Update on the New Metro Bus Network

TPB Tech

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
October 3, 2025

Thank you to our customers, operators, partners, and staff for your feedback, patience, and ridership. We appreciate you!

Better Bus Launch by the Numbers

125
New bus routes

376
Outreach events

109
Better Bus Partners with 259 locations

111
Unique maps for stations and jurisdictions

2,800+
Staff trained on the new network

7%
More service for the same funding

460+
Metro office-based staff supported outreach

250
Elected officials, staff, and jurisdiction partners briefed

50
Neighborhood profiles created

450K
Take-ones covering 14 languages

74%
Bus customer awareness of new network in CY2025 Q2

37
Back-to-School focused events and bus stop chats

8,500+
Bus flags fabricated and installed

250
Route profiles and handouts in English and Spanish

20,000
Secondary signs at eye level to indicate that change is coming

Outreach and engagement ensured that 74% of bus customers knew about Better Bus by Launch Day

- Recruited, trained, and deployed the Better Bus Squad, the **largest staff volunteer team in the last 10 years**
  - Enabled by daily dedicated Teams chat, real-time support, digital and printed materials, and branded attire
- **Engaged 3,000+ of Metro's community partners** via routine emails and virtual meetings
- Created Better Bus Partners program to further **engage 109 partners, who amplified outreach efforts and increased awareness** at 259 locations
  - Enabled by dedicated support, communications toolkit, print materials and signage, and branded swag
- Held **37 Back-to-School events, including 10 bus stop chats** to make sure students knew what to do when school started

Customers and operators continue to provide feedback to help improve the network

We continue to receive and review comments from customers, operators, jurisdictional partners, and other stakeholders

Customers

Over 5,200 calls and texts to customer call center from launch through early September

- 54% runtime / schedule / crowding / delays
- 20% bus stop and customer information issues
- 10% routing/alignment issues
- 16% other issues

Operators

Over 200 comments from operators have been received since mid-July

- 50% runtime / schedule
- 30% stop locations or flags
- 25% route design or alignment*

*Percentages sum to more than 100% due to some comments being ascribed to more than one category

The launch of Better Bus was just the beginning. We are continuing to improve bus service

Feedback from customers, operators, and partners are already improving safety and operations of the new network

Route	Name	Change
C29	Anacostia – Southern Av	Shifted route to Alabama Av SE instead of Mississippi Av SE
C31	Minnesota Av	Shifted WB route to directly turn from Nannie Helen Burroughs Av to Minnesota Av NE
C37	Lincoln Hts – Potomac Av	Shifted route to continue on Southern Av instead of using 41st Street SE
C63	Deanwood – Washington Hospital Center	Directly serves the bus loop at the VA Medical Center to provide direct access
C83	Barnaby Woods – Friendship Heights	Directly serves the Knollwood Retirement Community
D72	Connecticut Av – Mt Pleasant	Shifted route so that all buses serve the Mt Pleasant terminal
D90	Massachusetts Av – Tenleytown	Shifted WB/NB route to serve Idaho Av
P31	New Carrollton – Takoma Langley	Shifted route to serve Lebanon St instead of Merrimac Dr

# We continue to improve customer experience and information

Fixing data, maps, bus stop flags and removing old flags has improved customers' experience

- Data for apps, buses and back-end systems updated on July 27 and September 14
- **Corrected on-board announcements and station bay assignments** and added extra trips for school days

- Removed or covered outdated signage at stations and shelters
- **Deployed temporary bus bay signage** in shelters and across bus loops
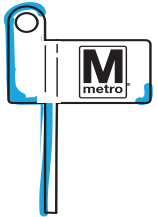
- **Corrected ~215 bus stop flags** since launch
- Adjusted stop for C53 to improve pedestrian safety
- **Removed flags from stops that are no longer served**

Metro and DDOT relocated the C53 stop on 8th Street SE at Pennsylvania Avenue to address pedestrian concerns

Relocated e-paper signs to new stops such as 24th and Pennsylvania, NW

Early service performance has been mostly positive

After a short adjustment period in the first week, the new network's performance is similar to a typical summer month

