



**Safety and Operations Committee**

**Board Information Item III-B**

**December 12, 2019**

## **Bus Transformation Project Update**

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

## Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

MEAD  
Number:  
202136

Resolution:  
☐ Yes ☒ No

### TITLE:

Bus Transformation Project

### PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Rob Puentes, Chair of the Bus Transformation Project's Executive Steering Committee, and Rich Davey, from the project's consultant team will brief the Board on the Bus Transformation Project's Strategy, the Action Plan to implement the Strategy, and early actions for WMATA and Metrobus.

### PURPOSE:

The Board will receive a briefing on the Bus Transformation Project's Strategy and Action Plan to transform the region's bus system, including early actions for WMATA and Metrobus.

### DESCRIPTION:

In September 2018, Metro, its partner jurisdictions, and local transit agencies launched the Bus Transformation Project with the goal to create a bold, new vision and a collaborative action plan for the future of bus in the region. Two briefings have occurred to date that updated the Board on the project's goals, timeline, and deliverables and the draft strategy and recommendations. This briefing includes the Strategy and recommendations, the multi-year Action Plan, and early actions and priorities for WMATA.

Contractors and Interested Parties Involved in the Work: **AECOM, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Foursquare Integrated Transportation Planning, and NeoNiche Strategies**

### Key Highlights:

- The Bus Transformation Project was organized as an independent assessment of the region's bus system to gain regional consensus on a vision and collaborative action plan for the future of bus in the region and the role of Metrobus within the bus system. The project's Executive Steering Committee (ESC) guided the strategy's development and was comprised of recognized regional leaders. Additionally, over 35 project committee meetings were held to gain consensus from local bus providers, state and local departments of transportation, advocates, community organizations, and riders. A full list of all committee members can be found in the Strategy Summary and Action Plan Summary located at [www.bustransformationproject.com](http://www.bustransformationproject.com).
- Collaboration with the public was extensive through the Strategy and Action Plan's development. Over the course of the project, the region's residents and civic and advocacy groups were loud and clear that transformation means fast, frequent, reliable, affordable bus service that feels like a unified system.
- The Strategy incorporates four key recommendations: Frequent and convenient bus service; Bus priority on roadways; Customer experience; and a Task Force to implement the Strategy. Within the key recommendations, a set of 26 more specific recommendations were provided. Implementing the Strategy will improve the region's bus system and grow ridership by providing better connectivity, improving the rider experience, reducing travel time and increasing reliability, increasing efficiency and consistency across providers, making transit more affordable, and enhancing equity.
- The Action Plan outlines the activities required to transform the bus system. It recognizes and builds on progress to date by WMATA, local bus providers, and the local, state, and regional entities who are responsible for the quality of the bus system. It is built around milestones for each recommendation with assignment of responsibility to advance each recommendation. Both the Strategy and Action Plan are available on the project website

( [www.bustransformationproject.com](http://www.bustransformationproject.com) ).

- Some key early actions for Metro include providing accurate, real-time arrival information, providing the full transfer discount, establishing Metrobus service guidelines, beginning to scope a bus network restructuring effort, and piloting low-income fare product with the District.

### **Background and History:**

Buses are an integral part of the National Capital Region's transportation system and carry over 620,000 trips per day over a network that reaches 81 percent of the region's residents. Metro and the other local providers like ART, CUE, DASH, DC Circulator, Fairfax Connector, Ride On, and TheBus affordably connect residents to jobs, school, and other aspects of daily life. However, traffic is increasing and bus speeds are decreasing, leading to longer travel times and unreliability in getting to a destination. Customer expectations have changed and there is increased competition for fewer passengers. Government budgets are under pressure to do more with less. Bus's market share is eroding as competition becomes more plentiful and, in some cases, more affordable. The allure of new technology, such as autonomous cars, distracts from the fact that driverless cars and transportation network companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, won't solve the region's mobility problem without defying the laws of physics and geometry. Empirical research points to the likelihood that the new options will make current problems worse.

The Bus Transformation Strategy was released on September 5, 2019 after incorporating comments gathered in the spring and summer of 2019 from the general public, project stakeholders, local jurisdictions, regional transportation boards, and the WMATA Board. The Strategy has four key recommendations: Frequent and convenient bus service; Bus priority on roadways; Customer experience; and a Task Force to implement the Strategy. Within the key recommendations, a set of 26 more specific recommendations were established.

A multi-year Action Plan was developed to prioritize and arrange the Strategy's recommendations to ensure maximum impact. The

milestones and duration to implement each recommendation is based on each recommendation's transformational potential and the challenges involved in implementation. The Action Plan incorporates feedback from the project's Technical Team and Strategy Advisory Panel, as well as from a survey of bus providers and departments of transportation to gather progress to date.

Earlier briefings to the Board occurred on [January 24, 2019](#) and [July 25, 2019](#).

### **Discussion:**

Metro, along with jurisdictional partners and the region's local bus providers launched the Bus Transformation Project in September 2018. Bus providers and the cities, counties, and states that own and operate the region's roadways must coordinate and collaborate to transform the bus system into a system that meets changing customer needs, keeps up with changing technology, and maintains a sustainable cost structure. The Bus Transformation Project has taken a broad view of 'bus' to include any vehicle that transports many riders, makes efficient use of roadways, and is considered a local bus, as distinct from commuter buses.

The outcome of the Bus Transformation Project is both the Strategy, which provides the direction for the regional bus system, and a multi-year Action Plan, which outlines the specific implementation steps to advance the recommendations. The vision is that 'Bus will be the mode of choice on the region's roads by 2030, serving as the backbone of a strong and inclusive regional mobility system.' Goals include regional connectivity, rider experience, financial stewardship, sustainable economic health and access to opportunity, and equity.

Public and stakeholder engagement has been integral since the project's launch. The project was led by the Executive Steering Committee (ESC), with additional stakeholder groups including a Strategic Advisory Panel, Technical Team, and the WMATA Leadership Team. The Strategy Advisory Panel was comprised of transit agencies, transportation agencies, advocates, community organizations, and riders. The Technical Team was comprised of

subject matter experts from Metro, local and state departments of transportation, and local bus providers.

A summary of stakeholder engagement since the project began in 2018 includes:

- 8,800+ public survey responses
- 23 Executive Steering Committee meetings
- 16 Technical Team meetings
- 8 Strategy Advisory Panel meetings
- 14 WMATA Leadership Team briefings
- 13 Metrobus operator listening sessions
- 45 External project briefings
- 33 Pop-up events
- 3 Public Open House events
- 4 Focus Groups
- 140 participants in September 2018 Kickoff Summit
- 285 Social media posting
- 312,000 people reached via social media

The Strategy sets an ambitious path forward and includes:

1. **Provide frequent and convenient bus service** that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.
2. **Give buses priority on roadways** to efficiently move people quickly and reliably
3. **Create an excellent customer experience** to retain and increase ridership.
4. **Empower a publicly appointed task force to transform bus** and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

Implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan could include the following outcomes:

- Stabilizing or growing ridership by 1-3 percent through a bus network redesign, as realized in Houston, Baltimore, Austin, and Columbus;

- Recouping much of the \$30M that Metrobus loses annually to congestion and increasing ridership by up to 7 percent by giving buses priority and enforcing it on the region's roads;
- Reducing bus lane violations by 85 percent through automated enforcement, as seen in London;
- Increasing ridership by 2 percent by providing accurate real-time information, as observed in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago data; and
- Reducing security incidents logged by control center by 30% and reducing customer complaints by 50% with the addition of on-board CCTV footage visible to customers

The Action Plan represents the detailed implementation plan for the Bus Transformation Strategy. It is based on a set of milestones associated with the 26 recommendations. These milestones highlight how action by these agencies will result in a better bus system for the residents and business across the region. Considering activities already being pursued at the local, state, and regional levels, the Action Plan is designed to be flexible enough to empower each jurisdiction and agency to implement their priorities while working collaboratively to implement regional priorities.

The Action Plan identifies the expected outcome for each recommendation, the primary and secondary responsible parties, dependencies among the other recommendations, and the project goals supported. Additionally, step by step actions are identified to achieve the outcomes with durations for each step. The Action Plan recognizes and builds on progress to date by WMATA, local bus providers, and the local, state, and regional entities who are responsible for the bus system. It incorporates feedback from the project's Technical Team and Strategy Advisory Panel, as well as a survey that was distributed to bus providers and local and state departments of transportation.

During the Action Plan's development, the Technical Team and Strategy Advisory Panel provided feedback on the Task Force and its composition, the limited need for a regional approach to many of the recommendations, and the desire to ensure that the

Action Plan incorporated the progress to date by various agencies and jurisdictions. As noted above, progress to date, as reported by each bus provider and jurisdiction, is the baseline for the Action Plan. The recommendations that require a regional approach start with the formation of a working group of subject matter experts. The other recommendations begin by proposing that each bus provider or jurisdiction develop their own context-sensitive approach, while utilizing existing organizations to ensure knowledge sharing and coordination on a structured basis. The Task Force was proposed to ensure a regional champion for bus and to oversee implementation of the Action Plan. However, the recommendation has met resistance and therefore, is proposed to begin later to provide time for the region to continue to discuss how and who are best able to guide the bus system in a more unified manner to better meet customers' needs.

There are many early actions for Metro to undertake to implement the Strategy's recommendations. These could occur through the annual budget process, the capital plan, adoption of relevant policies, and/or convening subject matter experts in lieu of a Task Force.

Actions that are underway and that would be completed include:

- Launch GTFS-Real Time to provide accurate, real-time arrival information
- Provide full transfer discount between Metrobus and Metrorail
- Launch mobile payment solution

Actions that Metro could lead include:

- Establish Metrobus service standards
- Define and begin bus network restructure effort in collaboration with local bus providers
- Assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation formula
- Establish bus priority capital program
- Enhance Metrobus marketing, transit benefits, and front-line staff training programs
- Continue upgrades of Metro-owned bus bays and stop facilities



- Begin testing and evaluation of zero emission buses

Actions that Metro could partner with one or more jurisdictions or bus providers include:

- Collect and share standardized bus operation and performance data
- Obtain commitments from state and local agencies to implement bus priority
- Implement enforcement policies that establish bus priority
- Pilot low-income fare product
- Incorporate local bus providers into existing pass products and transfer discount
- Facilitate an independently published annual Progress Report and Performance Scorecard
- Develop a platform for rider feedback

Future WMATA Board activities in 2020 include voting to endorse the Strategy and voting on relevant policies such as Metrobus service standards and any potential recommended changes to Metrobus service definitions and cost allocation.

#### **FUNDING IMPACT:**

This is an information item.	
Project Manager:	Allison Davis
Project Department/Office:	PLAN/SPPM

#### **TIMELINE:**

<b>Previous Actions</b>	<p>May 2018 - Consultant awarded contract for Bus Transformation Project</p> <p>September 2018 - Kick-off Summit for all stakeholders</p> <p>November 2018 - Completed first round of public engagement; Completed strategic considerations discussion with each committee</p>
-------------------------	--

	<p>Winter-Spring 2019 - Draft strategies developed</p> <p>May 2019 - Draft strategy and recommendations released for public and stakeholder comment</p> <p>June 2019 - Completed second public survey and open houses. Completed listening sessions and presentations with project committees.</p> <p>July 2019 - Complete presentations and discussions with regional transportation organizations.</p> <p>September 2019 - Strategy and recommendations released. Begin work on Action Plan</p> <p>December 2019 - Complete Action Plan for implementation, including input from project committees and bus providers</p>
<b>Anticipated actions after presentation</b>	<p>January 2019 – WMATA Board resolution to endorse the Bus Transformation Strategy and early actions by WMATA and Metrobus.</p> <p>January - March 2020: Present Strategy and Action Plan to regional transportation boards and local elected councils/boards at each jurisdiction.</p>

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information item. No Board actions recommended.

# BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Safety and Operations  
Committee Presentation

December 12, 2019



# Overview

---

1. The Need to Transform the Bus
2. Bus Transformation Strategy
3. Action Plan
4. Early Actions by WMATA
5. Next Steps

**Congestion, affordability, and mobility** are major problems in the DC region that will only continue to grow

## What can we do?

Bus is a major part of the region's transportation system, carrying 600,000 daily passengers

- Much of our region's population depends on bus as their only way to travel
- Rapid, effective bus service is fundamental to our region's prosperity

Meanwhile, the world of transportation is innovating rapidly, and our bus system has not kept pace

- Many technology-driven mobility options threaten to make congestion worse
- Cities and regions across the country are contending with many of the same challenges that this region is facing
- Many have made tough policy and operations decisions that have transformed their bus systems, decreased congestion, attracted ridership gains, improved reliability, and created more efficient operations

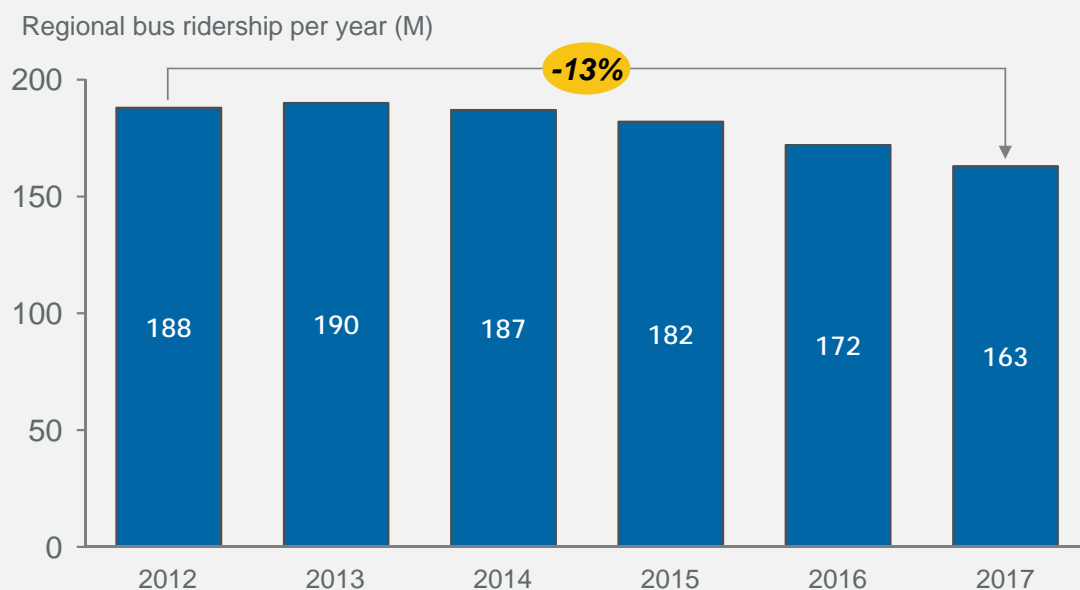
## It is time to transform the region's bus system

2

[BusTransformationProject.com](http://BusTransformationProject.com)

## The Challenge:

- Customers are turning to other travel options.
- Traditional definitions of bus service are not keeping pace with rapid technology and social change
- Since 2012, bus ridership has fallen by 13 percent across the region



Bus faces several **core challenges** that will continue to grow unless changes are made today:



Meet **customer needs**



Keep up with **changing technology**



**Coordinating** across region



Maintain **sustainable** cost structure



**Deciding** how service is paid for

3

BusTransformationProject.com

## Collaborative transformation: a broad and deep process

Quality bus service is a shared responsibility:

- Bus service providers
- Departments of transportation who own, operate, and enforce streets and curbs
- Funding partners

Working together is critical to ensuring the bus system meets customer needs



More than a year of public and stakeholder input, including:

- 8,800+ public survey responses
- 23 Executive Steering Committee meetings\*
- 16 Technical Team meetings\*
- 8 Strategy Advisory Panel meetings\*
- 14 WMATA Leadership Team meetings\*
- 13 Metrobus operator listening sessions
- 45 External project briefings
- 33 Pop-up events
- 3 Public Open House events
- 4 Focus Groups
- 140 participants in September 2018 Kickoff Summit
- 285 Social media posting
- 312,000 people reached via social media

\*All project committee members, including from funding partners and bus providers can be found on the [last page of the Strategy Summary](#) and the last page of the Action Plan Summary at [www.bustransformationproject.com](http://www.bustransformationproject.com).

# Strategy Recommendations

The strategy to achieve the vision and goals is built around four recommendations



## 1 Frequent and Convenient Bus Service

Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth



## 2 Bus Priority on Roadways

Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably



## 3 Customer Experience

Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership

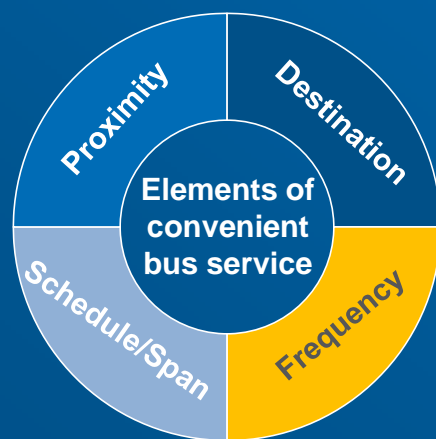


## 4 Task Force to Implement the Strategy

Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system



# 1 Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth



\* Through a Mass Transit Plan as required by the WMATA Compact

- (A) **Establish regional standards** across bus systems to provide consistent bus service, tailored by location and time of day
- (B) Collect and **share standardized bus operations and performance data** across agencies to improve transparency and better plan bus service
- (C) **Collaboratively restructure the region's bus network** to create the most efficient and customer-focused bus system\*
- (D) Cooperatively **assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation formula** using the Metro Board's Authority
- (E) Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to **operate flexible on-demand services** to supplement the fixed route network where and when warranted

## Recommendation

1



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **responsiveness** to customer demand for service
- Increased **access to transit** (frequency, schedule, span)
- Convenient service that is **direct and coordinated** among providers
- Increased bus **ridership**
- More **efficient use of resources**

## 2 Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably

- (A) Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to **adopt consistent guidelines**, bolster jurisdictional capital spending, and expedite coordinated implementation of bus priority
- (B) Implement enforcement policies that **establish bus priority** and result in reliable and fast service
- (C) Establish a capital program at Metro that **supports accelerated implementation of bus priority projects** including BRT
- (D) Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority and **move more people more efficiently**



These recommendations will result in:

- Reduced **journey time** for bus riders
- Increased **on-time performance**
- Increased **ridership**
- Increased frequency and decreased **bus operating costs**
- Improved **corridor traffic conditions** for all vehicles
- Improved **regional productivity and competitiveness**

# 3 Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership

## A Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information to plan a trip

A1: Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place

A2: Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers

A3: Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits

## B Make paying bus fares easier

B1: Provide free transfers between bus and rail

B2: Provide reduced fare options for low-income riders

B3: Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place

B4: Develop new regional passes that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable

B5: Incentivize more employers to offer transit benefits



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **customer satisfaction**
- **More affordable transportation** for residents that need it most
- **Increased transit ridership**
- **Less congestion** on our region's roads
- Reduced **safety incident rates** at bus stops and on buses
- Reduced **environmental impact** of transportation

## 3 Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership

### C Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus

C1: Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled

C2: Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone on board by partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions

C3: Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service

C4: Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness

### D Pursue innovation and bus improvement

D1: Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency

D2: Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements such as service provision, customer experience, and bus operator and passenger safety



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **customer satisfaction**
- **More affordable transportation** for residents that need it most
- **Increased transit ridership**
- **Less congestion** on our region's roads
- Reduced **safety incident rates** at bus stops and on buses
- Reduced **environmental impact** of transportation

# 4

## Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system

- (A) Convene a Task Force to **oversee implementation** of the Strategy and **provide long-term leadership** for the region's bus system
- (B) Facilitate an independently published **annual progress report** on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a **bus performance scorecard** to track the level of service delivered to customers
- (C) **Develop a platform for rider feedback**, administered by the Task Force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback into regular revisions of the Strategy recommendations

### Recommendation

4



These recommendations will result in:

- The public will experience a **unified bus system** that is **customer-responsive**
- **Customer representation** for strong customer accountability
- **Integrated decision making** and efficient use of public resources
- **Better coordination** of operations and facilities, services and guidelines

# Examples of Activities Underway in the Region

## Current work of operators and jurisdictions

Flexible service pilot in Montgomery County

BRT in Montgomery County and Northern Virginia

Joint storage/maintenance facilities between WMATA and Montgomery County

Electric buses in DC Circulator and RideOn Fleet

AV shuttle pilot in Fairfax County

Dedicated bus lanes in DC

Microtransit service in DC

Exploring opportunities for joint storage/maintenance facilities and connected traffic signals in Prince George's County

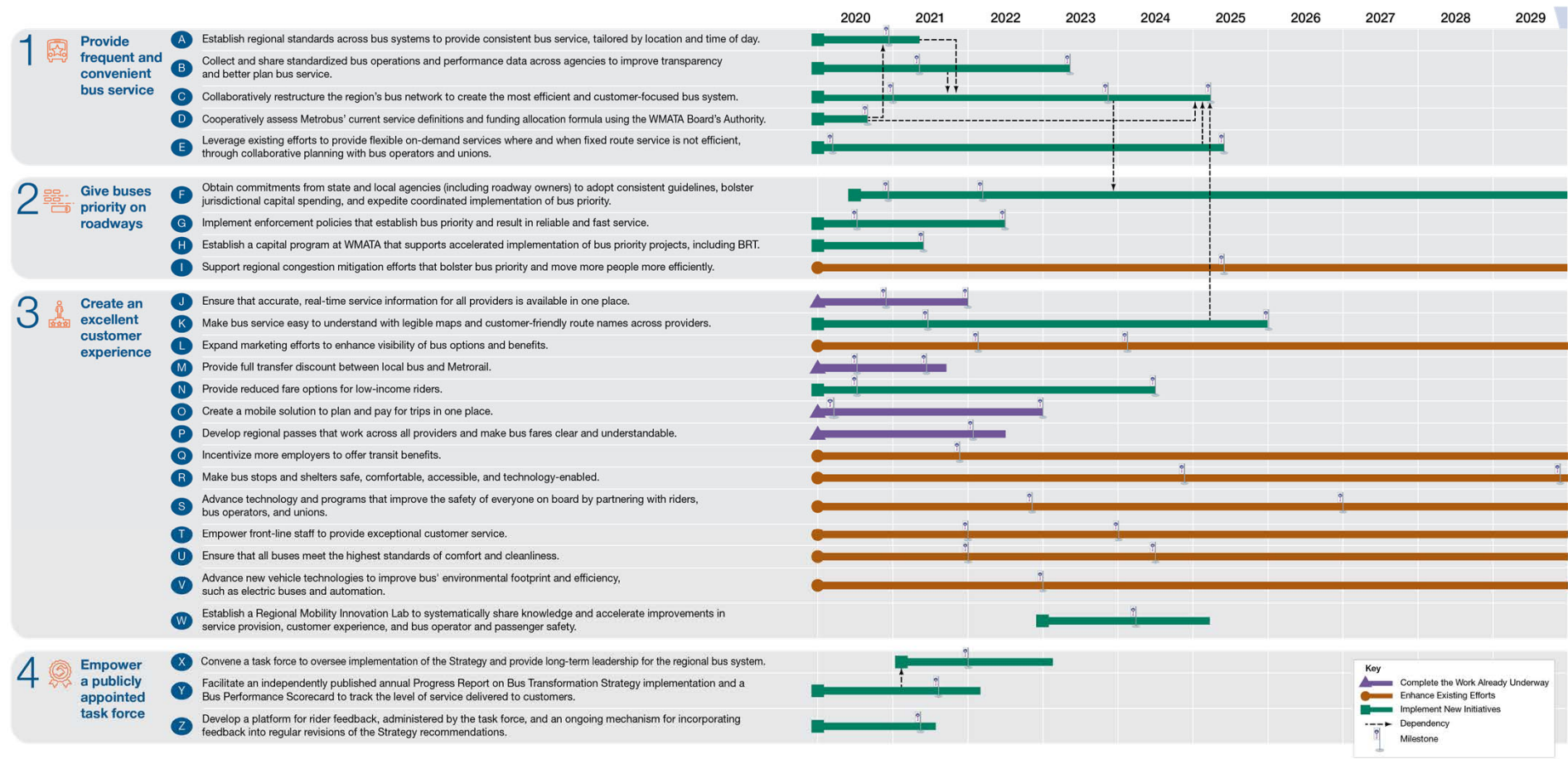
Transit signal priority across the region



Progress to date on all Strategy recommendations by agencies in the region is provided at [www.bustransformationproject.com](http://www.bustransformationproject.com)

BusTransformationProject.com

# Plan Of Action





## Action Plan – Key Outcomes of Implementing the Bus Transformation Strategy

### Customers will have...

- ...a more seamless experience using the region's transit system
- ...bus service that better matches their needs and demands
- ...faster and more reliable trips
- ...less expensive trips, especially low-income passengers
- ...accurate, easy-to-use, accessible information that makes it easy to use the region's transit system
- ...safer and more comfortable experience when riding and waiting for the bus
- ...a voice in shaping the Bus Transformation Strategy as it evolves



### The region's transit system will see...

- ...increased ridership
- ...higher operating cost efficiency
- ...improved customer satisfaction
- ...less congestion on the region's roads
- ...reduced environmental impact of transportation
- ...better coordination in regional decision making



## Next Steps to Transform the Bus

- **Seek endorsements** from local jurisdiction councils and/or boards and regional transportation entities on Strategy
- **Empower Metro, bus providers, jurisdictions** to:
  - Lead on actions within their control
  - Partner to implement regional actions
- Recognize current financial realities, while maintaining progress to build a bus system that meets customers needs of **a fast, frequent, reliable, affordable system that feels unified**

There is a better way to get there.





