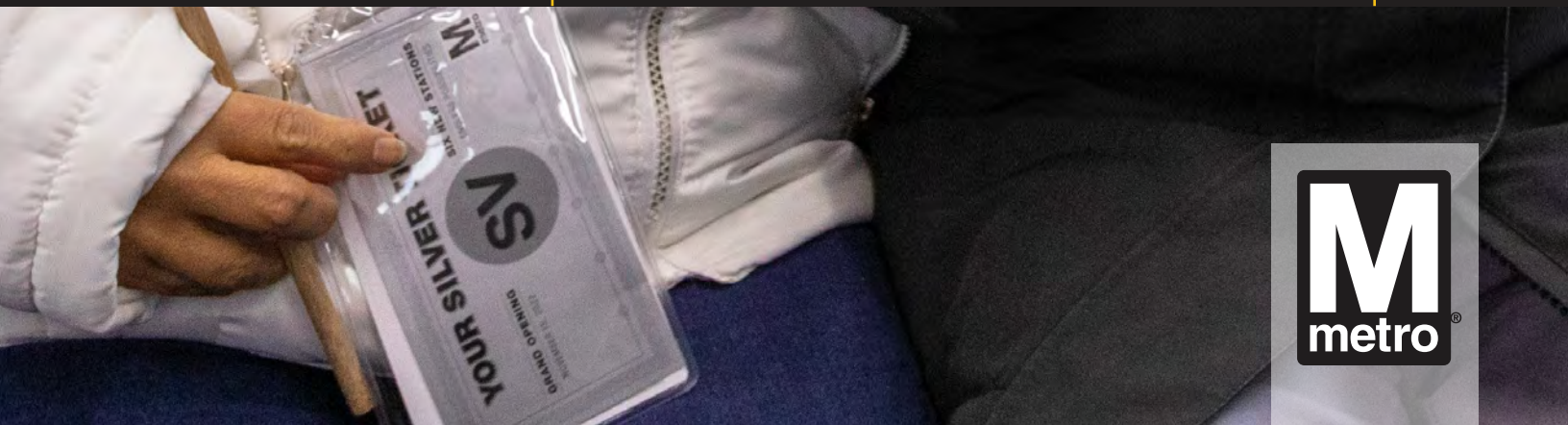




# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION *Plan*

**2023 - 2026**

Metro's commitment to public engagement





**PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION  
PLAN**

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The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Metro) strives to be a leader in transit-oriented public participation, outreach and communication. Metro's Public Participation Plan (PPP) showcases Metro's commitment to public participation by serving as a guiding tool to guarantee customers and community members receive high-quality information, communication and feedback opportunities around projects and initiatives, and to fulfill federal obligations.

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# 01

## Principles

Metro's Public Participation Plan (PPP) is grounded in the principle that a reasonable, inclusive, and collaborative public participation process will be conducted to gain customer and community input into Metro decision-making about its policies and services.

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## Your Metro, The Way Forward

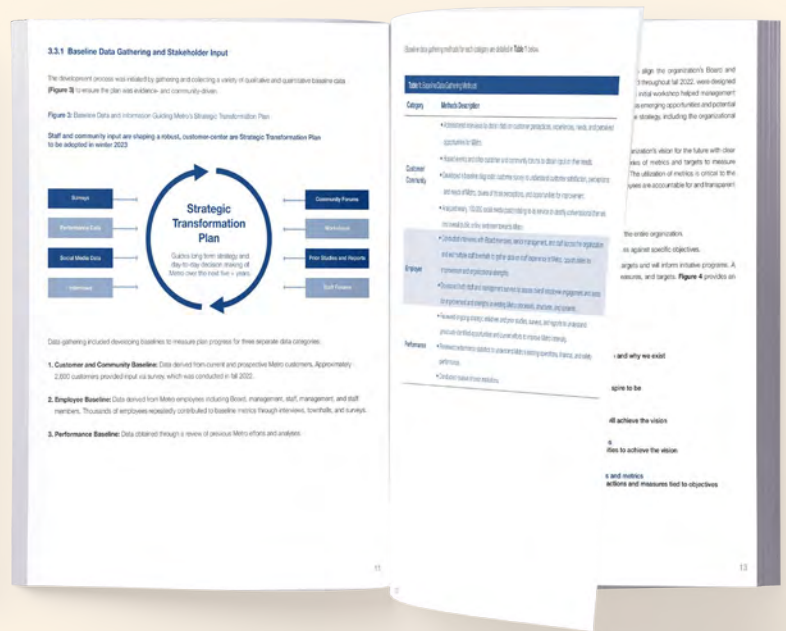
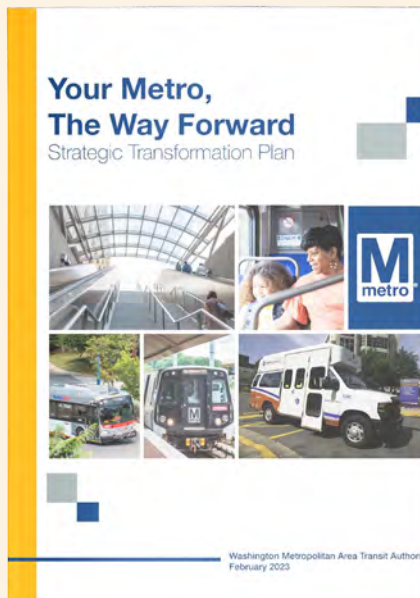
Metro's Strategic Transformation Plan (STP) was released in early 2023 to guide Metro's strategy and actions over the next five+ years to meet the evolving needs of its customers and employees. The plan guides long-term strategy and day-to-day decision-making as Metro continues to regain ridership post-pandemic and respond to changing mobility patterns to ensure the agency captures the needs of the community. Further, the plan was developed by the Board of Directors and management through direct and active input from Metro's customers, employees, and regional stakeholders.

The STP defines Metro's priorities and connects our mission, vision, and goals with actionable initiatives that will drive progress. It focuses on four goals:

- » service excellence,
- » talented teams,
- » regional opportunity and partnership,
- » sustainability.

The initiatives associated with these goals include many customer-facing projects, such as improved rail and bus service, new fare payment technology and simplified fare policies, community partnerships, and the creation of a new community relations office. These initiatives will require extensive outreach and engagement to ensure the needs of our customers and community partners are part of the decision-making and implementation of these programs.

Following the IAP2 Core Values, guidance from Metro's STP, as well as a robust vetting process during the creation of the PPP, Metro established guiding principles, goals, and objectives that demonstrate commitment to public participation, equity, and public service.



# Goals + Objectives

## for Public Participation

# 01

## Inclusion

Actively facilitate the involvement of all communities that may be affected in the public participation process.

### Objectives:

- » Listen, learn, and deepen engagement and communication with equity-focused communities.
- » Provide communication materials in multiple languages and in formats that serve individuals with disabilities, limited and no-English proficiency (LEP/NEP) populations, people with limited literacy, and low-income communities.
- » Ensure that minorities and LEP/NEP communities see their ethnicity, race, and languages reflected at outreach events and in communication materials.
- » Include multiple methods of engagement that recognize and address other access barriers (e.g., physical, financial, technological, and cultural).

# 02

## Collaboration

Work jointly with the community throughout the planning and project development process.

### Objectives:

- » Foster sustained and meaningful relationships with community partners, such as community-based organizations, cultural groups, transit equity advocates, and social service agencies.
- » Obtain early input to inform decision-making.
- » Communicate detailed, easy-to-understand information in a timely manner that allows the public to provide informed feedback.
- » Use accessible and diverse strategies that facilitate feedback from most impacted members of the community.
- » Ensure local jurisdictional partners and Metro Board of Directors are engaged with, and included in, outreach activities when their communities are affected.





# Continuous Improvement and Evaluation

Metro is dedicated to ongoing monitoring and evaluation at all levels, including the key performance indicators (KPI) program that monitors ongoing and long-term programs associated with Metro’s strategic plan. To reflect Metro’s commitment to performance measurement and meet its requirement of updating its Title VI program every three years, a performance measurement framework was developed for both the overall PPP, as well as individual project efforts. More information about this effort can be found on page 47.

In addition to Metro’s leadership changes, there are additional policy and societal changes that shaped the PPP:

## Covid-19 Pandemic

Many of the safety precautions implemented on an emergency basis during the Covid-19 pandemic are no longer mandatory including mask wearing, social distancing, and avoidance of large gatherings. Some of the safety precautions were found to have enduring ancillary benefits. We broadened our practices to include virtual meeting options whenever possible and expanded customer reach through enhanced use of social media.

## Federal & Metro Compact Requirements

FTA’s Circular 4702.1B, *Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients*, is the primary source of federal requirements and guidance for Title VI compliance, but it is not the



only source of guidance on full, fair, and meaningful public communication and outreach.

As a recipient of FTA’s urbanized area formula grants, Metro must provide opportunities for public hearings and make information available to the public. FTA and the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) also direct transit agencies to incorporate environmental justice principles into their planning, projects, and activities to prevent disproportionately high adverse effects on minority and low-income populations. The USDOT, like other federal agencies, requires public involvement in environmental review processes under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Metro’s Compact also provides guidance on public participation requirements, including information about public hearing requirements and guidelines. Additional details about Federal and Metro Compact requirements can be reviewed in *Appendix C: Federal and Metro Compact Requirements Review*.

## Key Findings from Peer Agencies and the Previous PPP

Key findings included in the original development of the PPP still hold true for this edition. These findings, as well as best practices from other agencies, have been used to shape communication and outreach plans and provide a strong base for many of our successes. We also continue to follow best practices in the industry, attend trainings and webinars about the latest public participation trends, and complete peer agency review as part of each PPP edition. Read the results in *Appendix B: Peer Transit Agency Review*.

## Concepts That Continue to Guide our Efforts

Involve hard-to-reach and Title VI populations by **going where they are.**



Demonstrate **cultural sensitivity** by understanding your audience and using:

- universally recognized graphics
- diverse media outlets and community locations
- translated materials
- and other preferred methods



Acknowledge and **use** input and **showcase** how it is used in decision-making.

Make it convenient to attend events and **tailor event formats** to the preferences of groups whose input is sought.



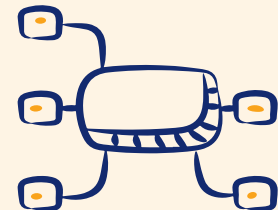
Work with community-based organizations and other community partners to build relationships and **trust** across diverse populations.

Establish an institutional **framework** for public participation that includes a lead department and training.

Use a variety of tactics



**to get the word OUT** ... and ...



# 02

## Implementation & Innovation: 2020-2023 Year in Review

This chapter highlights the improved processes, agency progress, and achievements from the past three years of service to the Washington Metropolitan area.





Quiet



Zero Emissions



Metro experienced a rapid increase in public engagement activities from the region’s \$10 billion investment in Metro’s Capital Improvement Program, which resulted in a significant increase to the number and scale of projects impacting customers. In addition, Metro’s STP, *Your Metro, the Way Forward*, unveiled in 2023 and the direction of General Manager and CEO Randy Clarke focused the organization on the importance of public engagement activities.

Our standardized public participation planning process, managed by Metro’s new Office of Customer Experience and Engagement (CXE), ensures compliance with FTA regulations, and ensures communications and outreach methods for planned projects and policy initiatives are inclusive, consistent, collaborative, and responsive to the needs of the community. The tactics laid out in the plan ensure that our diverse customer base, including minority and LEP/NEP populations, are engaged and informed.

Once a project is initiated and determined to have customer or community impacts — whether led by Metro or external organizations whose projects impact our customers — the project plan must include elements that support inclusive and proactive communications and outreach strategies.





140+

Between November 2020 and June 2023, Metro managed communications for more than 140 projects and initiatives.

project management, content development, and outreach programs; develops collaborative relationships with partners; and ensures compliance with Metro’s PPP and FTA requirements. Since June 2023, additional supporting positions include a Director of Planned Project Communications and Participation with four Strategic Communications Managers and an Outreach Manager. The team is further supported by contract staff providing communications; project management; writing; design and multi-media production; outreach staffing; and event planning services.

To ensure coordination across the organization, the team meets regularly with representatives from the Offices of Customer Research, Customer Service, Employee Communications, Government Relations, Marketing, and Media Relations to discuss upcoming projects and define communication strategies and tactics. The team also meets bi-weekly with representatives from other partner offices – the Offices of ADA Policy and Planning, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Planning – to confirm demographic and Title VI compliance for current and upcoming projects.

# Awards

2022

MARCOM AWARDS



**Marcom Platinum Award in Strategic Communications** (*Rockville Canopy Replacement Project*)

**PRNEWS Platinum Award in Community Relations Campaigns, Honorable Mention** (*Rockville Canopy Replacement Project*)

2023



**Virginia Transit Association Outstanding Transit Marketing Award** (*Regional Transit Silver Line Extension*)

## individual recognition

**Transportation Research Board TCRP Publication Panelist, Inclusive Public Participation in Transit Decision-Making** (*Project J-07/Topic SH-22*)

**2023 Metro Sustainability Awards Sustainability Champion, Bronze** (*Public Participation Programs*)

**2023 Metro Sustainability Awards, Honorable Mention** (*Community-Based Art in Transit at the Bladensburg Bus Garage*)

**Metro Board Recognition & Appreciation Awards** (*Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Communications & Outreach, Yellow Line Tunnel Project Communications & Outreach*)

# Project Highlights

Metro's Office of CXE managed the communications and outreach for more than 140 projects between November 2020 and June 2023. The following pages highlight various projects that applied innovative communications and participation techniques. A complete list of projects can be found in *Appendix D: Outreach Activity List*.

## Station Openings

2022 and 2023 were exciting years for Metro! The long-awaited Silver Line Extension to Ashburn, Virginia opened in November 2022 and the new Potomac Yard Station in Alexandria, Virginia opened in May 2023, adding seven new stations to the Metrorail system. Both historic days for Metro, Nov. 15, 2022 for Silver Line and May 19, 2023 for Potomac Yard, were highlighted with grand opening events featuring stakeholders, customers, employees, and media outlets.

The expansion of service to Washington Dulles International Airport and the opening of the Potomac Yard Metro Station, Metro's second infill station, emphasizes Metro's history and reminds employees, customers, stakeholders, and the communities we serve about the importance of accessible transit for our region.

### Potomac Yard Metro Station

The new Potomac Yard Metro Station, located on the Blue and Yellow lines, opened on May 19, 2023, in Alexandria, Virginia. Initiated by

the City of Alexandria and funded through tax revenue, developer contributions, federal and state grants, loans, and regional sources, this is Metro's 98th rail station and second infill station, located between Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and Braddock Road stations. The station includes a secure Bike & Ride facility and a Capital Bikeshare docking station, connects to other regional transportation systems, and offers walkable access to the future 3.5-acre Virginia Tech Innovation Campus.

