

# Better Bus: Network Redesign for Metrobus and TheBus

Prince George's County Council

Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and the  
Environment Committee

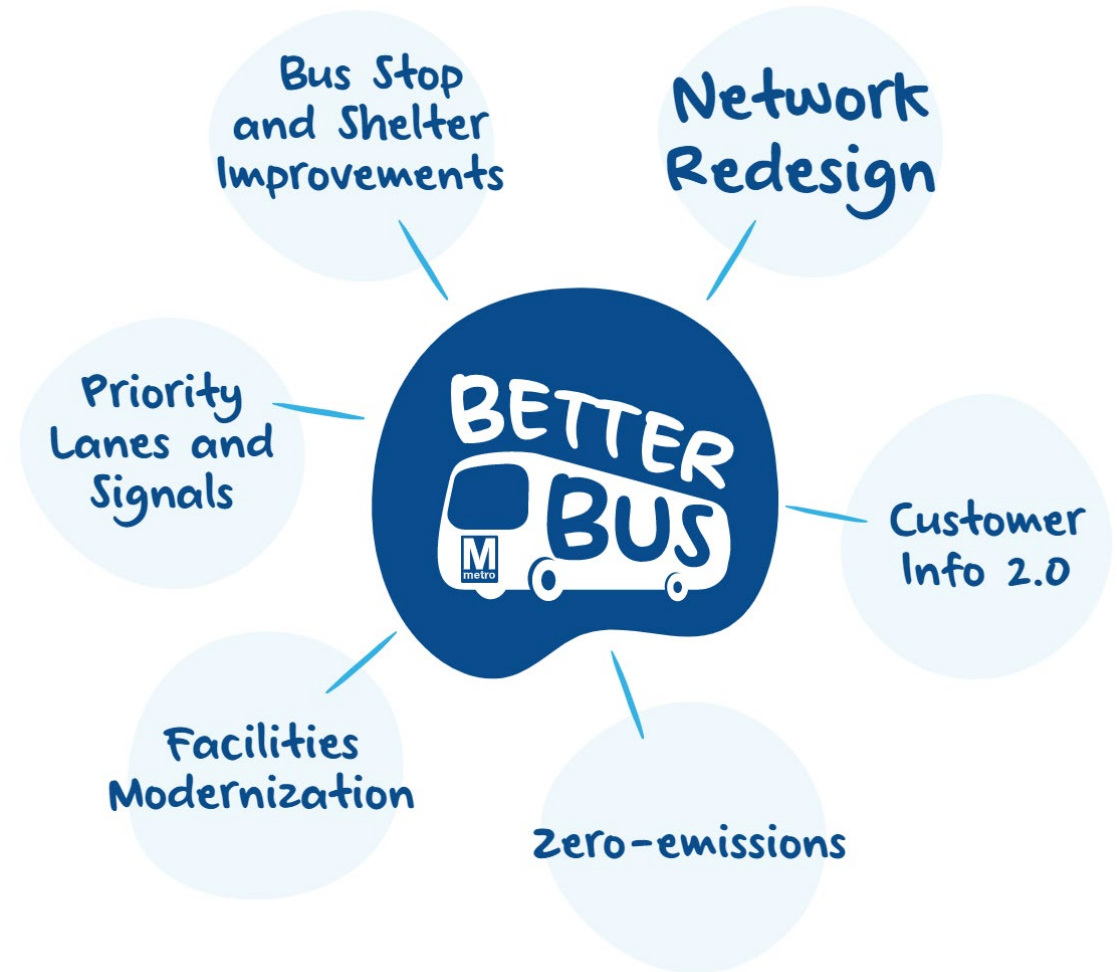
January 26, 2023





# Purpose

- Provide update on Better Bus: Network Redesign



# The Need for a Better Bus Network



To keep up with our changing region and the people that live and work here



To better connect people to where they need to go



To promote equity, inclusiveness, and access to opportunity



To create a network that is easy to use no matter where you are



To identify a sustainable and predictable funding approach for bus service



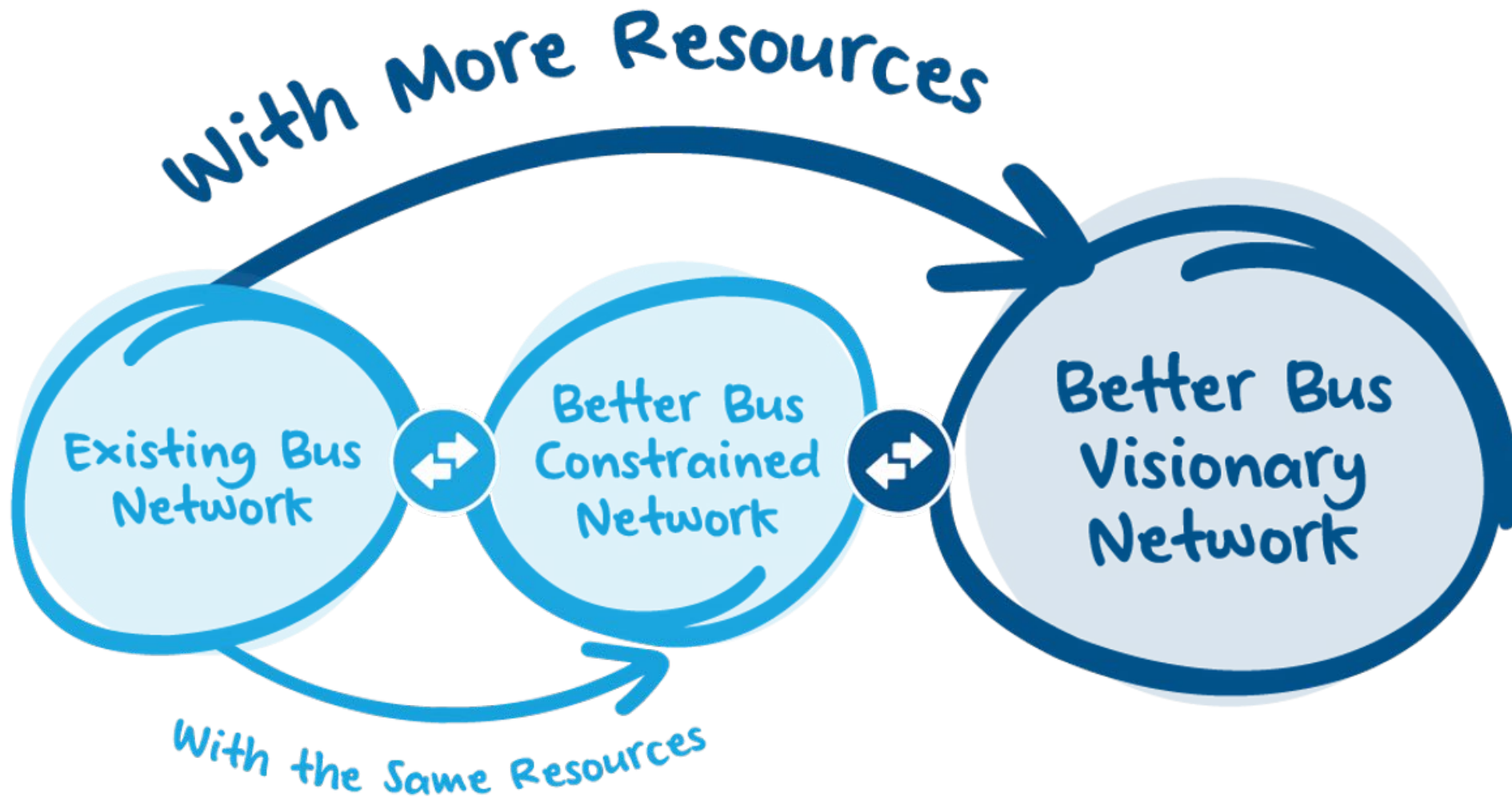
# Guiding Principles

## Principles that will guide project approach and decisions

- Ensure a customer-focused and regional perspective
- Engage and communicate authentically, inclusively, and transparently
- Ensure equity is a value throughout the project
- Allow customers' input, region's needs, data, and service guidelines to drive decisions
- Attract customers with frequent, reliable, connective service
- Make cost-effective and data-driven business decisions

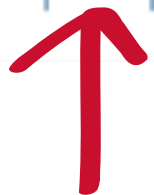


# What the Region Gets from the Redesign





# Better Bus Network Redesign Roadmap



We are here





# Summary of Engagement with Customers and Other Audiences

# Engagement: By the Numbers for the Region and County



Nearly **9,500** (1,100) contacts  
at 18 (3) pop-up events

**500+** (85+) conversations  
with customers at bus stops

**6,500+** (515) survey  
participants



Outreach to **12,000** Metro employees  
Listening sessions at **9** Metrobus divisions  
and **1** TheBus division



