

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

## Board Action/Information Summary

☒ Action ☐ Information

MEAD Number:  
201773

Resolution:  
☒ Yes ☐ No

### TITLE:

Public Hearing for Late-Night Service Changes

### PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

To obtain Board authorization to hold a public hearing on proposals to change the current Metrorail span of service and potential changes to Metrobus late night service.

### PURPOSE:

Staff will seek authorization to hold a Compact-required public hearing, and brief the Board on proposals to reduce Metrorail's span of service and provide increased time for maintenance and inspection work, proposed Metrobus service changes for late night customers, and the federally-required Public Participation Plan.

### DESCRIPTION:

The SafeTrack maintenance program will restore the Metrorail system to a state of good repair, but maintaining safe and reliable service requires more track access. Returning to 135 hours of service out of every 168 hours a week will deter maintenance efforts. The Metrorail system is too large, too complex, and too deep to address existing maintenance needs in such a short window.

To sustain the progress of SafeTrack and address Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recommendations, which include providing more maintenance track time, WMATA is working on a long-term maintenance strategy – and central to that will be providing adequate track time to maintain the rehabilitated tracks and signals; mitigate water intrusion; maintain lighting, fans, and other life-safety systems; test and inspect; and conduct training and emergency preparedness activities – all of which require time for tracks to be out of service.

### Key Highlights:

- Four proposed Metrorail span of service scenarios would provide an additional eight hours of track maintenance time each week (a 20% increase) to allow for extended work periods needed to improve safety and conduct state of good repair, continuous maintenance efforts.
- The public hearing will gather input on four scenarios to amend the Metrorail operating times.
- During the public hearing, staff will also gather input on options to provide additional transit services by altering Metrobus late-night service.

## **Background and History:**

As part of the SafeTrack maintenance program, the Metrorail service hours were adjusted to close the system at midnight, seven days a week. This span of service change went into effect on a temporary basis beginning June 3, 2016.

In July 2016, GM/CEO Paul J. Wiedefeld proposed a long-term span of service change to close the system at midnight, Monday – Saturday, and Sundays at 10pm.

Changes to the Metrorail span of Service require public outreach, impact analysis and consideration of alternates, followed by Board approval.

The span of service proposal is the result of recommendations from third party experts, peer review, and consultants brought in to review the current maintenance plan. These reviews found:

- First, SafeTrack is right approach – accelerated program was needed to eliminate backlog in track maintenance
- Second, Metro needs longer windows of track access to continue maintaining system

These findings are also consistent with repeated warnings from the FTA about the lack of maintenance time on the right-of-way.

On May 7, 2016, the FTA's Safety Directive 16-3, stated:

"In our Safety Directive 15-1, dated June 17, 2015, FTA determined that WMATA work crews do not have sufficient access to the rail right-of-way to perform critical inspection, testing and maintenance activities. This is still the case. Increased demands for passenger service have shrunk maintenance windows during evenings, weekends, and late nights. As a direct consequence, WMATA's maintenance departments collectively have accumulated thousands of backlogged work orders dating back to 2012 and 2013. Lack of track access has left WMATA's maintenance managers struggling to prioritize the most significant and safety critical repairs for completion, while deferring and re-scheduling other work."

To sustain the progress of SafeTrack and address FTA recommendations, WMATA is working on a long-term maintenance strategy – and central to that is providing adequate track time to maintain the rehabilitated tracks and signals; mitigate water intrusion; maintain lighting, fans, and other life-safety systems; test and inspect; and conduct training and emergency preparedness activities – all of which require time for tracks to be out of service.

According to Board Resolution 2012-29, "the Board of Directors approves Hours of Service as a Metrorail service standard."

## **Discussion:**

WMATA staff have developed four scenarios for adjusting the Metrorail Span of Service

(Scenario A is the proposal introduced by the General Manager in July 2016). The four scenarios are:

	<b>Scenario A</b>	<b>Scenario B</b>	<b>Scenario C</b>	<b>Scenario D</b>
Mon-Thu	5am-midnight	5am-11:30pm	5am-11:30pm	5am-midnight
Fri	5am-midnight	5am-midnight	5am-1am	5am-3am
Sat	7am-midnight	7am-midnight	7am-1am	9am-3am
Sun	7am-10pm	7am-11:30pm	8am-11pm	noon-11pm

The scenarios were developed to provide an additional 8 hours of track access each week to conduct safety-critical work, while also looking to minimize the number of riders impacted and the overall reduction in annual ridership. The attached presentation includes a chart showing ridership impact for each scenario.

The WMATA Compact requires a public hearing for “major service reductions.” Additionally, in compliance with the FTA's Title VI requirements to set service standards and policies and Board Resolution 2013-27, a change to the span of service is considered a major service reduction.

FTA requires that WMATA complete a service equity analysis if a major service change lasts longer than 12 months; the analysis must be approved by the Board prior to reaching the 12-month mark. The equity analysis must evaluate the impacts of the proposed service changes on minority and low-income populations, which requires extensive research, outreach, reporting, and Board approval.

Therefore, WMATA must conduct its public participation (which will include multiple opportunities for public feedback), perform the service equity outreach, research and analysis, conduct a Compact-required public hearing, and receive Board approval before the initial span of service change made under SafeTrack in June 2016 exceeds 12 months.

Late night Metrorail ridership trends are being examined to aid in decision making for the proposal. The number of riders using Metrorail's late night service has decreased significantly over the last few years:

- Sunday night ridership after 10 pm is down 43% since 2011. Sunday ridership averages less than 200,000 daily trips on Metrorail, and only about 8,000 – or four percent-- of those trips are between 10 pm-Midnight.
- Historically, on Friday and Saturday nights, WMATA was keeping the 117 mile rail system with 91 stations open for fewer than 3,000 trips per hour (after midnight), preventing work crews from using the time to complete safety and maintenance repairs.