The station also features innovative artwork that showcases a partnership between the City of Alexandria and Metro's Art in Transit program. To increase awareness about the station opening, Metro conducted extensive customer outreach at stations and community events; posted on social media; issued press releases, generating local media coverage; and shared newsletters with 1,260 recipients, resulting in an open rate of 56%.



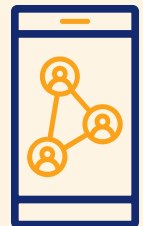
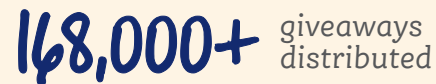
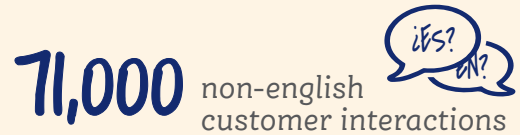


### Silver Line Extension

Opening the Silver Line Extension in November 2022 was the final stop along a visionary transportation journey that was decades in the making. This transformative project was a dream come true for the thousands who campaigned, planned, built, and implemented this bold expansion of the Metrorail system. One of the largest capital construction projects in the United States and a generational infrastructure investment in Northern Virginia, the Silver Line provides Metro customers with a high-capacity transit connection to the Dulles corridor and eastern Loudoun County.

As Metro prepared for the opening of the Silver Line Extension, the communications team sought to overcome some negative public perceptions related to project delays, station design, and proximity to the airport, as well as separate safety concerns regarding the Metrorail fleet. As the region continued to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, telework was predominant and transit ridership remained low. It was critical that communication and outreach strategies aligned to communicate confident, trustworthy, and transparent messaging that greatly increased awareness of the coming service and stations, built trust among regional partners, and encouraged ridership. The campaign messaging focused on the endless possibilities that six new stations bring to the region and communities along the Silver Line Extension.

## Station Opening Communications Spotlights



## Major Construction Projects

From January 2021 to May 2023, Metro executed multiple major construction projects resulting in temporary rail station closures at 19 stations. As segments of the rail system were closed, Metro launched extensive multichannel communications and outreach campaigns geo-targeting the communities most impacted by the closures. The customer engagement efforts included multilingual in-person customer support every day of each shutdown, bilingual webpages, station-specific handouts, signage, virtual and in-person information sessions, biweekly newsletters, and advertisements online and in local publications.

### Platform Improvement Project

The final three phases of this project included three-month-long station closures at 13 stations in Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Summer 2022. During each closure, construction crews rebuilt deteriorating outdoor platforms and installed customer experience improvements. Shuttle buses replaced trains to transport customers to their destinations, with directional signage and customer support on-site throughout the shutdowns.

### Rockville Canopy Replacement Project

Shady Grove and Rockville stations were closed with no rail service on Sept. 11, 2021, while Metro replaced the aging canopy over the Rockville Station platform. Originally scheduled to reopen on Dec. 4, 2021, the reopening date was adjusted to Jan. 16, 2022, to allow Metro to address unforeseen service challenges and materials issues.



In 2022, a bold, attention-grabbing campaign was created to increase newsletter subscribers for a shutdown on Metro's Orange Line in Prince George's County, Maryland. With a poster campaign, low-cost social media promotion, and a fun popsicle handout at the impacted stations, the communications team achieved a 700% increase in the subscriber base.

The communications and outreach campaign received several awards in 2022, including the MarCom Platinum Award for the Strategic Communications category, PRNEWS Platinum Awards Honorable Mention in the Community Relations category, and a Gold Stevie Award for the communications and outreach report in the Best Government Publication category.

### Blue and Yellow Line Major Construction

In September 2022, Metro began constructing new track to connect the future Potomac Yard Station to the Metrorail system, and concurrently, began an eight-month rehabilitation of the Yellow Line tunnel and bridge between Pentagon and L'Enfant Plaza stations. Due to the Potomac Yard work, six Blue and Yellow line stations south of Reagan National Airport closed with no rail service from Sept. 10 to Nov. 6, 2022. After the Blue Line stations reopened, three shuttles remained to accommodate the Yellow Line closure.



## Communication Highlights

To welcome customers back, Metro hosted a Yellow Brick Road event to thank riders for their patience during the eight-month shutdown. Attendees included Metro General Manager and CEO Randy Clarke, the Yellow Line project team, Metro employees and Board members, media members, and social media contest winners. As part of a contest to win a spot on the tour, more than 480 haikus were submitted via social media! The event featured a private train tour on a special “Yellow Brick Road” train that took customers from L’Enfant Plaza through the Yellow Line tunnel and over the bridge and back.

## Major Construction Spotlights



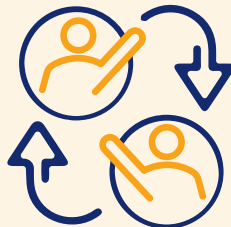
**387,000+**  
web page views

**~300,000**

handouts distributed

**35**

newsletters sent



**2.2M+**

customer interactions

**2.7M+**

impressions



**3,700+**  
signs posted

**264** news stories





### Bus Garage Modernization

Metro operates nine bus garages responsible for maintaining over 1,600 buses. Since 2019, we began major initiatives to transform three of our garages – Northern, Bladensburg and Western – into state-of-the-art, LEED®-certified facilities. In 2022, we announced we would begin converting our bus garages to electric as part of a fleet-wide transition to reduce emissions and protect the health of the community and environment.

Across the three bus garage projects, Metro held 27 quarterly community meetings – 21 virtual and six hybrid – which were advertised with the help of key stakeholders, evites, flyers distributed to the community, and banners at the project sites. The project team, Metro’s Government Relations Officers, and Communications Project Leaders also regularly engaged in “small group” meetings to address prominent community concerns. Metro posted bilingual social media messaging and engaged directly with the community to produce Art in Transit banners that now cover the perimeter fencing, capturing the history and spirit of the community. Groundbreaking events were also hosted for the community which included Metro’s General Manager and CEO Randy Clarke, D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, Federal Transit Administration Administrators, and Advisory Neighborhood Commission leaders.

## Better Bus Engagement Metrics



**90** public events

**32,500+** customer engagements

**230** stakeholder meetings, briefings, and check-ins

**5,410**  
combined  
newsletter  
subscribers



**18**  
network redesign  
engagements in  
spanish

**1,300** staff engagements with 370 operator comments

**620,000** social media impressions

**175** attendees at two groundbreaking ceremonies for bus garages



**40,000**

Experience Lab webpage views for network redesign



**200** art banners installed and bus garages

## Policy, Fare and Service Changes

### Budget Process

Each year, Metro goes through a budget approval process that includes extensive outreach to ensure the public receives thorough and timely information about proposed changes with multiple ways to submit feedback.

#### Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Budget

The Authority faced a significant budget shortfall due to low ridership caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Public engagement was key to helping Metro's Board of Directors and management make decisions about pandemic recovery. As a result, more than 22,400 individuals and organizations provided feedback on the FY22 budget during the public comment period, which spanned from Feb. 20 to March 16, 2021.

#### Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Budget

The \$4.8 billion budget, split evenly between operating and capital budgets, focused on providing safe, reliable, and affordable transit service to the region. The budget included plans to launch Metrorail service to six new Silver Line stations and a new Potomac Yard Station. The FY23 budget page received over 19,700 views during the public comment period, and more than 3,000 respondents provided comments including over 7% in Spanish.

### 2021 Fare and Service Change

In 2021, Metro's Board of Directors approved fare and service changes designed to better meet the needs of existing customers, reflect new travel patterns and lifestyle changes, and attract new customers. These changes were part of Metro's pandemic recovery plan to support the region's recovery and assure that public bus and rail travel were safe. The changes included:

- » A "frequent service" network – 12-minute all day, frequent service on rail and 20 Metrobus lines
- » Free transfers between bus and rail
- » \$2 one-way weekend fares
- » More late-night Metrorail service
- » 50% discount on unlimited passes – Metro's first-ever pass sale!

To increase awareness about these changes, we deployed various bilingual communications tactics, including digital and print signage in stations, at bus stops, and at transit centers; paid radio and television ads; new customer-friendly service maps, both online and at bus stops; and outreach and brochure distribution at the stations with the highest ridership.

## New and Notable Tactics

### Compact Public Hearings

For FY22, all public hearings were held virtually on a new platform used to streamline the process, ensure accessibility, and make participation easier for the public. For FY23, Metro hosted its first-ever hybrid public hearings, with the opportunity to participate in person or virtually at three public hearings in February. Between FY22 and FY23, there were 155 public speakers and recorded audio submissions.



### Stakeholder Outreach

In FY22, Metro hosted Virtual Information Sessions with 100 elected officials, jurisdictional partner staff, and leaders from Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC) and CBOs. In FY23, we shared stakeholder emails with 4,000 individuals – including over 350 CBOs, elected officials, jurisdictional staff, event venues, apartment and residences, schools, shopping areas, and more.

### Direct Mailings

During the FY22 budget process, a letter about the budget survey was mailed to approximately 20,000 residents in targeted zip codes throughout the region to encourage low-income and minority participation.

### In-person Outreach

As part of the FY22 and FY23 budget process, street teams spoke with over 178,000 customers and handed out more than 114,000 brochures, and as part of the 2021 Fare and Service Changes, outreach staff conducted 228 pop-ups at Metro stations and bus stops, interacting with over 219,500 customers. Seventeen percent of those interactions were in languages other than English.

### Transit App

Push notifications were also sent via the Transit app, which has high Spanish language usage. Between the two budget processes, there were over 3,500 survey link clicks, with 26% of those surveys completed in Spanish.



# Meeting the Community Where They Are

One of the first principles of our first PPP in 2014 – “Meet people where they are” – still rings true today. Even with the pandemic, Metro still engaged with more people face-to-face than ever before. We notified stakeholders and the community before initiating projects, provided customer service during impacts, collected feedback from customers on almost 70 different projects, built community trust with our transit police, and educated groups on how to use our system.

Between September 2020 and early 2022, it was apparent that we still needed to reach our customers in-person but needed to do so safely due to Covid-19. We adjusted our in-person outreach strategy to include the largest, most impactful projects. In early 2022 when pandemic restrictions eased, we expanded outreach to community locations like fairs, festivals, libraries, recreation centers, shopping centers, laundromats, sporting events, concert venues, farmers markets, grocery stores, air shows, and mobile markets.





[wmata.com/silverline](http://wmata.com/silverline)



RIDE SILVER



**5.3+ million**  
customers reached



**900,000+**  
interactions in languages  
other than English



**772,000+** interactions in Spanish

**1+ million**  
pieces of printed  
collateral distributed



**166** in-person  
community engagement  
events in one year

We used multiple outreach and engagement tactics to talk to our customers and the community:

**Bus ride-alongs** were re-implemented for two projects in February 2023. Outreach teams boarded Metrobuses and safely interacted with customers onboard for the first time since the pandemic began. Staff interacted with more than 3,600 customers.



**Community-based organization (CBO)** in-person visits were re-implemented in 2023 as part of our Fiscal Year 2024 Budget outreach process. During the pandemic, many CBOs closed or decreased staffing, making it hard to reach the right people with the right information. In-person visits proved to be more successful than emails or phone calls at sharing information with community leaders. Outreach staff distributed over 2,600 project brochures in-person to 22 of the 44 CBOs that remained open.

**Community engagement at festivals and other events** came back strong in mid-2022 where we distributed information and answered questions about Metro projects and services. To build excitement and reach new potential customers, we interacted with over 45,300 people at 64 community events for the opening of the Silver Line Extension and Potomac Yard stations.

**Door-to-door distribution** was used for multiple projects to reach targeted residences and businesses. Over 1,000 flyers were hand-delivered at community centers and businesses near the impacted Metro stations during the fourth phase of the Platform Improvement Project. For the Better Bus Network Redesign, 9,450 door hangers were distributed to residences in equity-focused communities around the five workshop areas.

**Hybrid meetings and public hearings** were implemented after the pandemic. All meetings and hearings were hosted in-person, with a virtual option, allowing customers and community members to choose how to attend and participate.

**In-person open houses** were re-implemented and provided opportunities for customers to talk with project staff one-on-one prior to the formal Public Hearing process. These open houses were staffed by bilingual team members.

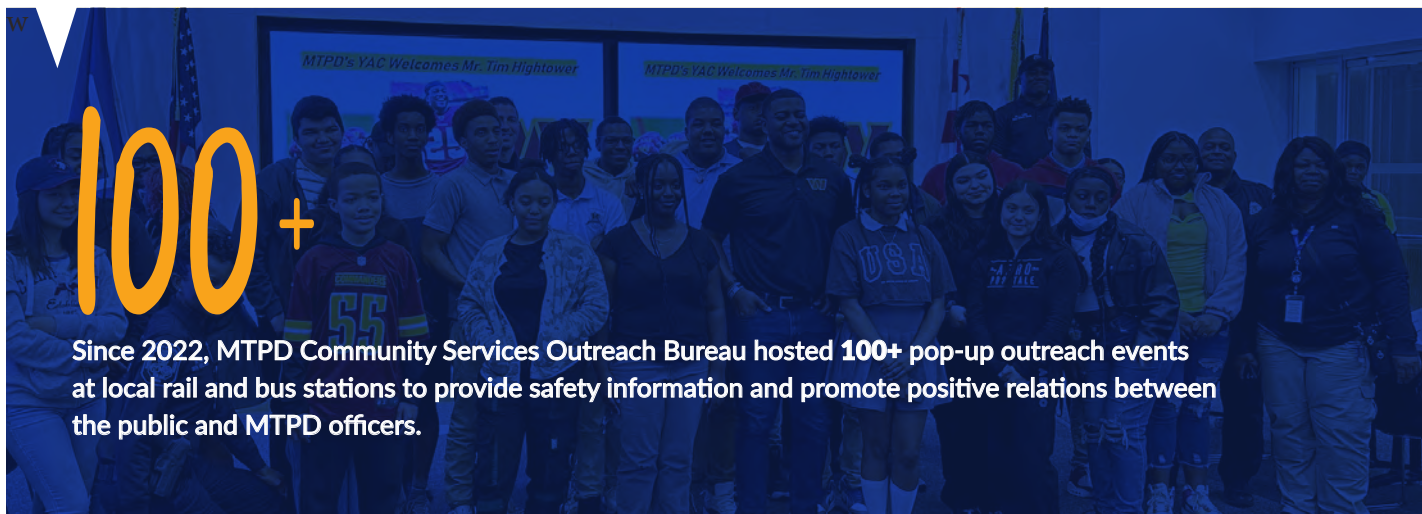
**Transit center, station, and bus stop pop-up events** continued to be the best locations to meet the majority of our customers. Some events had more formal set-ups with tents/tables and interactive activities, and some were more informal to distribute information and provide customer service.



Creative art projects were available at **Silver Line** and **Potomac Yard** opening outreach events in partnership with the **Art in Transit** program to highlight art installations at the new stations.

