



Safety and Operations Committee

Information Item IV-A

December 13, 2018

FY2020 Station Platforms Project

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD Number:
202036

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

FY20 Station Platform Project

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Discuss FY2020 planned service outages to repair 20 station platforms, which will close six stations in Northern Virginia during summer 2019 and affect approximately 8 percent of peak weekday riders. Provide a progress report on efforts to develop travel alternatives for impacted customers, Metro's customer research and communications plan, and customer retention initiatives.

PURPOSE:

Update the Board on work underway with regional transportation partners to develop a robust mitigation plan, including promotions to retain riders and encourage them to return when the work is completed.

DESCRIPTION:

Metro staff are preparing for the first phase of the Platform Rehabilitation Project in summer 2019, with service alternatives, customer communications, and ridership retention strategies being refined based on information gained during SafeTrack and recent customer research.

Unlike SafeTrack, Metrorail customers are now familiar with line segment shutdowns and the use of temporary service alternatives. Metro no longer wants to deliver the "stay away" message that was required when the emergency SafeTrack program was introduced. Instead, the goal is to provide customers with more information about where service is running and what their options are for traveling around the shutdown, as well as information when service returns to normal and possible promotions to return to Metro.

Key Highlights:

- In FY20, major service outages are scheduled to enable the rehabilitation of station platforms:
 - May 25 – September 2, 2019: Shutdown BL/YL south of National Airport

- September 3 – 29, 2019: Single tracking on BL, between Van Dorn St – Franconia-Springfield
- The closure of these six Metrorail stations will impact approximately 17,000 weekday rush hour customers, or 8 percent of peak weekday ridership.
- Metro is working with regional partners to develop a robust mitigation plan for the summer 2019 service outage and a campaign to inform customers of their travel options.
- Recent customer research has found that the majority of impacted customers are aware of next summer’s shutdown, and they plan to research alternative travel options less than three months before the shutdown start date.

Background and History:

In FY20, Metro will begin the first phase of a major capital project to rebuild 20 outdoor station platforms. From Memorial Day to Labor Day (May 25 – September 2, 2019), six Metrorail stations in Virginia on the Blue/Yellow Lines will be closed for platform reconstruction and other major capital work: Braddock Road, King St-Old Town, Eisenhower Ave, Huntington, Van Dorn St, and Franconia-Springfield. The Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Metrorail station will remain open and represents the southernmost terminus on the Blue/Yellow lines during summer 2019.

On a typical weekday during peak periods, the six stations that will be closed in summer 2019 record about 17,000 entries per AM Peak, which is approximately 8 percent of the 212,000 AM Peak entries systemwide.

Experience from SafeTrack has shown that approximately 60 percent of daily Metrorail riders will take advantage of the free substitute bus shuttles and connect back to Metrorail.

Discussion:

VIRGINIA COORDINATION EFFORTS

Metro is leading, with the support of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC), a Northern Virginia stakeholder group using the SafeTrack coordination effort as the model. The group has over 140 members and includes representatives from Northern Virginia local governments, state government, VA Congressional offices, the federal government, transit providers, and police and emergency management. Following a kickoff in May 2018, the group convenes by regular conference calls that will continue monthly.

Metro and stakeholders use the time to coordinate mitigation efforts and report

progress on planning for the summer 2019 platform work. The group maintains a tracking list of outstanding follow-up items. It is also an opportunity to ensure coordination and share information on major transportation projects in the region such as the I-395 HOT lane construction (VDOT), Memorial Bridge reconstruction (NPS), National Airport construction (MWA), and the King-Street Old Town Station Bus Bay project (Alexandria).

In addition, two other groups have met to begin planning for the summer 2019 work: (1) the regional bus providers who are developing a bus alternatives plan and (2) regional representatives who are developing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and other mitigation strategies. Both of these groups support and inform the Virginia stakeholder group coordinated by Metro and NVTC.

NoVa CUSTOMER RESEARCH

Metro conducted customer research this fall to learn firsthand from Northern Virginia customers about their preferred service alternatives, as well as the best ways to communicate information related to service disruptions. The survey targeted regular riders with registered SmarTrip® cards who use the six impacted stations.

