



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES: November 10, 2025

In attendance: Tino Calabia (Chair), Steve Kaffen (Vice Chair), Sandra Neuzil (Second Vice-Chair), Vanessa Coles, Rico Dancy, Debby Fisher, Marcie Goldstein, Sarah Radt, Denise Rush, and Patrick Sheehan.

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 November 10th, 2025, as presented. The BRS Meeting Minutes from October 14th, 2025, were approved as written.

Bus Flags Designs:

Teddy Krolik, Project Manager, Digital Customer Technology and Innovation, stated we are in the prototyping phase of the bus flags. We are gathering information which will inform the next (engineering) phase, to ensure a product can be reproduced at scale and materials can be acquired easily. Mr. Krolik stated implementation of bus flags is estimated for summer 2026. He shared information gathered during the research phase, including feedback from operators and customers, along with WMATA groups including sign makers, maintenance, designers, and different agencies across North America. These peers recently implemented newly redesigned bus flag, and the feedback was helpful to learn from their experiences. Bus operators need to see the flag at night. Therefore, a nighttime observation was done with bus operations team close to the new Carrollton office building. The prototype has high reflectivity, making a difference in visibility.

Mr. Krolik stated from extensive customer research investigation, we learned that route ID, destination, operating agency, and bus stop ID were the most important pieces for the bus flags. We also tested for website URLs, QR codes, direction of travel, bus stop name, and various other pieces, and found that those were rated much lower. Focus on the four elements will reduce the cognitive load. Mr. Krolik stated the purpose is to gather feedback from the AAC and others, to understand how WMATA can improve the flags even more. WMATA has made specific improvements including increased visibility during day and night, and increased fonts size consistently across all the sign types. He stated flags with up to four routes have increased amount of reflective surface area.

Mr. Krolik stated we have a proposal to bring together multiple operators on the same flag. He discussed a mock-up flag with Prince George's County Transit and Metro logo. He stated the effort is also to unify both Metrorail and Metrobus so that customers feel they are traveling on the same company. Mr. Krolik stated durability of flags and cost

effectiveness are being considered. He discussed the two-part sign system where the left side of the flag is focused on the needs of the operators and the right side of this post is the information panel for customers. Mr. Krolik discussed different configurations and colors and stated Capital Cream and Monumental Bronze are used for illustration. The focus is on features more than colors, to make definitive decisions for procurement and production of these signs.

Mr. Krolik stated the size of two-route bus stop sign is approximately 18 by 30 inches and uses four-inch type. The three to four routes flag maintains four-inch type. The third one is more of a vertical display for five or more routes. Only 3% of stops will have five or more routes, including operators, thus we would be using two-inch type. That may require case-by-case review and special production maintaining two-inch type. Mr. Krolik stated we have a good sign design for the remaining 97% bus stop flags.

Discussing the features, Mr. Krolik provided information about accessibility and stated the height of the destination is one and a half inch, whereas the route ID is four inches. The color contrast will be improved by using white text on dark backgrounds, or vice versa. Overall cognitive load will be reduced by removing extraneous information. The second feature is the way partner-agencies are being presented. In a proposal from the DMV Moves effort, there is a recommendation to unify bus stops. Instead of multiple poles and blades, we would consolidate them onto a single display, making it easier with consistent information for customers. Increased size of the logos will make it easier for customers to find the needed route or stop. Another feature is to unify Metrobus and Metrorail by creating shared graphical system. Reflectivity would be twice than the reflective area and quality - on the current better bus flags. Mr. Krolik stated the way the post and the beacon are located, it would remove the mirror strike hazard for bus operators.

Mr. Krolik shared pictures of prototypes from displayed during day and at nighttime. From daytime, he shared examples of how monumental bronze, capital cream, and reflective material appeared. In the nighttime he shared the reflective material creates almost a flag within the flag, making it very easy for operators and customers to locate these signs. An important feature learned about dark background with white letters was that it is easy to read the text in dark conditions, however, the text appears to float in the air. The background surface or shape could not be seen. Mr. Krolik stated the effort is to make the best bus flag for all Metro stakeholders, thus, the work will still continue.

Chair Calabria stated he liked the large fonts for the new flags. He stated that Prince Georges County bus system is called THE BUS, whereas Mr. Krolik mentioned it as Prince

George's County Transit. Mr. Krolik stated Prince George's County has changed THE BUS to Prince George's County Transit. Chair Calabia asked if Fairfax County's bus will be adapted for flags. Mr. Krolik stated we would work directly with our partner to ensure their information is displayed per their branding.