**Youth engagement and school visits** became more prevalent in 2022 at community festivals and in partnership with the Metro Transit Police Department Outreach Division (MTPD) and its Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Project staff attended the YAC in-person meetings while outreach teams attended a few high schools to engage students and notify them about upcoming project impacts and the importance of providing their feedback.

**Workshops** were introduced in 2023 for the Better Bus Network Redesign as a community-oriented, family-friendly, innovative refresh to the standard open house format.



Since 2022, MTPD Community Services Outreach Bureau hosted **100+** pop-up outreach events at local rail and bus stations to provide safety information and promote positive relations between the public and MTPD officers.





We also hosted a “design studio” at Gallery Place Station, allowing customers to experience elements of the railcars firsthand, including a seat sample, a piece of aluminum train siding, renderings, and more. While at the exhibit, customers provided feedback that was then included in the new design of the trains. In total, 16,700 customers engaged with the exhibit!

### Trip planning tools

Twenty customers, including low-income and minority Metrobus customers, completed usability testing on our trip planning tools which led to improved experiences on [wmata.com](http://wmata.com).

### Website redesign

Usability testing was also completed using wireframes of a future [wmata.com](http://wmata.com) design proposal. The study included 16 customers ranging from low-income transit-dependent customers to senior citizens. Feedback from this study is being used to design Metro’s new website scheduled for launch in 2025.

### Addressing safety

We conducted extensive focus groups to understand customers’ safety concerns with returning to Metro during and after the pandemic. These focus groups included over 60 current and former Metro riders, and the findings were instrumental in developing Metro’s award-winning “Doing our Part” ad campaign.

## Policy & Infrastructure Changes through a Public Hearing Process

Each year Metro hosts multiple public hearing processes for various initiatives as required by the Metro Compact or other legal guidance. From November 2020 to June 2023, Metro held 17 public hearings for eight proposed projects, including our new STP. Fiscal Years 2022-2024 Budgets, fare and service changes, and joint development proposals. Each process includes robust outreach to impacted customers and communities, encouraging them to take a survey, provide written comments, upload documents, or give oral testimony at a public hearing.

## World-Class Customer Service

Metro continues to collect feedback and respond to customers on an ongoing basis through our Office of Customer Service - via phone, email, web comment form, social media channels, and our live chat feature.

Customer Service receives over 489,000 calls per year assisting customers with trip planning, general information, SmarTrip®, compliments, and complaints. In addition to calls, we responded to over 52,000 emails, communicated with 13,000 customers through chat, and replied to over 20,000 customers through social media regarding service, maintenance, fare, and safety issues. Overall, our customer service center handles over 500,000 contacts per year.

# Expanding Community Partner Engagement

Community partner engagement continued to be an integral part of all communications planning and execution. These relationships have provided valuable insight into decision-making and yielded beneficial recommendations and opportunities to reach community constituents.

## Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

CBOs and social service agencies are a key resource for Metro to gather feedback and different perspectives on projects and initiatives. With over 330 CBOs in our stakeholder database, we keep these partners updated with the latest project news; send them suggested content, images, and videos in multiple languages that they may share through their social media and newsletter distributions; and offer print material drop-offs. Between November 2020 and June 2023, we sent more than 50 emails to over 1,900 CBO representatives about various projects and initiatives including why they are necessary, and how the public could provide input or learn more. In many cases, our CBO emails contained links to a communications toolkit, with ready-to-go newsletter text, social media posts, and graphics that community partners could use to help amplify the message.

We engaged with CBOs to spread the word and help community members plan for alternative travel for a variety of major construction projects, including the Blue and Yellow Line station closures to connect Potomac Yard to the Metrorail system; the Yellow Line closure for tunnel and bridge rehabilitation; Orange Line single-tracking and station closures for rail replacement; and Green Line station closures for signaling upgrades.





During the Yellow Line closure, we engaged and met with the local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) in areas impacted by construction. Through our meetings, we discovered that construction would impact a popular tourist area and concert venue during a busy time of year. After meeting with the local ANC, our contractor was able to reschedule their construction to a less busy time of year.

We also engaged with CBOs as part of our annual budget process to encourage public input on the proposed budget and kept CBOs updated when any fare and service changes went into effect. First implemented in 2021 as part of our FY22 budget, communications toolkits are now a standard component of our CBO engagement tactics. These toolkits contain newsletter content, social media posts, and graphics in English and Spanish so CBO representatives can quickly and accurately inform the communities they serve. Toolkits also contain multilanguage flyers per the impacted area's demographic information.

For the Better Bus Network Redesign, we focused on building relationships with CBOs to ensure we were able to more effectively reach their constituents. We partnered with So Others Might Eat, DC Transportation Equity Network, and House of Ruth, among others. We also co-

sponsored pop-up events with CBOs at busy transit or community locations where visitors could explore the proposed network at interactive stations, talk with technical team members, and provide feedback at a time and place convenient to them. About 17 percent of our engagements were with Spanish speakers and another 4 percent were with other non-English language speakers.

The MTPD Community Services Outreach Bureau has also built strong relationships and hosts approximately four events per month at diverse organizations throughout the region, including the Open Door Baptist Church Health Information Fair and Faith & Blue events in D.C. and Maryland. They also host events and raise money for local shelters and schools, and provide services for those in need, such as food distribution for more than 500 people and cold weather protection on various holidays.

Additionally, we manage a stakeholder database of over 2,400 contacts that include places of worship, event venues, business improvement districts, apartments and residences, schools, shopping areas, other transit providers, and social service organizations. We communicate with them frequently about feedback opportunities or upcoming projects that may impact their constituents.

## Metro Advisory Groups

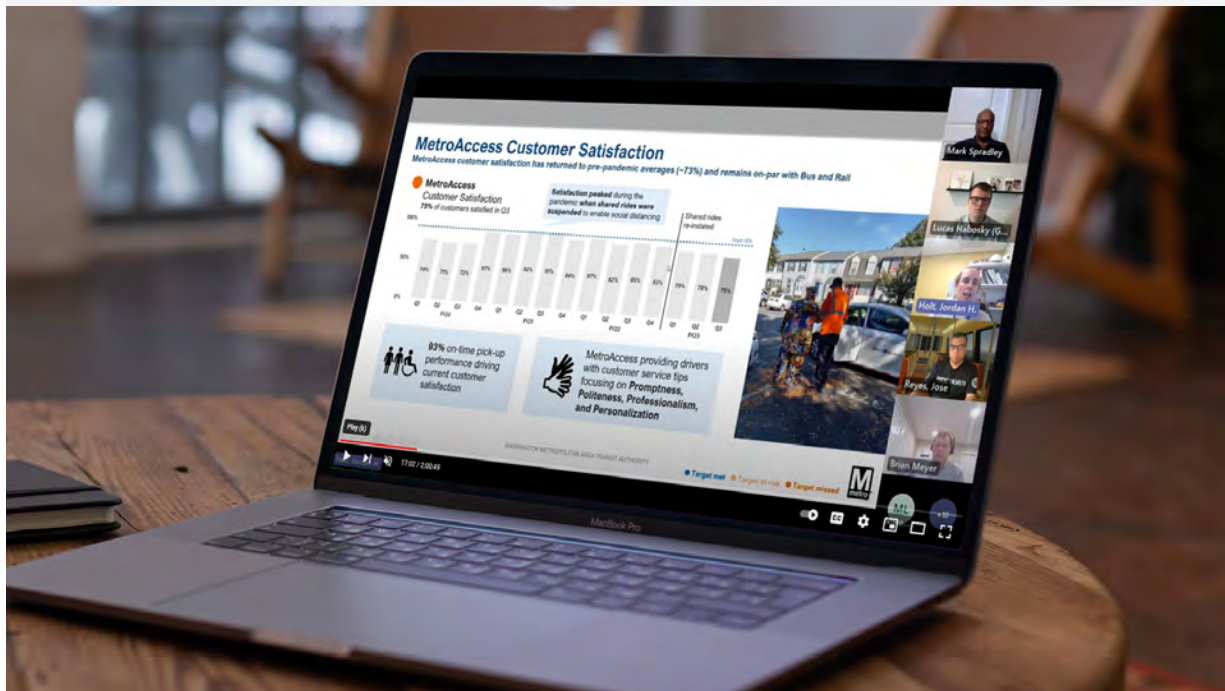
Metro partners with three advisory groups and multiple project-focused committees that project managers frequently collaborate and meet with to discuss priorities and initiatives.



### Riders' Advisory Council (RAC)

The RAC was established in 2005 and advises the Board on Metro policy and service issues. The eleven-member Council includes two members each from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, four at-large members and a representative from the Accessibility Advisory Committee. A member of Metro's Board of Directors attends meetings as a liaison between the Board and the RAC. Monthly meetings are open to the public and are conducted virtually.

In FY23, the RAC produced its first Annual Report, which sought to document RAC members' engagement with customers to document their concerns. RAC members also participated in Metro's FY24 budget hearings, visited New York City to view potential new railcar design features, and hosted a "Meet the Project Team" event with the Better Bus project. Metro's Chief Operating Officer and General Manager regularly attend RAC meetings to address operational concerns and obtain feedback on proposed changes.







## Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

The AAC was established in 1979 to address the needs of senior citizens and people with disabilities. The twenty-member committee includes six members each from Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, and two at-large members. There are also two subcommittees – one for Bus and Rail and another for MetroAccess. The committee and subcommittees meet monthly, and all meetings are open to the public. All AAC meetings are held virtually, continuing since April 2020.

From September 2020 through June 2023, the AAC held 96 committee and 192 subcommittee meetings for a total of 288 meetings.

The AAC also participated in several in-person events, focus groups, and other engagement efforts:

- » Metrobus farebox/validator vehicle testing;
- » Silver Line Extension and new station site visits;
- » Grand Opening of Silver Line Phase II;
- » Fort Totten faregate modifications pilot site visit;
- » New York trip to view open-gangway trains;
- » Potomac Yard Station opening;
- » Better Bus Network Redesign engagement;
- » Budget hearings;
- » Grand opening of the L'Enfant Plaza Headquarters building;
- » two phases of Waymap testing; and
- » table-top exercise for shuttle buses in rail emergencies in Loudoun County.



### Youth Advisory Council (YAC)

The YAC is MTPD's flagship educational program for high school students within Metro's transit zone. The program aims to provide essential life-skills, such as self-budgeting and personal responsibility, while offering a safe space for young adults to “speak their peace” about community policing issues in the D.C. metro area. The Community Services Bureau, including Youth Services Division (YSD) sworn officers, organize and facilitate monthly meetings during the school year at Metro Headquarters. During the 2022-23 school year, youth attendance grew to over 100 percent.

The increase in program participation is likely due to the direct interaction and outreach by YSD to schools across the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. MTPD regularly invites sworn officers to attend YAC meetings, which helps to build positive relationships. On occasion, local VIPs and celebrities such as nationally-known former professional athletes are invited to attend and socialize with the youth, which further strengthens community relations.



## Community Connections Committee (CCC)



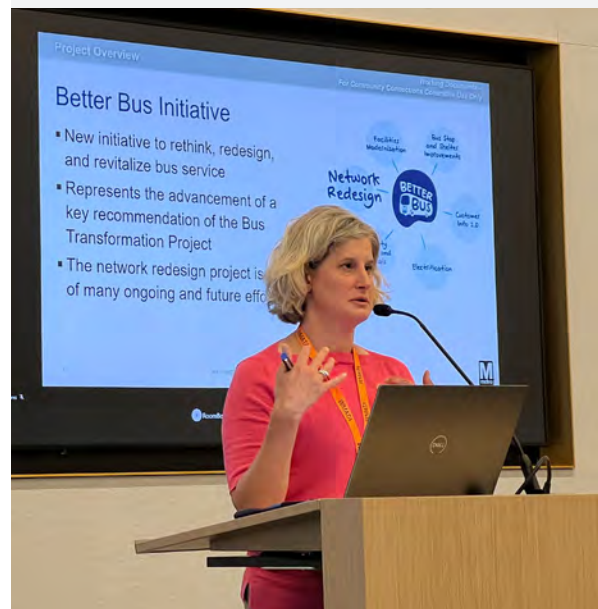
The CCC was established in fall 2022 to serve as a link between the Metro team and the broader public for the agency's Better Bus Network Redesign project. For the project, the CCC ensures voices are heard and serves as a sounding board for existing and future customers across the region. The 39 members hold leadership positions in CBOs, businesses and business groups, minority and disability groups, labor organizations, advocacy groups, and others.

As the liaison between Metro and the public, the CCC provides project insight and feedback from their outreach engagements to make sure everyone's voice is heard. They've also spread the word about the redesign project to the groups they work with and represent by sharing content and information about the project from our digital toolkits; holding in-person events; strategically placing bilingual yard signs in prominent locations; and displaying multilingual take-ones in their offices.

## Bus Garage Reconstruction Project Small Group Meetings



Metro collaborates with the community for Bus Garage Reconstruction Projects by engaging key stakeholders, such as ANC members, residents and business owners, in regular, small group meetings. Each group, consisting of about eight representatives, meets four times a year to discuss community concerns and to preview the proposed community meeting topics and presentation. The feedback received during these meetings is incorporated into a final presentation shared with the community, demonstrating Metro's commitment to address topics that matter to stakeholders. In total, Metro hosted approximately 33 small group meetings.





**Jurisdictional Partners**

Jurisdictional stakeholders, including elected officials and other transit agency and technical staff, are critical for sharing Metro’s projects and initiatives with their constituents. For major construction projects such as the Yellow Line Tunnel and Bridge Reconstruction Project or the summer construction shutdowns, Metro hosted monthly project briefings and developed project e-newsletters to keep them informed. We also provided project fact sheets and communications toolkits with relevant information, draft social media posts, and newsletter templates to be shared through their own channels.

**Other Community Partners**

Metro collaborates with many local partners on community building efforts to create lasting community relationships and build trust.

**Metro’s Art in Transit Program** collaborates with community organizations and representatives, jurisdictional arts councils, artists, and art professionals to incorporate visual artworks into the preparation and building phases of transit projects. This program enhances the customer experience, the communities it serves, and the Capital region at large.

Along with permanent artworks installed at new stations on the Silver Line and in Potomac Yard, recent, temporary projects were made possible through collaborations with local organizations such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Main Streets for different neighborhoods. These led to the installation of unique and original artwork at construction sites during Dupont Circle canopy installation; Tenleytown and L’Enfant Plaza escalator replacement initiatives; Northern and Bladensburg Bus Garage Reconstruction Project



worksites; temporary bus shelter replacement at Fort Totten, Takoma, Brookland and Shady Grove stations. A new underpass mural was also created during the West Hyattsville & Community paint day.

Metro partnered with **The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)** on many initiatives, emphasizing the importance of bicycling as a last-mile connection to and from our stations and bus stops. During Bike Month in May 2023, Metro staff participated in WABA's e-bike showcase, distributing safety information and giveaways, and sharing renderings of the 8000-series Fleet of the Future trains, which feature dedicated space for bicycles on board.