Some of the top findings include:

- Seven in 10 registered SmarTrip® users are already aware of the 2019 shutdown
- Most customers will begin researching alternative travel options less than three months before the shutdown start date
- The three most effective modes of communication are:
 - Metro emails or text messages
 - Posters in Metro stations
 - Brochures distributed at Metro stations
- Social media platforms were the least preferred forms of communication
- Half of the customers affected by the shutdown plan to use free Metro shuttle buses
- The expected use of the various options are (customers could choose more than one option):
 - Metro shuttle buses – 53%
 - Drive own car – 43%
 - Regular Metro buses – 33%
 - Uber/Lyft – 22%
 - VRE – 20%
- Expected use of regular Metrobus routes (8Z, 10A, 11Y, 21A, and Metroway) is relatively low, but we may be able to increase it through advertising/messaging

DRAFT MITIGATION PLAN

Based on initial discussions with our partners and customer research, Metro staff have prepared a draft mitigation plan that includes:

1. Free bus shuttles replacing rail service for the six closed stations
 - a. Express shuttles to Pentagon (from Franconia-Springfield and Huntington Stations)
 - b. Two local bus shuttles connecting closed stations
2. Supplemental existing Metrobus service on Metroway, 8Z, 10A, 11Y, and 21A
3. Local service enhancements and travel alternatives provided by jurisdictions

The following is the preliminary Metrobus service plan, which based on previous shutdown experience and customer research, anticipates approximately 60 percent of regular rail riders in the corridor will use bus alternatives.

Route	Days	Span
8Z	wk	5:35am - 8:50pm (midday service ac
10A	wk	4:25am - 1:46am
11Y	wk	6:31am - 9:03am 4:10pm - 7:24pm
21A	wk	5:35am - 7:47pm (midday service ac
Metroway	wk	5:30am - 9am 3:30pm - 7:30 pm
Shuttle 1 Express shuttle btw Franconia-Springfield and Pentagon Transit Center	wk, Sa, Su	5:30am - Midnight
Shuttle 2 Local shuttle btw Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn St, King St, and National Airport	wk, Sa, Su	5:30am - Midnight
Shuttle 3 Express shuttle btw Huntington and Pentagon Transit Center	wk, Sa, Su	5:30am - Midnight
Shuttle 4 Local shuttle btw Huntington, Eisenhower Ave, King St, Braddock Rd, and Crystal City	wk, Sa, Su	5:30am - Midnight

** - Buses required will supplement existing service

^ - Buses required to provide midday service

COMMUNICATIONS

Metro, NVTC, Northern Virginia jurisdictions, and the Commonwealth of Virginia will work together to ensure there is a high level of communication to all stakeholders, including customers, elected and government officials, and local business and community groups.

Similar to the SafeTrack project, Metro will develop a dedicated project website to provide up-to-date information and link to other regional resources. Metro will distribute targeted outreach materials to customers at the impacted locations and will share those materials with other stakeholders to post on their own websites, share by social media, share with elected officials, and provide at key commuting locations.

Based on customer feedback, new communications and outreach tactics may be created to better inform customers about travel alternatives. For example, the campaign may include an effort to increase familiarity with local bus routes, which research has found is very low among regular rail riders at the impacted stations. Also, service alternatives may be presented in a more targeted fashion to provide specific alternatives to customers based on their regular travel patterns.

FUNDING IMPACT:

No funding impact at this time.	
Project Manager:	Lynn Bowersox
Project Department/Office:	Customer Service, Communications and Marketing

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	<p>May 2018: Platform rehabilitation program announced</p> <p>October 2018: NoVa customer research conducted</p>
Anticipated actions after presentation	<p>Early 2019: roll out mitigation campaign to prepare communities and riders</p> <p>May 25 – September 2, 2019: Shutdown BL/YL south of National Airport</p> <p>September 3 – 29, 2019: Single tracking on BL, between Van Dorn St – Franconia-Springfield</p>

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information item. No Board actions recommended.

