

# BUS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Strategy Advisory Panel Meeting  
September 9, 2019

10:00 am – 12:00 pm



# Agenda – Strategy Advisory Panel

Topic	Time	Notes
<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ESC members endorse Strategy</li><li>Strategy overview with recommendations in final form</li></ul>	10:00 – 10:20	Information
<b>Action Plan Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Overview of what the Action Plan is (implementation plan for 10 years)</li><li>Current work of operators and jurisdictions</li></ul>	10:20 – 10:40	Discussion
<b>Breakout Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Implementing the Recommendations: opportunities, constraints, and early wins</li></ul>	10:40 – 11:45	Breakout
<b>Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Project team develops draft Action Plan September - October</li><li>Action Plan finalized and published December</li></ul>	11:45 – noon	Information

# Executive Steering Committee Endorsement

*“Buses play a critical role in connecting people throughout this region to opportunities. The Bus Transformation Project will identify and implement steps to make local bus a world class travel option for all of the region’s residents.”*

—Rob Puentes, Executive Steering Committee Chair

## **Executive Steering Committee**

Rob Puentes, Chair	Sandy Modell
Rosie Allen-Herring	Neil Pedersen
David Alpert	Jack Potter
Chuck Bean	David Richardson
Bob Buchanan	Deborah Ratner Salzberg
Jim Dyke	Stewart Schwartz
Nat Gandhi	Anne Stubbs
Kim Horn	Beverley Swaim-Staley
Jack McDougle	Ed Wytkind



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# Strategy & Recommendations

# Overview of Strategy & Recommendations

The strategy to achieve the vision and goals is built around four recommendations



1 **Frequent and Convenient Bus Service**

Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.



2 **Bus Priority on Roadways**

Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably.



3 **Customer Experience**

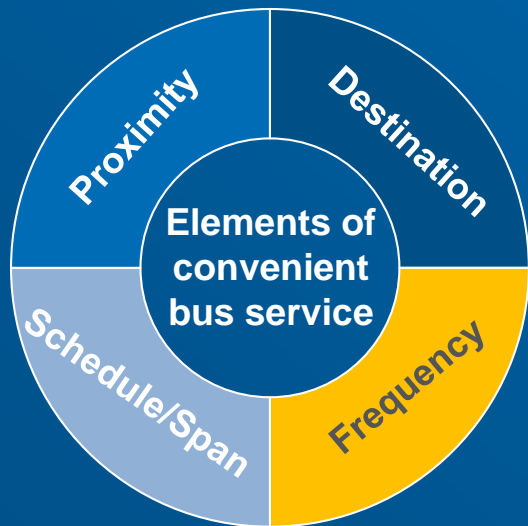
Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership.



4 **Task Force to Implement the Strategy**

Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

# 1 Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.



- (A) **Establish regional standards** across bus systems to provide consistent bus service, tailored by location and time of day.
- (B) Collect and **share standardized bus operations and performance data** across agencies to improve transparency and better plan bus service.
- (C) **Collaboratively restructure the region’s bus network** to create the most efficient and customer-focused bus system.\*
- (D) Cooperatively **assess Metrobus’ current service definitions and funding allocation formula** using the WMATA Board’s Authority
- (E) Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to **operate flexible on-demand services** to supplement the fixed route network where and when warranted

\* Through a Mass Transit Plan as required by the WMATA Compact



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **responsiveness** to customer demand for service
- Increased **access to transit** (frequency, schedule, span)
- Convenient service that is **direct and coordinated** among providers
- Increased bus **ridership**
- More **efficient use of resources**

## Public Comments: Frequent and convenient bus service

There is broad public support for:

- Frequent and direct service with fewer stops
- Coordinated schedules across agencies
- A single app to plan, use, and pay for all services
- More off-peak and late night bus service
- A bus network redesign to align the routes with where people want to go and make the system easier to use
- *Testing* flexible service types if they are financially sustainable and accessible to everyone

*“Frequent needs to be reliably frequent. The bus needs to arrive when it's supposed to arrive. The failure to do so is probably the most frustrating thing about riding the bus, and the thing that keeps some people from doing it at all.”*

*“Many people have to depend on at least one bus to get someplace. Bus transferring is horrible--even with apps, schedules often are wrong, and people are forced to wait in areas where there is either no shelter or a low expectation of safety.”*

*“You should specifically look at how to realign the entire system with major corridors using the new dedicated lanes the region is planning.”*



## 2 Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably.

- A Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to **adopt consistent guidelines**, bolster jurisdictional capital spending, and expedite coordinated implementation of bus priority.
- B Implement enforcement policies that **establish bus priority** and result in reliable and fast service.
- C Establish a capital program at WMATA that **supports accelerated implementation of bus priority projects** including BRT.
- D Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority and **move more people more efficiently**.



