



**Safety and Service Delivery**  
**Committee Information Item III-A**  
**April 12, 2018**

**Fair Share Initiative Update**

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
**Board Action/Information Summary**

Action  Information

MEAD Number:  
201970

Resolution:  
 Yes  No

**TITLE:**

Fair Share Program

**PRESENTATION SUMMARY:**

To provide an update on the Fair Share program to improve fare compliance on Metrorail and Metrobus and to outline the plans to secure the swing gates throughout the Metrorail system.

**PURPOSE:**

The Board will be informed about progress of the Fair Share program and other fare compliance efforts to improve safety for employees and customers, increase revenue collection, and provide more accurate farebox ridership counts.

**DESCRIPTION:**

This information item provides an update on the Fair Share program and plans to implement secure swing gates across the rail system.

**Key Highlights:**

- Fare evasion is an issue at all transit properties, including Metro. It presents a safety concern for employees, an equity issue for paying customers, reduces Metro's revenue, and results in inaccurate farebox ridership counts.
- In the Metrorail system, improper use of the swing gates is the primary way that customers avoid paying fares. The Fair Share pilot was launched in May 2017 at Fort Totten and Gallery Place stations. The pilot was determined to be effective at reducing – but not eliminating – fare evasion.
- Based on the findings, Metro staff has decided to implement the program at the remaining rail stations, including approximately half of the stations by summer 2018.

**Background and History:**

Conflicts between employees and customers over fares are a safety and customer service concern at Metro. Fare evasion creates real and perceived fairness issues among customers, most of whom pay for every ride. It also directly results in the loss of revenue that Metro needs to provide safe and reliable bus and rail service, and indirectly impacts federal funding formulas and local subsidy discussions by reducing

our official farebox ridership count, a measure of our value to the region.

Fare evasion takes a number of forms on our bus and rail systems. In the Metrorail system, the use of swing gates is the primary way that some customers avoid paying fares. Some also “tailgate,” which occurs when a fare evader closely follows a paying customer through the fare gates; jump over or go under the fare gate paddles; and squeeze through the barriers. On Metrobus, the primary forms of fare evasion are bypassing the farebox when entering the bus or entering through the rear door of the bus.

A number of challenges make fare collection a difficult issue:

- *Assault risk limits staff role.* Due to the risk of assault, bus operators and station managers play a limited role in fare enforcement. Bus operators are instructed not to confront passengers who do not pay. All passengers are quoted the fare by an automated announcement or the operator. Station managers are not directed to enforce fares through confrontation with passengers.
- *Limited police resources.* Metro Transit Police officers play a leading role in enforcing fare collection, optimizing deployments using trend analysis, but they are only able to be present at a fraction of station entrances and on a limited number of bus routes.
- *Permissive swing gates.* At non-pilot stations, rail station swing gates open both ways, with no audible alarms, making it easy for people to enter or exit stations through the gates with little impediment. This ease creates more attempts to evade the fare, leading to more potential conflicts between employees and customers.

In June 2017, staff updated the Board on the Fair Share pilot program, including testing two new configurations for more secure swing gates at Fort Totten and Gallery Place Metrorail stations. The goal of the pilot was to reduce the amount of fare evasion on the rail system by stopping the use of station swing gates except in the event of an emergency. Staff evaluated the pilot using several factors, including usage of the swing gates, station manager feedback, customer response, and effectiveness of securing devices and gate stops. The pilot was determined to be effective at reducing – but not eliminating – fare evasion and its expansion could protect the loss of critical funds we depend on to provide train and bus service.

### **Discussion:**

Metro loses millions of dollars each year when customers use the system without paying and every tap that is not counted has a negative impact on our federal formula funding, which supports the purchase of new railcars and buses and station improvements. The Fair Share program is designed to improve the safety of employees and customers, increase revenue collection, and provide more accurate farebox ridership counts through three primary elements.

