

Riders' Advisory Council

July 1, 2026

Members Present:

William Way, Chair, Virginia
Eli Craveiro Frankel, At-Large/District of Columbia
Patrick Sheehan, At-Large/AAC Representative*
Ali Siddiqi, Maryland
Thomas Shepard, At-Large/District of Columbia
Irene Stephens, District of Columbia
Hendeke Tafesse, Virginia*
Brandon Wu, District of Columbia

* - Present via videoconference

Metro Staff Present:

Sarah Meyer, EVP and Chief Customer Officer
John Pasek, Deputy Board Secretary
José Reyes, Board Program Manager
Sam Serebin, Product Manager, Wayfinding and Service Delivery
Spring Worth, Alternate Director/Board Liaison to the Riders' Advisory Council, Metro Board of Directors

Call to Order:

Mr. Way called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

The agenda was approved without objection.

Public Comment:

There were no comments from members of the public.

Wayfinding Update:

Sam Serebin, Metro's Product Manager for Wayfinding and Service Delivery provided an update on Metro's plans to update Metro Rail station wayfinding and noted that he had previously presented on this project to the RAC in January of 2026. His presentation focused on why Metro is undertaking these wayfinding updates, what those updates will look like and when they'll appear in the system.

Sarah Meyer, Metro's Executive Vice President and Chief Customer Officer noted that the wayfinding updates are a customer-led process and are incorporating suggestions from Metro's advisory groups as well as individuals online. She said that Metro has tried a lot of

different systems of wayfinding over the past several years, which has resulted in an inconsistent system that isn't as clear as it could be. She noted that everyone has different preferences and ways of processing information, so Metro is adopting and following certain principles with this project. Those principles are:

1. Deliver information where and when customers need it.
2. Improve accessibility, including by using font size and color choices.
3. Ensure that all wayfinding is predictable and consistent.

Mr. Serebin explained that small service changes can cost Metro millions of dollars in wayfinding updates and gave the example that to fully change the name of the Largo Town Center Station to "Downtown Largo" would cost an estimated \$19 million. He noted that design choices could help reduce those costs. He also provided an overview of studies that concluded that riders had trouble navigating the Metro Rail system, and noted that as Metro has grown, the wayfinding system has become more complex and less consistent.

Mr. Serebin noted that the project has two goals – to reduce maintenance costs and to improve the customer experience. He said that the project is focused on the graphic system, not on the hardware used for signage and other displays. He also explained the different ways that Metro collects data on wayfinding, including the use of virtual reality to allow for updates without making physical changes, and pilot programs, and the factors Metro would use to evaluate the success of the program.

Mr. Serebin explained that Metro is moving service information signage from trackside locations onto the platform and onto digital displays. He said that this will reduce the need to continually update this signage in coordination with service changes or name changes at other stations, as well as to put the service information closer to actual customers. He then provided an overview of Metro's modular graphics system that will provide Metro a more comprehensive overview of its signage inventory, as well as Metro's decision-making process to maintain a terminal-based directional system. He also explained directional helpers, which include icons to provide riders with additional context clues, and proposed changes to the pylons located outside Metro Rail stations.

Next, Mr. Serebin provided an overview of the proposed changes to Metro's "Station Ahead Maps," which list all of the upcoming stations on a particular line, including a change to a "destination first" orientation and to list all potential stops, and proposed changes to Metro's tactile signage for customers with visual impairments. He noted that Metro is also updating its icons to make them easier to understand.

Mr. Serebin said that a pilot of the new signage at the L'Enfant Plaza station is expected to be installed in October 2026.

Mr. Way then opened the floor to questions and comments.

In response to a question from Mr. Siddiqi about other stations that would receive updated signage, Mr. Serebin said that Metro will start with L'Enfant Plaza and then update the signage at all stations over the next five years.

Mr. Craveiro Frankel said that he had a hard time recognizing the elevator icon as an elevator. Mr. Serebin explained Metro's decision-making process that led the team to select that particular icon to represent an elevator and said that he is interested to get riders' feedback when these icons are installed on physical signage at L'Enfant Plaza.

Mr. Way said that he appreciated that proposed updates, including the international icons, since the Washington DC region receives a lot of international visitors.