Metro employees banded together to raise over \$2,500 for **Virginia's Special Olympics** at the annual Dulles Plane Pull event. The team of 25 competed against other teams to see which group

could pull an 82-ton United Boeing 737 airplane the furthest in 10 seconds.

Metro collaborated with the **Autism Transit Project** for the first time in April 2023, joining other fellow transit agencies in raising awareness about autism. We invited 26 local enthusiasts with autism to record boarding and safety announcements.

Metro promoted **Earth Day** in 2023 to local schools by inviting children from kindergarten to 6th grade to submit their best drawing, print or photograph celebrating the role public transportation plays in protecting our environment, combating climate change, and supporting sustainable and livable communities. Of the original artwork, three designs were selected to become bus wraps. Customers were able to use a special tracker to locate each uniquely wrapped bus.

Metro employees volunteer with the food bank for a day of service every January, typically averaging over 100 Metro volunteers. Metro customers and the community are also invited to drop off food donations as part of the “Fill-A-Bus” food drive held annually in December as a partnership with the **Capital Area Food Bank**.

Metro works with **The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)** Commuter Connections to host a pit stop for Bike to Work Day every May. This event promotes bicycling to work as a healthy and safe alternative to driving

alone. On average, over 150 customers stop by the pit stop at East Falls Church Station each year.

## Newsletters and Digital Engagement

In addition to the community outreach and events, Metro works diligently to inform our stakeholders and interested members of the public about a wide variety of projects and initiatives through the use of newsletters and e-blasts. These communications help our partners inform our customers how current and future projects may effect them.

# Online Engagement By The Numbers

 **8,800+** subscribers

 **74** e-blasts

 open rates  
**27-61%**

 click-through rates  
**6-15%**

 combined stats represent projects highlighted below

*Better Bus Dispatch*

*Rockville Canopy Replacement Project*

*2023 Major Construction*

*Major Blue and Yellow Line Construction*

*Silver Bulletin Newsletter*

*Platform Improvement Project*

*Bladensburg Bus Garage Reconstruction Project*



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Be aware of your blind spots

# Accessibility At The Forefront

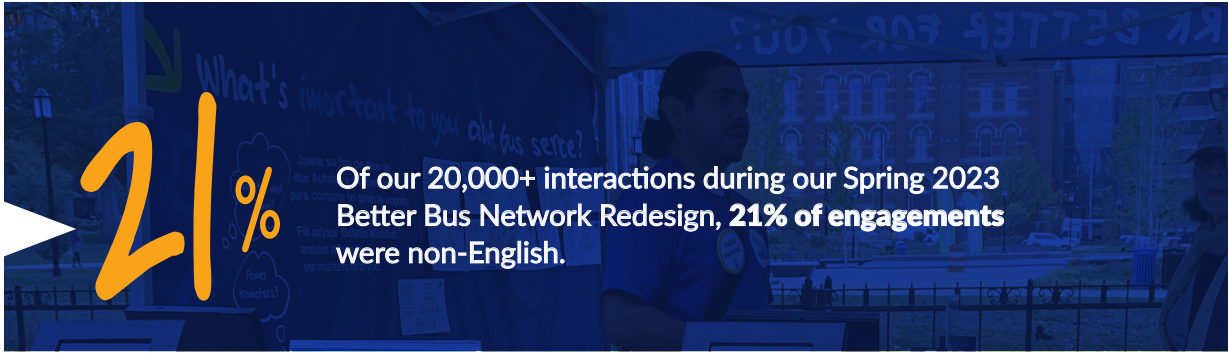
Project communications and outreach efforts always ensure that all impacted customers and community members have access to the information they need and the ability to participate.

## Language Access

Metro uses on-call outreach contracts to provide public engagement support for various projects and initiatives. It allows the flexibility to build professional outreach teams based on the needs and location of the project, which may require specialized outreach based on gender, race, ethnicity, and spoken languages. Language needs include, but are not limited to, Amharic, Mandarin, French, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, or American Sign Language (ASL). All contracted bilingual outreach staff wear their applicable language button for easy identification and all outreach teams are trained to use interpretation tools such as our on-call language line and language applications via mobile devices. Detailed information about each project's language support can be found in *Appendix D: Outreach Activity List*.

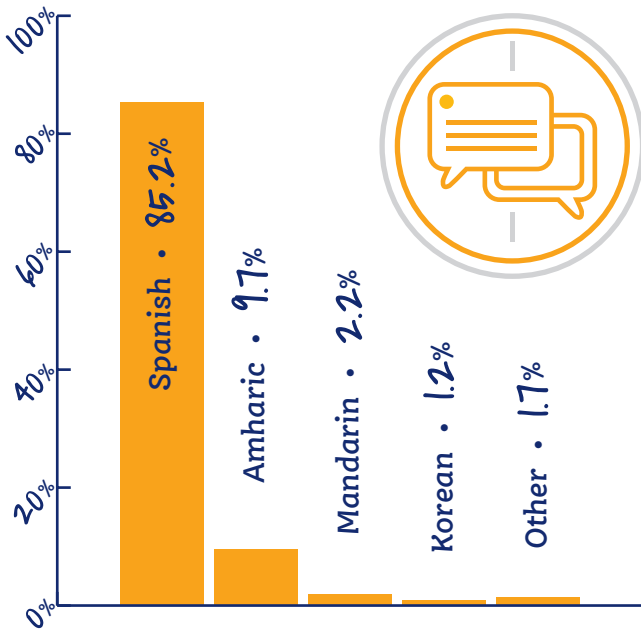






Between September 2020 and June 2023, our outreach teams interacted with over 906,000 customers in a language other than English. Outreach teams provide a detailed engagement report that documents all language interactions to show current language trends at a particular outreach location. These reports shape future outreach and engagement planning.

We continue to translate all vital materials, along with other materials that may provide a better customer experience based on the population that is impacted. Infographics and images are used frequently to portray key messages, but we still use professional translation services for the following materials:



- » Advertisements in non-English publications, social media, and radio
- » Brochures and flyers
- » Project webpages (wmata.com also has a Google translation tool for Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese)
- » Press releases for large impacts
- » Public hearing notices and docket materials
- » Transit app
- » Digital and printed signs (notification, wayfinding, proposals, etc.)
- » Surveys

For large-scale projects, written materials usually include a statement explaining how to receive more information in a preferred language other than English. We also offer translation and interpretation services for all public meetings.

\*OTHER languages included: Vietnamese, American Sign Language, French, Arabic, Portuguese, German, Italian, Russian, Swedish, Farsi, Tagalog, Uzbek, Hindi, Turkish, Thai, Cantonese, and Czech.







During extended shutdowns, we communicate specifically about the **accessibility** of alternate routes. We provide **extra signage** at stations to help customers locate special **accessible shuttles** and ensure shuttle maps use contrasting colors to provide **visibility** for individuals with low vision and colorblindness. Our street teams, typically at the stations for the duration of extended shutdowns, are **trained to assist individuals** with various accessibility needs.

project, Metro coordinated with Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind to provide advanced notice of the closure to low-vision customers. During construction, Metro provided project updates and offered a station walk-through. When the project was complete, Metro notified the organization when the station would reopen. Building this relationship also garnered additional local contacts, such as Washington Ear.

### Materials

Printed and online materials are always checked for accessibility. We consider color and font in design and ensure website materials include alternate text and can be read by a screen reader.

### Trainings

Metro outreach teams are prepared to interact with people with disabilities. Guest speakers from the ADA Policy and Planning Office provide guidance and information to our teams during the training.

### Metro's Accessibility Advisory Committee

AAC provides accessibility guidance and feedback on Metro projects. For example, Metro is collaborating with ACC to develop WAY-MAP, a phone application that provides wayfinding for the visually and mobility impaired. The goal is to map the entire rail system and all regional bus stops. To date, 21 outdoor stations have been included on the app. AAC and the community are both integral to testing and calibrating the beta version of the app.

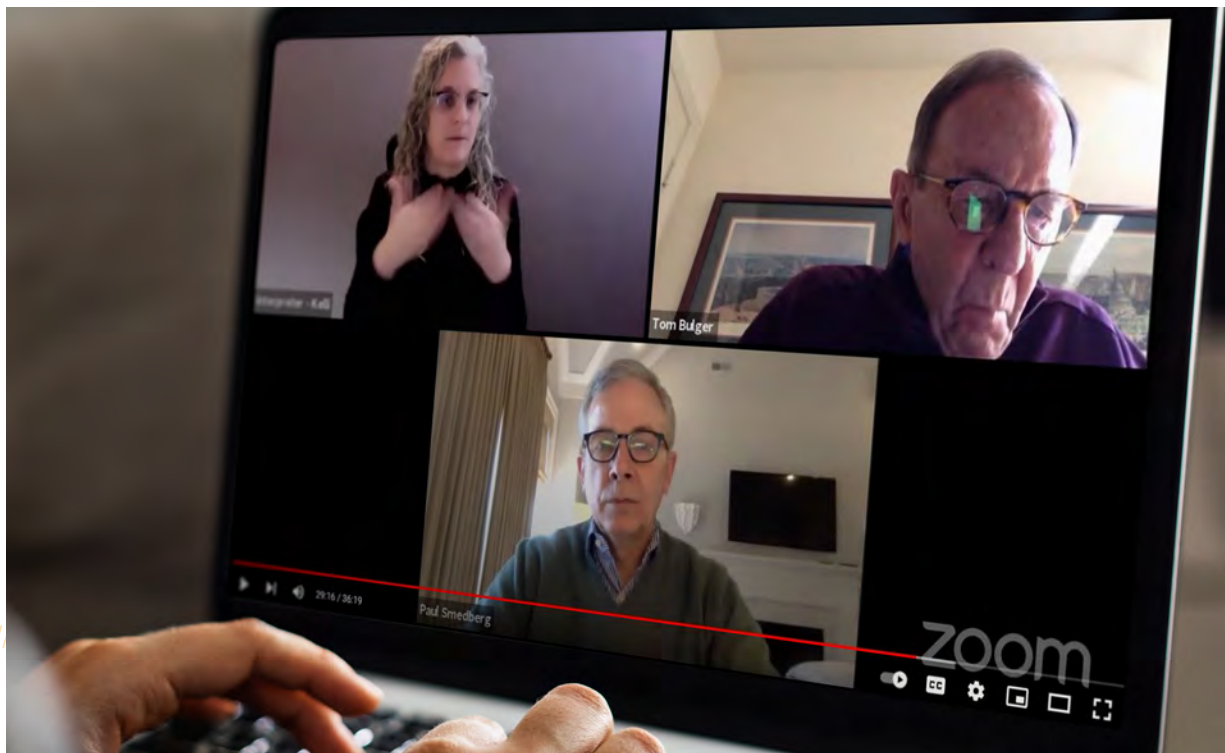
# *Evolving Practices* From The Pandemic

Metro activated its agency-wide Pandemic Response Plan on Jan. 29, 2020, and incrementally began to make adjustments, ramping up actions in March 2020 to minimize employee exposure while maintaining lifeline service for essential workers.

While it was critical to protect our customers and employees from unnecessary health risks, we also needed to inform and engage our customers and the broader region about critical service changes, as well as policy and budget decisions. The Covid-19 pandemic forced Metro to expand its toolbox to include new communications tactics and strategies. Three years later, as the restrictions have lifted, some of the practices adopted during the pandemic continue to be effective, and in some instances, more inclusive than ever before.

## Going “Virtual”

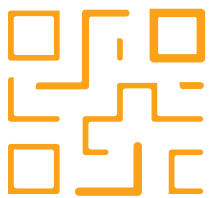
In 2020 when in-person meetings were severely restricted, Metro staff conducted extensive research on virtual platforms and formats to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for required fiscal year budget public hearings. In fact, as the Board of Directors responded to the pandemic and managed through great uncertainty, five budget proposals were presented in FY21 and FY22, providing an immediate need for updated engagement practices. With the new virtual format, the public could watch the hearing



officers and presentations live through YouTube and on [wmata.com](http://wmata.com), and call in to provide their oral testimony. This virtual format provided additional visibility to the hearing process and allowed for more people to attend at a time when in-person, group activities were very risky. Since then, we have continued to adjust the format and registration process to allow the public to choose how they want to participate – by video, by phone, or in-person. Interactive features like live Q&A and chat can be utilized during virtual-only meetings. So far in 2023, we found that the majority of meeting participants are joining virtually when there are both live and virtual options available.

### QR Codes

Metro adopted the early tactic of using large QR codes on informational signs to provide customers with a faster and safer alternative by accessing information via their phones. As QR codes became more mainstream, we procured a smart QR code generator to track metrics with greater flexibility and incorporated QR codes into design and brand standards. QR codes are now a standard tool used on all materials and at events.