FY20 Station Platform Projects

Safety and Operations Committee
December 13, 2018



Purpose

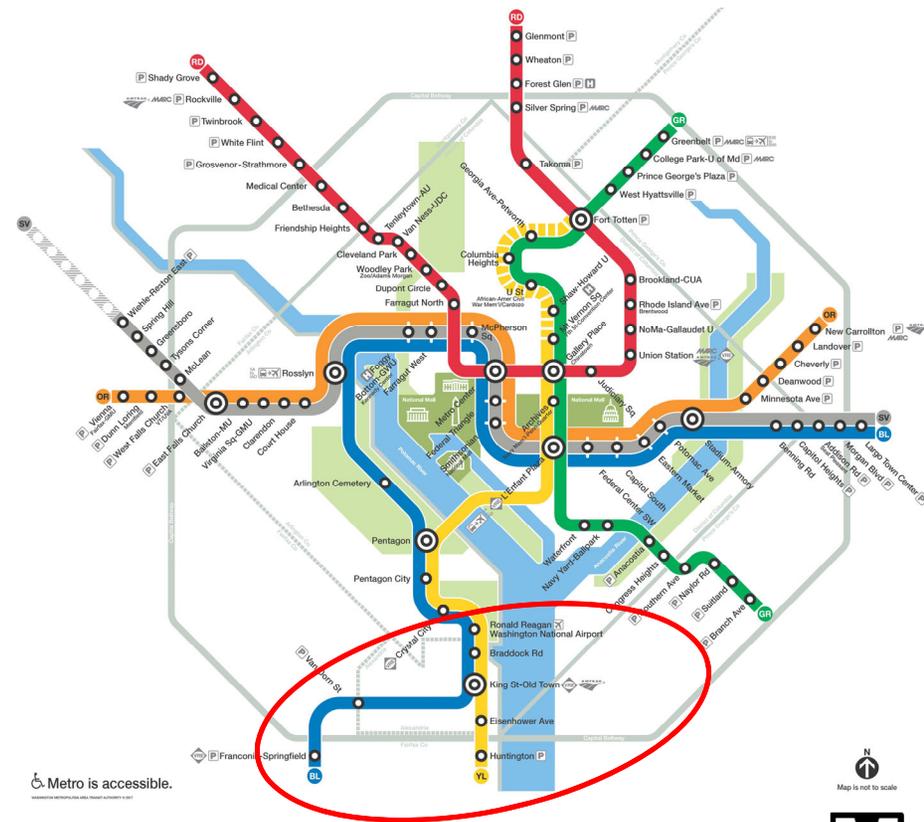
- Provide the Board with further details on FY20 station platform projects that will close 6 stations and impact 8% of weekday riders
- Preview draft mitigation plans prepared in cooperation with jurisdictions
- Highlight development of customer retention initiatives

Major Outage Guidelines to Minimize Customer Impacts

- No station should experience two major outages in a three-year period
- Focus construction on summer and major holiday weekends to reduce impact on loyal commuters
- Concentrate work to minimize impact to riders, rather than conducting a series of smaller outages
- Deliver best possible service outside work zone
- Provide public notification several months in advance

Capital Investment: Platform Rehabilitation Project

- **May 25 – September 2, 2019:**
 - Shutdown BL/YL south of National Airport
 - Stations Closed: Braddock Rd, King St, Eisenhower Ave, Huntington, Van Dorn St, Franconia-Springfield
 - During a typical weekday rush hour, approx. 17,000 customers board at these six stations (8% of ridership)
- **September 3 – 29, 2019:**
 - Single tracking on BL, between Van Dorn St – Franconia-Springfield
 - BL trains every 24 minutes

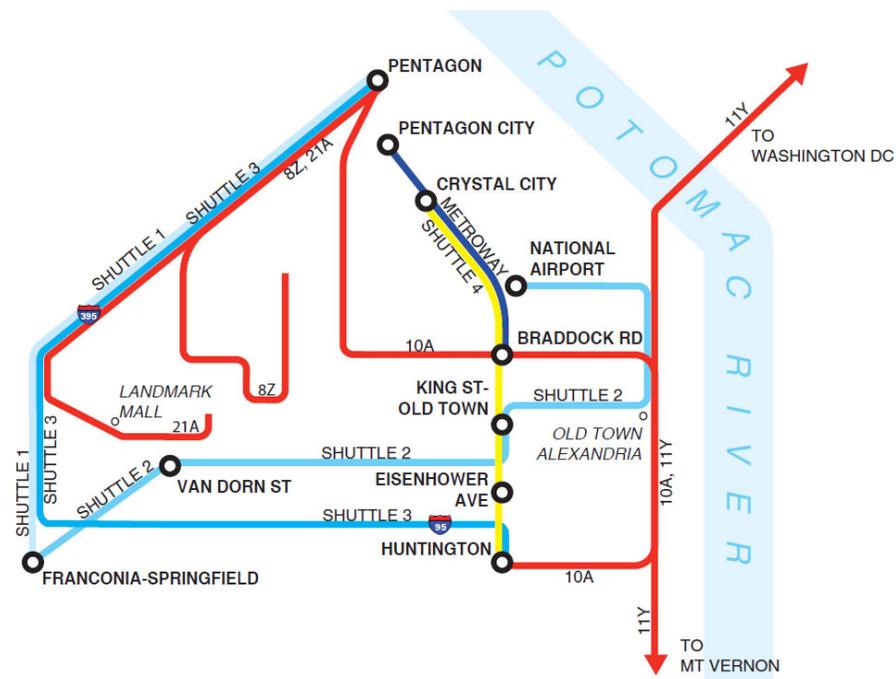


Regional Network Coordination

- Planning Underway for Summer 2019 Mitigations
 - Northern Virginia Stakeholder Group led by Metro and supported by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC)
 - More than 140 members: local government, state government, Congressional offices, federal government, transit providers, police and emergency management, MWAA
 - Using SafeTrack coordination effort as model

