



Safety and Operations Committee

Board Information Item IV-A

Customer Experience Improvements

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

☐ Action ☒ Information

Document
Number:
205582

Resolution:
☐ Yes ☒ No

Presentation Name:

Wayfinding Improvement Program

Project Manager:

Sarah Meyer

Project Department:

Customer Experience and Engagement

Purpose/Key Highlights:

Introduce Metro's Customer Experience Strategy to build brand awareness by showcasing the value of Metro and making the system easier to navigate. The initiatives part of this strategy aligns with the Strategic Transformation Plan's goals of **Service Excellence**; **Regional Opportunity and Partnership**; and **Sustainability**.

Interested Parties:

Jacobs, Entro, Order Design, HNTB, Luminator, ANC, Dell

Background:

Information, wayfinding and technology are critical pieces of helping keep the customer engaged throughout their decision to ride Metro. Over the last year, Metro has been strongly focused on improving its passenger information by changing the designs of its upgrades to the data that powers our web, mobile systems, adding new Digital Screens in rail stations/at bus stops/on-board buses. We continue to improve passenger information as part of our overall Customer Experience Strategy and Metro's Strategic Transformation Plan. These improvements are geared toward reducing anxiety and eliminating barriers to riding our services.

Discussion:

Proactively engaging the community to deepen and develop Metro's relationships with customers is a core of our new Customer Experience Strategy. Tying our brand, technology, navigation and outreach together help us reduce fragmentation and anxiety customers feel when they decide to choose Metro. Rethinking every step of

the customer journey helps to build an even better Metro. There are seven steps in this journey we've already begun rethinking to show you a stronger Metro.

- **Consideration:** showing Metro's value so people choose to use us over other transportation options. We will build campaigns that focus on our brand value propositions, Fast, Less-Expensive, Safe
- **Plan:** Focusing on where we go with re-imagined websites and maps and focusing on delivering reliable, accurate real-time information
- **Pay:** Employing a mobile-first strategy while making payments fast and easy
- **Navigate:** Creating best-in-class digital and static signage to make riding Metro easy to navigate. Doing more to integrate with and highlight partner services like VRE, MARC and connections to local airports.
- **Wait:** being more upfront about service changes, and digitizing our customer information to make it clear what's happening to your service when it's not running as expected
- **Ride:** unifying the on-board information with other passenger information signs, optimizing our data, and designing a fleet of the future with the customer first
- **Post-Travel:** a stronger, easier-to-access feedback loop, more responsive Customer Service Teams and new Outreach & Engagement teams to make for stronger community connections

Funding Impact:

This presentation is informational and not a request for action or funding.

Previous Actions:

These are previous enhancements Metro has made to information & technology to enhance the Customer Experience:

- **September 2022:** the final phase of the Platform Improvement Projects ended on the Orange Line, finalizing the upgrades of Passenger Information Displays at 20 Metrorail stations and expanding the number of digital customer information screens
- **November 2022:** General Manager Randy Clarke shared in his remarks with the Board the introduction of new street-level Metrorail customer information screens at Metro Center and Columbia Heights
- **March 2023:** pilot program of new ePaper signs at Braddock Rd launched. This effort was to test a unified systems architecture and more passenger information
- **April 2023:** Metrobus customer information enhancements launch to customers with new on-board bus screens and data changes to improve the information

Metrobus customers receive via web, mobile and screens

- **June 2023:** introduction of a “planned work” design system for the first time, looking at the ways information that’s most important to people is what they read first
- **July 2023:** “MetroPulse” (beta) debuts on wmata.com, providing real-time data on train performance including waits, number of trains running and alerts
- **August 2023:** a survey of potentially new static wayfinding signs was conducted with representative customers

Next Steps:

- **September 2023:** L’Enfant Plaza Wayfinding Pilot begins
- **October 2023:** upgraded Passenger Information Displays at three core Metrorail stations – Gallery Place, Metro Center, L’Enfant Plaza
- **November 2023:** more customer information displays are installed at Bethesda, L’Enfant Plaza, Union Station & Regan National Airport
- **Winter 2023:**
 - Re-imagined Intermodal Service Maps debut
 - Metrobus line & neighborhood map debut
 - Beta version of MetroPulse app

Recommendation:

Information Only

Building a Better Customer Experience

Safety & Operations Committee
September 14, 2023



Strategic Transformation Plan

Service Excellence: Modernizing and enhancing end-to-end customer experience to keep and grow ridership

- Build a **Customer Experience** practice
- Improve **wayfinding**
- Focus on **technology upgrades** and digital infrastructure



Expand **customer-centric regional mobility** to streamline customer information across services



Proactively engage with the **community** and with regional transit partners

Industry Trends

Industry peers are re-thinking how they present their systems to customers

Clear, unified information builds a more inclusive transit network

Your transit service lineup.

Information for Sound Transit employees and transit partners



Sound Transit service is growing, and to keep up with the growth we have a new and simpler way of naming our train and bus rapid transit lines. Beginning in Sept. 2021, Sound Transit will begin augmenting branded names with lettered and numbered line names.

LA, meet our new lineup.

Metro has updated rail and busway line names. We've added a letter to help our riders choose their journey.

Metro is growing.

That's great news for LA, because we have big plans for new rail and busway lines. We've updated our names so it's easier for everyone, including riders with visual impairments, to get where they need to go. So, what's new? We added letters to the color and symbol for rail and busway lines

Look for line letter signs.

