



Rockville Canopy Replacement Project

Communications and Outreach Report
April 2022



Previous page: Newly constructed Rockville canopy, January 2022.

*Above: Rockville canopy steel beam installation, October 2021.
Photo was captured during a drone flyover.*

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About the Project

Rockville Canopy Replacement Project: Building a Safer and More Reliable System

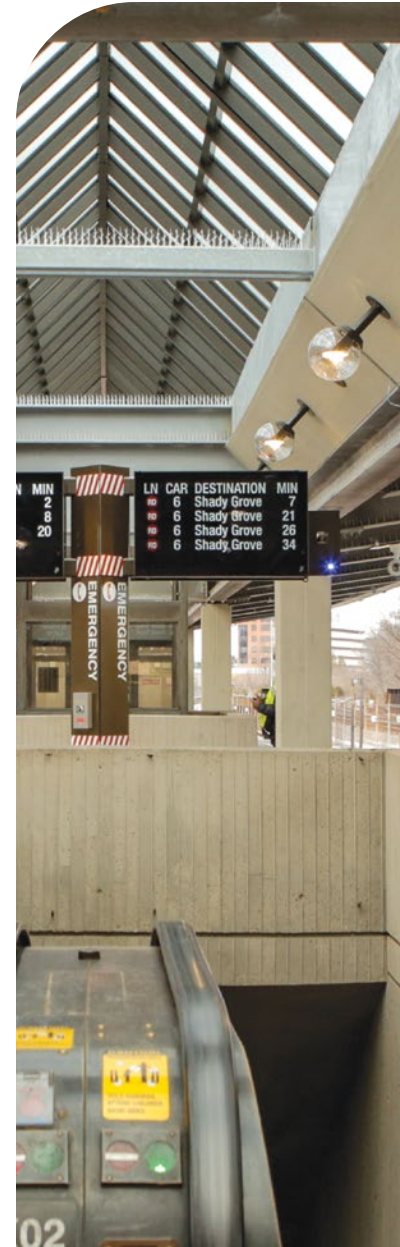
The \$15M project to replace the aging canopy over the Rockville Station platform was part of Metro's multiyear Capital Improvement Program to invest in the system's safety and reliability and the region's economy. To support Metro's goals, the canopy was rebuilt and now features new, more efficient LED lights, upgraded speakers for station announcements, new digital screens for passenger information and new CCTV cameras for improved security. Additional work to improve the canopy infrastructure is expected to continue in the future.

Communications & Outreach Campaign: Navigating Customers Through a New Travel Experience

Shady Grove and Rockville stations closed, with no rail service on Sept. 11, 2021. Originally scheduled to reopen on Dec. 4, 2021, the reopening date was adjusted to Jan. 16, 2022 to allow Metro to address unforeseen service challenges and materials issues.

With rail service temporarily halted due to the project, customers experienced new ways to travel: for nearly four months, free shuttle bus service replaced rail service between Shady Grove and Twinbrook stations, parking was temporarily limited at two stations and Metrobus and Montgomery County Ride On (Ride On) bus stops were relocated at Rockville Station. To help the public and stakeholders understand these changes, Metro launched a multichannel communications and outreach campaign. This report summarizes the communications and outreach strategy and results.

The original 450-ton canopy at Rockville Station was demolished and rebuilt from late 2021 into early 2022. The new canopy, pictured here, is made up of 400,000 pounds of steel and provides 21,000 square feet of coverage for customers.



Campaign Duration

- 10 months (May 2021-February 2022)

Audiences

- **Target:** Transit customers at Shady Grove and Rockville stations, stakeholders, regional transit providers and community groups in Montgomery County.
- **Secondary:** Employees, media, infrequent customers and visitors.

Objectives

- Increase public understanding of travel alternatives, community impacts and station changes as a result of the project.
- Improve Metro's reputation as a transit agency that handles station closures appropriately.
- Build public trust and confidence that the station closures are necessary to improve safety, service reliability and the customer experience.
- Drive awareness and education about Metro's Capital Improvement Program.



Strategic Communications Plan

Guided by Metro's Public Participation Plan and Language Assistance Plan, the Rockville Canopy Replacement Project communications and outreach campaign was designed to reach customers at their stations, in their neighborhoods and in their homes. This was achieved through a variety of tactics including in-person station assistance, social media, local news placement, 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.

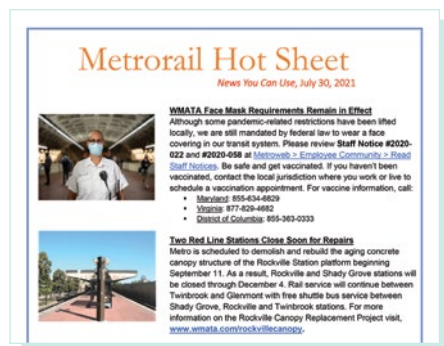
Tactics

The Rockville Canopy Replacement Project communications and outreach campaign was guided by research-based strategies to innovatively communicate timely, transparent and accurate information to customers and stakeholders. Expanding on success-driven strategies from previous projects, comprehensive tactics were deployed to increase project awareness and understanding among target audiences.