Materials in **10**  
languages with **2,500**  
QR code scans

**7,000+**  
webpage views

**3,000+** e-newsletter  
subscribers



**890,000+** impressions  
on online ads

**7** ads in **6** languages  
in community  
newspapers

Digital signage  
at **91** stations



**45** Technical Committee  
members and **39**  
Community Connections  
Committee members

**20+** meetings with elected  
officials across the region



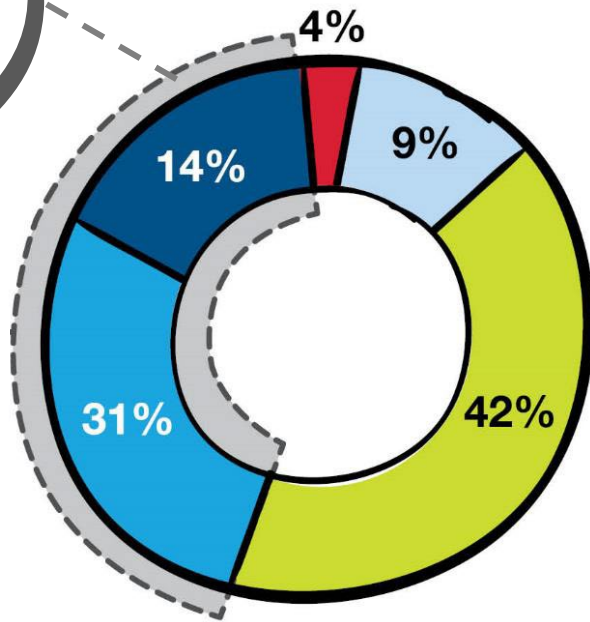




# Bus Service is Good and it Could Be Better

### All Better Bus Network Redesign Respondents

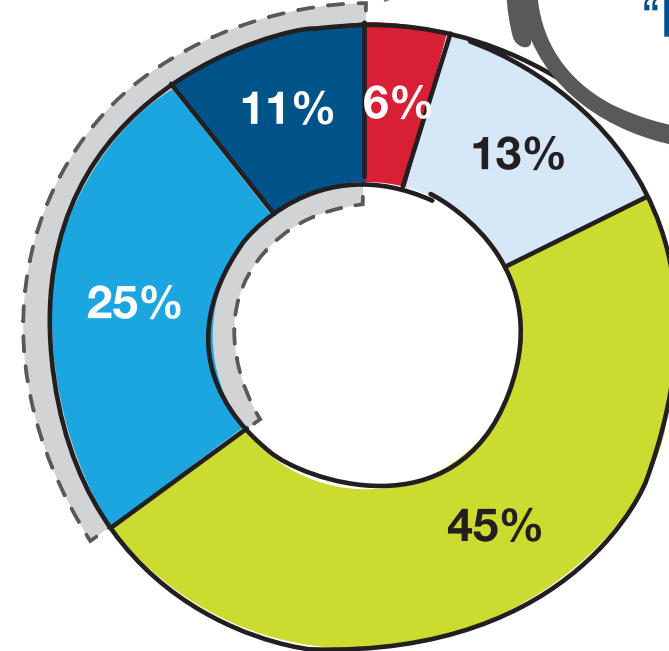
45% "Very Good" or "Excellent"



### Respondents Who Identified as Residents of Prince George's County

36% "Very Good" or "Excellent"

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor



Source: 2022 Public Survey  
Overall Rating of Regional Bus Service





# Current and Potential Customer Priorities for Improvement

**Long wait times and unreliable buses**  
are the biggest barriers to customers using the bus more

Top 3 Desired Bus Service Improvements

**All Better Bus Network  
Redesign Respondents**

**Respondents Who Identified as  
Residents of Prince George's County**

Shorter wait times

1

Buses that arrive on time

Buses that arrive on time

2

Shorter wait times

Bus trips that are safer

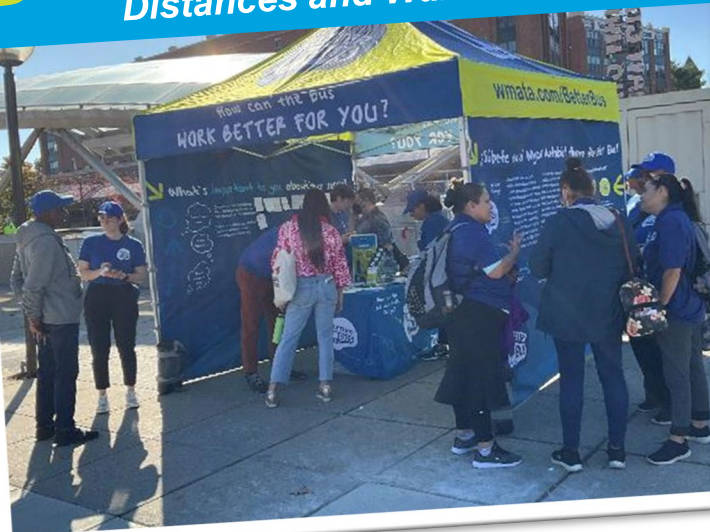
3

Bus service in a new location



# Additional Takeaways From Phase 1 Engagement

*Inequities Exist in Reported Walk Distances and Wait Times*



*Quality of Life is Essential in Attracting and Retaining Bus Operators*



*Opportunities exist for Metro to work more transparently with regional partners*



