



Finance and Capital Committee

Information Item IV-A

April 11, 2024

FY2025 Budget Public Outreach and Input Report

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

<input type="radio"/> Action <input checked="" type="radio"/> Information	Document Number: 206747	Resolution: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
---	-------------------------------	--

Presentation Name:

FY2025 Budget Public Outreach & Input Report

Project Manager:

Sarah Meyer

Project Department:

Customer Experience & Engagement

Purpose/Key Highlights:

Metro's Public Participation Plan advances its goals of **service excellence** and **regional opportunity and partnership**. In this presentation, staff will summarize the results from the FY2025 Budget Public Outreach and Input Report. Through multiple formats, staff solicited and received public feedback regarding the FY2025 proposed budget, FY2025-2030 Capital Improvement Plan and associated potential service and fare changes.

The FY2025 budget communications and outreach effort was designed to encourage public feedback from customers, stakeholders, and community members across Metro's 1,500-square-mile service area. Communications were guided by Metro's Board-approved Public Participation Plan (PPP), which meets or exceeds all Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements. Efforts included outreach across the system and in the community, multilanguage advertisements, and Spanish-language digital ads.

Interested Parties:

No interested parties identified.

Background:

The WMATA Compact requires Metro adopt a balanced budget annually. In December 2023, staff presented the FY2025 GM/CEO's Proposed Budget to the Board of Directors that confronted the \$750 million fiscal deficit within the existing subsidy funding model through substantial service cuts and fare increases. Following

coordination with jurisdictional partners, Metro revised its FY2025 operating budget based on additional funding from the jurisdictions to avoid the severe service cuts from the initial FY2025 Proposed Budget.

Discussion:

As part of the FY2025 budget process, Metro engaged in a targeted public communication and outreach effort to increase awareness, answer questions and solicit feedback on the proposed budget and associated service and fare proposals. The FY2025 budget communication and outreach effort was designed to encourage public feedback from customers, stakeholders, and community members across Metro's service area. Communications were guided by Metro's Board-approved Public Participation Plan, which meets or exceeds all Federal Transit Administration requirements.

Pursuant to the Public Participation Plan, the Board of Directors held four public hearings on February 26, 27, 28, and 29, 2024. The public hearings included one virtual and three in-person opportunities, with one in-person public hearing held in an area served by the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission pursuant to VA Acts of Assembly Ch. 854 Enact. Cl. 8. All hearings were broadcasted online at youtube.com/metroforward. Prior to each hearing, the public could attend a one-hour open house staffed by Metro's subject matter experts to answer questions. Those who wished to submit virtual testimony could pre-register to participate by video or call in during the hearing to submit audio-only testimony. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation was provided at each of the Public Hearings.

In addition to the public hearings, Metro used targeted marketing and media strategies to increase awareness and encourage feedback on the proposed budget. The primary method for collecting feedback was the online survey tool. Available in English and Spanish, this survey allowed the public to provide feedback by answering the survey questions, submitting open-ended comments or uploading documents. In total, Metro received 13,649 public comments and responses on the proposed budget. More than 97 percent of the feedback was received via the online survey tool. In total, Metro received 33 percent more comments for this year's fiscal year budget than last year.

Public engagement included:

- 8,132 surveys completed
- 55 comments uploaded through the survey or sent to the Board Secretary's Office
- 71 testimonies delivered at the public hearings

Survey Responses

Out of the more than 8,000 survey responses, 72% of respondents are current Metrobus riders and 81.5% are current Metrorail riders (measured as having traveled in the last week). The team worked to gather diverse voices, with 10% of respondents identifying as Hispanic, 11% African American, and 10% Asian.

Survey respondents expressed high approval for increasing service hours and maintaining affordability:

- 66% prefer price increases to service cuts
- 87% support for closing Metrorail later on Fridays and Saturdays
- 84% oppose increasing fares

Overall, the survey respondents demonstrated that reducing service would have a bigger impact on travel decisions compared to fare changes. Over 80% of respondents said eliminating bus service or closing stations would decrease their likelihood of choosing Metro. However, when faced with a decision between fare increases or service cuts, two thirds of respondents would choose fare increases.

