



MEMORANDUM

TO: TPB Technical Committee
FROM: Abigail Zenner, TPB Communications Specialist
SUBJECT: Activities related to the Blue and Yellow Line summer 2019 Metro station closures
DATE: June 7, 2019

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has been fixing its outdoor Metrorail platforms to bring them to a state of good repair. Ten platforms have already been rebuilt and WMATA has identified 20 more in need of repairs. To complete this work as quickly as possible, WMATA planned to close the stations and suspend service within the area where the work is being performed. As part of this on-going Platform Improvement Project, six stations and service along the Blue and Yellow Lines south of National Airport were closed on May 25 and plan to be reopened on September 8, 2019.

The following memo details Transportation Planning Board (TPB) and Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) activities to support the shutdown through coordinating activities, compiling data, and commuter support through Commuter Connections. It also highlights other activities from members and partners.

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS ACTIVITIES

COG/TPB's Commuter Connections has formed a WMATA Platform Shutdown Transportation Demand Management Work Group which meets on a regular basis to exchange information on commuting solutions during this year's and future year Metrorail station shutdowns related to the platform work.

Specifically related to the summer station shutdown, Commuter Connections' outreach program included two pop-up events that occurred in May. The first event occurred on Wednesday, May 8 at the Huntington Metro station during the evening rush. The City of Alexandria, Fairfax County, Commuter Connections, and 94.7 FM radio station participated in the event to help Metrorail riders identify solutions for their summer commute. Commuter Connections hosted a similar event on Tuesday, May 14 at the Van Dorn Metro station also during the evening rush. The City of Alexandria, DASH, Fairfax County, Commuter Connections, and WTOP staffed the event. Approximately 1,000 commuters were reached between both events. Commuters were given information as they were exiting the station and both events were promoted through Facebook boosted posts.

Commuter Connections has been promoting the CarpoolNow dynamic ridesharing mobile app, along with the entire suite of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program services, at the pop-up events and through other means. The Commuter Connections spring employer newsletter featured a frontpage story on the shutdown. Targeted digital ads are being used around the affected Metrorail stations. COG/TPB staff also sent targeted email announcements regarding the shutdown and

suggested commuting solutions to approximately 5,800 commuters and to 1,000 employers around the affected stations.

Commuter Connections created a standalone website for commuting options during the shutdown at commuterconnections.org/metro-station-shutdown.

COG/TPB DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

What impact does the shutdown have on the region's traffic congestion, and what impact does the region's traffic congestion have on the shuttle and supplementary bus services being run in the area? COG/TPB staff are compiling congestion data along major commuter routes. Vehicle probe data shows speeds along these routes which can flag any anomalies along shuttle bus routes or major commuting areas. These data can show if speeds are slower or faster than normal, potentially helping advise adjustments to supplementary bus services.

The data collection will also be useful after the shutdown period is complete to analyze how the system responded. This type of analysis can be useful for operations planning for future transit disruptions. Over the coming months, staff will also look at other data sources (as data become available) to analyze shutdown impacts such as transit ridership, shifting travel patterns, and traffic volume changes.

COG REGIONAL COORDINATION

Aside from the Department of Transportation Planning, COG staff have also assisted in coordination calls with Public Information Officers (PIO) and COG public safety committees. These coordination calls helped the region's local jurisdictions, transit agencies, public safety, and other agencies prepare, share information, and monitor and respond to concerns. COG's Office of Communications issued a press release that reminded Metrorail riders about the shutdown and provided information about resources available from Commuter Connections.

COG/TPB continues to support and provide information to numerous partner agencies during the shutdown, including on public outreach, operations planning, and public safety planning.

WMATA ACTIVITIES

WMATA has been coordinating with regional jurisdictions and partners since May 2018. The transit agency held regular conference calls and partnered with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). This coordination included state and local representatives including COG, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA), the Pentagon, Virginia Railway Express (VRE), OmniRide, the District Department of Transportation, Virginia State Police, congressional offices, and many more.

WMATA also organized its own PIO group to share information and coordinate on outreach, press releases, press conferences, communications materials, and other messaging. WMATA representatives participated in COG's PIO communications call to share its outreach efforts. The agency has a dedicated team focusing on communications on the platform improvement project. This communications team created signage, website updates, information at events, and more. The

team has also provided presentations at community groups, business groups, for elected officials, and government agencies including the TPB Technical Committee. WMATA also used social media and paid advertising to get the word out. Two weeks before the shutdown, outreach teams handed out brochures at each of the affected stations.

WMATA is providing shuttle buses throughout the affected areas for those who need to travel through the Blue and Yellow Lines. Free parking is available at Franconia-Springfield, Huntington, and Van Dorn St. Temporary bicycle parking is also available at all six closed stations.



WMATA has a dedicated website with information about the project at wmata.com/platforms.

NVTC, CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, VRE, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

NVTC worked with WMATA to organize a Northern Virginia stakeholder group, bringing together transit operators, communications specialists, and other government agencies to plan, conduct meetings, and coordinate in advance of the station and service shutdown. Over the course of the shutdown, NVTC and WMATA will continue to coordinate check-ins with local jurisdictions to analyze and adjust for shifting travel patterns, communications, and operational changes.