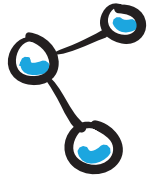
*A Majority of Current Bus Customers Surveyed Ride the Same Amount or More than pre-COVID*

*Regional Bus Connections are Critical*

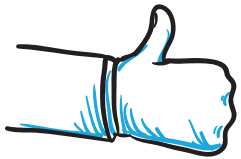


# Vision for a Better Bus Network

# A Great Bus System Delivers...



- **Regional Connectivity** – Matches when and where people want to travel



- **Quality Customer and Operator Experience** – Provides fast, frequent, and reliable service



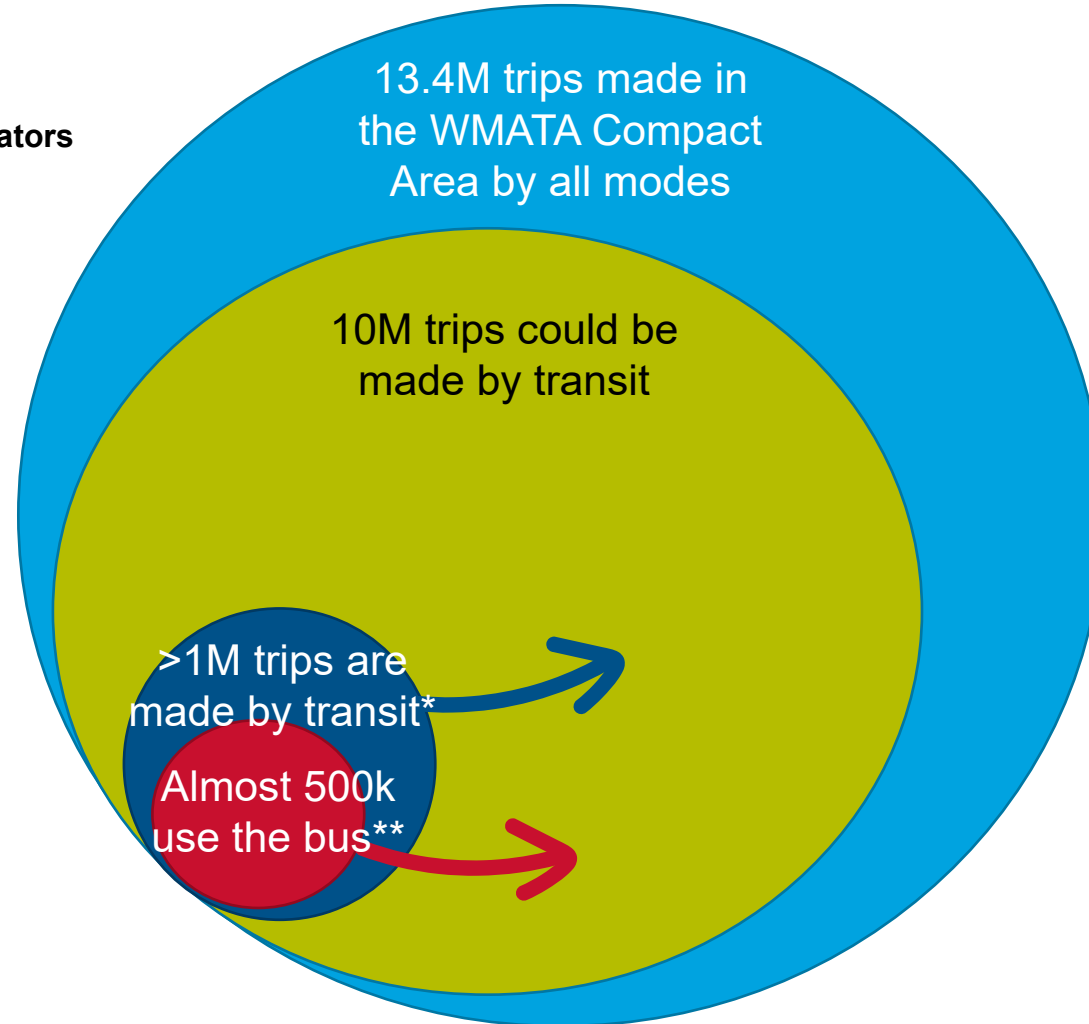
- **Equity** – Addresses inequities and increases access to opportunity for disenfranchised communities

