

# Bus Flags Status Update



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
November 5, 2025

# Project Goal

Make the **most accessible** bus flags in North America.

Design a flag that serves our **customers, front-line employees, and the region**, while unifying our services under One Metro.

## Project phases

Research

**Prototyping**

Engineering

Implementation



# Confirming priorities

## Hear directly from customers and operators:

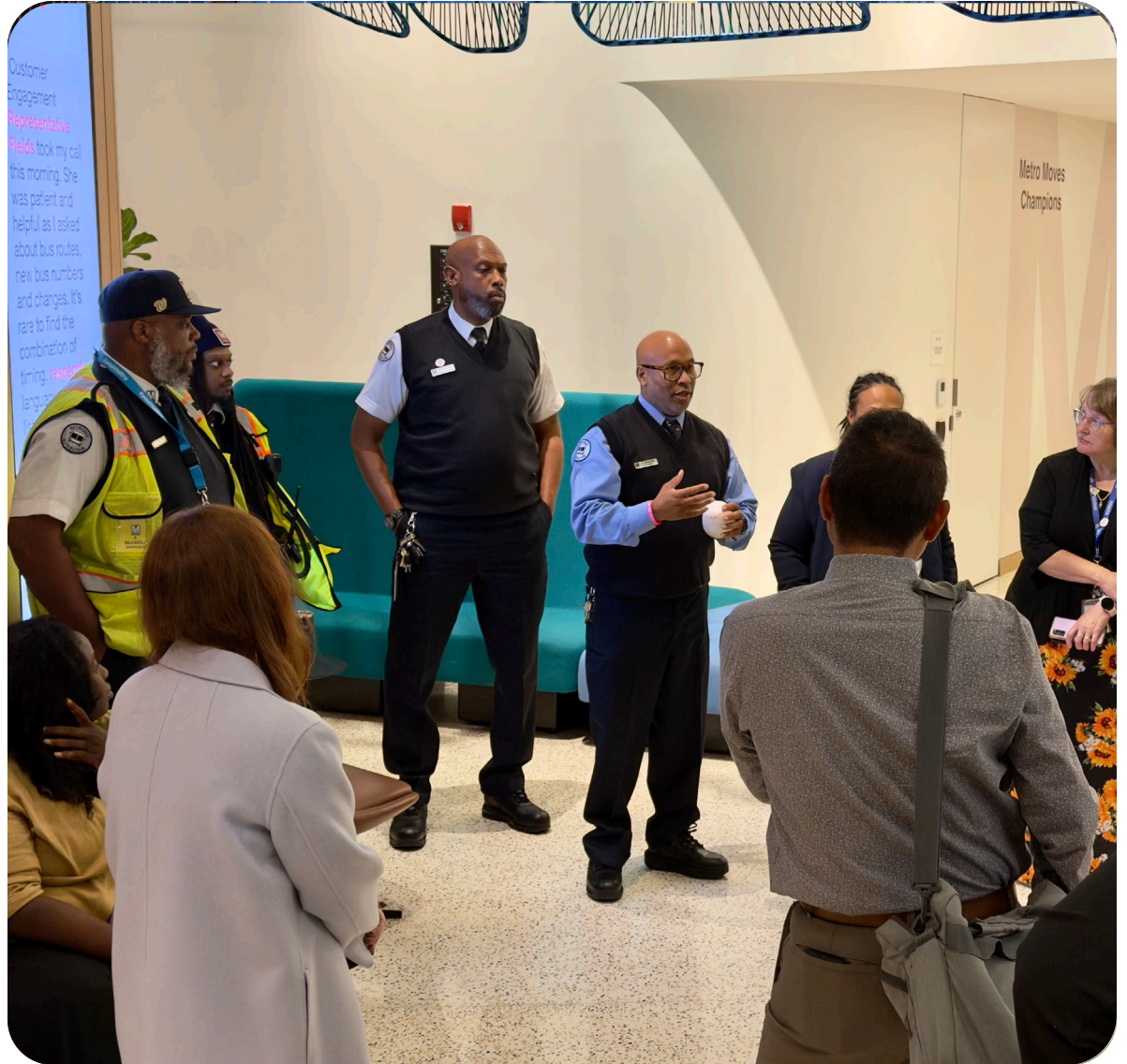
Collected ~280 survey responses at Bus Divisions and ~1320 through Transit App to confirm most important elements.

