



Safety and Operations Committee

Board Information Item III-C

Customer Service Excellence Initiatives

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
203397

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Customer Service Initiatives

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

This presentation provides the Safety and Operations Committee and update about multiple initiatives to advance customer service excellence and improve employee experience.

PURPOSE:

Provide the Board with an update on initiatives in the areas of security, fare evasion, station cleanliness and station customer service to improve customer and employee experience within the the Metro bus and rail systems.

DESCRIPTION:

There are no interested parties in these matters.

Key Highlights:

Various initiatives are underway to improve customer and employee experience.

- Security initiatives include problem-oriented policing with targeted deployment and community focus.
- A notification campaign of fare evasion enforcement has begun; enforcement will begin in November 2022.
- Rail stations, bus loops and transit centers are receiving a detailed cleaning
- Best practices for station customer service are being analyzed and implemented, including hiring customer liaisons for both rail and bus.

Background and History:

Multiple back to the basics initiatives are underway to improve customer communications, cleanliness and service. This began last month with the return of some of Metro's newest and most reliable rail cars improving wait times for most customers. Continued work along the Silver Line extension will bring on six

new stations. Work continues to advance to add the new Potomac Yard station on the Yellow and Blue Lines.

Five Orange Line stations have been brought back into service, providing customers with safer and brighter stations with the installation of new slip-resistant tiles, brighter LED canopy lighting, lighted handrails and brighter, clearer passenger information displays in addition to the new customer amenity of phone chargers.

A focus on improving customer satisfaction begins with safety and security. Thus, Metro Transit Police Department (MTPD) officers have increased their presence on trains, in the stations, and on buses. Customers have informed staff that cleanliness and fare evasion are also of concern and steps are being taken to address these issues.

Discussion:

Multiple initiatives have been launched to address customer comments regarding improved safety, security and service within the Metro bus and rail systems. These include customer-centric (problem-oriented) policing strategies, fare evasion enforcement notifications, a customer-facing amenity cleaning program, and a peer review and customer service improvement program for station operations and management.

Security Initiatives

"We're Working Differently" is the campaign that highlights problem-oriented policing strategies aimed at improving community relations, adding crisis intervention specialists and strategically reallocating officer deployment throughout the bus and rail systems.

Fare Evasion Campaign

A systemwide warning campaign began October 4, informing the public that fare evasion enforcement will begin November 2022. Digital and print notifications in English and Spanish are throughout the bus and rail systems. MTPD officers and other staff will distribute printed fliers to fare evaders with the same warning information that details potential fines by jurisdiction. Fare gate modifications are also being piloted.

A number of other actions are underway or planned to address fare evasion. In November, Metro is expected to begin testing faregate modifications as a preventive measure with prototypes installed at a selected rail station for employees to test. Some of the modifications being explored include tactile deterrents on top of faregates and higher barriers.

"Clean Sweep"

A seven-week program aimed at rail stations and bus transit centers to repair lights, clean windowpanes, clean granite and tile floors, remove graffiti, pressure-wash benches and bus shelters, and address painting and other housekeeping

activities. Over 70 of 91 planned station cleanings have been completed as of the beginning of October 2022. These improvements provide a safer and cleaner customer experience.

Station Customer Service Practices

As part of our efforts to improve the customer experience, Metro leadership requested a review of our stations' staffing and management practices from peer properties through the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Four peers that manage Station Operations at London Underground, British Columbia Rapid Transit Company, New York City Transit, and Toronto Transit Commission will visit Metro the week of October 17. They will conduct field visits to our stations and control center; meet with station staff, supervisors, and union officials; observe training; and review our policies and procedures. Drawing on the best practices in place at their respective properties, they will share recommendations and ideas for improvements that result in better customer service.

As an initial step in improving customer service, Metro will implement a new Customer Experience Liaison (CXL) outreach program to enhance staff visibility in stations and to make Metrobus and Metrorail an easy and seamless experience. CXL staff will wear easily identifiable uniforms and be in Metrorail stations and at Metrobus transit center throughout the system.

FUNDING IMPACT:

Funding for these initiatives are included in the current year's budget.	
Project Manager:	Brian P. Dwyer
Project Department/Office:	Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

TIMELINE:

N/A

Customer Service Excellence Initiatives

Safety and Operations Committee
October 13, 2022



Purpose

- Update the Board on initiatives to improve customer service and employee experience



Current Areas of Focus



Security Initiatives



Fare Evasion Campaign



Clean Sweep



Station Customer Service Practices



Security Initiatives

“We’re Working Differently”

- Launch several public safety initiatives to strengthen and support customer safety and community service for those who use our transit system
- Foundation of MTPD policing strategy
 - **Education:** Elevate community-oriented policing through development of rich community-based organization partnerships
 - **Outreach:** Address community need with the help of crisis-intervention specialists
 - **Enforcement:** Use intelligence and data to address areas with complex security concerns



Operation “Helping Hands”

- Began September 12
- Strategically place officers throughout bus and rail system to increase visibility, reduce crime so customers and employees have a safer environment
- Officers riding trains and buses in intervals throughout the day – 14 on day shift and nine on evening shift
- Future expansion of community-oriented policing for additional support