- Reliability (e.g. on-time performance (OTP) and service delivered) is trending up as operators and customers become more comfortable with the new network

- Missed trips caused by operator availability continue to impact service delivered, but have improved since launch

- Bus ridership in July and August was 8 percent lower than last year. This was expected based on peer agencies' experience since it takes time for customers to adapt to changes

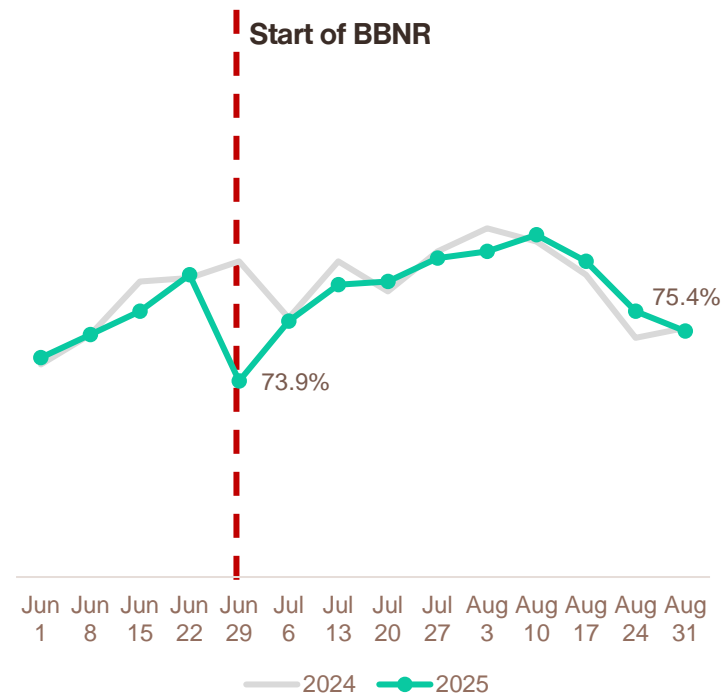# Customers are already benefitting from the new network

- With more service added to the **Frequent Service Network**, 47% of customer trips have had scheduled wait times of 12 min or less, compared to 44% in the old network

- The C11 provides a **new connection** between DC and employment and retail centers in Maryland. More than 4,000 people used the C11 to get to National Harbor, a 50% increase in trips there.

- Almost 3,000 trips used the P12's **new weekend service** to Laurel in July

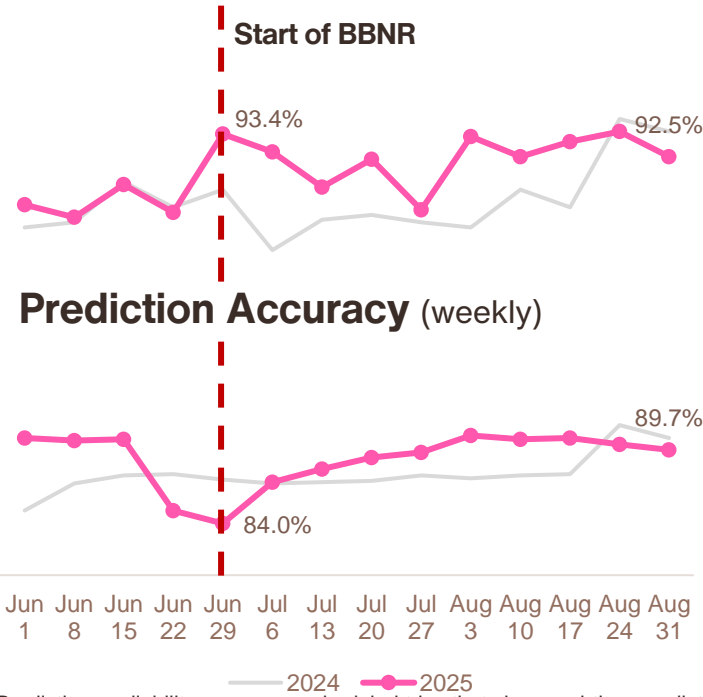# On time performance and real time prediction are similar to summer of 2024

On Time Performance (OTP) stabilized after a dip in the first few days, matching performance with July and August 2024.

