

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Board Action/Information Summary

☒ Action ☐ Information

MEAD Number:
202329

Resolution:
☒ Yes ☐ No

TITLE:

Metrorail Station Name Change Proposal

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Briefing on jurisdiction request for rail station name change.

PURPOSE:

Board consideration of new station name proposal submitted for Largo Town Center Metrorail Station.

DESCRIPTION:

There are no interested parties in this matter.

Key Highlights:

- As was the case with the first phase of the Silver Line, station signage and map updates for phase two of Silver Line service present an opportunity to review current station names
- The County Executive for Prince George's County submitted a request to change the name of Largo Town Center to Downtown Largo and the County has committed to fund the incremental \$332K required towards signage changes
- The proposed name is responsive to efforts to rebrand the area around the Metrorail station to encourage transit-oriented development
- WMATA conducted a survey to collect feedback about the proposed station name, which resulted in 1,942 responses from across the region. The respondents preferred Largo over the alternatives presented: Downtown Largo and Downtown PGC
- Prince George's County conducted local outreach during an in-person community meeting. The 25 participants preferred the name Downtown Largo over the alternatives presented: Largo and Downtown PGC

Background and History:

Station names are guided by Board policy (P/I 4.1/4). Station name changes (or new names) are to be submitted by jurisdictions to the Metro Board for approval. The submissions must include community support and a funding commitment for any signage and map changes.

Major tenets of the Metro System Station Names Policy include the following:

- Jurisdictions are to complete outreach in their communities to determine potential station names. Names are then formally submitted to the WMATA staff to conduct required regional research of the potential names
- Names should identify the station locations by geographical features or centers of activity, provided that landmarks are within one half mile of the station (walking distance)

- Names should be distinctive and evoke imagery in the mind of the patron
- Each station name should be no longer than 19 characters (including spaces and punctuation), except for transfer station names, which should be no longer than 13 characters

In May 2011, the Board reviewed and updated the Metro System Station Names Policy to:

Higher Education/Universities:

- Grandfather all existing higher education/universities
- Limit future names to main campuses within one half mile of the station

Institutions/Landmarks:

- Retain current policy
- Grandfather all existing institutions/landmarks
- Encourage landmarks on neighborhood and interactive maps

Hospitals:

- Retain current practices

Commercial Naming Rights:

- Continue current practice of not selling commercial naming rights
- Promote station domination and other opportunities to grow revenue outside of changing station names

Discussion:

In advance of the next phase of Silver Line service, Metro is preparing for systemwide signage and rail map changes. Notices went to the Board and jurisdictions that station name changes could be considered as part of the signage change-outs. The signage change requests were to be finalized by December 31, 2021, to meet all deadlines and avoid delay penalties. A request was granted to extend the deadline for this request to enable consideration in January 2022.

A proposal was submitted under the current policy to change the name of Largo Town Center Metrorail Station in Prince George's County. The proposal asks that the name be changed to Downtown Largo Metrorail Station. The jurisdiction has committed to fund the incremental \$332,000 needed to make the signage changes throughout the system.

The proposed name change is in response to economic redevelopment efforts in the jurisdiction. Largo Town Center Metrorail Station opened in 2004. This major commuter station is a mile from FedEx Field, home of the Washington Football Team. Since that time, the County has put in motion the Prince George's Plan 2035, with a goal to further develop and rebrand Prince George's County to be the community of choice for families, businesses, and workers within the region by 2035. The Plan includes developing vibrant, walkable regional serving centers within the downtown area. As Largo continues to expand and will benefit considerably from this plan, the County feels a need to provide a more coherent identity to residents. Therefore, the County is requesting that Largo Town Center be changed to Downtown Largo to help further unify the community and brand it in alignment with their overarching plan.

Following community outreach, Prince George's County submitted the following name changes to WMATA for customer testing:

- Largo, Downtown Largo, Downtown PGC

Consistent with the policy, WMATA conducted a survey which was actively promoted via local TV news, print media and social media. The survey was completed by 1,942 respondents.

