



**Safety and Operations Committee**

**Board Action Item III – A**

**Updated Bus and Rail Service Guidelines and Standards**



# Board Document

OVERVIEW			
<b>PRESENTATION NAME</b>	Updates to Metro Bus Service Guidelines and Metro Rail Service Standards	<b>DOCUMENT NO.</b>	300128
<b>ACTION OR INFORMATION</b>	Action		
<b>STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN GOAL</b>	Service excellence;		
<b>RESOLUTION</b>	Yes		
EXECUTIVE OWNER			
<b>EXECUTIVE TEAM OWNER</b>	Webster, Thomas J.;		
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Planning and Performance		
<b>DOCUMENT INITIATOR</b>	Jordan H. Holt		
OTHER INFORMATION			
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Safety and Operations Committee	<b>COMMITTEE DATE</b>	6/11/2026
<b>PURPOSE/KEY HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<p>Staff will present and recommend Board adoption of updated Bus Guidelines and Rail Service Standards. Establishing guidelines and standards is a best practice in service planning, demonstrating good governance by providing transparency over the parameters used in decision making.</p> <p>Metro's current Bus Guidelines and Rail Service Standards were last updated in December 2020 and February 2022, respectively. They define minimum frequencies, hours of operation, and standards at the route and network level for reliability, productivity, cost-effectiveness and regional impact. They underlie service planning recommendations included in the annual budget proposal.</p>		



# Board Document

	<p>Updating the guidelines and standards is part of the Service Design and Management program of the Strategic Transformation Plan. The proposed updates align service planning policies with current practices that support ridership growth, manage costs, and advance key commitments in the DMVMoves Plan. These updates support continuous service improvement and will guide the multi-year service plan included in the annual budget proposal.</p>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<p><b>Regional Alignment through DMVMoves</b></p> <p>On November 17, 2025, the Board endorsed the DMVMoves Plan, which committed to creating a more integrated and seamless regional transit network. The plan called for regional transit operators to adopt shared bus service guidelines by Fall 2026. These guidelines specify minimum standards for bus frequency and hours of operation intended to create a more consistent customer experience across the region, ensuring service levels align with local demand. The update to the Metro Bus guidelines incorporates these regional standards, fulfilling our commitment to advance the DMVMoves plan.</p> <p><b>Continuous Improvement of Metro Bus and Metro Rail</b></p> <p>The Bus Guidelines and Rail Service Standards were last updated in December 2020 and February 2022, respectively. Since then, Metro has made significant progress in prioritizing all-day frequent service, an approach that has helped drive ridership and better meet customer needs while also using the fleet more efficiently. The updated guidelines codify these practices by establishing service parameters that emphasize consistent frequency throughout the day.</p> <p>The guidelines will also serve as the foundation for continued service improvement. They establish a transparent framework for service planning that informs staff recommendations to adjust, add, or remove service through the budget process. In addition to productivity and cost-effectiveness measures, the guidelines incorporate customer experience factors and outline how performance standards will be used to identify and prioritize investments as part of the multi-year service plan.</p> <p><b>Promote Cost Efficiency</b></p> <p>The guidelines align planning practices to prioritize moving the greatest number of people with the fewest resources. They update</p>



# Board Document

	<p>standards to enable more strategic deployment of 8-car trains and articulated buses to better match service with demand. Additionally, the guidelines introduce updated productivity and cost-effectiveness standards to ensure service planning decisions support the efficient allocation of resources. A greater focus on all-day frequent service also helps reduce fixed costs by lowering peak vehicle requirements.</p> <p>Summary of Changes</p> <p>Rail Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hours of service updated to match FY2027 approved budget</li> <li>• Minimum frequency standard of 6 minutes set for all core stations, not just Red Line</li> <li>• Remove standard to operate 100% 8-car train.</li> <li>• No change to passenger loading standards, which continue to define crowding as more than 100 passengers per car during the busiest hour on the busiest segment on the busiest days</li> <li>• No change to on-time performance definition</li> <li>• Add network service quality metrics aligned to key results in the Strategic Transformation Plan and included in the Bus Guidelines (access to frequent service, average scheduled wait time, access to destination)</li> </ul> <p>Bus Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate regional guidelines for service classifications, activity tiers, minimum frequencies, and minimum hours of service. Set one frequency standard for all-day service, rather than a specific standard for peak and off-peak times</li> <li>• Streamline list of standards for reliability, productivity, cost-effectiveness, and network performance to align with current service planning concepts and key results in the Strategic Transformation Plan</li> <li>• Add definitions and standards to inform bus priority investments, aligning to international standards for Bus Rapid Transit</li> <li>• Simplify standards for bus stop amenities</li> <li>• Simplify guidance for route design decisions</li> <li>• Update guidance on how the guidelines will be used to support continuous network improvement</li> </ul>
<b>INTERESTED PARTIES</b>	None



