# Platform Reconstruction and Safety Improvements

Phase IV Communications and Outreach Report

November 2022

# Contents

## 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.
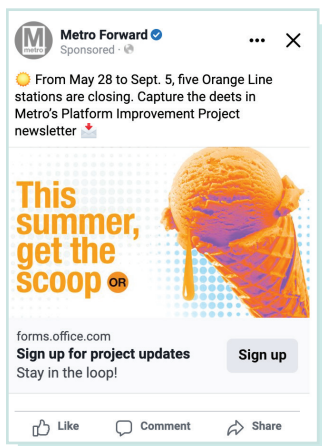
## Before Construction

December 1, 2021–May 27, 2022
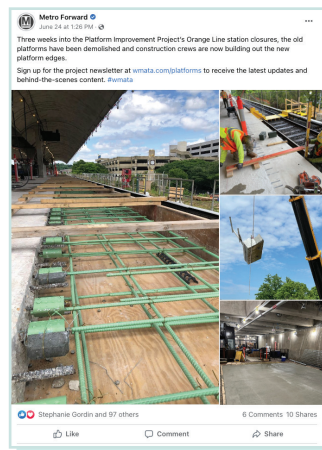
## During Construction

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
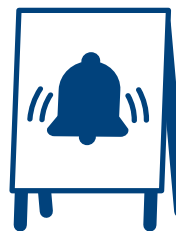- Community-based organization outreach

**60** earned media stories

**44,150** unique web page views

**593** wayfinding and notification signs

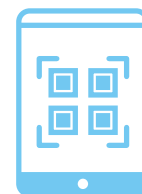**527,806** customer engagements

**40,122** handouts distributed
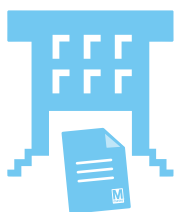
**3,551,171** media impressions

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

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.

**48%**
April 2022

**58%**
May 2022

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

**50%**
April 2022

**75%**
May 202

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

**515**
April 2022

**1,206**
September 2022

**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.

## Going Digital: wmata.com/platforms
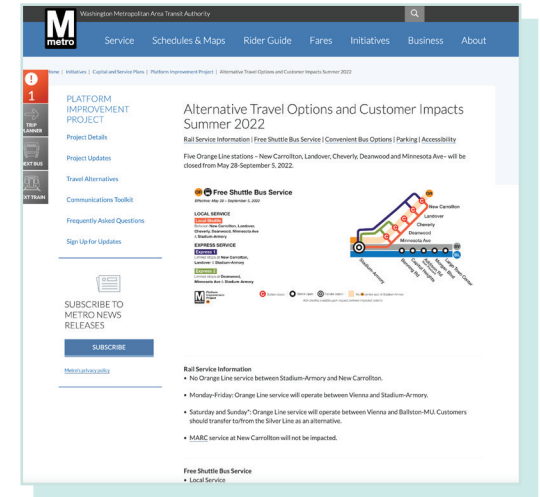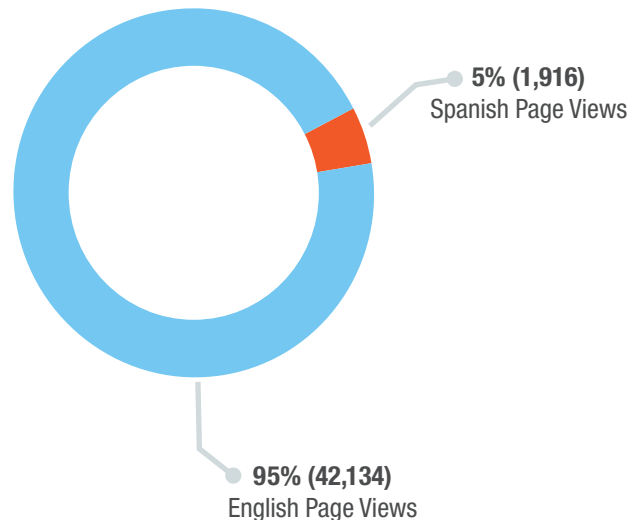
Unique Page Views Over
9 Month Timeframe

**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.
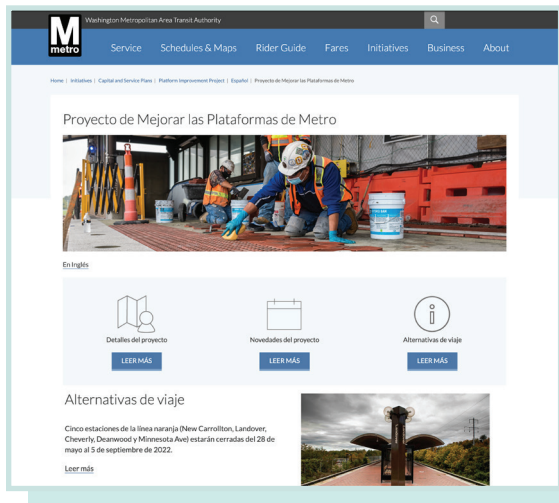
**INSIGHTS**

- 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.

