



# **New Rail Service, Franconia-Springfield to Greenbelt**

**Blue Line Realignment and  
Feedback from Rider Survey**

**Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
Office of Planning**

**October 2008**





# Reasons to Propose a New Service Alignment

---

- More growth has occurred in the eastern portion of Downtown D.C. causing a shift in some travel patterns.
- Improve rail reliability at the Rosslyn Portal
- Utilize available capacity on the Yellow Line Bridge.



## Benefits of New Service Alignment

---

- Service better tailored to changing ridership patterns.
- Increased capacity to get more Virginians into the District of Columbia.
- Blue Line riders from south of Pentagon to L'Enfant Plaza will save 12 minutes on their trip.
- More reliable service on both Orange and Blue Lines.
- Direct service from Franconia-Springfield to Greenbelt.



# Growth at Downtown Stations

- More growth has occurred in the eastern portion of Downtown.
  - When looking at station boarding growth over the last 5 years the most significant growth has been in the eastern parts of Downtown.

| Station Boarding Comparisons 2002-2007 |                |                |               |           |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|
|  | 2002           | 2007           | Change        | % Change  |
| <b>Eastern Downtown</b>                |                |                |               |           |
| Gallery Place                          | 13,800         | 21,900         | 8,100         | 59%       |
| Navy Yard                              | 3,100          | 4,200          | 1,100         | 35%       |
| Eastern Market                         | 4,800          | 5,900          | 1,100         | 23%       |
| Capitol South                          | 7,300          | 8,500          | 1,200         | 16%       |
| Federal Center SW                      | 4,700          | 5,300          | 600           | 13%       |
| Archives                               | 7,800          | 8,500          | 700           | 9%        |
| Anacostia                              | 7,200          | 7,600          | 400           | 6%        |
| L'Enfant Plaza                         | 21,100         | 21,900         | 800           | 4%        |
| Judiciary Square                       | 10,600         | 10,100         | -500          | -5%       |
| Waterfront                             | 4,000          | 3,200          | -800          | -20%      |
| Sub-Total                              | 84,400         | 97,100         | 12,700        | 15%       |
| <b>Western Downtown</b>                |                |                |               |           |
| Foggy Bottom                           | 18,500         | 20,600         | 2,100         | 11%       |
| Union Station                          | 30,300         | 32,900         | 2,600         | 9%        |
| Metro Center                           | 28,700         | 29,800         | 1,100         | 4%        |
| McPherson Square                       | 16,000         | 16,400         | 400           | 3%        |
| Farragut West                          | 23,600         | 24,100         | 500           | 2%        |
| Federal Triangle                       | 10,400         | 10,400         | 0             | 0%        |
| Smithsonian                            | 12,000         | 11,600         | -400          | -3%       |
| Sub-Total                              | 139,500        | 145,800        | 6,300         | 5%        |
| <b>Total for Downtown Stations</b>     | <b>223,900</b> | <b>242,900</b> | <b>19,000</b> | <b>8%</b> |



## Shift in Travel Demand

---

- This change has resulted in more people from south of the Pentagon taking the Yellow Line across to Downtown.

|  | 2002   | 2007   | Change | % Change |
|--|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| Blue Line Ridership<br>Rosslyn to Foggy Bottom | 12,200 | 11,700 | -500   | -4%      |
| Yellow Line Ridership<br>Pentagon to L'Enfant  | 12,500 | 14,100 | 1,600  | 13%      |

- There has been a 13 % growth in riders Between Pentagon and L'Enfant, while the ridership between Rosslyn and Foggy Bottom has declined 4%.



# Blue Line Realignment Proposal

---

- During the weekday peak periods the Blue Line presently operates approximately every 6 minutes between Franconia/Springfield and Largo Station (10 trains per hour).
- The proposal is to shift some Peak period Blue Line trains to operate via Yellow Line bridge to L'Enfant Plaza and on to Greenbelt.
  - During the peak periods 3-4 trains per hour would operate between Franconia/Springfield and Greenbelt increasing capacity by 8000 passenger trips.
  - Add 3-5 Orange Line trains from West Falls Church to Downtown.
  - This proposal adds capacity from Virginia to Downtown via the Blue Line to L'Enfant Plaza and the Orange Line through Rosslyn.
  - To maintain the current peak period headways between Largo and Downtown, 3-5 trips per hour would operate between Largo and Vienna by utilizing existing trippers currently operating between Vienna and New Carrollton.