Before Construction

Timeframe: May 1–Sept. 10, 2021

Tactics: Web page, press releases, stakeholder coordination, customer research, customer signage, service maps, handouts, in-person station assistance, photo content, employee communications, customer service briefings, multilingual communications toolkit, e-blasts, paid media



During Construction

Timeframe: Sept. 11, 2021–Jan. 15, 2022

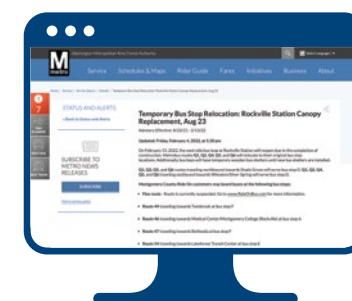
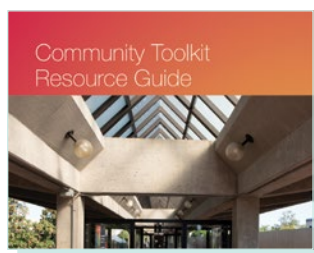
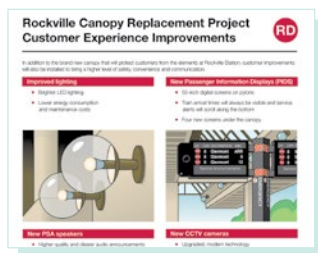
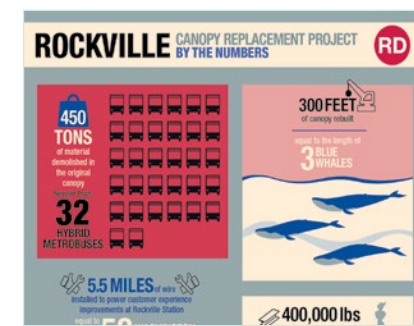
Tactics: Web page, stakeholder coordination, shuttle bus signage, press releases, in-person station assistance, photo and video content, employee communications, multilingual communications toolkit, biweekly e-blasts, owned media




After Construction

Timeframe: Jan. 16–Feb. 28, 2022

Tactics: Web page, stakeholder coordination, customer research, customer signage, handouts, in-person station assistance, employee communications, e-blasts, owned media, digital signage, welcome back campaign



Results By the Numbers



80+%
e-blast survey
respondents said
the **e-blasts**
were helpful



26,257
unique web
page views



555
wayfinding
and
notification
signs




565,643
customer engagements



28,326
handouts
distributed



1,229,057
media impressions



average
e-blast click rate
6.8%



883
QR code
scans




7 press
releases



8 stakeholder
meetings




14
e-blasts sent



average e-blast opens
30.2%



432
e-blast recipients



117
earned
media
stories



24%
increase
in customer
awareness from
July to September

Results

Key Performance Indicators



Customer awareness increased from

54%
July
2021

to

78%
September
2021



Customer trust that the closure was necessary increased from

55%
September
2021

to

71%
February
2022



Customer belief that Metro managed the closure well increased from

31%
September
2021

to

53%
February
2022

Using a data-driven approach by consistently measuring and implementing customer feedback, the communications and outreach campaign proved to be a success:

- As Metro increased communication about the project, customer awareness and trust also increased. As a result, project awareness among current customers at Shady Grove and Rockville stations improved **24 percentage points** between July and September.
- During the campaign, Metro enhanced email communications by integrating interactive content, which helped convey the right message to the right audience. **Four out of five** e-blast survey respondents found Metro's information helpful throughout the project.
- The most successful channels to share project updates with customers were digital communications, newspaper articles, press releases and signs in Metrorail stations. Digital communications from Metro was the most utilized source by customers, with **36%** of respondents noting they used these to learn about project updates.



INSIGHTS

- New and traditional research methods, such as inline email surveys, were utilized to gain insight into audience preferences and shape the communications campaign.

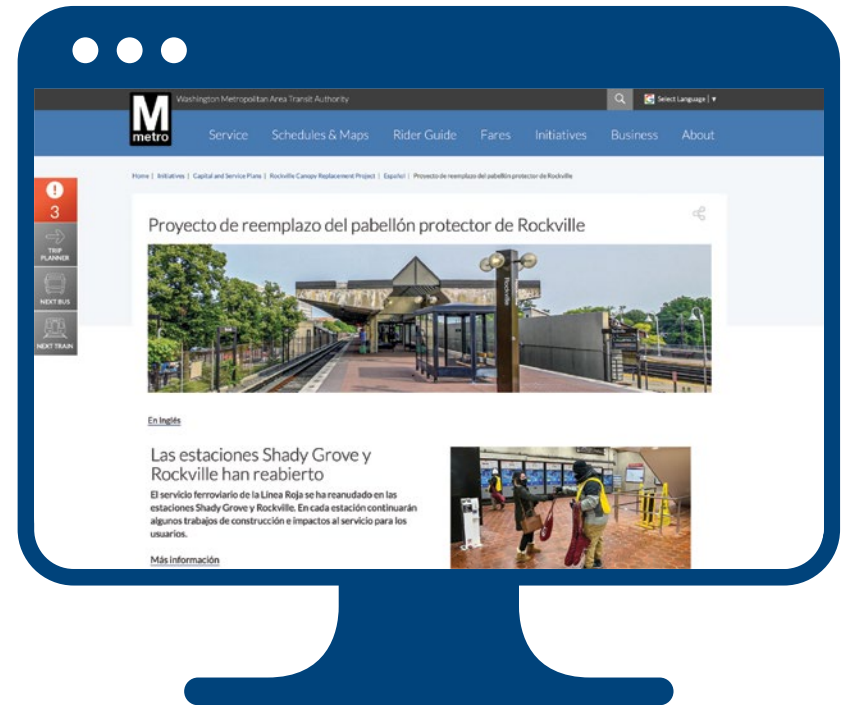
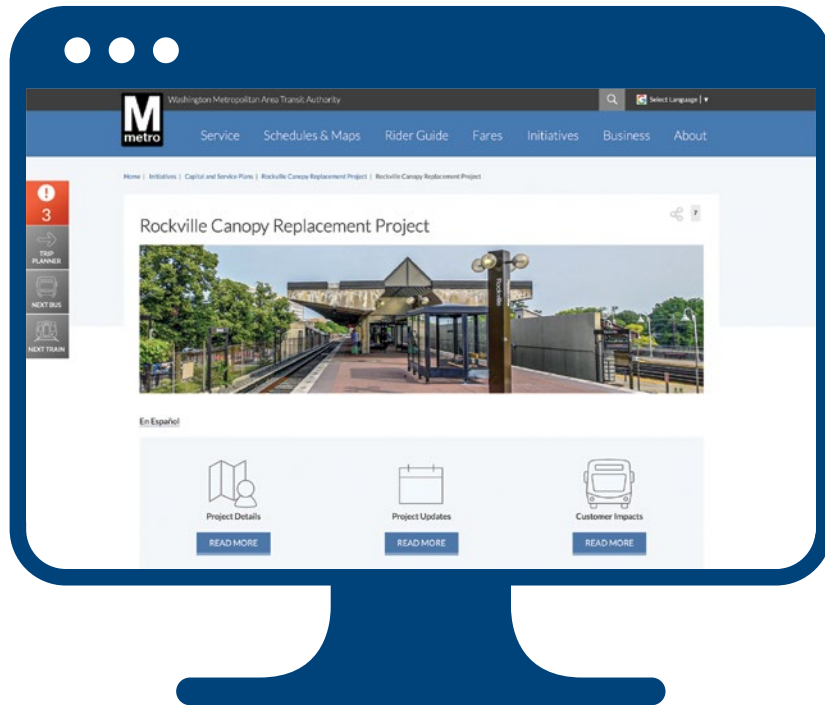