You will see the addition of letters to line colors on station signage, maps, timetables, posters, our website, other digital platforms and everywhere else you find our colored dots and squares.



A Line



B Line



C Line



D Line



E Line



G Line



J Line



K Line

Together: As A Region

Metro is at the **center** of a comprehensive regional mobility network

Support growing regional transit ridership

Attract **new** or **infrequent** riders by making transit easier to navigate and access

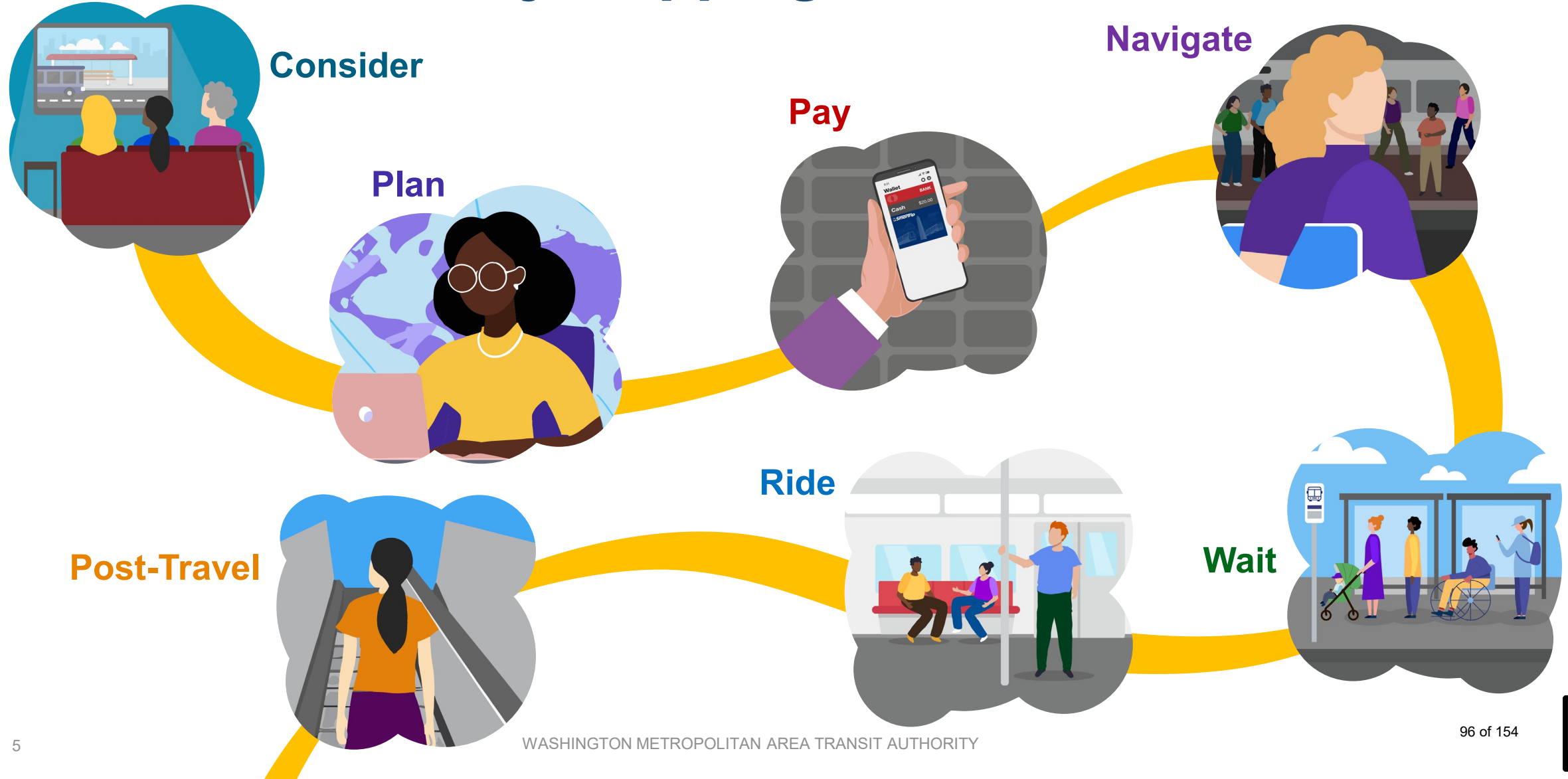


Invitation to participate in a regional **workshop** to improve customer information & wayfinding



Increase region's value to residents, businesses, visitors and event organizers

Customer Journey Mapping



Customer journey: CONSIDER



OUR GOAL

We need people to choose Metro

Market with these brand propositions:

Transit is **faster**,
safer, cheaper, and
more **sustainable** than other modes

OUR CHALLENGE

In our digital world, rare negative incidents often overamplified

Competing with 1-click transportation options

Winning lapsed customers back

Customer journey: PLAN



OUR GOAL

Showcase our bus and rail network;
regional partner connections

Build confidence in frequent services

Announce loudly when service changes
occur

OUR CHALLENGE

Today's maps are outdated, not
region-first... route-to-route instead
of point-to-point travel