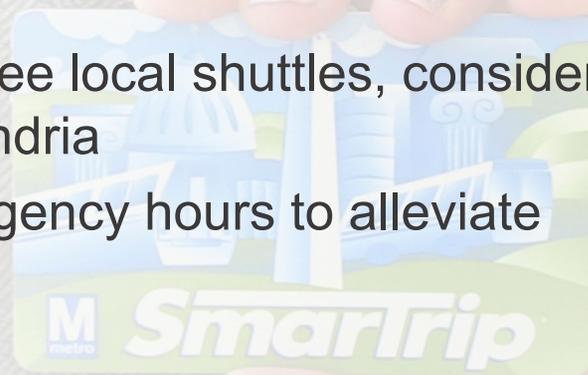
Service Alternatives – Initial Metrobus Planning

- Free express bus shuttles to Pentagon
 - From Franconia-Springfield and Huntington stations
- Free local bus shuttles connecting closed stations
 - Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn St, King St-Old Town and National Airport
 - Huntington, Eisenhower Ave, King St-Old Town, Braddock Rd and Crystal City
- Additional capacity on existing routes
 - 8Z, 10A, 11Y, 21A, Metroway
- Preliminary Metrobus plan anticipates approx. 60% of regular rail riders in corridor will use bus alternatives



Local Operator Service Enhancements

- Local operator service enhancements under consideration:
 - Fairfax Connector: supplement existing routes, shuttle connecting Huntington North and South
 - Alexandria DASH: operation of one of the free local shuttles, considering expanded trolley service in Old Town Alexandria
 - OmniRide: shuttles to VRE stations, contingency hours to alleviate overcrowding
 - Arlington ART: added capacity



Alternative Travel Options and Demand Management

- WMATA is working with state and regional representatives on:
 - Promotion of park and ride locations
 - Promotion of existing transit service
 - Telework policies
 - Signal prioritization and dedicated lanes
 - Outreach to slugging community and vanpools/carpools
 - Coordination with transportation demand management (TDM) professionals
 - Additional capacity on VRE



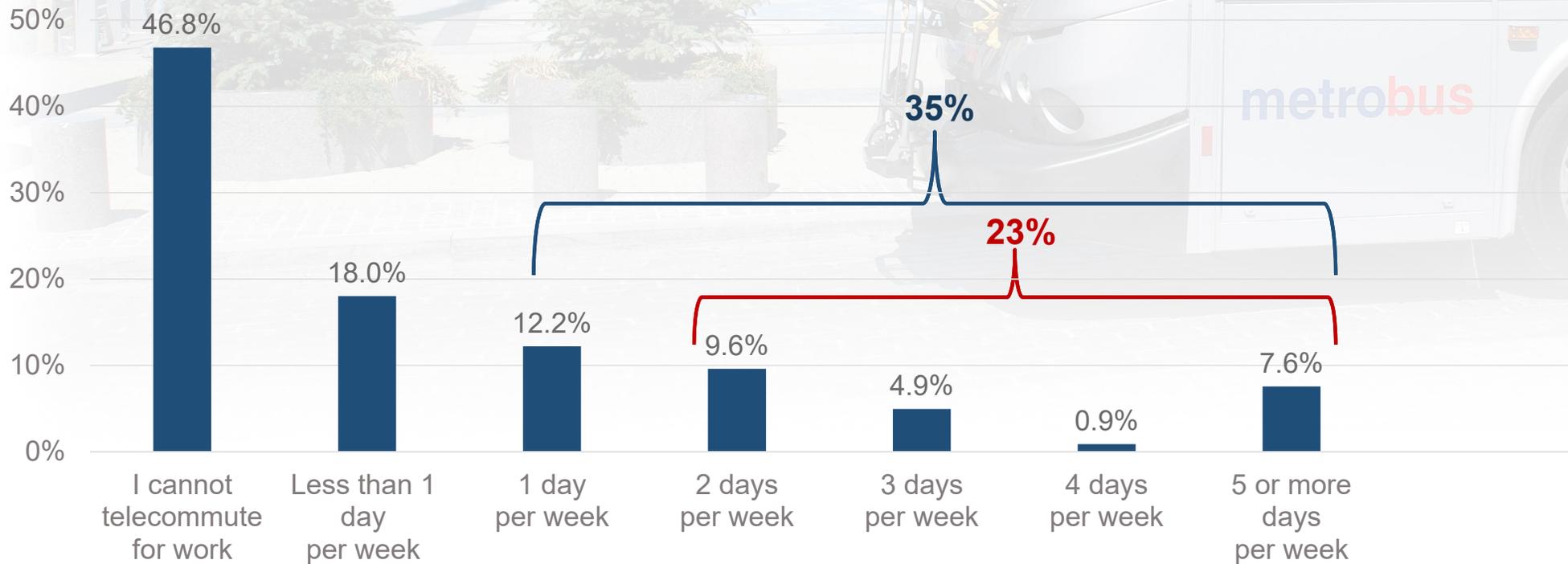
Learning from Summer 2018 Red Line Shutdown

