

**Northern Bus Garage
Memorandum of Agreement
Annual Report for 2025
Submitted January 2026**

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I. Overview

This document serves as the required annual update for progress made on the 2021 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Northern Bus Garage Reconstruction Project (the Undertaking), in compliance with Washinton Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) responsibilities to carry out the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) as a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant recipient. This document describes all activities conducted in calendar year 2025 in compliance with the above reference MOA. The document provides a brief project background in Sections II & III and describes project progress in Sections IV & V. It concludes with next steps and expectations for 2026 and beyond.

In 2025, construction progressed with major milestones, including superstructure completion and the commencement of the interior build-out, which are outlined in Section VI below. While active construction prevented the implementation of some MOA compliance activities, outlined in Section V, other MOA treatment measures were advanced, including continued oversight of design plan implementation, community engagement, and development of interpretive content. Of additional note, Section 106 oversight duties transitioned over the reporting period after WMATA's Architectural Historian retired in June, and the role was backfilled in September 2025.

II. Project Background

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is currently engaged in a major reconstruction of the historic Northern Bus Garage (NBG) facility (NR# 13000290),

located at 4615 14th Street NW in Washington, D.C. The NBG was closed in 2019 and is currently being redesigned as a modern bus operations and maintenance center to meet current and future needs. The new NBG will house Metro's first 100% zero-emission bus fleet when it reopens in 2027. The undertaking is funded in part with an FTA grant, requiring compliance with Section 106.

The Northern Bus Garage is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under significance criteria A & C. Under criterion A, it has been determined significant for its impact on neighborhood development; under criterion C, it is considered an outstanding example of Italian Renaissance Revival architectural design. The building was initially constructed in 1906 as the Capital Traction Company car barn and has since been expanded and modernized, with significant additions built in 1926, as well as between 1987 and 1992. Despite alteration, the building was determined to retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance for NRHP eligibility as part of the 1998 Multiple Property Document: *Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, D.C., 1862 – 1962*. The building was formally NRHP-listed in 2013.

III. Section 106 Requirements

Throughout calendar years 2020 and 2021, FTA, SHPO, WMATA, and several invited consulting parties engaged in Section 106 consultation during the project planning and initiation phase. In 2020, FTA determined that the Undertaking would constitute an Adverse Effect to the historic property primarily due to substantial demolition activities, necessitating the execution of the MOA. MOA development took place throughout the calendar year 2021 and included several consulting party meetings throughout that year. The draft MOA was issued on November 29th, 2021, for consulting party review and comment, and the final agreement was executed between the signatories on December 15th, 2021.

Within the stipulations of the agreement, WMATA and FTA have committed to ensuring the implementation of several treatment measures, including following specified design plans that minimize the adverse effect on the resource, as well as designing public-facing interpretive materials and other elements that highlight the site's history. The three specific treatment measures stipulated by the MOA include:

- (1) **Implementation of Design Plans:** WMATA will construct the project according to the design plans included in MOA Attachments 2, 3, and 4. This includes new construction elements that are compatible with the historic Northern Bus Garage (MOA attachment 2), as well as performing specific restoration work for the historic

14th street façade that ensures historic fabric and remains a prominent feature of the overall Northern Bus Complex (MOA Attachments 3 & 4).

- (2) **Installation of Replica Streetcar Tracks:** To illustrate and highlight the Northern Bus Garage's original function as a streetcar car barn, WMATA shall install replica streetcar tracks in the area where streetcars used to enter and/or exit from the building along 14th Street, NW (MOA Attachment 5).
- (3) **Interpretive Mitigation:** In consultation with the DC SHPO and consulting parties, WMATA shall develop and install one (1) to three (3) exterior interpretive signage exhibits and up to five (5) interior interpretive signage exhibits for the building's community (MOA Attachment 6).

Please reference the MOA for more details on specific treatment measures. In the time since MOA execution, WMATA has worked toward full compliance with Section 106. WMATA continues to engage community stakeholders via regular public meetings, providing information and soliciting comments. Updates have been posted on the project website, and all stakeholders continue to be actively engaged.