Metrobus & Metrorail siloed

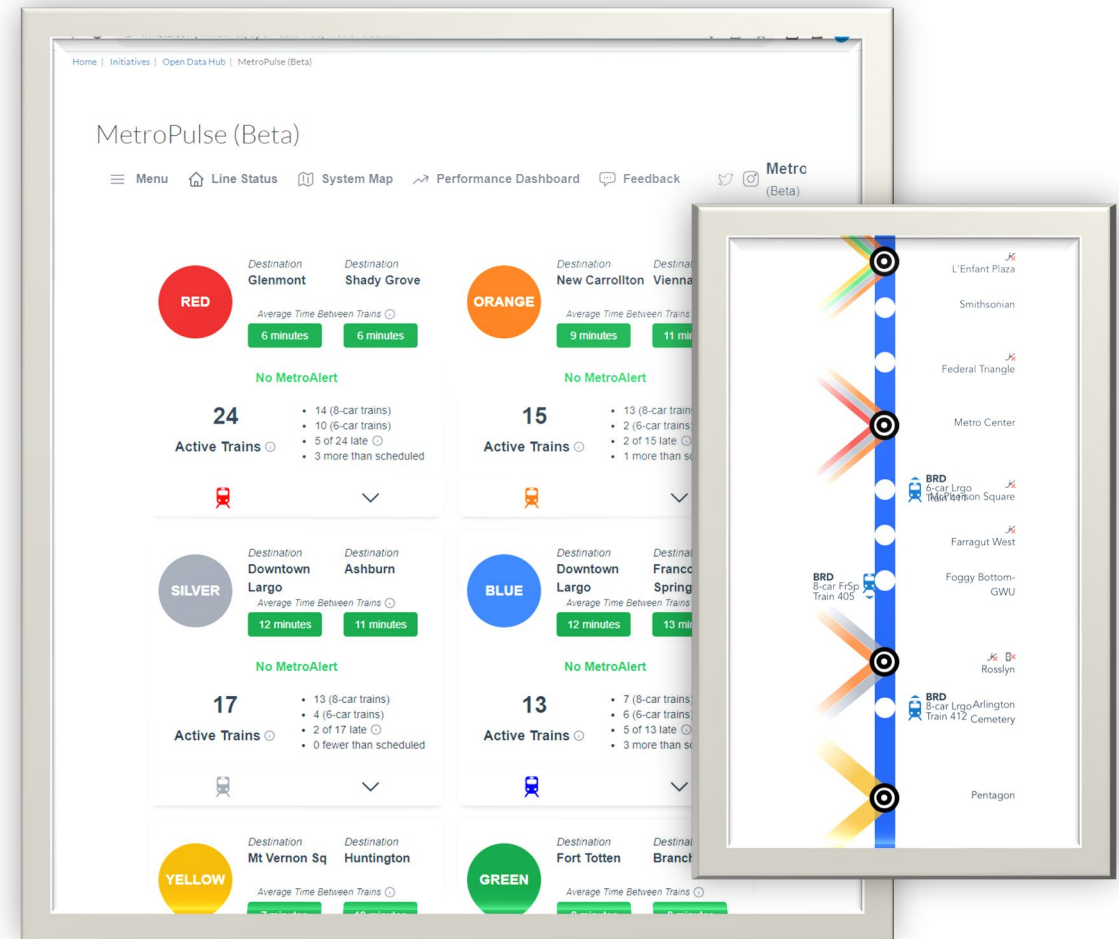
Technology is antiquated,
preventing **One Metro** voice for
customer information

New Trip Planning Technologies

MetroPulse launched to provide real-time updates for Metrorail and increase transparency

ROADMAP

- Add Metrobus **this fall**
- Mobile app & real-time customer service interactions in **2024**
- Real-time MetroAccess vehicle tracking in **2024**