	Agree
I know why Metro is suspending service between Fort Totten and NOMA-Gallaudet stations.	60%
I trust that the service suspensions are necessary.	66%
I was informed early enough about the service shutdowns on the Red Line.	72%
I was reminded early enough about the service shutdowns on the Red Line.	73%
I have a good understanding of my alternative travel options between late July and early September.	62%

Customer Research – Summer 2018 Red Line Shutdown

1 in 3 affected customers have the option of telecommuting 1+ days per week
1 in 4 can telecommute 2+ days per week

How often can you telecommute for work?

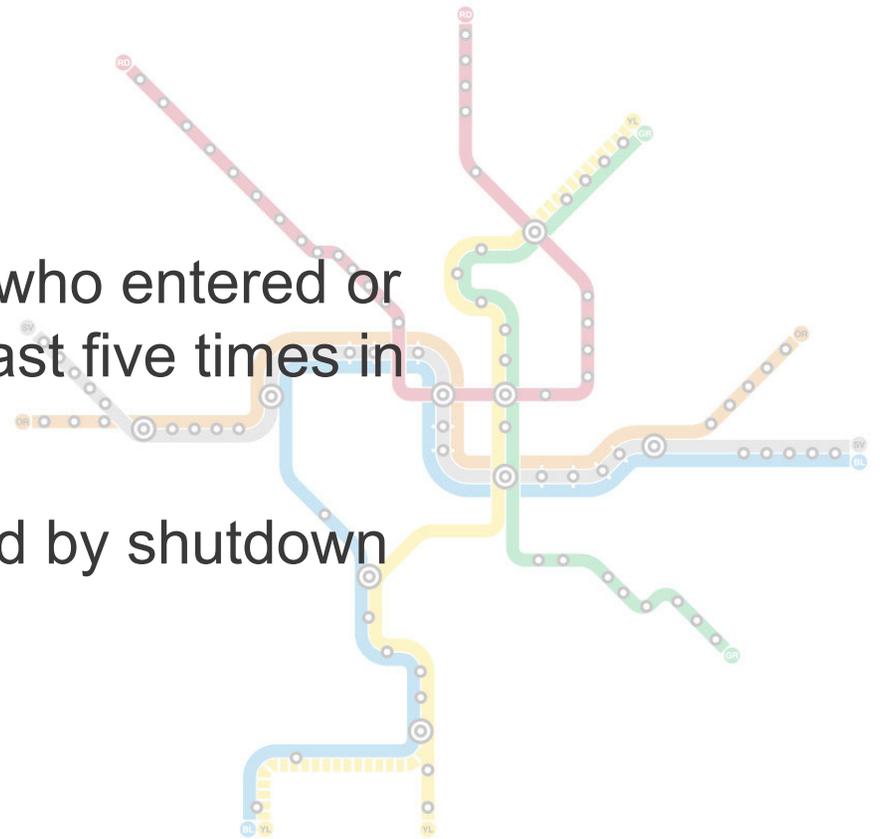


Learning from Summer 2018 Red Line Shutdown

- Customers want personalized service alternatives based on their stations and travel patterns
- Increase use of email and text messaging for customer notification
- Ensure accuracy and maintenance of signage
- Improve messaging to set expectations about trip times on bus shuttles and other travel alternatives
- Provide clarity about frequent service available beyond work zone

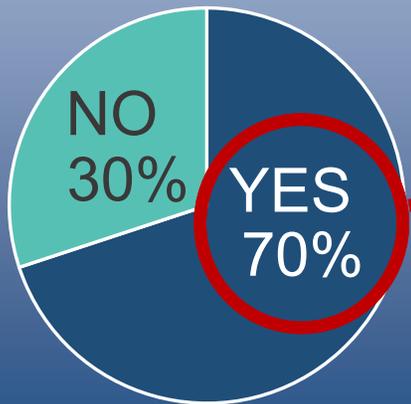
NoVa Customer Research

- Conducted October 2018
- Surveyed existing Metrorail customers who entered or exited one of the affected stations at least five times in September 2018
- More than 10% of 17,000 riders affected by shutdown took survey