First, Metro is reinforcing that all customers need to tap their farecards to ride. This involves addressing the remaining instances where some groups were told not to tap

cards, building on the completed transitions of MetroAccess customers and students to fare cards. Over the past two years, Metro has eliminated paper farecards and nearly completely eliminated flash passes, meaning Metro passengers should have cards they can tap to open fare gates or board a bus. Last year, staff worked with MetroAccess customers and their companions to replace flash passes with SmarTrip cards that allow them to enter through paid fare gates. Likewise, Metro partnered with the District of Columbia to ensure students using DC One cards are able to tap through gates. In past years, some students boarded buses with flash passes. Now, all students are required to tap DC One Cards. These efforts have largely eliminated the need for customers to access the swing gates except in the event of an emergency. This helps to improve fare compliance by eliminating the substantial groups of passengers who were previously instructed to bypass the farebox for legitimate reasons. Among the remaining steps are making sure our employees and contractors have the correct access through their badges and are aware of the policies.

Second, there is a concentrated effort underway to address employee assaults triggered by fare disputes. Transit police have increased enforcement actions over the past year. Training and outreach continues for employees, with bus operator assault town halls, and the community, through Respect Your Ride program and engagement with community organizations.

Third, swing gates are being secured across the rail system. In rail stations, the biggest fare evasion problem is the use of swing gates to gain free access to the system. This program reduces the ease of fare evasion by removing the easiest point of unimpeded entry and exit, while maintaining access during emergencies. Frontline employees consistently express concern and frustration about fare evasion.

The swing gate pilot at Fort Totten and Gallery Place stations provided evidence that the secure configuration is effective in reducing – but not eliminating – fare evasion. Swing gate usage at Fort Totten was reduced by more than 90% in a sample measurement, comparing periods before and after the pilot was implemented. Overall, ridership saw a net-gain of 2% compared to year-over-year trends before the pilot.<sup>1</sup> The unsecured gate stop configuration was minimally effective. During the pilot, we also learned that it is important to reinforce to employees that swing gates are not for routine use.

The experience with the pilot was valuable and informed a revised configuration for the swing gates. In the system-wide implementation, all gates will employ magnetically secured configuration with alarm and the gate-stop only configuration will not be continued. Gate status indicator lights added inside the kiosk to alert station managers to unsecured gates. To address the issue of some gates not fully closing automatically, new gates and floor closers will be installed to improve reliability. In addition, fare barriers will be raised to four and a half feet at above ground stations in response to employee feedback.

Securing all swing gates in the rail system will be done in five phases. The first phase – the Pilot – is completed. Phase 2 and Phase 3 are under contract and scheduled to be completed with fiscal year 2018 funds. As a result, by summer, half of our rail stations will have the swing gates secured. Phase 4 includes another quarter of the stations and is scheduled for fiscal year 2019. Phase 5 includes gates where complying with

Americans with Disabilities Act standards requires relocating fare gates to ensure adequate clearance around the swing gates. This is planned to be completed concurrent with installation of new fare gates in the next few years.

1 The before and after ridership trend comparison showed a 2.3% positive net swing in weekday ridership. Before the pilot, ridership was down 2.8% year-over-year in January to April 2017. After the pilot launched, there was a noticeable improvement in the trend with ridership down by only 0.5% year-over-year in May to December 2017. This compares favorably to a 4% systemwide decrease in average weekday ridership during calendar year 2017 from 639,100 to 612,700 (as measured in May). The data excludes periods with segment shutdowns impacting Fort Totten – if not excluded, the net swing would be positive 6% due to bus bridges substantially increasing Fort Totten entries.

**FUNDING IMPACT:**

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Securing the swing gates costs approximately \$65,000 per station. Phase 2 is under contract for \$1.4 million and Phase III is under contract for \$1.6 million with completion dates scheduled for the end of FY2018. |                                       |
| Project Manager:  | Joseph Leader                         |
| Project Department/Office:  | Office of the Chief Operating Officer |

**TIMELINE:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Previous Actions</b>                       | May 2017 – Fair Share pilot launched at Fort Totten and Gallery Place Metrorail stations   |
| <b>Anticipated actions after presentation</b> | Summer 2018 – Half of rail stations will have secured swing gates<br>Fiscal Year 19 – 28 additional stations are scheduled for secured gates |



**Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority**

# **Fair Share Update**

Safety and Service Delivery Committee  
April 12, 2018



## Purpose

Provide an update on the Fare Share project:

- Lessons learned on pilot program
- Program expansion and schedule





## Fair Share Overview

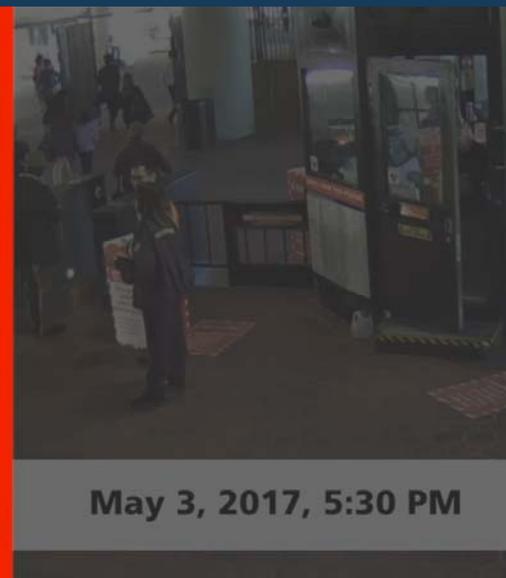
- All customers tap
- Reduce employee assaults triggered by fare disputes
- Secure all swing gates across the rail system





## Lessons Learned from Pilot at Fort Totten and Gallery Place

- The secure configuration is effective at reducing – but not eliminating – fare evasion
- Need to reinforce to employees that swing gates are not for routine use





# Revised Swing Gate Design Configuration

- Employ alarmed magnetically secured configuration
- Alert station managers to unsecured gates
- Install all new gates and floor closers
- Raise fare barriers to 4½ feet at above ground stations

## Secured Configuration

Magnetically secured with push-to-open bar, alarm, and card swipe





# The swing gate project includes 5 phases with a majority of stations addressed in the near term

| Swing Gate Phases   | Stations (#) | Gates (#)  | Completion                           |
|---|--------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| ● <b>Phase 1</b><br>Pilot   | 2            | 4          | FY2017                               |
| ● <b>Phase 2</b>  | 18           | 41         | FY2018                               |
| ● <b>Phase 3</b>  | 24           | 46         | FY2018                               |
| ● <b>Phase 4</b><br>(includes all 12 elevator entrances requiring comm. upgrades) | 28           | 67         | FY2019                               |
| ● <b>Phase 5</b><br>(includes all gates requiring faregate changes)               | 19           | 34         | Concurrent with faregate replacement |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>91</b>    | <b>192</b> |                                      |





## Phase 2 Schedule

| Stations         | Primary Construction Months |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Metro Center     | April                       |
| Gallery Place    | April                       |
| NoMa Gallaudet   | April                       |
| Union Station    | April                       |
| Anacostia        | April                       |
| Congress Heights | April                       |
| Braddock Road    | April                       |
| King Street      | April                       |
| Minnesota Ave    | April                       |
| Naylor Road      | April                       |

| Stations              | Primary Construction Months |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rosslyn               | May                         |
| College Park          | May                         |
| Prince George's Plaza | May                         |
| West Hyattsville      | May                         |
| Fort Totten           | May                         |
| Columbia Heights      | May                         |
| Georgia Ave           | May                         |
| Wheaton               | May                         |
| Vienna                | May                         |
| Tysons Corner         | May                         |

Primary construction includes:

- Trenching and conduit installation
- Electrical installation/ access control
- Swing gate and railing installation
- Tile and grout replacement

Following by inspection and acceptance (punch list items)



## Rail Fair Share Next Steps

- Implement Fair Share program at all rail stations
- Install video monitors and automated people counters at unstaffed elevator entrances
- Continue Transit Police enforcement efforts
- Pursue new capabilities and improved data collection with fare payment modernization program
- Address exceptions to “all customers tap” principle
- Promote fare products, passes, and online loading options



# Tactics Against Bus Fare Evasion

## Bus

- Automated fare announcements 
- On-board video displays
- #8 Key
- Bus operator training and refresher training

## MTPD

- Metrobus enforcement division targeted deployments
- High Intensity Targeted Enforcement (HITEs)
- Bus division safety meetings