*To transport more customers, create safer streets, and improve air quality*



# Travel in the WMATA Bus Compact Area

\*Transit = All bus + all rail operators  
\*\*Bus = All bus providers



While 76% of weekday trips in the region could have used transit in 2019, only 8% of trips *actually did*

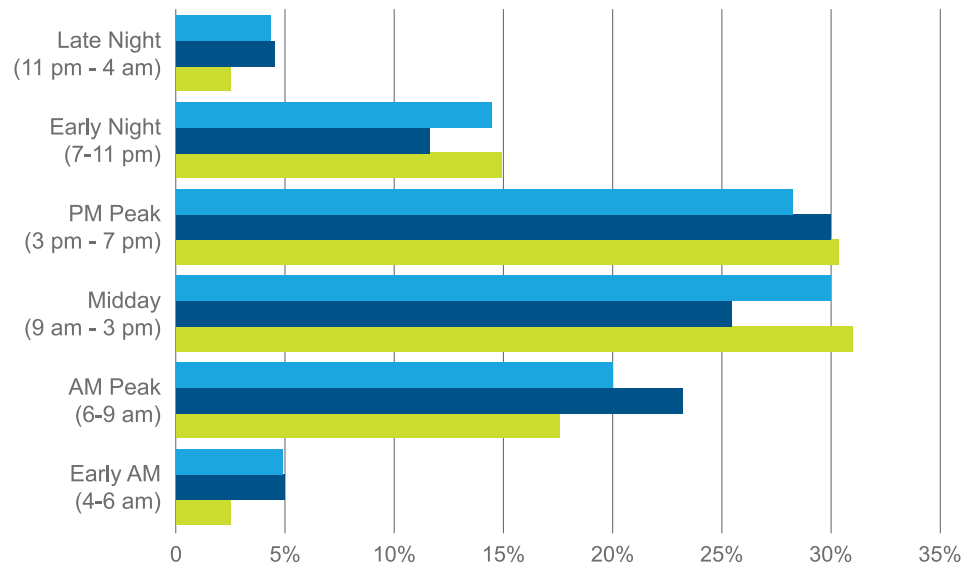
42% of survey respondents report regular use of multiple bus providers



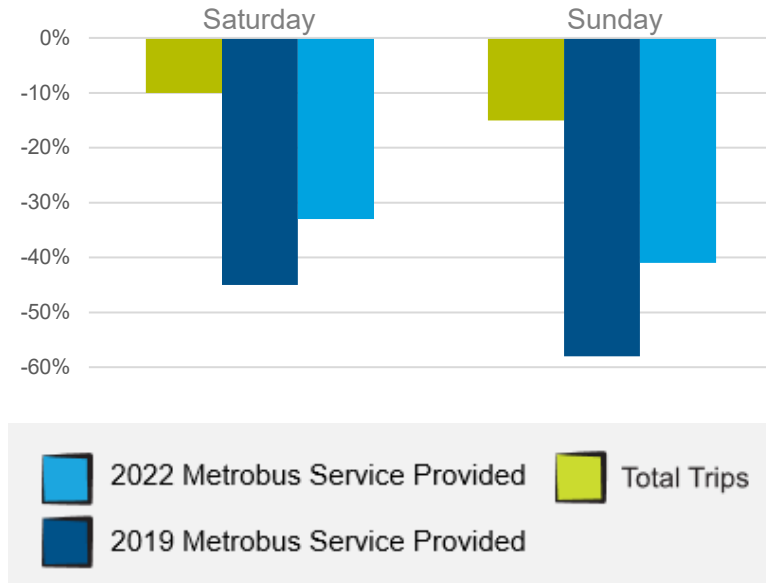
# Designing for When People Travel

- 48% of trips in the region occur during the peak periods
- 46% of trips occurred during the midday and early night - more since the pandemic

Weekday Distribution of Trips and Metrobus Service



Weekend Trips and Metrobus Service as Compared to Weekdays



A great bus system operates quality service for trips that happen at any time

The redesigned network will:

Improve all-day service

Improve weekend service



*Service changes since 2019 have better aligned service with demand across the day and the week, but more could be done*



# Designing to Serve All Trip Purposes

- Bus service has traditionally focused on serving M-F 9 to 5 commute trips, especially into DC
- But most weekday trips are for errands, shopping, social visits, entertainment, etc.
- 38% of commute trips occur outside of the traditional peak periods