# Early Actions by Metro

## Early actions for Metro

*Specific actions for Metro to implement the Strategy's recommendations. These could occur through the annual budget process, the capital plan, adoption of relevant policies, by partnering with jurisdictions and bus providers, or convening in lieu of a Task Force.*

### Complete

- Launch GTFS-Real Time to provide accurate, real-time arrival information
- Provide full transfer discount between Metrobus and Metrorail
- Launch mobile payment solution

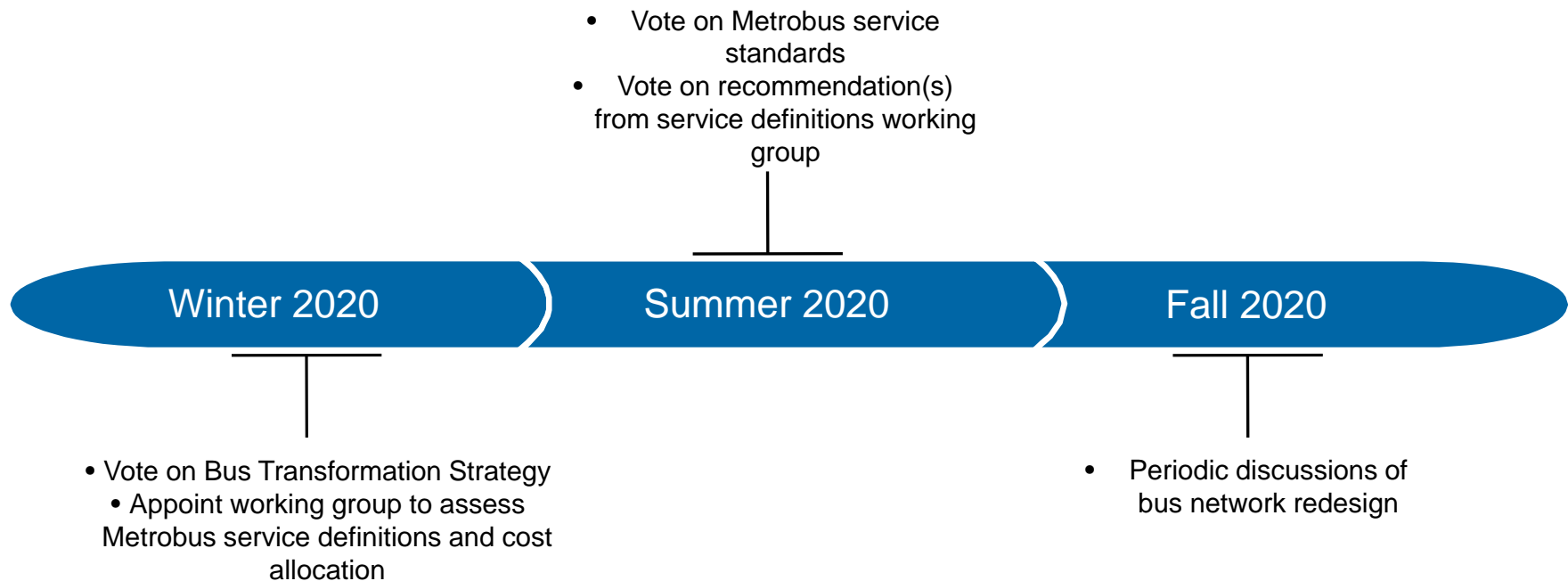
### Lead

- Establish Metrobus service standards
- Define and begin bus network restructure effort
- Assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation formula
- Establish bus priority capital program
- Enhance Metrobus marketing, transit benefits, and front-line training programs
- Continue upgrades of Metro-owned bus bays and stop facilities
- Begin testing and evaluation of zero emission buses

### Partner

- Develop approach to collect and share standardized bus operation and performance data
- Seek commitments from state and local agencies to implement bus priority
- Investigate enforcement policies that establish bus priority
- Pilot low-income fare product
- Incorporate local bus providers into existing pass products and transfer discount
- Facilitate an independently published annual Progress Report and Performance Scorecard
- Develop approach for a platform for rider feedback

## Proposed Board Activities – Calendar Year 2020



## Next Steps

Seek endorsement of the vision, goals, strategy, and recommendations of the Bus Transformation Project (January 2020)



WASHINGTON AREA  
**BUS TRANSFORMATION**  
PROJECT

*A better way to get there*

## Strategy Summary



*"Buses play a critical role in connecting people throughout this region to opportunities. The Bus Transformation Project will identify and implement steps to make local bus a world class travel option for all of the region's residents."*

September 2019  
bustransformationproject.com

—Rob Puentes, Executive Steering Committee Chair

# BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Summary of Agency and/or Jurisdiction  
Progress to Date

December 12, 2019



# Overview

---

1. Summary of Changes from Draft Strategy
2. Bus Provider and/or Jurisdiction Progress to Date

# Changes from the Draft Strategy

## Structural Changes:

- Streamlined from six key recommendations to four
- Final strategy includes 26 recommendations

## New Recommendations Based Public Feedback:

- A regional rider feedback platform as a response to public input that riders should be a part of shaping their system
- On-board safety for drivers and passengers
- Bus cleanliness and comfort
- Customer service

## Other Changes Based on Stakeholder Feedback:

- No longer proposed transferring service between bus providers, but does propose revisiting the definition of “regional” bus routes by the WMATA Board
- Removed recommendation to consolidate back-office functions
- Recommended Task Force for the governance of bus not necessary to jumpstart Bus Transformation, but the still recommends that the region work together to identify a version of collaboration that works



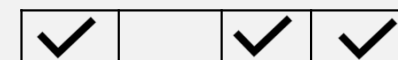
# 1 Provide frequent and convenient bus service

- A Establish regional standards
- B Collect and share standardized bus operations and performance data
- C Collaboratively restructure the region's bus network
- D Cooperatively assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation
- E Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to operate flexible on-demand services

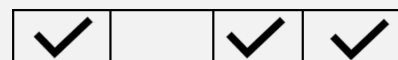
## Survey Findings: Progress to Date



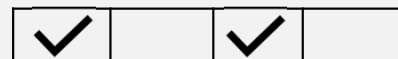
WMATA developed service guidelines (2015) with the region, but not Board adopted. Other agencies have standards and/or performance metrics



AVL and APCs on most buses in region; Level and sophistication of data cleaning and analysis varies



Nothing has been done at a full regional level. VA agencies have and will continue to review entire network (by jurisdiction) through required TDP and TSP process. DC local bus study completed in 2014; Circulator TDP updated in 2017. Prince George's Transit Vision Plan



Progress made through first part of Bus Transformation Project

*No survey question*

Montgomery County and DDOT have pilot programs. Other jurisdictions have studied it or are currently studying it. Prince George's has limited call-a-ride services open to all



## 2 Give buses priority on roadways

- A Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to expedite bus priority**
- B Implement enforcement policies that establish bus priority**
- C Establish a capital program at WMATA that supports accelerated implementation**
- D Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority**

### Survey Findings: Progress to Date



No commitments exist to expedite bus priority measures. Implementation decisions implemented on a case by case basis. 2015 Metrobus service standards included priority. DDOT has made H&I Street bus lanes permanent, Arlington/Alexandria have Metroway, Fairfax Co and Montgomery working on several corridors

--	--	--	--

Traffic Incident Management Enhancement Taskforce (TIME) as part of TPB/COG. MCDOT, DDOT, VDOT, all expressed support for this. Plus "general agreement that it's good to pursue." TPB Bus Lane Enforcement Study from 2017. Varying implementations of automated enforcement allowed in different jurisdictions

✓	✓	✓	
---	---	---	--

No progress to date

*No survey question*

Some work being done, e.g. DDOT study in FY20 budget. VDOT has congestion pricing on Express Lanes. MD is considering managed lanes

✓	✓	✓	
---	---	---	--

# 3 Create an excellent customer experience

## A Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information

- A1: Real-time service information for all providers available in one place
- A2: Legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers
- A3: Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus

## B Make paying bus fares easier.

- B1: Provide full transfer discount between bus and rail
- B2: Provide reduced fare options for low-income riders
- B3: Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place
- B4: Develop regional passes that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable
- B5: Incentivize more employers to offer transit benefits

### Survey Findings: Progress to Date

VA	DC	MD	M metro
----	----	----	---------

Consensus support for GTFS real time but few fully implemented	✓		✓	
Other than the WMATA-published map, there are no system-wide maps. Have not started route renumbering	No survey question			
Bus marketing is thus far piecemeal on individual services - MD 355 Ride On 101, DC Circulator, etc.	✓	✓	✓	
WMATA proposed as part of FY21 operating budget				✓
Various subsidy programs in multiple jurisdictions, and some free fares (e.g., CUE). DC/WMATA planning pilot	✓			
WMATA is working on a mobile payment solution				✓
WMATA has added Metrobus to their monthly unlimited pass. Most bus operators in the region already accept the WMATA Weekly Unlimited Bus Pass	✓	✓	✓	✓
Many jurisdictions already have programs: Arlington, Fairfax, Alexandria, DC, and parts of Montgomery	✓	✓	✓	✓

5

# 3 Create an excellent customer experience

## C Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus.

C1: Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled

C2: Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone, partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions

C3: Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service

C4: Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness

## D Pursue innovation and bus improvement.

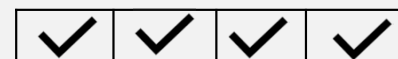
D1: Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency

D2: Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements

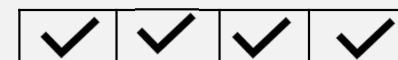
## Survey Findings: Progress to Date



VDOT, WMATA, Fairfax County already have guidelines. City of Fairfax is in the process of developing. Alexandria and Prince George's use WMATA's standards



All agencies have passenger and driver safety features, and are planning for improvements



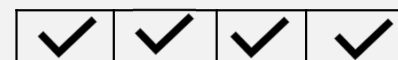
All providers include customer service in operator training efforts, although some are provided by the contractor. Alexandria and FCDOT have incentive programs



Operators have individual standards

No survey question

Five agencies currently doing or moving toward electric bus procurement (WMATA, Circulator, Ride On, DASH, The Bus) with expected implementation around 2021. VDOT and DRPT are also moving forward with EV buses. AV shuttles being tested in VA



TPB Regional Public Transportation Subcommittee and WMATA JCC are two existing forums for ad-hoc information sharing

No survey question

# 4 Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus

- A** Convene a Task Force to oversee implementation of the Strategy and provide long-term leadership for the regional bus system with membership
- B** Annual progress report on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a bus performance scorecard
- C** Develop a platform for rider feedback, administered by the Task Force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback

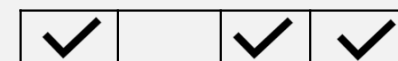
## Survey Findings: Progress to Date



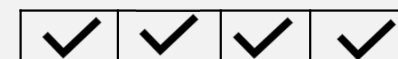
No agencies have committed to date; revisit the structure and timing of this recommendation

*No survey question*

Bus performance scorecard - some start from CSG report (just Metrobus in DC). Performance metrics are published by DASH, Metrobus, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, MCDOT. DRPT and NVTC collect and publish performance metrics for all agencies



RACs exists at WMATA and Prince George's County. DASH is forming advisory committees. Other agencies have ways for riders to provide feedback on service



SUBJECT: DRAFT APPROVAL OF BUS TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

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

WHEREAS, The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority ("WMATA") Board of Directors (the "Board") sets policy direction for WMATA; and

WHEREAS, The Washington, D.C. area relies on an integrated transportation network, in which buses play an essential role as the most efficient mode of surface transportation, reducing roadway congestion, providing the most affordable mobility option, extending the reach of transit into communities across the region, and connecting residents with jobs, education, healthcare, and is fundamental to the region's prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Over 620,000 trips on local buses are taken every weekday, and 81 percent of residents live within a quarter-mile of a bus stop; and

WHEREAS, Bus providers are contending with significant challenges as bus speeds are declining, ridership has fallen, and, the world of transportation is innovating rapidly, and our region's bus system has not kept pace; and

WHEREAS, The quality of bus service is a shared responsibility of bus service providers, departments of transportation who own and operate streets and curbs and enforce use regulations for these amenities, and funding partners ("Responsible Parties") and these Responsible Parties must work together to create a regional system that meets customer needs; and

WHEREAS, A steering committee of regional civic and business leaders led a project on behalf of the region, with the purpose of achieving a vision that buses will be the transportation mode of choice on the region's roads by 2030, serving as the backbone of a strong and inclusive regional mobility system (the "Bus Transformation Project"); and

WHEREAS, Civic and business leaders from across the region collaborated on the vision and strategy to transform bus in the region and have called on regional political leaders to act now; and

WHEREAS, The Bus Transformation Project benefits from more than a year of outreach to nearly 9,000 citizens and 140 leaders from jurisdictions, bus providers, businesses,

community organizations, disability advocates, labor and other stakeholders, provides a Strategy that outlines recommendations and the direction to transform the region's bus system, and develops a ten-year Action Plan with implementation steps to gain momentum over time; and

WHEREAS, The region's residents and civic and advocacy groups clearly indicated their desire for a fast, frequent, reliable, and affordable bus system that feels unified across the region; and

WHEREAS, The Bus Transformation Strategy includes key recommendations to: provide frequent and convenient bus service, give buses priority on roadways, create an excellent customer experience, and establish ongoing stewardship to transform bus regionally, while enabling local action;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board believes strongly in investing in the region's bus system to improve mobility, reduce congestion, promote regional competitiveness, promote a more livable region, and fight climate change; and be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board endorses the vision, goals, strategy, and recommendations of the Bus Transformation Project as the direction required to transform bus in the region, recognizing that specific funding commitments, projects, and agreements will need to be secured from the Responsible Parties and through the WMATA's annual budget process; and be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board supports WMATA's efforts to improve the level and quality of service operated by Metrobus and directs WMATA staff to continue to coordinate service with locally provided bus service and Responsible Parties to respond to customer demand and create a bus system that works within the realities of the complex funding and governance structure in the Metropolitan Washington region, while advancing a system that is customer-focused and feels unified to the public; and be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board recognizes that giving buses priority on roadways is essential to providing fast and reliable bus service and encourages Responsible Parties to find opportunities to move quickly from planning to implementation of bus priority measures, including bus rapid transit (BRT) where practical; and be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board endorses the recommendations outlined in the Bus Transformation Strategy and adopts those recommendations as guidance to staff in drafting relevant policies such as Metrobus service standards and future potential recommended changes to Metrobus service definitions and cost allocation, as a means to create an excellent customer experience and encourages collaboration among all Responsible Parties on these expeditiously; and be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board encourages Responsible Parties to incorporate the Bus Transformation Strategy's recommendations, where feasible, into their local planning and funding activities to ensure progress on transforming the region's bus system;

*RESOLVED*, That the Board directs staff to update applicable budgeting and planning documents to incorporate the Bus Transformation Strategy and recommendations; and be it further,

*RESOLVED*, That the Board will seek specific ways to support implementation of the strategy at WMATA including through the annual budget process, the capital improvement program and the adoption of relevant policies; and be it finally,

*RESOLVED*, That this Resolution shall be effective 30 days after adoption in accordance with Compact Section 8(b).