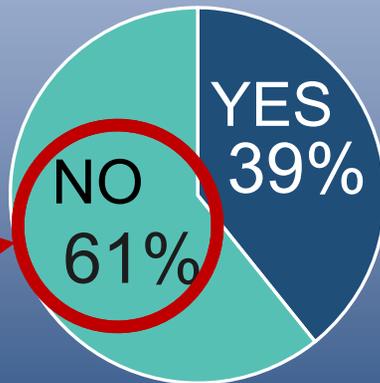


Customer Research – Impacted NoVa Riders

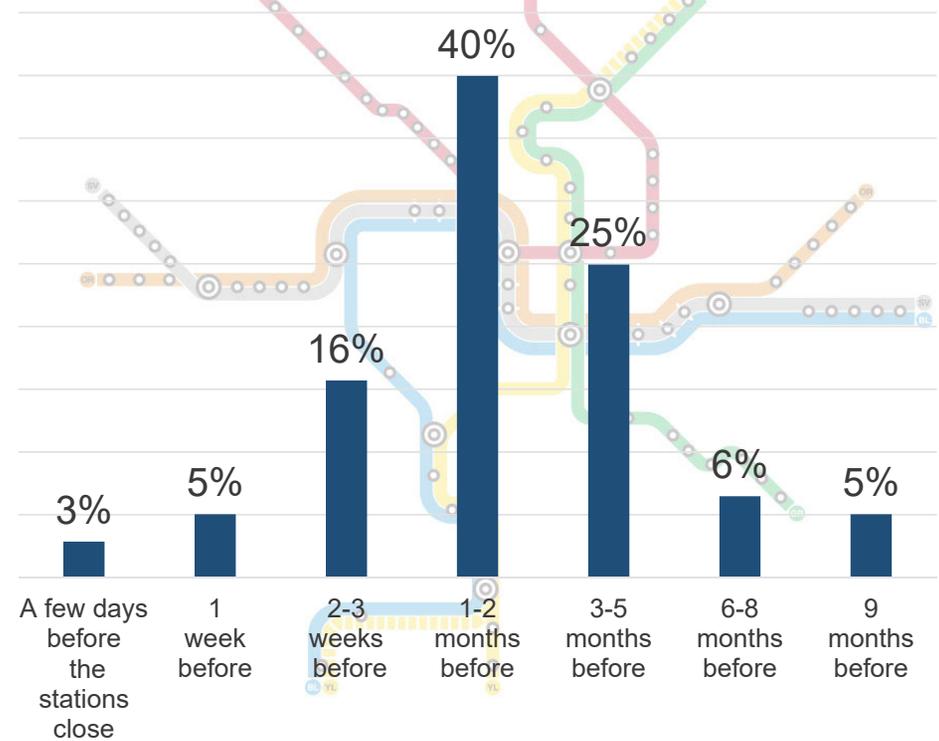
Were you aware of the 2019 shutdowns before taking survey?



Have you already researched travel alternatives?

