

Platform Reconstruction and Safety Improvements

Phase IV Communications and Outreach Report

November 2022


Deanwood
ORANGE LINE
DEANWOOD
STATION
ORANGE LINE TO
NEW CARROLLTON
EXIT
FIRE

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Executive Summary

Looking Back on the Communications Campaign

Over the course of 10 months, Metro deployed a multichannel communications and outreach campaign to increase project awareness across the region. Throughout the project, Metro used several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to provide insight into customer behavior and sentiments, while measuring the success of this communications campaign. To reach the target audiences with the information that was most useful to them, Metro listened to customers and adjusted communications tactics and messaging based on that feedback. The approach resulted in an effective communications campaign for the final phase of the project:

25%

Customer awareness increased by 25% one month after the communications campaign was launched

82%

Newsletter content was helpful to 82% of subscribers before, during, and after the closures

10%

Customer trust that the closures were needed increased by 10% from April to May 2022

698%

Newsletter subscribers increased by 698% from April to September 2022



Through the Capital Improvement Program, Metro will continue these successes and advance additional large-scale construction projects to create a safe, sustainable, and world-class transit system for the National Capital Region. Metro is committed to working with regional stakeholders to efficiently and effectively communicate with the public to tell Mero's story and ensure the region is kept up to date on upcoming projects.

Project Overview

During summer 2022, five Orange Line stations – New Carrollton, Landover, Cheverly, Deanwood, and Minnesota Ave – closed with no rail service from May 28 through September 5, marking the final phase of Metro's largest, most complex capital construction project since the system opened in 1976. During this time, platform reconstruction work was completed at New Carrollton, Landover, and Cheverly, while customer experience improvements were installed at all five stations to bring a higher level of safety, convenience, and communication to all customers. Critical safety repairs were also conducted on several bridges along this segment of the Orange Line.

Customers at the five modernized Orange Line stations now benefit from new safety enhancements:



Slip-resistant tiles



Brighter LED lighting



Larger digital display screens



Rebuilt platform edges



Additional upgrades and amenities

Similar to previous years, Metro used a construction strategy that temporarily closed the stations while work was underway, bolstering safety for customers and construction crews while allowing Metro to minimize service impacts and restore normal service much faster than would otherwise be possible. During the station closures, Metro provided free shuttle bus service and other travel alternatives, and aided customers in navigating the station shutdowns, parking closures, pedestrian detours, and bus stop relocations.



These station closures were part of Metro's Capital Improvement Program which invests in the system safety, reliability, and the region's economy. The reopening of these five stations, along with the previous four years of platform reconstruction work, demonstrates Metro's commitment to deliver a sustainable, equitable, and world-class transit system to the National Capital Region.

Communications & Outreach Strategy

Guided by Metro's Public Participation Plan and Language Assistance Plan, the comprehensive communications and outreach campaign was launched to help the public and stakeholders understand the project impacts prior to, during, and after station closures, reaching customers both at and away from the stations.

Building upon lessons learned from previous stages of this project, the communications plan identified successes, including utilizing *The Washington Post* digital advertisements, and areas of improvement, such as low newsletter sign-ups, to target when executing the communications campaign. To enhance the campaign from previous years, the communications team focused heavily on the identified area of improvement – increasing the newsletter subscriber base prior to the station closures. As a result, a new campaign, invoking enjoyable summer concepts with bold, colorful graphics was created and successfully executed, exceeding key performance indicators three months ahead of schedule.



Other successful in-person and digital tactics to increase awareness about the station closures and project impacts included in-person station assistance, social media, print advertisements, and station signage. Timely multilingual communications were delivered to a diverse customer and stakeholder base to increase awareness, educate about service changes, and provide key project information.

This report summarizes the communications and outreach strategy and results.



Campaign Duration

- 10 months (December 2021–September 2022)

Audiences

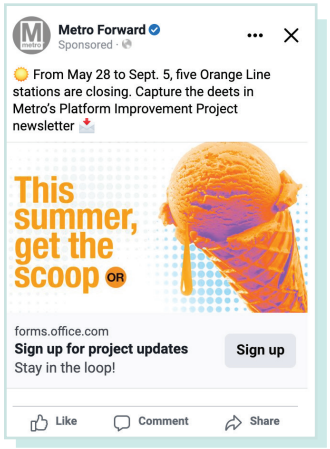
- Target: Transit customers at New Carrollton, Landover, Cheverly, Deanwood, and Minnesota Ave stations, stakeholders, regional transit providers, and community groups in Prince George's County and Washington, DC.
- Secondary: Employees, media, other jurisdictional partners, infrequent customers, and visitors.

Objectives

- Announce project scope, duration, service impacts, and travel alternatives, and drive customer awareness about project impacts.
- Coordinate with internal and external partners.
- Provide customer service and ongoing project updates at impacted stations.
- Announce stations are reopening and retain ridership.
- Prioritize customer and employee safety and fiscal responsibility.
- Celebrate the hard work, success, and improvements made by the four-year platform rehabilitation program, and thank customers for their patience.