These recommendations will result in:

- Reduced **journey time** for bus riders
- Increased **on-time performance**
- Increased **ridership**
- Increased frequency and decreased **bus operating costs**
- Improved **corridor traffic conditions** for all vehicles
- Improved **regional productivity and competitiveness**



# Public Comments: Prioritizing bus on roadways

There is broad public support for:

- Prioritizing bus on roadways
- Implementing bus lanes and signal priority
- Enforcing bus lanes with automation and fines
- Congestion pricing and curb management
- Taking a regional approach to implement priority treatments – such as congestion pricing, common standards for bus lanes and priority, and enforcement

*“Buses must be given priority on more corridors across the region. It is essential to moving more people, more quickly, and more equitably.”*

*“Please emphasize the importance of enforcement - particularly automated. There aren't enough police available to patrol and deter violations - it needs to be automated.”*

*“All bus routes should have dedicated bus lanes and priority at intersections. They move far more people more efficiently and with less pollution than cars and therefore should have priority.”*

# 3 Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership.

## A Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information to plan a trip.

A1: Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place

A2: Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers

A3: Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits

## B Make paying bus fares easier.

B1: Provide free transfers between bus and rail

B2: Provide reduced fare options for low-income riders

B3: Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place

B4: Develop new regional passes that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable

B5: Incentivize more employers to offer transit benefits



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **customer satisfaction**
- **More affordable transportation** for residents that need it most
- **Increased transit ridership**
- **Less congestion** on our region's roads
- Reduced **safety incident rates** at bus stops and on buses
- Reduced **environmental impact** of transportation

# 3 Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership.

## C Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus.

C1: Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled

C2: Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone on board by partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions

C3: Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service

C4: Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness

## D Pursue innovation and bus improvement.

D1: Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency

D2: Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements such as service provision, customer experience, and bus operator and passenger safety.



These recommendations will result in:

- Increased **customer satisfaction**
- **More affordable transportation** for residents that need it most
- **Increased transit ridership**
- **Less congestion** on our region's roads
- Reduced **safety incident rates** at bus stops and on buses
- Reduced **environmental impact** of transportation

## Public Comments: Excellent customer experience

There is broad public support for:

- Free transfers from bus to Metrorail
- Bus stop improvements
- Real-time arrival information
- Simpler pass products
- Reduced-fare products
- Mobile app
- Simplified maps & route names

*“Making one bus pass that can be used for all bus in the metropolitan area makes people to ride bus more.”*

*“Simplifying passes and make it easier to understand. Currently very confusing to what can be used when and where.”*

*“Free transfers and unified payment would do wonders.”*

*“An app with bus location would be amazing.”*

*“Make it obvious where users can transfer to other buses, not just to metro stations.”*

# 4 Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

- A** Convene a Task Force to **oversee implementation** of the Strategy and **provide long-term leadership** for the regional bus system with membership as follows:
- The Governors of Virginia and Maryland and the Mayor of the District of Columbia each nominate one person (three members total)
  - The six principal members from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia on the WMATA Board collectively nominate one person (one member total)
  - Bus Transformation Executive Steering Committee nominates three people (three members total)
  - The Task Force itself may nominate up to two additional people (up to two members total)
- B** Facilitate an independently published **annual progress report** on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a **bus performance scorecard** to track the level of service delivered to customers.
- C** **Develop a platform for rider feedback**, administered by the Task Force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback into regular revisions of the Strategy recommendations.