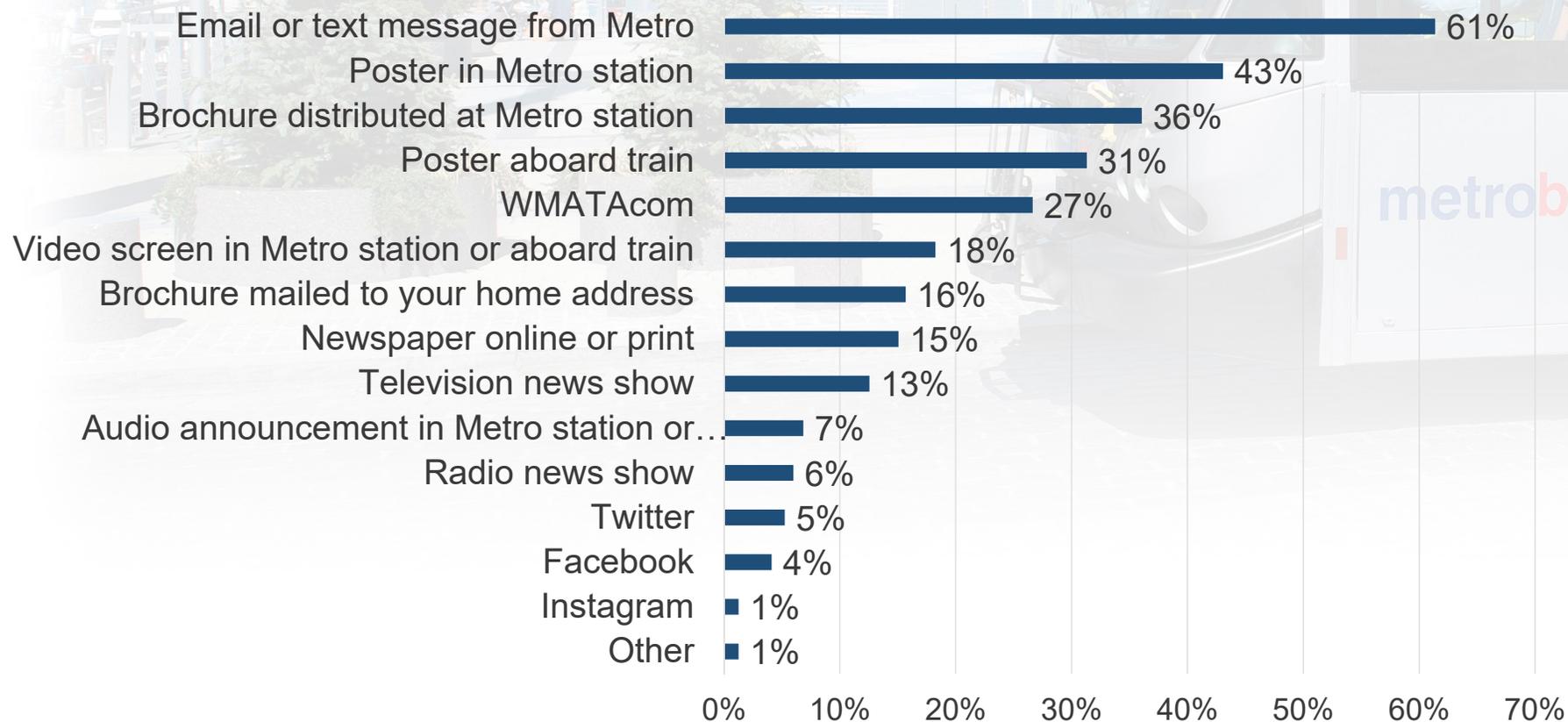


When are you likely to research travel alternatives for next summer?



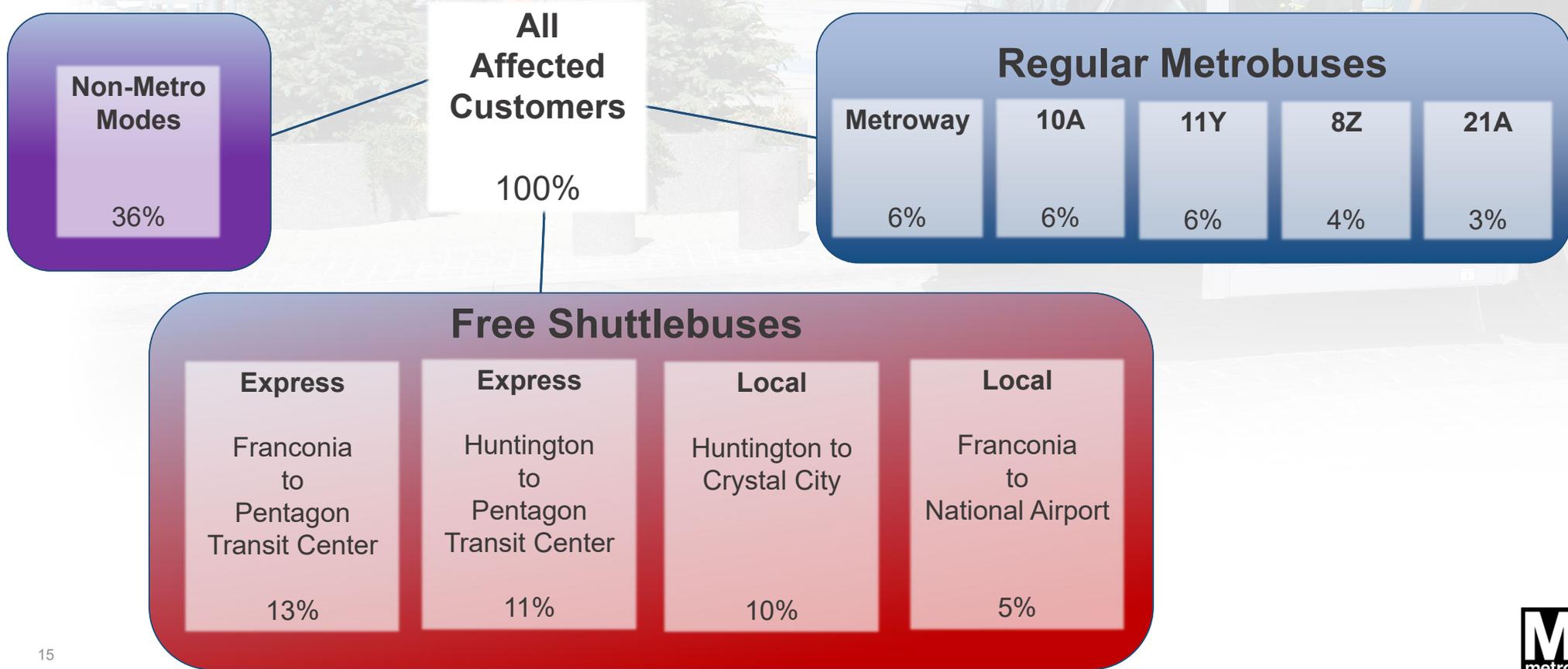
Customer Research – Impacted NoVa Riders

What is the best way to communicate information to you about alternative travel options?
Select top 3 sources.



