

March 16 Community Meeting Q and A

Metro has prepared the below questions and answers (Q&A) addressing comments raised at the March 16, 2021 community engagement meeting on the Northern Bus Garage Reconstruction Project.

### **Street and Sidewalk Designs**

**Q: Are there plans by DDOT to resurface the streets around the garage prior to reopening? Specifically, the section around 14<sup>th</sup> and Arkansas that is full of cracks in the pavement.**

A: Part of the construction is expected to include at a minimum new asphalt overlays, curb to curb, on perimeter streets around the garage and new pavement markings.

**Q: Can Decatur Street be even wider to accommodate a “promenade” or “people’s park” to enhance commercial space?**

A: Metro has reduced the bus garage’s footprint as much as possible and the proposed connector complies with DDOT’s shared use standards. Any further widening would encroach on remaining carriage space on the adjacent private properties.

**Q: Can Iowa Street be widened to enhance east/west travel?**

A: Metro presented multiple concepts to DDOT for consideration, including an option that would have returned two-way traffic. DDOT clearly expressed their preference for 8-foot parking spaces with a single 11-foot travel lane northbound, which allows for full green space and lights down the entirety of Iowa Avenue and green space buffer to the garage.

**Q: With wider sidewalks on 14th Street, how will that impact parking on 14th Street?**

A: The widening of sidewalks on 14th Street will not decrease parking. In fact, the removal of the 50-foot curb cut will add two additional parking spaces.

**Q: Will we lose any parking on 14th Street during construction?**

A: There will be some impacts to parking during the construction phases. Metro has worked with DDOT to obtain temporary occupancy permits and will communicate impacts to the community prior to any parking being impacted.

### **Northern Bus Garage Building Design & Logistics**

**Q: Are the surfaces of the red-mix side walls still metal panels? If so, why was metal ultimately chosen over brick?**

A: The structure will consist of all masonry or concrete products; metal panels will not be included. There will be metal trim on the perimeter of the roof.

**Q: Will the garage door at the exit open and close for each bus? With the use of more traditional doors, what is the impact on air pollution?**

A: It depends. The doors will be controlled by sensors designed to pick up bus movement, so they will stay open if multiple buses are lined up to exit and would close once a bus is no longer present at the sensors. If only one bus is exiting, the doors will open once the bus triggers the sensor, and the doors

will then close once the bus exits. If there are multiple buses exiting on green light then the door will stay open until all buses exit the facility.

The design intent is to restrict fugitive emissions through the doors. The space between the interior door and the exterior doors can store buses two deep. The exterior doors will be traditional sectional doors with motor operators; they will not be “fast acting.” The purpose of having two sets of doors, interior and exterior, is to be able to filter as much of the air as possible limiting any exhaust into the neighborhood.

**Q: Did DDOT make any remarks on how trucks will unload to supply retail stores in the future? Where is the loading dock? What comments did DDOT make with respect to impacts on 14th Street, NW traffic when trucks are unloading?**

A: Metro is working with DDOT to coordinate the best possible scenario for retailers and the community. There will be a designated commercial loading/unloading zone, with appropriate signage, on the east side of 14th Street. There will be a ramp from street to sidewalk to allow delivery trucks to move carts/hand trucks. Additionally, small dumpsters will be rolled out to trash trucks, and dedicated space is being incorporated to avoid double-parking scenarios.

### **Safety and Environment**

**Q: What is the efficiency for filtration of PM1?**

A: Efficiency is 70-75% for MERV 14 filters although Metro continues to evaluate alternatives.

**Q: Regarding filters, can you translate what it really means when the manufacturer states its filters are 85-90% effective?**

A: Metro is committed to rebuilding a cleaner, more environmentally sensitive garage and as such has exceeded the regulations and guidelines set forth by DOEE for air filtration. Manufacturers follow industry standards.

Filter efficiency varies based on the size of particles (measured in microns). ‘85-90%’ filter efficiency means that the filter is designed to capture 85-90% of particles that pass through the filter banks. These filters have been exhaustively tested in a wide range of facilities and have a proven track record of being highly effective at capturing particles associated with vehicle exhausts. For more information, refer to the standards developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioner Engineers (ASHRAE).