## Consult internal teams at Metro:

Met with Bus Operations, Systemwide Accessibility, Bus Planning, Bus Fleet Maintenance, Facilities, Architecture, Planning & Performance, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Riders' Advisory Council.

## Gather best practices

Worked with the benchmarking team to learn from seven North American agencies.



# Research

## Bus Operators

**“Make the flags more visible...  
[We need to] be able to see clearly at night.”**

—Bus Operator (Sept. 2025 Bus Operator Survey)



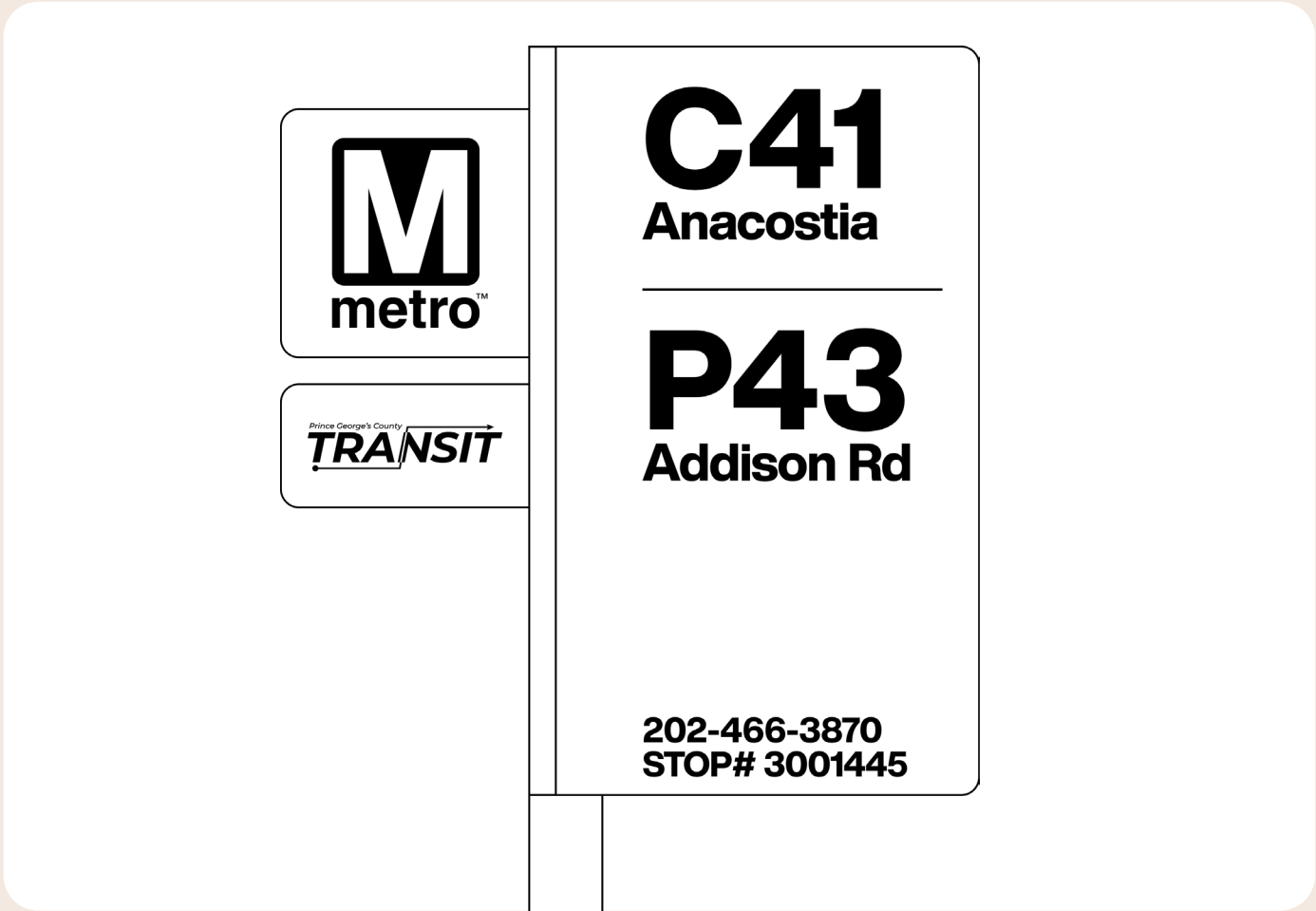
## Customers

**“Must haves” according to frequent riders**

Rank	Info	Customers
1	Route ID	95%
2	Destination	70%