Strategy
Tactics







Before Construction

December 1, 2021–May 27, 2022

During Construction

May 28–September 5, 2022

After Construction

September 6–30, 2022

Tactics

- Web page
- Stakeholder coordination
- Customer signage
- In-person station assistance
- Employee communications
- Bilingual communications toolkit
- Newsletters
- Owned and paid media
- Photo and video content
- Service and station maps
- Press releases
- Service advisories
- Customer research
- Handouts
- Community-based organization outreach

Results

By the Numbers

60 earned media stories

44,150 unique web page views

593 wayfinding and notification signs

527,806 customer engagements

40,122 handouts distributed

3,551,171 media impressions

average newsletter click rate **6%**

1,321 QR code scans

91,672 non-English customer engagements

31.34% average newsletter open rate

30 material dropoffs to community centers

1,206 newsletter recipients

4,354 mailers sent to residences and businesses

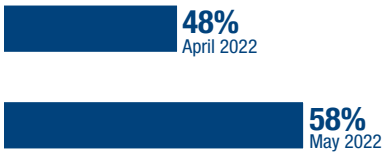
Results

Key Performance Indicators

By opening the lines of communication, Metro was able to consistently receive and implement customer feedback.

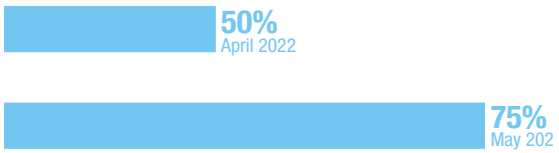
Customer awareness

Increased as a result of the multichannel communications and outreach campaign efforts.



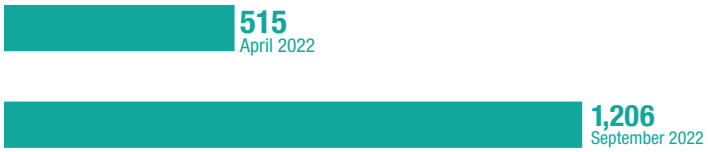
Customer trust

Increased when Metro emphasized the project's importance to increase safety and service reliability.



Newsletter subscribers

Increased from the beginning of the communications and outreach campaign until the stations reopened.



82% of newsletter subscribers found Metro's information helpful throughout the project, citing photo and video content, construction updates, and service information as being the most useful components.

INSIGHTS

- Targeting newsletter sign-ups prior to the project start date gave Metro a large base of individuals to communicate important project updates, in a way that was most convenient and accessible to the audience.

A Closer Look

Going Digital: wmata.com/platforms

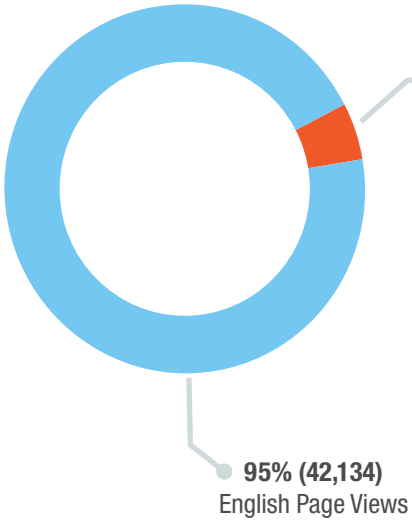
Unique Page Views Over
9 Month Timeframe

44,150

Average Time
Spent on Page

1 min, 41 sec

English & Spanish Views



5% (1,916)
Spanish Page Views

95% (42,134)
English Page Views



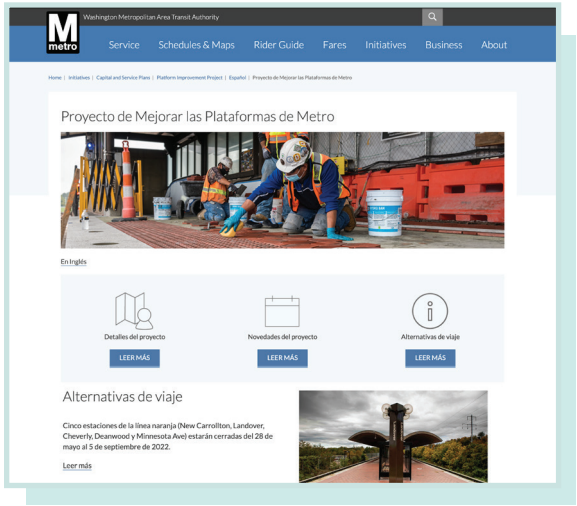
The travel alternatives and customer impacts page was kept up to date with information on station changes, shuttle bus operations, and bus service to assist customers with planning their travel.

INSIGHTS

- The web page was used to host additional newsletter content, such as the People Behind the Project and Business Spotlight features, allowing longform content to be repurposed and promoted on other communications channels.