These recommendations will result in:

- The public will experience a **unified bus system** that is **customer-responsive**
- **Customer representation** for strong customer accountability
- **Integrated decision making** and efficient use of public resources
- **Better coordination** of operations and facilities, services and guidelines

## Public Comments: Leadership for Transformation

There is broad public support for:

- A more unified system that doesn't require the customer to understand the systems of nine different providers
- Service that is accountable to current and future bus riders
- An effort driven by local knowledge and cooperation
- Market-based solutions; not driven by regulations and penalties
- Holding leaders accountable for improving bus with transparent standards and easy-to-digest scorecards

*“Performance management and accountability are key to long-term, sustainable success.”*

*“Holding transportation and transit agencies accountable for prioritizing bus... Create interjurisdictional entity with teeth”*

*“Senior elected officials must be on board and drive this”*

*“Find a way to make sure the WMATA Board spends a reasonable amount of time on bus!”*



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# Action Plan



# Action Plan — Today's Topics

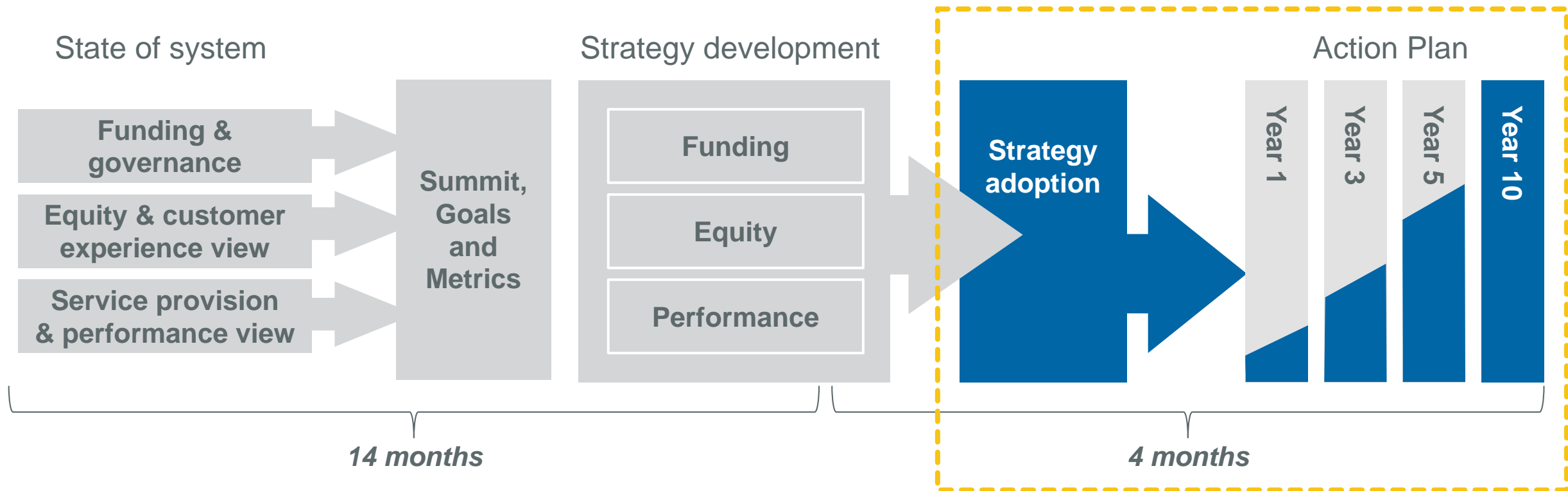
Recommendations → Action Plan

- Overview of the Action Plan (10 year implementation plan)
- Current work of operators and jurisdictions
- Methodology for developing Action Plan

## Action Plan Overview

- Overall “owners” for each recommendation
- List of action steps needed to accomplish each recommendation
- Rating of each recommendation based on transformative impact and ability to implement
- Prioritization of recommendations
- High level schedule sequence for each year, grouped into 1, 3, 5, and 10 year timeframes

