

ITEM 7 – ACTION
September 16, 2026

DMVMOVES Service Guidelines

Action: Adopt Resolution R3-2027 to approve regional service guidelines.

Background: The board was briefed on the DMVMoves service guidelines and performance measures for the region's bus systems at its July meeting. An update on recent developments will be provided, following which the board will be asked to adopt the set of regional service guidelines.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE DMVMOVES REGIONAL BUS SERVICE GUIDELINES

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, reauthorized on November 15, 2021 when the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law, for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the region demonstrated unified leadership through the 2024 launch of the DMVMoves initiative, when the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Boards of Directors adopted a joint resolution formally establishing DMVMoves as a shared commitment to strengthen long-term coordination and planning for regional transit; and

WHEREAS, the appointed DMVMoves Task Force of regional officials, assisted by two Advisory Groups, and supported by TPB staff, led the DMVMoves effort and developed a shared vision for the future of the region's transit network and the identification of sustainable, long-term, dedicated funding sources to support it; and

WHEREAS, the culmination of this Task force's work was the development of the DMVMoves Plan, which outlines both a funding recommendation to address WMATA's long-term capital needs and a Regional Transit Integration Action Plan that calls for coordinated investments and actions to make travel across the region faster, safer, more integrated, and more reliable; and

WHEREAS, on November 17, 2025 the COG and WMATA Boards of Directors adopted a Joint Resolution endorsing the DMVMoves Plan, adopting the DMVMoves Vision and six regional goals, directing WMATA and local agency staff to implement the DMVMoves Plan, and calling upon elected officials, agency partners, and regional stakeholders to support and advance the commitments necessary to realize the DMVMoves Vision and ensure a stable, integrated, and sustainable future for the region's transit systems; and

WHEREAS, in the Joint Resolution the COG and WMATA Boards of Directors urged the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to act as lead coordinator for implementation of the DMVMoves Plan, responsible for convening stakeholders, monitoring progress, and issuing annual reports to WMATA, state and local partners, and the public, and that such reports will include progress reports on the implementation of the DMVMoves Plan, including bus priority corridor advancement, implementation of fare policy changes and regional service guidelines, and uniform reporting of transit system performance; and

WHEREAS, on January 21, 2026, in Resolution R9-2026, the TPB accepted the charge to act as lead coordinator for implementation of the DMVMoves Plan, convening stakeholders to develop regional integration actions for implementation, including the developing of a set of regional bus service guidelines for the TPB to adopt; and

WHEREAS, COG and WMATA staff convened a working group on transit service guidelines, which met over the course of the year and developed a set of regional bus service guidelines that defined common service classifications, activity tier land use context criteria, service type classification criteria (core, coverage, peak, and other), service criteria: span (hours per day) of service and service frequency, and used these criteria to proposed minimum span and frequencies for each grouping along with a “use” statement for the guidelines to provide policy and application context; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2026 the WMATA Board of Directors adopted a set of transit service guidelines for Metrobus as well as Metrorail which reflected the proposed regional set of bus service guidelines; and

WHEREAS, in July 2026, the TPB and the TPB Technical Committee were briefed on the proposed set of bus service guidelines and use statement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board:

1. Adopts the following set of bus service guidelines to:
 - i. Set clear, consistent expectations for customers across the region, with flexibility to meet local needs;
 - ii. Support more seamless, coordinated service planning;
 - iii. Enhance customer understanding and confidence in the system and encourage increased ridership; and
 - iv. Enhance transparency and accountability.