3	Operating Agency	58%
4	Bus Stop ID	45%

# Improving on Better Bus

Accessibility	2× Increase in Visibility (Day & Night)
Reflectivity	2× Increase (Surface Area + Intensity)
Partner Support	2× Larger Logo
Brand Unity	One Look & Feel
Durability	Rigid Construction
Cost	Minimal Increase



# Two-Part Sign System

## Beacons for Operators

- Facing street
- Diamond grade reflectivity
- Vibrant colors
- Large size
- Unique shape



**C41**  
**Anacostia**

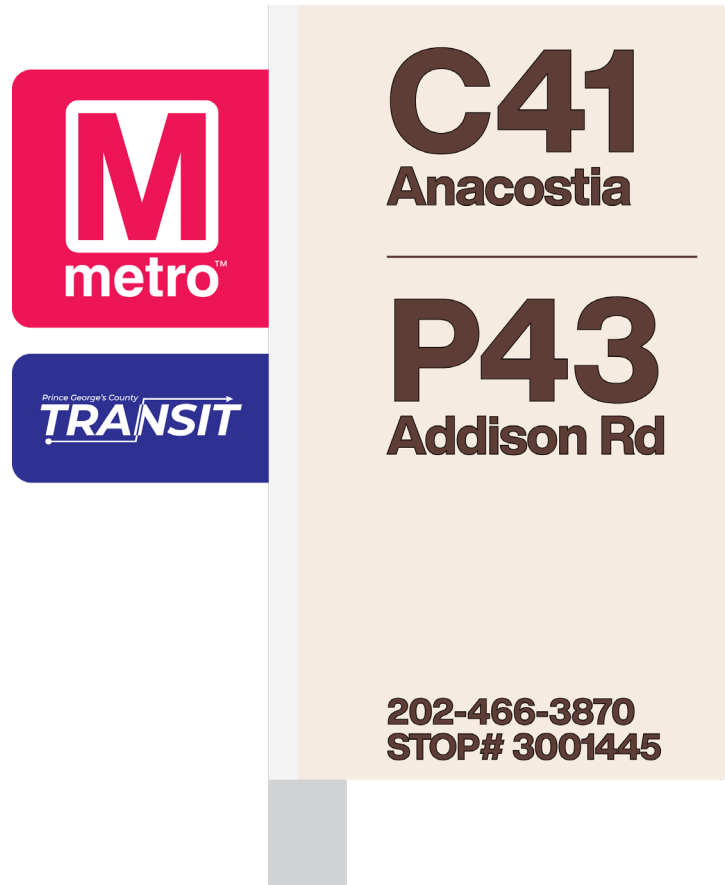
**P43**  
**Addison Rd**

**202-466-3870**  
**STOP# 3001445**

## Info Panel for Customers

- Facing sidewalk
- Largest font of any bus flag in North America
- High contrast
- Anti-glare finish