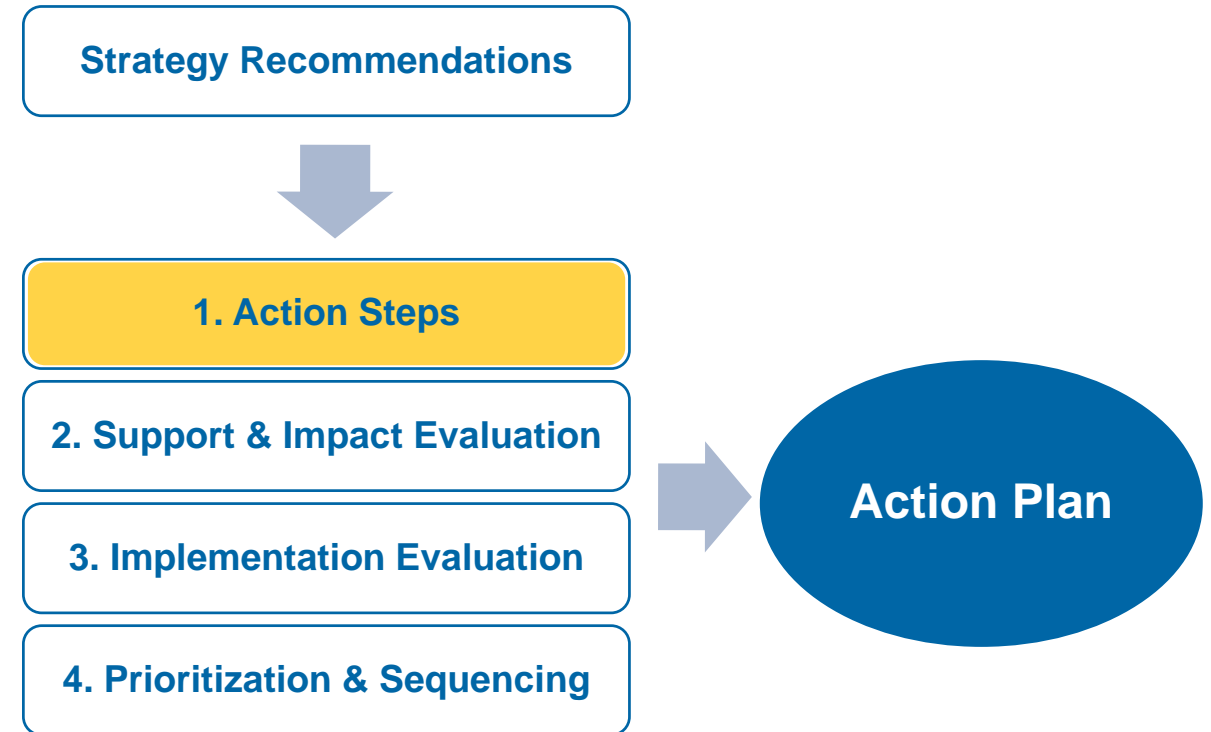
# Process overview: Regional stakeholders work together to define the roles of bus and create an Action Plan



# Action Plan Development

## Methodology for developing Action Plan

- 1. Outline Action Steps:**  
Input from today's breakout session;  
incorporate ongoing efforts across the region
- 2. Evaluate "Transformation" potential:**  
public support from earlier BTP surveys  
and magnitude of positive impact
- 3. Evaluate Implementation factors:**  
cost, return on investment, progress to  
date, institutional challenge, and time to  
realize changes
- 4. Prioritize and sequence action steps:**  
a coordinated set of actions for  
implementing the Strategy



