

September 20 Community Meeting Q and A

Metro has prepared the below questions and answers (Q&A) addressing comments raised at the September 20, 2021 community engagement meeting on the Bladensburg Bus Garage Reconstruction Project.

Garage and Construction Impacts to the Community

Q: When the garage is reconstructed, does Metro anticipate any increase in the number of mechanical fans or operational noise to surrounding neighborhoods?

A: We do not anticipate any increased noise impacts associated with the new facility. The new facility will have similar mechanical plants, and there is a possibility that there may be a decrease in mechanical devices on the roof as we move from two buildings to one building.

Q: How does the height of the existing building compare with the proposed height of the new building?

A: The new Operations and Maintenance (O&M) building will combine the existing O&M and current Heavy Repair & Overhaul (HR&O) Facility into one location. Additionally, the CNG facility will be located separately at the northwest corner of the site. The height of the current HR&O Facility is 23' tall. The new, combined O&M building will be 59' in height. In addition to the new O&M building, a new employee parking garage will be added, which will be 49'-9" in height, both structures are within zoning ordinance requirements.

Q: What benefits will this project bring to the community?

A: This project will completely modernize the look of Bladensburg Bus Garage, which will help to improve aesthetics within the community. The garage is being designed to include the infrastructure needed to sustain and operate a zero-emission bus fleet.

Q: Will this project increase the number of buses that use the facility, if so by how many?

A: Today, there are about 276 buses operating out of the existing Bladensburg Bus Division – 176 stored at the existing facility and 100 buses at the Bladensburg Road/Montana Avenue temporary parking lot. The new facility will expand bus storage to approximately 300 buses – 200 standard 40' buses and 100 60' articulated buses.

Q: Very few routes in our neighborhoods can support articulated buses – due to steep hills and inclines. Is the expansion of the bus fleet meant to benefit other communities, since those buses will not be able to serve our community?

A: Generally, Metro distributes buses across all garages to minimize cost to the region and to efficiently serve customers. Buses are mostly garaged and stationed close to their assigned routes.

Q: Will there be any noise-mitigating structures between the facility and the railroad tracks to keep noise from spilling into the neighborhoods?

A: Currently, Metro does not plan to include a noise wall in that area and does not project any noise impacts to the surrounding communities.

Q: What strategies will be put in place to minimize traffic congestion during heavy construction periods?

A: Metro is working in close coordination with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to develop a plan that optimizes the flow of traffic in and out of the garage. Based on DDOT's guidance, Metro realigned the main garage entrance with 28th Street. Also, to help minimize congestion within the community, Metro's contractors will schedule deliveries outside of peak travel times as much as possible. And Metrobuses operating from the garage will leave and return to the garage during non-peak hours.

Q: Will the traffic light at the 26th Street entrance be moved to the new 28th Street entrance? Also, when will the 28th Street construction begin?

A: The traffic light will be moved, but the first phase of construction does not involve alteration of the entrance. It'll be at least three years before that happens.

Environmental Strategies

Q: As the national capital's biggest transit authority, why isn't Metro leading the transition to green transit system? We are excited to hear Metro is getting ready to include electric buses but why are smaller systems like DASH ahead of Metro?

A: The Board's approval of Metro's zero-emission fleet strategy was a major step towards converting to a fully zero-emission bus fleet. We are working on a pilot project that will help us to understand how zero-emission buses will operate within Metro's environment, considering routes, weather, recharging facilities, etc. At the same time, we are looking into infrastructure upgrades (facilities, power supply, labor force training, etc.) needed to seamlessly transition to zero-emission buses. We are making great strides towards the electrification of our bus fleet. Learn more about our strategy [here](#).

Q: Will the garage construction include solar panels? Can those panels provide the capacity to recharge electric buses?

A: Yes, the garage will have solar panels. The level of energy generated by the solar panels alone will not be sufficient to charge the buses. We would need substantial charging capabilities to maintain and recharge buses. Metro will work in partnership with PEPCO to define grid and power requirements and to build the right infrastructure at our bus garages.

Q: Metro is using water to manage dust emission from construction, where is the runoff water going?

A: Metro will coordinate with the Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE) to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and local codes required to manage dust generated during reconstruction of the bus garage.