OTP (weekly)

Start of BBNR

73.9%

75.4%

Jun 1 | Jun 8 | Jun 15 | Jun 22 | Jun 29 | Jul 6 | Jul 13 | Jul 20 | Jul 27 | Aug 3 | Aug 10 | Aug 17 | Aug 24 | Aug 31
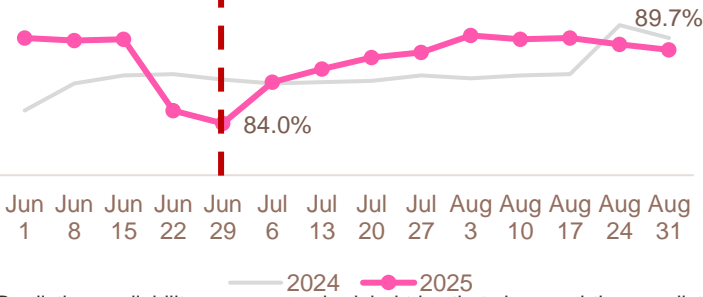
—— 2024 ——●—— 2025

Prediction availability* has remained strong since launch as missed trips decreased. Prediction accuracy* steadily improved with OTP.
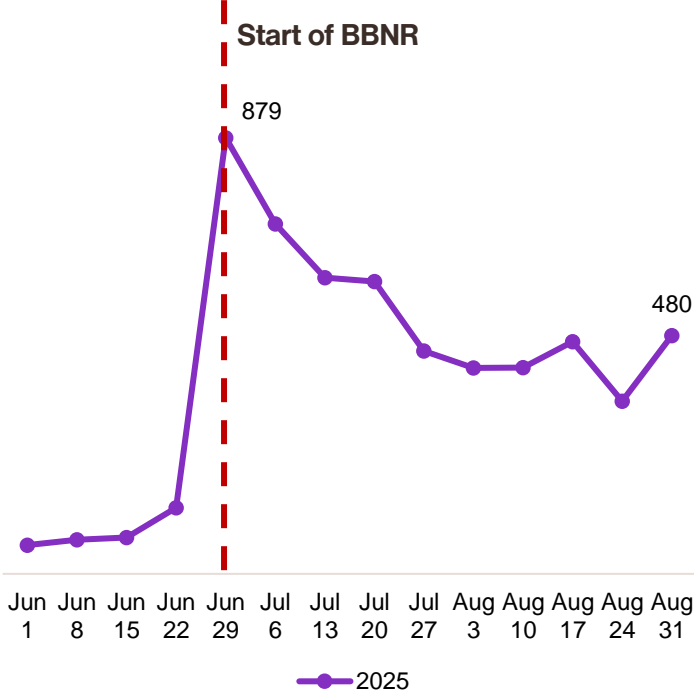
Prediction Availability (weekly)

Start of BBNR

93.4%

92.5%

Prediction Accuracy (weekly)

84.0%

89.7%

Jun 1 | Jun 8 | Jun 15 | Jun 22 | Jun 29 | Jul 6 | Jul 13 | Jul 20 | Jul 27 | Aug 3 | Aug 10 | Aug 17 | Aug 24 | Aug 31

—— 2024 ——●—— 2025

*Prediction availability measures scheduled trips that show real-time predictions. Prediction accuracy measures the quality of the real-time predictions