# Board Document

<b>RECOMMENDATION/NEXT STEPS</b>	The Board will be requested to adopt sections 1-9 of the Bus Service Guidelines and Rail Standards for minimum train frequencies, passenger load, and train length.
<b>FUNDING IMPACT</b>	The standards and guidelines set parameters for frequency, vehicle loading, hours of service, route design, productivity and cost effectiveness that inform recommendations to adjust, remove, or add service included in the annual budget proposal. The standards and guidelines provide a transparent framework for decision-making but are non-binding.

# Metro Service Guidelines and Standards



**Safety and Operations Committee**  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
June 11, 2026

# Delivering Your Metro, the Way Forward

Focus Today



## Service Excellence

Deliver safe, reliable, convenient, accessible, and world-class service that customers can trust across all modes.

### Objectives of Service Excellence Goal

- **Safety and Security**
- **Reliability**
- **Convenience**

Priority Program:  
**Service Design and Management**



## Talented Teams

Attract, develop, and retain world-class talent where individuals feel valued, supported, and proud of their contribution.

### Objectives of Talented Teams Goal

- **Recruitment and Retention**
- **Learning and Development**
- **Customer Service Mindset**



## Financial & Organizational Efficiency

Steward public resources and efficiently allocate resources where they drive the most value, to ensure service delivery.

### Objectives of Financial & Organizational Efficiency Goal

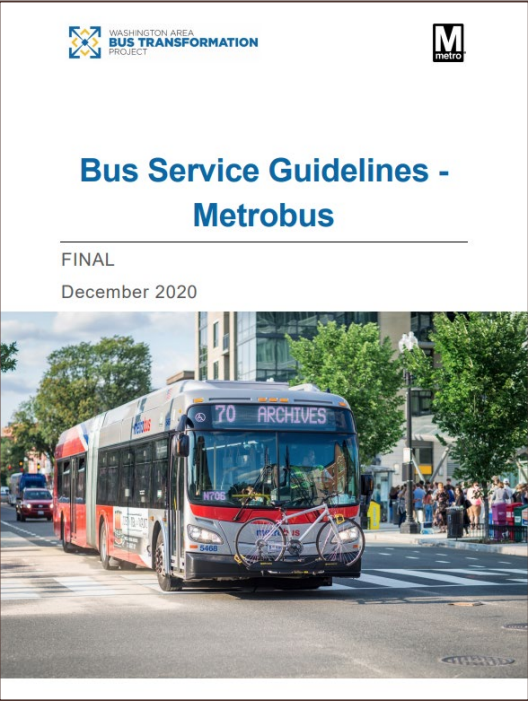
- **Financial Responsibility**
- **Organizational Efficiency**
- **Energy Management**

# Update Affirms Focus On All-Day, Frequent Service And Moves Forward Regional Standardization

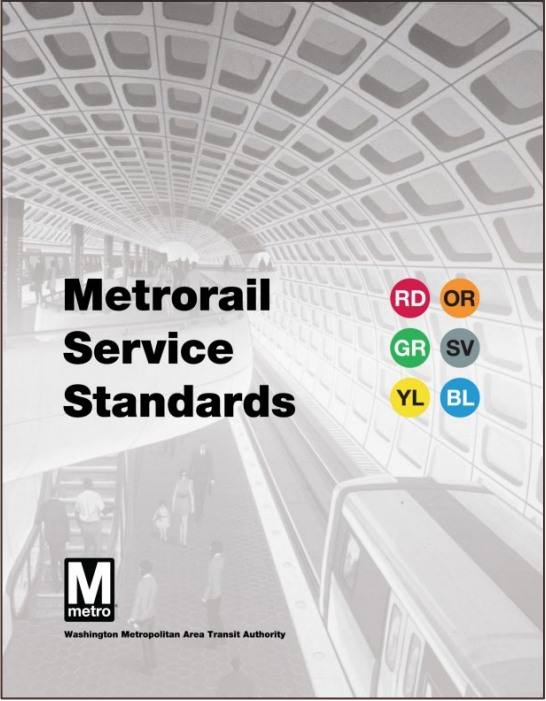
Service Guidelines establish parameters (e.g., frequency, span, vehicle load) to enable clear decision-making on where to adjust, remove, or add service, informing multiyear service plan