"Thank you for being out here and informing the customers."

— Customer at Shady Grove Station

A Closer Look

Online Presence: wmata.com/rockvillecanopy

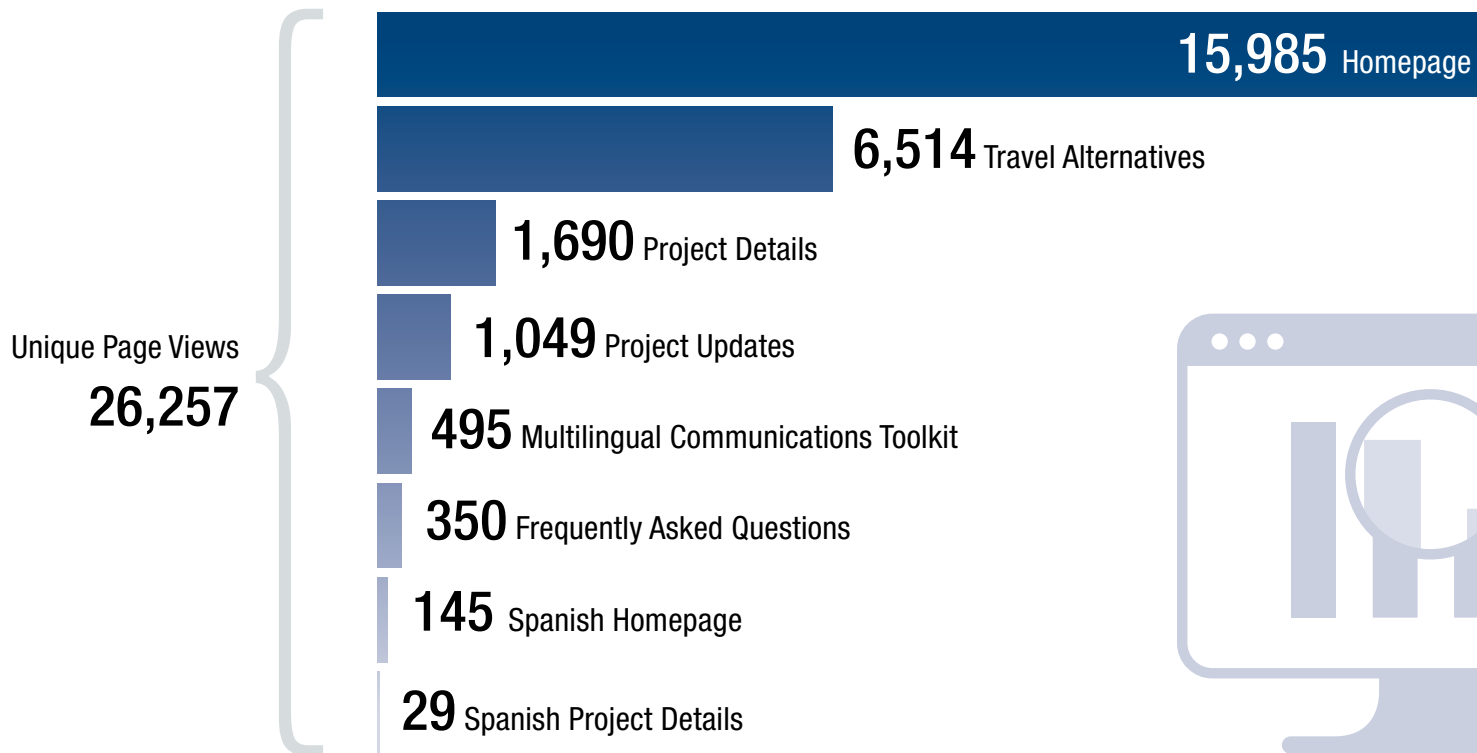


INSIGHTS

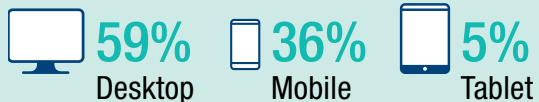
- External stakeholders generated more traffic to the web page than social media posts, demonstrating the importance of sharing project information and coordinating early and often with stakeholders.