IV. Construction Progress

During the first half of 2025, foundation and utility work advanced with slab-on-grade placement, underground piping, and conduit installation. The superstructure advanced concurrently with steel erection and concrete deck placement, while exterior work commenced with wall framing, air barrier installation, and initial brick and precast elements. Inside, door frames and masonry walls were installed, overhead mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) systems were built out, and fireproofing preparations were made. Wet utility work achieved major milestones, including sewer and water main installations, sewer relocation, and storm outfall tie-ins.

Later in the year, slab-on-grade placement continued, and work shifted toward enclosure and interior build-out. Roofing installation and testing progressed, window frames and glass were added, and brick and precast elements reached the penthouse level. Inside, MEP installation continued, interior wall framing began, and fireproofing and painting advanced. Wet utility tie-ins along Arkansas, Buchanan, and 14th Streets remain on hold until early 2026. Looking ahead, next year will focus on completing utility connections, finishing interiors, and installing site improvements to prepare for project completion.

V. MOA Compliance Activities

Throughout calendar year 2025, WMATA took several steps to achieve MOA compliance, which is required within one month of the issuance of the building occupancy permit. Measures completed over the last year include the following:

1. Design Plan Implementation

Prior to 2025, careful demolition and construction activities occurred that preserved the 14th Street façade and worked to incorporate it into the new building. The building has been built to the standards and specifications required by the design plans attached to the MOA. The WMATA Architectural Historian has reviewed restoration design plans and worked with the design team to include refinements that ensure compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and other Historic Preservation Best Practices. Please see the construction progress above for more information on the progress so far.

In 2026, restoration of the historic façade and façade elements will proceed with oversight from appropriately qualified staff meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards. The WMATA Architectural Historian continues to review plans and specs for the restoration work and has recommended integration of preservation best practices throughout the project development process.

2. Installation of Replica Streetcar Tracks

During previous reporting periods, original streetcar tracks were uncovered, salvaged, photo-documented, collected, and stored in a secure location. Aside from continued conversation and planning, no further reportable progress was made on this item during calendar year 2025, as construction is ongoing and site preparation activities have not yet occurred to allow for its advancement. This item will be further addressed in 2026, as the building moves towards completion and preparatory site work in the area commences.

3. Interpretive Signage Exhibits

On March 26th, 2025, over 100 individuals, primarily residents and business owners in the NBG area, participated in a community discussion and survey at an open house event. That survey was also posted online in late March and early April for those who could not attend. The results demonstrated that, in addition to the topics specifically required by the MOA, the community would prefer to see content regarding historic vehicle types used at NBG over the years, as well as changes to the bus garage as part of the more flexible content

within the community room space. This vote also informed WMATA on the preferred layout for the display, with a majority of votes favoring a continuous single-panel design.

Subsequently, WMATA's Architectural Historian began drafting content, considering these community preferences, specifically focusing on the community room. Simultaneously, the WMATA Architectural Historian has engaged relevant knowledgeable individuals and groups, including the National Capital Trolley Museum, with the intention of continuing to procure comprehensive information and unique imagery for display. At this stage, the text and materials for both the Wayside Panels and Community Room displays have been drafted, and initial concepts have been developed within an internal document. This document is currently undergoing internal reviews and quality assurance & control (QA/QC) processes. Once the draft content has been approved by the required internal stakeholders, WMATA intends to forward these materials for consulting party review in early 2026.

VI. Next steps

In 2026, WMATA will also continue working to advance completion of all measures required by the MOA. The WMATA Architectural Historian will continue to review design plans and work with the design team to include refinements that ensure compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and other Historic Preservation Best Practices. Moving forward, the project team is scheduled to perform repointing, restoration activities, and roof installation for the historic 14th Street façade later this year.

Additional requirements will similarly progress along with construction. As the exterior envelope of the building nears completion, site work will commence that will allow for the placement of replica or salvage rails and exterior wayside interpretive panels.

As the interior build-out continues, the intended community room space will be constructed, allowing for the installation of the interior exhibit space. In preparation for build out, WMATA continues to advance the procurement and approval of draft content include text and imagery. As stated, the WMATA Architectural Historian has completed the initial internal draft of the material, which is currently undergoing QA/QC review. The material will undergo review by relevant internal stakeholders in early 2026, and, once approved, will be circulated among the consulting parties for additional review. The intention is to have the draft content in circulation in the first quarter of 2026.