

## September 21 Community Meeting Unanswered Q and A

Metro has prepared the below Questions and Answers (Q&A) addressing comments raised at the September 21, 2021 community engagement meeting on the Northern Bus Garage Reconstruction Project. Several of these topics also have been addressed at prior community meetings for this Project.

### **Q: Why should Northern Bus Garage not remain closed until it can reopen with only electric buses?**

A: When Northern Bus Garage was closed for repairs and modernization, all bus operations from the garage were spread across the region's other bus maintenance facilities. This redistribution of operations adds additional strain on regional resources and is not a long-term or permanent solution.

Today, Metro is working on building the infrastructure needed to maintain and operate a fully electric bus fleet at Northern Bus Garage. Converting the fleet is more complicated than a one-for-one exchange of diesel buses for electric buses. It will require understanding how electric buses will operate in the regional environment. Right now, electric buses do not have the same operating characteristics as conventional buses and in some cases may not be able to complete longer bus routes, due to current limitations in electric bus battery range. Plans to transition Metro's bus fleet and facilities will continue to develop in the coming years, with an emphasis on regional equity, transit safety and reliability, and emissions reduction goals.

### **Q: Will moving to the electrification of Northern Bus Garage mean that Metro will step away from bringing a garage to Prince George's County?**

A: Metro does not have plans to build a new bus garage in Prince George's County.

### **Q: How will Metro approach the electric bus evaluation period at Shepherd's Parkway?**

A: Earlier this year Metro's Board approved its [zero-emission fleet strategy](#), which is evidence of its commitment to transitioning to an all-electric bus fleet. The upcoming Electric Bus Test & Evaluation Program at Shepherd's Parkway will provide much-needed insight into how electric buses will operate within the region and the Metrobus environment. The Test & Evaluation Program will be compliant with all Federal, State and internal regulations, and is just one of the many steps Metro is taking towards transitioning to zero-emission buses and advancing its commitment to building a sustainable and more environmentally friendly transit system.

### **Q: Does Metro have a plan to ensure the equitable distribution of electric buses on routes that serve lower income communities?**

Metro is committed to providing equitable and reliable transportation services to customers and ensuring that its zero-emission strategy is held to the same guidelines outlined in the [Board's Transit Equity Framework and Metrobus service guidelines](#). Metro will use a phased approach to convert its fleet is committed to purchasing only zero-emission vehicles by 2030. At this time, the breakdown of where those vehicles will be distributed is not known; however the implementation strategy will be aligned with Metro's overarching [sustainability vision and principles](#).

### **Q: Will there be charging stations along test routes for the Shepherd's Parkway pilot?**

A: The purpose of the test and evaluation process is to understand how electric buses will operate under regional conditions and what resources are needed to ensure success. Metro does not have plans to

include charging stations along the test routes. As part of the broader Zero-Emission Bus transition planning process, the need for on-route charging will be assessed and, if deemed necessary, Metro will coordinate implementation with partner agencies and jurisdictions.

**Q: How does Metro compare to its transit peers in major cities like LA, Houston, Seattle or Chicago, in transitioning to zero-emission vehicles?**

A: Metro is committed to achieving electrification by 2045 and has taken major strides towards reaching that goal, including building Northern Bus Garage as its first all-electric facility, pursuing a zero-emission pilot, and working with regional partners to build infrastructure. If the goal can be achieved sooner, it will be. It's important for the community to keep in mind that making the transition isn't as simple as buying new buses. In addition to infrastructure, it will require a reliable power source, funding, workforce development, and much more. Metro will continue to work with its agency partners to address these challenges and support the region as it moves to a cleaner transportation future. Recently, more than 20 regional leaders joined Metro in sending a [letter](#) to our Congressional delegation emphasizing the need for continued federal funding to support the electrification of public transit bus fleets in the National Capital Region.

**Q: Since the useful life of a Metrobus is 15 years, does that mean that Metro will continue to by new diesel buses until 2030?**

A: No, starting with our next bus procurement in Fiscal Year 2024, Metro will no longer purchase diesel vehicles and will only purchase lower emission buses. By 2030 every new vehicle purchased will be a zero-emission vehicle.

**Q: Metro initially considered adding affordable housing as a part of this project. Is the delay in zero-emission bus related to why this is no longer being considered?**

A: No. The garage's space and historic preservation requirements, along with site size and height constraints limit the mix of uses the property can provide. In 2018, Metro issued a Request for Expression of Interest and received little interest from developers. Given these factors, we do not plan to solicit developers for affordable housing at Northern Bus Garage.

**Q: Did Metro have conversations with local business owners about bringing in new retail for the Northern Bus Garage?**

A: Metro's contractor StreetSense has engaged with local business and property owners to discuss new retail opportunities. Based on that outreach, StreetSense and Metro are collaborating to build a cohesive business district where community retailers can benefit and compliment each other, further contributing to the development of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor.

**Q: Will Metro take into consideration labor issues when it selects a bus manufacturer to supply new buses?**

A: Metro's procurement process is aligned to its Fleet Plan. Metro adheres to FTA guidelines and issues competitive Requests for Proposals. Each proposal is evaluated on its own merits.

**Q: Has a comparison study been done to evaluate the air quality in the community while Northern Bus Garage was in operation versus now that it has been closed since 2019?**

A: Such a study is not required and has not been conducted by Metro.