



Accessibility Advisory Committee

300 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

BUS/RAIL SUBCOMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES: December 8, 2025

In attendance: Tino Calabia (Chair), Steve Kaffen (Vice Chair), Sandra Neuzil (Second Vice-Chair), Susan Bowmaster, Vanessa Coles, Rico Dancy, Tajuan Farmer, Debby Fisher, Marcie Goldstein, Phillippa Mezile, Swatha Nandhakumar, Sarah Radt, Denise Rush, and Patrick Sheehan.

Call to Order

Anu Sharma, AAC Coordinator, took roll call, read the Meeting Agenda, and provided helpful information, thereafter, Chair Calabia moved the meeting forward.

Review and Approval of BRS Agenda and Minutes:

The BRS approved the Meeting Agenda for December 8th, 2025, as presented.

The BRS Meeting Minutes from November 10th, 2025, were approved with a modification.

Better Bus Update:

Charlie Dingboom, Planning Manager, Office of Bus Planning, discussed bus service changes that will be effective December 14th, 2025. Many changes will address deficiencies in the network redesign and right-size service with a few larger element. For instance, A29, a new rush hour route is being established in Virginia, every 24 minutes between Van Dorn Street Station and Metro Center. This route is being funded through the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission's (NVTC's) I-395-95 Commuter Choice Grant Program. Chair Calabia asked if this funding is unique and if Virginia is the only one helping to fund a route. Mr. Dingboom stated this has been used a couple times before. There might be other grant application areas in the area but not in the same level. Mr. Dingboom highlighted some significant changes, for instance in DC, C63 route is being extended to Georgia Avenue Petworth Station. Crowding issues are being addressed on C-11 whereas M42 and M44 are shifted to improve connectivity and service area.

Mr. Dingboom stated several smaller changes on C11, C25, C26, C27, C35, C37, C55, C87, D1X, D32, D32, D74, and D96. Chair Calabia asked if the routes that were cut in June with the new network, are being restored in December. Mr. Dingboom informed that routes are not being restored wholesale. Ms. Mezile stated a complaint that buses were not taking the veterans to the hospital as it once did. Mr. Dingboom stated the adjustment on C63 provides connection to the Washington Hospital Center bus loops. WMATA worked with the VA hospital and Washington Hospital Center to move the fence to allow an ADA bus stop. That also ties into the crosswalk to the Virginia Hospital Center. Mr. Dingboom provided Maryland updates about M22, M52, P1X, P15, P35, P62, P66, and P72. Mr. Dingboom provided information about routes in Virginia: A11, A12, A1X, A25, A40, A66, F20, and F28. Mr. Dingboom informed that this information is available on WMATA website under Service Advisory for the December 14th service change.

Chair Calabria asked about the printed brochures for each of the routes. Mr. Dingboom stated the Customer Experience team is working on generating timetables in a print-at-home style timetable. He stated the effort is also to have a supply of print-outs at the Accessibility Center at L'Enfant headquarters. Vice Chair Kaffen stated D90 customers wait for long durations and recommended to review the frequency along Massachusetts Avenue. Mr. Dingboom concurred and stated this was our first opportunity to assess the new network performance. Vice Chair Kaffen discussed the backup on Columbia Road due to bike lanes. He asked if bus operators are instructed to watch out for any intended riders at those shelters. Mr. Dingboom stated the operators are trained and instructed to look in shelters for customers. Second Vice Chair Neuzil if all the changes will be reflected in Trip Planner and third-party apps. Mr. Dingboom stated the Trip planner app, Metro Pulse app, as well as the third-party apps will reflect the service appropriately.

Ms. Mezile stated three buses did not service 14th & Florida Avenue, and a bus did not service U Street stops. Mr. Dingboom stated D5X route will not make all the stops whereas D50 route makes all the local stops. Ms. Mezile recommended to ensure bus annunciators work properly and inform customers of the next stop(s). Responding to Chair Calabria's inquiry about printed bus timetables, Sarah Meyer, Chief Customer Officer, stated the data for the schedules is being updated now. It will be updated on our website tomorrow and available to all GTFS exports, those third-party providers starting tomorrow. Ms. Meyer stated we have the print-at-home timetable feature available and the data will be there tomorrow. Anyone can put in their pickup location and that will render the exact schedule time. Ms. Meyer stated you can have a printed timetable that shows the font of that information in an accessible format.

Vice Chair Kaffen stated the next-bus-screens in shelters that serve multiple routes cover the next and subsequent buses. The screens iterate at the same frequency. Ms. Meyer stated currently, there are software updates going out to all those screens. She provided an example at Friendship Heights, that now just shows the first page with more relevant data for riders. Vice Chair Kaffen discussed the entirely painted buses in specific colors, possibly for advertisement, generating revenue. Ms. Meyer stated we run an advertising concession where we sell advertising on our buses. That is a lucrative contract generating about \$25 million a year for our operating funds. We are asked by our jurisdictional partners to do what we can to bring in revenue from other sources. Therefore, we have that advertising concession currently running. WMATA is currently piloting a new digital screen on the sides of one bus. Depending upon jurisdictional partners' and market demands, we hope future advertising will be on digital screen on the sides of our buses.