# 1. Action Steps Inputs

## Current work of operators and jurisdictions

Flexible service pilot in Montgomery County

BRT in Montgomery County and Northern Virginia

Joint storage/maintenance facilities between WMATA and Montgomery County

Electric buses in DC Circulator and RideOn Fleet

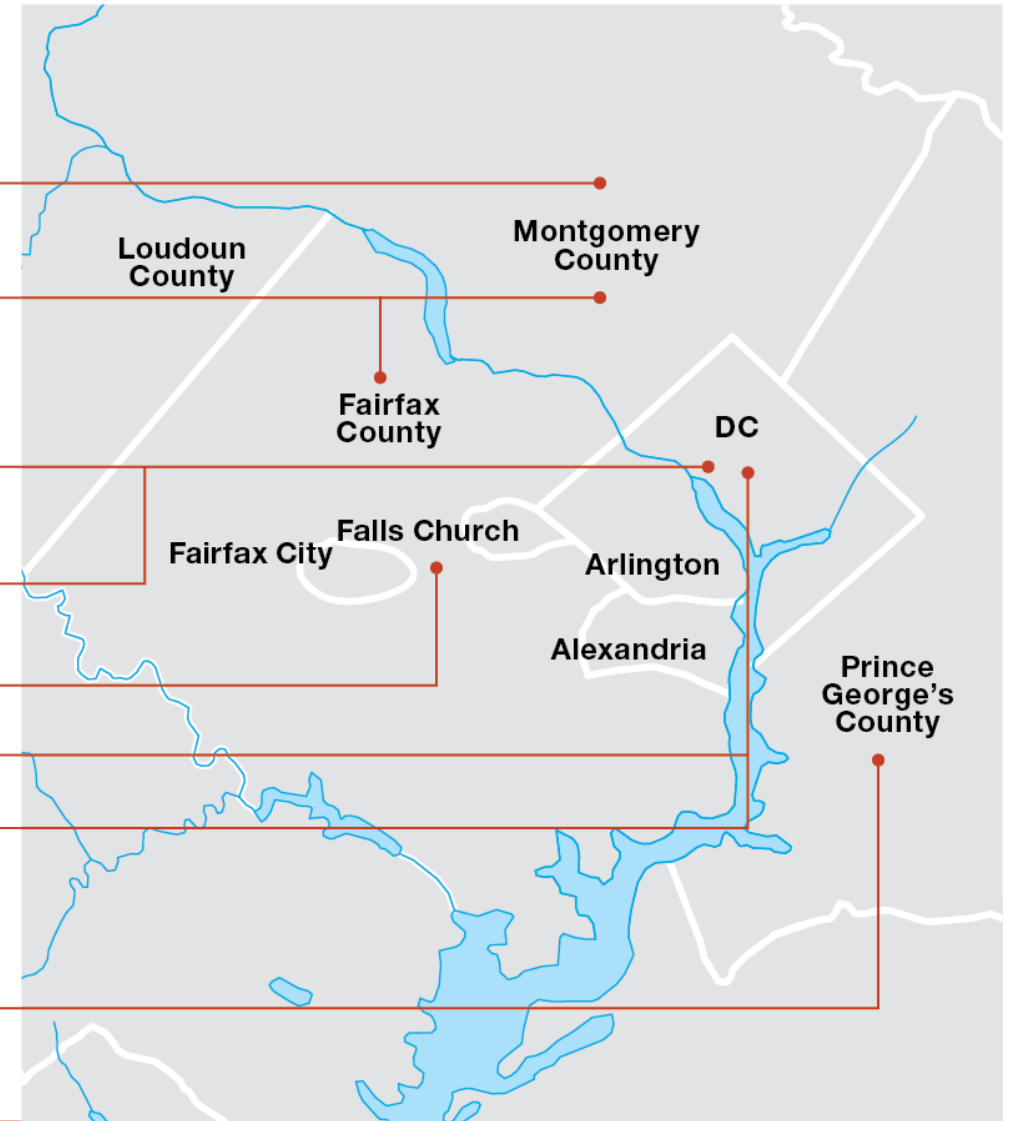
AV shuttle pilot in Fairfax County

Dedicated bus lanes in DC

Microtransit service in DC

New storage/maintenance facility with room to expand  
Making more bus stops accessible and with real time information

Transit signal priority across the region



# 1. Action Steps Development

## Illustrative Example

### Action steps

*Recommendation 3-A1*

**Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place**

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### *Outcome*

Every bus provider achieves very high accuracy of real-time data; All agencies providing GTFS real-time data.

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### *Action Plan Steps*

- a. Assess agency readiness (hardware, software, vendor/staff capabilities, back-end data warehousing/integration, data management/flow, etc.) of capabilities to support real-time development and maintenance
- b. Develop plan for hardware, software and staff support to implement and maintain public real-time information feeds (where needed)
- c. Implement (design, testing, pilot, etc.) real-time information feed with all operators
- d. Identify regionally agreed-upon standards for data accuracy and reliability
- e. Confirm real-time information feed accuracy and reliability for all bus systems
- f. Ensure that real-time information feeds are available publicly and are accessible through commonly used apps
- g. Market for broad use of this capability for planning transit trips

## 2. Support and Impact Evaluation

### Evaluation Methodology – Transformative

*Recommendation 3-A1*

**Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place**

Evaluation	Low	Med	High	Description
Level of public support			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public and stakeholder feedback</li><li>3,000 survey responses</li></ul>
Magnitude of impact		✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Based on how much the recommendation moves us towards the Vision (by meeting objectives and reaching goals as defined earlier in the study)</li></ul>