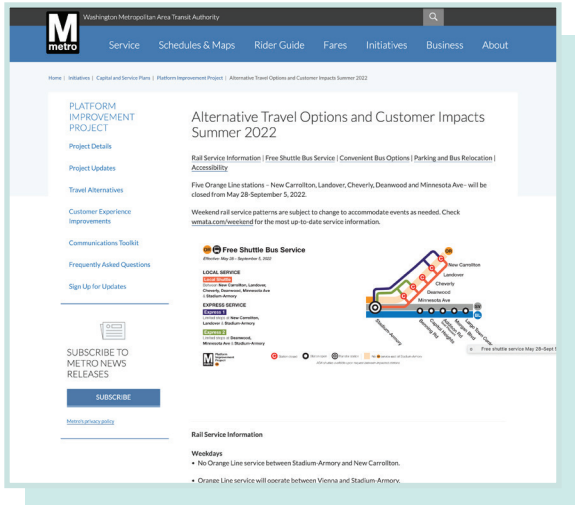
Most Viewed English and Spanish Web Pages

1



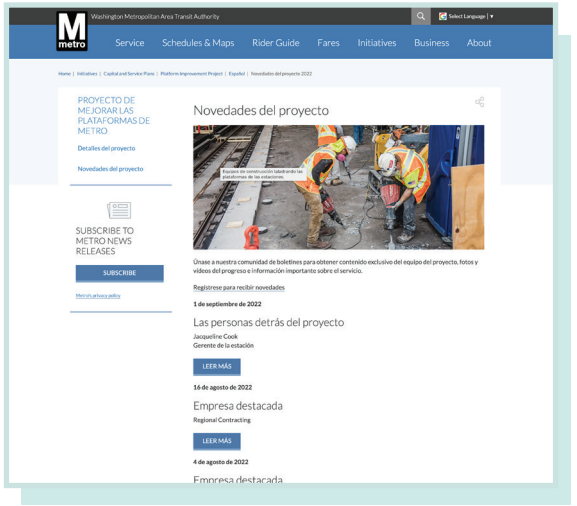
Homepage
English views: 17,377
Spanish views: 1,498

2



Travel Alternatives & Customer Impacts
English views: 11,568
Spanish views: 177

3



Project Updates
English views: 5,458
Spanish views: 173

INSIGHTS

- Across both the English and Spanish web pages, the Homepage, Travel Alternatives & Customer Impacts, and Project Updates pages had the most unique page views. Throughout the project, these pages were promoted the most and were continuously updated to keep customers informed about the most recent project developments.

A Closer Look

Sharing Updates: Newsletters

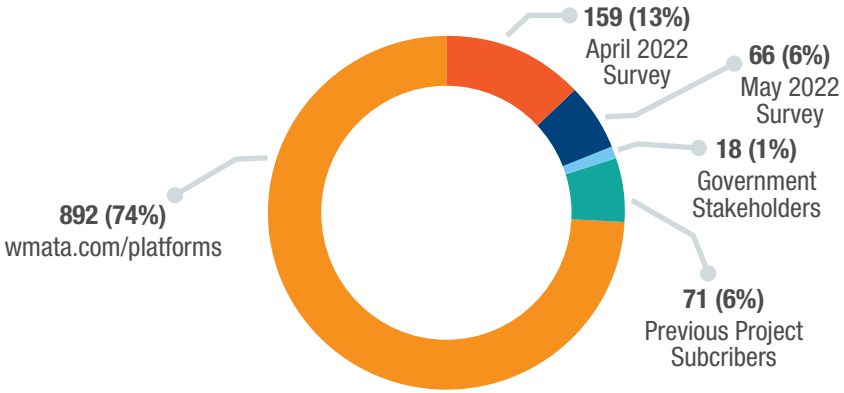
1,206 Subscribers

13 Newsletters

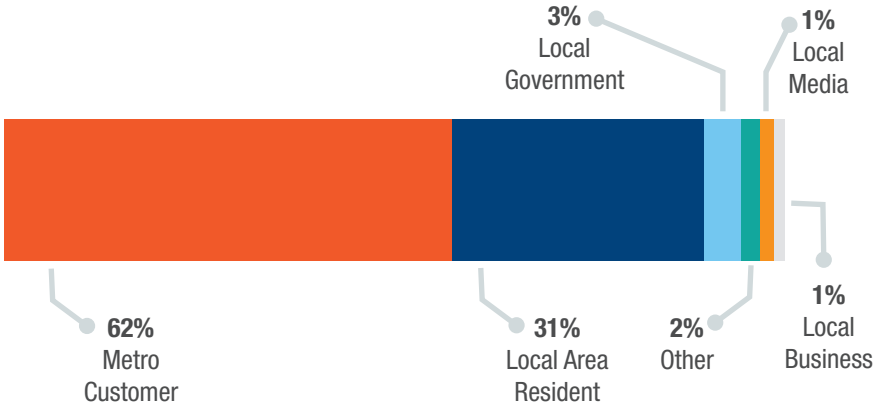
698% Increase In Subscribers After "This Summer" Campaign