# Impact to Customer

---

## Pros:

- Service better tailored to ridership patterns.
- Virginia riders from south of the Pentagon will get more service to eastern portion of downtown D.C. each hour.
- Four additional Orange Line trains from West Falls Church headed downtown D.C. per hour.
- More reliable service on both the Blue and Orange Lines.
- Travel times for 17,000 riders will be reduced by up to 12 minutes.
- No added cost for service.
- Direct peak period service from Franconia-Springfield to Greenbelt.

## Cons:

- Direct Blue Line service to Rosslyn, Foggy Bottom will be reduced to every 12 minutes.
- Travel time for 13,000 riders will be increased by up to 12 minutes.

## Other:

- Will require customers to learn new system map.



# Customer Feedback Research Method

---

- To obtain feedback from Metrorail riders who were to be affected by the proposed service change, Metro conducted interviews with passengers boarding the rail at the following stations:

| Completed Surveys     |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| <u>Station</u>        | <u>Completes</u> |
| North                 | 136              |
| College Park-UMD      | 28               |
| Greenbelt             | 55               |
| Prince George's Plaza | 27               |
| West Hyattsville      | 26               |
| South                 | 310              |
| Braddock Road         | 54               |
| Eisenhower Avenue     | 48               |
| Franconia-Springfield | 47               |
| Huntington            | 49               |
| King Street           | 59               |
| Van Dorn Street       | 53               |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>         | <b>446</b>       |

- As the proposal affects peak period service, the interviews were conducted during the peak periods.



# Customer Feedback Research Findings

---

- Overall, the results of this research show that Metrorail riders potentially affected by the Blue Line realignment are favorable towards the proposal in general, even though the majority are unaware of the proposal.
  - Specifically, fewer than one in five respondents (17%) were previously aware of the Blue Line realignment proposal.
  - Among those aware of the Blue Line realignment, the majority (61%) shared positive feedback towards the proposal, most often mentioning that it was a good idea in general (51%). About two in ten (19%) gave negative criticism, most often stating that it would extend travel time (12%).
    - Notably, respondents intercepted at the North stations were significantly more likely to have positive reactions than those at the South stations (78% vs. 54%).



# Customer Feedback Research Findings

---

- The majority of riders mentioned that their travel would be unaffected by the Blue Line realignment with regard to travel time, directness of route, service availability and/or number of transfers required.
  - Specifically, respondents were more likely to rate that the change would offer more service availability (29% vs. 13% less service availability), allow a more direct route (26% vs. 13% less direct route), take less time (25% vs. 19% more time) and/or require fewer transfers (18% vs. 9% more transfers) for their travel.
- The vast majority of riders had positive impressions of the test map of the proposed route. Additionally, a majority of respondents mentioned that adding a new line color to the map would make the change easier to understand.
- When determining what train to board once it approaches the station, riders most often said that they look at the electronic passenger information display systems displayed in the rail station (69%) and/or look at the train destination sign on the outside of the train (69%).



# Customer Feedback

## Key Take-Aways

---

- The survey result confirms the planning data on the advantages and disadvantages of the realignment:
- There are more riders that will be advantaged by the proposal than ones that are disadvantaged.
  - Orange Line, Green Line and Yellow Line riders will have additional service and/or savings in travel time
  - Riders traveling from Southern segments of the Blue Line to Northern Arlington County/Fairfax County or Foggy Bottom will have longer travel times or additional transfers.
- If this project moves forward then communication/promotion and signage are key in terms of customer acceptance:
  - The new Line should have its own color designation separate from the existing 5 colors.
  - New comprehensive signage packs must be installed at all stations that will clearly display the new system and the options for all riders (regular commutes and occasional riders).
  - A region wide customer information program must be developed and disseminated to the public in conjunction with any change.



## Next Steps

---

- These results of the customer survey are being shared with interested groups including WMATA Rider's Advisory Committee (RAC), the Jurisdictional Coordinating Committee (JCC) and interested groups like the Arlington Advisory Council.
- To prepare for a update presentation to the WMATA Board in early winter, staff will prepare will:
  - Develop a the cost of necessary signage improvements
  - Put together the elements and outline of a customer communication
  - Further detail possible improvements to the realignment plan such as:
  - Implementing express bus service to supplement the rail service.
  - Evaluating the amount and frequency of the service that could operate over the Yellow Line Bridge
- The Board is anticipating a briefing on this project in the Nov././Dec. timeframe