# 3. Implementation Evaluation

## Evaluation Methodology – Implementation

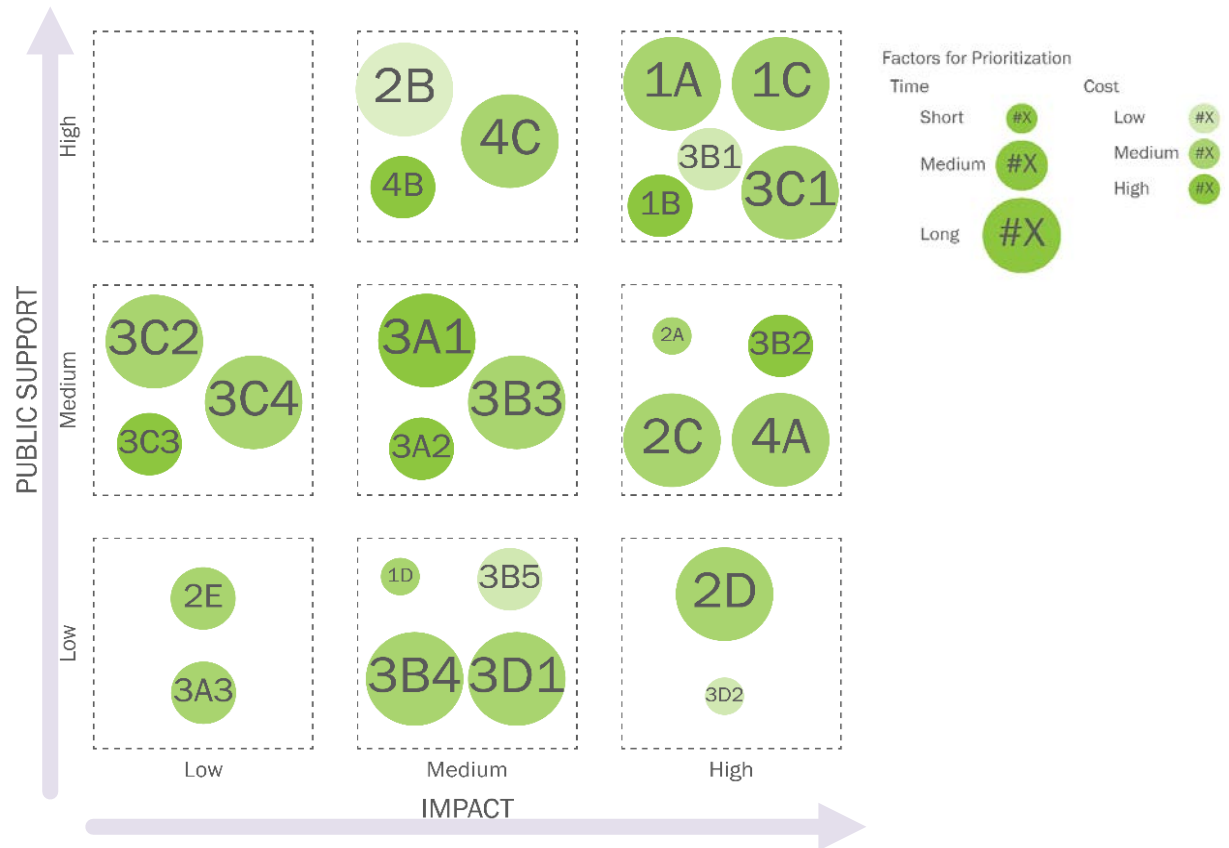
*Recommendation 3-A1*      **Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place**

Evaluation	Low	Med	High	Description
Investment	✓			Capital cost estimate based on work-to-date/industry standards
Return on investment		✓		Based on how much it improves the rider experience (frequency, reliability, travel time)
Institutional challenge	✓			Level of effort required to achieve agency/jurisdiction adoptions
Progress to date	✓			Captures existing level of progress in region (commitment, pilot, implementation)
Time		✓		Based on the results of metrics 1-4

# 4. Prioritization and Sequencing

The Action Plan will prioritize recommendations that have strong public support, and high potential for positive impact, informed by implementation factors

	Transformational		Implementation			Institutional
	Public Support	Magnitude of Impact	Time	Cost		
Recommendation	●	●	▶▶	\$\$	▶▶	
Recommendation	●	●	▶	\$	▶▶	
Recommendation	●	●	▶▶	\$\$	▶▶	
Recommendation	●	●	▶▶▶	\$\$\$	▶▶▶	