An Average of 82% Subscribers Found the Message Helpful Across All Newsletters

Sources of Newsletter Subscribers



Breakdown of Newsletter Survey Respondents



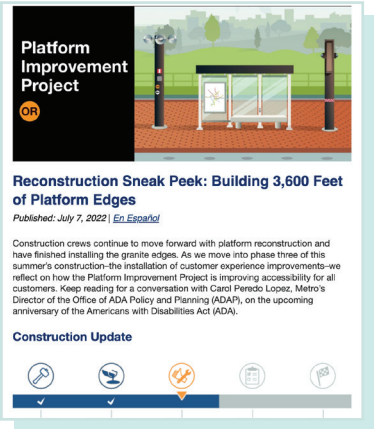
INSIGHTS

- In previous project phases, Metro struggled to share information digitally with customers, because the newsletter subscription base was very low. To solve this problem, a bold, attention-grabbing campaign that invoked enjoyable summer concepts, known internally as "this summer," was created to increase newsletter sign-ups. With a lofty goal to reach 1,000 subscribers by September 1, the campaign successfully exceeded the goal by June.



A Closer Look

Sharing Updates: Newsletters


Platform Improvement Project

OR

Reconstruction Sneak Peek: Building 3,600 Feet of Platform Edges

Published: July 7, 2022 | En Español

Construction crews continue to move forward with platform reconstruction and have finished installing the granite edges. As we move into phase three of this summer's construction–the installation of customer experience improvements–we reflect on how the Platform Improvement Project is improving accessibility for all customers. Keep reading for a conversation with Carol Peredo Lopez, Metro's Director of the Office of ADA Policy and Planning (ADAP), on the upcoming anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Construction Update

31.34% Average Open Rate

6% Average Click Rate

Scan to view a project newsletter!

Before Construction	During Construction	After Construction
5 Newsletters	**7** Newsletters	**1** Newsletter
31.1% Average Open Rate ▲	31.06% Average Open Rate ▲	34.25% Average Open Rate ▲
6.97% Average Click Rate ▲	9.97% Average Click Rate ▲	2% Average Click Rate ▼

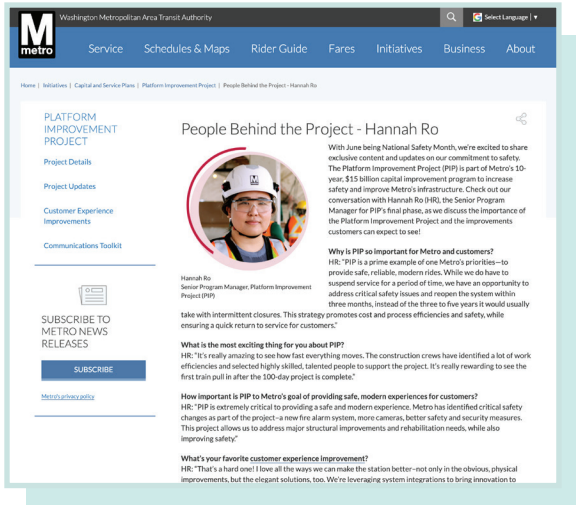
▼ Lower than Industry Standard ▲ Higher than Industry Standard 20.44% Open Rate Standard 2.25% Click Rate Standard

INSIGHTS

- Newsletter recipients engaged with content the most when there were visual components, specifically video content. The most clicked-on link was the timelapse video of demolition at Landover Station.