Following the public comment period, staff prepared a FY2025 Budget Public Outreach & Input Report summarizing all feedback received. Staff will distribute this Report with the FY2025 Budget presentation for adoption by the Board of Directors.

Funding Impact:

No funding impact from this presentation

Previous Actions:

No previous actions identified.

Next Steps:

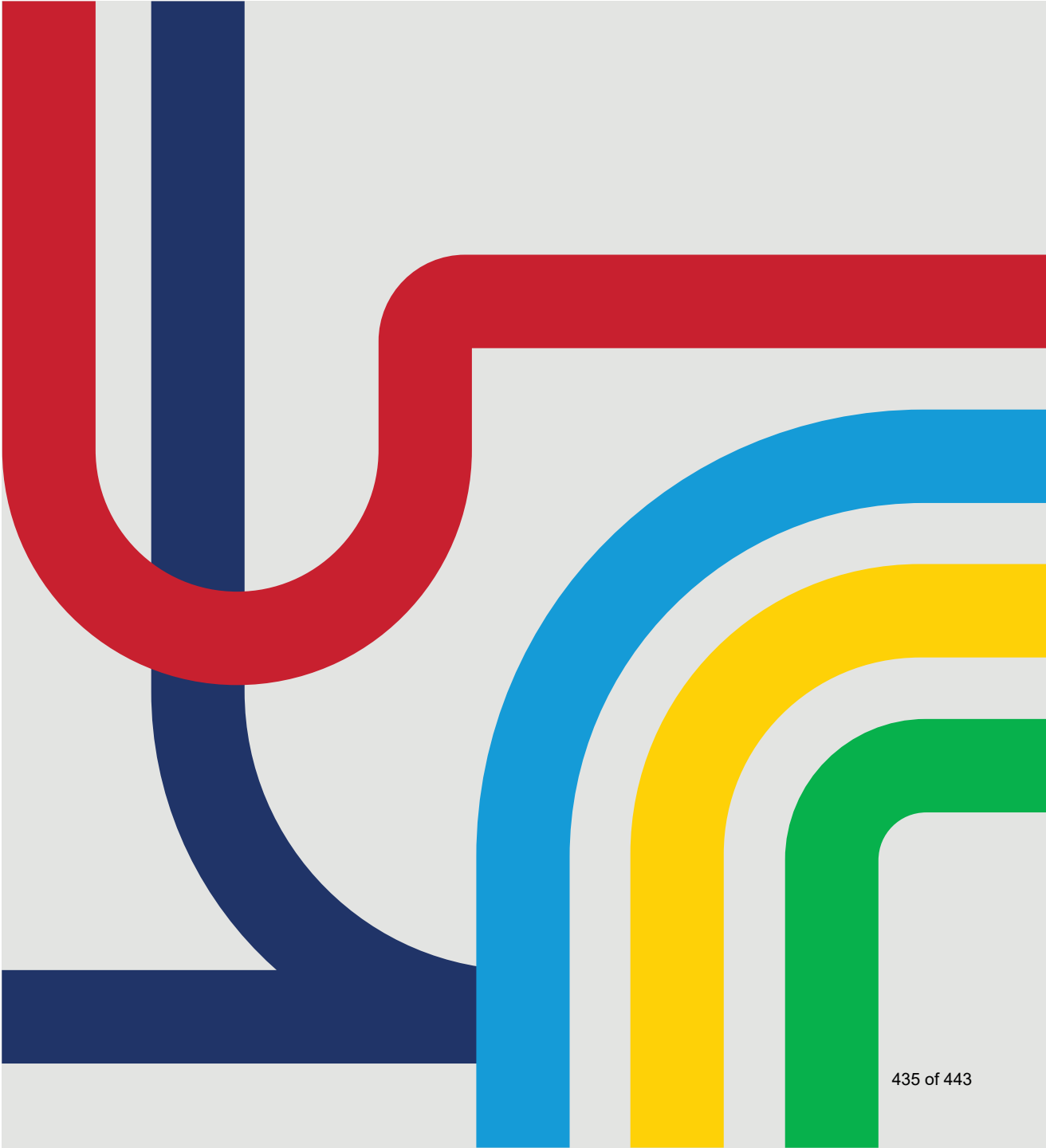
Staff will distribute the FY2025 Budget Public Outreach & Input Report with the FY2025 Budget presentation for adoption by the Board of Directors.