Mr. Wu asked about Metro's choice to use a lighter typeface. Mr. Serebin said that bold text can cause letter forms to close up and make them less legible, and that a lot of bold text can add to riders' cognitive load.

Mr. Staudt asked about wayfinding breadcrumbs and how riders would learn, for example, which train to take from a platform served by multiple lines to reach a specific destination. Mr. Serebin responded that this information would be confirmed by using the Station Ahead Maps which will be posted in multiple locations on each platform.

Mr. Wu asked questions about the placement of text on Station Ahead Maps and other signage, on which information is included on Station Ahead Maps, and whether there is a standard for abbreviations. Mr. Serbin explained that Metro has a standard naming convention based on the available space on a particular sign.

Mr. Way asked whether these wayfinding updates would be tested on tourists or people who don't know the system well. Mr. Serebin said that Metro is very interested in testing the updates with individuals who don't know the system well or who aren't native English speakers. He noted that Metro doesn't have that testing protocol in place, but is excited to carry out those kinds of tests once the L'Enfant pilot signage is installed. Ms. Meyer noted that Metro previously tested earlier signage pilot with individuals who aren't intimately familiar with the Metro system and/or L'Enfant Plaza station. She said that Metro took what it learned from that round of testing and incorporated changes into the updated signage that will be installed at L'Enfant Plaza in October.

Mr. Shepard asked whether there would be a public comment period during the pilot wayfinding installation at L'Enfant Plaza and whether Metro would be doing any social media outreach to solicit feedback from members of the public. Ms. Meyer responded that she is happy to create additional assets on Metro's website and added that Metro currently has information on its website and has received feedback on this project. She noted that Metro has already made substantial changes to the wayfinding in response to feedback from customers, the RAC and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Mr. Way thanked Ms. Meyer and Mr. Serebin for their presentation and moved to the next item on the agenda.

Outreach/Member Report Out:

Mr. Way said that he has been reached out to members to help develop a work plan for the year. He added that he contacted transit advisory groups in the DC region and would be asking members to also identify and contact groups in their respective jurisdictions. He said that he had contacted the Action Committee for Transit in Montgomery County as well as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Citizen Advisory Committee.

Mr. Way reminded members that this summer's Red Line summer shutdown will soon be underway and encouraged members to monitor the service throughout the duration of the project.

Mr. Siddiqi said that he heard from riders who had to navigate around the Blue and Yellow Line closures for the Crystal City second entrance project. He noted that while they appreciated the shuttles, especially the express shuttle to National Airport, they most appreciated the fact that the project wrapped up two weeks early, prior to the Juneteenth holiday weekend.

Ms. Stephens so that she reached out to contacts to provide their input to the "Transit Stories" project, which is collecting transit riders' experiences throughout the region. She also told the group that she has recently started following the "TransitViews" Facebook group, and someone posted there about late or missing buses on the P12 and M44 bus routes, especially the first buses of the day showing up late or not at all. Mr. Pasek said that he would get more information from Ms. Stephens offline to refer the issue on to Metro Bus staff.

Mr. Craveiro Frankel noted that one of his friends had recently had jury duty, which involved her traveling through the Judiciary Square station and encountering many tourists who didn't understand the escalator etiquette of standing on the right side of the escalator to leave the left side open for people who want to walk up or down the steps. He asked whether Metro would be doing any publicity campaigns to make riders aware of this custom. Ms. Meyer told members to stay tuned on this issue, but that there were limits on what Metro can put on signage due to concerns about litigation.

Mr. Staudt explained the need for additional signage at the National Airport station to direct riders to move up the platform to board six-car trains, such as the floor markings that are in place at Gallery Place-Chinatown station. He said that many riders don't move far enough up the platform, so that when a train pulls in, they run to try and make the last car, which can create a safety issue. He also mentioned that, now that half of Yellow line trains have been extended to Greenbelt, there is often bunching and inconsistent headways between Greenbelt-bound Green and Yellow line trains, resulting in some trains being very crowded while others are empty. He suggested holding trains to even out headways.

Mr. Wu said that he had received reports of riders missing their connections when trying to change trains at transfer stations such as Fort Totten; he said they would get to their second train only to have it close the doors on them and depart. He asked whether Metro had a policy of holding trains for transfers. He also asked about the status of bus/train transfer signage, which had been piloted at Greenbelt and notified bus drivers to wait for connecting train passengers on lower-frequency bus routes.