## Going Digital: wmata.com/platforms

# Most Viewed English and Spanish Web Pages

**1**



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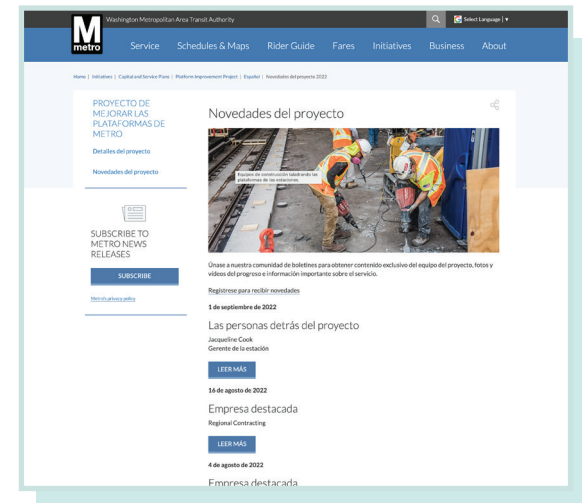English views: 17,377
Spanish views: 1,498

**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
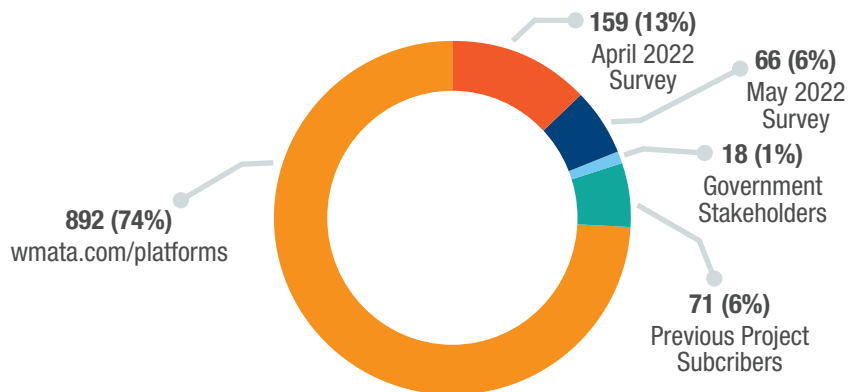## Sharing Updates: Newsletters

**1,206** Subscribers

**13** Newsletters

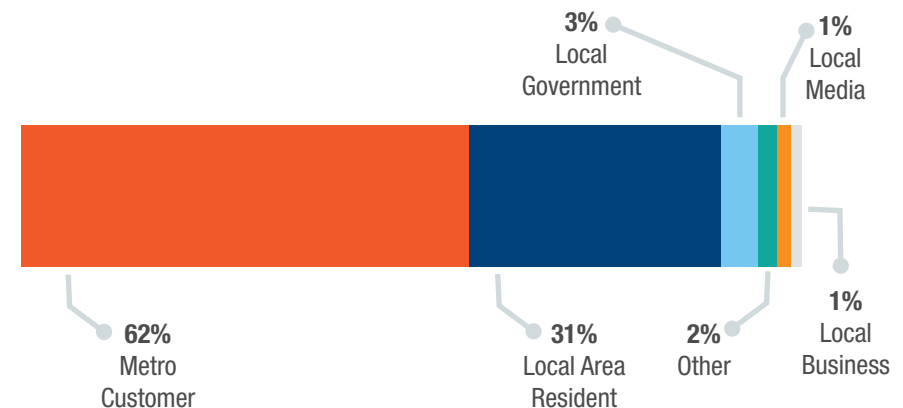**698%** Increase In Subscribers After "This Summer" Campaign