Recommendation:

Information Only

FY2025 Budget Public Outreach and Input Report

Finance and Capital Committee

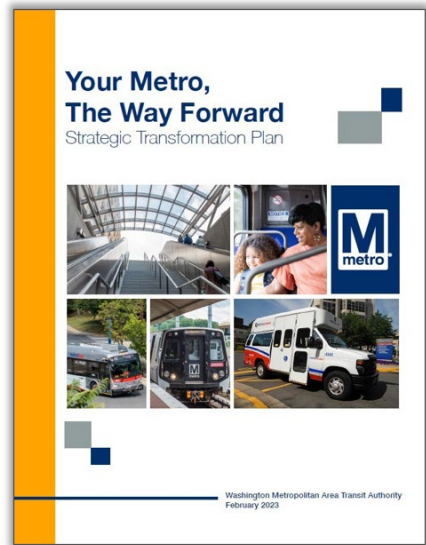


Purpose

Describe the methods of public engagement used to solicit feedback

Summarize the results from the FY2025 Budget Public Outreach and Input Report

Strategic Transformation Plan: Guides long term strategy and day-to-day decision making of Metro over the next five + years



Guiding



Day-to-day decisions

- Customer interactions
- Service schedules
- Communications



Long-term strategy

- Budget allocation
- Capital improvements
- Priority projects



Goals — Our priorities to achieve the vision