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,

---

Patricia Y. Lee  
General Counsel

WMATA File Structure Nos.:





WASHINGTON AREA  
**BUS TRANSFORMATION**  
PROJECT

*A better way to get there*

# Strategy Summary



*“Buses play a critical role in connecting people throughout this region to opportunities. The Bus Transformation Project will identify and implement steps to make local bus a world class travel option for all of the region’s residents.”*





**Executive  
Steering  
Committee  
Members**

Rob Puentes, Chair  
Rosie Allen-Herring  
David Alpert  
Chuck Bean  
Bob Buchanan  
Jim Dyke

Nat Gandhi  
Kim Horn  
Jack McDougale  
Sandy Modell  
Neil Pedersen  
Jack Potter

David Richardson  
Deborah Ratner Salzberg  
Stewart Schwartz  
Anne Stubbs  
Beverley Swaim-Staley  
Ed Wytkind

## Bus Transformation Project - Executive Steering Committee

To: Residents, Businesses, and Elected Officials of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Region

From: Robert Puentes, Chair

### **Subject: Final Strategy for the Bus Transformation Project**

In 2018 a group of leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors came together to oversee a bold vision: to highlight the critical role of the Washington region's bus system, and to transform it for maximum impact over the next generation.

This Strategy document is the result of that effort. On behalf of the Executive Steering Committee, we strongly believe it's four key recommendations—make buses faster and more reliable, accelerate investment for prioritizing buses on our roadways, serve customers through safe and easy to use technology, and create a structure to ensure lasting change—contain the seeds for transformation. A detailed action plan will follow this Strategy in the fall of 2019 and illustrate precisely how these recommendations will be implemented.

We call on regional leaders for action now.

From traffic headaches to subway shutdowns, the region's transportation problems are well known. Although good work is underway to address those challenges, buses have largely been left out, unheralded, and deprioritized despite their role as a significant component of the region's transportation system. To better illustrate this importance, buses in the national capital region deliver over 600,000 trips each weekday—almost the same number of trips each day as Metrorail. Unfortunately, buses in the DMV today are relegated to competing with cars for roadway space, angling with ride-hailing companies for curb access, and fighting for attention as new mobility options pop up seemingly every day.

The result? Unhappy bus riders getting more unhappy. The most recent regional survey of commuters found that those who take the bus are significantly less satisfied than they were just three years prior. While this is a challenge to retaining riders and attracting new ones, it is especially harmful for customers who are bus-dependent with few alternatives for how they get around the region. During the extensive outreach conducted to inform this Strategy we heard loudly from the riding and non-riding public, across all demographics and parts of the region, an unequivocal call for better bus service. Not surprisingly, what they wanted was a radical recommitment to fixing the basics: speed, frequency, reliability, affordability.

The Bus Transformation Project set out an ambitious notion of “transforming” bus and a big piece of that is rethinking policies, practices, and attitudes. It will require the region's bus providers to work with their employees and focus on quality and customer service. The perspectives of front line workers will come from treating the unions as partners and can propel this critical work forward.

This strategy is not an unattainable wish list of what the Executive Steering Committee would like to see, nor would we be remotely satisfied with a report that sits on the proverbial shelf. With that in mind, we considered financial stewardship throughout this project. This does not mean investments are not needed—they absolutely are—but what we recommend is keenly aware of budgetary constraints at all levels of government. We also strongly believe that since ridership will increase once these strategies are implemented, there is a strong return on investment for what we have proposed.

We recognize that transforming the Washington region's bus system will not be easy. It will not happen without tough decisions, strong advocates inside and outside government, and a clear voice for current and future riders. But the public has spoken loud and clear. It is past time for state, regional, and local leaders to do what many other places are already doing: making bus the mode of choice on the region's roads. It is critical to the Washington region's prosperity.

Sincerely,



# Prosperity in Peril

Congestion, affordability, and mobility are major problems in the Washington Region that will only continue to grow as 40,000–60,000 jobs and households are added each year. Meanwhile, our regional bus system is not keeping pace with this growth and riders' needs for frequent, reliable, and fast service.



## THE CHALLENGE

Growing congestion results in poor access to jobs, higher costs of living, and decreased economic growth and competitiveness. Time spent in congestion takes away from family, friends, faith, and fitness; suppresses income potential; adds to stress and frustration; and lowers the overall quality of life.

The vast majority of the region's 20 million daily trips occur in personal vehicles on already gridlocked roads.

Rail transit emerged as an effective tool to combat congestion in our region, but its effectiveness has limits. Metrorail's high-speed, high-capacity network only reaches about a quarter of the region's land area, and any rail system expansion is many billions of dollars and decades away.

## THE BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Other regions nationally and globally have transformed their bus systems to address similar challenges, decreasing congestion, improving reliability, and operating efficiently with frequent and fast service. It is past time for us to do the same: **rapid, effective surface transportation is critical to our region's prosperity.** Buses have a vital role to play because they make efficient use of roadways by transporting large numbers of riders safely, conveniently, and affordably, and they provide service in areas not accessible by Metrorail.

Over the course of the project, the region's residents and civic and advocacy groups were loud and clear on how to transform the bus system: **Transformation means fast, frequent, reliable, affordable service that feels like a unified system,** and isn't beholden to geographic or funding boundaries. The Bus Transformation Strategy provides a path forward as a coordinated regional strategy that addresses customer needs, leverages innovative technology, and proposes an approach to regional governance to make the strategy a reality.

This Strategy Summary introduces four key recommendations that have been shaped by a broad range of stakeholders and the public from across the region. These recommendations focus on actions that ensure frequent and reliable bus service on a consistent basis across the region, with improved speed and efficiency for riders. They push forward innovation in operations, institutions, and technology that will position the region to transform the bus system.

Visit [bustransformationproject.com](http://bustransformationproject.com) to read more about the project and the Strategy in full.





# A better way to **GET THERE**

## THE VISION

Bus will be the mode of choice on the region's roads by 2030, serving as the backbone of a strong and inclusive regional mobility system that will support a growing and sustainable economy.

### A Regional Strategy

This strategy focuses on riders' needs by examining how quality bus service works to best support various types of users across different areas within our region and how the region's bus operators can best interact with each other and with other users of the roadways.

The strategy recommends concrete actions to transform existing bus services into a truly integrated, accessible regional bus network that is part of the larger regional mobility system.

### Collaboration

Collaboration across regional and political boundaries can produce solutions that facilitate fast, frequent, affordable, and seamless travel connections for customers; connect people with jobs, services, and opportunity in our region; provide access to more affordable housing options; align the high-frequency and high-capacity regional bus network with roadways where buses are given priority; clearly delineate and effectively coordinate regionally provided services and locally managed bus systems; and empower organizations to coordinate functions, leverage transformative technologies, and transparently track progress.

*The bus network of tomorrow can achieve performance outcomes and transportation objectives that will make the region more competitive, sustainable, and equitable.*

## VISION TO GOALS

From its vision, the Bus Transformation Project set out five goals to guide the transformation of bus across the District of Columbia, State of Maryland, and Commonwealth of Virginia:

**Regional connectivity:** Provide reliable on-street transit options that efficiently connect people to places and improve mobility.

**Rider experience:** Ensure a convenient, easy-to-use, user-centered travel choice.

**Financial stewardship:** Maintain a transit mode that is financially sustainable in the long term.

**Sustainability:** Encourage vibrant, economically thriving and sustainable communities.

**Equity:** Create a bus system that is affordable and equitable.

To meet these goals, the project developed dynamic recommendations based on stakeholder collaboration, public engagement, and world-wide best practices. These recommendations directly address the core challenges. While buses are a space- and cost-efficient means to move large numbers of people, they are currently not being used to their potential.

## INNOVATION AROUND THE REGION

The Bus Transformation Strategy isn't starting from scratch. A selection of what jurisdictions across the region are already taking action to improve the bus system include:

Flexible service pilot in Montgomery County

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Montgomery County and Northern Virginia

Evaluating opportunities for joint storage / maintenance facilities between Montgomery County and WMATA

Electric buses in DC Circulator and RideOn fleet

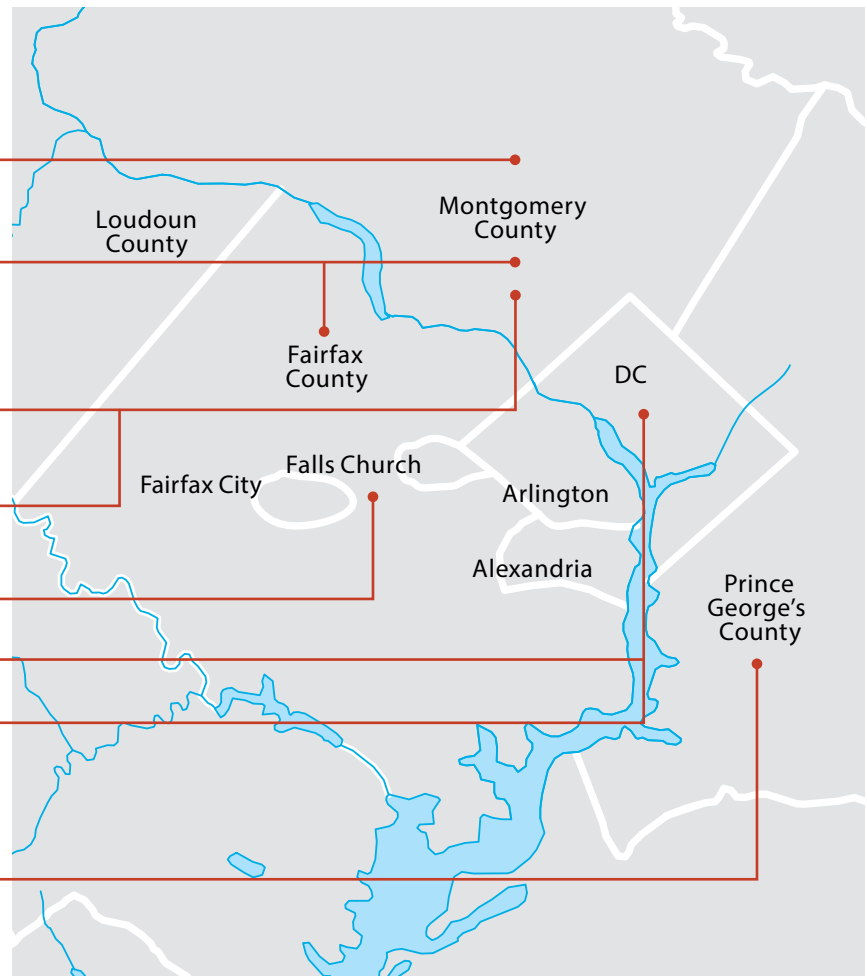
AV Shuttle Pilot in Fairfax County

Dedicated bus lanes in DC

Microtransit service in DC

New storage/maintenance facility with room to expand. Making more bus stops accessible and with real time information

Transit signal priority across the region



# Recommendations

Authored in partnership with stakeholders across the region, the Bus Transformation Strategy sets out an ambitious path forward. The strategy makes four key recommendations to achieve the goals of this effort.

1



**Provide frequent and convenient bus service**

that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.

2



**Give buses priority on roadways** to move people quickly and reliably.

3



**Create an excellent customer experience** to retain and increase ridership.

4



**Empower a publicly appointed task force to transform bus** and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

*Learn more about how the project developed into a strategy and read the strategy at [bustransformationproject.com](http://bustransformationproject.com)*



## Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.

- A. Establish regional standards** across bus systems to provide consistent bus service, tailored by location and time of day.
- B. Collect and share standardized bus operations and performance data** across agencies to improve transparency and better plan bus service.
- C. Collaboratively restructure the region's bus network** to create the most efficient and customer-focused bus system. [\*Mass Transit Plan as defined in the WMATA Compact]
- D. Cooperatively assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation formula** using the WMATA Board's Authority.
- E. Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to operate flexible on-demand services** to supplement the fixed route network where and when warranted.



### ***A modern bus system must...***

- ✓ *Recognize that one size does not fit all, and that service decisions must be guided by demand, land use, and equity.*
- ✓ *Share operations and performance data in a standardized format.*
- ✓ *Coordinate service provided across multiple agencies.*
- ✓ *Balance the operating and funding conditions that make sense for regional bus operations with those that make sense for individual jurisdictions.*
- ✓ *Offer a better choice in the growing market of resource intensive options that people have at their disposal today.*

### ***Implementing these recommendations will result in...***

- ✓ *Consistent and appealing service across the region as a result of cohesive planning, operations, and performance.*
- ✓ *Greater communication among agencies and customers.*
- ✓ *Increased number of customers who use bus region-wide to access key destinations—regardless of where they live and what times they travel.*
- ✓ *Greater transparency associated with “regional” services—where riders benefit from the clearer distinction of how services are planned and allocated.*
- ✓ *Meeting riders’ growing expectations of transit and travel across the region through forms of bus that are flexible and cost-effective.*
- ✓ *Stronger connections between bus and land use, where people can access employment centers, key goods and services, and amenities and live affordably.*

# 2



## Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably.