A Closer Look

Online Presence: wmata.com/rockvillecanopy



Web Page Views



Top Web Page Referrals



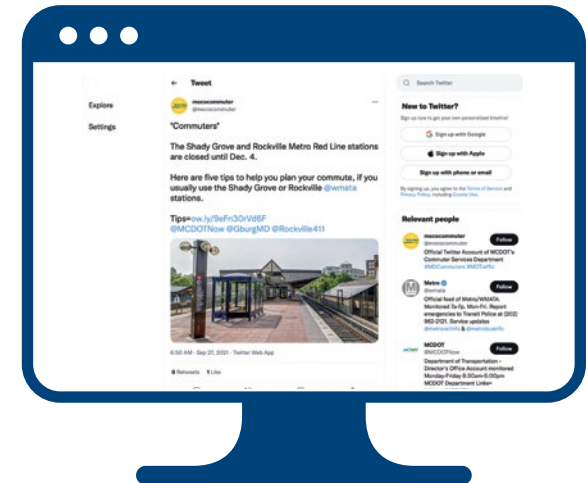
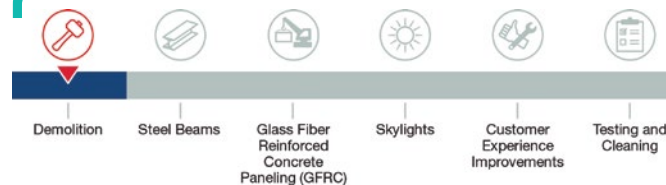
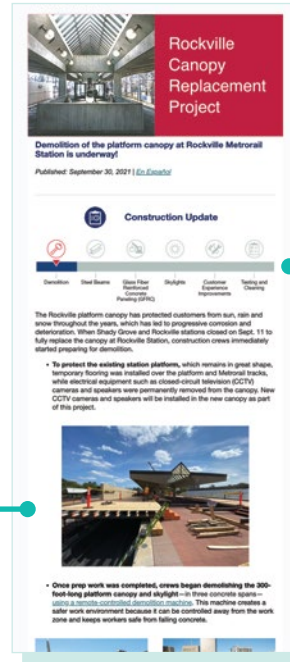
A Closer Look In the Know: E-blasts



E-blasts shared important project updates, such as the top five things to know about the stations reopening.



Scan this QR code to view the project update e-blast from Sept. 30.



External stakeholders, such as Montgomery County Department of Transportation, reposted e-blasts on social media to increase the content's reach.

A timeline informed readers about the different phases of construction as work progressed.



INSIGHTS

- Recipients engaged with e-blast content most during the closure, when average clicks and opens exceeded industry standards. The most clicked links were videos of construction and information about SmarTrip® card replacement.
- Results from the inline survey indicate that customers found e-blasts most helpful when behind-the-scenes content, a timeline of construction and information about other related Metro projects were included.

A Closer Look

In the Know: E-blasts



14 Total E-blasts



432 E-blast Recipients

6.8% Average Click Rate / 30.2% Average Open Rate

Before Construction

4 E-blasts Sent

4% Average Click Rate ▼

21.7% Average Open Rate ▼

During Construction

7 E-blasts Sent

10.4% Average Click Rate ▲

40.9% Average Open Rate ▲

After Construction

3 E-blasts Sent

7.6% Average Click Rate ▲

32.6% Average Open Rate ▼

▼ Lower than Industry Standard ▲ Higher than Industry Standard

E-blast Engagement Compared to Industry Standards

30.2% Average Open Rate ▼

38.6% Industry Standard

6.8% Average Click Rate ▲

6.4% Industry Standard



"I am waiting for the Shady Grove and Rockville stations to reopen so thank you for keeping me posted."

— Local Resident

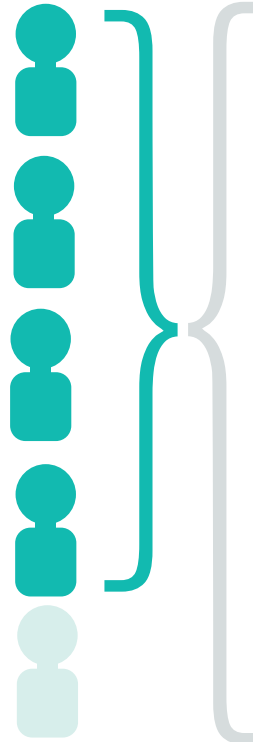
A Closer Look

In the Know: E-blasts

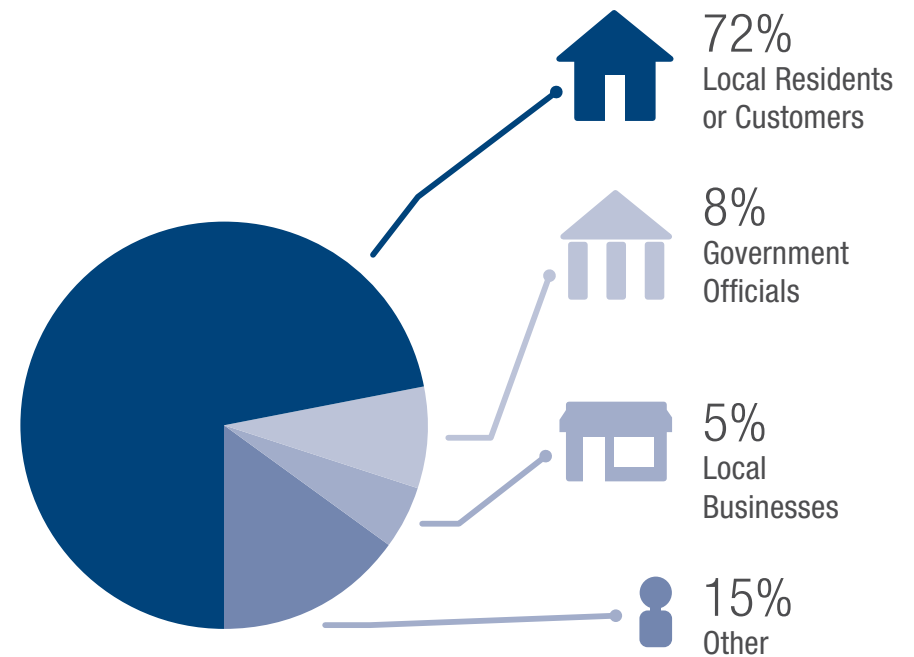


E-blasts included an inline survey soliciting feedback on the content to inform future communications messaging and decisions.

