

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Board Action/Information Summary

Action Information

MEAD
Number:
201738

Resolution:
 Yes No

TITLE:

Station Name Change Proposals

PRESENTATION SUMMARY:

Overview of the Metro System Station Names Policy, and recommendations on the adoption of secondary names for the Smithsonian and Foggy Bottom Metrorail Stations

PURPOSE:

To obtain Board action on secondary name proposals submitted for the Smithsonian and Foggy Bottom Metrorail Stations.

DESCRIPTION:

Key Highlights:

- As was the case with the first phase of the Silver Line, station signage and maps will be updated with the introduction of new service, presenting an opportunity to review current station names
- Following notification to the Board and jurisdictions, two proposals were received, both from the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) requesting the addition of secondary names to existing stations
- In compliance with the Metro System Station Names Policy, the DDOT proposals include letters of support from community groups; however, both proposals exceed the policy's 19-character limit for station names.
- Per policy, WMATA conducted a customer survey to test name efficacy. The survey found 54 percent of customers support the proposed Smithsonian station name change to include a secondary name of National Mall, and 26 percent of customers support the proposed Foggy Bottom—GWU station name change to include a secondary name of Kennedy Center.

Background and History:

Station names are guided by a Board-approved policy. Under the Metro System Station Names Policy (P/I 4.1/4), station name changes (or new names) are to be submitted by jurisdictions to the Metro Board for approval. The submissions must include community support and a funding commitment for any signage and map changes.

Major tenets of the Metro System Station Names Policy include the following:

- Jurisdictions are to complete outreach in their communities to determine potential station names. Names are then formally submitted to the WMATA staff to conduct required customer research of the potential names;
- Names should identify the station locations by geographical features or centers of activity, provided that landmarks are within one-half mile of the station (walking distance);
- Names should be distinctive and evoke imagery in the mind of the patron; and
- Each station name should be no longer than 19 characters (including spaces and punctuation), except for transfer station names, which should be no longer than 13 characters.
- WMATA is to complete research amongst the Authority's regionwide customer base.

In May 2011, the Board reviewed and updated the Metro System Station Names Policy to:

Higher Education/Universities:

- Grandfather all existing higher education/universities
- Limit future names to main campuses within ½ mile

Institutions/Landmarks:

- Retain current policy
- Grandfather all existing institutions/landmarks
- Encourage landmarks on neighborhood and interactive maps

Hospitals:

- Retain current practices

Commercial Naming Rights:

- Continue current practice of not selling commercial naming rights
- Promote station domination and other opportunities to grow revenue outside of changing station names

Discussion:

In advance of Silver Line Phase II launch, Metro is preparing for systemwide signage changes. Beginning last summer, notices went to the Board and jurisdictions that station name changes could be considered as part of the signage change-outs. The signage changes must be finalized by April 30, 2016, in order to meet all deadlines and avoid delay penalties and change order costs.

Two proposals were submitted, both by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), to add secondary names to two Metrorail stations currently in the system. Under the proposals, the current Smithsonian Metrorail Station name would be changed to include a secondary name of National Mall. And, Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station would be changed to include a secondary name of Kennedy Center.

DDOT staff completed the required community outreach, and received letters of support for the Smithsonian Metrorail Station secondary name addition of National Mall from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D, the National Park Service, and the Smithsonian Institute.

DDOT also received letters of support for the Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station secondary name addition of Kennedy Center from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. These efforts fulfilled the community outreach requirement of the policy.

Following its own community outreach, DDOT submitted the following name changes (adding secondary names) to WMATA for customer testing:

- Smithsonian (primary); National Mall (secondary)
- Foggy Bottom-GWU (primary); Kennedy Center (secondary)

Consistent with the policy, WMATA conducted an online survey that was

completed by 1,608 members of Amplify, WMATA's online panel that is representative of Metro's regional customer base. Respondents were asked to rate the potential station names in meeting each of the following Metro System Station Names Policy criteria:

- Relevance: *Describes the location well*
- Brevity: *Easy to remember*
- Uniqueness: *Not easily confused with other station names*
- Evocation: *Appealing; Clearly conveys where you are when you reach the station*
- And, to determine customers' **overall preference** for the revised names

The results of the survey found that the current station name of Smithsonian is appealing, easy to remember and unique. Customers said the proposed secondary station name addition of National Mall is slightly more descriptive and clearly conveys where someone is in the region. Overall, more than half of customers (54%) support changing the name from Smithsonian to Smithsonian as the primary name, with National Mall as the secondary name.