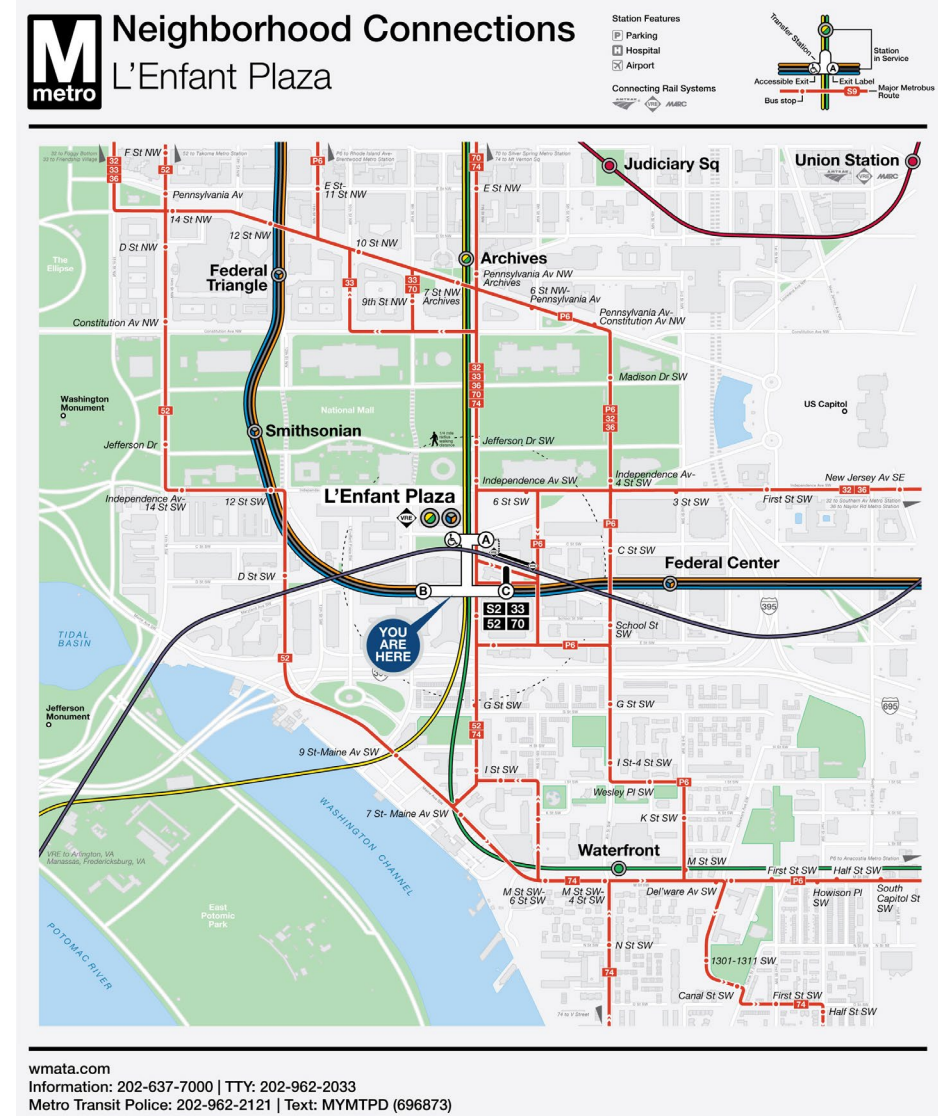
The Plan for Planning

Re-imagining how we showcase the Metrobus & Metrorail network together **this winter**

(online, app, in-station, bus stop)

ROADMAP

Establish clearer connections to MARC, VRE, regional buses, airports, Purple Line and bikeshare **in 2024**



Customer journey: PAY



OUR GOAL

Easy, mobile-first payments

Establish more customer friendly policy like fare capping

Treat SmarTrip like a regional currency, beyond transit

OUR CHALLENGE

SmarTrip app is too cumbersome

Fare vending machines are outdated

"Card Based" system vs "Account Based System" limits customer features, regional partnerships

Customer journey: PAY

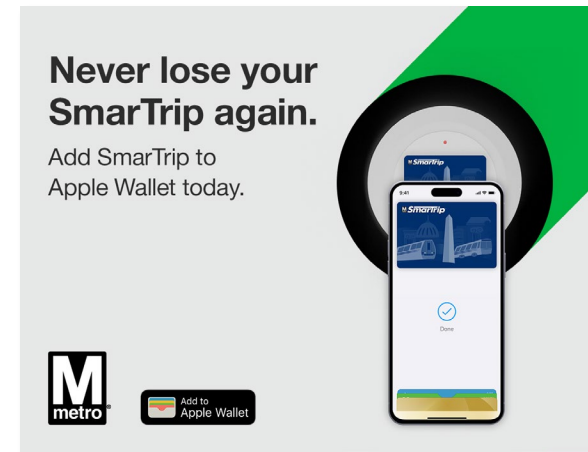


Market SmarTrip in Wallet, encourage buying fares before arriving **this fall**

New Metrobus fareboxes, rear-door boarding **this year**

ROADMAP

Fare Modernization to include credit cards, fare capping, next-gen account management



Customer journey: NAVIGATE



OUR GOAL

Becoming the transit provider of choice in a world of 1-click options.

Create signage/wayfinding systems inclusive to all our riders

Thinking as a region, not a sole provider

OUR CHALLENGE

Large scale stations

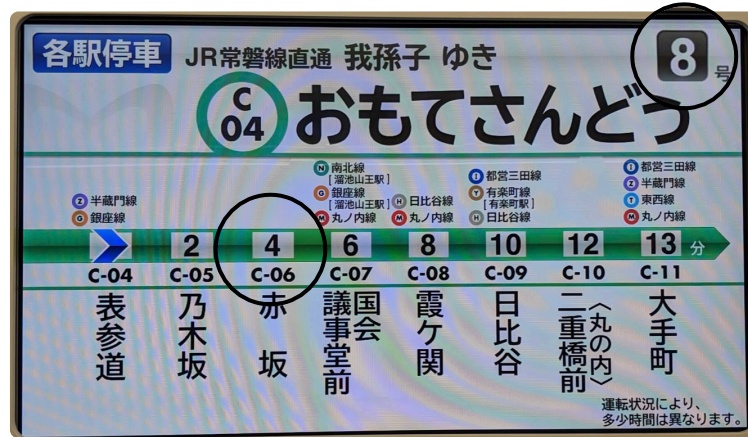
Can't hang signs from ceiling

Long history of "patches" & "pilots"

Bus & Rail historically siloed

Incorporating worldwide best practices

New York: real-time arrivals screens with next stations for trains



Tokyo: route breakdown with upcoming station stops, line/station numerical labeling