Station Ahead Maps:

Jamee Ernst, Project Manager, Wayfinding and Service Information; Sam Serebin, Product Manager, Wayfinding and Service Information; Brian Anderson, Director, Customer and Technology and Innovation; and Sarah Meyer, Executive Vice President and Chief Customer Officer, provided an update on the Station Ahead Maps (SAMs). Ms. Ernst stated SAMs orient a customer where they are in the system, and what stops are ahead of them. Ms. Ernst shared varying iterations of SAMs: track signs, some on platform pylons, and some stations only have digital SAMs. The goal for SAMs is to have consistent design, text, color, and symbols, throughout the system. For consistency, SAMs will have vertical orientation listing all the stations. SAMs answer three primary questions: where is my train, which train do I board, and is my destination ahead? After the system map, SAMs act as a second point of confirmation at the platform level.

Ms. Ernst stated the design concepts include a minimal, simplified design intended to reduce cognitive load. She provided an example of a station name (showing the customer where they are) highlighted with a white rectangle and a navigational arrow pointing up indicating the next stations till the end of the line(s). We have introduced a more uniform appearance for the regional connectors: Amtrak, MARC, and VRE, easier to read, rather than using each operator's logo. Ms. Ernst discussed consistency throughout the system using a few examples on how SAMs look on different lines. The text size increases as you move towards the end of the line with less stations to list. The platforms that service multiple lines will show SAMs branching off to the left, right, or straight, as the train lines bifurcate.

For placement options, there are large pylons (23.5 inches wide), and small pylons (11.5 inches wide) on the platform. When possible, the large pylons will be used as this guarantees the largest text height. The SAMs will point towards the corresponding track. Discussing the phases till implementation, Ms. Ernst stated currently we are in the refinement phase before moving towards internal approvals and creating the master production files. That will follow a pilot at selected Metro stations, followed by a final refinement process (if needed), incorporation of SAMs into our larger guidelines manual and system-wide implementation. Chair Calabria asked about the signage for restrooms. Maggie Butler, Vice President, System-Wide Accessibility stated the assessments have been completed for restrooms and we will have an updated report for in January. Ms. Mezile thanked and stated she is so grateful to have the SAMs. She was able to follow the electronic signage also, which was intuitive.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil asked if the angled wall signs will be changed. Ms. Ernst stated eventually all SAMs will be vertical for consistency and ease of maintenance. Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated SAMs are read bottom to top vs how people read top to bottom. Ms. Ernst stated the arrow pointing up indicates what is ahead of you. Second Vice Chair Neuzil recommended to increase the size of the arrow and move it to the left of the listed stations. Vice Chair Kaffen stated system maps are needed at the escalators where people need them the most. Ms. Radt asked if all the signs will be updated at the same time to avoid confusion for riders due to the reading order. She asked about the location of the International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA) directing towards the accessible routes and elevators. Ms. Radt asked about effective visibility since SAMs appear to be at standing-people height vs. wheelchair-height. Ms. Ernst stated customers can get close to these signs on platform pylons. She will talk to designers about the placement height and ISA.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated a low vision person cannot get close enough to view the list with smaller fonts. She does not see colors well, rather sees dark and light in between the width of the bands in the snail's trails, which is helpful. In her opinion, the color lines are too narrow on the split of the snail trail and stations, and the reading order top to bottom is logical for most people. Mr. Anderson stated with more stations on the sign, the font size is a half an inch. With fewer stations to be listed, the font size scales up to an inch and a half. Ms. Radt asked about the ADA requirement of font size for the SAMs. Ms. Ernst stated half an inch is the same size as the current system map. Ms. Meyer stated it is important that we try to have information available to those who can use it, in addition to the available large digital screens iterating. Ms. Meyer acknowledged that we are going to try to give everybody something. We have worked hard to enlarge the font on the PIDs on the overhead signs, and we also have raised lettering on the pylons.

Ms. Mezile asked how high or low is the bottom of the SAMs from the ground? Ms. Radt asked approximately how many of these new signs are going to be in each station? Ms. Meyer stated she feels very strongly that we try to bring these assets back to help customers ensure that they know which train to get on. Ms. Radt stated she is sympathetic that there are a very few people that have low vision, and you cannot cater just to us all the time, WMATA has got to meet the public where they are. She asked where we can find that equivalent information that can be accessed. She recommended to print these out and see how we see SAMs in person. Mr. Serebin stated it is very important to see these things in person in the real world. Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated she would like to see the SAMs in person. Chair Calabria thanked Ms. Ernst, Ms. Meyer, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Serebin, for presenting to the committee.