# Visual Design



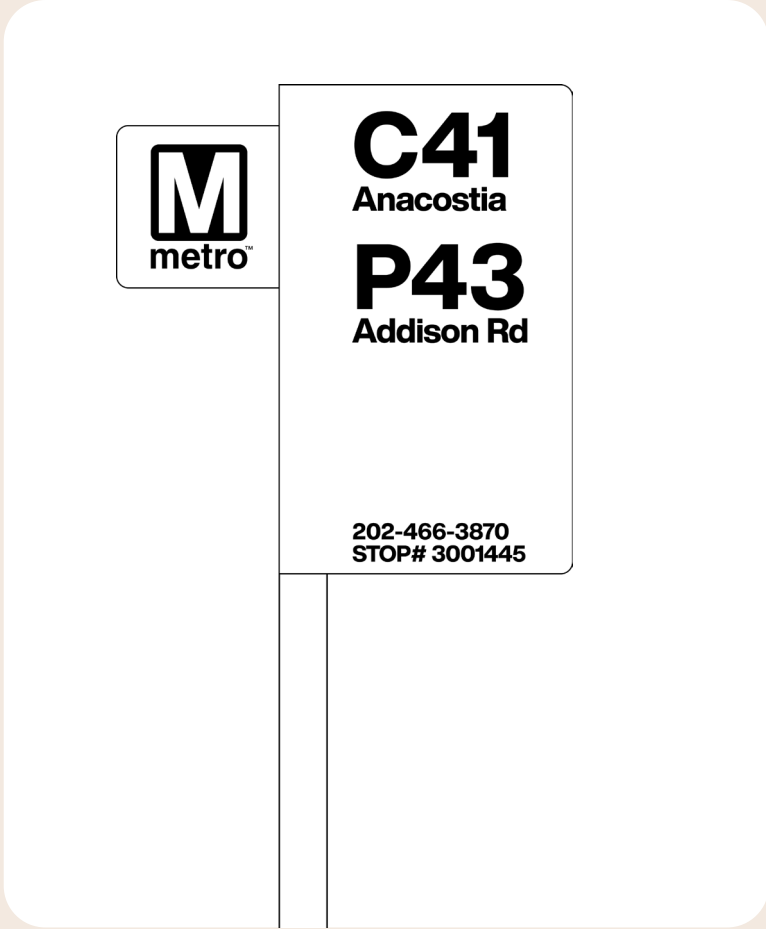
Capital Cream



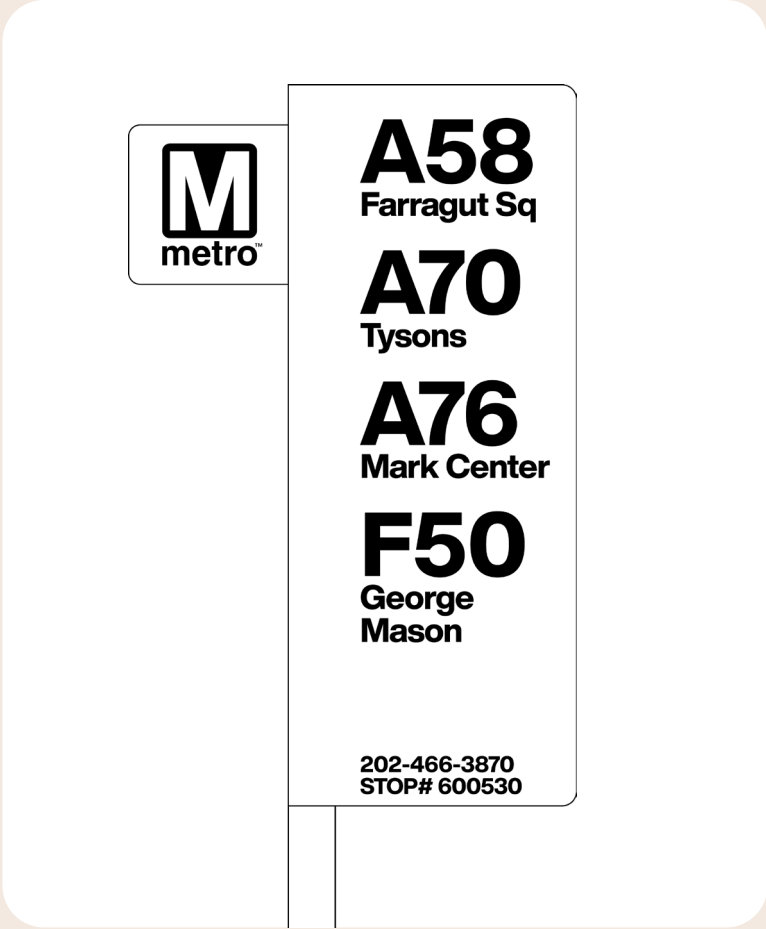
Monumental Bronze

# Unified Design Family

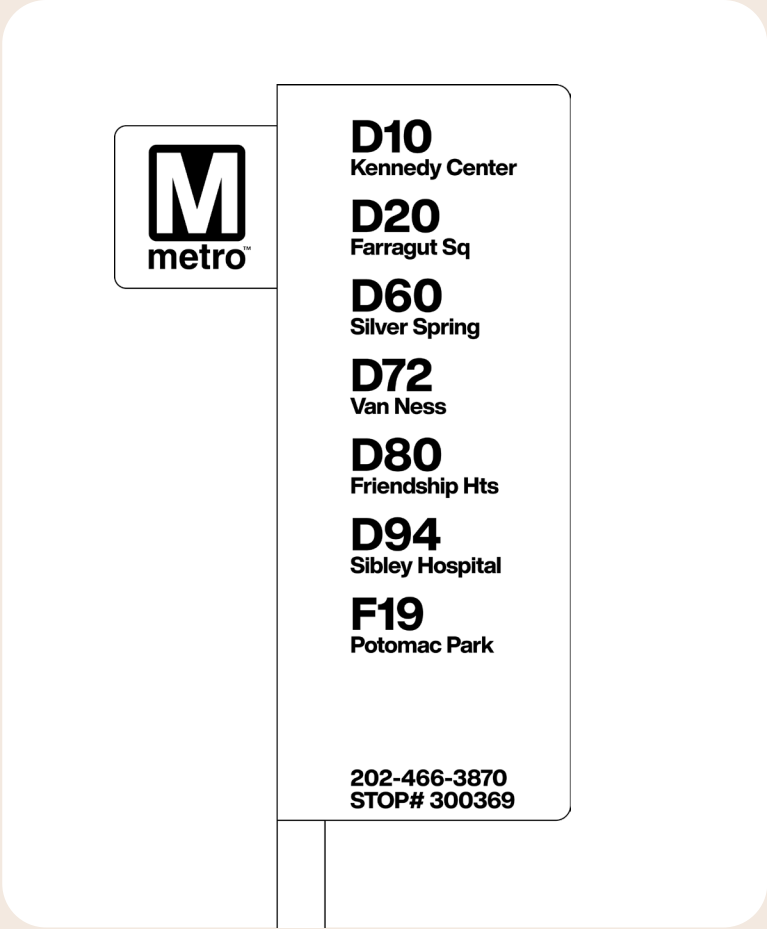
1–2 routes • 83% of stops  
18x30" • 4" type



3–4 routes • 13% of stops  
18x45" • 4" type



5+ routes • 3% of stops  
18x45" • 2" type



# Features in Detail

# Accessibility

**200% increase** in viewing distance. (50' to 100').

**35% increase** in contrast (white text on dark background) improves readability in all lighting conditions.

**Focuses attention on the 4 most important elements** customers are looking for.

## Sources:

1. ADA font size guidelines; SEGD readability calculator
2. WebAIM WCAG contrast checker
3. Metro Customer Research Team; n= 1,329



The diagram shows a white rectangular sign with rounded corners. At the top, the text 'C41' is displayed in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. To the right of 'C41' is a vertical double-headed arrow with the label '4"' indicating its height. Below 'C41', the word 'Anacostia' is written in a smaller, bold, black sans-serif font. To the right of 'Anacostia' is another vertical double-headed arrow with the label '1.5"' indicating its height.