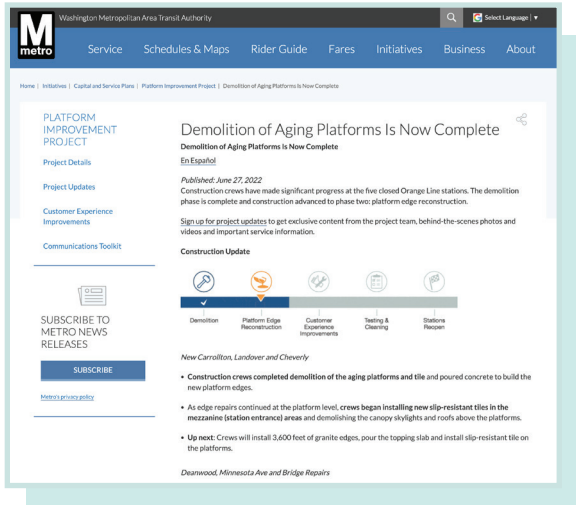
Most Viewed Newsletter Articles

1



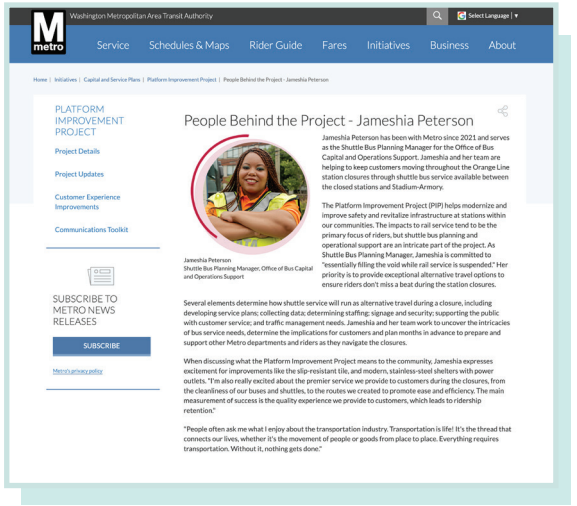
People Behind the Project: Hannah Ro – 217 views

2



June 2022 Construction Update – 203 views

3



People Behind The Project: Jameshia Peterson – 172 views

"It provided an update of construction. And the project manager was introduced. It is nice to put a face on the project. The pictures gave a great visual."

— Local Resident

"The countdown clock got my attention and the quick facts at the top of the message are helpful."

— Local Resident

A Closer Look

Helping Hands: Customer Outreach



Metro staff encourage customers to sign up for project updates at the New Carrollton Station pop-up event.



When the stations reopened, Metro staff welcomed customers back and distributed water bottles as a token of appreciation.

5
Pop-up Events

76
Customer Inquiries Through Customer Service

22,230
Staff Hours Worked

4,354
Mailers Sent to Local Residents

INSIGHTS

- Distribution of paper versions of the newsletter instilled confidence in customers that the project was on schedule by showing construction progress and photos.

"Thank you all for your help. It does really make a difference for those passengers new to this station."

— Customer at Stadium-Armory Station

A Closer Look

Helping Hands: Customer Outreach

Total Customer Engagements

527,806

17% Non-English Engagements







Metro staff engage with customers at pop-up events prior to the station closures.

Common Customer Questions

- How long does the Express Shuttle take compared to the Local Shuttle?
- Will the stations reopen on time?
- What work is being done to the stations?
- Is the shuttle frequency the same on weekdays and weekends?
- Are the Blue Line closures every weekend this summer?

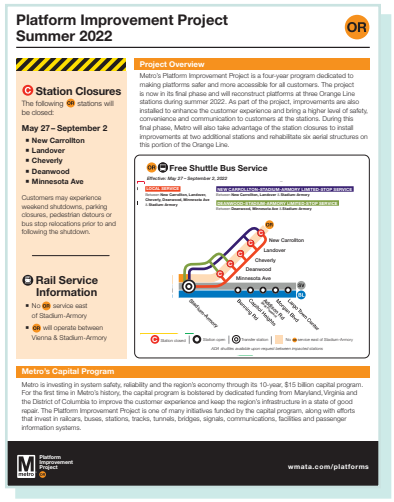
10,630 Giveaways Distributed

- **5,000** Water Bottles
- **4,500** Tote Bags
- **580** USB Fans
- **550** Popsicles

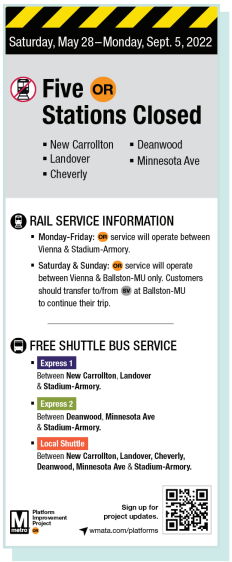
40,122 Handouts Distributed

- **30,442** Station Closures Take-ones
- **7,000** Newsletter Handouts
- **2,680** Bus Relocation Take-ones

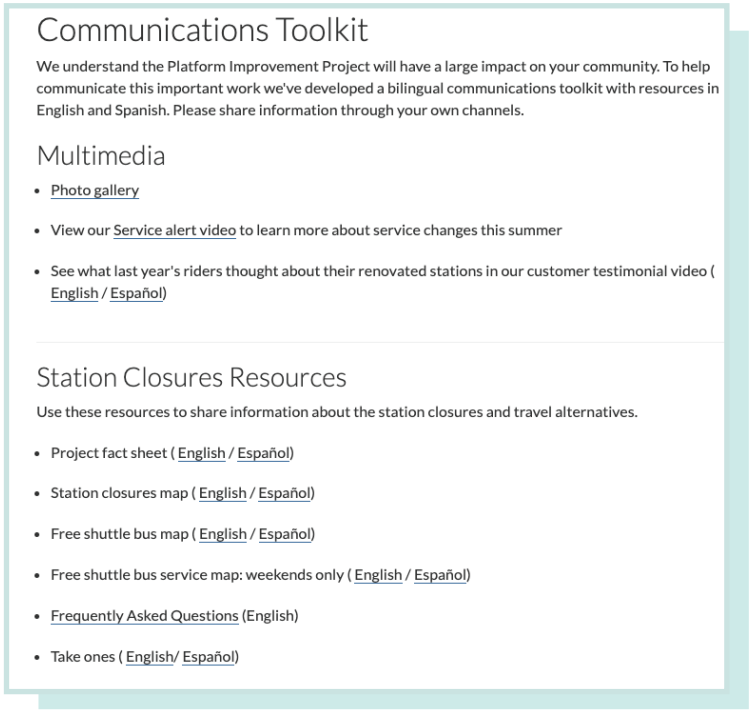
Spreading the Word: Communications Toolkit