Over 4 in 5 (80+%) respondents reported project update e-blasts were helpful.



The identities of those respondents are:



“Great, detailed info. Love all the specifics about the technology, equipment, features, and progress. Also love the historical photos.”

— Local Resident



“The Metro project team was very helpful in addressing issues.”

— Montgomery County Department of Transportation Stakeholder

A Closer Look

Dive In: Photo and Video Content



Scan the QR code to view a 30-second timelapse video showing demolition of the original canopy. This video was shared on social media and was included in the Oct. 15 e-blast.



A 30-second video displayed service information on digital screens aboard 7000-series trains. This video supplemented the on-train system map to share important information with customers in real time.



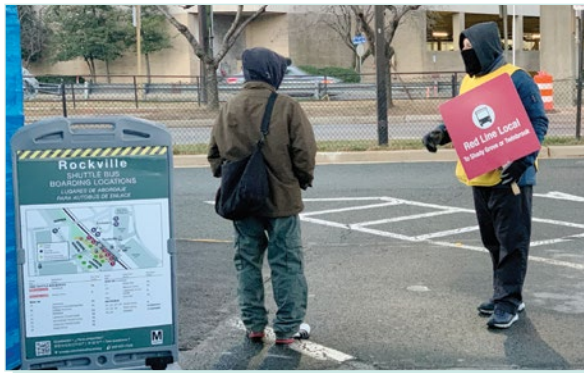
Scan the QR code to view drone footage taken during the steel beam installation phase of construction. This video was shared in the Oct. 28 e-blast and was posted on Metro's YouTube channel, generating 710 views and 10 comments.



Scan the QR code to view the online photo gallery, which contained construction photos to keep customers informed on project status.

A Closer Look

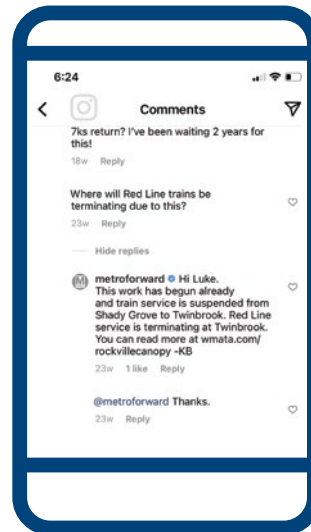
Here to Help: Customer Outreach



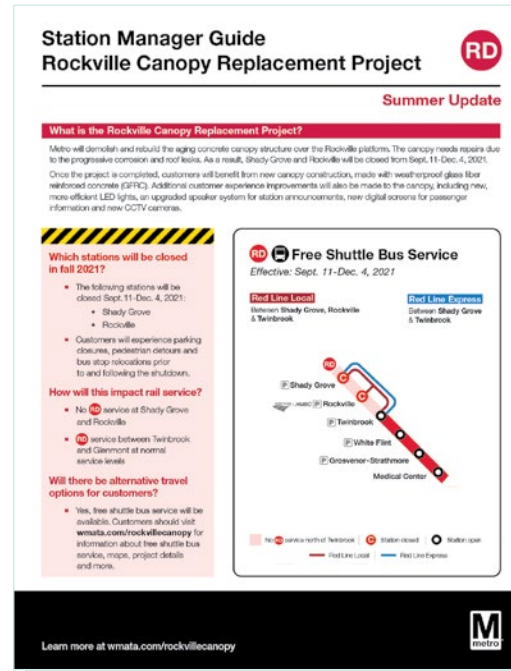
Metro staff helped customers navigate free shuttle bus service at the stations throughout the closures.



Metro and Ride On collaborated for pop-up events at the closed stations.



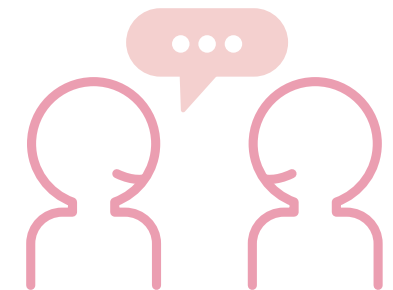
Customer service staff engaged with and assisted customers on Metro's social media channels.



Information was shared with station managers and customer service staff, who were instrumental in sharing project information and assisting customers with trip planning.



Station managers assisted customers with fare machines when the stations reopened.



INSIGHTS

- Regional transit provider attendance at outreach events was essential to providing accurate trip planning advice and ensuring customers understood all travel alternatives available during the shutdown.



“Everything said is great information for all parties and Metro is staying transparent with their stakeholders. The more the public is informed the least speculation and rumors.”

