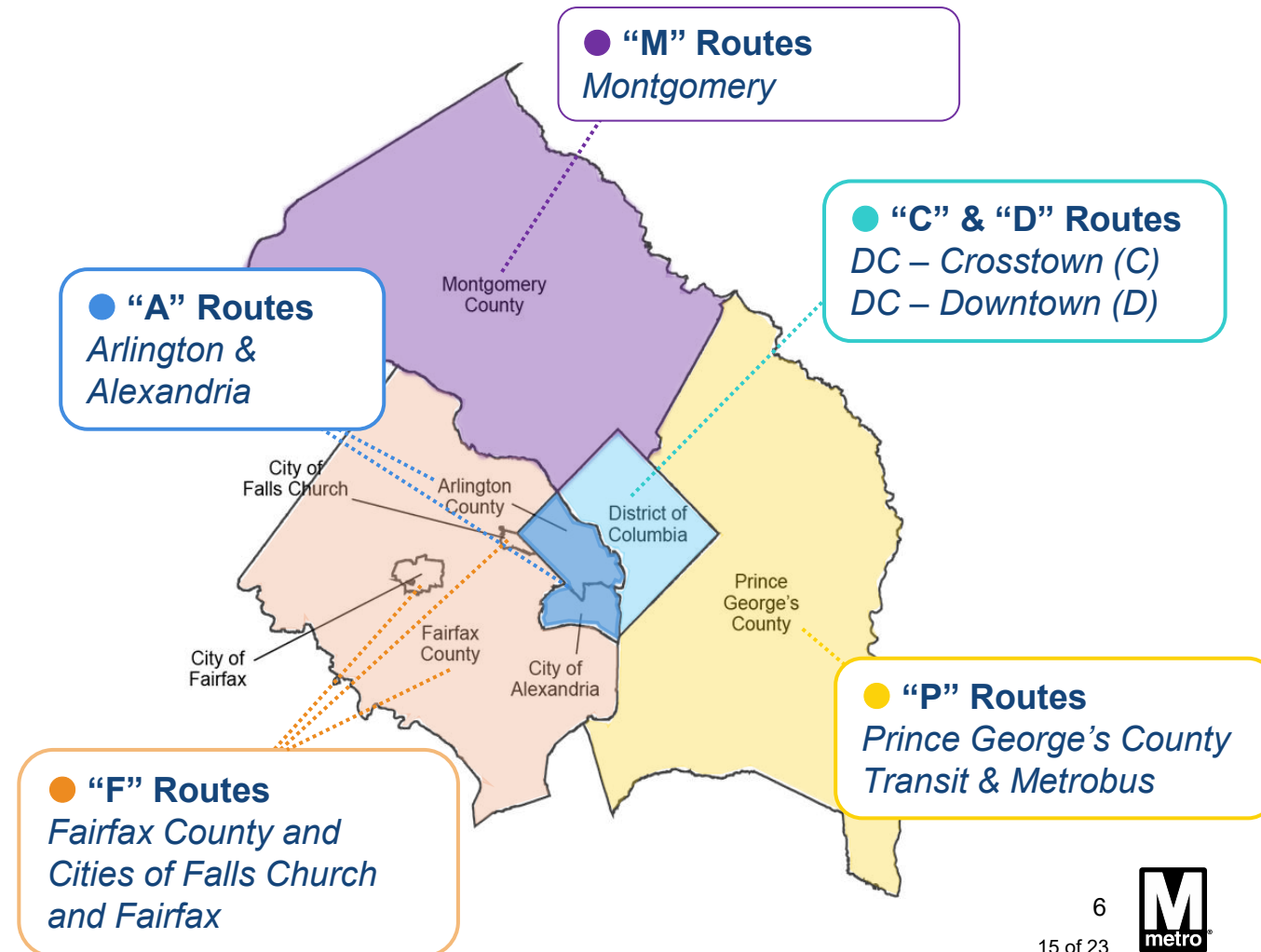
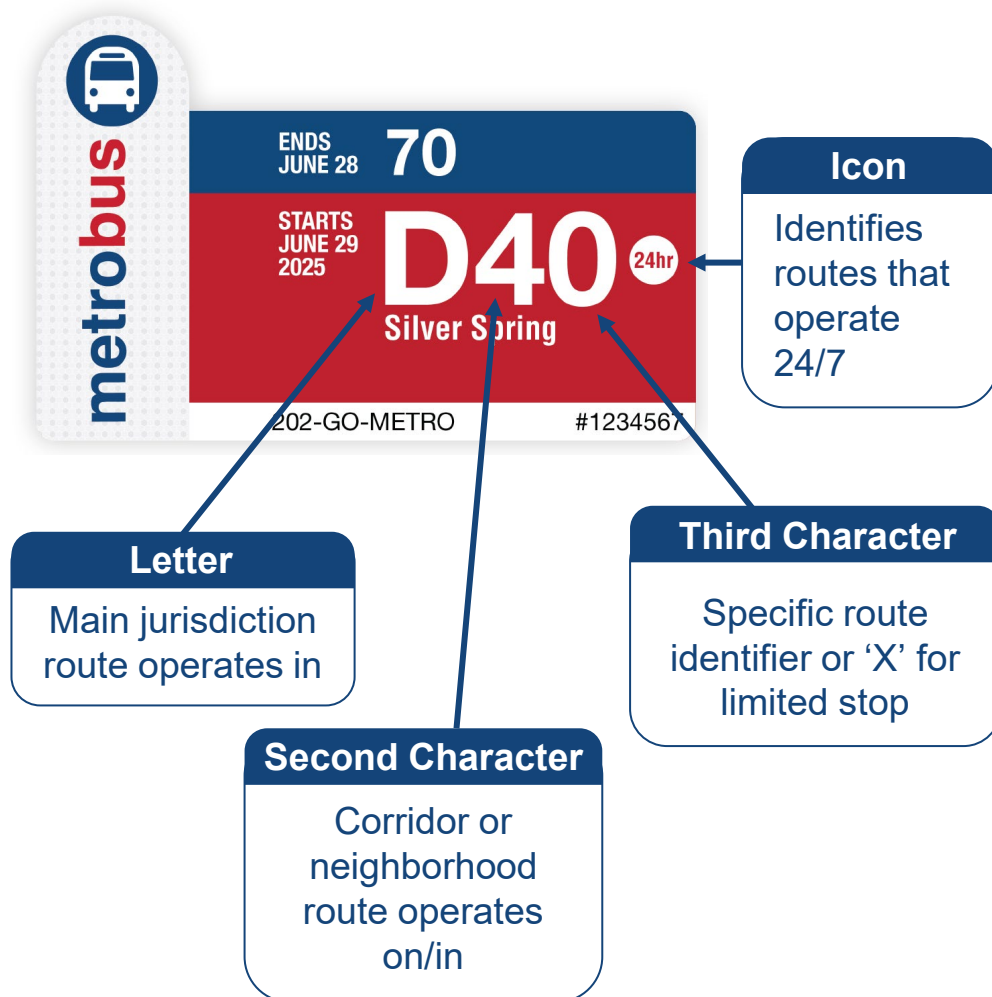