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

### Sources of Newsletter Subscribers

**159 (13%)** April 2022 Survey

**66 (6%)** May 2022 Survey

**18 (1%)** Government Stakeholders

**892 (74%)** wmata.com/platforms

**71 (6%)** Previous Project Subcribers

### Breakdown of Newsletter Survey Respondents

**3%** Local Government

**1%** Local Media

**62%** Metro Customer

**31%** Local Area Resident
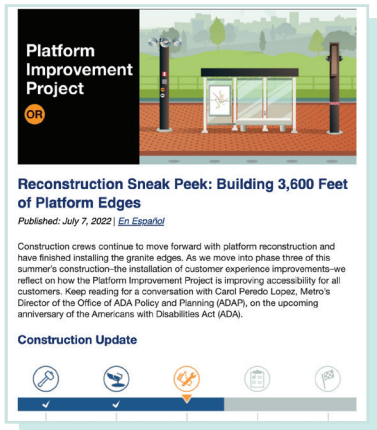
**2%** Other

**1%** Local Business

### 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.

This summer, get the scoop OR

## Sharing Updates: Newsletters

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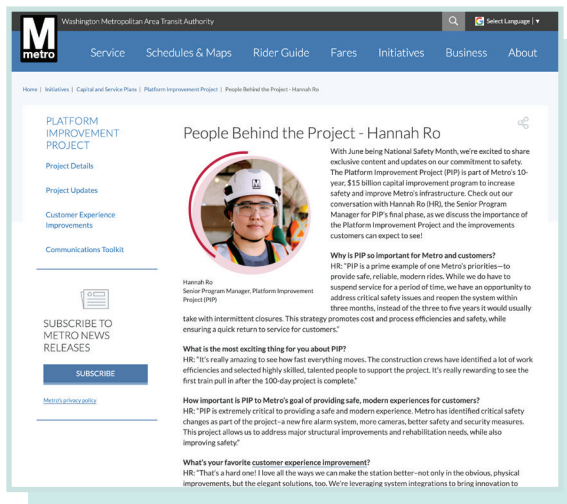
### INSIGHTS
- Newsletter recipients engaged with content the most when there were visual components, specifically video content. The most clicked-on link was the timelapse video of demolition at Landover Station.
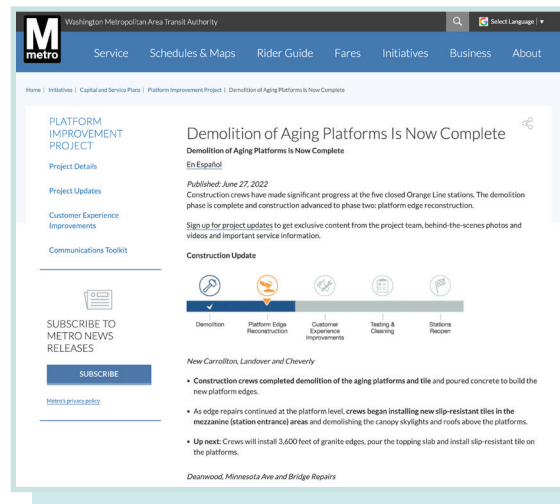
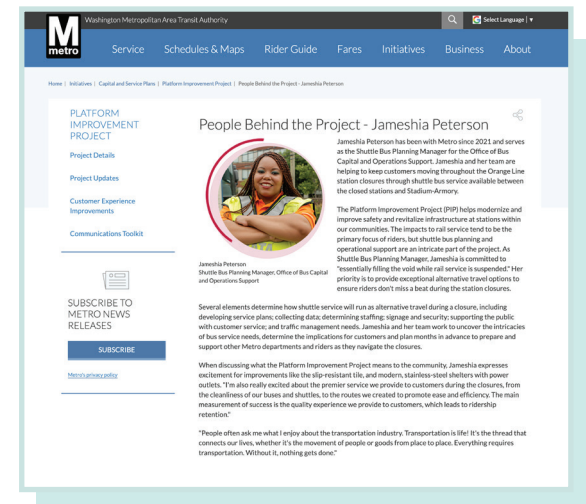## Most Viewed Newsletter Articles

# 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

## Helping Hands: Customer Outreach

Total Customer Engagements
**527,806**

17% Non-English Engagements

ሰላም

안녕하세요

**SPANISH 10%**

**OTHER 1%**

Korean, Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, Arabic, German, Portuguese

**AMHARIC 6%**

*hello*     *hola*





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

## Communications Toolkit

We understand the Platform Improvement Project will have a large impact on your community. To help communicate this important work we've developed a bilingual communications toolkit with resources in English and Spanish. Please share information through your own channels.

### Multimedia

- Photo gallery

- View our Service alert video to learn more about service changes this summer

- See what last year's riders thought about their renovated stations in our customer testimonial video ( English / Español)

### Station Closures Resources

Use these resources to share information about the station closures and travel alternatives.

