



## Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

### **BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES: July 14, 2025**

In attendance: Tino Calabia (Chair), Steve Kaffen (Vice Chair), Sandra Neuzil (Second Vice-Chair), Susan Bowmaster Rico Dancy, Tajuan Farmer, Debby Fisher, Marcie Goldstein, Phillippa Mezile, and Swatha Nandhakumar.

#### **Call to Order**

Anu Sharma, AAC Coordinator, took roll call, read the Meeting Agenda, and provided helpful information, thereafter, Vice Chair Kaffen moved the meeting forward.

#### **Review and Approval of BRS Agenda and Minutes:**

The BRS approved the Meeting Agenda for July 14<sup>th</sup>, as presented.

The BRS Meeting Minutes from June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, were approved as written.

#### **Summer 2025 Shutdown – Phase II:**

Theresa Thomas, Supervisor Crew Support, Wayside Work Planning; and Bobby Gilchrist, Program Manager, Bus Street Operations; discussed Major Outages, and provided information about the Summer 2025 Shutdown, Phase II. Ms. Thomas provided the shutdown overview for Green Line and stated the planned work will be from Southern Avenue to Branch Avenue and will include installation of 102,000 linear feet of fiber optic and radio cable; upgrade signaling and communication systems; rail renewal, fastener and tie replacement, ballast tamping, and grout pads of the rail infrastructure; install of upgraded platform edge lights; re-lamping and repairing lighting - roadway and non-roadway and the ETS circuits; replacement of feeder cables in tie-breaker rooms at Branch Ave Yard; station signage updates and station repairs – both interior and exterior; Branch Avenue Yard upgrades and repairs in common areas for three building locations.

Ms. Thomas stated the shutdown will take place from August 2 to August 31, with service restoring on September 1, 2025 (Labor Day). The impacted stations are Naylor Road, Suitland, Branch Avenue, and Branch Avenue Yard. The shutdown extension will impact Congress Heights and Southern Avenue stations for two weekends, August 9-10 and 16-17, along with the mentioned three stations. Mr. Gilchrist stated free shuttle service will be available 30 minutes before and after, and during Metrorail operating hours. Mr. Gilchrist stated Anacostia will be impacted for weekend extensions only. Discussing the bus service relocations, Mr. Gilchrist stated there will be layover staging locations at Branch Avenue, Southern Avenue, and Anacostia (for weekend extensions only). The Signaling Timing Adjustment (STA) will be at Branch Avenue and Naylor Road Stations and it has already been adjusted for better traffic flow in and out of the stations.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil asked about frequency of the shuttle service. Mr. Gilchrist stated shuttle service frequency will be 8 to 10 minutes, throughout the shutdown. Ms. Mezile

informed about the upcoming basketball games towards the end of August. Mr. Gilchrist appreciated the information and stated there will be ample shuttles available. Ms. Fisher asked how people will understand the contractor's buses are working for Metro. Mr. Gilchrist stated a Metro brand emblem will be on every contract bus working for Metro.

Mr. Gilchrist provided information about the weekday and weekend shuttle service from August 2 through 31, that will service Southern Avenue to Branch Avenue. He also provided shuttle information for the weekend extension on August 9-10 and 16-17, from Southern Avenue to Branch Avenue. Mr. Gilchrist provided shuttle stops for Express and Local services - per station, along with the layover and staging information. He also shared information about relocation of some bus bays due to layover and staging. Vice Chair (VC) Kaffen appreciated the enormous coordination required for shutdowns. Mr. Gilchrist thanked VC Kaffen and stated it's done to give the best service in the nation. SVC Neuzil praised the well coordination during previous shutdowns. Mr. Gilchrist thanked her and stated it takes a couple of days for people to get used-to of the service provided.

### **Better Bus Network - Update:**

Al Himes, Director, Bus Service Planning and Scheduling, stated the Better Bus Network (BBN) started two weeks ago on Sunday, June 29th. There are a few minor issues however the rollout overall was successful, and we are working on making corrections to about 150 to 200 of the 7,500 to 8,000 bus stop signs in our service area. Some corrections are being made to the electronic data systems as a few stops are not being announced by the buses. All the items found during the first two weeks of operation where minor corrections were needed, have been adjusted, and will be effective Sunday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Himes stated we will continue to evaluate the service and make additional tweaks as we discover things that need to be adjusted.

Chair Calabia asked if information to customers was provided at the eliminated stops informing about the new bus stops. Mr. Himes stated notices with informational QR Codes were posted at the bus stops that the bus stop was being eliminated. Chair Calabia inquired about modifications in December and next July. Mr. Himes stated we are reviewing all the comments we receive and looking to see what adjustments can be made. Depending upon the type of modification, it could be effective sometime between July and December.

VC Kaffen asked how customers could submit their feedback. Mr. Himes stated customers' feedback could be received through WMATA's regular customer service channels. VC Kaffen stated with BBN; his bus route frequency has reduced to half. He also provided

feedback about the interior bus electronic signs displaying incorrect information. Mr. Himes stated he would share information about the electronic signs, with the bus maintenance team, and it could be that some of the older buses still have the sign that VC Kaffen described. VC Kaffen also recommended night buses for future consideration particularly between midnight and 6am, providing service to Union Station and other destinations. Mr. Himes stated currently, Metro has 14 routes that run overnight, and we will continue to review the effectiveness of the coverage.