- 1 Unified Bus Customer Experience Across Region:** Formally adopts DMVMoves Task Force guidelines (commitment to adopt by Fall 2026)
- 2 Continuous Improvement of Metro Bus and Metro Rail:** Focus on all-day, frequent service and maximizing regional impact
- 3 Promote Cost Efficiency:** Prioritize moving the most people with the fewest resources

**Metro Bus Guidelines**  
Last Updated December 2020



**Metro Rail Standards**  
Last Updated February 2022



# DMV Moves Plan Commits To Continuing Coordination Across Regional Transit Providers

Metro Board endorsed the DMVMoves Plan on November 17, 2025, directing Metro to continue regional collaboration across six action areas. Service Guidelines advance several action plan commitments

DMVMoves Action Area	Desired Outcome	In Guidelines
Service Guidelines & Reporting	Consistent service quality and transparent regional accountability	Yes
Regional Bus Priority	Faster, more reliable and more cost-effective service in high-demand corridors	Yes
Fare Integration	Simpler, more equitable fare experience	No
Customer Information & Facilities	Easier wayfinding, clearer customer information, and more uniform stop experience	Yes
Shared Resources	Reduced duplication, lower procurement costs, stronger negotiating power	No
Consistent Training & Requirements	Strengthened regional workforce and reduced administrative burden	No

### Regional Member Groups:



# Guidelines Set Parameters For Multiyear Service Plan

Bus service guidelines include all of the following core elements. Items included in the rail standards are underlined. **Pink text** indicates metrics used to define FTA Title VI standards.

## Common Definitions

Create **route classifications**: standardized service types that align with each route's purpose

Define **activity tiers** to group areas by density

Develop clear standards for **passenger amenities** and **bus priority investments**

## Route/Line Level Standards

Assign **performance targets** to routes according to service type for the following metrics:

- Hours of service
- **Frequency**
- **Load factor**
- Vehicle size/train length
- Stop distance
- Route design
- **On-time performance**
- Productivity
- Cost effectiveness

## Network Standards

Establish key metrics that reflect the **overall regional impact** of Metro Bus and Metro Rail:

- Destination access (jobs)
- Access to frequent service
- Average scheduled wait time
- **Service availability**
- Funding allocation goal

## Service Improvement

Outline how the Guidelines will be used to support **continuous network improvement** toward the Visionary Network

Develop a **prioritization framework** to guide investment decisions

Acknowledge **trade-offs** when allocating limited resources



# Bus Update: Incorporate Regional Guidelines

Regional guidelines developed in Spring 2025 by DMVMoves working group composed of all regional providers

Updated Classifications and Activity Tiers to Use Consistent Definitions




Updated Minimum Hours of Service and Frequency Standards

Tier 1

Tier 2

Tier 3

Eliminate different standards for peak and off-peak, applying **one frequency standard for all day service**. Bolded items represent change from current standard

Framework <i>Major corridors, direct connections</i>	 <b>Major Core</b>	<b>17 → 16 hrs per day</b> Bus every 6-12 mins	<b>17 → 16 hrs per day</b> Bus every 6-12 mins	
Coverage <i>Arterial corridors, provide access</i>	 <b>Core</b>	<b>17 → 16 hrs per day</b> Bus every 15 mins	<b>13 → 14 hrs per day</b> Bus every 20 mins	<b>13 → 12 hrs per day</b> Bus every 30 mins
Commuter <i>Rush hour service to activity centers</i>	 <b>Peak</b>	14 hrs per day Bus every 30 mins	12 hrs per day Bus every 30 mins	<b>12 → 10 hrs per day</b> Bus every 60 mins
		4 hrs per weekday As needed	4 hrs per weekday As needed	4 hrs per weekday As needed

