Finance and Capital Committee
Board Information Item VI – B
November 19, 2026

Fare Penalty and Enforcement Alignment

Board Document

OVERVIEW			
PRESENTATION NAME	Fare Penalties and Enforcement	**DOCUMENT NO.**	300178
ACTION OR INFORMATION	Information		
STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN GOAL	Service Excellence and Financial and Organizational Efficiency		
RESOLUTION	No		
EXECUTIVE OWNER			
EXECUTIVE TEAM OWNER	Andy Off Stephen Boehm		
DEPARTMENT	Deputy General Manager		
DOCUMENT INITIATOR	Goepfert, Stephen M.		
OTHER INFORMATION			
COMMITTEE	Finance and Capital Committee	**COMMITTEE DATE**	11/19/2026
PURPOSE/KEY HIGHLIGHTS	Provide an update on fare evasion penalties and enforcement across Metro and the region, including industry best practices and a potential concept for more uniform penalties and enforcement. Effective fare enforcement hinges on jurisdictional partners aligning on a consistent regional approach to encourage fare compliance from customers. Key Highlights: • Fare enforcement is shared across jurisdictions: Metro Transit Police (MTPD) issue citations and summons to individuals and the jurisdictions manage payments, court appearances, and collection		

	• Fare evasion penalties vary across the jurisdictions range from civil fines of $50 or less to criminal penalties that can lead to jail time if unpaid • From January 1 to July 1, 2026, jurisdictional partners only collected about 16 percent of the fines issued by MTPD • Metro's potential concept, rooted in successes seen at peer agencies, includes escalating civil penalties, added penalties for unpaid citations, new fare enforcement officers, and a customer incentive to pay on time
DISCUSSION	Fare enforcement involves both Metro and the jurisdictions Metro is responsible for fare enforcement, issuing criminal summons in Virginia and Maryland and civil citations in DC. The jurisdictions control what happens next, including payments, court appearances, and the collection of fines. Fare evasion penalties vary in type, amount, and severity across the jurisdictions, complicating enforcement measures and messaging. In the first half of 2026, MTPD issued about 11,000 citations/summons worth about $600,000 in fines. Over the same period, there were 1,853 payments and court appearances, and $96,480 was collected, about 16 percent of the fines issued. Metro's increased fare enforcement efforts rely on jurisdictional partners to enforce fare evasion penalties to increase fare compliance and provide revenue for service and customer experience improvements. Peer agencies provide examples of other approaches to fare enforcement: • Escalating penalties for repeat offenders: New York's MTA issues a warning for a first offense, $100 for a second, and $150 and/or a criminal summons for a third or later offense • Utilizing fare inspection officers: Boston (MBTA) uses non-sworn Fare Engagement Representatives to conduct fare inspections, freeing up transit police officers to tackle other responsibilities • Modernizing enforcement and appeals: London (TfL) offers easy online payment and contracts with an independent body to handle first-level appeals

	• Raising fines: Chicago (CTA) sets fines at the $300 maximum allowed under Illinois law with options for community service or temporary bans at the discretion of a judge Metro is considering potential concepts for uniform fare evasion penalties and enforcement The potential concept applies to both fare evasion and unauthorized use of discounted passes, with escalating penalties: • First offense: $50 civil penalty and/or criminal summons • Second offense: $150 civil penalty and/or criminal summons • Third and subsequent offenses: $200 civil penalty and/or criminal summons Unpaid citations would face added penalties with fines increasing every thirty days. After 90 days, penalties will shift to mirror parking tickets and moving violation penalties in the jurisdictions. The proposed concept would also authorize new fare enforcement officers to issue civil citations for fare evasion, which would reduce the cost of enforcement by letting MTPD focus on safety and security of the system. Jurisdictional approval is required to authorize these officers. To encourage future compliance, customers who pay a first-time offense citation on time could receive a $25 Smart Trip credit against the penalty paid. Consistent enforcement requires regional partnership. Customer fares pay for service. When customers pay, Metro can reinvest fare revenue into providing more safe and reliable service. Metro's potential concept depends on regional partnerships to encourage fare compliance and provide resources for Metro to improve customer experience.
INTERESTED PARTIES	Information only.
RECOMMENDATION/NEXT STEPS	Information only. • Work with jurisdictional partners to enforce current fare evasion rules • Convene regional body to evaluate consistent fare evasion penalties and enforcement across the region • Coordinate with partners on legislation that would standardize fare enforcement and collection across the region

FUNDING IMPACT	Information item update – No funding impact

Fare Penalties and Enforcement

Finance and Capital Committee
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
November 19, 2026

Fare Enforcement Involves Both Metro and Jurisdictions

Metro Controls

Enforcement

Metro Transit Police issue criminal summons (VA, MD) or civil citations (DC) to individuals for fare evasion.