- A.** Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to **adopt consistent guidelines**, bolster jurisdictional capital spending, and expedite coordinated implementation of bus priority.
- B.** Implement enforcement policies that **establish bus priority** and result in reliable and fast service.
- C.** Establish a capital program at WMATA that **supports accelerated implementation of bus priority projects**, including BRT.
- D.** Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority and **move more people more efficiently**.







### ***A modern bus system...***

- ✓ *Cannot be burdened by the high levels of congestion that single-occupancy vehicles cause.*
- ✓ *Maximizes the people-carrying capacity of the region's roads and infrastructure.*
- ✓ *Effectively uses limited resources from across the region to combat congestion with fast, frequent, and reliable service.*
- ✓ *Attracts and benefits more riders, whereas, without intervention, bus runs the risk of becoming the mobility option only for those who have no other choice.*

### ***Implementing these recommendations will result in...***

- ✓ *Predictable and reliable bus service that customers can trust.*
- ✓ *Moving more people in the most efficient way - giving people more time to work, learn, and play.*
- ✓ *A myriad of benefits across the region, including increased access to jobs and tourist attractions, enhanced economic competitiveness, reduced emissions, and promotion of a healthier natural environment.*



## Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership.

### A. Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information to plan a trip.

- A1: Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place
- A2: Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers
- A3: Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits

### B. Make paying bus fares easier.

- B1: Provide free transfers between bus and rail
- B2: Provide reduced fare options for low-income riders
- B3: Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place
- B4: Develop new regional passes that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable
- B5: Incentivize more employers to offer transit benefits

### C. Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus.

- C1: Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled
- C2: Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone on board by partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions
- C3: Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service
- C4: Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness

### D. Pursue innovation and bus improvement.

- D1: Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency, such as electric buses and automation
- D2: Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements such as service provision, customer experience, and bus operator and passenger safety





### ***A modern bus system must...***

- ✓ *Be legible for all users and provide one-stop information that includes trip planning and real-time status.*
- ✓ *Provide a range of payment options that are functionally and financially efficient, and meet the diverse needs of customers.*
- ✓ *Be a convenient, safe, easy-to-use, user-focused mobility option for all riders.*
- ✓ *Capitalize on innovations that reduce negative environmental impacts.*

### ***Implementing these recommendations will result in...***

- ✓ *Increased ridership and improved perception that bus is an appealing and desirable mode of travel, becoming an easy choice for all users, regardless of age, ability, or income.*
- ✓ *Reshaped travel choices that help people choose where they live and work.*
- ✓ *A safer and more comfortable system for customers and employees.*
- ✓ *Positive impacts to the built and natural environment that create a more livable and sustainable region.*



## Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

- A.** Convene a Task Force to **oversee implementation** of the Strategy **and provide long-term leadership** for the regional bus system with membership as follows:
- The Governors of Virginia and Maryland and the Mayor of the District of Columbia each nominate one person (three members total)
  - The six principal members from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia on the WMATA Board collectively nominate one person (one member total)
  - Bus Transformation Executive Steering Committee nominates three people (three members total)
  - The Task Force itself may nominate up to two additional people (up to two members total)
- B.** Facilitate an independently published **annual progress report** on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a **bus performance scorecard** to track the level of service delivered to customers
- C.** **Develop a platform for rider feedback**, administered by the task force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback into regular revisions of the Strategy recommendations.



### **Because...**

- ✓ *People from across the region have said the current disjointed bus system is not meeting their needs - and driving them to other modes.*
- ✓ *Immediate and sustained action is needed to implement recommendations to transform the bus system. A task force will have the authority to set the agenda and coordinate actions to achieve real progress.*
- ✓ *Responsible agencies must be held accountable for the goals, priorities, and performance of bus across the region.*
- ✓ *Direct feedback from riders is essential to the continued improvement of bus service in the region.*

### **Implementing these recommendations will result in...**

- ✓ *Stronger governmental entities that have responsibilities for bus, and who collaboratively implement strategy recommendations.*
- ✓ *A unified regional program; otherwise, the status quo will remain, and the region will likely continue to face the same problems.*
- ✓ *Regular reporting by independent organizations that increases the visibility of bus transformation and yields measurable improvements for customers.*
- ✓ *A clear mechanism for riders to influence changes to bus service in the region.*





# Collaboration

Engagement has been a cornerstone of this project from the beginning! Engagement activities include:

<b>140</b>	Participants at the Kickoff Summit
<b>8,800</b>	Survey responses to date
<b>13</b>	Metrobus division engagement events
<b>4</b>	Focus groups
<b>23</b>	ESC meetings
<b>12</b>	Technical Team meetings
<b>7</b>	SAP meetings
<b>45</b>	External project briefings
<b>3</b>	Public open house events
<b>33</b>	Pop-up events
<b>13</b>	WMATA Leadership Team briefings
<b>243</b>	Social media postings
<b>185,750</b>	People reached via social media

Creating a sustainable surface transportation future depends on collaboration between bus operators, cities, counties, and states that own the roads.

It also depends on input from the broader community – from businesses, non-profits and community organizations, thought leaders, the public, and many more!

## WHO IS DRIVING THIS BUS?

Tapping into the immense expertise within this region has guided the development of this strategy, and this strategy has relied on the input of many from across the region.

### Executive Steering Committee

Committee members, who hold various leadership positions in the business community, with regional organizations and non-profits, or are unaffiliated transit experts or labor representatives, have been closely involved with developing the strategy and played an important role in ensuring transparency, independence, and consideration of the needs of the region's travelers and bus service providers.

### Strategy Advisory Panel (SAP)

Panel members, who hold leadership positions in local and state governments, community-based organizations, businesses, minority and disability groups, labor organizations, think tanks, and the education community, represent a variety of regional perspectives and provide critical insight into issues that affect bus.

### Technical Team

Team members are recognized discipline leaders within WMATA and senior jurisdiction transit staff who review technical aspects and analyses throughout the project.

### WMATA Leadership Team

Team members are decision-makers within WMATA who oversee those parts of the project that affect organization and operations.

### General Public

A broad sample of bus riders and non-riders have shared their priorities through various media, including almost 9,000 survey responses, both on-line and on-site at locations throughout the region.

### Key Stakeholders

Other stakeholders from across the region have provided input that represents the perspectives of broad constituencies. These stakeholders include transit and transportation leaders, and elected and appointed officials.



# Public Engagement

The Bus Transformation Strategy is the result of extensive public feedback and significant collective effort. From when the Draft Strategy was released in Spring 2019, a regional, inclusive public engagement effort brought thousands of voices to the project and helped clarify the strategy's focus and final recommendations.

## HOW IT HAPPENED

### Went Where People Are:

Held bilingual pop-up events at Metro stations, bus transit centers, grocery stores, and shopping areas in Maryland, Virginia, and DC, where people could learn about the project and take a short survey.

**Promoted the Survey:** Used in-person, print, radio, and digital platforms to promote a short bilingual survey about the Draft Strategy.

**Hosted Open Houses:** Held three public open houses in central locations in Virginia, Maryland, and DC to obtain feedback about the Draft Strategy.

**Used Social Media:** Used Instagram and Facebook ads to publicize the survey and outreach events – and many of our social media posts were re-posted by regional transit agencies and other critical stakeholders.

## PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

- Top recommendation preferences, across all jurisdictions:



**Free transfers between bus and Metrorail**



**Build dedicated bus lanes**



**Run more buses on busy routes**

- Safe, accessible bus stops and discounted fares for low-income riders were high priorities for people aged 65 or over, Spanish-language survey respondents, and low-income respondents.
- People across all demographic groups believed recommendations could transform bus in the region, and strongly supported public funding for implementation.

## WHAT THE COMMENTS SAID

from the survey and open houses. Yes the comments were read!

“Free transfers to Metrorail is critical. The region’s transit system is built around being multi-modal. Why penalize people for using the system as designed?”

“Frequent needs to be reliably frequent. The bus needs to arrive when it’s supposed to arrive. The failure to do so is probably the most frustrating thing about riding the bus, and the thing that keeps some people from doing it at all.”

“Yes yes yes to dedicated bus lanes. Yes and more yes.”

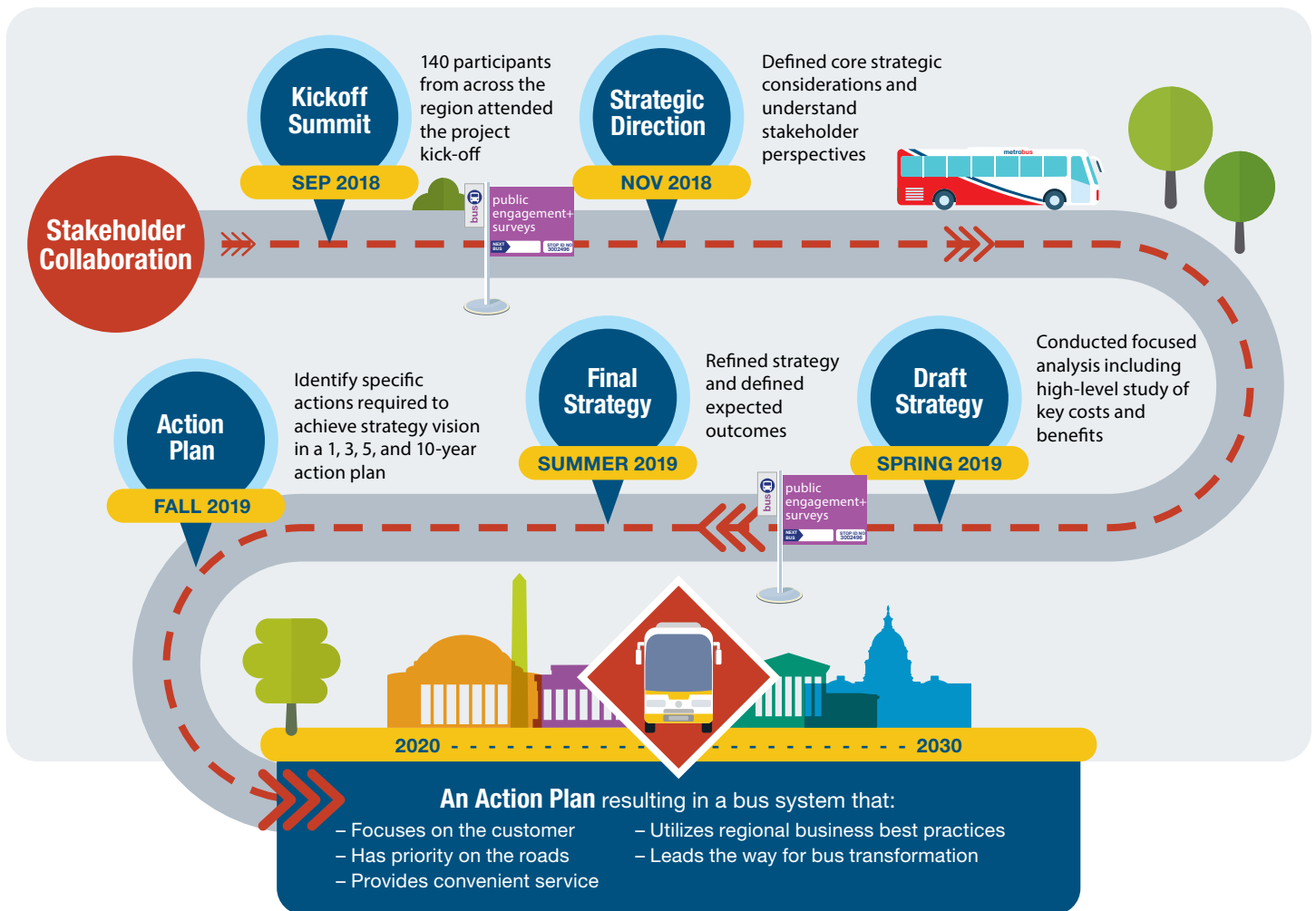
“Enforcement programs for bus lanes are critical!”

## Highlights from Draft Strategy Public Outreach

- 39 Spanish-language radio ads on El Zol
- 1,500 emails to partner and stakeholder organizations
- 16,900 SmarTrip users reached by email blast
- 10,900 postcards distributed
- 1,300 clicks on Facebook and Instagram ads
- 492 comments received

# Next Steps

This Strategy and its recommendations are the result of extensive stakeholder insights, clear feedback from the public, best practices from other regions, and comprehensive analysis of the region's bus system.



