

August 8, 2023, Community Meeting Q&A

Meeting Summary:

The 2023 summer community meeting for the Bladensburg Bus Garage Reconstruction Project was hosted virtually and in person at the Woodridge Neighborhood Library on August 8, 2023. The project team shared project news and answered questions from the community. The topics covered include team introductions and a project overview, construction updates, a presentation from the Small Business Programs Office, Metro's Zero Emission Bus Update, and a preview of what to expect next quarter.

Design and Construction Updates

Q: Is there going to be an eco-friendly green roof? What are the plans to capture the water runoff?

A: No, there are no plans to have a green roof on the maintenance building. The roof is designed to help with rainwater collection that will be used for operations. Precipitation from the roof enters the storm drain system via downspouts and is collected in the rainwater tanks. There are also additional rainwater tanks which collect run off from the entire site.

Q: Will there be diesel fuel tanks and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) tanks and where will they be placed on the site?

A: Yes, there will be diesel fuel tanks and CNG equipment at the new Bladensburg Bus Garage. The diesel fuel tanks will be placed in concrete vaults adjacent to Bladensburg Road, while the CNG equipment will be located at the front corner, adjacent to 25th Place and Bladensburg Road.

Q: How much is being spent on building the new garage?

A: The new Bladensburg Bus Garage will be able to support a 100% zero-emission fleet at opening. Additionally, it will have environmentally friendly features such as solar panels, rainwater harvesting system for bus wash, etc. The current budget for the project is approximately \$340 million.

Zero-Emissions

Q: Is it true that the zero-emission buses will not have gas combustion engines?

A: That is correct. The battery electric buses do not have internal combustion engines.

Q: What is the weight difference of battery electric buses compared to gas-powered buses?

A: While the exact weight difference is not available, the battery electric buses are heavier due to the batteries on board the bus.

Q: How will the heavier battery electric buses affect the streets?

A: We are having ongoing discussions on potential impacts as the transition to electric vehicles is not just impacting our industry or buses, but all types of vehicles, including light duty vehicles. As changes occur, best practices will be developed.

Q: What is the travel range and battery life of the electric buses?

A: In comparison to a diesel bus, the range of a battery electric bus is more limited. Several factors can impact the range of a battery electric bus. Topography such as hills and wintry weather conditions are large factors. Given that it is a new and evolving technology, we evaluate all factors to ensure that we are providing an efficient service for our riders.

Q: How long do you expect the batteries on the zero-emission buses to last and will the zero-emission buses be autonomous?

A: We expect to have 12-year battery warranties for the buses. Currently, we are not planning for autonomous buses.

Q: How are you going to power the bus charging stations? Are you going to have solar panels?

A: The facility will have some solar panels on site. The amount of solar that we can fit in the bus garage site is only a fraction of the amount of power it takes to charge this number of battery electric buses. Primarily, we will rely on the electric utility, Pepco, to provide power to the site to charge the buses.

Q: Could we have some insight into the fencing aesthetics in the community?

A: As stated during the spring community meeting, landscaping elements, including trees, will be incorporated along the fence's perimeter. The ornamental metal fence meets Metro's design and safety standards and is a vital component to ensuring the security of the garage. As such, we do not have plans to alter the fence design.