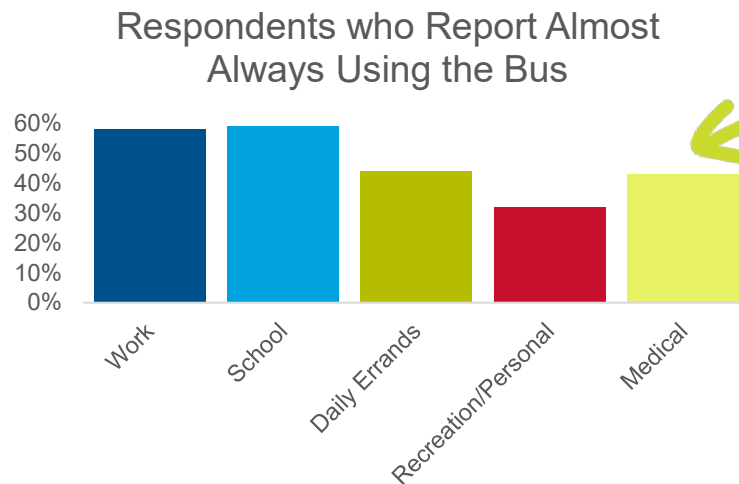
A great bus system serves a wide range of trip purposes

The redesigned network will:

Provide convenient connections to essential services, especially for Equity Focus Communities

Improve connections to diverse job centers across the region

Almost 60% report using the bus to get to work and school almost all the time



More than 40% report almost always using the bus for errands and medical needs

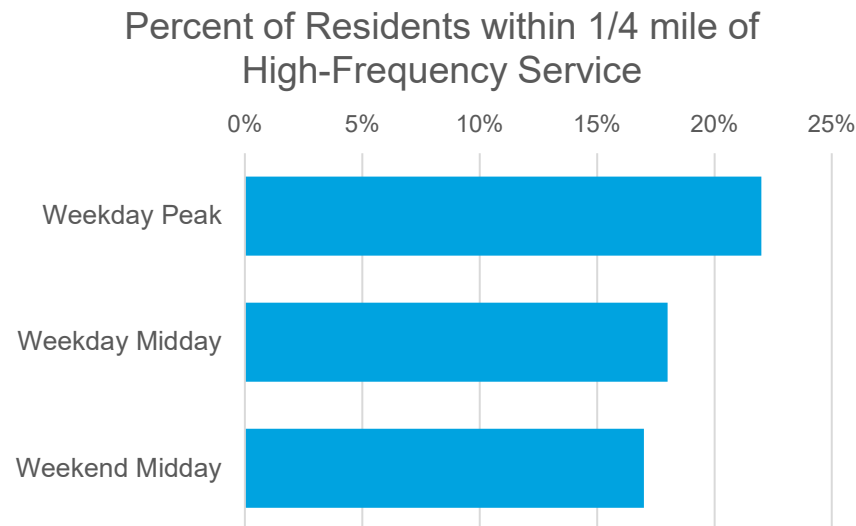






# Designing for Where Bus Service is Needed

- 74% of residents of the WMATA Compact Area live within 1/4 mile of a bus stop
  - 22% live near high-frequency service during the peak periods
  - 18% live near high-frequency service during the weekday midday
  - 17% live near high-frequency service during the weekend midday
- Metro's investment in the Frequent Service Network resulted in 2X better ridership recovery on those routes since the pandemic



A great bus system provides frequent service for as many people in the region as possible.

The redesigned network will:

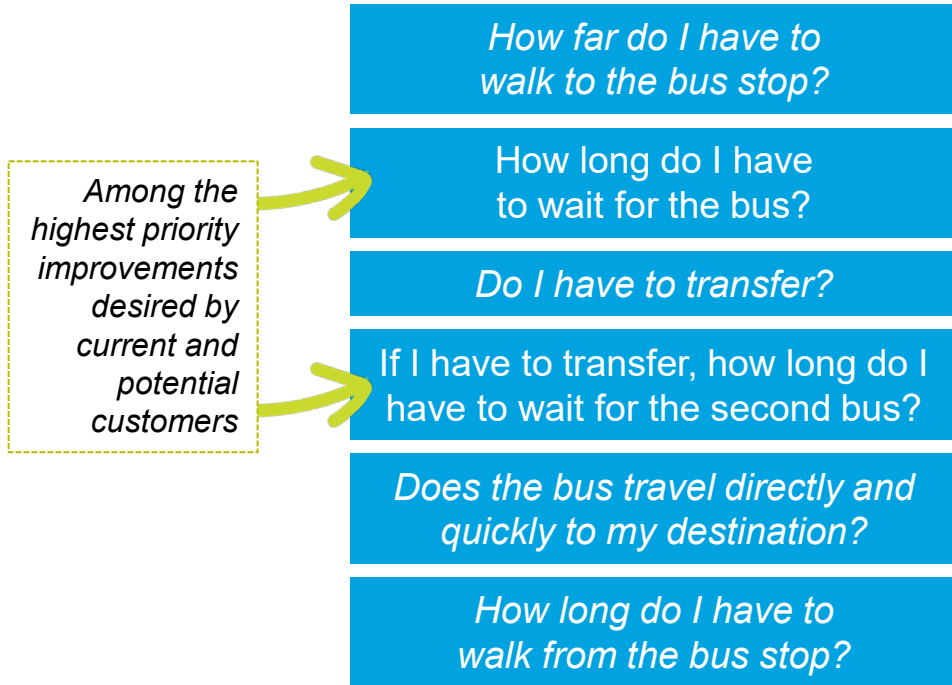
Maintain coverage for communities that rely on transit