Service Excellence

Talented Teams

Regional
Opportunity
and Partnership

Sustainability

Print Outreach



56,000+
brochures distributed
in buses and stations



550+
signs on buses
and in stations



156,000
multilanguage print
ad impressions

Community Outreach



34,000
robocalls to
MetroAccess
customers



3,800
emails to regional partners



Communications toolkit with
ready-to-share graphics and posts

Digital Engagement




11,300
website views



200,000
digital Spanish ad impressions

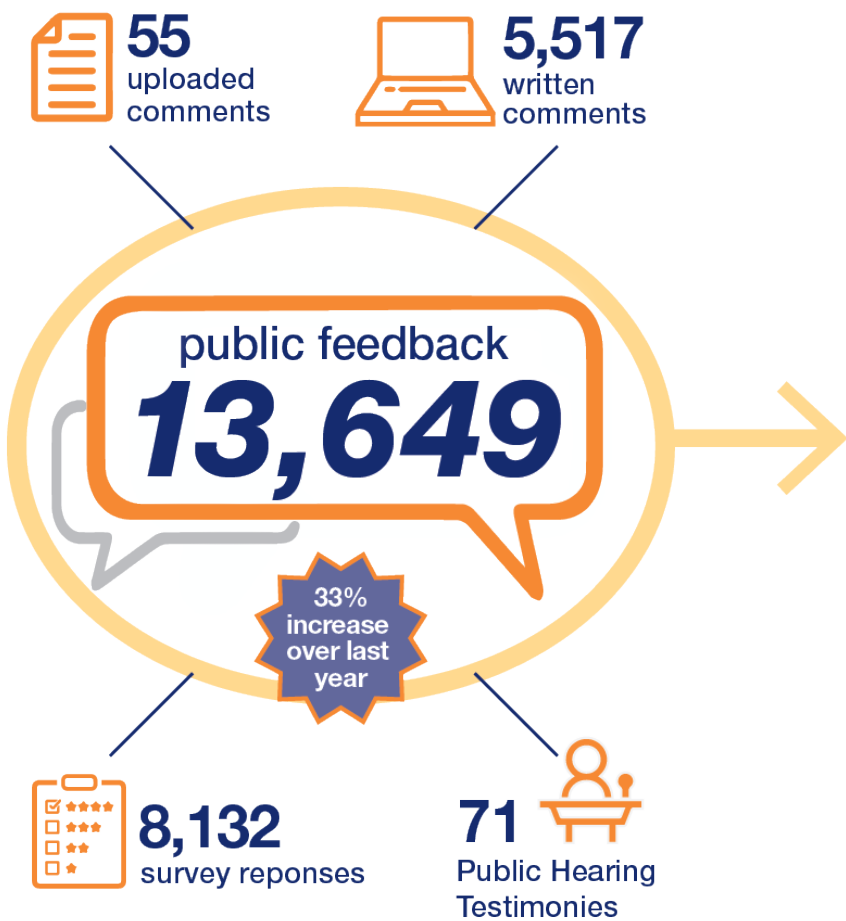


15,000+
clicks on Transit App banner

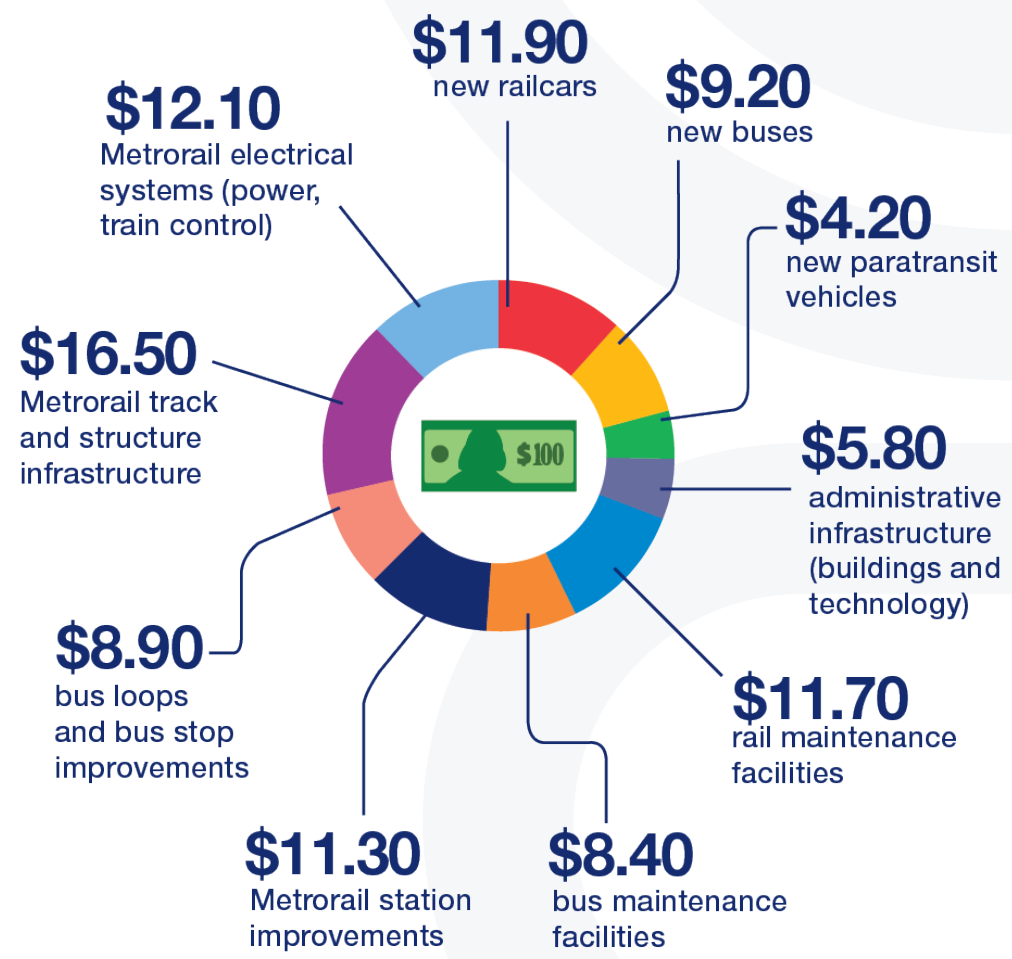


4,400+
social engagements
(likes, comments, shares, saves)