— Metro Employee

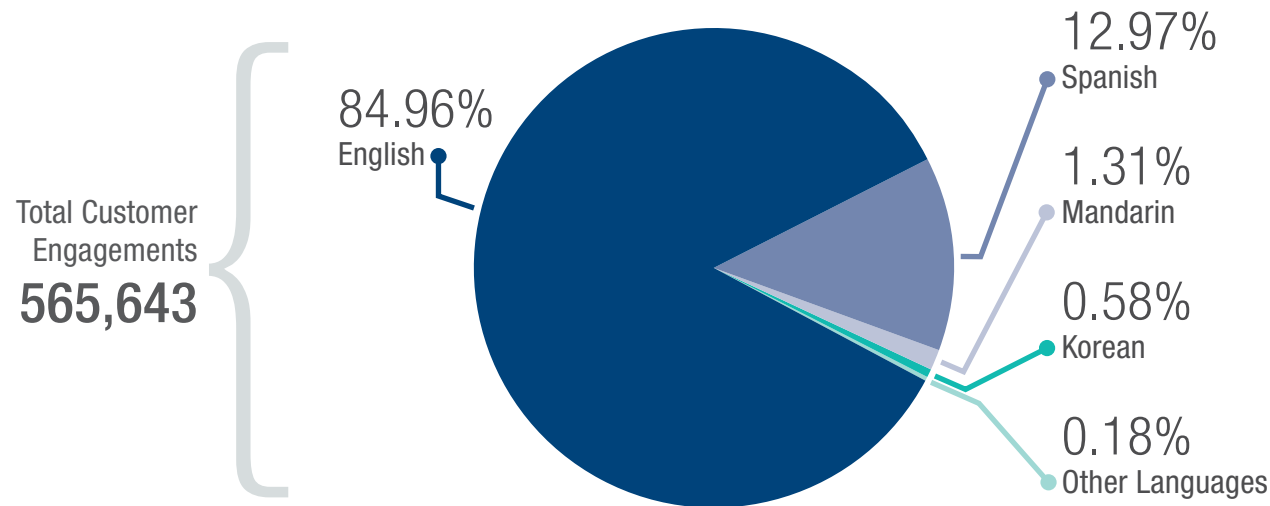
A Closer Look

Here to Help: Customer Outreach



“Thank you for having someone that speaks Spanish every day!”

— Customer at Rockville Station



hello hola 안녕하세요您好

Common Customer Questions

- “What is the schedule for the shuttle buses?”
- “Will the pedestrian tunnels at Shady Grove and Rockville stations remain open during the closures?”
- “Why is the reopening delayed?”
- “How can I check my SmarTrip® card balance?”
- “What repairs are being completed at Rockville?”

28,326 Items Distributed



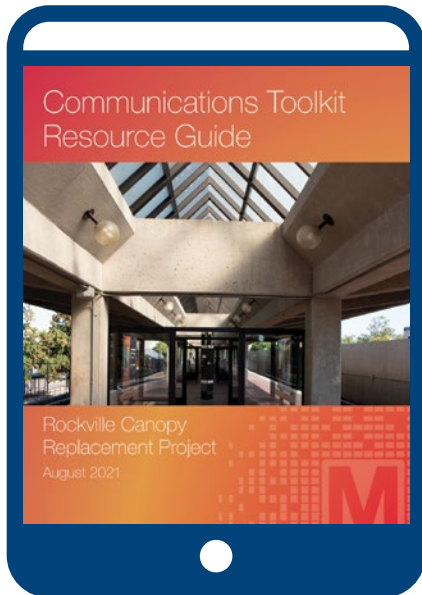
89
Mailers



Mailers were sent to residences and businesses within one-tenth of a mile of the construction site to inform them of noise impacts.

A Closer Look

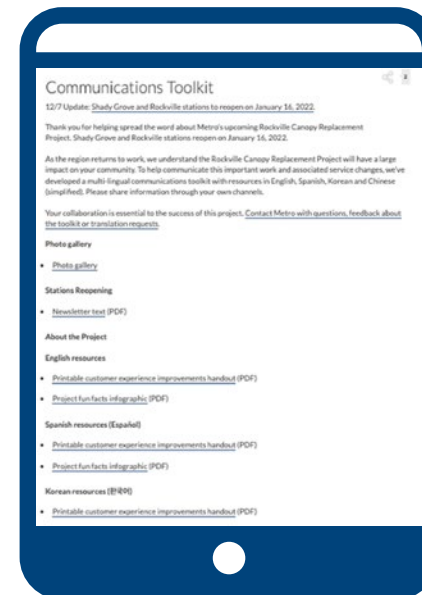
Regional Coordination: Stakeholder Outreach



A multilingual communications toolkit was created to encourage stakeholders to share accurate and timely project updates with their audiences.



The multilingual communications toolkit included pre-approved messaging, maps, fact sheets and other project resources in English, Spanish, Chinese (simplified) and Korean.



As the project progressed, the multilingual communications toolkit was updated to reflect up-to-date information.



Stakeholders throughout the region used the multilingual communications toolkit to share key project updates on social media and in their newsletters to increase message penetration.

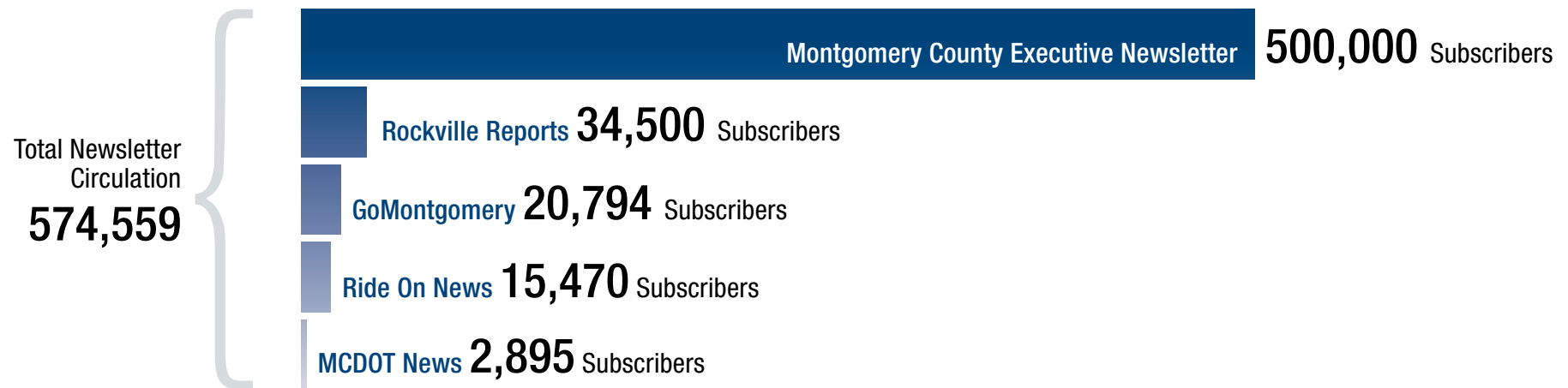
A Closer Look

Regional Coordination: Stakeholder Outreach



25

Number of times local newsletters shared information about the Rockville Canopy Replacement Project.