12,400+

QR code scans between  
August 2022 and June 2023



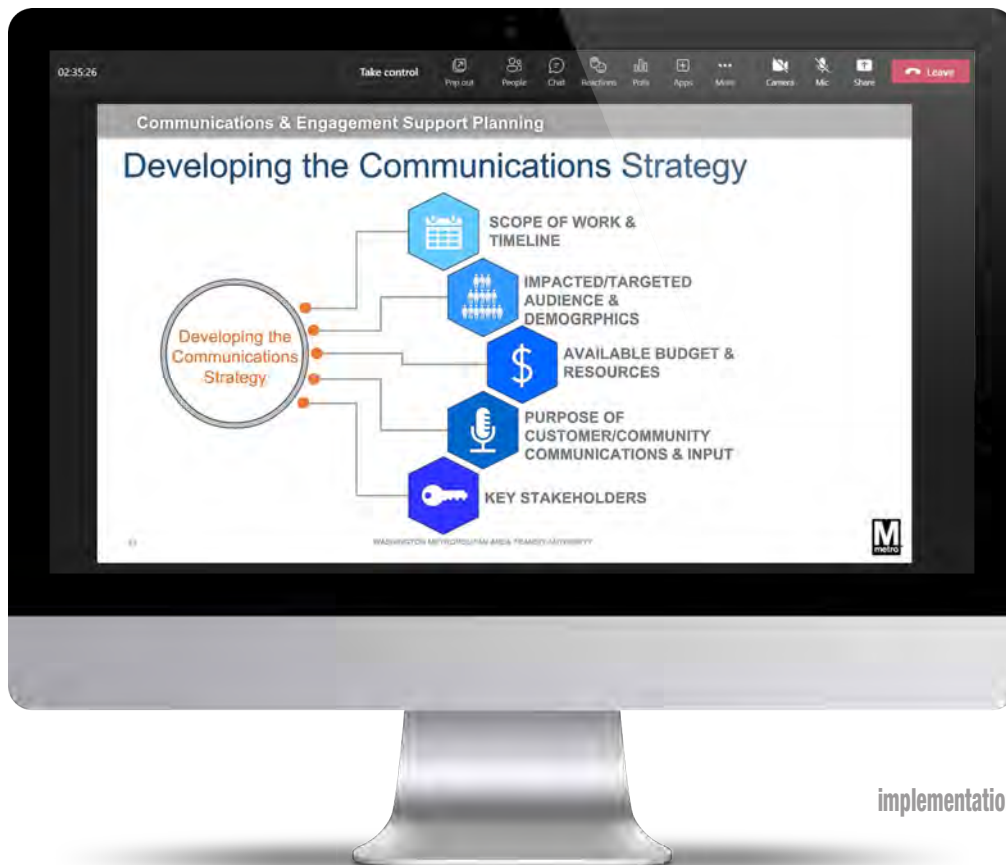
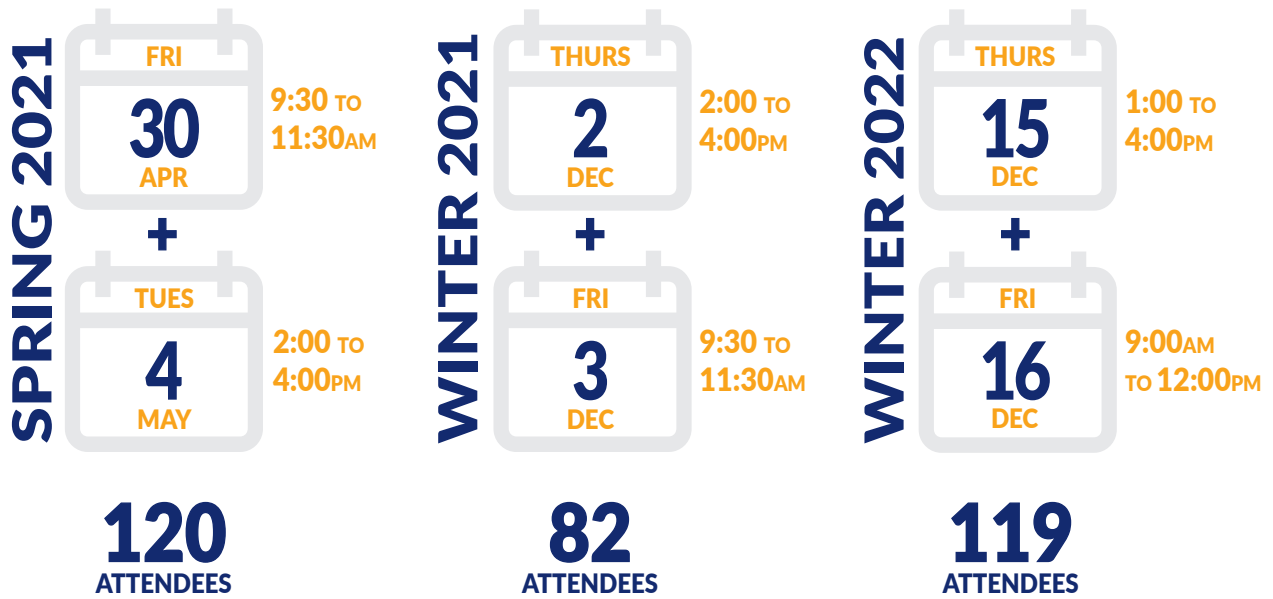
### Reinventing the Outreach Set-up

Outreach Information Booths were introduced early on in 2020 as a way to continue in-person engagement, while protecting outreach staff and providing a level of comfort for customers to receive information and engage on critical topics. For several months, proper safeguards were put in place during outreach activities, including tables with plexi-glass stands, separate brochure stands, and sanitizing stations. The use of the Outreach Information Booth as part of in-station outreach continued to be useful throughout the pandemic, as it provided customers with a comfortable place to engage with staff and pick up materials without direct contact. Once the general public became more comfortable with taking information directly from staff, the Outreach Information Booth shifted to being used mainly for projects where customers provide feedback or complete a survey on a tablet. When in-person events increased at the start of 2022, outreach information booths became scalable for small or large community events and included Metro-branded tents, interactive engagement tools, and a kids activity table.



## Public Participation Plan Training Summary

Completion of trainings are recorded, tracked, and reported through Metro's PeopleSoft Enterprise Learning Management system.



**97%**  
of attendees felt their time was valued.





# Measuring Performance

Metro continually evaluates and tracks performance measures on our communications planning processes and strategies through our Public Participation Management System.



## Public Participation Management System (PPMS)

The Office of Customer Experience & Engagement uses a web-based tool that was built in-house to support Metro communications and performance tracking called the PPMS. This tool tracks public participation for projects and initiatives, and creates one large database for easy reporting. The PPMS is considered a first of its kind in public participation tracking in transportation.

The PPMS is also used to document communications plans, capture data and the results from outreach activities, and produce the annual FTA report of public participation activities, shown in *Appendix D: Outreach Activity List*. An important related function of PPMS is the Public Events Calendar, which provides a centralized summary of relevant public events and public outreach activities.

One of the other key functionalities of PPMS is the ability to track performance measures, including communications plans, post-activity summaries, and post-project evaluations.

# Triennial **PPP** Performance Measurement Review

Below is Metro's Triennial PPP *Performance Measurement Review* based on the inputs completed between November 2020 and June 2023.

Strategy	Action	Performance Measures, Targets and Sources
<b>1. METHODS AND INFORMATION</b>		
What steps did you take to reach the project populations (LEP, low-income and minority groups)?	Outreach events are physically accessible to participants.	1. <b>99.98%</b> of outreach activities were within 1/4 mile of Metrobus or Metrorail line.
	Activity information, including marketing and promotional materials, is accessible to participants.	2. <b>99.98%</b> of venues for outreach activities were approved by WMATA ADA staff.
		3. <b>99.97%</b> of outreach materials were translated into all key languages identified in Project Communications and Outreach Plan.
		4. <b>99.86%</b> of activities utilized Ethnic media to advertise activity information.
		5. <b>99.9%</b> of outreach materials were developed at least two weeks before event.

2. PARTICIPATION AND EVENT FEEDBACK		
Did participation rates match the project demographics? Did the public and staff view the outreach as effective?	Other than meetings designed for small groups, project outreach events should be well attended.	6. <b>99.92%</b> of outreach activities that met the attendance goal for that type of event.
	LEP, minority and low-income participation in outreach accurately reflect project population.	7. <b>99.9%</b> of participation rates by minority and low-income groups in the outreach activity met or exceeded the demographic range of the project population identified in the Project Communications and Outreach Plan.
	Outreach event participants had a positive experience and were satisfied with opportunities to provide input.	8. <b>99.07%</b> of outreach activities received an average of "good" or higher ratings from post-event comment card or survey for each project activity.
	Key lessons learned from outreach process.	9. For <b>99.98%</b> of outreach activities the project managers summarized the key lessons learned for future outreach.

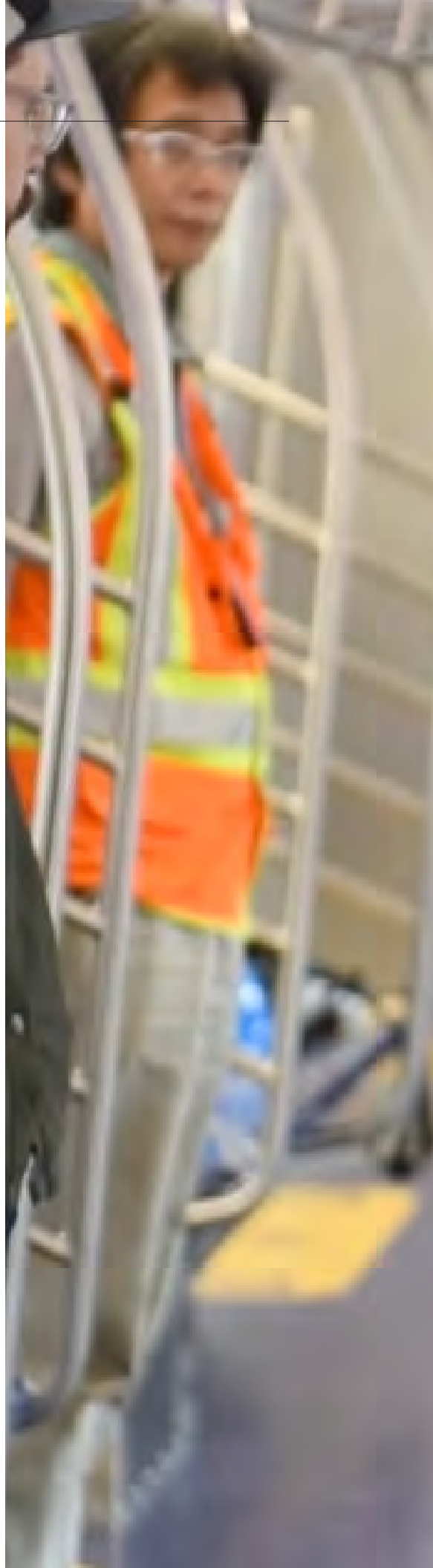
3. FOLLOW UP		
Provide a clear opportunity for all public outreach participants to receive follow up information about the project, including recommendations and plans for implementation.	All event outreach participants are informed of event results, project results and implementation of project results.	10. For <b>100%</b> of outreach activities the project manager summarized the key recommendations from the public and explained why or why not these can be implemented.
		11. For <b>99.96%</b> of outreach activities recommendations/results were communicated back to outreach participants and stakeholders/CBOs who provided contact information (who requested to stay in touch).
		12. <b>100%</b> of outreach activities where there is a process in place for keeping in touch with outreach participants and stakeholders/CBOs in the period between project planning and implementation.
		13. For <b>100%</b> of outreach activities there is a clear process for re-informing the public (including the key demographic groups from the project) when elements of the project are implemented.

# 03

## Communication + Outreach Guidelines and Procedures

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This chapter provides an overview of the processes and guidelines that Metro must follow when projects potentially impact customers or the surrounding community.





# Project Program Initiation

The development of the project charter, scope, and budget is a critical time for project managers to begin identifying customer and/or community impacts and determine how to engage these groups to obtain feedback throughout the project. It is also the right time to begin working with the CXE team.

When a project or program is initiated, whether internally at Metro or externally and adjacent to Metro property, the project manager must consider its impacts to customers and community members throughout the project's life cycle and the final product's lifespan.

The project manager is tasked with identifying whether the project triggers the PPP, assessing the breadth and impacts to customers and the community, and coordinating the intake process with the communications team.

## **Does the Project, Program or Initiative trigger the PPP?**

Overall, any planned project, program or initiative that has a Metro customer or jurisdictional community impact, or a project that requires public feedback from other guidance like the Metro Compact or FTA, must follow PPP guidelines.

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Projects that require a public hearing under Metro's Compact automatically trigger compliance with the PPP in addition to complying with the Compact standards.

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**Most projects and initiatives fall into the following categories**



## Studies + Pilots

Long-term and short-term planning studies, including:

- » strategic planning
- » pilot programs
- » station area planning projects
- » bus, rail, parking or fare studies, etc.



## Customer Experience Improvements

Required or planned work around new systems and structures that impact customer behavior, experience, or travel access, including:

- » changing, adding, or eliminating customer amenities
- » technology upgrades
- » fare media or purchasing options



## Customer Infrastructure Upgrades + Environmental Studies

Required or planned work that temporarily or permanently opens, modifies, or closes Metro facilities or travel access to Metro facilities, including:

- » projects that require NEPA environmental evaluations and impact reports
- » amending the mass transit plan
- » joint development, adjacent construction, and jurisdictional projects that impact Metro customers



## Fare, Service, & Policy

Planned adjustments for fares or fees, routes, span of hours, and service frequency, especially those defined as major changes that require an equity analysis and/or compact public hearing, including:

- » new or updated customer policy initiatives or programs

For emergency repairs or projects that impact customers, we must do our due diligence to follow PPP protocol for communications and outreach whenever possible.

# *Incorporating* **Communications +** **Engagement** *from the beginning*

The development of the project charter, scope, and budget is a critical time for project managers to think about customer or community impacts and how to engage these groups in providing feedback throughout the project. It is also the best time to start working with the CXE team on the following items.

**Charters:** All project charters must be approved by the Chief of CXE. Each charter should include information about customer and community impacts and a high-level overview of planned customer, community, and stakeholder engagement. If it isn't known at the time, a risk preliminary statement can be included describing what could happen without proper communication or community engagement. Impacts may include schedule delays, scope modifications, loss of ridership/revenue, safety or compliance issues, and reputational damage. These should also be included in risk registers and assessments.

**Scopes of Work (SOW):** Any SOW, task order, agreement, or contract for a project or initiative that triggers the PPP must include information about supporting communications and engagement efforts. CXE must review and

approve the SOW and may provide additional content or evaluation criteria.

It is at the discretion of CXE to determine which resources will be used to support the communications and outreach efforts.

If the project will impact customer behavior, experience, or travel access, the project manager must work with internal stakeholders and appropriate jurisdictional partners to develop an approved site plan, operations plan, and/or Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan. Some of this work may need to be developed for the scope to be written properly.

**Budget:** All projects or initiatives that trigger the PPP must include a budget line item for communications work, with the expectation that





most projects will be supported using external resources. Since communications budgets fluctuate widely by the type of impacts a project may have and the tactics that may need to be used to address the customer or community, it is best to work directly with CXE.

**Customer Experience:** For Metro to deliver frequent and accessible service that modernizes and enhances the customer experience, the customer must be at the forefront of all projects and initiatives.

Customer research and CXE guidance can inform customer-centric decisions and designs. The project manager will include this guidance in the charters. The team will try to mitigate customer impacts and improve customer technology and amenities.

The intake process must happen early enough in the project's life cycle to allow CXE to develop

and implement a communications plan and secure necessary resources. Depending on the scope of the project, this may be anywhere from two months to a year prior to realized impacts or engagement.

Joint development and adjacent construction projects should follow the *Metro Adjacent Construction Communications Manual* and follow the CXE planning and coordination guidelines.

**It is the project manager's responsibility to identify appropriate internal stakeholders and host project coordination meetings to discuss customer and communication impacts and experiences.**

# Communications Plan Development

We tailor each communications plan to the project or program based on the scope, customer impact levels, schedule, budget, and stakeholder needs.

Project managers are active participants in the development of the communications plan, responsible for overall management of the project (i.e., Board action items, approvals, reports), and must ensure any references to communications and outreach items are reviewed and approved by CXE in advance of publishing or presenting to the Board of Directors or other stakeholders.

The following process allows CXE to prepare a plan that is executable and ensures compliance. For projects that are externally led and impact Metro customers, such as adjacent construction, those project teams must follow the *Metro Adjacent Construction Communications Manual* and submit a communications plan for review and approval.

- STEP 01** **Gather Critical Information from Project Team**
- STEP 02** **Define the Communications Project Team**
- STEP 03** **Determine Communications Messaging and Tactics**
- STEP 04** **Establish Resource Requirements**
- STEP 05** **Develop Plan Timeline and Milestones**

# STEP 01 Gather Critical Information from Project Team

In order to craft an effective and customized communications strategy, the CXE team must obtain all of the essential project details from the project manager.