# Activity Tiers and Route Classifications Help Unify Levels of Service Across the Region

Activity Tier 1

Activity Tier 2

Activity Tier 3

Higher Density Requires More Service

Lower Density Requires Less Service



# Bus Update: Performance Metrics Align to Strategic Transformation Plan, Better Bus Redesign

**Bolded items represent revised metrics.** Ongoing regional coordination presents opportunity to further align to common definitions

Availability	Productivity	Reliability	Cost Effectiveness	Route Design	Network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Minimum Distance Between Stops</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Retired Metric: Stop Frequency</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Passengers per Revenue Hour</li> <li>Passengers per Trip</li> <li><b>Passenger per Vehicle Revenue Mile</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Retired Metric: Unique Segment Ridership</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Time Performance</li> <li>Vehicle Load Factor</li> </ul> <p><i>Retired Metric: Crowding</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Passengers per Thousand Dollars Spent</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Retired Metric: Operating Cost per Passenger Trip</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deviations</li> <li>Route Groupings and Trunks</li> <li>Parallel Corridors</li> <li>Circuitry</li> </ul> <p><i>Retired Metric: None</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Destination Access</b></li> <li><b>Access to Frequent Service</b></li> <li><b>Average Scheduled Wait Time</b></li> <li>Availability: Base Coverage</li> <li>Funding Allocation Goal</li> </ul> <p><i>Retired Metric: Availability</i></p>



# Bus Update: Define Bus Priority

**Bus priority investments reduce the impact of congestion on bus service, improving cost-effectiveness and speed, reliability and safety for customers**

Defines three levels of investments, including design standards, conditions, and performance outcomes

1. **Bus Rapid Transit** - highest level with full features to maximize speed, reliability, and capacity
2. **Bus Priority - Medium-build** - corridor improvements with many priority features, moderate cost and construction impacts
3. **Bus Priority - Quick-build** - targeted, lower-cost treatments on congested segments, often limited to certain times

Example of Medium Build: 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bus Lane



# Guidelines Incorporate International BRT Standards

## 5 Basic Elements of BRT:

- 1. Dedicated right-of way**
  - Physically separated lanes
  - Dedicated bus lanes
  - 24/7 bus lane enforcement
- 2. Busway alignment**
  - Center street alignment
- 3. Off-board fare collection**
  - All-door boarding
- 4. Intersection treatments**
  - At least 75% intersections with transit signal priority
- 5. Platform-level boarding**
  - Level boarding



## Examples of BRT:

- Top Left: Guangzhou, China
- Top Right: Jakarta, Indonesia
- Bottom Left: San Francisco, California

Source: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

# Bus Update: Simplifies Bus Stop Amenities Sections

## Level 1 – Fewer than 50 Daily Boardings

1. Bus Stop Sign
2. ADA 5'x8' landing pad or equivalent
3. Sidewalk (accessible pathway)



## Level 2 – 50 to 99 Daily Boardings

4. Expanded boarding & alighting area (rear-door access)
5. Seating
6. Trash Receptacle
7. Lighting
8. Real Time Info (Smaller Scale)