Illustrative: Evaluation

Illustrative: Prioritization

# Action Plan Concept

**1** Provide frequent and convenient bus service

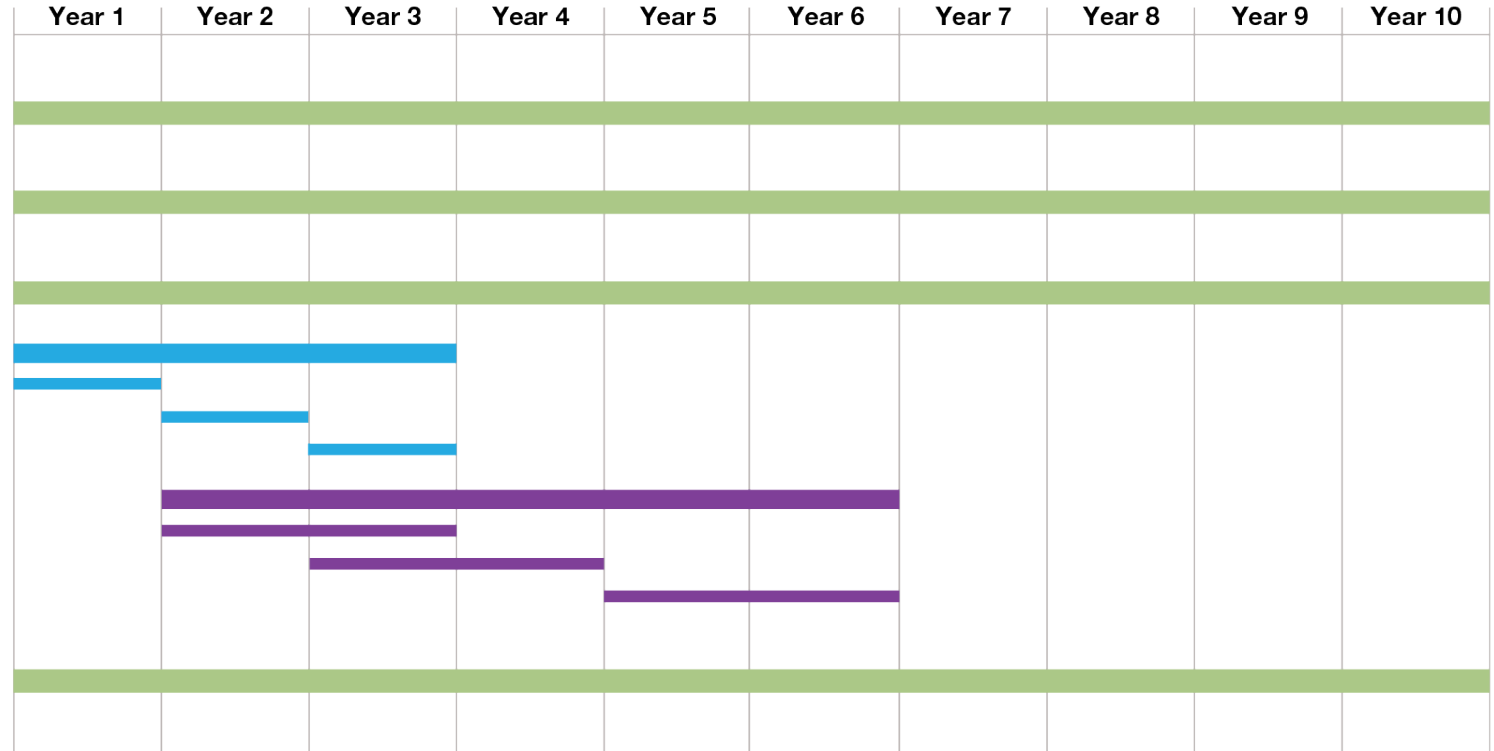
**2** Give buses priority on Roadways

**3** Create an excellent customer experience

3A1 Real-time Information  
Action a  
Action b  
Action c

3C1 Bus stops and shelters  
Action a  
Action b  
Action c

**4** Empower a publicly appointed task force to transform bus








Illustrative: Sequencing








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# Breakout Session

-  Bus Operating Agencies
-  Roadway Owner Agencies
-  WMATA
-  Task Force
-  Independent Organizations

# Summary of Recommendations






Anticipating action steps for implementation, the recommendations relate to a range of “owner” organizations

Recommendation #1	Principal Owner
Provide frequent and convenient bus service that connects communities and promotes housing affordability, regional equity, and economic growth.	
1A. Establish regional standards across bus systems to provide consistent bus service, tailored by location and time of day.	
<b>1B. Collect and share standardized bus operations and performance data across agencies to improve transparency and better plan bus service.</b>	
<b>1C. Collaboratively restructure the region’s bus network to create the most efficient and customer-focused bus system.</b>	
<b>1D. Cooperatively assess Metrobus’ current service definitions and funding allocation formula using the WMATA Board’s Authority.</b>	
1E. Leverage existing efforts by transit providers to operate flexible on-demand services to supplement the fixed route network where and when warranted.	