Once the shutdown work is complete, NVTC is planning a marketing effort to bring back riders when the affected Blue and Yellow Line stations and service reopen. Under this project, NVTC will implement a multi-pronged marketing effort to persuade former and potential riders to return to Metrorail and other local public transportation options.

The City of Alexandria has provided a website with an extensive list of options for commuters during the shutdown. The page includes information about WMATA shuttle buses, DASH buses, links to

Commuter Connections to find a carpool or vanpool, information on biking, and how to receive a subsidy for the water taxi. People interested in using the water taxi may fill out a form for the subsidized rate. The water taxi runs between Old Town Alexandria and the Southwest Waterfront in the District of Columbia.

A commuter tools website also explains that there is free commuter parking available at Franconia-Springfield, Huntington, and Van Dorn St and that temporary bike parking will also be available at all the closed Metrorail stations. For transit riders using the DASH bus mobile app, introductory fares are available for \$1. The City of Alexandria also leased 200 parking spaces at Landmark Mall to facilitate carpooling and ridesharing during the shutdown. Permits for these spaces were handed out on May 28 but there is an option for people who are interested to be placed on a waitlist as spaces become available. The City of Alexandria is also offering discounted rates in city garages.

On its site, the City of Alexandria offers numerous alternative options including those mentioned above and provides more detailed maps from WMATA showing each of the shuttle bus routes. The website can be found at: alexandriava.gov/goalex/info/default.aspx?id=109697

VRE has also reached out to Virginia Metro riders in advance of the shutdown. VRE provided a dedicated website specifically to Metro riders to explain the VRE option. VRE representatives were also available in Alexandria to answer any questions Metro riders may have about using VRE. In an agreement with Amtrak, VRE riders can also use select Amtrak trains with a VRE ticket and there are discounted rates available during the shutdown. These options may alleviate crowding on VRE trains.

More information for Metro riders interested in using VRE as an option can be found at: vre.org/service/vre-isnt-just-for-long-distance-commutes/

Other jurisdictions including Fairfax and Arlington have also provided information on dedicated websites providing links to help their residents find alternate commuting options. Many jurisdictions have shared information across social media platforms, using the coordinated messages. Some bus routes in the counties are also adding some additional service.

While this year's station shutdown is focused on the Blue and Yellow Lines, future stations will be shutdown as part of this on-going project. Next year, stations and service along the Orange Line will be shutdown to repair platforms there. The region will need to prepare for those shutdowns and may learn lessons from this summer's work.

Attachments: WMATA maps showing bus and alternative routes in the affected area.



Convenient Bus Options

metrobus \$2

8Z Bus service with stops between **Quaker Lane** and **Pentagon** Station

10A Bus service with stops between **Huntington** and **Pentagon** stations

10E Bus service with stops between **Hunting Point** and **Pentagon** Station

11Y Bus service with stops between **Mount Vernon*/Hunting Point** and **Potomac Park**
*Service to **Mount Vernon** only during rush hours
**\$4.25 fare during rush hours

21A Bus service with stops between **Landmark** and **Pentagon** station

M metroway \$2

Limited-stop bus service with stops between **Braddock Rd** and **Pentagon City** stations

C closed
May 25-Sept 8, 2019

No Blue or Yellow Line rail service south of National Airport





Free Shuttle Service

Franconia-Pentagon Express

Express shuttle between **Franconia-Springfield** and **Pentagon** stations

Blue Line Shuttle

Shuttle between **Franconia-Springfield, Van Dorn St, King St-Old Town,** and **National Airport** stations

****Does not stop at Braddock Rd**

Landmark-Pentagon Express

Express shuttle between **Landmark Mall** and **Pentagon** stations

****Morning and evening rush hour service only**



Free Shuttle Service

Huntington-Pentagon Express

Express shuttle between **Huntington** and **Pentagon** stations

Yellow Line Shuttle

Shuttle between **Huntington, Eisenhower Ave, King St-Old Town, Braddock Rd,** and **Crystal City** stations

****Does not stop at National Airport**



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Northern Virginia Supplemental Service

Alexandria/DASH

- Enhanced AT3 & AT4 Service
- Expanded King Street Trolley and Water Taxi Service
- Bus & HOV changes on Washington St

Fairfax Connector

- Additional 393/394 Express Bus Service
- Promotion of existing Connector routes and Fairfax commuter options

OmniRide/PRTC

- Free Shuttle - Dale City Commuter Lot to Rippon VRE
- Free Shuttle - Lake Ridge Commuter Lot to Woodbridge VRE
- Promotion of existing, underutilized express commuter routes to Pentagon, Rosslyn, DC

Virginia Railway Express (VRE)

- Utilization/promotion of existing train capacity at Franconia-Springfield and King-Street/Old Town Stations
- Subsidized Amtrak step-up fare available



Source: CTB Supplemental Service Plan