- Project fact sheet ( English / Español)

- Station closures map ( English / Español)

- Free shuttle bus map ( English / Español)

- Free shuttle bus service map: weekends only ( English / Español)

- Frequently Asked Questions (English)

- Take ones ( English/ Español)

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.

## 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

- 233,985 (nextdoor)
- 20,777 (LinkedIn)
- 52,248 (Facebook)
- 162,501 (Twitter)
- 70,447 (Instagram)



5 Orange Line stations closed May 28 - Sept. 5

Next Stop: Safer, Modern Stations

wmata.com/platforms

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



Tweet

Metro @wmata

📢 🟠 Attention Orange Line Metro riders: New Carrollton, Landover, Cheverly, Deanwood and Minnesota Ave stations reopen their doors tomorrow, Sept. 6 🎉 #wmata #pgcounty

10:26 AM · Sep 5, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

15 Retweets  6 Quote Tweets  72 Likes

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



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
26,471 followers
1mo

Hannah Ro has led many construction projects since joining Metro 8 years ago. Today, the Senior Program Manager gives us an inside perspective on the final phase of the Platform Improvement Project.

Read the interview: https://lnkd.in/gRfDwaFZ

#wmata #publictransit

"This project allows us to address major structural improvements and rehabilitation needs, while also improving safety."

HANNAH RO
Senior Program Manager
Platform Improvement Project

Kyle Anderson and 97 others     10 comments · 2 shares

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

👍 I am definitely looking forward to seeing the Orange Line stations fully renovated. They will look superb when they're done.
Like   Reply   2d

Author
Metro Forward
🙌 Yes, we are excited about the finished product too Ben! -KB
Like   Reply   2d

👍 @metroforward I'm there! 🥲 Can't wait to ride again. Special thanks to the shuttle buses for the comfortable ride to/from Stadium Armory. The drivers were always friendly and professional! 😎
9w   3 likes   Reply   Send

Total Reach of Media
## 3,551,171

**85%** Paid Media



- 1,369 — *The Washington Informer*
- 33,641 — *Washington Post Local Living (DC)*
- 50,000 — *El Tiempo Latino* Spanish
- 321,820 — YouTube Pre-roll
- 1,575,082 — Facebook & Instagram Ads
- 603,592 — *The Washington Post* Digital
- 45,000 — *Washington Hispanic* Spanish
- 19,133 — *Washington Post Local Living (PG County)*
- 307,112 — Digital Ad Network

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



**dcist** — Five Orange Line Stations To Close This Summer In Final Leg Of Metro's Platform Project

**WUSA9** — 5 ORANGE LINE STATIONS CLOSED UNTIL SEPT. 6

**THE WASHINGTON Informer** — COMMUNITY — Metro Reopening Orange Line Stations East of the Stadium-Armory — by WI Web Staff — September 5, 2022

**T44 TELEMUNDO** — METRO — Cerrarán 5 estaciones de Metro en la línea naranja durante el verano de 2022 — Las estaciones que cerrarán son: New Carrollton, Landover y Cheverly en el condado de Prince George's en Maryland, y Deanwood y Minnesota Avenue en el noreste de D.C.

**MASS TRANSIT** BETTER TRANSIT THROUGH BETTER MANAGEMENT — TECHNOLOGY > FACILITIES > SHELTERS, STATIONS, FIXTURES, PARKING & LIGHTING — Final phase of WMATA's multi-year Platform Improvement Project begins this weekend, closing five Orange Line stations

**WUSA9** — Metro Orange Line stations closed since May to reopen Tuesday

## 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.

| Before Construction | During Construction | After Construction |
|---|---|---|

**Paper and Digital Signs in the System**

**593**

**1,321** QR Code Scans



Notification signage in 26 Orange Line stations.



"This summer" digital signage posted across the system.



Shuttle bus signage at six stations.



Station closed signage at five stations.



Bus relocation signage at New Carrollton.
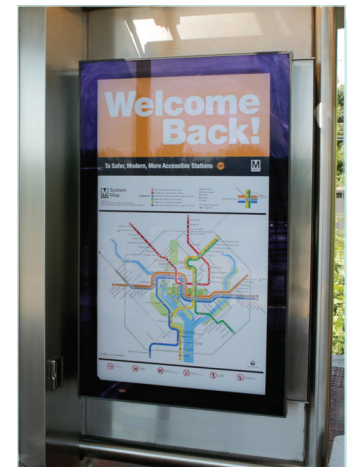


"Welcome back" digital signage at five stations.

## 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% | – |

# About the Report
## 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 |

**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

For questions about this report, contact:

Morgan Bassford
Communications Consultant
✉ *mbassford@wmata.com*