*The Bus Transformation Project's action plan will chart the implementation of this Strategy over the next 10 years. Stay tuned as we release this important plan by the end of 2019!*

## EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Rob Puentes, Chair	Nat Gandhi	David Richardson
Rosie Allen-Herring	Kim Horn	Deborah Ratner Salzberg
David Alpert	Jack McDougale	Stewart Schwartz
Chuck Bean	Sandy Modell	Anne Stubbs
Bob Buchanan	Neil Pedersen	Beverley Swaim-Staley
Jim Dyke	Jack Potter	Ed Wytkind

## WMATA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer  
Joseph Leader, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer  
Robert Potts, Senior Vice President, Bus Services  
Andrea Burnside, Vice President, Operating Budget, Performance, and Planning  
Jim Hughes, Managing Director, Intermodal Strategic Planning  
Barbara Richardson, Executive Vice President and Chief of External Affairs  
Lynn Bowersox, Senior Vice President, Customer Service, Communications, and Marketing  
Regina Sullivan, Vice President, Government Relations  
Dennis Anosike, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
Tom Webster, Executive Vice President, Capital Planning and Program Management  
Shyam Kannan, Vice President, Planning  
Allison Davis, Director, Planning  
Julie Hershorn, Assistant Director, Bus Service Planning and Scheduling

## TECHNICAL TEAM

Ray Alfred, WMATA  
Martin Barna, Alexandria - DASH  
Jewel Bell, WMATA  
Jamie Carrington, WMATA  
Raka Choudhury, DDOT  
Allison Davis, WMATA  
Clinton Edwards, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT)  
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County  
Michael Felschow, Fairfax Connector  
Lawrence Flint, WMATA  
Anthony Foster, Prince George's County - TheBus  
Dan Goldfarb, NUTC  
Scott Gross, Loudoun County  
Derek Gunn, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Jim Hamre, WMATA  
Matt Hardison, WMATA  
Julie Hershorn, WMATA  
Al Himes, WMATA  
Jordan Holt, WMATA  
Jim Hughes, WMATA  
William Jones, Arlington - ART  
Shyam Kannan, WMATA  
Melissa Kim, WMATA  
Carla Longshore, DDOT  
Phil McLaughlin, Montgomery County - RideOn  
Dave Michels, WMATA  
Heidi Mitter, VDOT - NOVA  
Mark Phillips, WMATA  
Delores Proctor, WMATA  
Pat Pscherer, Washington Suburban Transit Commission  
Eric Randall, Transportation Planning Board  
Gail Ribas, WMATA  
Chloe Ritter, City of Fairfax - CUE  
Tim Roseboom, Arlington County  
Wendy Sanford, City of Fairfax  
Lisa Schooley, WMATA  
Charlie Scott, WMATA  
Al Short, WMATA  
Dan Smith, WMATA  
Sam Stepney, WMATA  
Steve Strauss, DDOT  
Catherine Vanderwaart, WMATA  
Marcus Washington, WMATA  
Thomas Webb, WMATA  
Christine Wells, Washington Suburban Transit Commission  
Todd Wigglesworth, Fairfax County  
Christopher Ziemann, City of Alexandria

## STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL

Marcel Acosta, National Capital Planning Commission  
David Anspacher, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission - Montgomery  
Monica Backmon, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority  
Josh Baker, Alexandria - DASH  
Jeff Bennett, DDOT - Circulator  
Tom Biesiadny, Fairfax County Department of Transportation  
Michael Blackwell, Northern Virginia Community College  
Mercia Bowser, Disability Community Outreach Collaborative  
Maura Brophy, Federal City Council  
Zachary Chissell, Maryland Transit Administration  
Daehyeon Choi, Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington  
Maria Ciarocchi, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce  
Christopher Conklin, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Candace Cunningham, Restaurant Opportunities Center  
Ronnie Dampier, Office of the City Administrator  
Bob Duffy, Arlington Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development  
Dan Emerine, District Department of Transportation  
Sophia Fisher, Fairfax Department of Planning and Zoning  
Rudy Gardner, Local 922  
Gigi Godwin, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce  
Laurel Hammig, National Park Service - National Capital Region  
Dan Hibbert, Montgomery County Department of Transportation - RideOn  
Jennifer DeBruhl, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT)  
Jennifer Hosey, Action Committee for Transit  
Raymond Jackson, Local 689  
Aly Kaba, DC Office on African Affairs  
Steve Kaffen, WMATA Accessibility Advisory Committee (DC)  
Monika Kerdeman, Transportation Planning Board Citizens Advisory Committee (MD)  
Elizabeth Kiker, House of Ruth  
Yon Lambert, City of Alexandria  
Dennis Leach, Arlington County  
Justin Lini, Transportation Planning Board Citizens Advisory Committee (DC)  
Jana Lynott, AARP  
Nechama Masliansky, So Others Might Eat  
Kate Mattice, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission  
Joe McAndrew, Greater Washington Partnership  
Clayton Medford, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce  
Emeka Moneme, Federal City Council  
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Penny Newquist, Loudoun County  
Vincent Orange, District Chamber of Commerce  
Mark Pace, Montgomery College  
Jeff Parnes, Transportation Planning Board Citizens Advisory Committee (VA)  
Scott Pedowitz, Arlington Chamber of Commerce  
Dwayne Pelfrey, Fairfax County Department of Transportation - Connector  
Phil Posner, WMATA Accessibility Advisory Committee (VA)  
Pat Pscherer, Maryland Department of Transportation - Suburban MD  
Doris Ray, Transportation Planning Board Access for All Committee  
Chloe Ritter, City of Fairfax - CUE  
Lynn Rivers, Arlington Transit  
Caitlin Rogger, Greater Greater Washington  
Lisa Rother, Urban Land Institute (ULI Washington)  
Wendy Sanford, City of Fairfax  
Kanti Srikanth, Transportation Planning Board  
Yesim Taylor, DC Policy Center  
John Townsend, American Automobile Association  
Andrew Trueblood, DC Office of Planning  
Deb Wake, League of Women Voters, National Capital  
D'Andrea Walker, Prince George's County  
Wil White, Riders Advisory Council  
Yemisrach Wolde, DC Language Access Coalition

## This project will transform bus service...

from

Wondering when  
the bus will come



**MAKE BUS THE EASY FIRST  
CHOICE**



to

**Frequent and predictable**

from

Slow and stuck in traffic



**PRIORITIZE BUSES  
ON MAJOR ROADWAYS**



to

**Fast trips where you want to go**

from

Last resort



**FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER**



to

**Appealing and desirable**

from

Region divided



**STRENGTHEN REGIONAL  
COOPERATION TO TRANSFORM  
THE BUS SYSTEM**



to

**Stronger together**

### LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REGION'S BUS SYSTEM

Draft Strategy and Recommendations  
Bus System Today  
Public Input Survey Report  
Project Overview  
Strategic Considerations

[bustransformationproject.com/resources/#documents](http://bustransformationproject.com/resources/#documents)

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS DOCUMENT

Executive Steering Committee  
WMATA Leadership Team  
Technical Team  
Strategy Advisory Panel  
Consultant team: AECOM, Foursquare ITP, BCG, Neoniche Strategies



WASHINGTON AREA  
**BUS TRANSFORMATION**  
PROJECT

[bustransformationproject.com](http://bustransformationproject.com)

# Action Plan

## Executive Summary

November 2019









# A better way to **GET THERE**



Congestion, affordability, and mobility are major problems in the Washington Region that will only continue to grow as 40,000–60,000 jobs and households are added each year. Meanwhile, our regional bus system is not keeping pace with this growth and riders' needs for frequent, reliable, and fast service.

## **THE VISION:**

**Bus will be the mode of choice on the region's roads by 2030, serving as the backbone of a strong and inclusive regional mobility system that will support a growing and sustainable economy.**

Other regions nationally and globally have transformed their bus systems to address similar challenges, decreasing congestion, improving reliability, and operating efficiently with frequent and fast service. It is past time for us to do the same: rapid, effective surface transportation is critical to our region's prosperity. Buses have a vital role to play because they make efficient use of roadways by transporting large numbers of riders safely, conveniently, and affordably, and they provide service in areas not accessible by Metrorail.

Over the course of the project, the region's residents and civic and advocacy groups were loud and clear on how to transform the bus system: **Transformation means fast, frequent, reliable, affordable service that feels like a unified system, and isn't beholden to geographic or funding boundaries.** The Bus Transformation Strategy provides a path forward as a coordinated regional strategy that addresses customer needs, leverages innovative technology, and fosters collaboration and coordination to make the strategy a reality.

**This Action Plan highlights the activities required to achieve the changes envisioned for the region's bus system, and demanded by stakeholders and the public, over the next decade.** Whereas the Bus Transformation Strategy document embodies the "what" for transforming bus, this Action Plan details the "how." These actions focus on achieving results that benefit bus riders and the whole region by providing frequent and reliable bus service on a consistent basis across the region, with improved speed and efficiency for riders.

*Visit [bustransformationproject.com](http://bustransformationproject.com) to read more about the Strategy and the Action Plan.*

Authored in partnership with stakeholders across the region, the **Bus Transformation Strategy** sets out an ambitious path forward. The strategy makes four key recommendations to achieve the goals of this effort.

# Recommendations

## THE FOUR MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS ARE:

1



**Provide frequent and convenient bus service** that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.

2



**Give buses priority on roadways** to move people quickly and reliably.

3



**Create an excellent customer experience** to retain and increase ridership.

4




**Empower a publicly appointed task force** to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

These four overarching recommendations encompass 26 specific recommendations that will require collaborative action from a number of agencies and stakeholders. With nine separate agencies providing local bus service in the region, along with multiple layers of state and local governments with adjacent responsibilities, no one entity can implement all of these recommendations on their own. **Agencies will need to take the initiative to lead some actions and partner together to achieve others.** Building on the excellent work already underway in our region, the Action Plan envisions a collaborative implementation approach that facilitates progress by sharing knowledge and best practices while leveraging the priorities and resources of each stakeholder.



# Key Outcomes of Implementation

Concerted effort leads to a range of far-reaching regional benefits:

-  Satisfaction with transit service
-  Financial benefit
-  Environmental benefit

The region's system will also see many benefits:

-  Increased ridership
-  Higher operating cost efficiency
-  Better coordination in regional decision making
-  Increased transit mode share
-  Reduced environmental impact of transportation
-  Improved customer satisfaction
-  Less congestion on the region's roads

## BY 2030 BUS RIDERS WILL SEE A VASTLY IMPROVED BUS SYSTEM:

### Faster and more reliable trips



... as a result of service standards, bus priority, and enforcement.

### More affordable transportation



... with new reduced fare options and free transfers between bus and Metrorail.

### A restructured regional bus system



... that better meets customer needs.

### A bus system that is easy to use



... thanks to standardized maps, more accurate data, upgraded technology and signage.

### Safer, more comfortable trips



... with cleaner buses, improved bus stops, and added security features throughout the system.



# Action Plan Overview

The Action Plan represents the detailed implementation plan for the Bus Transformation Strategy recommendations and prioritizes each activity for maximum impact over the 10-year implementation period.

The Action Plan is built around a set of milestones associated with the 26 recommendations—targets for achieving specific improvements by individual entities and all of the region’s bus providers. These milestones highlight how action by these agencies will result in a better bus system for the whole region.

All of the recommendations are critical to truly transforming bus in the region, but taken together they represent an extremely large undertaking that cannot all be addressed simultaneously. The Action Plan presents sequenced steps to implementation, based on each recommendation’s potential for transformation and the relative difficulty of implementation, to achieve maximum impact within a 10-year timeframe. **Considering activities already being pursued at the local, state, and regional levels, this Action Plan is designed to be flexible enough to encourage each jurisdiction and agency to implement their priorities while working collaboratively to implement regional priorities.** The specific actions are likely to be pursued and achieved in different manners in each of our region’s jurisdictions due to differences in the governance structures, processes, and progress that each has already made.

The following pages highlight the Action Plan schedule and priorities, with a focus on the **milestone achievements** that will transform the bus system in our region.

The recommendations have been divided into three categories based on how they should be implemented:



**Complete the Work Already Underway:**

Includes recommendations whose actions are already largely underway by the responsible parties.



**Enhance Existing Efforts:**

Includes recommendations whose activities represent ongoing work that will need to be elevated through expanded funding or staffing existing programs and work activities.



**Implement New Initiatives:**

Includes the remaining recommendations whose activities should be implemented as soon as possible by the involved actors. Current progress on these actions may vary widely between agencies, and some may already be underway at individual agencies.

This Action Plan will allow the region to truly transform the bus into the mode of choice on the region's roads and ensure that customers will be provided with high-quality service that takes them where they need to go quickly, reliably, and comfortably. This won't be easy. It will take political will and require difficult decisions. While financial stewardship is an important tenet of the Strategy – and indeed many of the recommendations would result in operating cost savings, increased fare revenues from higher ridership, or both – **to successfully transform the bus, the Action Plan needs political leadership and financial resources.**

It is critical that in addition to completing the planning and technical work that is part of this Action Plan, the region must come together to ensure that **investment in bus and continued support of bus are at the forefront of regional conversations about transportation.**

# 1



## Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.

### PRIORITIES:

- A. Establish regional standards** across bus systems to provide consistent bus service, tailored by location and time of day.
- B. Collect and share standardized bus operations and performance data** across agencies to improve transparency and better plan bus service.
- C. Collaboratively restructure the region's bus network** to create the most efficient and customer-focused bus system.
- D. Cooperatively assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation formula** using the WMATA Board's Authority.
- E. Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to operate flexible on-demand services** to supplement the fixed route network where and when warranted.