Average resident **gains access to at least 5% more key destinations** (e.g. hospitals, groceries, entertainment) within 60 minutes at all times during the day/week



Could attract nearly **13,000 more daily weekday trips**

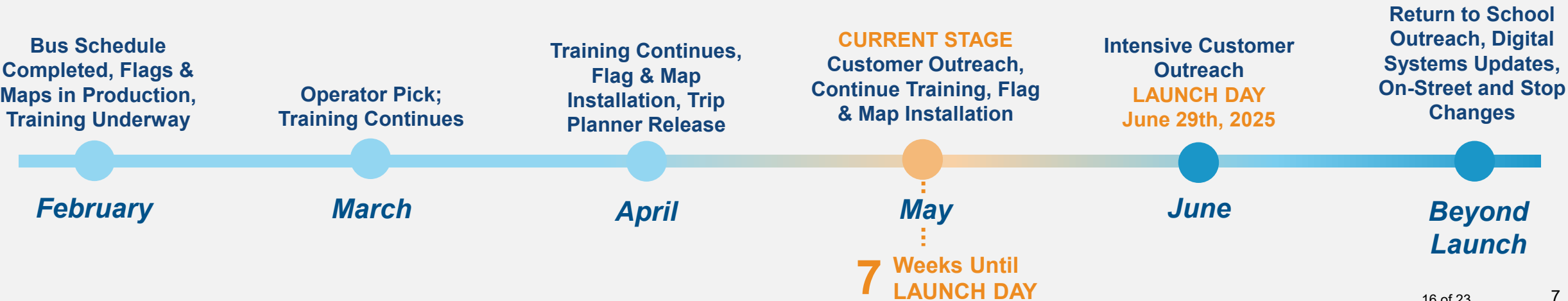
New Route Names and Signs Make It Easier to Ride the Bus