INSIGHTS

- The combination of hosting monthly coordination meetings and sharing the multilingual communications toolkit provided stakeholders with the resources needed to amplify Metro's messaging and share accurate and timely information.



"I liked the toolkit's simplicity in terms of cutting and pasting, and that there were pre-approved Metro messages for us to share the messages with our communications folks."

— Maryland Transit Administration Stakeholder

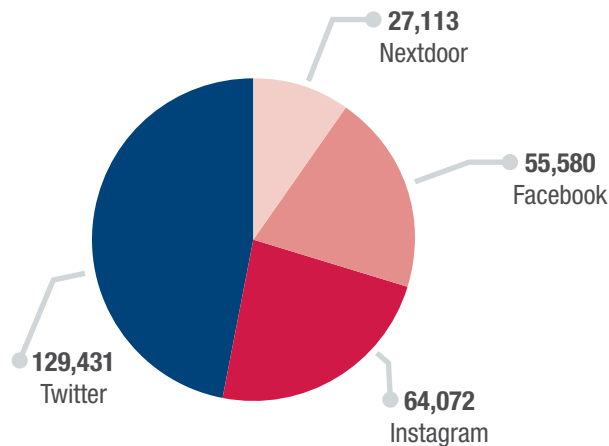


A Closer Look

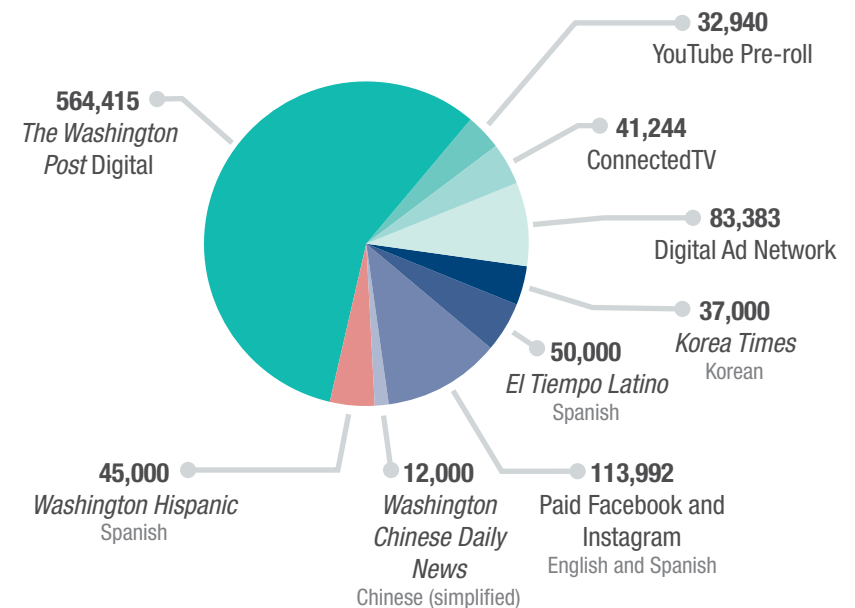
Spread the Word: Media & Advertising

Total Media Impressions
1,229,057

20% Owned Media Impressions



80% Paid Media Impressions



Love that you're staying true to the original design of Metro 🙌 It's what makes the system unique and beautiful

28w 2 likes Reply ...



Total Earned Media Stories

Before Construction

45 Media Stories
4 Press Releases

During Construction

66 Media Stories
3 Press Releases

After Construction

6 Media Stories

A Closer Look

Spread the Word: Media & Advertising



The Washington Post digital advertisement.



Spanish Facebook advertisement.

지금 계획하기 시작하세요

RD ROCKVILLE 역의 캐노피 교체 작업으로 두 개 역 폐쇄
2021년 9월 11일~12월 4일

C 역 폐쇄

- Shady Grove
- Rockville

열차 운행

- 모든 운행 역에서 RD 정상 운행
- Shady Grove 및 Rockville RD 운행 중단

무료 셔틀버스 운행

- Red Line Local Shady Grove, Rockville, Twinbrook 구간
- Red Line Express Shady Grove, Twinbrook 구간

Metro의 Rockville 캐노피 교체 프로젝트를 통해 Rockville 역 플랫폼의 노후된 캐노피 구조물을 교체하게 됩니다. 새로운 플랫폼 캐노피 외에도, Rockville 역 이용객은 더 밝고 효율적인 LED 조명, 역사 안내 방송을 업그레이드 스피커 시스템, 자세한 대합 승객 정보 디스플레이(PIDS) 및 새로운 폐쇄 피로 텔레비전(CCTV) 카메라 등 추가적인 고객 경험 개선안을 세로이 맞이하게 됩니다.

wmata.com/rockvillecanopy 에서 더 알아보기

Korea Times print advertisement.



INSIGHTS

- The Washington Post digital ads were used for the first time to inform customers about a large capital project requiring station closures, an effective tactic that generated 46% of all media impressions.
- Twitter posts generated the most owned media impressions on Metro's social media channels, resulting in double the impressions of those generated by Instagram or Facebook posts.