Mr. Wu also noted a recent article about Metro fare enforcement efforts and its assertion that a significant portion of fare evasion citations were being thrown out by the DC's Office of Administrative Hearings for being improperly written. He said that he would like to invite someone from the Metro Transit Police Department to an upcoming RAC meeting to discuss Metro's plans for fare enforcement and how it works with federal agencies and officers during its campaigns. He noted that he has received reports that during recent fare enforcement activities at Georgia Avenue and Columbia Heights stations, federal officers were also present, along with Metro Transit Police Department officers.

Lastly, Mr. Wu said that he is still working on an opinion piece for the Greater Greater Washington website regarding the RAC's 2026 Annual Report and would be following up with members after this meeting.

Mr. Shepard noted that the Red Line seems to have consistent issues with reliability and, while he understands that it's Metro's oldest subway line, he said that Metro needs to provide more detailed information on the causes of delays and other service interruptions. He also said that when using the MetroPulse app, it's difficult to distinguish between scheduled and real-time arrivals, meaning that users may end up waiting for a bus that is arriving according to its schedule, but isn't actually nearby. He cited a recent example of trying to decide whether to take Metro Bus or Metro Rail where having more accurate information would have improved his decision-making.

Bus Operators Quoting the Fare:

Mr. Way then asked RAC members for their comments regarding whether or not bus operators should quote the fare to riders who don't pay when boarding. The RAC's feedback on this issue had been requested by Director Tracy Hadden Loh at an earlier Board meeting.

Mr. Staudt said that he thought this would invite confrontation and would be more prone to making customers feel unsafe as well as to introduce delays in service. He said that while he understands riders' concerns about operators not being involved in fare enforcement, changing the policy to require operators to quote the fare to customer will create more significant issues. Mr. Siddiqi added that he thought that resulting confrontations between operators and passengers would create additional delays.

Mr. Craveiro Frankel said that he didn't see how this policy would actually increase fare payment compliance. He added that he would be interested to see if there was information that showed that this policy actually increases the number of individuals paying.

Mr. Wu said that it's his understanding that Metro already has a recording that tells riders the fare because that reduced confrontations between operators and riders. He said that he would support a pilot if there was evidence from peer agencies that this worked but based on testimony from operators and Metro's previous statements, he doesn't see it being successful. He noted that even under the current policy where operators are supposed to quote the fare, this is being done inconsistently, if at all.

Mr. Shepard said that while he agreed with sentiment of not wanting to create unnecessary confrontations, he could support operators quoting the fare to riders if allowed to use their discretion in applying the policy it could increase fare compliance. He also suggested additional signage to remind riders to pay their fares.

Mr. Way said that he agreed with everyone's thoughts and that safety is paramount. He noted that Metro already has an automated message reminding riders of the cost of a fare. He added that, unless there's a good rationale to require operators to confront operators, it's the sense of the RAC to not require operators to quote the fare to riders.

Mr. Siddiqi noted that there have been instances of violence when riders try and confront fare evaders on Metro Rail and said that Metro's policies should be based on common sense to avoid unnecessary confrontations.

FY2027 Budget and Service Update:

Mr. Pasek told the group that, since the Metro Board adopted the FY2027 budget in April, additional funding for Metro Bus service in the District, which was in the initial budget proposal, but not in the budget adopted in April, has been added back in. He explained that this funding will increase frequency on several routes beginning in December 2026, add three routes to the 24-hour service network, and adjust routing to two Metro Bus routes. He added that Metro Rail service improvements included in the FY2027 budget went into effect earlier in the week, including peak frequency improvements on the Red line and Blue/Orange/Silver lines, and that all Red line trains would operate with eight cars.

Ms. Worth clarified that the additional funding provided only lasts through the end of FY2027, so additional funding would need to be identified for subsequent years to maintain these service improvements.

Mr. Pasek told Council members that, on July 4th, all Metro service would be free after 5 p.m.

New Business:

Mr. Siddiqi announced that he was stepping down from his position on the Council to pursue his Master's degree.

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the Council, Mr. Way adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

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