Timeline: Better Bus Network Redesign Launch

- Metro will be the first agency of its size to implement a full network redesign in one phase in less than a year
- Temporary signs and maps ensure customers and employees are ready on Launch Day
- Permanent signs, maps and stop improvements will roll out in the coming year

PROGRAM SCHEDULE



Informational Materials on the New Network

Various tools are available **now** at wmata.com/BetterBus



Plan Your Trip

Use the Trip Planner or call 202-GO-METRO to understand how your trip(s) will change



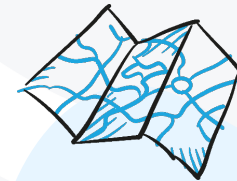
Find Your New Route

Visit the Route Crosswalk webpage to understand which route(s) is replacing your current route



Understand Your Route

Review Route Profiles with details, hours of operation and frequency for each route in the network



Learn About Changes in your Neighborhood

See Neighborhood Profiles with summaries of changes by geographic area

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Service Schedules & Maps Rider Guide Fares Initiatives Business About

Home | Schedules | Trip Planner | Trip Planner

Trip Planner

Use Chat agents available Monday - Friday 07:00 AM - 07:00 PM EDT, Saturday - Sunday 08:00 AM - 07:00 PM EDT, excluding holidays

Chat LIVE WITH US

Trip Planner Instructions for New Metrobus Routes and Stops

For trips through June 28, 2025, select the date of your trip to see your route under the current Metro system.

For trips after June 29, select one of the three dates below to view your route with Metro's all-new bus routes and stops.

- Weekdays: June 30
- Saturdays: July 5
- Sundays: June 29

FROM Address, Station, Landmark TO Virginia Tech

Travel by ☒ Bus ☐ Rail ☐ Both

Leave At 4 PM 5 PM 6 PM ON 5/7/2025

Show me the route that Gets me there first

I can walk up to 3.4 miles

PLAN MY TRIP

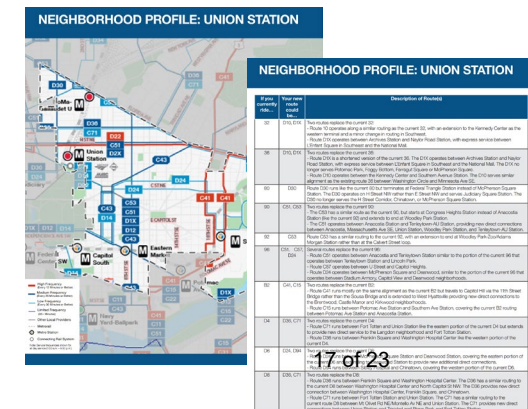
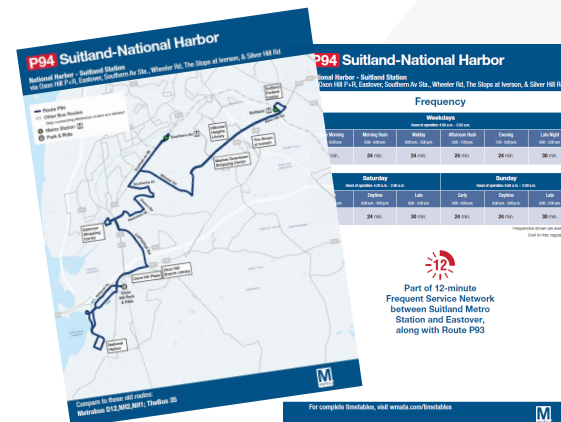
New Bus Network Tool | Find Your New Route

Enter your current bus route to generate your new bus route option(s).

