



2019 Metrorail Platform Improvement Project Mid-Summer Report July 23, 2019

Metro Platform Improvement Project Status

All Metro Stations south of Reagan National Airport closed on May 25. Metrorail service has been replaced by enhanced bus service and [five free shuttles](#). Travelers should use the [Metro Trip Planner](#) to determine the best routes available.

When stations reopen and service resumes, some work will continue at each of the six stations in order to finalize the station improvements. Once completed, customers can expect an enhanced station experience that will bring a higher level of safety, convenience and communication.

New safety features include slip-resistant tiles, brighter LED canopy lighting and lighted handrails on stairs. In addition, stations will have new platform surveillance systems (CCTV) and operator-connected safety call buttons that will provide a direct contact to station managers and the operations control center.

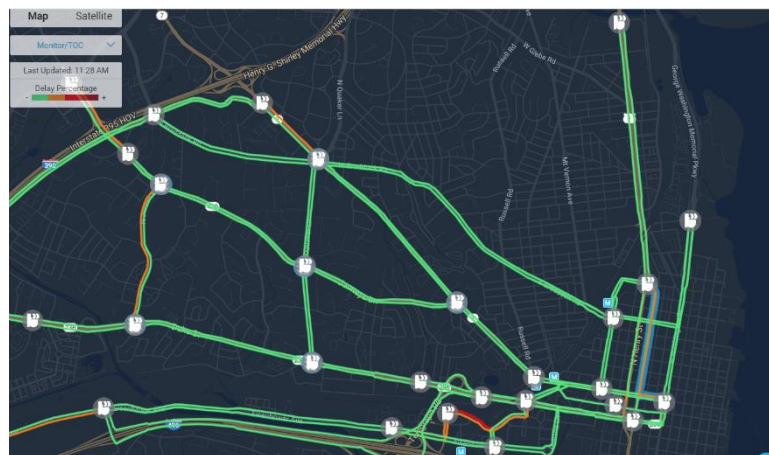
Stations will have new stainless-steel platform shelters conveniently equipped with USB charging ports, new Passenger Information Displays (PIDS) with larger 55-inch screens, along with new platform intercom speakers for clearer public announcements and emergency notifications.

The following information provides an update on the first half of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Platform Improvement Project (PIP).

Traffic Information



The City installed additional traffic sensors as part of the PIP to monitor travel times on major corridors; there are now 30 sensors in operation which provide real time traffic data as well as historical data that can be used for monitoring and decision making.



These sensors were used to monitor travel times from the first half of the PIP. Times varied greatly with some commute periods with lower than average travel times and some substantially higher.

Traffic, as usual, was impacted by weather, crashes and power outages. The most significant delays were typically due to one of these factors. On average, travel times throughout the city only increased by about 4% when compared to the spring. However, travel times during the summer are typically lower due to decreased traffic during the summer months. The greatest increases were on eastbound Duke Street (33%) during the evening commute period and on northbound Van Dorn Street (21%) during the morning commute period.

Metrorail Station and Shuttles



Within the first few days of the PIP, the Van Dorn and Eisenhower Metrorail stations were operating smoothly with moderate wait times and little to no crowding. While there was general congestion surrounding the King Street Metrorail station during the first week, pedestrians quickly found their way to the correct bus boarding locations. City staff worked with the Alexandria Police Department and WMATA staff to help people safely navigate the area. The Braddock Road Metrorail station had the most issues with bus bunching and long lines throughout the first week, but adjustments were made to improve operations at this location. At all stations, WMATA staff were reported to be extremely helpful in directing people to the appropriate locations. The City provided additional staff to assist commuters and visitors after WMATA decreased the number of ambassadors as Metrorail stations.



Community Feedback



Most **Alexandria businesses** surveyed (59 percent) report that revenue since Metrorail closure is similar to or has increased, compared with same period last year. Businesses closer to Metrorail stations are more likely to report revenue decline than those that did not. For instance, 38% of businesses on Upper and Middle King businesses report revenue declines of greater than 5%, with most of those seeing declines of greater than 10%.



The rate of **DASH customer complaints** rose by 14% during May/June.