**Q: How often will Metro change the filters in the bus garage? 10 years from occupying the new facility, how often will the filters be changed?**

A: We need to understand how systems will perform when the garage is fully operational. The first year of operation will be an observatory year and filters will be inspected monthly for the first six months, and quarterly after that. Filters are expected to need to be changed every six months. After the first year of operation Metro will assess the findings to establish the proper filter replacement frequency long term.

**Q: Why isn't Metro selecting more efficient filtration systems for filtering PM1?**

A: Metro is committed to ensuring all its systems either meet or exceed safety standards and will select a filtration system that complies with DOEE guidelines and best suits the operational needs of the facility.

**Q: Can you provide more detail on the contaminant chemicals you are finding at the site?**

A: Metro is working closely with DOEE to identify and mitigate contaminants. Contaminants have been identified as coming from two sources, underground storage tanks and industrial operations. Metro is working with DOEE to develop a comprehensive understanding of the contaminants, including petroleum hydrocarbons from the underground storage tanks and chlorinated compounds associated with industrial operations

**Q: "Other industrial operations" is vague, can you clarify what chemical contaminants are in the soil and water?**

See response above.

**Q: Are any of the ground contamination monitoring locations outside of Metro's property boundaries? And if not, how will those areas be evaluated for contamination issues and treatment or removal needs?**

A: In addition to testing land within its property borders, Metro will test multiple locations outside of its property lines through a series of "plume-chasing" exercises, as recommended by DOEE. The testing program is designed to provide soil and groundwater quality sampling of the area surrounding the garage. During this process, Metro will be in communication with the residents and will not enter a homeowner's yard without permission. After initial testing and analysis, upon review of the findings by DOEE it may be deemed necessary to expand our investigations further.

**Q: Will Metro investigate yards beyond their property for contaminants? If found, will they clean up and monitor the property?**

A: Metro's goal is to be protective of human health and the environment. We will work closely with DOEE to ensure we have the appropriate remediation program in place, meeting all guidelines within the scope of DOEE regulations.

**Zero-Emission Buses**

**Q: Why is Metro considering diesel buses and not solely zero-emission buses?**

A: Metro is committed to transitioning to a zero-emission bus fleet. However, as explained in prior community meetings, the infrastructure needed to support a zero-emission bus fleet is new technology to Metro (as well as to other cities across the country). A test fleet is imperative to ensuring we have the right infrastructure in place to continue to provide Metro customers with reliable and dependable service. Shepherd Parkway has the power to charge buses and the overhead parking deck needed for overhead chargers, which is among some of the reasons why that site was selected for testing of zero-emission buses. What we learn from Shepherd Parkway will inform Metro's zero emission bus fleet plan and ultimately the future of Northern Bus Garage. In any event, the Northern Bus Garage has been designed to enable a future zero-emission bus fleet.

**Q: If the plan is to move towards zero-emission buses why is there a need for diesel fueling stations? And how does that square with the new diesel-fueled buses Metro ordered in 2019?**

A: The transition to a zero-emission bus fleet will be a phased approach. The diesel-fueled buses, ordered in 2019, are necessary to help bridge the gap until Metro's 10 bus maintenance facilities have fully transitioned to a zero-emission fleet. Additionally, all of Metro's garage locations need to have multiple ways of running buses. In the event of an emergency – such as a power outage – Metro needs to be able to maintain operations.

**Q: How long will it take Metro to get an electric fleet?**

A: There are many components that impact Metro's timeline to transition to a full zero-emission bus fleet, including making sure the right infrastructure is in place, in particular with the power distribution grid, to support the technology needed to operate a ZEB fleet.

**Q: What is the difference between zero-emission buses and electric buses?**

A: Zero-emission buses and electric buses are essentially the same. Electricity is used to power the bus, using a battery pack that powers the motor and eliminates emissions at the tailpipe.

**Q: Do you have projections of relative proportions that you expect for the fleet as a whole or for Northern Bus Garage? In 2025, what proportion of the fleet will be diesel versus electric?**

A: Metro is developing its zero-emission bus fleet plan. Once the plan is approved, details will be shared with the public.