# Partner Support

**Biggest logos ever** offered to partners.

**Reduced visual clutter** at ~1,500 shared bus stops.

**New inter-operability opportunities** through adoption of regional bus stop ID.

**Delivers on DMVMoves Action Plan** for unified bus stop flags.



# Reflectivity

**2× more reflective** than Better Bus.  
Diamond grade reflective beacon.

**32% larger reflective area** and unique shape stand out in any environment.

**Significantly reduced mirror strike risk.** Beacon is mounted above typical mirror heights.

## Sources:

1. 3M Spec Sheets
2. Shop drawings for New Flyer XD40 2023

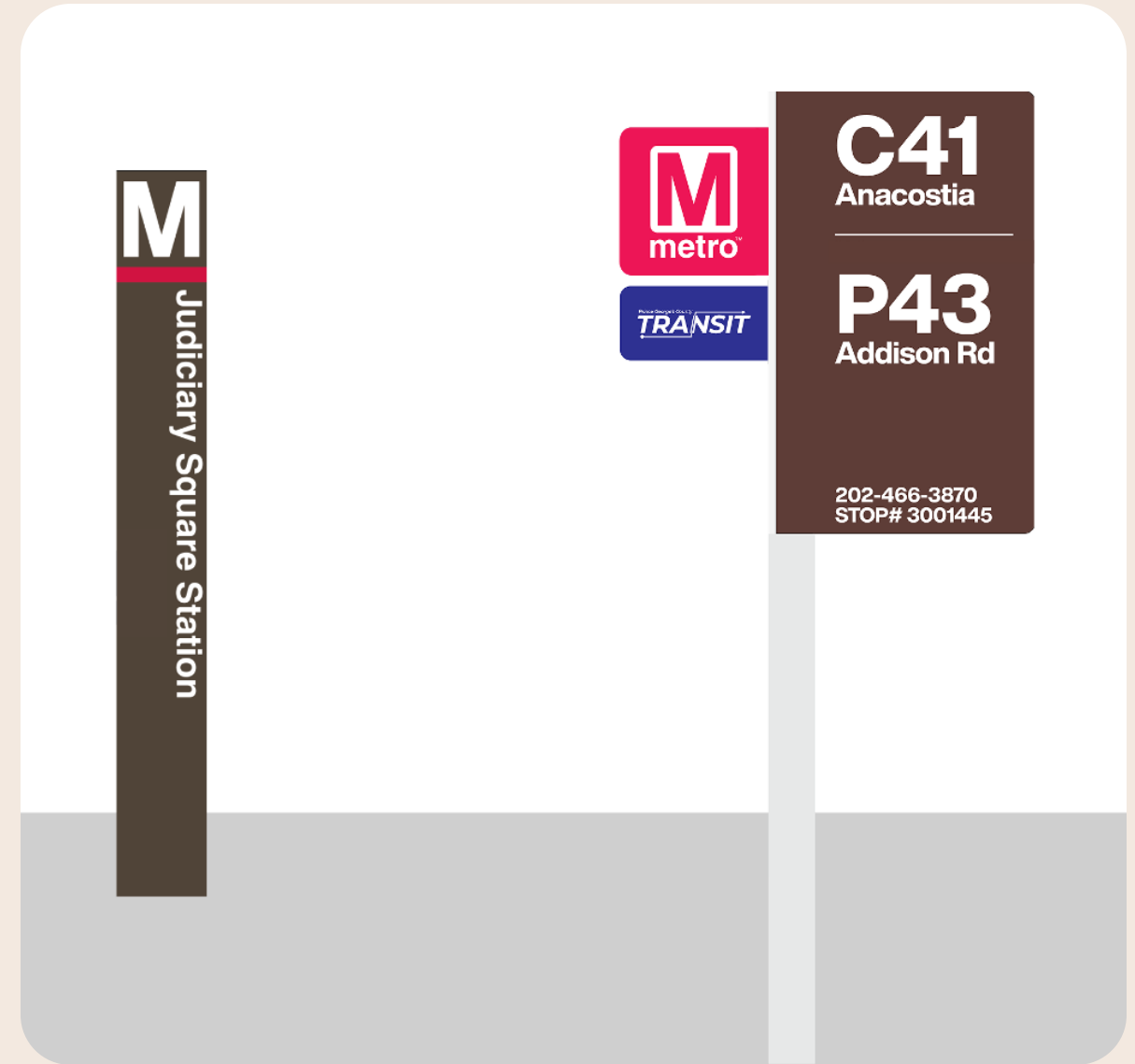


# Brand Unity

Finally, rail and bus look like **one organization**.