Metro Transit Police issued citations worth approximately $600,000 in fines during the period from January 1 through July 1, 2026.

Citation/Summons:
11,000
January 1 – July 1, 2026

Jurisdictions Control

Payments & Court Appearances

VA: Offender must appear in court; penalty assessed for failure to appear.

MD: Offender may prepay citations in Montgomery County. Court date will be assigned if payment is not received. Offender must appear in court in Prince Georges County

DC: Offender may pay penalty or request an administrative hearing.

Payments & Court Appearances:
1,853
January 1 – July 1, 2026

Jurisdictions Receive Funds

Collection

VA: Clerk of the Court receives payment

MD: Clerk of the Court receives payment

DC: DC Treasury receives payment

Collections:
$96,480
January 1 – July 1, 2026

Fare Evasion Penalties Vary Across Jurisdictions

Virginia

City of Alexandria

- **Civil**
- $100 fine

Arlington County

- **Civil and Criminal**
- 1st - $10-$50 fine
- 2nd & subsequent - $50-$100 fine and/or up to 10 days jail or both

Fairfax County

- **Criminal**
- Up to $100 fine

Loudoun County

- **Civil and Criminal**
- 1st - $10-$50 fine
- 2nd & subsequent - $50-$100 fine

District of Columbia

Effective May 3, 2019

- **Civil**
- ≤$50 fine
- In 2024, civil citation changes to criminal when person:
  1) fails to provide name and address; or
  2) knowingly provides an incorrect name or address; fine increases to $100 upon conviction

Maryland

Montgomery County

- **Civil and Criminal**
- 1st - $50 fine if paid; up to 10 days jail if not paid
- 2nd & subsequent - $75 fine if paid; up to 10 days jail if not paid

Prince George's County

- **Criminal**
- 1st - $10 - $50 fine
- 2nd & subsequent - $50 -$100 fine if paid; up to 10 days jail if not paid

Examples of Industry Best Practices for Effective Fare Enforcement

Escalation of Penalties for Repeat Offenders

Peers have ladder of escalating penalties for repeat offenders to **establish sufficient deterrence**.

Example: MTA (New York)

Fines escalate based on the number of repeat offenses: a warning on a first offense, $100 on a second, and $150 and/or a criminal summons on a third offense or above.

Fare Inspections

Enforcement by non-sworn officers to verify customer payment to allow sworn officers to spend **more time on other duties**.

Example: MBTA (Boston)

MBTA uses Fare Engagement Representatives to conduct fare inspections system-wide, allowing MBTA Transit Police officers to conduct investigations and deter more serious crimes on the network.

Efficient Enforcement & Appeals Process

Online payment and a transit-specific appeals process allows for **faster collections and resolutions**.

Example: TfL (London)

Citations can be easily paid online. TfL contracts with an independent appeals body to handle first-level appeals for fare citations. Further appeals go before a specialized magistrate judge.

Higher Fines

Peers are empowered by statute to set **steeper fines and additional penalties**.

Example: CTA (Chicago)

The Chicago Transit Authority Board sets fines at the maximum allowable by Illinois law ($300), as well as the potential for community service and/or temporary bans at the discretion of the judge.

Fare Evasion Penalty and Enforcement Concepts

Penalties for Fare Evasion & Unauthorized Use of Discounted Passes

First Offense

$50 civil penalty and/or criminal summons*

Second Offense

$150 civil penalty and/or criminal summons

Third and Subsequent Offenses

$200 civil penalty and/or criminal summons

*Criminal summons means there will be an adjudication and potential criminal consequences (*e.g.,* court appearance, additional fine, pay court costs, conviction, jail time etc.)

Penalties for Unpaid Citations

Penalties for Unpaid Citations

After 30 days the fine doubles

After 60 days the fine triples

After 90 days penalties like those for parking tickets and moving violations in the jurisdiction (*e.g.,* unpaid citations referred to a collection agency)

Multiple options to manage collections and distribution of penalties paid to the appropriate jurisdictions

Fare Enforcement Officers to Issue Civil Citations

Authorize new fare enforcement officers to issue civil citations for fare evasion and unauthorized use of discounted passes

- Enable MTPD to focus resources on safety and security of Metro system
- Reduces cost of fare evasion enforcement
- Jurisdictions to authorize new fare enforcement officers
- New fare enforcement officers will have the ability to help MTPD

Incentive to Pay Citation

Provide Customer Incentive to Pay Citation

For first offense: On-time payment earns $25 Smart Trip credit against penalty paid to incentivize future fare compliance

Opportunities to Further Reduce Fare Evasion

Jurisdictions to Enforce Current Rules

Convene Regional Body to Evaluate Uniformity of Penalties and Enforcement

Enabled by Jurisdictional Legislation, Metro Leads Standardization and Centralization of Fare Enforcement Collection