The proposal adding "National Mall" as a secondary name for Smithsonian station has been considered perviously, in June 2012, and was not adopted at that time. It was noted then that multiple Metrorail stations serve the National Mall, including Federal Triangle, L'Enfant Plaza, Union Station, Judiciary Square and Metro Center stations. For many special events on the Mall, the Smithsonian station may be closed due to its location falling within established security perimeters or to avoid overcrowding.

The survey also found that customers overwhelmingly said the current Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail station name is relevant, brief, unique and evocative. A clear majority of Metro customers preferred the current name to the proposed station name change to add the secondary name. Only one in four customers support changing the name from Foggy Bottom-GWU to Foggy Bottom-GWU as the primary name with Kennedy Center as the secondary name. This station name change proposal has not been previously considered.

FUNDING IMPACT:

No funding impact because, per Metro's station name policy, the District of

Columbia has committed to cover costs related to station name changes that are beyond the Silver Line signage plan.

Project Manager:	Lynn Bowersox
Project Department/Office:	Customer Service, Communications and Marketing

TIMELINE:

Previous Actions	2011: Board revisions to Metro System Station Names Policy
Anticipated actions after presentation	2016: Metro begins systemwide signage changes for Silver Line phase

RECOMMENDATION:

- Based on strong support from the community and customer preference, staff recommends Board approval of the Smithsonian Metrorail Station name change to include National Mall as a secondary name.
- Staff does not recommend Board approval of the proposed name change for Foggy Bottom—GWU Metrorail Station, because three out of four customers prefer the current station name without the addition of the proposed secondary name, and the proposed name exceeds the 19-character limit of the Metro System Station Name Policy.

PRESENTED AND ADOPTED: April 28, 2016

SUBJECT: SMITHSONIAN AND FOGGY BOTTOM-GWU METRORAIL STATIONS NAME CHANGES

2016-22

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

WHEREAS, The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) proposes changing the station name of the Smithsonian Metrorail Station in the District of Columbia to add "National Mall" as the secondary name for clarification of location, and changing the name of the Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station in the District of Columbia to add "Kennedy Center" as the secondary name for clarification of location, and has committed the funding required for the station name changes; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with the Metro System Station Names Policy, the District of Columbia conducted community outreach efforts regarding changing the name of the Smithsonian Metrorail Station to include "National Mall" as the secondary name, and received letters of support for the name change from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6D, the Smithsonian Institution and the United States Department of Interior, National Park Service; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with the Metro System Station Names Policy, the District of Columbia also conducted community outreach efforts regarding changing the name of the Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station to include "Kennedy Center" as a secondary name, and received letters of support for the name change from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with the Metro System Station Names Policy, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) then conducted an online survey of 1,608 members of Amplify, WMATA's online customer panel, to test the proposed name changes submitted by the DDOT, which determined that the majority of customers support changing the name of the Smithsonian Metrorail Station to add "National Mall" as the secondary name, but the majority of the panel did not support the name change for the Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station; and

WHEREAS, After receiving public comment at the Customer Service, Security and Planning Committee (the "Committee") meeting regarding the benefits of adding "National Mall" as a secondary name for the Smithsonian Metrorail Station and "Kennedy Center" as a secondary name for the Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station, the Committee approved

Motioned by Ms. Tregoning, seconded by Mr. Evans

Ayes: 8 – Mr. Evans, Ms. Harley, Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Downey, Mr. Price, Mr. Goldman, Mrs. Hudgins and Ms. Tregoning

the name changes for both the Smithsonian and Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Stations;
and

WHEREAS, The Committee also waived the 19-character limit established by the Metro System Station Names Policy, because the name changes are preferred by customers; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors approves the following station name changes for the Smithsonian Metrorail Station and the Foggy Bottom-GWU Metrorail Station:

- Smithsonian (primary), National Mall (secondary);
- Foggy Bottom – GWU (primary), Kennedy Center (secondary); and be it finally

RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall be effective 30 days after adoption in accordance with § 8(b) of the WMATA Compact.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



Mark R. Pohl
Acting General Counsel

WMATA File Structure No:
20.9.2 Rail Station Names