Addressing Mental Health

40 Percent Increase in People Needing Mental Health Assistance



- Hire and deploy Crisis Intervention Specialists trained in mental health awareness, de-escalation
- Pair with officers or operational staff
- Link to services provided by local organizations
- 100+ applicants received to date; onboarding through February 2023
- Interviewers to include Dept of Health, Mayor's Office, Metro Mental Health team, MTPD Community Services
- Peer input on deployment of similar program



Fare Evasion Campaign

Communications and Education: Fare Evasion Warning Campaign

- October 4, launched systemwide warning campaign
- Notices displayed on digital signs throughout the system
- English and Spanish versions posted in Station Managers' kiosks
- Metro Transit Police (MTPD) officers and other Metro personnel will distribute physical fliers to fare evaders with same warning information
- Enforcement begins November



 **Please pay your fare before riding.**

If you don't pay your fare, Metro Transit Police could issue you a fine.

POSSIBLE FINES
Washington DC – \$50
Maryland – Up to \$100
Virginia – Up to \$100

  **SCAN TO GET OUR APP.** Visit wmata.com or call 202-637-7000 for information on where to buy a SmarTrip® card or to learn about programs that can help if you can't afford the fare.





Clean Sweep

Cleaner Customer Facilities

- Improve the appearance of rail stations, bus loops and transit centers
- Detailed cleaning and moderate enhancement
- 71 of 91 stations complete (as of October 4)
- Seven-week program