Tokyo: line number designation

Norway: through stations, train platform boarding locations

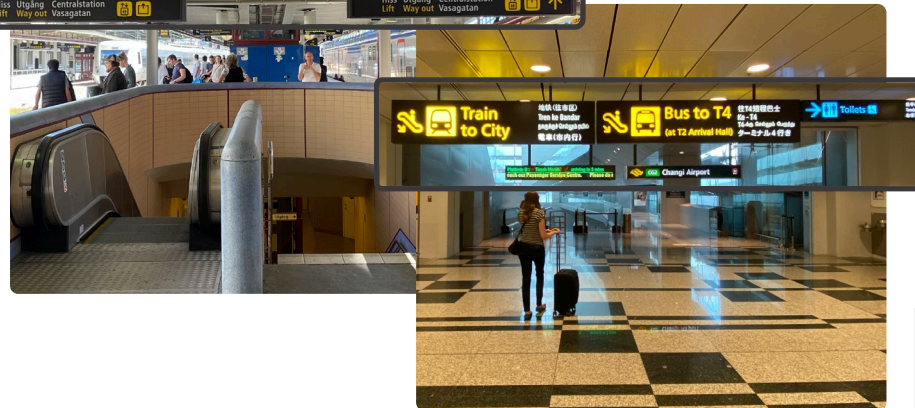


Incorporating worldwide best practices



Tokyo: Floor decals & color coding to categorize amenities, destinations

Stockholm: Lots of strong iconography



8:45 PM **Lai King Sports Centre**
60 Lai Cho Rd, Kwai Chung, Hong Kong

Walk
^ About 9 min, 650 m
▲ Use caution - may involve errors or sections not suited for walking
Head north on Lai Cho Rd toward Joint St

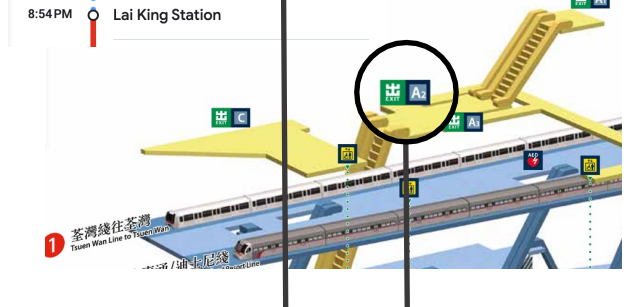
Turn left onto Joint St

Turn left onto Lai King Hill Rd

Turn right

Turn left
① Take the stairs
② Destination will be on the right

Enter via Lai King Station Exit A2



Hong Kong: entrance/exit labels aid online navigation

Reducing customer journey time and uncertainty

Where is my train?

Am I on the right platform?

Is this the right track?

When is the train coming?

Did I get on the right train?

Where is the exit?

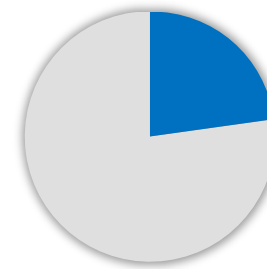
Which exit can I take?

Which exit should I take?

Turning insights into action



39% of registered SmarTrip customers say they took the **wrong** rail station **exit** in the past year



23% boarded a train in the **wrong direction**



29% went to the **wrong platform**



17% took the **wrong train line**

Metro Customer Survey, March 2023

Street level entrance/exit "pylon"

Today

Stripes represent service at station

No visual direction element

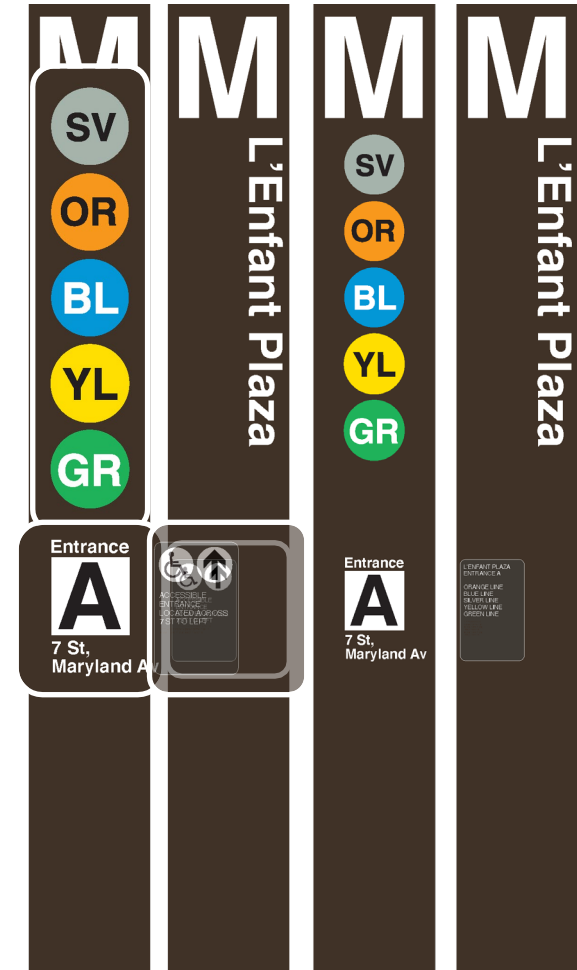


Pilot

More pronounced service labels

Entrance path label

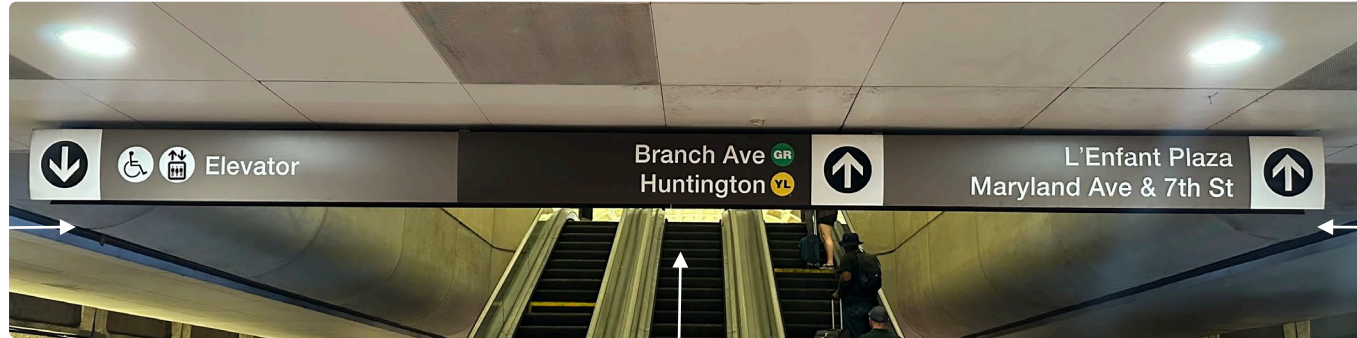
More arrows added to aid visual direction