Recommendation #2	Principal Owner
Give buses priority on roadways to move people quickly and reliably.	
<b>2A. Obtain commitments from state and local agencies (including roadway owners) to adopt consistent guidelines, bolster jurisdictional capital spending, and expedite coordinated implementation of bus priority.</b>	
<b>2B. Implement enforcement policies that establish bus priority and result in reliable and fast service.</b>	
<b>2C. Establish a capital program at WMATA that supports accelerated implementation of bus priority projects, including BRT.</b>	
2D. Support regional congestion mitigation efforts that bolster bus priority and move more people more efficiently.	

# Summary of Recommendations

Anticipating action steps for implementation, the recommendations relate to a range of “owner” organizations

-  Bus Operating Agencies
-  Roadway Owner Agencies
-  WMATA
-  Task Force
-  Independent Organizations

## Recommendation #3

Create an excellent customer experience to retain and increase ridership.

### A. Equip riders with high-quality, accurate, and easily accessible information to plan a trip.

**A1: Ensure that accurate, real-time service information for all providers is available in one place**

A2: Make bus service easy to understand with legible maps and customer-friendly route names across providers

A3: Expand marketing efforts to enhance visibility of bus options and benefits

### B. Make paying bus fares easier.

B1: Provide free transfers between bus and rail

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B3: Create a mobile solution to plan and pay for trips in one place

**B4: Develop new regional passes that work across all providers, and make bus fares clear and understandable**

B5: Incentivize more employers to offer transit benefits

Principal Owner



Principal Owner

### C. Make it safer and more pleasant to ride the bus.

C1: Make bus stops and shelters safe, comfortable, accessible, and technology-enabled

C2: Advance technology and programs that improve the safety of everyone on board by partnering with riders, bus operators, and unions

C3: Empower front-line staff to provide exceptional customer service

C4: Ensure that all buses meet the highest standards of comfort and cleanliness

### D. Pursue innovation and bus improvement.






D1: Advance new vehicle technologies to improve bus' environmental footprint and efficiency, such as electric buses and automation

D2: Establish a Regional Mobility Innovation Lab to systematically share knowledge and accelerate improvements such as service provision, customer experience, and bus operator and passenger safety



# Summary of Recommendations

Anticipating action steps for implementation, the recommendations relate to a range of “owner” organizations

-  Bus Operating Agencies
-  Roadway Owner Agencies
-  WMATA
-  Task Force
-  Independent Organizations

## Recommendation #4

Empower a publicly appointed Task Force to transform bus and lead the implementation of a truly integrated regional system.

4A. Convene a Task Force to oversee implementation of the Strategy and provide long-term leadership for the regional bus system with membership as follows:

- The Governors of Virginia and Maryland and the Mayor of the District of Columbia each nominate one person (three members total)
- The six principal members from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia on the WMATA Board collectively nominate one person (one member total)
- Bus Transformation Executive Steering Committee nominates three people (three members total)
- The Task Force itself may nominate up to two additional people (up to two members total)

4B. Facilitate an independently published annual progress report on Bus Transformation Strategy implementation and a bus performance scorecard to track the level of service delivered to customers.

4C. Develop a platform for rider feedback, administered by the Task Force, and an ongoing mechanism for incorporating feedback into regular revisions of the Strategy recommendations.

Principal Owner





## Breakout Session

- Facilitated one hour discussion
- Each table assigned five primary recommendations
- Inputs will inform Action Plan

## Discussion questions for select recommendations:

- **What are the barriers to implementation?**
- **What about this recommendation resonates most with the public?**
- **What first steps will gain the most momentum?**



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# Next Steps & Homework

## Next Steps

- September - October: work sessions with Technical Team members
- Late October: draft Action Plan
- November-December: finalize and publicize Action Plan