Respondents were asked to rate the potential station name in meeting each of the following Metro System Station Names Policy criteria:

Brevity: Easy to remember

Uniqueness: Not easily confused with other station names

Evocation: Appealing; clearly conveys where you are when you reach the station

**Group: Respondents to Prince George's County Survey
n=1,942**

"Largo Town Center"							
	Agree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
I like the name	62%	15%	42%	20%	23%	8%	6%
The name is easy to remember	81%	9%	58%	23%	10%	6%	3%
The name is not easily confused with other station names	86%	7%	69%	17%	7%	3%	4%
The name clearly conveys where you are when you reach the station	72%	16%	53%	20%	12%	10%	7%
The name describes the location well	66%	18%	47%	19%	16%	11%	8%

"Largo"							
	Agree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
I like the name	61%	27%	41%	21%	11%	8%	19%
The name is easy to remember	79%	12%	60%	19%	9%	2%	9%
The name is not easily confused with other station names	77%	13%	60%	17%	10%	3%	10%
The name clearly conveys where you are when you reach the station	69%	19%	50%	20%	12%	7%	12%
The name describes the location well	66%	20%	47%	19%	14%	8%	12%

"Downtown Largo"							
	Agree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly

I like the name	22%	68%	12%	11%	10%	19%	49%
The name is easy to remember	38%	44%	17%	21%	17%	14%	30%
The name is not easily confused with other station names	45%	36%	24%	21%	19%	10%	26%
The name clearly conveys where you are when you reach the station	30%	57%	15%	15%	13%	17%	40%
The name describes the location well	25%	59%	12%	13%	16%	16%	43%

"Downtown PGC"							
	Agree	Disagree	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
I like the name	6%	91%	4%	2%	3%	10%	81%
The name is easy to remember	12%	78%	5%	6%	11%	13%	64%
The name is not easily confused with other station names	23%	58%	11%	11%	19%	10%	48%
The name clearly conveys where you are when you reach the station	7%	88%	4%	3%	5%	11%	77%
The name describes the location well	6%	87%	4%	2%	7%	11%	76%

**Group: Respondents to Survey at Prince George's County Community Meeting
n=25**

Prince George's County also surveyed the community during an in-person community meeting.

The survey was as follows:

Based on the criteria discussed, which of the proposed Metrorail names accurately support the Blue Line Corridor Vision? Select all that apply.

Downtown Largo – 92%
Downtown PGC – 8%
Largo – 4%

FUNDING IMPACT:

There is no funding impact because, per Metro's station name policy, this jurisdiction has committed to cover the \$332,000 incremental costs related to this station's name change.	
Project Manager:	Lynn Bowersox

Project Department/Office:	Customer Service, Communications and Marketing
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TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	2011 – Board revisions to Metro System Station Names Policy
Anticipated actions after presentation	2021 – Metro begins systemwide signage changes after adoption of Silver Line Phase II

RECOMMENDATION:

Riders and the communities we serve develop strong attachments to rail station landmarks and resist change. One role Metro plays is to contribute a sense of place and support jurisdictions in their efforts to encourage transit-oriented development. Rebranding an area while riders learn about new destinations, landmarks, and changing travel patterns is sometimes a bumpy transition.

In the case of Largo Town Center, most respondents to the Metro survey preferred the current name, Largo Town Center, or Largo. However, Prince George's County has designated Largo as a downtown area as part of the Prince George's Plan 2035. This downtown area is positioned to become a destination that will offer a mix of uses and broaden connectivity and walkability. Therefore, the County Executive requests the station name change to Downtown Largo.

As the Board has shown deference to the local jurisdictions in leveraging station names to help market transit-oriented development, staff recommends approving the County's proposal to rename the station to Downtown Largo Metrorail Station as a matter of consistency.

SUBJECT: LARGO TOWN CENTER STATION NAME CHANGE

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

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Resolution 2011-36 and Metro System Station Names Policy (P/I 4.1/4), as amended, the Board of Directors is required to approve all changes to Metro station names; and

WHEREAS, Prince George's County has requested that Largo Town Center Station be changed to Downtown Largo Station and committed the funding (\$332,000) for the incremental cost of the name change; and

WHEREAS, The station name change will continue to assist the traveling public in wayfinding;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors approves the following station name change:

- Largo Town Center Station to Downtown Largo Station

that will take effect upon installation of new signage associated with the beginning of passenger service for Silver Line Phase Two stations; 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
Executive Vice President and General Counsel