**Shared graphical system** across rail and bus.

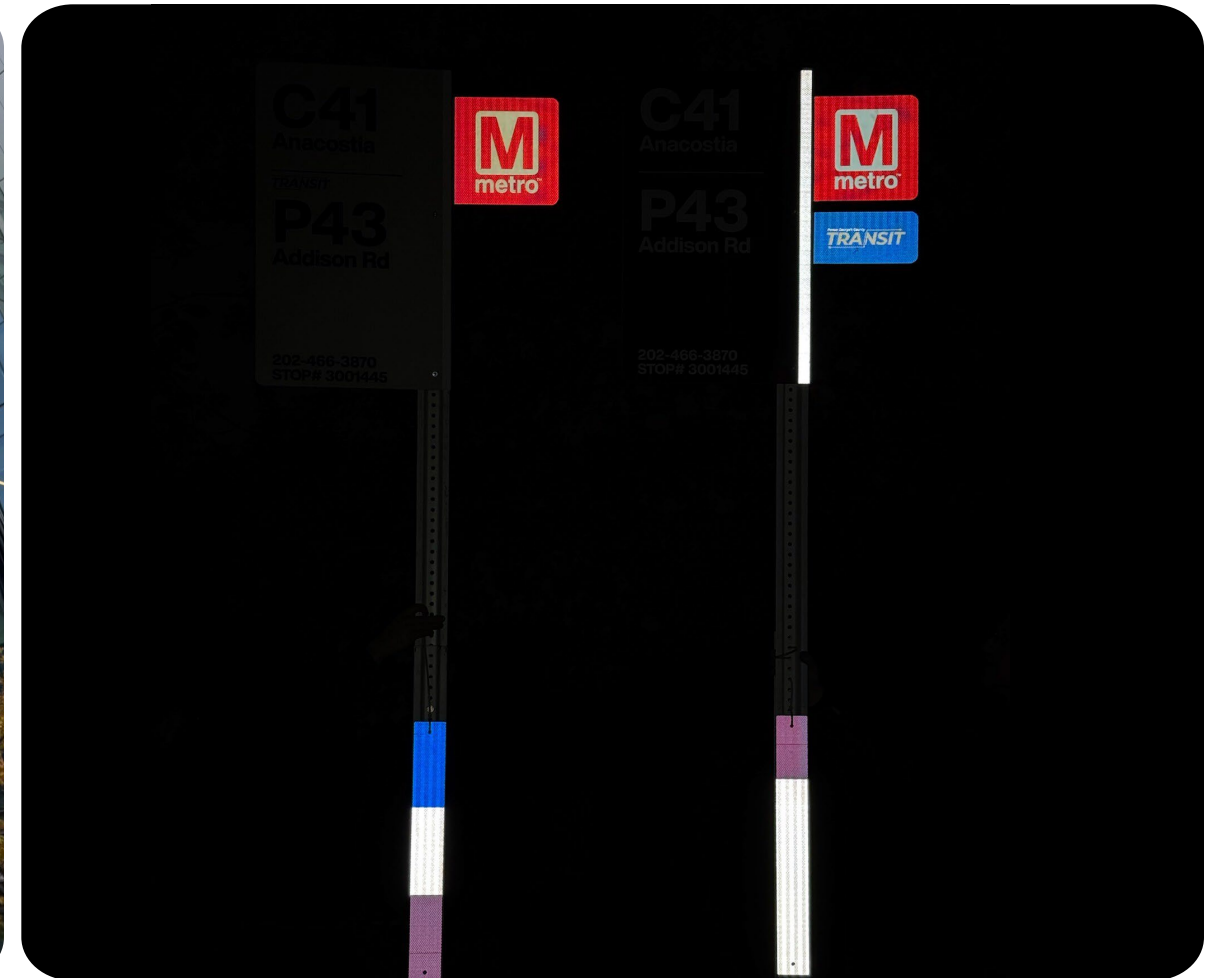
- Typography
- Color
- Logomark



# Day & Night Visibility



Daytime



Nighttime + flash