Committee Discussion on Signage:

Second Vice Chair Neuzil discussed issues about Metrorail static signs and the recommendations to WMATA. She stated Metro Staff have asked for feedback on static signage during site visits and presentations to the BRS. Metro is moving forward with prototypes and signage design. It would be in the best interests of the AAC/BRS to offer our recommendations soon to have an impact. She shared a list of Metro Rail static sign types, responding to Metro Staff and includes issues raised by the AAC. Each sign type was followed with issues perceived by the committee's collective lived experiences, and recommendations for improvement. Second Vice Chair Neuzil invited feedback from the committee and stated at future BRS Meetings we can discuss MetroRail Emergency signage, MetroBus Flags and Static Signs, and Metro Branding for Metro Rail.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil shared a list of sign types inside Metro Rail Stations to find wheelchair accessible elevators; exits; rail line to points of interest, e.g. airports; access to customer restroom, accessibility and gender of bathrooms. Finding elevators from Metrorail platforms has issue that pylons on rail platforms sometimes have circles with elevator, wheelchair, and arrow symbols. It is inconsistent whether these symbols are placed on one, two, or no sides of the pylons. She recommended to have accessible route information on platform pylons by placing ISA with directional arrows on all mid-platform pylons. ISA should be on at least two sides of pylons to be easily seen when approaching from either direction. She recommended placing ISA on pylons four feet from the ground (current location) enabling people using wheelchairs and with low vision to easily see them. She also recommended to add tactile, and provide consistency.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil discussed issues about the wall signs concerning the ISA. Riders with low vision inside a rail car often read information on wall signs as it pulls into a mid-platform station. Riders with low vision rely on wall signs besides platforms with middle tracks however there two formats as sometimes there are black symbols on a white background, and sometimes white symbols with black background on a composite white rectangle. Second Vice Chair Neuzil asked the committee to provide feedback as to which is easier to see. She also mentioned that the order of the symbols vary and asked which order is more logical. Second Vice Chair Neuzil recommended to be consistent by using one format for the ends of wall signs (prefer black icons on white circles), one order top to bottom, and include these symbols on the end(s) of all large wall signs.

Second Vice Chair Neuzil discussed finding the correct exit from Metrorail platforms and stated the overhead at escalator have glare at the Gallery Place Metro Station. The exits have letters with streets information nearby the L'Enfant Plaza Metro Station's wall sign.

At Gallery Place Station's sign exit letters could be easily added. The issues is that lower-level riders cannot easily see overhead exit information as you approach an escalator and need to stop to decipher the sign, which blocks foot traffic. Another issue is that ceiling lights cause glare while attempting to decipher overhead sign information. She recommended to add exit letter in addition to streets and directional arrow at eye level on wall signs beside platform and on platform pylons. Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated Metro platform signs now have points of interests, e.g. IAD and DCA airports. Issue is that the two airports can be reached from one platform. She recommended to give equal emphasis to each airport. Second Vice Chair Neuzil invited the committee to provide feedback, to collectively share it with Ms. Meyer's team for review and consideration.

Mr. Sheehan recommended to continue this discussion at the January meeting. He was informed that the topic will be added to January BRS Agenda to continue the discussion. There was a recommendation to share the presentation with Ms. Meyer and her team, and the Riders' Advisory Council (RAC).

Mr. Serebin stated that Second Vice Chair Neuzil has put together a great inventory and that they are doing similar work. Hence, exit information will be lettered with points of interest and intersections on it with specific signs. Service and exit information will be clearly differentiated in the signed types. Mr. Serebin stated Second Vice Chair Neuzil identified inconsistencies and challenges introduced into the system. They are in the process of improving digitally at present. Mr. Serebin stated we have developed a system where exit information, and information out of our stations, will be communicated through a system of squares. The service information is going to be depicted through a system of circles, an element consistently deployed making the system more intuitive.

Mr. Serebin stated we would like to find an opportunity to get together with the AAC to share our research. This will enable timely alignment and the AAC can contribute to solutions that we come up with and bring to the public. He appreciates how larger type, wherever possible, is preferable. Second Vice Chair Neuzil stated there appears much of a lag before we hear about it and can give you useful feedback. Mr. Serebin concurred and stated he would like to build that quicker feedback loop.

Public Comments

The first member of the public commented about SAMS and stated it is natural to read top to bottom. The stated larger font size is needed to read the longer list of stations. Concerning Second Vice Chair Neuzil's presentation, the white arrow on the black circle

on the White rectangle was easier for her to see the opposite, the white arrow. Although everything appeared to float in the larger black rectangle.

Ms. Radt discussed an outreach on the DC Council for Persons with Disabilities which falls under the DC Office of Accessibility Resources. They were interested in learning about WMATA's efforts on signage, any work done on digital options for folks who do not hear, to get the same information. They are meeting on Wednesday. Ms. Radt also stated her dissatisfaction about not receiving a response concerning an incident that occurred on a Metro train on October 31st, where her daughter had a negative experience. Ms. Radt stated as a result, the AAC discussed adding Safety on the agenda. Dr. Butler stated there may be some internal system-wide areas of improvement, and within the safety department. She will connect with the Chief Safety Officer to check on the status.

Public Comments can be received via phone at 202-962-1100, or via email at MetroAACChair@wmata.com

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.