Project factsheet



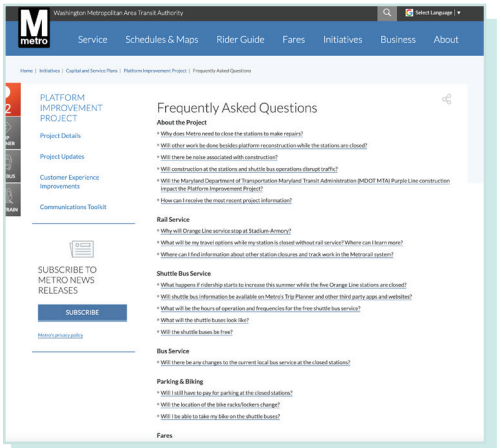
Station closures take-one



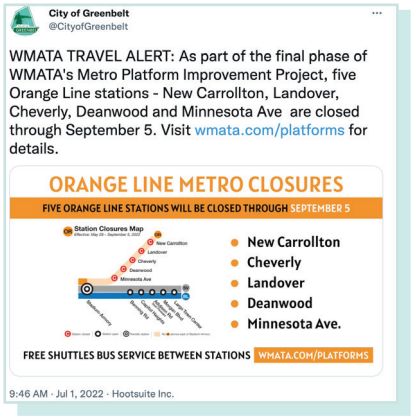
A communications toolkit, with English and Spanish resources including pre-approved messaging, maps, videos, fact sheets, and other project resources was posted on wmata.com/platforms. This page generated 769 page views.



Stakeholders across the region reminded customers of project impacts before, during, and after the closures.



One popular resource, the Frequently Asked Questions page, was viewed nearly 600 times.



Throughout the project, stakeholders used content from the toolkit to share timely and accurate project updates to their audiences.

A Closer Look

Building Partnerships: Stakeholder Outreach

Orange Line Reopening Media Event With:

- Randy Clarke, *Metro General Manager and Chief Executive Officer*
- Floyd Holt, *Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Prince George's Office of the County Executive*
- Chris Van Hollen, *United States Senator, Maryland*
- Dannielle M. Glaros, *Councilmember, Prince George's County*
- Dr. Tracy Hadden Loh, *Metro Board Member*





1,000

Handouts distributed across **30 recreation centers, libraries, and schools.**

INSIGHTS

- Over 40 personal emails sent to stakeholders and material distribution to 30 recreation centers, libraries, schools, and community centers near the closed stations were essential in spreading the word to the greater community, specifically those without Internet access.

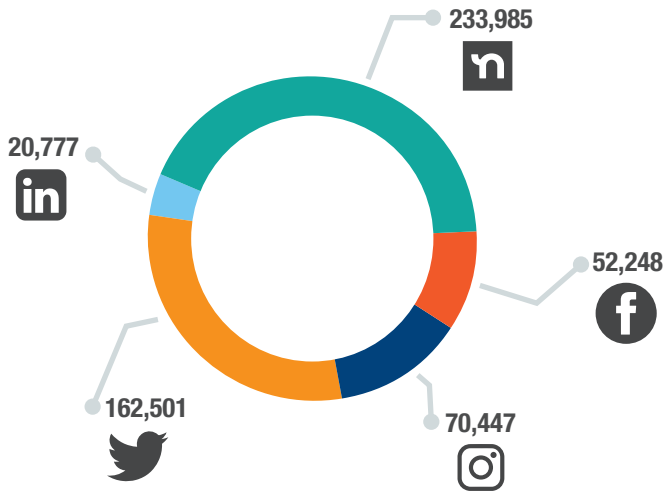
10 Stakeholder Meetings

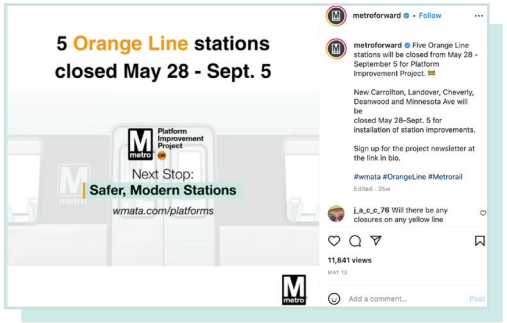
Amplifying the Message: Media & Advertising