**Q: Will maintenance personnel retraining influence how fast we convert the bus fleet over?**

A: There are always challenges involved with workforce changes. However, Metro is committed to ensuring its employees are trained and ready to maintain and operate a ZEB fleet when the time comes. The vendor selected to furnish Metro's ZEB fleet will be required to provide training on the new technology as part of the procurement requirements.

**Q: Why not wait to open Northern until Metro is able to open as an all-electric fleet?**

A: The Northern Bus Garage is located near high ridership corridors and when operational it serves as a critical Metrobus maintenance, repair, and operational hub. The temporary closure of Northern was necessitated by safety concerns within the existing facility, which will be remediated by the reconstruction project. As detailed study has shown, keeping the garage closed past its reconstruction phase would ultimately adversely impact Metro's service to customers.

### **Metro's Operations**

**Q: Are your commitments to the District Government agencies in writing?**

A: All of Metro's interactions with the community and partnering agencies are memorialized in meeting notes and public records, and its project commitments will ultimately be captured through the

permitting process. Additionally, presentations and video recordings of these community meetings are available on the Northern Bus Garage project website, [wmata.com/northernbusgarage](http://wmata.com/northernbusgarage). As a trusted organization, Metro is committed to being transparent and open with our customers and the community.

**Q: Metro is seeking demolition of certain historic fabric as needed for construction of a project of “special merit.” Why does this project qualify as having “special merit?”**

A: The Mayor’s Agent has the final authority to determine what is in the public interest under the DC historic preservation law, as the potential demolition of designated historic elements. All hearing requests for “special merit” are reviewed and either approved or denied by the Mayor’s Agent as outlined in DC special regulations. The project has special merit because it provides substantial District and community benefits and furthers local land use planning. The project also minimizes the loss of historic fabric and preserves or enhances the key historic features of the existing building.

**Q: How is Metro working with minority business enterprise (MBE) programs on this project, and putting money back into the community?**

A: Metro is committed to giving back to the communities we serve and providing local opportunities for minority small business owners. Clark was one of the many large prime contractors considered, and ultimately selected, for this project. Metro will be establishing a disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) goal for the construction phase of this project once designs are further advanced and an estimate for construction costs is available. Based on the goal determined by Metro, Clark will be developing a DBE participation plan to meet this goal once the construction phase contract is awarded. All businesses wishing to be considered for the DBE program must complete [Metro’s registration process](#) or register with the District Department of Transportation.

This project is funded, in part, with federal funds. Metro will follow federal DBE requirements for the project.

**Q: Why hasn’t Metro shared its DBE numbers for this project?**

A: We are in the preconstruction phase of this contract, so we do not have any data yet for the construction phase. During this time, Metro will assess the nature of work associated with the Northern Bus Garage Reconstruction and Metro’s Small Business Program Office will establish DBE goals for participation once designs are further advanced and a construction cost estimate is developed. Clark will submit its DBE participation plan to align with established goals and Metro will evaluate Clark’s strategy for including minority business owners. Clark has already awarded over \$5.5 million of work to DBE partners during the preconstruction phase and remains committed to maximizing DBE opportunities during the construction phase.

**Q: How will Metro work with the community to address property damage related to this construction?**

A: Metro is still in the design phase for this project. During the construction phase there will be established processes in place to address the community’s concerns regarding property damage. There is an extensive instrumentation program that will be required to monitor vibration and potential ground

movement around the perimeter of the construction site. As this project nears construction mode, we will revisit this topic and cover, in detail, the process for reporting concerns.

**Q: Ten years from now, what is preventing Metro from putting a body shop/spray paint booth in the garage or adding more buses than the current number?**

A: Body shop and spray paint booth functions have been permanently removed from this bus garage and distributed to other bus garages. Understanding community concerns and facility constraints these functions will not be returning to this facility under currently issues permits. Any change to these design plans will have to go through multiple level approvals by several different agencies. This process adds an extra layer of community involvement and ensures that Metro is abiding by all the necessary standards and guidelines. Metro is committed to open conversation and transparency with the community, and we will continue to host these community meetings on a quarterly basis until the new garage opens.