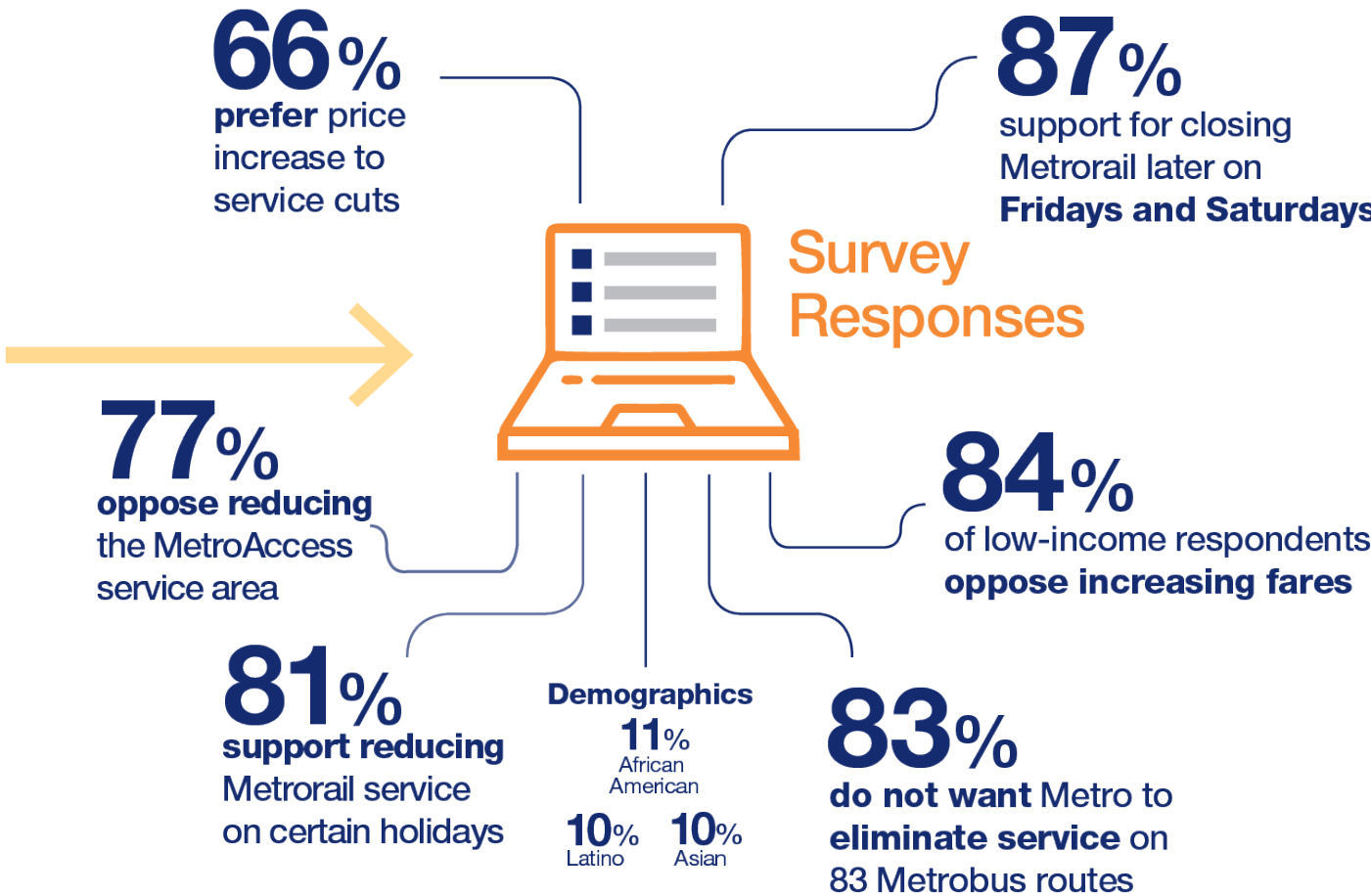
21%
increase
over last
year



How customers would allocate \$100 of Metro's budget



Customers support **increasing service hours & maintaining affordability**



Fare and service changes factor into travel decisions



proposed fare increases would **decrease likelihood** of choosing Metro



say closing up to 10 stations would **decrease the likelihood** of choosing Metrorail



say eliminating service **decreases the likelihood** of choosing Metrobus

Thank you!

Washington Metropolitan
Area Transit Authority



Finance and Capital Committee

Item V

April 11, 2024

Subsequent Agenda

Subsequent Finance and Capital Committee Agenda

April 11, 2024



May 9, 2024

I. Action Item

- A. Lottsford Road Joint Development Agreement

**Washington
Metropolitan Area
Transit Authority**

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024
202-962-1234

wmata.com

*A District of Columbia,
Maryland and Virginia
Transit Partnership*