Expand access to high-frequency service all day and all week



# Designing for Bus Service that is Convenient

- Customers make decisions about how to travel based on what is most convenient for them



- For short trips, customers consider options with short wait times and no transfers to be convenient
- For long trips, customers consider direct, fast bus routes with well-timed transfers to be convenient
  - Limited stop service benefits customers making long trips
  - Branching service also tends to benefit customers making long trips

A great bus system provides convenient travel times for the trips customers want to make.

## The redesigned network will:

- Increase high-frequency service where customers are making shorter trips
- Rethink use of limited-stop and branching service to identify where they can provide the most benefit
  - Improve transfers across the system
  - Provide direct service where demand supports



# Designing Service that is Reliable to Ride and Operate

- Metrobuses were on-time 78% of the time in 2022
  - Reliable service was a priority improvement requested by both existing and potential customers
- Reliability improved by up to 18% on three corridors where bus lanes were added in 2020
- Bus operators report difficulty in maintaining schedules and taking relief breaks

A great bus system is reliable for customers and operators

**The redesigned network will:**

Use dedicated bus lanes and transit priority across the region

Shorten bus routes where appropriate to make routes easier to operate on schedule



# Designing to Advance Equity

- Approximately 25% of all trips in the region are made by residents of Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) – but they make more than 50% of Metrobus trips
  - Tend to make more trips early in the morning, evening and late at night
  - 35% more likely to commute on the weekends
  - More likely to live with ¼ mile of a bus stop
  - More likely to live near high-frequency bus service
  - Have access to fewer jobs within 45 mins on transit
  - Have access to fewer colleges/universities and grocery stores within 30 mins on transit

A great bus system provides great service to communities that need it the most

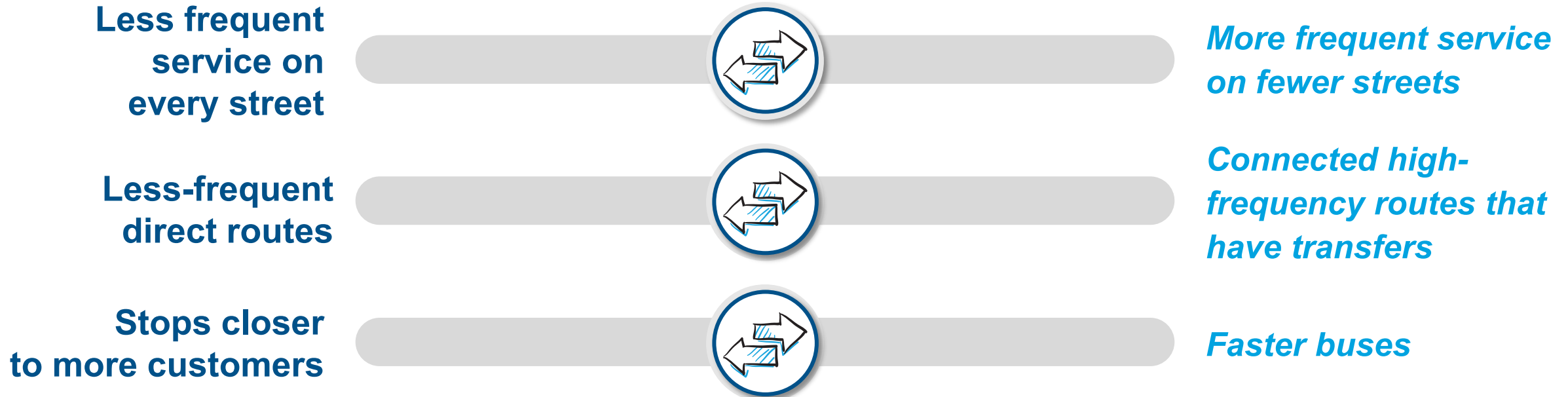
## The redesigned network will:

Continue to focus resources in EFCs and for other groups that rely heavily on bus

Continue to improve access to opportunity in communities that need it the most

# Even Great Bus Systems Must Make Tradeoffs

Designing a Bus Network requires tradeoffs in how resources are applied. Decisions will be needed about the extent to which network should provide for:



# A Great Bus System Also Includes



**Legible, intuitive, coordinated, and accessible information** to plan, pay, and ride, regardless of the operator



**Clean, comfortable, secure vehicles** that are environmentally sustainable



Transit hubs with **seamless connections** to transit, bikeshare, and carshare, providing safe, secure, easy to use transfers



**Exceptional customer experience** from start to finish



**Transit priority and enforced, dedicated lanes** to enable reliable service



**Bus stops with shelters, seating, lighting, and accurate real-time information**, connected with sidewalks and safe pedestrian crossings



**Consistent work schedules and attractive facilities** that improve quality of life for front-line staff



# Next Steps for the Better Bus Network Redesign

- Designing visionary and constrained networks hand in hand with County DPW&T staff
- Continuing to engage elected officials and other audiences
- Preparing to engage public and stakeholders in April and May 2023 with redesigned networks
- Recommended network for draft FY2025 budget (December 2023)



**Sign up for our e-newsletter** to get project updates



**Read summaries** about engagement and market assessment

[www.wmata.com/betterbus](http://www.wmata.com/betterbus)



# Appendix

Current and Potential Customer Priorities for Improvement

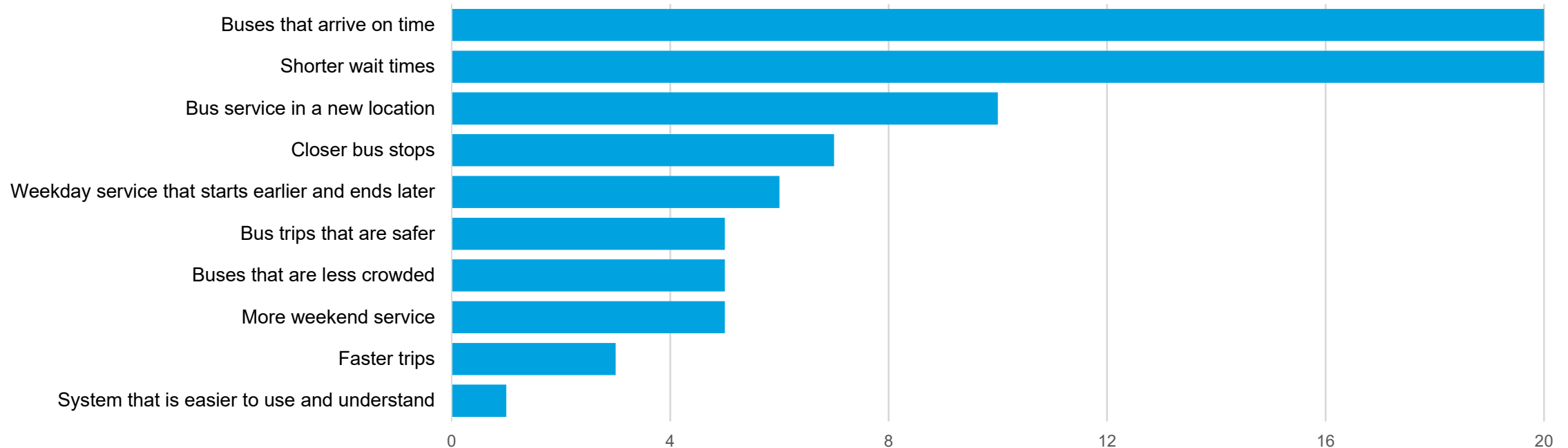




# Current and Potential Customer Priorities for Improvement – Prince George’s County

**Long wait times and unreliable buses**  
are the biggest barriers to Prince George’s customers using the bus more

Top Desired Bus Service Improvements



Number of Responses (Prince George’s County Events)

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

[www.wmata.com/betterbus](http://www.wmata.com/betterbus)  
Source: Roadshow Pop-up Priorities Exercise





# Current and Potential Customer Priorities for Improvement - Regionwide

**Long wait times and unreliable buses**  
are the biggest barriers to customers using the bus more

Top 10 Desired Bus Service Improvements