↑ **1%—3%**

*Cities such as Austin, Columbus, and Houston that have recently restructured or redesigned their bus service have stabilized ridership and in some instances, realized ridership increases from 1% to 3%.*

**48%**

*Today, 48% of the Washington area population has 15-minute or better service during peak periods. Applying service guidelines to ensure that service aligns with demand will increase the number of residents with access to frequent service and the number of jobs accessible via frequent service.*

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### in 2020

- The WMATA Board will revise the definitions of “regional” bus service and associated funding formulas.
- Multiple agencies will pilot and implement flexible on-demand service.
- The region will adopt minimum service standards tailored by land use and time of day.



### in 2021

- Data sharing agreements between bus providers will be implemented.
- The bus system restructuring effort for the region will begin.



### by 2025

- Data about all the regional bus providers will be available in one place.
- The new restructured regional bus system will be operational.
- Flexible, on-demand service will be provided in the areas and times of day where it makes the most sense, widening the reach of the transit system throughout the region.

## BENEFITS UNLOCKED

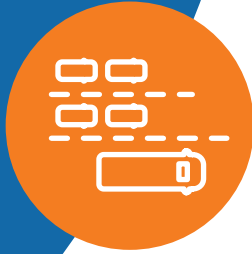
Customers will have:

- a more seamless experience using the region’s transit system
- bus service that better matches their needs and demands
- better access to frequent bus service

The region’s bus system will see:

- increased ridership
- higher operating cost efficiency
- improved customer satisfaction
- less congestion on the region’s roads
- reduced environmental impact of transportation

# 2



## Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably.

### PRIORITIES:

- F.** Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to **adopt consistent guidelines**, bolster jurisdictional capital spending, and expedite coordinated implementation of bus priority.
- G.** Implement enforcement policies that **establish bus priority** and result in reliable and fast service.
- H.** Establish a capital program at WMATA that **supports accelerated implementation of bus priority projects**, including BRT.
- I.** Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority and **move more people more efficiently**.

## \$30M

*Improving bus speeds to 2008 levels would enable Metrobus to recoup much of the \$30M that is lost annually to congestion and could result in ridership increases of 7%.*

## ↑10%

*With transit signal priority (TSP), routes outside of downtown DC have shown runtime improvements of greater than 10% and schedule reliability has shown improvements by about 5%.*

## ↓85%

*In London, automated bus lane enforcement reduced bus lane violations by 85%.*

## Up to 31%

*New York City Select Bus Service showed travel time improvement averages of 13% to 23% and 10% to 31% increases in ridership.*



## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### in 2020

- The region will commit to pursuing area-appropriate bus priority treatments at the policy level.
- The region will develop an implementation-ready enforcement program for bus priority.



### in 2021

- WMATA will develop a capital program for implementing bus priority in the region.



### by 2025

- The region will have established guidelines for where and how bus priority should be implemented.
- To appropriately enforce bus priority, the necessary equipment will have been acquired and necessary legislation will have been enacted by the appropriate state and local bodies.
- Efforts to support and implement congestion pricing in the region will be moving forward.
- Implementation of bus priority projects around the region will be underway.

## BENEFITS UNLOCKED

Customers will have:

- Faster and more reliable trips

The region's bus system will see:

- Increased ridership
- Higher operating cost efficiency
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Less congestion on the region's roads
- Reduced environmental impact of transportation

# 3



## Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership.

### PRIORITIES:

Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information to plan a trip.

- J.** Ensure that **accurate, real-time service information** for all providers is available in one place.
- K.** Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and **customer-friendly route names** across providers.
- L.** **Expand marketing efforts** to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits.

Make paying bus fares easier.

- M.** Provide **full transfer discount** between local bus and Metrorail.
- N.** Provide **reduced fare options** for low-income riders.
- O.** Create a **mobile solution** to plan and pay for trips in one place.
- P.** Develop **regional passes** that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable.
- Q.** **Incentivize more employers** to offer transit benefits.

# 15,000

*An increase in 15,000 weekday transit riders could result by creating a more seamless fare structure between Metro and local bus providers.*

# ↑2%

*Providing accurate real-time information increased ridership by 2% in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago. They also realized increased customer satisfaction, increased customers' feelings of safety and security, and reduced perceived wait times.*

# ↑20%

*Across the WMATA Compact area, some 350,000 residents (8.5% of the total population) live below the poverty line, and low-income people make up about 25% of weekday passenger trips (rail + bus). A 50% decrease in fares could generate a 20% increase in ridership.*



## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### in 2020

- Mobile payment will be enabled on local buses in the region.
- All bus providers in the region will have a plan for publishing GTFS-Real Time bus data.
- Transfers between Metrorail and Metrobus will be free.
- DC will pilot a low-income fare product for transit passengers.



### in 2021

- GTFS-Real Time data will be available for all bus providers in the region.
- Transfers between Metrorail and all local bus services will be free.
- The region will begin deploying easier to understand print and electronic maps.
- The region and the jurisdictions will develop plans to encourage more employers to offer transit benefits to bus riders.



### by 2025

- Bus routes across the region will have a cohesive, easy to use numbering scheme.
- Low-income fare products will be available in all jurisdictions.
- WMATA will have launched an app that allows people to plan and pay for all their local bus and Metrorail trips in the region.
- All regional bus providers will accept WMATA's Monthly Unlimited Passes and other types of unlimited bus passes.



## BENEFITS UNLOCKED

Customers will have:

- A more seamless experience using the region's transit system
- Less expensive trips, especially for low-income passengers
- Accurate, easy-to-use, accessible information that makes it easy to use the region's transit system

The region's bus system will see:

- Increased ridership
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Less congestion on the region's roads
- Reduced environmental impact of transportation

# 3

(continued)



## Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership.

### PRIORITIES:

#### Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus.

- R.** Make **bus stops and shelters** safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled.
- S.** Advance technology and programs that **improve the safety** of everyone on board by partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions.
- T.** Empower front-line staff to provide **exceptional customer service**.
- U.** Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of **comfort and cleanliness**.

#### Pursue innovation and bus improvement.

- V.** Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' **environmental footprint and efficiency**, such as electric buses and automation.
- W.** Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically **share knowledge and accelerate improvements** such as service provision, customer experience, and bus operator and passenger safety.

↓ **50%**

*On-board monitors showing live CCTV footage of the vehicle to passengers were added to some Metrobuses, which resulted in a reduction in customer complaints by over 50% and criminal incidents logged by the control center by 30%.*

**128,000**

*Transitioning to a battery electric bus fleet could reduce Metrobus emissions by almost 128,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e annually by 2040, the equivalent of almost 100,000 passenger vehicles driven for 1 year.*

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### in 2021

- New customer service training programs will be developed for transit staff.
- Best practices for bus cleanliness will be established.



### by 2025

- Bus will be marketed more effectively around the region, with an appropriate portion of operating costs spent on marketing efforts.
- Responsible parties will have developed plans and identified funding to ensure that all bus stops are ADA accessible and meet jurisdiction's amenity guidelines by 2030.
- All transit providers will be implementing their plans to equip buses with enhanced safety equipment.
- All transit providers will have implemented improved customer service training programs and other policies that ensure best-in-class customer service.
- All providers will have implemented improved bus cleaning programs, ensuring that buses throughout the region have clean interiors and exteriors.
- Bus providers across the region will be in the process of implementing full zero emission vehicle fleets and supporting facilities.
- The Regional Mobility Innovation Lab will have successfully launched.



### by 2030

- All bus stops in the region will meet jurisdictional guidelines for access, amenities, and safety.
- Buses will be safer for passengers and bus drivers and be fully equipped with the best safety and security features.



## BENEFITS UNLOCKED

Customers will have:

- A more seamless experience using the region's transit system
- Safer and more comfortable experience when riding and waiting for the bus

The region's bus system will see:

- Increased ridership
- Improved customer satisfaction
- Less congestion on the region's roads
- Reduced environmental impact of transportation
- Higher operating cost efficiency

# 4



## Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

### PRIORITIES:

- X.** Convene a Task Force to **ensure implementation** of the Strategy **and provide long-term leadership** for the region's bus system.
- Y.** Facilitate an independently published **annual progress report** on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a **bus performance scorecard** to track the level of service delivered to customers.
- Z.** **Develop a platform for rider feedback**, administered by the task force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback into regular revisions of the Strategy recommendations.



*With increased visibility of bus performance, progress on bus transformation, and expanding implementation of bus priority treatments across the region, the profile of bus is expected to grow among regional decision makers, and investment in priority treatments and other critical improvements is expected to increase.*

# 8,800

*The Bus Transformation Strategy was shaped through the priorities and preferences of over 8,800 people who responded to surveys and attended events. During implementation, public input will continue to be a crucial part of the process in the form of a regional rider feedback platform.*

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### in 2021

- The region will come to consensus on a formal process that elevates the role of bus in regional transportation plans and ensures that all local bus providers are moving forward in the same direction.
- The first Bus Transformation Progress Report will be published.
- The first annual Bus Performance Scorecard will be published by an independent entity.
- The region's Rider Feedback Platform will be launched to provide a single touchpoint for riders to provide comments on the bus system.



### by 2025

- This Action Plan will have been revised to reflect progress made and new priorities and opportunities.



## BENEFITS UNLOCKED

Customers will have:

- A more seamless experience using the region's transit system
- A voice in shaping the Bus Transformation Strategy as it evolves

The region's bus system will see:

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Less congestion on the region's roads
- Better coordination in regional decision making

# Action Plan

## 1 Provide frequent and convenient bus service

- A** Establish regional standards across bus systems to provide consistent bus service, tailored by location and time of day.
- B** Collect and share standardized bus operations and performance data across agencies to improve transparency and better plan bus service.
- C** Collaboratively restructure the region's bus network to create the most efficient and customer-focused bus system.
- D** Cooperatively assess Metrobus' current service definitions and funding allocation formula using the WMATA Board's Authority.
- E** Leverage existing efforts to provide flexible on-demand services where and when fixed route service is not efficient, through collaborative planning with bus operators and unions.

## 2 Give buses priority on roadways

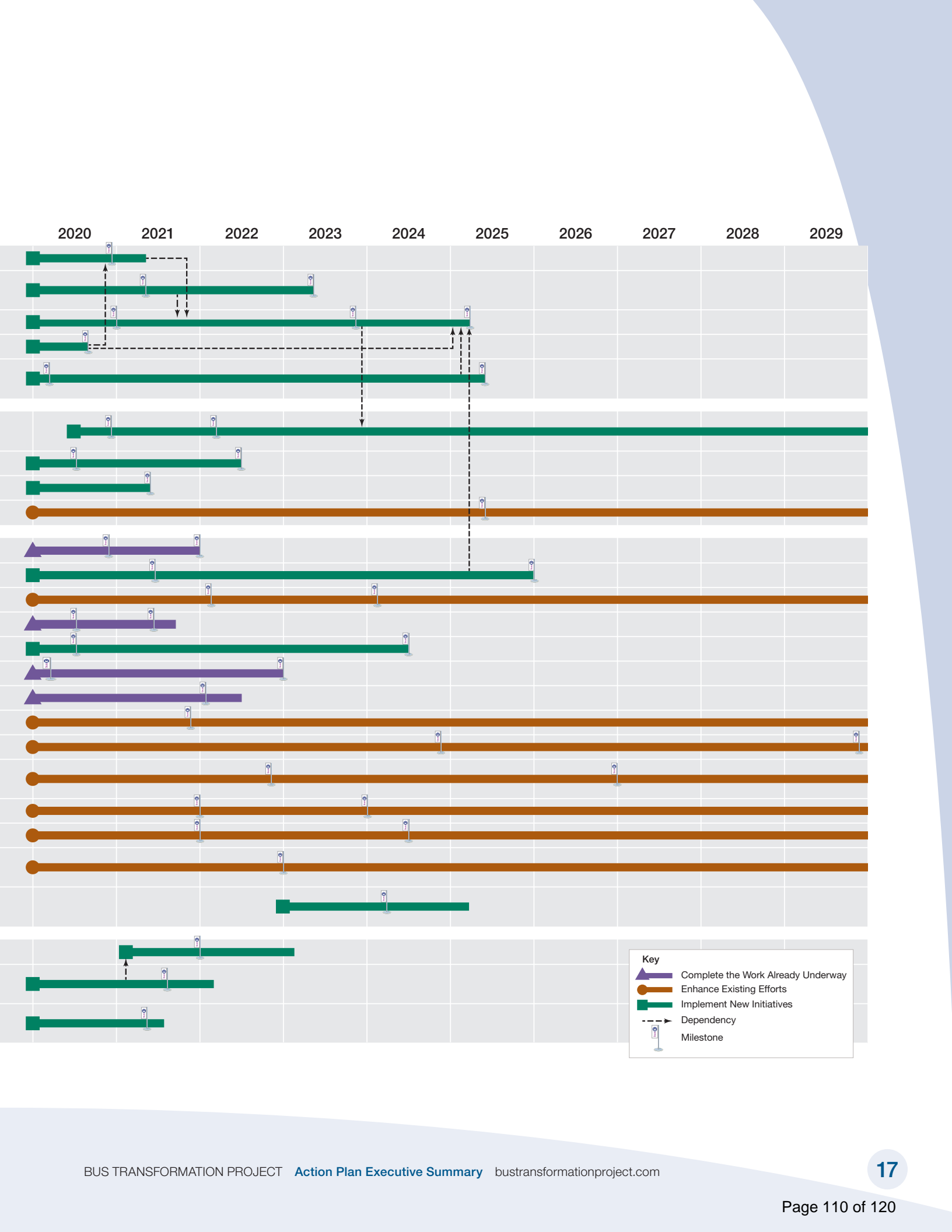
- F** Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to adopt consistent guidelines, bolster jurisdictional capital spending, and expedite coordinated implementation of bus priority.
- G** Implement enforcement policies that establish bus priority and result in reliable and fast service.
- H** Establish a capital program at WMATA that supports accelerated implementation of bus priority projects, including BRT.
- I** Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority and move more people more efficiently.