The City released an online form in June to get **feedback from the community** in response to the project. Nearly 650 people responded and the following highlights key takeaways:

- 60% of respondents said they were able to get where they needed to go with delays of 30 minutes or more each way; 43% of respondents said they were able to get where they needed to go with delays of less than 30 minutes each way.
- When asked with transportation modes they tried for trips they would've otherwise taken by Metrorail (or to avoid traffic from station closures), the majority of respondents said they used Metrobus (34%).
 - 24% used the Blue Line Shuttle

- 33% used the Yellow Line shuttle
 - 29% used their own car;
 - 19% used their own bike or Capital Bikeshare,
 - 16.5% used DASH; and
 - 6% tried the Water Taxi
- The majority of respondents were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” (53%) with the City-distributed information on transportation alternatives during the closure.

Ridership Information



WMATA Shuttles have experienced **more than 1 million trips** since the beginning of the shutdown. The table below presents the ridership numbers from the first half of the summer (through July 14).

Bus Route	Average Weekday trips	Average Weekend trips	Average Weekly Total Trips	Total Trips
Yellow Line Local Shuttle	6,285	6,290	37,715	264,005
Blue Line Shuttle (DASH)	5,298	6,146	32,636	228,452
Huntington-Pentagon Express	5,567	2,626	30,461	213,227
Franconia-Pentagon Express	6,987	3,854	38,789	271,523
Landmark-Pentagon Express	912	-	4,560	31,920
All Shuttles	25,049	125,245	144,161	1,009,127

Metrobus ridership has **increased by 30%** compared to pre-shutdown averages.

- **Metrobus 8Z** – 23% increase in ridership, or an additional 140 passengers per day.
- **Metrobus MW1** – 30% increase in ridership, or an additional 746 passengers per day.
- **Metrobus 21A** – 46% increase in ridership or an additional 205 passengers per day.
- **Metrobus 11Y** – 87% increase in ridership or an additional 461 passengers per day.
- **Metrobus 10A** –10% increase in ridership with an average 24% increase during the AM



DASH regular routes experienced a 14% decline in June 2019 when compared to the same time the previous year.

- June ridership figures on the two DASH routes serving the Pentagon - the AT-3 and AT-4 – are up by 14% and 15%, respectively.
- The extra AT-3 and AT-4 trips that are being operated during early mornings, middays, and late evenings are drawing over 100 riders per day on a typical weekday.
- The extra King Street Trolley trips that are being operated each morning are drawing an average of roughly 175 additional trolley boardings per day.
- The new Blue Lines stop in Old Town at the intersection of King Street/ Washington Street is drawing an average of approximately 370 boardings each weekday.



By the Numbers



For the month of June, the average **bicycle** volumes during the morning and evening peak periods on the Potomac Yard Trail were almost double the numbers from the same period last year and have nearly doubled compared to volumes prior to the Metro shutdown on the Metro Linear Trail.



The City secured a total of **400 parking spaces at Landmark Mall** to be used for commuters and issued parking permits for all of them, of which an average of 63% have been utilized each day.



The Alexandria Police Department issued more than 200 HOV related parking **violations** and approximately 250 HOV persons violations to keep HOV traffic and buses moving along Washington Street.



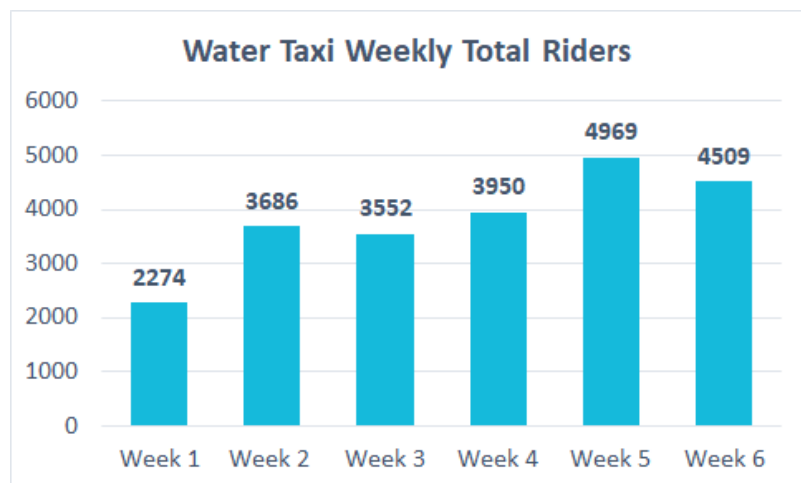
The City discounted weeknight and weekend parking rates in **City garages** from \$5 to \$2 and has seen a 12% increase in garage utilization compared to the same time in 2018 (16% on weekends and nearly 10% on weekdays). As of June 22, more than 17,000 parkers have benefited from the reduced rates. The most popular lots/garages during reduced price times are Union Street (36%) and Market Square (25%). The largest increase in utilization is in the Courthouse garage, with an 18% increase overall and a 56% increase in use on weekends.