Customer comments peaked during launch, has steadily decreased, and increased slightly at the start of the school year.
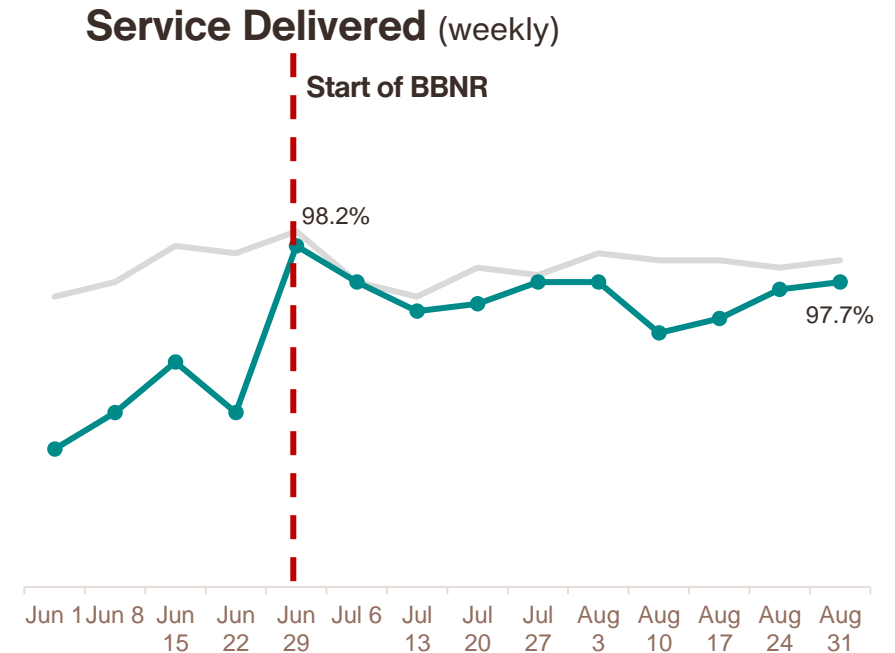
Total Comments Received (weekly)

Start of BBNR

879

480

Jun 1 | Jun 8 | Jun 15 | Jun 22 | Jun 29 | Jul 6 | Jul 13 | Jul 20 | Jul 27 | Aug 3 | Aug 10 | Aug 17 | Aug 24 | Aug 31

——●—— 2025

Missed trips from operator availability are at similar levels to last summer

Metro is increasing bus operator hiring to increase operator availability and reduce missed trips

- Training operators on the new network contributed to increase in missed trips from February – June.

- In new network, overall scheduled service delivered has improved and missed trips due to operator availability have declined.

- Missed trips typically increase in July and August in part because operators are encouraged to take vacations during lower ridership periods.

- Training classes are increasing by 20 operators (36 percent) starting in October.

Service Delivered (weekly)

Start of BBNR

98.2%

97.7%

Jun 1 | Jun 8 | Jun 15 | Jun 22 | Jun 29 | Jul 6 | Jul 13 | Jul 20 | Jul 27 | Aug 3 | Aug 10 | Aug 17 | Aug 24 | Aug 31

Looking ahead to ensure quality service and improve the network

December investments and FY2027 proposals will focus on improving performance and incrementally increasing service

Improve performance: Address critical crowding and reliability issues
- E.g.: Add early or late trip, adjust running times

Increase frequency: Frequency is a key driver of ridership and a top priority for customers.
- E.g.: Increase frequency to 20-min on routes with crowding

Provide consistent service: Service that is easy to understand that customers can rely on all day, seven days a week
- E.g.: Remove short turns at more times of the day/week

Examples of December service changes could include

- **A25, A29:** Peak frequency and new peak route using Virginia Commuter Choice grant
- **Running time adjustments** on some routes
- **Spot fixes and hours of operation corrections** to align with pre-launch hours and address crowding
- **Routine adjustments** to address on-street projects, coordinate trip times, and minor route adjustments

Next steps to build a better bus system

Launching the new network was just the beginning of Better Bus

- Continue to monitor performance, analyze ridership, and review feedback
- Implement December service changes
- Develop FY2027 service improvements and multi-year service improvement plan
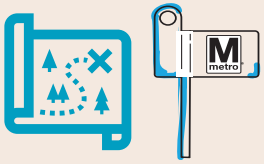
- Build process and tools to manage bus stops, flags, and signs
- Develop regional bus stop flags program for implementation
- Design bus maps and signage program for implementation

- Develop staff and community partner outreach
- Develop deeper partnerships with organizations that serve critical communities
- Increase internal collaboration for teams that conduct outreach