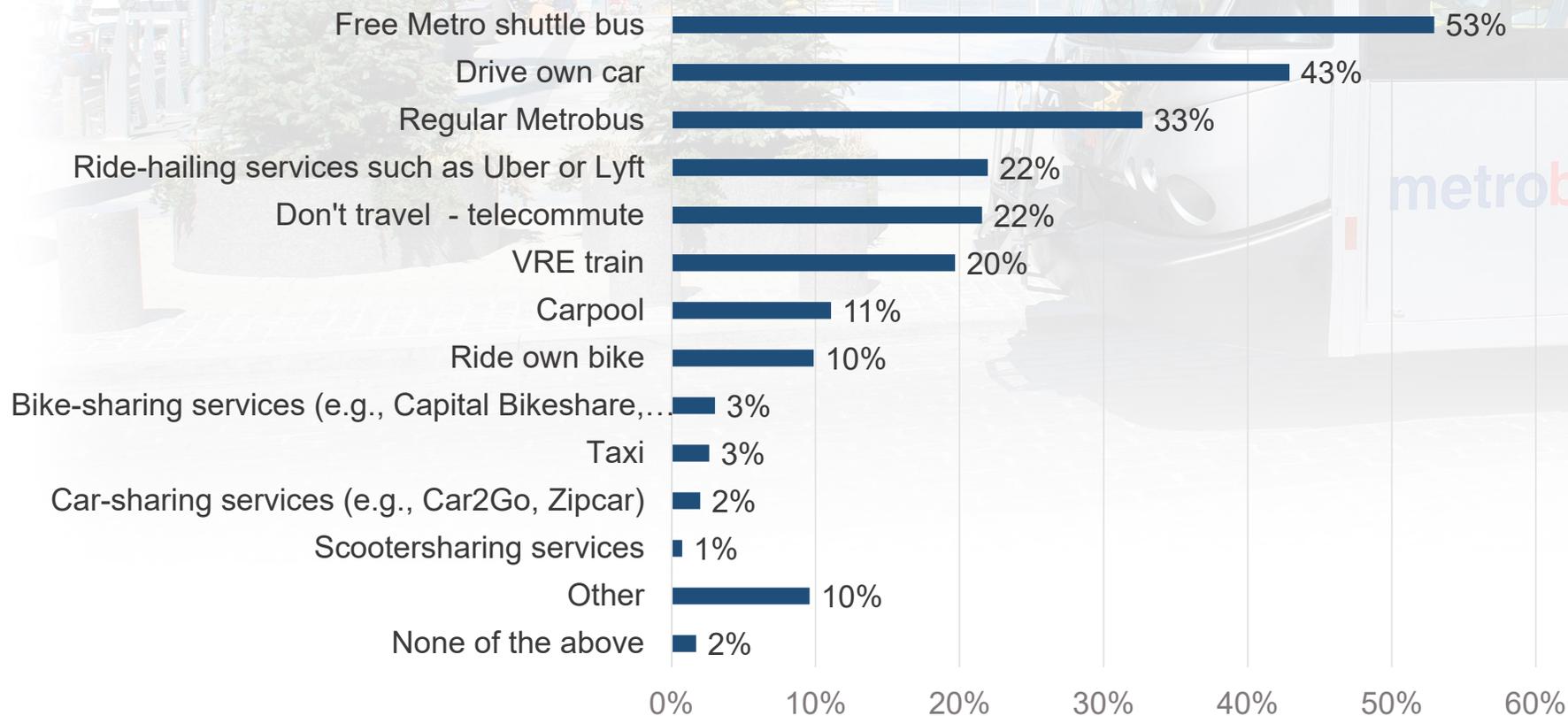
Expected Demand for Alternatives

Would you use these alternatives? *“Certainly Yes” responses only*



Customer Research – Impacted NoVa Riders

Which alternative travel modes do you expect to use more often when the stations south of National Airport are closed? Please select all that apply or "none of the above."



Board Policy Matters

- Staff evaluating potential discounts or incentives to retain riders during shutdown
- Analysis underway to determine what offering could be made to demonstrate appreciation for customer patience and incentivize riders to return after shutdown



Next Steps

- Finalize travel alternatives from Metro and regional providers
- Complete evaluation of promotion and incentive strategies and return to Board for approval
- Customers notification beginning in spring 2019