## 3 Create an excellent customer experience

- J** Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place.
- K** Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers.
- L** Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits.
- M** Provide full transfer discount between local bus and Metrorail.
- N** Provide reduced fare options for low-income riders.
- O** Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place.
- P** Develop regional passes that work across all providers and make bus fares clear and understandable.
- Q** Incentivize more employers to offer transit benefits.
- R** Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled.
- S** Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone on board by partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions.
- T** Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service.
- U** Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness.
- V** Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency, such as electric buses and automation.
- W** Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements in service provision, customer experience, and bus operator and passenger safety.

## 4 Empower a publicly appointed task force

- X** Convene a task force to ensure implementation of the Strategy and provide long-term leadership for the region's bus system.
- Y** Facilitate an independently published annual Progress Report on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a Bus Performance Scorecard to track the level of service delivered to customers.
- Z** Develop a platform for rider feedback, administered by the task force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback into regular revisions of the Strategy recommendations.





# Collaboration

**Engagement has been a cornerstone of this project from the beginning!**

Engagement activities include:

<b>140</b>	<b>Participants at the Kickoff Summit</b>
<b>+8,800</b>	<b>Public survey responses to date</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Metrobus division engagement events</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Focus groups</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>ESC meetings</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Technical Team meetings</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>SAP meetings</b>
<b>45</b>	<b>External project briefings</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Public open house events</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>Pop-up events</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>WMATA Leadership Team briefings</b>
<b>285</b>	<b>Social media postings</b>
<b>312,000</b>	<b>People reached via social media</b>

*Creating a sustainable surface transportation future depends on collaboration between bus providers and cities, counties, and states that own the roads.*

*It also depends on input from the broader community – from businesses, non-profits and community organizations, thought leaders, the public, and many more!*

## WHO IS DRIVING THIS BUS?

Immense expertise within this region has guided the development of this strategy. This strategy has relied on extensive input from across the region.

### EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Committee members, who hold various leadership positions in the business community, with regional organizations and non-profits, or are unaffiliated transit experts or labor representatives, have been closely involved with developing the strategy and played an important role in ensuring transparency, independence, and consideration of the needs of the region's travelers and bus service providers.

### STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL (SAP)

Panel members, who hold leadership positions in local and state governments, community-based organizations, businesses, minority and disability groups, labor organizations, think tanks, and the education community, represent a variety of regional perspectives and provide critical insight into issues that affect bus.

### TECHNICAL TEAM

Team members are recognized discipline leaders within WMATA and senior jurisdiction transit staff who review technical aspects and analyses throughout the project.

### WMATA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Team members are decision-makers within WMATA who oversee those parts of the project that affect organization and operations.

### GENERAL PUBLIC

A broad sample of bus riders and non-riders have shared their priorities through various media, including almost 9,000 survey responses, both on-line and on-site at locations throughout the region.

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Other stakeholders from across the region have provided input that represents the perspectives of broad constituencies. These stakeholders include transit and transportation leaders, and elected and appointed officials.

# Next Steps

The Action Plan represents the end of the first phase of the Bus Transformation Project, but the work doesn't end here.

Now the hard work begins. Each transit provider, and many other entities in the region, have a role to play in implementing this Action Plan over the next 10 years. In order to unlock the benefits of an improved bus system, each agency will need to identify areas in which they can **lead, support, or partner** with other agencies to advance these recommendations.

Support across all recommendations and activities will be important to the Bus Transformation Strategy's successful implementation. Different agencies may have opportunities to lead in different areas. The lists below are not exhaustive, but provides some guidance for groups that want to push Bus Transformation forward.



WMATA	ALL BUS PROVIDERS:	ROADWAY OWNERS	LOCAL & STATE GOVERNMENTS	OTHER REGIONAL ENTITIES
✓ C	✓ A	✓ F	✓ F	✓ L
✓ D	✓ B	✓ G	✓ G	✓ Q
✓ H	✓ C	✓ I	✓ I	✓ W
✓ M	✓ E	✓ R	✓ M	✓ X
✓ O	✓ J		✓ N	✓ Y
✓ P	✓ K		✓ Q	✓ Z
	✓ L		✓ X	
	✓ R			
	✓ S			
	✓ T			
	✓ U			
	✓ V			




# Charting Progress

Where will we be  
a year from now?  
Two years from now?  
Ten years?

This Action Plan has defined an aggressive but feasible path towards the bus system this region needs. But the Action Plan is intended to be a living document that will adapt to progress and change. It has been developed in collaboration with the project Technical Team, and the prioritization process is documented in a transparent manner—all with the intent that the contents can be updated to reflect progress and change from year to year.

Progress made on implementation and the resulting benefits will be tracked regularly to highlight the region's progress to date and areas where more support is needed. How many of our region's goals can we achieve? How much better can we make our bus system?

Working together, we can transform bus into the mode of choice on the region's roads. This sample Progress Report shows how the region could grade itself on its progress in implementing the Bus Transformation Strategy next year.

RECOMMENDATION		ACTION PLAN TIMING	LEAD ACTOR(S)	SUPPORTING ACTOR(S)	STATUS	MILESTONE CHECK
	Create an excellent customer service experience to retain and increase ridership.					
J	Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place.	2020-2022	Bus providers, including WMATA	Working group to facilitate regional coordination	In-progress and on track	2020 milestone reached (all providers have plans for GTFS-RT); 2021 milestone on track (GTFS-RT available for all providers)
K	Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers.	2020-2025	Bus providers, including WMATA	Bus system restructuring workgroup (1C) to facilitate some action steps	In-progress but delayed	2021 milestone (easier to understand print and electronic maps) partially delayed
L	Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits.	2020-2030, and ongoing	Bus providers, including WMATA	Support from jurisdictions and independent organizations	Kickoff behind schedule	2022 milestone (bus will be marketed more effectively around the region) will likely be missed
W	Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements in service provision.	2023-2025	Working group comprised of bus providers, including WMATA, and	State and local gov't; roadway operating agencies	Not yet initiated	Not scheduled to start until 2023

## EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Rob Puentes, Chair	Nat Gandhi	David Richardson
Rosie Allen-Herring	Kim Horn	Deborah Ratner Salzberg
David Alpert	Jack McDougale	Stewart Schwartz
Chuck Bean	Sandy Modell	Anne Stubbs
Bob Buchanan	Neil Pedersen	Beverly Swaim-Staley
Jim Dyke	Jack Potter	Ed Wytkind

## WMATA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Paul Wiedefeld, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer  
Joseph Leader, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer  
Robert Potts, Senior Vice President, Bus Services  
Andrea Burnside, Vice President, Operating Budget, Performance, and Planning  
Jim Hughes, Managing Director, Intermodal Strategic Planning  
Barbara Richardson, Executive Vice President and Chief of External Affairs  
Lynn Bowersox, Senior Vice President, Customer Service, Communications, and Marketing  
Regina Sullivan, Vice President, Government Relations  
Dennis Anosike, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
Tom Webster, Executive Vice President, Capital Planning and Program Management  
Shyam Kannan, Vice President, Planning  
Allison Davis, Director, Planning  
Julie Hershorn, Assistant Director, Bus Service Planning and Scheduling

## TECHNICAL TEAM

Ray Alfred, WMATA  
Martin Barna, Alexandria - DASH  
Jewel Bell, WMATA  
Peter Cafiero, WMATA  
Jamie Carrington, WMATA  
Raka Choudhury, DDOT  
Allison Davis, WMATA  
Andrew D'huyvetter, NVTG  
Clinton Edwards, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT)  
Gary Erenrich, Montgomery County  
Michael Felschow, Fairfax Connector  
Lawrence Flint, WMATA  
Anthony Foster, Prince George's County - TheBus  
Scott Gross, Loudoun County  
Derek Gunn, Maryland State Highway Administration  
Jim Hamre, WMATA  
Matt Hardison, WMATA  
Julie Hershorn, WMATA  
Al Himes, WMATA  
Jordan Holt, WMATA  
William Jones, Arlington - ART  
Shyam Kannan, WMATA  
Melissa Kim, WMATA  
Carla Longshore, DDOT  
Phil McLaughlin, Montgomery County - RideOn  
Dave Michels, WMATA  
Heidi Mitter, VDOT - NOVA  
Mark Phillips, WMATA  
Delores Proctor, WMATA  
Pat Pscherer, Washington Suburban Transit Commission  
Eric Randall, Transportation Planning Board  
Gail Ribas, WMATA  
Brent Riddle, Fairfax County  
Chloe Ritter, City of Fairfax - CUE  
Tim Roseboom, Arlington County  
Wendy Sanford, City of Fairfax  
Lisa Schooley, WMATA  
Charlie Scott, WMATA  
Al Short, WMATA  
Jennifer Slesinger, City of Alexandria  
Dan Smith, WMATA  
Sam Stepney, WMATA  
Catherine Vanderwaart, WMATA  
Marcus Washington, WMATA  
Thomas Webb, WMATA  
Todd Wigglesworth, Fairfax County  
Christopher Ziemann, City of Alexandria

## STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL

Marcel Acosta, National Capital Planning Commission  
David Anspacher, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission - Montgomery  
Monica Backmon, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority  
Josh Baker, Alexandria - DASH  
Jeff Bennett, DDOT - Circulator  
Tom Biesiadny, Fairfax County Department of Transportation  
Michael Blackwell, Northern Virginia Community College  
Mercia Bowser, Disability Community Outreach Collaborative  
Maura Brophy, Federal City Council  
Zachary Chissell, Maryland Transit Administration  
Daehyeon Choi, Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington  
Maria Ciarocchi, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce  
Christopher Conklin, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Candace Cunningham, Restaurant Opportunities Center  
Ronnie Dampier, Office of the City Administrator  
Jennifer DeBruhl, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT)  
Bob Duffy, Arlington Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development  
Dan Emerine, District Department of Transportation  
Sophia Fisher, Fairfax Department of Planning and Zoning  
Rudy Gardner, Local 922  
Gigi Godwin, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce  
Laurel Hammig, National Park Service - National Capital Region  
Dan Hibbert, Montgomery County Department of Transportation - RideOn  
Jennifer Hosey, Action Committee for Transit  
Raymond Jackson, Local 689  
Aly Kaba, DC Office on African Affairs  
Steve Kaffen, WMATA Accessibility Advisory Committee (DC)  
Monika Kerdeman, Transportation Planning Board Citizens Advisory Committee (MD)  
Elizabeth Kiker, House of Ruth  
Yon Lambert, City of Alexandria  
Dennis Leach, Arlington County  
Justin Lini, Transportation Planning Board Citizens Advisory Committee (DC)  
Jana Lynott, AARP  
Nechama Masliansky, So Others Might Eat  
Kate Mattice, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission  
Joe McAndrew, Greater Washington Partnership  
Clayton Medford, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce  
Emeka Moneme, Federal City Council  
Heather Murphy, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Penny Newquist, Loudoun County  
Vincent Orange, District Chamber of Commerce  
Mark Pace, Montgomery College  
Jeff Parnes, Transportation Planning Board Citizens Advisory Committee (VA)  
Scott Pedowitz, Arlington Chamber of Commerce  
Dwayne Pelfrey, Fairfax County Department of Transportation - Connector  
Phil Posner, WMATA Accessibility Advisory Committee (VA)  
Pat Pscherer, Maryland Department of Transportation - Suburban MD  
Doris Ray, Transportation Planning Board Access for All Committee  
Chloe Ritter, City of Fairfax - CUE  
Lynn Rivers, Arlington Transit  
Caitlin Rogger, Greater Greater Washington  
Lisa Rother, Urban Land Institute (ULI Washington)  
Wendy Sanford, City of Fairfax  
Kanti Srikanth, Transportation Planning Board  
Yesim Taylor, DC Policy Center  
John Townsend, American Automobile Association  
Andrew Trueblood, DC Office of Planning  
Deb Wake, League of Women Voters, National Capital  
D'Andrea Walker, Prince George's County  
Wil White, Riders Advisory Council  
Yemisrach Wolde, DC Language Access Coalition



## THIS PROJECT WILL TRANSFORM BUS SERVICE...

from

Wondering when  
the bus will come



**MAKE BUS THE EASY FIRST  
CHOICE**



to

**Frequent and predictable**

from

Slow and stuck in traffic



**PRIORITIZE BUSES  
ON MAJOR ROADWAYS**



to

**Fast trips where you want to go**

from

Last resort



**FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER**



to

**Appealing and desirable**

from

Region divided



**STRENGTHEN REGIONAL  
COOPERATION TO TRANSFORM  
THE BUS SYSTEM**



to

**Stronger together**

### LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REGION'S BUS SYSTEM

Final Strategy  
Draft Strategy and Recommendations  
Bus System Today  
Public Input Survey Report  
Project Overview  
Strategic Considerations

[bustransformationproject.com/resources/#documents](http://bustransformationproject.com/resources/#documents)

### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS DOCUMENT

Executive Steering Committee  
WMATA Leadership Team  
Technical Team  
Strategy Advisory Panel  
Consultant team: AECOM, Foursquare ITP, BCG, Neoniche Strategies