Total Reach of Media

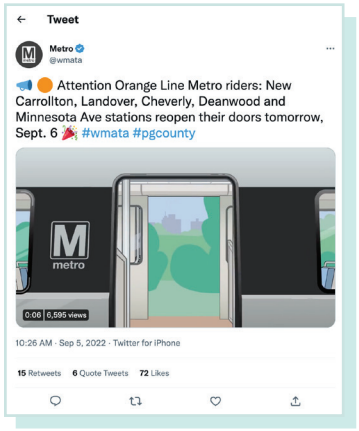
3,551,171

15% Owned Media

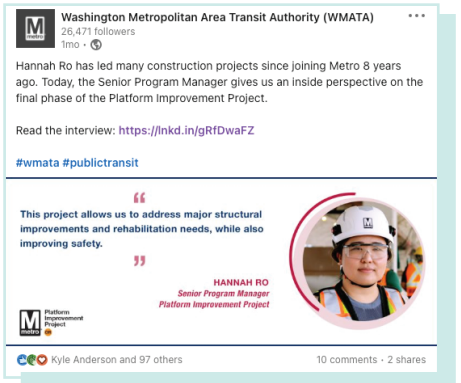




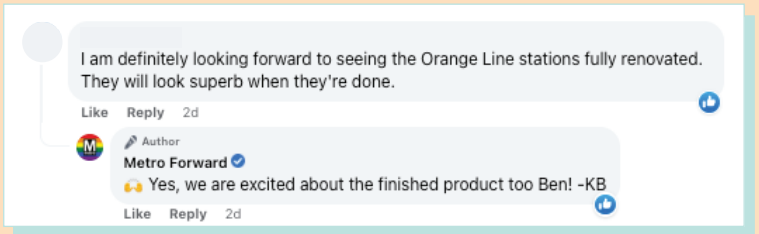
The service alert video was the most popular project Instagram post, generating over 11,800 views.

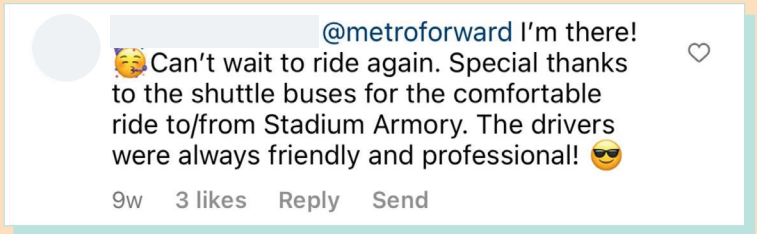


The station reopening video, posted to Twitter, generated 7,651 views and 21 retweets.



Owned media promoting the "People Behind the Project" article on Metro's LinkedIn generated 99 likes and 10 comments.





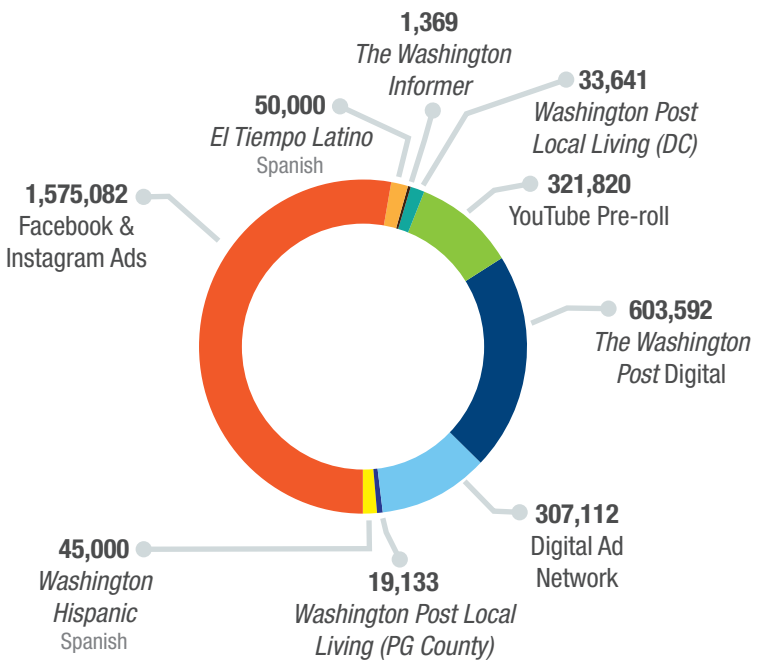
A Closer Look

Amplifying the Message: Media & Advertising

Total Reach of Media

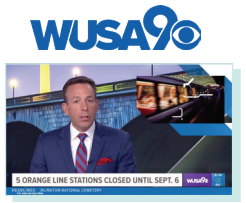
3,551,171

85% Paid Media



Before Construction	During Construction	After Construction
28 Media Stories	**23** Media Stories	**9** Media Stories

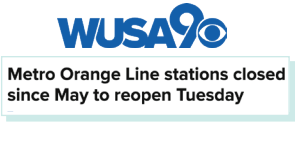


















INSIGHTS

- Building on lessons learned from Metro's Rockville Canopy Replacement Project a few months earlier, *The Washington Post* digital ads continued to bean effective way to inform customers about large capital projects, generating over 600,000 impressions.
- Newsletter content repurposed for social media, specifically the People Behind the Project features, were well-received on LinkedIn, generating shares among Metro employees celebrating their colleagues.