X2 FIND MY NEW ROUTE

Click the route name to view the route profile.

New Route	Runs Between
C57	U St-Capitol Hts
D20	Gallery Place-Minnesota Av
D2X	Farragut Sq-Capitol Hts



Multiple Ways We're Spreading the Word In-Person

Starting mid-May, engagement will shift to focus on meeting people where they are



Pop-Ups

- Raise awareness, help customers plan their trip and understand how the new network impacts them
- Target already scheduled outdoor events, such as farmers markets and festivals

Bus Stop Chats

- Raise awareness and inform customers about changes to their bus route

Ride-Alongs

- Raise awareness and inform customers about changes to their bus route
- Focus on high-change routes

On-Street Assistance Staff

- 100s of staff in the field to answer questions and provide information



Extending the Reach of Our Engagement

Partnering with Community-Based Organizations (CBO)

Leveraging partnerships with CBOs to extend the reach of our engagement



Elected Official Info Sessions

Briefing elected officials so they're able to answer constituents' questions and point them toward relevant materials



Communications Toolkit

Digital communications toolkit designed for partners to easily share information about the upcoming network changes in newsletters and on social media



Training Partners & Stakeholders

Providing training to stakeholders and partners so they're empowered to share information about the network with their constituents



Mailers

To spread the word in high change areas

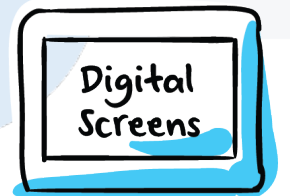


Signage

On buses, in stations, and at other hot spots

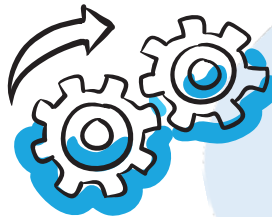


Digital Screens

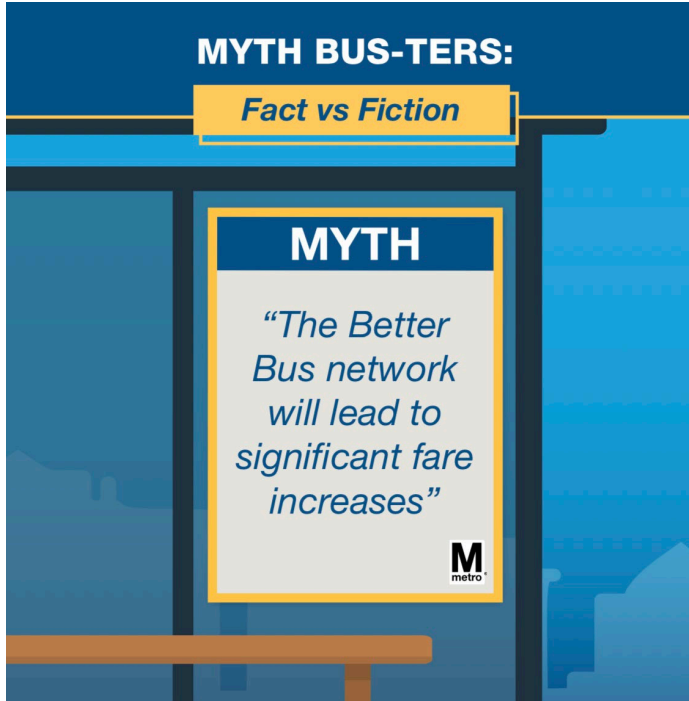


Committee Meetings

Spreading the word through Metro's committees (Youth Advisory Council, AAC, RAC)



Use Our Social Media Presence to Tell the Better Bus Story



Follow us on social media and amplify our posts




Share newsletter and social media content and talking points from our [Communications Toolkit](#) to let your constituents and community know about the new network!