Station exit signs

Today

Limited accessibility direction



Limited sense of place

Train direction wayfinding

Pilot



Improved accessibility directions

Exit path labeling

Regional connections

Trackside wall/pylon; station-ahead

Today

Train destination wayfinding



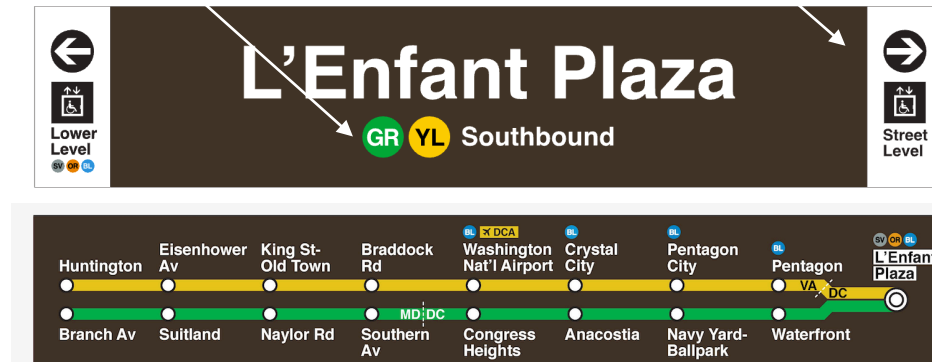
Complex station ahead listing

Limited sense of place

Pilot

More pronounced elevator labels

Cardinal travel direction

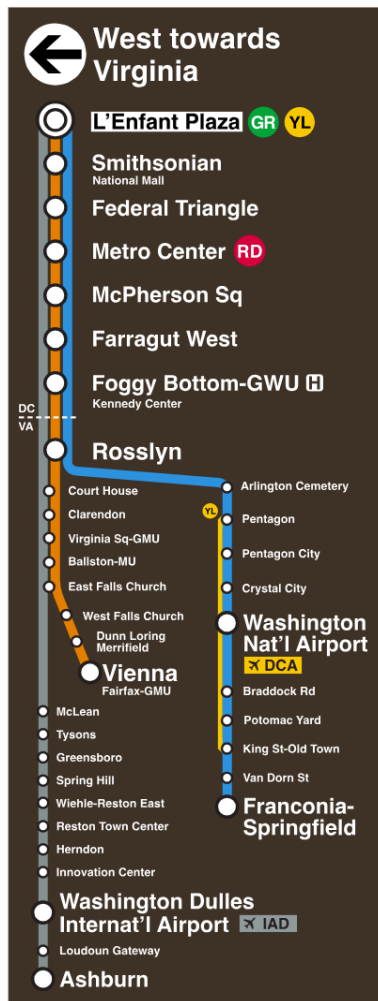


Regional connections



DRAFT

Piloting station ahead signs



Pros & Cons to design elements like:

- Number of stations
- Station call outs
- Transfer opportunities
- Landmarks, points of interest

DRAFT

Neighborhood/Landmark Map



Use Exit System to Full Potential:

- Landmarks, Bus Connections, Rail Connections
- Walking Estimations

Listening to Metro customers

Customer centric decisions drive ridership recovery

On-site and online surveys will be conducted **this fall** as new signs are placed throughout L'Enfant Plaza



Wayfinding. Way better.

We're testing new wayfinding signage at L'Enfant Plaza Station to help you get around Metro more easily.

Let us know what you think at wmata.com/wayfinding.