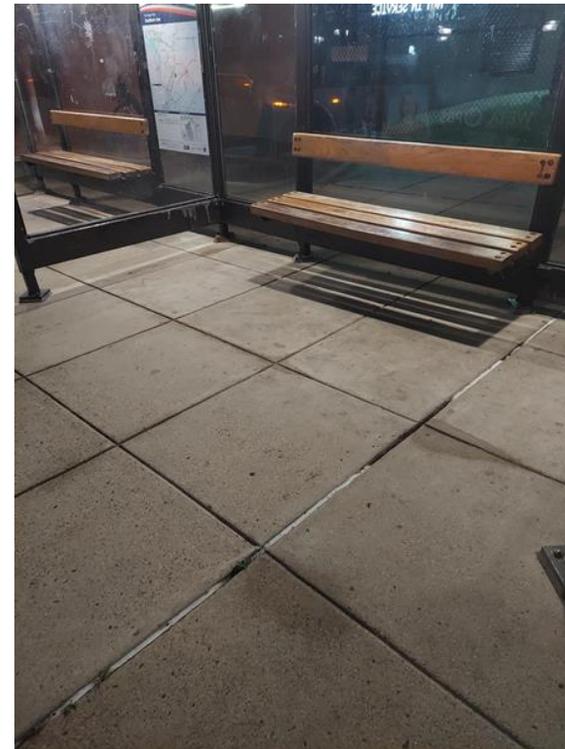


Pressure Wash Bus Shelters

BEFORE



AFTER



Relamp Recessed Lights

BEFORE



AFTER



Relamped Escalator Side Lights

BEFORE



AFTER

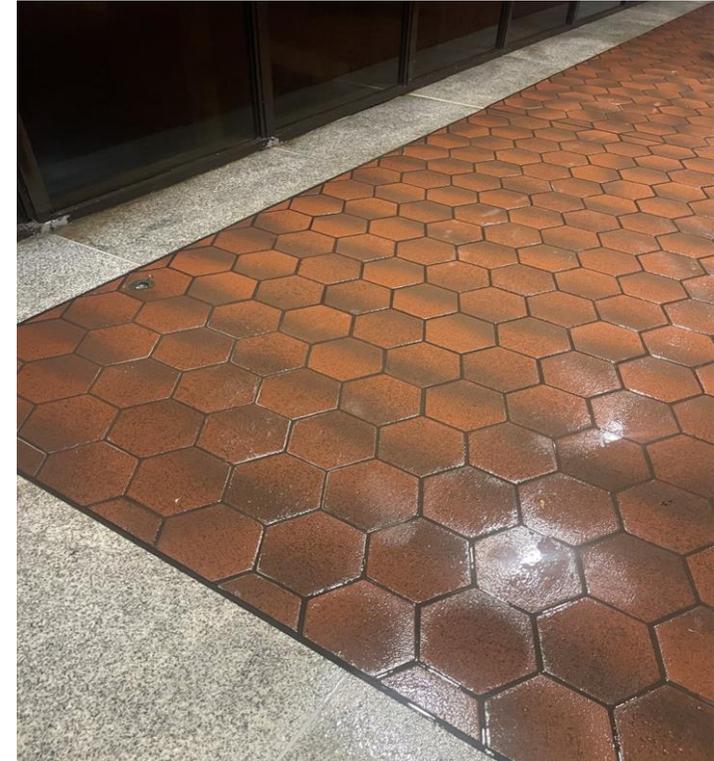


Clean Mezzanine Floor

BEFORE



AFTER

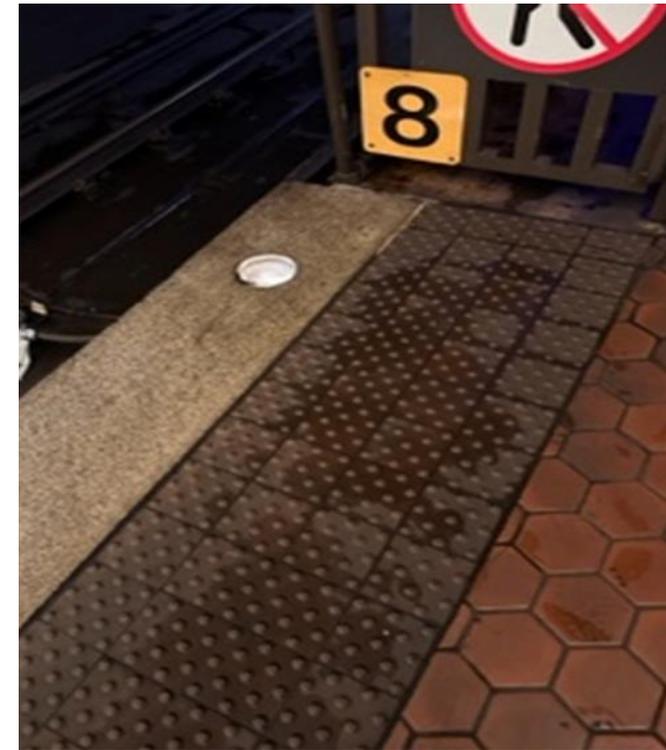


Pressure Wash Granite Edges

BEFORE



AFTER

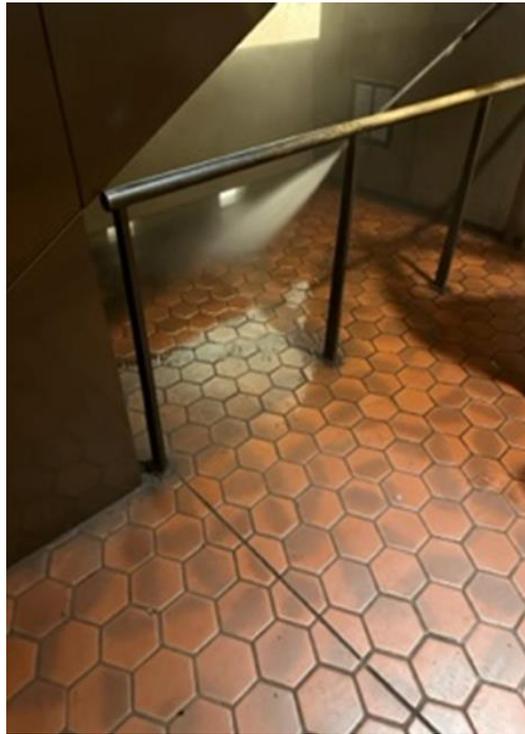


Clean Platform Floors

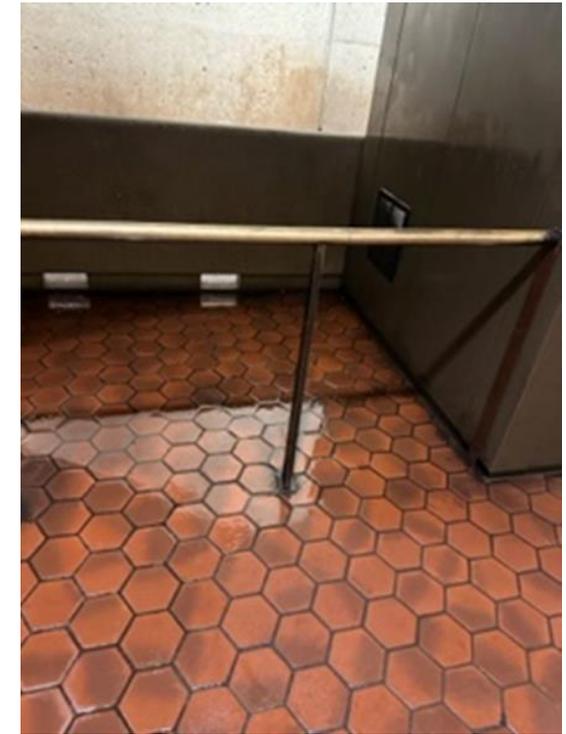
BEFORE



IN PROGRESS



AFTER





Station Customer Service Practices

Peer Review



- Convene panel of industry experts through the American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
 - October 17-21 (Mon – Fri)
- Opportunities to improve customer service in stations looking at best practices in:
 - Hiring
 - Supervision
 - Training
 - Staffing model
 - Technology
 - Policies, procedures and technology

NYCT, British Columbia Rapid Transit Company,
London Underground, Toronto Transit Commission



New Customer Experience Liaison



- Highly-visible uniformed presence to proactively engage and assist customers
- Liaison between Metro, the customer and the community
- Monitors activities in and outside of stations and on trains, platforms and buses during revenue service
- Assists during special events and service disruptions