## Scope of Work & Timeline

The project manager must provide details about the project with the CXE team, including any previously developed presentations, memos, or any documents that discuss customer or community impacts and mitigations. The project manager must also disclose the anticipated project duration, important project milestones, critical submittals, and Board dates.

## Impacted or Targeted Audience

Identify customers and communities who will be impacted and/or have a high interest or stake in the project. Demographic profile information is essential.

## Budget and Resource Availability

Determine and communicate the budget and resources tied to the project, including appropriate charge codes. CXE may decide to procure additional resources if deemed necessary.



# STEP 01 Gather Critical Information from Project Team

## CONTINUED

### **Purpose of Customer & Community Communications & Input**

To determine the correct messaging and tactics to use through the communications plan, the project manager and CXE will establish what the communications goals of the plan are and what the desired feedback is - most essentially whether the primary goal is to tell the public about the project or listen to what they have to say.

Sometimes the goal is to solely educate the public on a project and its impacts, other times project managers are looking for collaboration, direction, preferences, or critiques on potential concepts. A communications strategy will often include some combination of education and interaction.

### **Key Stakeholders**

A stakeholder list, register, or matrix should be shared with the communications project team and any key contacts that have insight into the project. This stakeholder list can also be shared with any major stakeholders that have a high interest and/or influence over the project.

## *Essential Components*

- » Communicate with the project manager early to understand the scope, resources, and anticipated timeline of the project.
- » Establish clear goals for public and stakeholder involvement and use tools and strategies to accomplish those goals.
- » Understand the demographics of the anticipated public audience and key stakeholders to craft your messaging.

# STEP 02 Define the Communications Project Team

Gathering the right team and clearly defining roles supports communications success.

## Leveraging Our Talent

To ensure compliance with the PPP, Title VI, ADA regulations, and the Metro Compact, many key departments within Metro will have a large role in the communications planning and implementation process. Using the stakeholder list provided by the project manager as a starting point, CXE may invite other offices and departments to join the communications project team depending on the project scope.

Opportunity offices. Other offices within CXE such as Customer Research and Government Relations are often included as well. If needed, additional team members may be identified by the project manager for resource management (procurement, budget, invoice processing, etc.). A Responsibility Assignment Matrix or List will be part of the final communications plan and will include the role/responsibility/authorities of each team member.

Partner departments that typically have an active role include the Planning, Accessibility, Board Secretary, General Counsel, and Equal Employment



## STEP 03 Determine Communications and Messaging Tactics

The same message can be communicated using many different approaches - it is crucial to choose the correct ones to reach your desired audience.

CXE, with input from the communications project team, determines the messaging and the most appropriate communications, outreach, and feedback tactics for the communications plan. These will be based on the project information shared in Step 01.

A strategic messaging framework is developed and used as a guide for all internal and external messaging. This messaging guidance helps produce coherent and consistent materials that resonate with the identified target audiences and provides an approved set of key talking points to use for all tactics. The messaging will likely need to be evaluated and updated at different stages of the project.

The communications plan must reflect Metro's guiding principles, goals, objectives, and key findings for public participation. Each plan must consider what different activities and tactics should be used when the impacted communities are hard-to-reach, especially equity-focused communities, to ensure successful communications efforts.

### For all communications plans:

- » Meet people where they are, do not expect them to come to us.
- » Employ proper methods – several standard and innovative approaches are needed to provide equitable communications. This also means using technology appropriately and not as the only strategy.
- » Communicate progress and milestones - the community wants and deserves to be updated along the way.
- » Ensure accessibility requirements and compliance are followed so everyone has access to the information they need and the ability to participate.
- » Comply with Metro's Language Assistance Plan (LAP) which ensures steps are taken to provide access to benefits, services, information, and other areas of Metro's programs and activities for individuals with LEP/NEP. The LAP considers the FTA's Four Factor analysis when assessing required languages for communication and community engagement projects.

## A Note on Accessibility

Each communications plan must comply with ADA requirements to ensure people with disabilities receive information, participate in feedback opportunities, and attend events equitably. Metro events, locations, and materials must be accessible. Accommodation information must be included in event communications, and auxiliary aids and services must be available.

For people who are blind, have vision loss, or are deaf-blind: provide a qualified reader, electronic information for use with a computer screen-reading program, or materials in large print or braille. Additionally, information posted or shared online/electronically must be accessible or available via an audio recording.

For people who are deaf, have hearing loss, or are deaf-blind: provide assisted listening device(s), a qualified note-taker, sign language interpreter, oral interpreter, cued-speech interpreter, tactile interpreter, real-time captioning, written materials, or a printed script.

For people who have speech disabilities: provide a qualified speech-to-speech transliterator (a person trained to recognize unclear speech and repeat it clearly), and keep paper and pen as a helpful tool to communicate effectively.



## STEP 04 Establish Resource Requirements

Once the team is set and the strategy is in place, determine what resources you will need and where they will come from.

Each tailored communications plan will require budget and staffing resources. As part of the planning process CXE will collaborate with the project manager and communications project team to identify the required resources based on the planned activities and tactics. All projects should assume that most communications support will require resources from outside of the CXE office. Personnel with specialized skills such as map and infographic design, video recording and editing, translation and interpretation services, event planning, multilingual outreach, installation

services, etc. may need to be secured along with the purchase of materials or supplies. Depending on the size and scope of the project, it may be determined that staff augmentation is required.

CXE will work with the project manager to determine the best methods for acquiring these resources, ideally through existing relationships and contracts. Roles and responsibilities will be established and may require procurement tasks to be completed by the project manager. Acquiring and securing resources are typically the largest influencer on project timelines.

### Do we need...

- » Graphic Designers
- » Videographers
- » GIS Services
- » Guest Speakers
- » Translation and Interpretation Services
- » Event Planners
- » Transportation Services
- » Reprographics
- » Easels
- » Laptops or Tablets
- » Projectors
- » Wi-Fi Hot Spots
- » Markers and Pens
- » Onsite Event Staff
- » Sign-in Sheet
- » Tables and Tents
- » Youth Activities
- » Giveaways
- » Rain Date / Backup Plan
- » Permits and Fees
- » Advertisements, Flyers, and Social Media Materials
- » Event Security
- » Refreshments



## STEP 05 Develop Plan Timeline and Milestones

Creating a clear schedule allows for seamless coordination in the communications project team and helps the project manager track progress.

A communications plan implementation schedule will be developed by CXE along with the communications project team. The schedule will take into account the following inputs:

- » Milestone list, project timeline, and deliverables, as provided by the project manager
- » Activity and tactics list defined within the communications plan, along with estimated durations
- » Internal resource availability, taking into consideration concurrent or upcoming projects, holidays, and vacation schedules
- » External resource availability, taking into consideration contracting lead times and other priorities

These activities will be sequenced to create a schedule with planned dates for completing project activities. Any change to the critical path will have implications on the entire schedule. Risks also need to be considered during schedule development. These could include internal risks like management directives, or external risks like supplier or contract delays.

Once the communications plan is drafted, it will be reviewed by the project team and key stakeholders for approval. Depending on the complexity of the plan and resource availability, it may take up to a month for plan development and approvals to proceed.



# Execution Monitoring + Reporting

Once finalized and approved, the communications project team will begin to execute, monitor, and report on the communications plan. Many factors will contribute to successful implementation.

## **Frequent and clear communication**

between the project manager and the communications project team is critical to a project's success. This includes immediately conveying any changes to the project regarding scope or schedule, and providing regular updates so the communications project team can manage reputation and resource implications. Best practices include hosting frequent project update meetings, sharing written updates and meeting notes, and creating online portals or channels where team members can get the latest information. This also is required for projects that are externally led and impact Metro customers.

**Missed deadlines** can have an impact on the project and plan contingencies. This must be understood by the project team. For a project to succeed, all members of the communications project team must work together to deliver items on time, especially final, approved documents needed for message and material development. Many times these are operations/site plans or detailed proposals. A slip of one or two days can have implications to the critical path of the project.

**Long-term projects** that span multiple months or years will need to reevaluate the communications tactics and messaging on a regular basis or as needs arise. It is important to note when certain milestones or presentations are required. Continuous assessment of the stakeholder and public satisfaction must be incorporated.

**When applicable, participants in outreach activities should be able to evaluate their experience and provide Metro an opportunity to collect important demographic information for Title VI purposes. Surveys, feedback, or evaluation forms should take the place of the standard Title VI comment card and offer opportunities for participants to provide additional input about the topic at hand and recommend improvements for future outreach activities.**

All communications plans are monitored and tracked as part of a performance measurement framework used for reporting on individual projects and Title VI program compliance. Performance measurement data is collected through four distinct reporting measurements:



### **Communications Plan**

Many activities and tactics that are listed in the communications plan, including event locations, language access, and ADA accessibility, are tracked and fed directly into the performance measurement framework. The communications plan also includes any additional communication and outreach reports, memos, or Board presentations that need to be created, whether it is a request from key stakeholders or required by federal mandates. It will also determine when the project is completed from a communications perspective. This may be when all reports are submitted and final input has been reported back to stakeholders or the public, or when the impact no longer exists.



### **Post-Activity Summaries**

Each outreach activity or tactic summary is tracked within the PPMS. Details typically include target audiences, participation, outcomes, and lessons learned. Many of these can be viewed in *Appendix D: Outreach Activities*.



### **Post-Project Evaluations**

All outreach activity summaries are aggregated into a post-project evaluation at the end of each project.



### **Triennial PPP Performance Measurement Review**

The results of the post-project evaluations throughout the year feed into an annual performance measurement review, shown on page 47, and aggregated into the triennial PPMS report which is shared as part of this PPP update.

# Appendix A

## Regional & Customer Demographics

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Understanding the nature and extent of Title VI protected populations within Metro's service area provides context for a culturally-sensitive, customized approach to communications and outreach. All public communication and outreach plans are tailored based on who may be impacted. Metro uses data collected from rail and bus passenger surveys, as well as U.S. Census data and other sources, to create demographic profiles that help guide public participation.

This appendix is an overview of the following data used when creating demographic profiles for Metro projects:

- » Metro Compact Area Demographics and LEP Populations
- » Metro Metrorail Station and Metrobus Route Demographics

Additional information about this data can be requested from Metro's Office of Planning and Office of Customer Research.

### **Metro Compact Area Demographics & Limited English Proficient Populations**

Metro is an interstate compact agency created in 1967 by the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Metro's transit service area includes:

- » Washington, D.C.
- » Montgomery County (MD)
- » Prince George's County (MD)
- » City of Alexandria (VA)
- » City of Fairfax (VA)
- » City of Falls Church (VA)
- » Arlington County (VA)
- » Fairfax County (VA)
- » Loudoun County (VA)

Metro owns and operates service in these jurisdictions alongside supplementary local bus service.

In FY23, Metrorail provided approximately 96 million passenger trips and Metrobus provided approximately 102 million passenger trips.

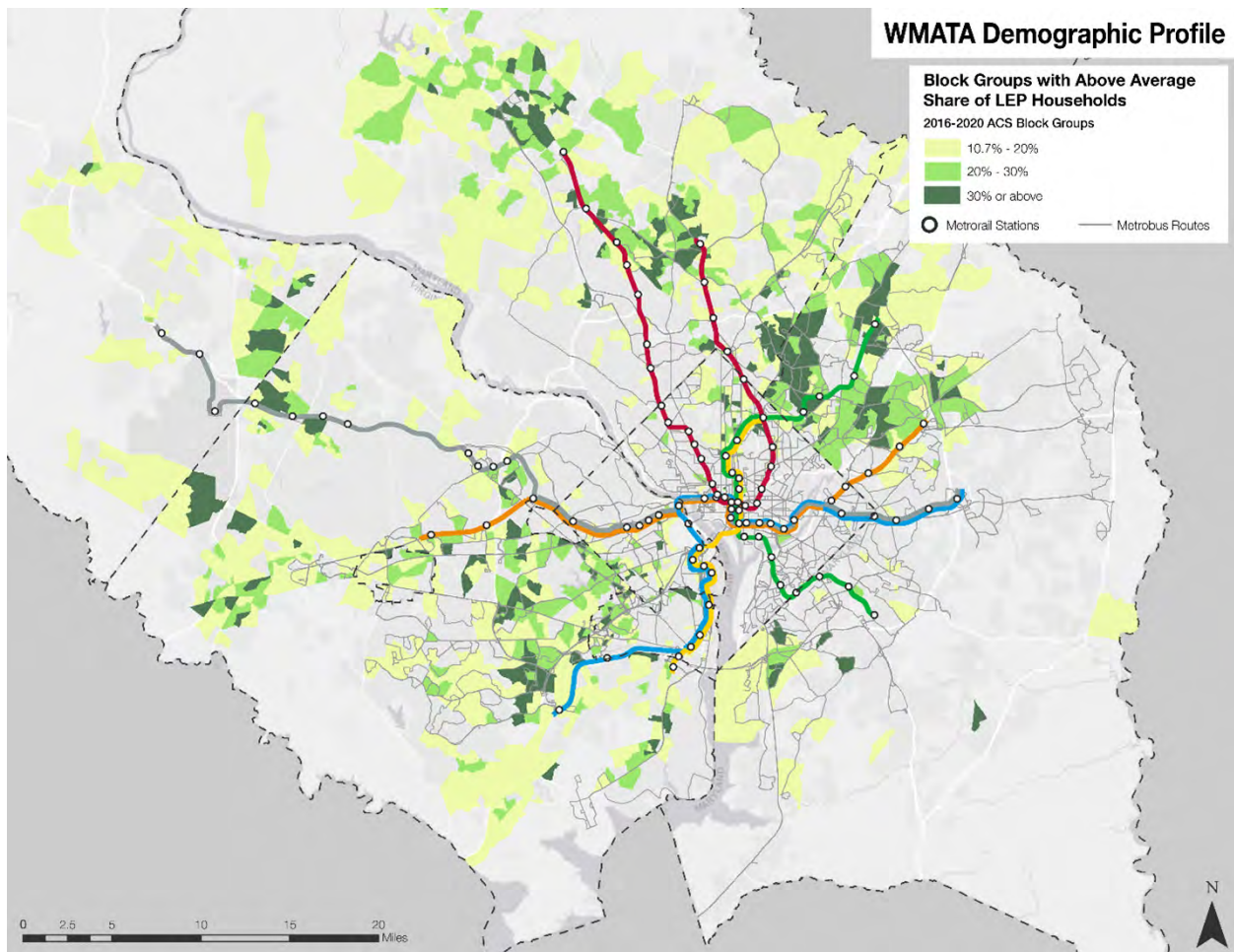
	District of Columbia	Maryland (Compact Areas)	Virginia (Compact Areas)
<b>High Minority Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Northeast quadrant</li> <li>» Northwest quadrant east of 16th Street NW</li> <li>» Southeast quadrant</li> <li>» Eastern and southern portions of Southwest quadrant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Eastern Silver Spring</li> <li>» Wheaton/Glenmont</li> <li>» Aspen Hill</li> <li>» White Oak</li> <li>» Gaithersburg</li> <li>» Germantown</li> <li>» Fairland</li> <li>» Prince George's County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Herndon</li> <li>» Chantilly</li> <li>» Centreville</li> <li>» Lorton</li> <li>» Bailey's Crossroads</li> <li>» Annandale</li> <li>» Springfield</li> <li>» Hybla Valley</li> </ul>
<b>High Low-Income Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Brightwood</li> <li>» Fort Totten</li> <li>» Northeast quadrant</li> <li>» Southeast quadrant</li> <li>» Southern portion of Southwest quadrant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Eastern Silver Spring</li> <li>» Aspen Hill</li> <li>» Gaithersburg</li> <li>» Germantown</li> <li>» Prince George's County inside the Beltway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hybla Valley</li> <li>» Woodlawn</li> <li>» Bailey's Crossroads</li> <li>» Annandale</li> <li>» West Falls Church</li> <li>» Chantilly</li> <li>» Ashburn</li> </ul>
<b>High LEP Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Petworth</li> <li>» Brightwood</li> <li>» Fort Totten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Woodlawn</li> <li>» East Riverdale</li> <li>» Chillum</li> <li>» Langley Park</li> <li>» Adelphi</li> <li>» Eastern Silver Spring</li> <li>» Wheaton/Glenmont</li> <li>» Gaithersburg</li> <li>» Rockville</li> <li>» Aspen Hill</li> <li>» Montgomery Village</li> <li>» Germantown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» City of Alexandria, west end</li> <li>» Hybla Valley</li> <li>» Springfield</li> <li>» Bailey's Crossroads</li> <li>» West Falls Church</li> <li>» Annandale</li> <li>» Centreville</li> <li>» Chantilly</li> <li>» Herndon</li> <li>» Sterling</li> </ul>



## Compact Area LEP Populations

In 2023, the Office of Planning reviewed the 2016-2020 ACS and thoroughly analyzed the census block groups and LEP populations within a 1/2-mile radius of the Metrorail stations and 1/4-mile radius of Metrobus routes.