Minimum Hours of Service and Frequency Standards			
	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
At least 50% of bus stops along a route are within a census block that has populations and employment density of:	30 or more units (residents+ jobs per acre)	15 or more units (residents+ jobs per acre)	5 or more units (residents+ jobs per acre)
Core routes <i>Serve major corridors with moderate frequency and all day service. Tend to be more direct</i>	16 hrs per day Bus every 15 mins	14 hrs per day Bus every 20 mins	12 hrs per day Bus every 30 mins
Coverage routes <i>Serve lower density residential communities with lower access to transit and connect them to higher density areas, activity centers, and/or transit hubs.</i>	14 hrs per day Bus every 30 mins	12 hrs per day Bus every 30 mins	10 hrs per day Bus every 60 mins
Peak routes <i>Use regular buses to provide service or connections to transit hubs/high frequency lines, central business districts, or employment centers</i>	4 hrs per weekday As needed	4 hrs per weekday As needed	4 hrs per weekday As needed
Other routes <i>Don't meet above definitions</i>	No regional standards		

Eliminate different standards for peak and off-peak, applying one frequency standard for all day service.

2. Endorses the following “Use” statement to provide context for implementation of the bus service guidelines:
 - A. Service guidelines set expectations [standards] for frequency and span by route purpose and the density of the areas the routes serve.
 - B. They are used by transit agency staff to design or restructure service, to inform resource requests, and to prioritize improvements when resources become available.
 - C. Resource limitations may require transit staff to make trade-offs between meeting these route-level guidelines and meeting standards for network accessibility – i.e., ensuring that most of the service area has access to at least some level of transit service within walking distance.
 - D. As a result, transit agencies operate routes for different goals; therefore, there may be cases where certain routes do not meet the service guidelines, but do meet other agency-specific goals or legal requirements.
 - E. It can be valuable to track adherence to the guidelines to (1) understand the level of additional resources that would be needed for the existing network to comply and (2) establish priorities for future investments.
3. Calls upon the region’s transit agencies to adopt these bus service guidelines, whether through:
 - i. Formal adoption by their board of directors or other body of governance;
 - ii. An update of their Transit Strategic Plan or Transit Development Plan (TSP/TDP); or
 - iii. Issued internal guidance.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Tom Harrington, TPB Multimodal Planning Program Director
Eric Randall, TPB Transportation Engineer

SUBJECT: DMVMoves – Regional Bus Service Guidelines

DATE: September 10, 2026

In January, the TPB passed Resolution R9-2026 (attached), endorsing the [DMVMoves Plan](#) and accepting the request urged upon it to act as the lead coordinator for implementation of the Plan, including overall plan progress reporting and working with the region's transportation agencies and transit operators to move forward on implementation of the DMVMoves Plan's Regional Integration Action Plan.

A specific recommendation of the DMVMoves Plan, which was accepted in the TPB Resolution, called for the TPB to adopt service guidelines for public transportation, which would provide a consistent framework for evaluating the type and level of transit service provided across the region.

TPB staff and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) staff coordinated to reconvene a DMVMoves working group of local agency subject-matter experts in the field of Service Guidelines and Performance Monitoring. The working group met bi-weekly, starting in March, and developed a set of guidelines for regional bus service, based on span of service (hours per day) and frequency of service across different land use activity tiers, with dense urban locations receiving high-frequency, all-day service and other locations receiving service appropriate to their context.

On June 25, the WMATA Board of Directors adopted new guidelines for rail and for bus service, the latter of which are consistent with the regional bus guidelines developed by the DMVMoves working group.

The proposed regional bus service guidelines were briefed to the TPB at its July meeting and are now being proposed for adoption by the TPB on September 16.

In addition to the service guidelines, a "Use" statement was drafted by the working group to ensure that the guidelines are used within appropriate context. The proposed TPB Resolution incorporates this Use statement with the goal that the resolution can be used as a model for adoption of the guidelines by public transportation governing bodies in the region.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE DMVMOVES REGIONAL TRANSIT INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, reauthorized on November 15, 2021 when the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law, for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the metropolitan area; and

WHEREAS, the TPB has long supported continued investments in the region's transit assets to keep the region's transit system safe and in a state of good repair; and

WHEREAS, the TPB's priority strategies include increasing the frequency and capacity of transit by expanding Bus Rapid Transit and Transitways, reducing travel times on all public transportation bus services, and moving more people on Metrorail and commuter rail; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) faces a capital funding shortfall in future years to maintain its system in a state of good repair which could impact the safety and reliability of the system and has a need for additional, dedicated capital funding; and