Considering existing late night ridership, preliminary demographic data indicates that the reduction in late night service disproportionately affects low-income riders. WMATA is therefore examining potential mitigation strategies, such as increasing late night bus service.

A complete service equity analysis will be conducted using data from the recently-

completed 2016 Ridership Survey and data collected on Sunday evening ridership.

Metrobus is developing multiple late-night service scenarios for the public to consider. Those scenarios would:

- Cover missing links
- Add more late-night bus routes throughout region
- Provide additional service to rail stations that are productive during late-night hours
- Increase service frequency to improve convenience during late-night hours

### **Public Hearing/PPP Process**

Following approval of this Board action, the next steps are as follows:

- October 1: Public comment period opens
- Week of October 17: Compact-required public hearing
- Week of October 24: Public comment period closes
- December 1: Board Committee meeting
- December 15: Board of Directors meeting: final recommendation approval

The Public Hearing and Title VI reports, incorporating public input and all feedback in a final list of recommended span of service Metrorail changes and Metrobus service changes, will be presented for Board approval in December. Service implementation is planned for July 1, 2017.

---

### **FUNDING IMPACT:**

Public hearing and PPP efforts will have no material impact on FY2017 budget. Net budgetary impact of Metrorail service span reduction and corresponding Metrobus service mitigations will be presented to Board in December as part of final recommendations.
--

Project Manager:	Joseph Leader
Project Department/Office:	Office of the Chief Operating Officer

### **TIMELINE:**

<b>Previous Actions</b>	June 2016 – Midnight Metrorail system closings go into effect under SafeTrack plan
<b>Anticipated actions after presentation</b>	October 2016: Public comment period and public hearing conducted December 2016: Public hearing and Title VI reports presented to Board July 1, 2017: Metrorail and Metrobus service changes take effect

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Compact-required public hearing, which will be conducted along with a robust Public Participation Plan (PPP) outreach effort, to gather feedback on proposals to reduce Metrorail's span of service and provide increased time for maintenance and inspection work, and to present to the public with Metrobus service change scenarios for late night customers.

**PRESENTED AND ADOPTED: September 22, 2016**

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL FOR A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO METRORAIL SPAN OF SERVICE AND LATE-NIGHT BUS SERVICE**

**2016-40**

**RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE  
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, The SafeTrack maintenance program is making progress to restore the Metrorail system to a state of good repair, but in order to sustain the achievements of SafeTrack, and address the Federal Transit Administration's recommendations, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is developing a new, long-term maintenance strategy; and

WHEREAS, To maintain safe and reliable transit service, WMATA work crews must have more track access hours to rehabilitate tracks and signals; mitigate water intrusion; maintain lighting, fans and other safety systems; and perform other required maintenance and safety activities; and

WHEREAS, The current Metrorail span of service encompasses 135 hours of service out of every 168 hours a week and does not provide WMATA work crews with the hours of access to perform needed maintenance and inspections; and

WHEREAS, Staff proposes a long-term change to the current Metrorail span of service, and offers four scenarios for adjusting the Metrorail span of service to provide an additional eight hours of track access each week to perform needed maintenance and safety-critical work, as shown in Attachment A, attached; and

WHEREAS, To offset the proposed reduction in Metrorail span of service, staff is also developing multiple scenarios for late-night bus service; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with Section 62 of the WMATA Compact, approval of the Board of Directors is necessary to hold a public hearing on the proposed changes to Metrorail span of service and late-night bus service; and

WHEREAS, Staff will also seek broad-based customer input on the proposed service adjustments, utilizing outreach methods that comply with Title VI requirements and the Board-approved Public Participation Plan; now, therefore be it

**Motioned by Mrs. Hudgins, seconded by Mr. Strickland**

**Ayes: 8 – Mr. Evans, Ms. Harley, Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Price, Mr. Goldman, Mrs. Hudgins and Ms. Carmody**

*RESOLVED*, That, in accordance with Section 62 of the WMATA Compact, the Board of Directors authorizes staff to conduct a public hearing to seek customer input on the alternative scenarios to the current Metrorail span of service, as shown in Attachment A, and potential changes to Metrobus late-night service, and public outreach as required by Title VI and the Board-approved Public Participation Plan; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That the Board of Directors authorizes the General Manager and Chief Executive Officer to report on the findings from the public hearing and public outreach efforts, and the Board shall consider these findings and public comments in their deliberations on the alternative scenarios to the current Metrorail span of service and potential changes to Metrobus late-night service; and be it finally

*RESOLVED*, That in order to permit the Board of Directors to fully consider the analysis of the public hearing and public participation prior to July 2017 (date service changes would take effect), this Resolution shall be effective immediately.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia Y. Lee  
General Counsel

WMATA File Structures Nos.:  
6.6.4 Bus Route and Service Planning  
18.8 Public Hearings and Meetings  
20.5.1 Rail Scheduling



# Metrorail Span of Service Proposals

	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
<b>Mon-Thu</b>	5am-midnight	5am-11:30pm	5am-11:30pm	5am-midnight
<b>Fri</b>	5am-midnight	5am-midnight	5am-1am	5am-3am
<b>Sat</b>	7am-midnight	7am-midnight	7am-1am	9am-3am
<b>Sun</b>	7am-10pm	7am-11:30pm	8am-11pm	Noon-11pm