Based on the ACS, 10.7 percent of the Metro compact area population over five years old has limited English proficiency.







Tables 3 and 4 represent the demographic profile charts, as well as minority and low-income figures for all Metrorail stations and Metrobus routes based on the most current customer data collected from the surveys as recent as spring 2023. Languages listed as “Top LEP Languages” are those whose LEP speakers represent at least 1 percent of the total area population.

For certain languages, the ACS only offers aggregated language groups. For example, most native Ethiopians speak Amharic or Oromo but per the ACS, the profile for this group would be counted as “African Languages.”

**Table 3: Metrorail Station Demographic Profiles**

Station	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
Addison Road	91%	48%	3%	81%	5%	Spanish
Anacostia	84%	55%	3%	74%	5%	Spanish
Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter	47%	9%	5%	33%	9%	Chinese
Arlington Cemetery	19%	16%	0%	4%	15%	N/A
Ashburn	59%	10%	31%	16%	11%	Spanish
Ballston-Mu	39%	13%	16%	12%	11%	Chinese, Spanish
Benning Road	85%	56%	3%	78%	3%	Spanish
Bethesda	39%	18%	11%	17%	12%	Spanish, Chinese
Braddock Road	28%	10%	4%	12%	11%	Spanish
Branch Avenue	83%	19%	2%	75%	4%	French, Spanish
Brookland-Cua	51%	26%	9%	28%	15%	Korean, Spanish, Arabic
Capitol Heights	91%	37%	3%	79%	10%	Spanish



Station	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
Farragut West	38%	9%	13%	17%	7%	Spanish, Chinese, French
Federal Center Sw	48%	14%	9%	30%	8%	N/A
Federal Triangle	39%	8%	10%	21%	8%	Chinese
Foggy Bottom-Gwu	41%	23%	14%	17%	10%	Spanish, Chinese
Forest Glen	37%	14%	8%	13%	14%	Spanish, Amharic
Fort Totten	76%	40%	8%	54%	17%	Spanish, Amharic
Franconia-Springfield	48%	21%	9%	29%	11%	Spanish, Vietnamese
Friendship Heights	33%	12%	12%	11%	8%	Spanish
Gallery Place-Chinatown	42%	16%	6%	24%	11%	Chinese
Georgia Ave-Petworth	55%	31%	6%	35%	13%	Spanish
Glenmont	56%	19%	16%	27%	14%	Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese
Greenbelt	59%	24%	5%	42%	12%	Spanish, Chinese, French
Greensboro	45%	11%	27%	8%	8%	Korean, Spanish, Chinese
Grosvenor-Strathmore	38%	10%	16%	8%	12%	N/A
Herndon	44%	8%	22%	11%	10%	Chinese, Arabic
Huntington	45%	22%	11%	21%	13%	Spanish, French



Station	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
New Carrollton	70%	33%	7%	56%	4%	Spanish, French
Noma-Gallaudet U	40%	12%	10%	18%	12%	N/A
North Bethesda	46%	9%	14%	16%	18%	Spanish, Korean, Chinese
Pentagon	46%	10%	10%	25%	10%	Chinese
Pentagon City	45%	20%	11%	24%	9%	Chinese, Spanish, Arabic
Potomac Avenue	50%	22%	6%	36%	7%	Spanish
Reston Town Center	29%	13%	11%	8%	9%	Spanish
Rhode Island Ave-Brentwood	71%	30%	5%	54%	12%	Spanish
Rockville	43%	24%	14%	16%	13%	Chinese, Spanish, Arabic
Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport	45%	17%	7%	31%	6%	Chinese
Rosslyn	41%	17%	16%	12%	15%	Spanish, Chinese
Shady Grove	52%	18%	16%	23%	12%	Spanish, Chinese
Shaw-Howard University	61%	29%	8%	42%	11%	Spanish
Silver Spring	54%	20%	7%	34%	14%	Spanish, Amharic
Smithsonian	30%	7%	10%	11%	8%	N/A
Southern Avenue	97%	52%	3%	87%	3%	Spanish



Station	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
West Hyattsville	74%	44%	4%	27%	43%	Spanish, French
Wheaton	63%	36%	8%	36%	25%	Spanish
Wiehle-Reston East	35%	11%	15%	12%	7%	Spanish
Woodley Park-Zoo	38%	23%	10%	18%	11%	Spanish





Routes	Line Name	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
17B,M	Kings Park	69%	13%	13%	25%	0%	Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean
17G,K, (L)	Kings Park Express	45%	12%	14%	9%	18%	Spanish, Vietnamese
18G,J	Orange Hunt	37%	5%	11%	10%	14%	Spanish, Vietnamese
18P	Burke Centre	44%	7%	18%	8%	15%	Spanish, Korean
(21A), 21C, (21D)	Landmark-Holmes Run Parkway	51%	23%	5%	33%	10%	Spanish, Amharic
22A, (22C), 22F	Barcroft-South Fairlington	57%	27%	13%	25%	17%	Spanish
23A, B, T	McLean-Crystal City	66%	48%	13%	25%	29%	Spanish, Chinese
25B	Landmark-Ballston	71%	59%	11%	40%	22%	Spanish, Arabic
26A	Annandale-East Falls Church	68%	62%	15%	10%	45%	Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese
28A	Leesburg Pike	83%	64%	15%	37%	32%	Spanish, Amharic
28F, (G)	Skyline City	72%	6%	22%	27%	16%	Spanish
29G	Annandale	56%	18%	20%	19%	13%	Spanish, Korean
29K,N	Alexandria-Fairfax	78%	63%	22%	39%	16%	Spanish, Korean
31,33	Wisconsin Avenue	50%	28%	16%	16%	14%	Spanish
32,36	Pennsylvania Avenue	88%	60%	2%	78%	5%	Spanish



Routes	Line Name	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
A12	Martin Luther King Jr. Highway	96%	70%	5%	76%	13%	Spanish
B2	Bladensburg Road-Anacostia	96%	72%	0%	87%	6%	Spanish
B21, 22	Bowie State University	85%	32%	1%	82%	7%	Spanish
B24	Bowie-Belair	99%	59%	3%	73%	13%	Spanish, French
B27	Bowie-New Carrollton	89%	50%	0%	74%	13%	Spanish, French
C2,4	Greenbelt-Twinbrook	89%	69%	9%	56%	33%	Spanish, French, Chinese
C8	College Park-White Flint	84%	63%	14%	46%	28%	Spanish, French, Vietnamese
C11, 13	Clinton	92%	33%	3%	89%	10%	Spanish
C12, 14	Hillcrest Heights	100%	59%	0%	86%	8%	Spanish
C21, 22, 26, 29	Central Avenue	100%	57%	2%	84%	6%	Spanish
D2	Glover Park-Dupont Circle	38%	21%	12%	10%	15%	Spanish
D4	Ivy City-Franklin Square	82%	53%	7%	60%	8%	Chinese, Spanish
D6	Sibley Hospital-Stadium Armory	57%	31%	8%	34%	13%	Spanish
D8	Hospital Center	92%	79%	2%	72%	11%	Spanish
D12	Southern Ave-Suitland	98%	81%	0%	88%	6%	Spanish
D14	Oxon Hill-Suitland	98%	81%	0%	88%	6%	Spanish
E2	Ivy City-Fort Totten	84%	40%	7%	58%	21%	Spanish



Routes	Line Name	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
J12	Marlboro Pike	98%	79%	9%	78%	13%	Spanish
K2	Takoma-Fort Totten	74%	44%	5%	36%	15%	Spanish
K6	New Hampshire Avenue-Maryland	95%	70%	7%	62%	27%	Spanish, Amharic, French
K9	New Hampshire Avenue-Maryland Limited	66%	44%	0%	49%	12%	Spanish, Amharic, French
K12	Forestville	99%	73%	5%	90%	4%	Spanish
L2	Connecticut Avenue	51%	21%	7%	27%	14%	Spanish
L8	Connecticut Avenue-Maryland	77%	57%	16%	33%	34%	Spanish
L12	Landover Road	96%	70%	5%	76%	13%	Spanish
M4	Nebraska Avenue	49%	42%	8%	21%	15%	Spanish
M6	Fairfax Village	95%	61%	0%	85%	2%	Spanish
MW1	Metroway-Potomac Yard	55%	24%	9%	28%	16%	Spanish, Chinese
N2,4,6	Massachusetts Avenue	49%	40%	14%	18%	13%	Spanish
NH1	National Harbor-Southern Avenue	98%	58%	0%	91%	4%	Spanish
NH2	National Harbor-Alexandria	85%	45%	13%	58%	15%	Spanish
P6	Anacostia-Eckington	96%	72%	1%	85%	4%	Spanish, Chinese
P12	Eastover-Addison Road	99%	73%	1%	91%	3%	Spanish
P18	Oxon Hill-Fort Washington	97%	42%	7%	76%	12%	Spanish



Routes	Line Name	Minority	Low-Income	Asian	African American	Latino	Top LEP Languages
W1	Shipley Terrace-Fort Drum	96%	78%	1%	89%	1%	Spanish
W2,3	United Medical Center-Anacostia	99%	80%	0%	92%	2%	Spanish
W4	Deanwood-Alabama Avenue	98%	82%	0%	91%	1%	Spanish
W5	Anacostia-Blue Plains	83%	53%	4%	70%	7%	N/A
W6,8	Garfield-Anacostia Loop	98%	82%	2%	88%	5%	Spanish
W14	Bock Road	100%	40%	5%	87%	17%	Spanish
X2	Benning Road-H Street	84%	64%	2%	73%	7%	Chinese
X8	Maryland Avenue	75%	38%	4%	64%	2%	N/A
X9	Benning Road-H Street Limited	93%	67%	3%	82%	5%	Chinese
Y2,7,8	Georgia Avenue-Maryland	88%	61%	5%	54%	30%	Spanish
Z2	Colesville-Ashton	85%	55%	10%	63%	12%	Spanish, French
Z6,8	Silver Spring-Fairland	94%	61%	4%	78%	16%	Spanish, Amharic, French
Z7	Laurel-Old Columbia Pike Express	86%	54%	11%	54%	30%	Spanish

*\*\*EO 12898 does not define the terms minority or low-income, but the terms have been defined in the USDOT and FHWA Orders on EJ. FHWA Order 6640.23A provides the following definitions, which have been used in this analysis:*

*Minority Individual – A person who identifies as:*

- » *Black: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;*
- » *Hispanic or Latino: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;*
- » *Asian American: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent;*
- » *American Indian and Alaskan Native: a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America (including Central America), and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition; or*
- » *Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.*





Agency	Location	Point of Contact / Interviewee(s)
<b>National</b>		
Capital Metro (CapMetro) & Austin Transit Partnership (ATP)	Austin, TX	Lonny Stern (CapMetro)
Melissa Ortiz (ATP)	DOT LEP Guidance	Agency-wide
Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)	Chicago, IL	Jeff Wilson
Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA)	Boston, MA	Anthony Thomas
Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)	New York City, NY	Lucille Songhai
<b>International</b>		
Transport for London (TfL)	London, England	Mark Evers

## Recurring Themes

### Communication in a Post-Pandemic World

Many agencies reacted quickly to changing circumstances during the pandemic and employed new strategies to communicate information, engage with their customers, and obtain feedback. Early on, agencies expressed the importance of staying home to avoid spreading the Covid-19 virus. Transport for London (TfL) was no exception, effectively communicating Covid-19 risks, resulting in a plunge in ridership to only 5% of pre-pandemic levels. Like many agencies, TfL is now working to regain public trust and make a compelling case for returning to public transportation.

Most agencies started virtual public meetings during the pandemic and now consider them a regular part of their outreach tactics. The Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) regularly met with stakeholder committees before the pandemic but shifted its community engagement to virtual meetings during the pandemic. Now the agency, who recently formed a virtual committee, continues to meet with community and stakeholder committees virtually, and encourage lower barriers to participation.

Like many other organizations nationwide, transit agencies have experienced personnel turnover as part of a shifting workforce. As with any government organization, the loss of personnel

also comes with a loss — sometimes tremendous — of institutional wisdom and knowledge. MTA team members expressed that they would like to develop better ways to not just retain the information when personnel exit but to manage it effectively and make it useful for new team members when they are onboarded.

Finally, many agencies noted that remaining flexible and listening to customers is essential. Several agencies reported that some campaigns have not gone as planned, but they will learn from them and readjust their strategies. MTA has learned to pivot and be flexible when project communications and outreach did not achieve the desired outcome. In one instance, MTA changed its communications approach when a rail scheduling change didn't reach the level of service it expected—and it was all based on customer feedback. Not only did MTA officials listen and adjust the level of service, but they also publicly acknowledged the challenge that arose and was transparent about their accountability.

