

# M E M O R A N D U M



SUBJECT: Better Bus Network Redesign Update - Draft Visionary Network Open for Comment      DATE: April 14, 2023

FROM: Allison Davis, Acting Senior Vice President, Planning and Sustainability

TO: Transportation Planning Board

On April 17, 2023, Metro is unveiling its [draft Visionary Bus Network](#) for public comment. We are seeking your assistance to extend our outreach to your constituents and colleagues. The draft Visionary Network fully incorporates the service and network of Metrobus, Prince George's TheBus, and City of Fairfax CUE systems, while building on other local bus providers' existing services within the WMATA Compact area to enhance and align bus service and the region's transit network.<sup>1</sup>

The draft Visionary Network was presented to Metro's Board on April 14<sup>th</sup>. The presentation is [here](#) and can be listened to starting at 1 hour, 29 minutes [here](#). In celebration of 50 years of Metrobus, Metro is hosting 50 events over 50 days to gather valuable input on the draft Visionary Network. On Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, you are invited to attend the project's Launch Party at [TheARC](#) in the District. Additional event information can be found on [wmata.com/betterbus](http://wmata.com/betterbus) including four additional community workshops to be held at the West Hyattsville Library (MD, May 6<sup>th</sup>), Arlington Central Library (VA, May 10<sup>th</sup>), Turkey Thicket Recreation Center (DC, May 20<sup>th</sup>), Creative Suitland Arts Center (MD, May 21<sup>st</sup>). A communications toolkit is available with newsletter, email, and social media content to share through your channels. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions.

## Highlights of the Draft Visionary Network

The draft Visionary Network was developed together with Metro's jurisdictional partners, unions, and operations staff. The Visionary Network, which would be implemented when resources are available, could result in nearly 15 million more customer trips on buses each year, avoiding over 14,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions annually, and saving bus customers almost 20,000 hours every weekday.

The draft Visionary Network fundamentals include the following:

- **A focus on frequent service that runs all day and seven days per week**, ensuring that 60, 73, and 64 percent more residents across the region will have access to high frequency transit midday, Saturday, and Sunday,

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<sup>1</sup> Metrobus is partnering with Montgomery County's RideOn Reimagined Study

- respectively;
- All service operates as frequently as possible and **not less than every 30 minutes**;
  - A **24-hour bus network** to support nightlife and late/early shift workers, providing 24-hour service to 1.1 million residents across the region;
  - Increased **crosstown and cross-county connections**, connecting between Metrorail branches, transit hubs, and activity centers, such as extending the Purple Line south from New Carrollton and connecting to the new Inova Alexandria Hospital complex;
  - **Direct connections** – within the confines of the street network and where housing and commercial locations are – such as between Fort Lincoln and Deanwood and across Southern Avenue between the District and Eastover Shopping Center in Maryland; and
  - **Maximize use of jurisdictions' bus priority investments**, making bus trips more reliable and ensuring investments are used at all times of the day and week.

The draft Visionary Network was developed with the following data:

- **Public input:** 45 percent of respondents to the project's survey indicated that bus service is very good or excellent in last fall's survey. Current and potential customers also indicated that frequent and reliable service are among the most important factors for bus service.
- **Existing bus service:** Performance and effectiveness of existing service at different times of the day and week.
- **The region's travel patterns:** Insight gathered from where and when travel occurs in the greater transportation system to identify new connections and places where transit service should be better (e.g., adjacent neighborhoods/areas.)

Several key considerations underly the Visionary Network. The results represent a 35 percent increase in resources devoted to bus in the region overall. The draft network does not specify which bus provider will operate the service nor have stops or route patterns, like limited stop service, been identified. The draft Visionary Network uses temporary route numbers in this phase to accommodate new routes and changes to existing routes.

### **Outreach and Engagement**

To celebrate 50 years of Metrobus', Metro is hosting 50 events over 50 days to engage customer and potential customers, among other audiences. From April 17<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>, Metro will seek input through Better Bus Experience LIVE! - a mix of in-person and virtual events – and our Better Bus Virtual Experience LAB, which will enable people to provide feedback when and where it works best for them.

Customers and potential customers will be able to view the draft Visionary Network, compare their trip on the current network to the draft Visionary Network, leave route-by-route feedback on an interactive comment map, and take a survey to tell us what they think about the draft Visionary Network and answer key trade-off questions.

### **Background**

In July 2022, Metro launched the Better Bus Network Redesign to create a bus network that matches when and where people want to travel, provides fast, frequent and reliable service, and addresses inequities and increases access to opportunity for disenfranchised communities. The Better Bus Network Redesign is a key initiative included in the Authority's strategic plan *Your Metro, The Way Forward* and builds on the Bus Transformation Project to ensure buses move more people and equitably connect a growing region.

At the completion of the Network Redesign, customers, the region, and our partners will have a:

- Bus network and service plan developed within existing resources for Metro Board consideration for implementation in the near-term;
- Visionary bus network and service plan with more resources that provides a path forward to meet some of the region's longer-term goals; and
- Clearly defined role of Metrobus in the region and a long-term sustainable, predictable funding model for bus service.