## Level 3 – 100 or More Daily Boardings

9. Bus Shelter
10. Real Time Info (Larger Scale)



# Rail Standards Update: Align to Current Practice

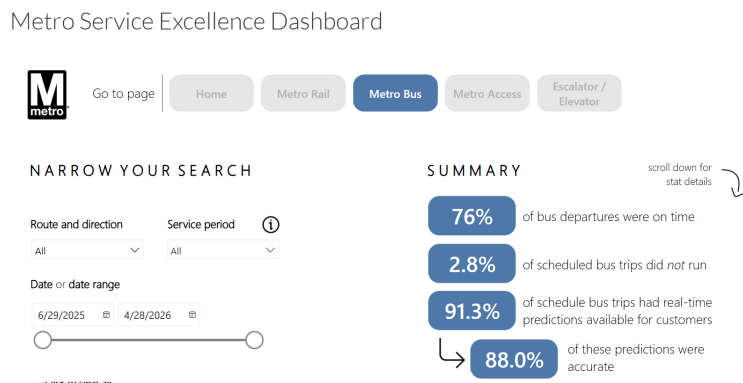
1. Updates minimum train frequency standards:
  - **Daytime and Evening:**
    - **Current:** 12 minutes on YGOSB+ 6 minutes on the Red Line
    - **Proposed:** 12 minutes on all lines + 6 minutes in the core
  - **Late Night:**
    - **Current:** 15 minutes on the YGOSB+ 10 minutes on the Red Line
    - **Proposed:** 15 minutes on all lines + 10 minutes in the core
2. **Introduces flexibility in train length:** Removes the 100% 8-car requirement
3. **Reaffirms vehicle load standards**



# Service Guidelines: Performance Transparency

## Strategic Transformation Plan

Metro regularly reports **key results** that align with the Service Guidelines



Metro Service Excellence Dashboard

Go to page: Home, Metro Rail, **Metro Bus**, Metro Access, Escalator / Elevator

**NARROW YOUR SEARCH**

Route and direction: All  
Service period: All  
Date or date range: 6/29/2025 - 4/28/2026

**SUMMARY**

- 76% of bus departures were on time
- 2.8% of scheduled bus trips did not run
- 91.3% of schedule bus trips had real-time predictions available for customers
- 88.0% of these predictions were accurate

scroll down for stat details

## Metro Bus Route Performance Report

Produce a **dashboard** evaluating each route's performance




ANNUAL LINE PERFORMANCE REPORT

metrobus

FY2025: July 1, 2024 – June 28, 2025

## Council of Governments Reporting

The DMVMoves Task Force established a plan for **regional annual reporting on key metrics** across all transit providers in the region



STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION 2024 REPORT

An annual review of public transportation in the National Capital Region

February 2026



# Next Step: Board Adoption of Guidelines and Standards

- Recommended adoption of sections 1-9 of the Bus Service Guidelines and Rail Standards for minimum train frequencies, passenger load, and train length



SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF UPDATED METRO BUS SERVICE GUIDELINES

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

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors adopted the current Metro Bus Service Guidelines in Resolutions 2000-10 and 2020-43; and

WHEREAS, Updating the Metro Bus Service Guidelines advances the DMV *Moves* plan to create a more integrated and seamless regional transit network, including minimum standards for service frequency and hours of operation; and

WHEREAS, The updated Metro Bus Service Guidelines aligns with the current practice of promoting all-day frequent service to help grow ridership and meet customer needs; and

WHEREAS, The updated Metro Bus Service Guidelines promote cost efficiency by establishing standards that prioritize moving the greatest number of people with the fewest resources; and

WHEREAS, Staff recommends repealing the previously adopted Metro Bus Service Guidelines and adopting the updated Metro Bus Service Guidelines set forth in Attachment A;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board of Directors repeals all existing Metro Bus Service Guidelines and adopts the updated Metro Bus Service Guidelines set forth in Attachment A; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer, or their designee, is authorized to implement, administer, and modify the metrics shown in Appendices 4, 5, 7 and 8 to the updated Metro Bus Service Guidelines set forth in Attachment A; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer shall use the updated Metro Bus Service Guidelines set forth in Attachment A to consider bus service changes in the budget process; and be it finally



SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF UPDATED METRO RAIL SERVICE STANDARDS

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

WHEREAS, The Board of Directors adopted the current Metro Rail Service Standards in Resolution 2021-44; and

WHEREAS, Updating the Metro Rail Service Standards provides an opportunity to reflect current conditions and operating practices, including changes in service patterns, ridership, and use of eight-car trains; and

WHEREAS, Staff recommends repealing the previously adopted Metro Rail Service Standards and adopting the updated Metro Rail Service Standards set forth in Attachment A;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board of Directors repeals the existing Metro Rail Service Standards and adopts the updated Metro Rail Service Standards for "Minimum Train Frequencies", "Passenger Load", and "Train Length" as set forth in Attachment A; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer, or their designee, shall use the updated Metro Rail Service Standards set forth in Attachment A to consider rail service changes in the budget process; and be it finally;