### **Balancing Digital and Traditional Communication**

As the world recovers from the pandemic, agencies recognize the importance of virtual public engagement opportunities, and how these strategies are now part of the new normal for transit agency communicators. However, agencies also recognize the importance of traditional face-to-face outreach and continue exploring strategies for conducting hybrid public meetings and engaging the public in-person more effectively. Alexandria Transit Company (DASH) used targeted in-person engagements like pop-up events and bus “ride-alongs” to effectively interact with people from specific demographic groups. The MDOT MTA ramped up contractor support to ensure successful virtual meetings.

Like public engagement tactics, agencies seek to find the right balance of digital and traditional communication tactics. MDOT MTA and Shuttle-UM have found the Transit app to be a valuable way to target riders and collect customer feedback. Shuttle-UM also uses text messages as a highly effective way to target students — a younger and transient audience. Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) used software and tools to keep track of community requests and feedback. Prince George's County The Bus leveraged social media to respond promptly to customer concerns and effectively implemented marketing and outreach strategies. Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) uses targeted Facebook ads to deliver their messages to specific communities, down to the zip code. Several agencies expressed interest in further developing apps to better connect with customers digitally.

While digital communication tactics are practical and efficient ways to reach audiences quickly, traditional communication tactics are still effective. Agencies used a variety of printed signs, including onboard bus signs, physical signage along walking routes or bus stops, and signs in stations. Paper signs and brochures still have a place in helping bridge the digital divide and reach customers on-site who may not be plugged into digital alerts. One clear example of a “win” was with the MTA's Better Bus network redesign initiative in Queens, New York. The project team sent printed and bound reports to libraries, senior centers, and other community centers so the public and officials could read about what MTA learned from the public when they asked for recommendations to improve and transform its bus network. Like New York's MTA, TfL noted that paper signage can reach customers more effectively than digital, in some instances. While costly, TfL—like many other agencies—copes with the right-sized, balanced approach that is both effective and economical.

## Inclusivity and Accessibility

Agencies are increasingly emphasizing the importance of tailoring messaging for diverse communities. Most agencies interviewed provide informational materials in Spanish, with many producing materials in multiple languages. TFL reached out to advocacy groups representing the disability community to design infrastructure that accommodates their specific needs and invested efforts in reaching out to underserved communities like neurodiverse advocacy groups. Arlington Transit (ART) targeted English as a Second Language customers and assisted seniors in making their services accessible to all. The agency also collaborated with trusted community organizations serving diverse audiences to meet their needs better. ART has built a robust list of “trusted partners.” This community partner list is vital because it provides the agency with groups they can repeatedly partner with and a place where people are already interested in transit service. Most importantly, patrons trust these community partners and inherently trust ART through the partnership.

Agencies emphasized the importance of collaborating with the community where they are and empowering “community connector” ambassadors for more inclusive outreach. ART hosted events at community centers, farmers’ markets, and existing events to directly interact with people. The agency collaborated with community connectors and utilized ambassadors for outreach. MDOT MTA met with various stakeholder committees and collaborated with community organizations during all stages of project development. The agency empowered community connectors like Baltimore City liaisons to extend its outreach efforts and target specific communities. CapMetro (Austin, TX) also uses community connectors, with a mix of community ambassadors and agency employees serving as liaisons. The agency incentivized employee community connectors with gift cards, capitalizing on their enthusiasm to extend the agency’s outreach.





Public Participation Requirement	Source Documentation	Applicability
Public comment is required prior to implementation of fare increases.	FTA C 4702.1B, 49 U.S.C. § 5307	Fare Studies/Changes, Paratransit Service or Policy Changes, Budget Long-Range Planning, Bus
Title VI, LEP/NEP, and Environmental Justice (EJ) populations must have the opportunity to have input into the transportation decision-making process and into the development of programs, policies, or services provided.	FTA C 4702.1B; FTA/FHWA joint planning regulations (23 CFR Part 450); USDOT Order 5610.2(a); DOT LEP Guidance	Line Studies, Station Access Planning, Rail and Bus Service Changes, Strategic Planning, Environmental Planning, Paratransit Service or Policy Changes, and Budget
Provide early and continuous opportunity for the public to provide comments, including Title VI protected and EJ populations.	FTA/FHWA joint planning regulations (23 CFR Part 450); FTA C 4703.1	Agency-wide
Provide adequate and clear notice of opportunities for public engagement, in the appropriate languages other than, and in addition to, English, with ample time provided for members of the public to participate.	FTA/FHWA joint planning regulations (23 CFR Part 450); FTA C 4702.1B; FTA C 4703.1; DOT LEP Guidance	Agency-wide
Ensure that public participation occurs at convenient times and locations for Title VI, LEP/NEP, and EJ populations.	FTA/FHWA joint planning regulations (23 CFR Part 450); FTA C 4702.1B; FTA C 4703.1; DOT LEP Guidance	Agency-wide



## FTA Circular 4702.1B: Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Title VI Circular (*FTA C 4702.1B*) is the primary source of Title VI guidance for recipients of FTA financial assistance. Public participation is listed as one of FTA's three Title VI Program objectives (*Chap. II-1*):

- a) Ensure that the level and quality of public transportation service is provided in a nondiscriminatory manner;
- b) Promote full and fair participation in public transportation decision-making without regard to race, color, or national origin; and,
- c) Ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) and non-English proficiency (NEP).

*FTA Circular 4702.1B* requires that recipients submit a "public participation plan that includes an outreach plan to engage minority and limited English proficient populations, as well as a summary of outreach efforts made since the last Title VI Program submission. A recipient's targeted public participation plan for minority populations may be part of efforts that extend more broadly to include other constituencies that are traditionally underserved, such as people with disabilities, low-income populations, and others."

*Chap. III-5, Promoting Inclusive Public Participation* instructs recipients to integrate the contents of Title VI, Executive Order 13166, and the DOT LEP guidance into the development of the public participation plan. The public participation plan should describe the proactive strategies that the recipient will use to engage

minority and LEP communities and the desired outcomes of this outreach. FTA recipients have "wide latitude" to decide "how, when, and how often specific public participation activities should take place," but these determinations should be supported by demographic analysis and the results of input (i.e., outreach and qualitative research) received through the development of the ppp.

*FTACircular4702.1B* also includes a list of effective practices for promoting public participation. These strategies are examples of the types of practices that recipients may include in a public participation plan, but they do not represent a comprehensive list of potential strategies for reaching minority, LEP, and low-income communities. The effective practices listed in the Circular include:

- a) Scheduling meetings at times and locations that are convenient and accessible for minority and LEP communities;
- b) Employing different meeting sizes and formats;
- c) Coordinating with community- and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and other organizations to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities;
- d) Considering radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations. Outreach to LEP populations could also include audio programming available on podcasts; and,
- e) Providing opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews or use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments.





a clearinghouse. Each agency identified in the order, including DOT, is responsible for creating an agency-wide EJ strategy.

While many of the principles of environmental justice and Title VI overlap, Title VI and environmental justice have key differences. Title VI protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of their race, color, or national origin, in the delivery of federal programs and services. Environmental justice seeks to protect minority and low-income populations from disproportionate and adverse effects to human or environmental health due to the actions of federal agencies, per *EO 12898*.

### **U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a) Final DOT Environmental Justice Order**

*U.S. DOT Order 5610.2(a)* describes how DOT will consider EJ principles throughout all of its programs, policies, and activities. It specifically addresses the integration of environmental justice into planning and programming, rulemaking, and policy formation with the aim of preventing disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority or low-income populations. FTA's *Environmental Justice Circular, 4703.1*, provides recommendations to recipients of FTA funds on how to fully engage EJ populations in the public transportation decision-making process; how to determine whether EJ populations would be subjected to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of a transportation plan, project, or activity; and how to avoid, minimize, or mitigate these effects. The *Environmental Justice Circular, 4703.1* incorporates the following EJ principles outlined in the DOT Order:

*Section 5 Integration with Existing Operations* requires that DOT and its modal administrations ensure that, in the operations and programs they

administer, there are meaningful opportunities for public participation during the planning and development of programs, policies, and activities. This includes providing opportunities for the identification of potential effects, alternatives, and mitigation measures in the NEPA required analyses and other planning activities. To prevent disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority or low-income populations, the public (including minority and low-income populations) should be able to access all available public information on the human health or environmental impacts of any program, proposed action, policy, or activity.

*Section 7 Preventing Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects* instructs the U.S. DOT and its modal administrations to ensure that operations avoid discrimination and disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority populations and low-income populations. An evaluation of the potential environmental, public health, and economic effects of DOT programs, policies, and activities, potential measures to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects identified, and the identification of alternatives to the proposed activity, program, or policy are required. The public, including members of minority and low-income communities, must have an opportunity to comment and to have their comments considered throughout this process and to have their input solicited in the consideration of alternatives.



well the recipient is engaged with the community on an ongoing basis and aware of their lifestyles and needs. (Where do they work? Where do they relax? What languages are spoken at home? What ways do they receive information?)

- d) Planning for effective public involvement includes not only relying upon transportation experts and demographic and socio-economic data analysis, but also reaching out to those who know the community and its needs, lifestyles, and concerns.
- e) It is important to follow FTA/FHWA joint planning regulations as required, including the requirement for periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the public engagement process.
- f) Strategies that reach LEP populations should be included in any public participation plan, per a recipient's Title VI program and its public participation and language assistance plans.

Chapter 3 also provides an overview of traditional and non-traditional public engagement strategies, as well as guidelines for hosting successful public meetings.

Traditional outreach, including providing notices, public meetings, listening sessions and community forums, should be made more inviting by using clear and accessible language and media to reach EJ populations. The use of interactive and well-facilitated outreach sessions during the notice and comment process and making comments received in these sessions part of the public record is recommended. In long-range planning, capital planning, and other major decisions, the use of more resource-intensive and more in-depth engagement practices such

as visioning and scenario planning workshops is recommended.

Non-traditional public participation approaches include strategies such as informal group meetings; community-led meetings; direct mail; digital media; and partnerships with community groups. The needs of environmental justice populations should be included throughout the planning process to ensure that their perspectives are captured at the inception of a project or planning process.

To ensure that public meetings are accessible and engage EJ populations, they should be held at convenient times and locations and feature an open format that allows everyone in attendance to participate. To ensure that meetings are accessible to all, staff that can accommodate the needs of people who are linguistically and cultural isolated, and individuals with disabilities, should be in attendance. Agencies should also consider the different learning styles, levels of educational attainment, and literacy skills of the various populations in their communities. All of the communication in the meeting and in the materials should be in language accessible to the general public and the purpose of the meeting and steps within the project process must also be clear. Meeting notices should be posted in advance of the meeting based on agency/jurisdictional standards.

### **Executive Order (EO) 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency**

*EO 13166* requires that federal agencies and their grantees identify the access, need for, and usage of their services and programs by people with LEP/NEP. Federal agencies and their grantees must develop and implement a system that allows LEP/NEP populations meaningful



- b) Develop, in consultation with interested parties, including private transportation providers, a proposed program of projects for activities to be financed;
- c) Publish a proposed program of projects in a way that affected citizens, private transportation providers, and local elected officials have the opportunity to examine the proposed program and submit comments on the proposed program and the performance of the recipient;
- d) Provide an opportunity for a public hearing in which to obtain the views of citizens on the proposed program of projects;
- e) Ensure that the proposed program of projects provides for the coordination of public transportation services assisted under 49 USC §5336 with transportation services assisted from other United States Government sources;
- f) Consider comments and views received, especially those of private transportation providers, in preparing the final program of projects; and
- g) Make the final program of projects available to the public.





Metro Activity	Public Involvement Requirement	Source
<p>Metro's Major Service Change Policies</p>	<p>Span of Service – Metrobus: A public hearing is required if there is a reduction of more than one hour in the span of service on a line.</p> <p>Span of Service – Metrorail: A public hearing is required if service is reduced.</p> <p>Frequency – Metrobus: A public hearing is required if there is a reduction of more than 20 percent in revenue miles.</p> <p>Frequency – Metrorail: A public hearing is required if service is reduced.</p> <p>Coverage/Availability – Metrobus: A public hearing is required if there is a reduction of 15 percent in route miles or if there is a reduction of 10 percent of riders.</p> <p>Coverage/Availability – Metrorail: A public hearing is required for any change in coverage/availability.</p>	<p>Metro's Title VI Major Service Change Policy</p>
<p>NEPA Documentation</p>	<p>Involving the public in preparing and implementing NEPA procedures;</p> <p>Providing public notice of hearings or meetings and the availability of environmental documents;</p> <p>Holding public hearings or meetings;</p> <p>Soliciting appropriate information from the public;</p> <p>Explaining where interested persons can get information on EIS; and</p> <p>Making EIS comments available to the public.</p>	<p>40 CFR § 1506.6(a)-(f)</p>
<p>Title VI Program Development</p>	<p>Provide an opportunity for meaningful public participation in the development of the major service change, disparate impact, and disproportionate burden policies.</p>	<p>FTA C 4702.1B</p>





publication. Notices of public hearings shall be posted in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board. (Subsection c)

- » Prior to calling a hearing on any matter specified in this section, the Board shall prepare and file at its main office and keep open for public inspection its report relating to the proposed action to be considered at such hearing. Upon receipt by the Board of any report submitted by WMATA, in connection with a matter set for hearing, pursuant to the provisions of Section 63 of this Article XIII, the Board shall file such report at its main office and make it available for public inspection. For hearings called by the Board pursuant to paragraph (b), above, the Board also shall cause to be lodged and kept open for public inspection the written request upon which the hearing is granted and all documents filed in support thereof. (Subsection d)

#### *Article XVI- General Provisions- Section 76: Police (p. 31)*

The Authority shall have the power to adopt rules and regulations for the safe, convenient, and orderly use of the transit facilities owned, controlled, or operated by the Authority, including the payment and the manner of the payment of fares or charges therefor, the protection of the transit facilities, the control of traffic and parking upon the transit facilities, and the safety and protection of the riding public... The rules or regulations established under this subsection shall be adopted by the Board following public hearings held in accordance with section 62(c) and (d) of this Compact... (Subsection e)

### **Metro Compact Area Demographics & Limited English Proficient Populations**

Metro, the regional transit agency for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, is an interstate compact agency created in 1967 by

the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Metro's transit service area includes:

- » Washington, D.C.
- » Montgomery County (MD)
- » Prince George's County (MD)
- » City of Alexandria (VA)
- » City of Fairfax (VA)
- » City of Falls Church (VA)
- » Arlington County (VA)
- » Fairfax County (VA)
- » Loudoun County (VA)

Metro owns and operates both rail and bus service in these compact jurisdictions including jurisdictions that also operate supplementary local bus service. Metro is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of eight voting and eight alternate directors. Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and the federal government appoint two voting and two alternate directors each.

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## **Appendix D**

This list includes all public participation activities completed from September 2020 through June 2023. Due to its size, Appendix D is only available upon request via outreachrequest@wmata.com.



Public  
Participation  
*Plan*  
2023-2026