**Temporary Bus Stop Signage, Permanent Bus Flags:**

Teddy Krolik, Project Manager, Customer Experience and Programs, provided an update about the temporary bus stop signage - that was implemented for the Better Bus Network (BBN) implementation, along with future permanent bus flags. Mr. Krolik provided the background, review of Metro's temporary BBN bus flag effort, and defined priorities for future bus flags, along with the next steps. Discussing the background, Mr. Krolik stated Metro learned a lot from designing and installing BBN temporary flags, and that DMVMoves has identified unified regional bus flags as a priority for improving regional transit in the future. The customer research (for BBN survey) from December 2023 found that both frequent and infrequent Metrobus riders reported bigger signs with larger and bolder fonts are a top priority. Over 70% of all Metrobus customers who have used other systems in the region said other systems have more helpful signage than Metrobus.

Mr. Krolik discussed the conflicting bus stop ID and shared two images of bus stop flags with multiple pieces of information. He shared an image of a bus stop flag that serves only one route and stated about 70% of stops service one route. Mr. Krolik shared an image of a bus stop flag that serves four routes. He asked the Committee to provide feedback on temporary BBN bus flags. He asked questions to considered for future bus flags, i.e. most important information to display, size/shape of flag, combine multiple agencies on a single flag (or not), most useful accessibility features, etc.

Referencing an image that Mr. Krolik shared, Chair Calabria asked about information on a bus flag (unrelated to Metro). Mr. Krolik stated it is a perfect example of confusion where individual operator decides how to display the information. Ms. Nandhakumar asked if the signs are at different heights, and the colors used, i.e. red on white, white text on red background. Mr. Krolik stated there is no difference in height. The existing signs were wrapped and reused for BBN updates. These are Metro colors and for ease, a subtle white line was added to separate the blue and the red portion. This is an example illustrating that we are listening and are trying to make improvements as feasible.

VC Kaffen made a few recommendations: make the font size as big as possible, not to change the current signs for some time for customers convenience, vertically lower the sign, stop ID is critical, and add numbers rather 202-GO-Metro. Mr. Krolik stated the current signs will not be changed anytime soon, and there are ADA regulations about height placement. However, the shape of this flag could be different in the future, thus possibly providing options for height placement. Mr. Krolik appreciated the recommendations about adding numbers for GO-Metro. Ms. Mezile commended about the contrast, height of the current signs, and route destination.

SVC Neuzil was glad to hear about the white subtle line separating the blue and red colors and inquired if the white line separates the listed routes also. Mr. Krolik confirmed that there is a white line separating the routes. SVC Neuzil appreciated listing the old routes for reference. She stated rather bigger fonts, having uniform font size is important for people with low vision. She asked if there will be a single sticker to include all Metro and other buses that service a stop. Mr. Krolik stated it will be challenging to coordinate the service changes/modifications. In the future, we must determine size, colors and the display. It is evident that the ability to print out one big sticker makes it easier to produce and attach. The currently used vinyl stickers cover up a portion of the reflective material on the bus sign. Thus, reflectivity overall of the sign is not as strong as before. Bus operators are concerned, because it is an important feature.

Chair Calabria recommended to include helpful information referencing the 202-Go-Metro phone number to make it more intuitive. Mr. Krolik stated that is consistent with earlier comments. Chair Calabria asked about the digital signs that provide real time information. Mr. Krolik stated the digital signs are not changing as part of BBN. There are about 1,000 of the digital signs throughout the system at shelters and we are continuing to put them in more locations. Ms. Nandhakumar asked clarification about 202-Go-Metro and recommended to have the phone number rather 202-Go-Metro. Mr. Krolik stated we understand 202-Go-Metro is not intuitive for customers, and it will be reviewed further. VC Kaffen recommended to adjust the scrolling speed of message on the digital sign at bus shelters. Mr. Krolik stated soon, he will begin to work on the digital signage and then can review it further.

Mr. Krolik asked the Committee's recommendations on specific accessibility features for a new flag, i.e. raised text or braille elements, color contrast, font size, etc. Chair Calabria stated the signs are too high for people to be able to reach them to read the braille. Mr. Krolik stated potentially, there would be two pieces in the general flag display, one at 8 feet and another one at 5 feet - smaller in size with limited information. Mr. Farmer asked

if PG County bus stops will have the 202-Go-Metro number along with the NextBus stop ID number. Mr. Krolik stated in PG County's bus stops, we show both PG County and Metro contact numbers. The Metro call center has been receiving calls about PG County Bus, Ride-On, and other neighboring agencies for years and will continue to do so. SVC Neuzil stated bus stop ID number would be the most important information to have at eye level. Mr. Krolik thanked her for the great idea.

Discussing the next steps, Mr. Krolik stated in Summer 2025, they will revise draft of future flag design with input from internal Metro stakeholders. In Summer-Fall 2025, they plan to produce prototype signage for customer testing in collaboration with regional partners. In Fall 2025, they plan to confirm regional partners' participation. Mr. Krolik shared some images from Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Edmonton, London, Miami, Montreal, and San Francisco Bay Area, illustrating various kinds of bus stop flags.

Chair Calabria shared pictures of digital screen installed at bus stops in New York City. Mr. Krolik stated those are generally paid for with ad revenue, and we are trying to provide big screens like that at stations with bus loops. At New Carrollton today, a real-time bus 55-inch screen has been installed at the beginning of the entrance to the bus bays. Mr. Krolik thanked the Committee for their time to have a great discussion. He looks forward to being able to discuss this in person sometime soon. SVC Neuzil asked if Metrorail-line-color-discs with single letter are available to see as examples. Mr. Krolik stated he can follow up in getting those images.

### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments during this meeting.

Public Comments can be received via phone at 202-962-1100, or via email at [MetroAACChair@wmata.com](mailto:MetroAACChair@wmata.com)

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.