Customer journey: WAIT



OUR GOAL

Easily know when train or bus is coming

Rethink how service changes are shown

Install more real-time arrival screens at transfer stations and bus stops

OUR CHALLENGE

Screens not fed with real time data

Fragmented technology systems

Installation costs

Limited user design experience

Improved screen designs

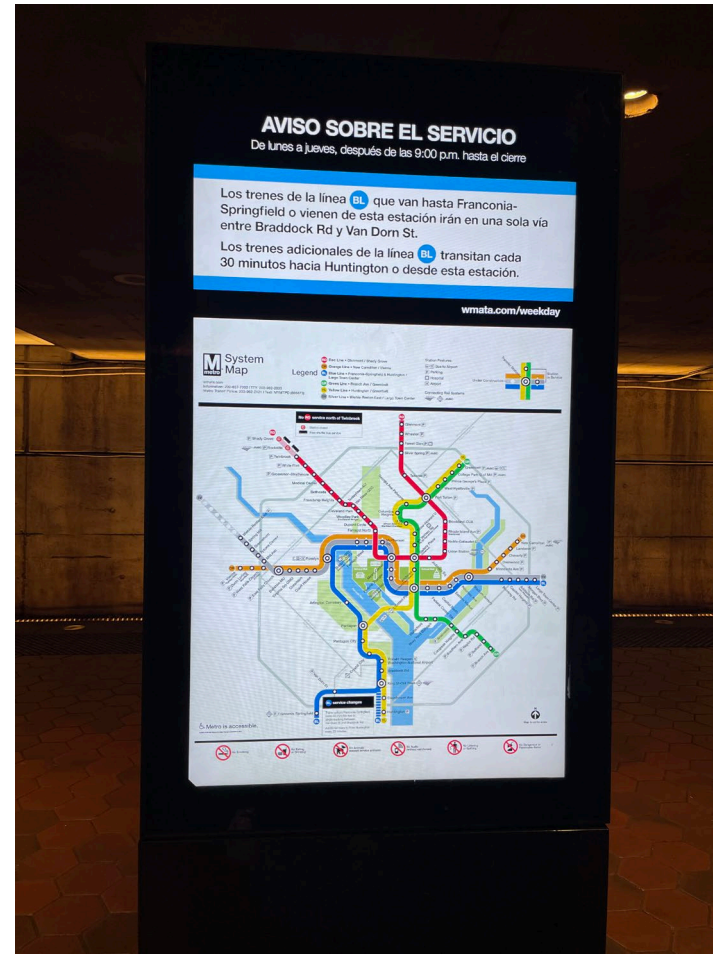
ROADMAP

New real-time, station ahead digital designs **this fall**

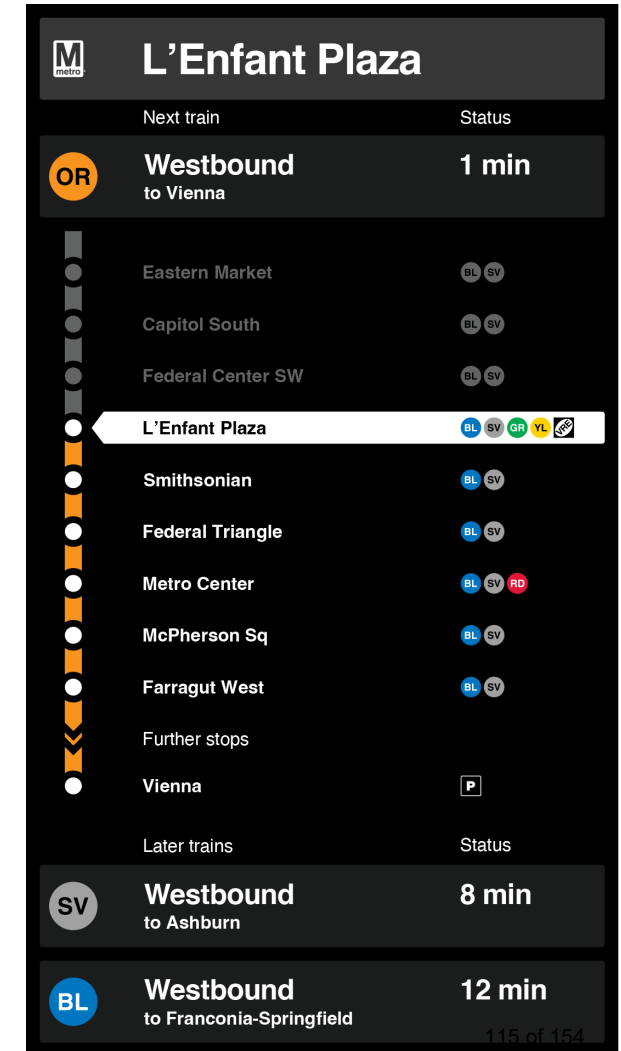
Add'l Entrance Displays & customer information screens beginning **this month**