A Closer Look

In-station Assistance: Signage

Before Construction

During Construction

After Construction

Total Signs in the System

555

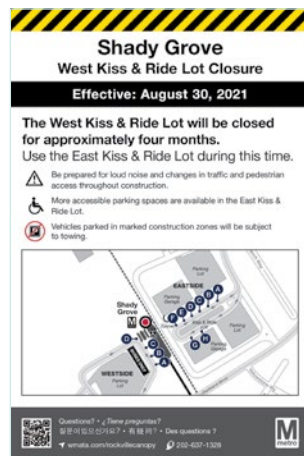


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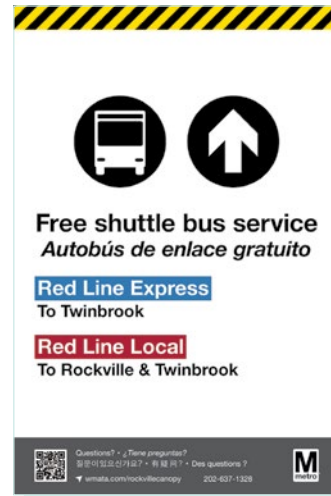
QR Code Scans



Notification signage in 27 Red Line stations.



Kiss & Ride Lot closure signage at Shady Grove Station.



Shuttle bus signage at Shady Grove, Rockville and Twinbrook stations.



Bus boarding locations banner at Rockville Station.



Bus relocation signage at Rockville Station.



Welcome back digital screen graphic in 27 Red Line stations.



Measuring Success: Looking Back on the Communications Campaign

The multichannel communications campaign was effective because Metro reached customers where they were, through their preferred channels, and with the information that was most important to them. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provided insight into customer behavior and sentiments, and informed real-time communication decisions for the Rockville Canopy Replacement Project.

These KPIs—measured through online surveys of Shady Grove and Rockville customers—demonstrated a successful campaign that moved the needle on customer awareness and trust:

- **Customer awareness of the project increased** from 54% in July 2021 (pre-campaign) to 78% in September 2021, before the station closures.
- **Customer trust that the closures were necessary rose** from 55% pre-closure to 71% after the stations reopened.
- **Public sentiment that Metro managed the closures appropriately jumped** from 31% pre-closure to 53% after the stations reopened.

Forward Momentum: Future Communications and Outreach

Metro appreciates employees, both on the front lines and behind the scenes, for their critical role in keeping customers informed throughout the project, and external stakeholders who were also essential to the success of the communications and outreach campaign.

Metro will continue working with regional stakeholders to advance capital projects that ensure a state of good repair for critical regional infrastructure. As future work is conducted on the Rockville canopy and other projects, Metro will continue to deploy communications which inform the public and stakeholders about community impacts. The Authority is committed to ensuring customers, stakeholders and the region are in the know by strengthening engagement and optimizing communications and content to create new ways to share the stories of safety, service reliability and customer experience at Metro.

About the Report

Appendix A: Customer Demographics

Station/Bus Line	Minority %	% Low-Income	% Asian	% African-American	% Latino	Top Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Languages
Shady Grove	46%	8%	13%	21%	8%	Chinese
Rockville	35%	11%	8%	14%	9%	Chinese, Korean, Spanish
Twinbrook	43%	11%	16%	16%	8%	Chinese, Korean, Spanish
Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q6	92%	58%	13%	52%	30%	Chinese, Korean, Spanish

Throughout this report Chinese, Chinese (simplified) and Mandarin are referenced. Chinese (simplified) refers to the written language, while Mandarin refers to the spoken language. Data in the table above, sourced from Metro's Public Participation Plan, does not specify the dialect of Chinese.

About the Report

Appendix B: Average Weekday Ridership

Station/Line	Fall 2019 (Pre-pandemic)	August 2021	September 2021	January 2022
Metrorail System	656,300	157,005	186,520	125,001
Red Line	261,890	61,650	71,540	49,750
Shady Grove	12,000	2,331	N/A	1,332
Rockville	4,200	1,021	N/A	511
Twinbrook	4,300	1,054	2,696	1,673

Shady Grove and Rockville stations were closed from Sept. 11, 2021–Jan. 15, 2022. Data in the September 2021 column does not include ridership data at Shady Grove and Rockville stations. Data for Shady Grove and Rockville stations in the January 2022 column is sourced from Jan. 16–31, 2022 only.

About the Report

Sources

Information retrieved by March 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 2.** The communications and outreach campaign was guided by a strategic communications plan developed in June 2021, Metro’s Public Participation Plan (PPP) and Metro’s Language Assistance Plan (LAP).
- Page 5.** Results were drawn from customer surveys conducted in July 2021, September 2021 and February 2022.
- Page 7.** Google Analytics provided by Metro of [wmata.com/rockvillecanopy](https://www.wmata.com/rockvillecanopy) from May 2021-January 2022. Referrals grouped as stakeholders include government and community stakeholders, such as Montgomery County.
- Page 9.** Data sourced from Mailchimp e-blasts sent between June 2021 and February 2022. Subscription numbers and engagement fluctuated throughout the project. The number of e-blast recipients represents the total subscribers at the end of the project. The industry standard is a benchmark used by Mailchimp to compare Metro’s e-blast campaign analytics with similar organizations categorized in the “Travel and Transportation” industry.
- Page 10.** Data sourced from February 2022 and inline e-blast survey results. Identities listed under “other” in the pie chart include, but are not limited to, Metro employees working on the project, federal employees and state elected officials.
- Page 13.** Data sourced from IdleTime Advertising outreach team reporting between August 2021 and January 2022.
- Page 15.** Circulation numbers for local publications sourced from Montgomery County and the City of Rockville.
- Page 16.** Data for owned social media metrics provided by Metro from May 2021-January 2022. Data for paid advertisements sourced from Facebook, Instagram, DyAdmic, *El Tiempo Latino*, *Korea Times*, YouTube, *The Washington Post*, *Washington Chinese Daily News* and *Washington Hispanic* from August 30-September 14, 2021.
- Page 18.** Total QR codes scans are from posted signage and handouts distributed at Shady Grove, Rockville and Twinbrook stations.
- Page 20.** Data sourced from Metro’s PPP.
- Page 21.** Data sourced from Metro’s PLAN Ridership Portal. Data in each column is the weekday average.



Above: Construction site at Rockville Station, November 2021.



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