Chair Calabia shared some pictures of various signs and stated one of them is the flag height. Referencing a previous discussion, Chair Calabia stated one of the signs seems high, although ADA compliant, it may be difficult for people with low vision to see it. In one of the pictures, the designated letters and numbers of the bus stop are very high. He recommended, where there is a white sign saying Bus Bay K, with bus identifications, i.e. C83, put it lower where bus bay is, making it easier for some customers. Mr. Krolik stated it is a great suggestion, and it is part of a larger discussion about how we can be better in presenting bus bay information on a consistent basis.

Chair Calabia discussed the second picture about the LED videos on a pole, showing the arrival times of buses. There is a button that can be pressed for audio. The third picture shows braille. The fourth picture of a bus stop with LED, from Seattle, shows bus arrivals in larger font and text for temporary changes in bus schedules or routes. The fifth picture of a bus stop in New York City shows how many stops away is a bus. The tablet is interactive and can be tapped for more information. He asked if there will be an interactive way of seeing additional information on any bus stops. Mr. Krolik stated those are great examples and we are looking at other agencies for inspiration. There are approximately 900 real-time bus arrival screens around the area, and we are looking to expand them. The idea that the bus flag would complement those screens is an important aspect. We would like to test and put the bus flag on a post that currently has a solar panel and see how everything works together.

Vice Chair Kaffen asked if dark blue color could be used instead of Monumental Bronze. He liked the reflectiveness to easily find the stops at night. He wondered if a bit more spacing between the letters and the numbers was needed. Yet, the C and D are large enough, so maybe not. When he looks for a route, he looks for the number not the letters. He wondered if riders understand the difference between C and D, unless it is an individual taking a bus from origin to destination. Vice Chair Kaffen gave his recommendations about the use of the letters, i.e. C for cross-border, D for District, A for Arlington. He stated the LEDs are helpful and asked to review the iteration time. Mr. Krolik stated those are great points. Having the right speed to display information on screens is important and new ideas are actively being tested. He invited the AAC to review some live street conditions.

Ms. Rush stated Vice Chair Kaffen rode with her on a bus route a while ago and learned some things about Prince George's County service. She stated it is disturbing that nothing has been done. Vice Chair Kaffen stated he has been in that area lately and some of the things they looked at related to signage and shrubbery, that still is the case. Chair Calabia thanked Ms. Rush for bringing up Prince George's County to our attention.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated the layout of the flag posts looks straightforward to her but would need to see in daylight, dusk and dark to determine a dark on light or light on dark best readability. About the color contrast, she preferred the light background with dark letters. She asked about the bottom elevation of the signs. She was glad to hear that there are 900 digital bus signs, that is 1 in 10 bus stops with digital sign. She wondered if those are at bus hubs. She would like the cycle-time for information to be longer as people with low vision take longer to grasp the information. Mr. Krolik stated those are all great points. About the color contrast, dark background has the highest contrast, however, for nighttime viewing, the cream is probably marginally better. Then there is some question of the balance of how many daylight hours and how many riders are out during the day versus at night. That is why, the color is something we will continue to work on. About the clearance, Mr. Krolik stated we are above the 80 inches required by ADA head clearance.

Ms. Radt stated she liked the huge numbers and letters and commented about the color contrast. She appreciated Chair Calabia bringing up the electronic signs. She shared her experience of a button for audio, that was not working. Ms. Radt recommended that emergency or basic information that is in tiny print at the bottom of those flags, i.e. phone number for an emergency, stop information, should also be in a tactile format at eye height. Mr. Krolik stated we are still doing that eye-level tactile panel as a part of a larger package that we'll be looking to test going forward.

Vice Chair Kaffen recommended to shorten the electronic messages with relevant information. He stated in DC; garbage cans are being placed next to the signs. Mr. Krolik stated we are working to reduce those scrolling lengths and some changes can be noticed rolling out immediately at certain locations so that customers get the essential route arrival information faster and more regularly.

Chair Calabia thanked Mr. Krolik for his presentation and for receiving the feedback. Mr. Krolik appreciated Chair Calabia's comments and stated we continue to work on the flags.

Chair Calabria commented about glare issue on the electronic sign. Mr. Krolik stated glare is essential, and we are considering a relative balance between reflectivity and anti-glare.