Continuing to work closely with jurisdictional partners to implement the new network

- Working with each jurisdiction on bus stop and on-street improvements, noting that some improvements may not be implemented until after Launch Day
- Transferred 10 buses to support Prince George's County Transit with service

New bus stops may also include routes from multiple agencies



BUS STOP

ENDS JUNE 28 **A11, B12**


STARTS JUNE 29, 2025

M12 metrobus McPherson Sq

84 R Georgia Av

92 R Silver Spring

metrobus 202-GO-METRO STOP# 1234567 | 311 STOP# 3456789



BUS STOP

ENDS JUNE 28 **A11, B12**

STARTS JUNE 29, 2025

P12 metrobus McPherson Sq

P84 TRANSIT Ikea Way

P92 TRANSIT Mt. Rainier

metrobus 202-GO-METRO STOP# 1234567 | TRANSIT 301-324-2877 STOP# 3456789

Bus Maps and Station Maps will show local bus providers routes

Looking for a Bus?
Boarding Locations and Service Days

Route	Destination	Boarding Location	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
A12	Hunting Point								
A68	Farmington Sq								
A68	Senior Centers								
A79	Tysons								
A79	Princeton Yard								
A71	King St Old Town								
A78	Met Center								
A78	Reston								
P80	George Mason								
P80	Fair Oaks								
P81	Fair Oaks								

For more information | Para más información

metabusa.com 202-GO-METRO STOP# 1234567 | 311 STOP# 3456789

Ballston-MU

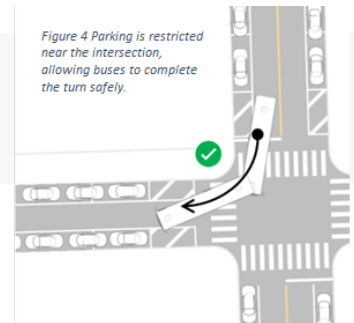
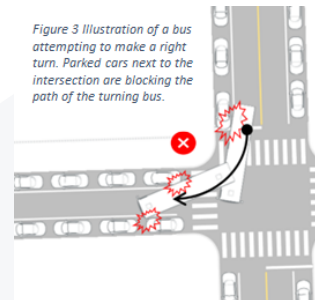
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A68	Hunting Point								
A68	Farmington Sq								
A68	Senior Centers								
A79	Tysons								
A79	Princeton Yard								
A71	King St Old Town								
A78	Met Center								
A78	Reston								
P80	George Mason								
P80	Fair Oaks								
P81	Fair Oaks								

For more information | Para más información

metabusa.com 202-GO-METRO STOP# 1234567 | 311 STOP# 3456789

Bus stop and on-street changes to support safe operations



Summary of Other Activities



Bus Flags

- Installation: early March – mid-June
- 3600+ Bus Flags installed to date (~47%); 100% of the Bus Flag Removal Notices installed



Operator Training

- All primary training complete. Training new operators and those who picked into new divisions is underway.



Digital Systems

- Trip Planner is live, customers can select dates for June 29th and later
- GTFS files will be available for third party applications on the developer portal in late June
- Bus Systems and data testing underway



WMATA Coordination

- Activation Plan and Launch Day Management plans are underway



Maps

- Design updates underway
 - 94 Bus Bay Station Maps Complete (~89%)
 - Jurisdictional maps complete, including local providers
- Installation starting once bus flags are complete

What Customers, Community Organizations, and Elected Officials can do ahead of Launch Day June 29, 2025

Customers

- 1 Try out the Trip Planner
wmata.com/tripplanner/
- 2 Attend a pop-up event
- 3 Share the route finder “crosswalk” tool
wmata.com/betterbus
- 4 Send us feedback and questions
wmata.custhelp.com or 202-GO-METRO

Organizations and Elected Officials

- 1 Try out the Trip Planner
wmata.com/tripplanner/
- 2 Become a Better Bus Partner
[Better Bus Partner | WMATA](https://wmata.com/betterbus)
- 3 Use the comms toolkit to spread the word
<https://www.wmata.com/initiatives/plans/Better-Bus/toolkit.cfm>
- 4 Request informational materials to distribute to your constituents

Outreach and engagement has started and will continue into the fall of 2025 to reach schools, children, parents, and those returning to the office after summer