Integrated technology systems in **Fall 2024**

Current Screen



Draft Screen



More screens for Metrobus customers

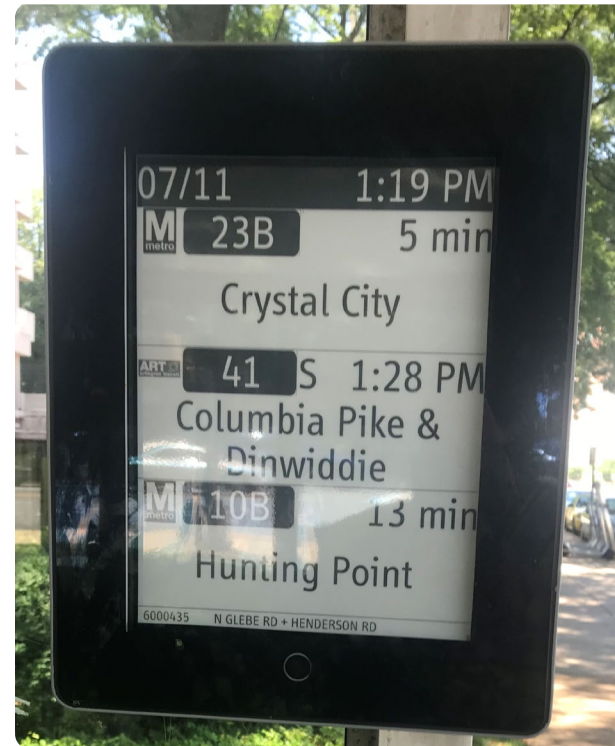
150 screens currently in region

100 additional screens coming in the **next year**

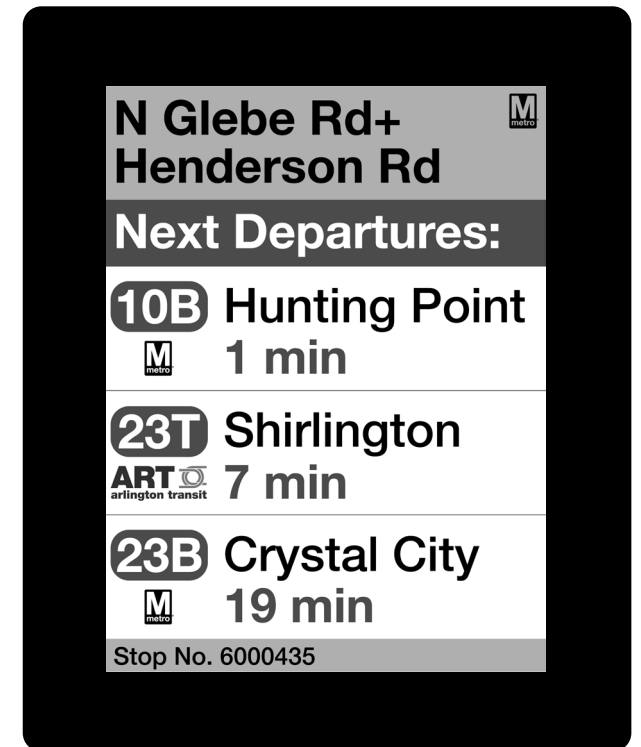
ROADMAP

Integrated technology system in **Fall 2024**

Current screen



New design



Customer journey: RIDE



OUR GOAL

Inform customers on-board:

- Where they're going
- When it's time to exit
- What's happening if there's a delay

OUR CHALLENGE

Screens not fed with real time data

Fragmented technology systems

Installation costs

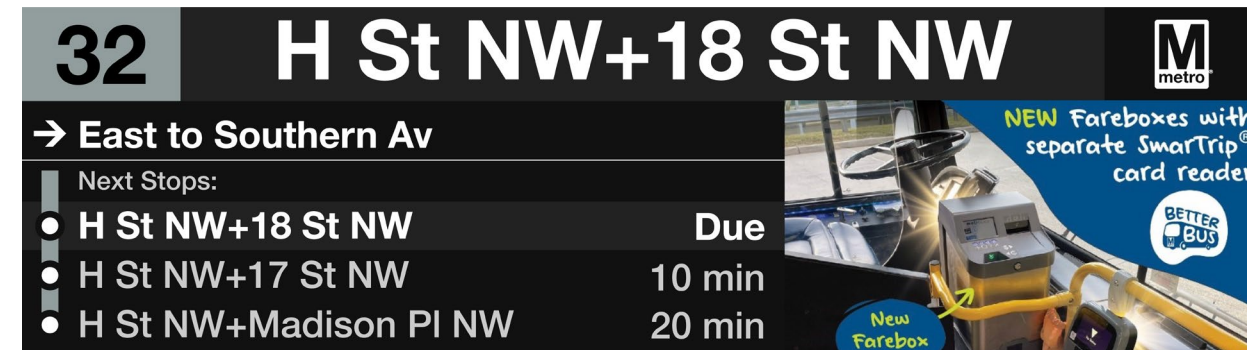
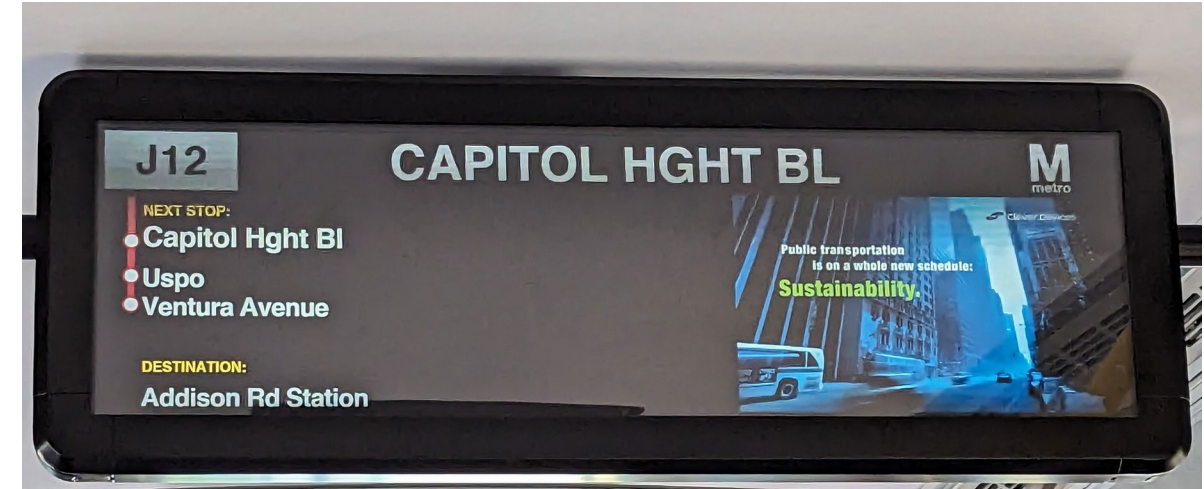
Limited user design experience

New on-board screen designs

Metrorail 7000-series



Latest Metrobus Fleet



Customer journey: POST-TRAVEL



OUR GOAL

Build a more **responsive** Customer Service team to respond 24/7

Strengthen Outreach & Engagement Teams to **connect** with the communities

Learn more about our customers, **fix** issues before they are reported, creating a safer, more reliable system

Next steps: working together