Committee Questions / Comments for DC DOT:

Vice Chair Kaffen discussed how buses in D.C. are affected by drivers who illegally park in bus lanes. Few years ago, Washington, D.C. had an influx of out-of-area buses that began running routes up to New York City and beyond, and down south. While there was a bus station in Union Station, these buses were given stops throughout the city, blocking traffic in the right lane, particularly at DuPont Circle. He has written to DCDOT a few times informing about this matter and about bicycles. However, there has been no change in the unsafe situations as customers have to cross the road to board these buses. Vice Chair Kaffen stated the bicycle lanes have created long lines of traffic and buses are in that line of traffic. Columbia Road is an example of such situation. Vice Chair Kaffen stated there seems to be a hiatus, however he is unsure if that is budget related. If not, then it may no longer be an issue which was a big issue for the DC bus movement at this time.

Chair Calabria stated we should bring these topics to the District of Columbia Department of Transportation. With respect to bicycle, Mayor Bowser canceled at least one bike lane in northwest Washington on Arizona Avenue. He stated the bike lanes affect people in crosswalks where they must cross to get to a bus island.

Members Comments and Discussions:

Second Vice-Chair Neuzil discussed three points about signage. She stated WMATA's Teddy Krolik and Sarah Meyer have asked the Committee for feedback. She discussed inconsistent signs guiding to elevators and escalators on Metro Station platform pylons. A wheelchair symbol in a circle indicates elevator direction and has been found at inconsistent locations at various stations. Chair Calabria commented about the problem of finding the correct exit or entrance at L'Enfant Plaza Station. Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated finding elevators and escalators should be available at all the Metro Rail Stations, for instance, Rosslyn Station has two entrances and the elevator is only at one side. It would be helpful to have enough signage to indicate to a person who needs an elevator, which way they should go. Chair Calabria stated Bethesda Station is another example where it is difficult to find the elevator.

Vice Chair Kaffen stated Tenleytown Station has an extremely long escalator. He often walks in wrong direction before realizing the correct side. Ms. Radt shared her experience from Union Station, where she went in the opposite direction before realizing the elevator was in the opposite end of the station. She recommended the elevator indicators should

be on all four sides of the platform pylons. She also mentioned about the inconsistent types of signage indicating elevators. Vice Chair Neuzil stated Mr. Weintraub had brought up signs for exits indicating street information for each exit. Second Vice Chair Neuzil asked if it is possible to ask WMATA to explain the rationale for how and where elevator signs are placed, and we can recommend making it more consistent. Ms. Coles asked if the elevator speed could be increased. Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated that might be an engineering and mechanics issue, way out of our scope. The newer elevators on the new Silver Line stations are quieter and faster and are very expensive to replace.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated Mr. Krolik asked us two questions at a recent meeting and wanted feedback. The first question was about having consistency in the order of Metro Rail Lines on all WMATA materials as well as web content. Some possibilities were (1) the order that the rail lines were built in and opened, (2) alphabetical order, or (3) order of Metro Rail Lines per platform levels. Ms. Radt stated the logic of rail lines per platforms may not be obvious to people, however, consistency is important. Second Vice Chair Neuzil discussed the pilot of restroom signage at five stations. There are five color combinations with three different colors. There were signs with dark background and light letters and vice versa. The sign with dark background got lost as the station is also dark. Mr. Krolik stated we are trying to ensure to communicate the message clearly to customers. The different color combinations can be tested when we start expanding the pilot program and invite the AAC to review them in person. He clarified that the current pilot signage is with blue background and white text on it. Second Vice Chair Neuzil recommended a narrow border around the sign if feasible. Mr. Krolik stated that is a great suggestion and we want to make incremental improvements.

Ms. Radt recommended to include emergency evacuation drills to a future AAC agenda, as discussed at the AAC meeting this month.

Public Comments

Vice Chair Kaffen stated a concern about a sign placed in a few buses, adjacent to the first front-forward-facing seats. The sign is incorrect as it says federal regulations require that these seats be available to persons with disabilities and seniors. Underneath it says wheelchair securement location, and that should be corrected since it is not a wheelchair securement location. He also recommended to shorten the message. Dr. Butler stated we can review with our partners.

Public Comments can be received via phone at 202-962-1100, or via email at MetroAACChair@wmata.com

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.