Navigating Change: Station Signage

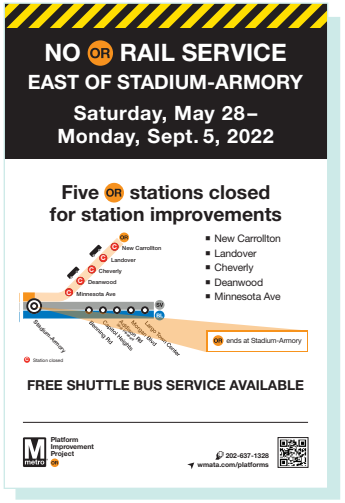
Paper and Digital Signs in the System

593

1,321

QR Code Scans

Before Construction



Notification signage in 26 Orange Line stations.



"This summer" digital signage posted across the system.

During Construction



Shuttle bus signage at six stations.



Station closed signage at five stations.

After Construction



Bus relocation signage at New Carrollton.



"Welcome back" digital signage at five stations.

Appendix A: Customer Demographics

Station	Fall 2019 Weekday Ridership	Minority	Low-income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Languages
New Carrollton	7,100	62%	9%	3%	50%	5%	Spanish, French
Landover	1,900	86%	21%	1%	79%	6%	Spanish
Cheverly	1,100	64%	8%	2%	52%	8%	Spanish
Deanwood	1,500	95%	38%	0%	84%	5%	Spanish
Minnesota Ave	2,400	89%	41%	4%	78%	5%	–

Appendix B: Station Ridership

Station	2019 Weekday Ridership	April 2022	May 2022
Metrorail System	626,270	228,250	231,470
Orange Line	210,110	70,620	69,210
New Carrollton	7,100	1,952	1,904
Landover	1,900	538	561
Cheverly	1,100	336	336
Deanwood	1,500	521	536
Minnesota Ave	2,400	525	540

About the Report
Sources

Information retrieved by September 2022. Information and data in this report is compiled from a variety of sources. In the case of discrepancies between this report and the original data source, the original data source shall prevail.

Page 3. . . . . The communications and outreach campaign was guided by a strategic communications plan developed in November 2021, Metro's Public Participation Plan (PPP), and Metro's Language Assistance Plan (LAP).

Page 7. . . . . Results were drawn from customer surveys conducted in April 2022 and May 2022, inline newsletter surveys, and subscriber numbers in Mailchimp.

Page 8 & 9 . . . . . Google Analytics provided by Metro of wmata.com/platforms from January 2022-September 2022.

Page 10. . . . . Data sourced from inline newsletters survey results, developed using QuestionPro. The number of newsletter recipients represents the total subscribers at the end of the project. Identities listed under "other" in the chart on the right side of the page include, but are not limited to, Metro employees working on the project, federal employees, and contractors.

Page 11. . . . . Data sourced from Mailchimp newsletters sent between February 2022 and September 2022. Subscription numbers and engagement fluctuated throughout the project. The industry standard is a benchmark used by Mailchimp to compare Metro's newsletter campaign analytics with similar organizations categorized in the "Travel and Transportation" industry.

Page 12. . . . . Google Analytics provided by Metro of wmata.com/platforms Project Updates page from May 2022-September 2022.

Pages 13 & 14 . . . Data sourced from IdleTime Advertising outreach team reporting between March 2022 and September 2022.

Page 15. . . . . Google Analytics provided by Metro of wmata.com/platforms Communications toolkit page from March 2022-September 2022.

Page 16. . . . . Data for owned social media metrics provided by Metro from February 2022-Septermber 2022.

Page 18. . . . . Data for paid advertisements sourced from Facebook, Instagram, DyAdmic, *El Tiempo Latino*, YouTube, *The Washington Post*, *Washington Hispanic*, and *The Washington Informer* from April-September 2022.

Page 19. . . . . Total QR codes scans are from posted signage and handouts distributed at New Carrollton, Landover, Cheverly, Deanwood, Minnesota Ave, and Deanwood.

Page 20. . . . . Data sourced from Metro's PPP.

Page 21. . . . . Data sourced from Metro's Ridership Portal. Data in each column is the weekday average.


ORANGE LINE
DEANWOOD
STATION
ORANGE LINE TO
NEW CARROLLTON
ORANGE LINE TO
VIENNA-FAIRFAX-GMU



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