The new **DASH mobile ticketing app** launched June 1st to improve customer convenience and to offer discounted bus fares for regular DASH routes during Metrorail shutdown. Over 1,500 users joined app and more than 1,000 rides were taken using the DASH Bus app during the first month.



Since the start of the PIP, nearly 23,000 trips have been taken on the **Water Taxi** between Alexandria, The Wharf, and National Landing during the morning and evening commute periods. On average, there are 175 a.m. riders and 637 p.m. riders during the daily commuting hours, or an average of 819 daily riders.



Construction Progress



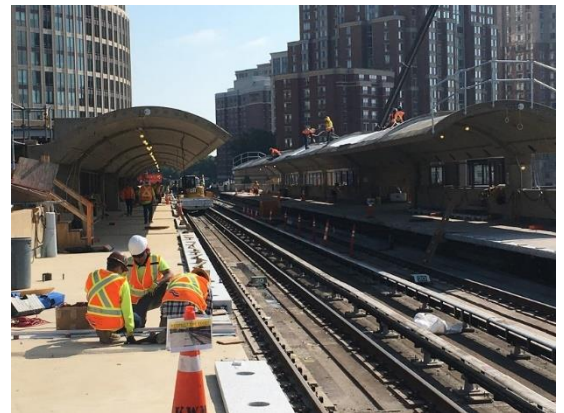
The demolished platforms are beginning to take shape again; nearly all concrete has been poured for the new platform edges, allowing crews to proceed with the placement of granite on the edges and advance work on the interior platform decks. Anchors and framing are also being installed for new skylights, shelters, benches and pylons.

- At Braddock Rd Station, where the "Braddock Hump" was eliminated last month, work continues to finish pouring the concrete platform edges. On the section of the platform that was impacted by the hump, crews will now lay granite on the edge, waterproof the platform deck and lay the topping slab. Along other sections of the platform, this station is the first to see new tile being installed. The framing for new skylights is underway and new pylon structures are going up on the platforms.



- At **King Street-Old Town Station**, all concrete has been poured and all granite is now set along the platform edges. Three quarters of the platform deck has been waterproofed and pouring of the topping slab has begun. The frames for new skylights are nearly complete, with glass installation beginning this week.

- At **Eisenhower Avenue Station**, concrete edges have been poured on both the inbound and outbound platforms, granite is being placed and waterproofing of the platform deck is nearing completion. New roofing is being installed on the platform canopies and electrical work is advancing with more than 75 percent of the station's electrical conduit infrastructure installed. Over the next few weeks, crews will focus on laying the topping slab, continuing to place the granite edges, starting tile installation and conducting elevator renovation.



- At **Van Dorn Street Station**, all granite slabs along the new platform edge have been installed. Waterproofing of the platform deck is also complete and pouring of the topping slab is 75 percent complete. The windscreen frames for the new customer shelters are being anchored and installed on the deck. Crews will complete the final quarter of the topping slab and begin laying tile.

Next Steps

- DASH is planning additional marketing/promotional activities in July along with an online survey to better measure customer satisfaction and generate additional feedback.
- The City will release one more feedback form to get community input after the project is complete.
- Staff is evaluating the Water Taxi usage data to determine if continuing this commute option after the Metro reopens will provide a benefit to City residents and workers.
- Staff is currently working to develop events to celebrate the reopening of the stations, thank customers for their support over the summer and encourage people to continue using transit for their commutes. The City is also working with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) on a multi-jurisdictional campaign to encourage riders to come back to Metrorail and use transit in general.
- Staff will provide an oral update to City Council at the first legislative meeting in September following the reopening of stations.
- After the Metrorail stations reopen, staff will compile a full report for the WMATA PIP including data and lessons learned.
- The City is coordinating with NVTC to work with and assist neighboring jurisdictions as they plan for Platform work that will have a great impact on their communities. Staff has committed to presenting lesson learned at NVTC meetings as well as to regional stakeholders who have already begun to plan for PIPs in their jurisdictions.
- The City, along with WMATA and Visit Alexandria staff, will be discussing the project at the American Planning Association's National Capital Region conference this fall.