WHEREAS, state and local transit agencies also face similar challenges including, but not limited to, deferred maintenance risks and unsustainable operating gaps, raising the potential for disruptive service reductions that would undercut regional progress on economic growth, environmental goals, and mobility goals; and

WHEREAS, the region demonstrated unified leadership through the 2024 launch of the DMVMoves initiative, when the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and WMATA Boards of Director, adopted a joint resolution formally establishing DMVMoves as a shared commitment to strengthen long-term coordination and planning for regional transit; and

WHEREAS, the appointed DMVMoves Task Force of regional officials, assisted by two Advisory Groups, and supported by TPB staff, led the DMVMoves effort and developed a shared vision for the future of the region's transit network and the identification of sustainable, long-term, dedicated funding sources to support it; and

WHEREAS, over the course of six Task Force meetings and seventeen Advisory Group meetings, participants worked collaboratively to assess regional needs, review detailed technical analyses, consider public feedback, and refine recommendations for a funding and action plan that would strengthen, integrate, and sustain transit across the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the TPB was briefed at periodic intervals of the findings and work activities of the DMVMoves Task Force and its Advisory Groups; and

WHEREAS, the culmination of this Task force's work was the development of the DMVMoves Plan, which outlines both a funding recommendation to address WMATA's long-term capital needs and a Regional Transit Integration Action Plan that calls for coordinated investments and actions to make travel across the region faster, safer, more integrated, and more reliable; and

WHEREAS, on November 17, 2025 the COG and WMATA Boards of Directors adopted a Joint Resolution (Attached) endorsing the DMVMoves Plan, adopting the DMVMoves Vision and six regional goals, directing WMATA and local agency staff to implement the DMVMoves Plan, requesting federal partners to increase PRIIA funding, and calling upon elected officials, agency partners, and regional stakeholders to support and advance the commitments necessary to realize the DMVMoves Vision and ensure a stable, integrated, and sustainable future for the region's transit systems; and

WHEREAS, in the Joint Resolution the COG and WMATA Boards of Directors urged the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) to act as lead coordinator for implementation of the DMVMoves Plan, responsible for convening stakeholders, monitoring progress, and issuing annual reports to WMATA, state and local partners, and the public, and that such reports will include progress reports on the implementation of the DMVMoves Plan, including bus priority corridor advancement, implementation of fare policy changes and regional service guidelines, and uniform reporting of transit system performance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board:

1. Expresses its gratitude for the work of the COG and WMATA Boards of Directors and the DMVMoves Task Force; and
2. Endorses the DMVMoves Plan and accepts the request urged upon it to act as the lead coordinator for implementation of the Plan, including:
 - a. Overall Plan Progress Reporting – Submitting an annual report to TPB (from staff) on the overall status of DMVMoves implementation.
 - b. Working with the region's transportation agencies and transit operators to move forward on implementation of the DMVMoves Plan's Regional Integration Action Plan including, but not limited to, the following activities:
 - i. Providing annual performance reporting through the TPB's State of Public Transportation Report;
 - ii. Adopting regional bus service guidelines;

- iii. Developing a Regional Bus Priority Plan that will define outcomes and targets, system benefits, and roles and responsibilities for the initial 7-corridor system concept;
 - iv. Facilitating agreement on methodologies and processes to assess bus stop conditions relative to guidelines and to prioritize bus stop upgrades in an equitable manner;
 - v. Supporting COG's Procurement team in convening a Joint Transit Procurement Committee and supporting the sharing of opportunities through a listserv and contracts clearinghouse;
 - vi. Facilitating discussion and agreement on other Action Plan recommendations that would benefit from regional coordination and consensus, as appropriate; and
3. Directs TPB Staff to develop and carry out a multi-year work plan for the conduct of the above tasks through an inclusive decision-making process for the remainder of FY 2026 and for inclusion in the FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and future work programs to sustain the progress made on enhancing regional transit planning, coordination, and delivery.

Adopted by the Transportation Planning Board at its regular meeting on January 21, 2026.