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## **MetroNow Coalition Releases Second Edition of Bus Progress Report - Highlights Urgency Needed to Achieve 2030 Regional Goals**

*This month marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WMATA's Metrobus service in the region*

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, the MetroNow Coalition, a group of regional leaders from the business, non-profit, and advocacy communities, released its [“2023 Bus Transformation Project Progress Report,”](#) which measures progress against regional goals to transform bus service in the region. The report comes as February marks 50 years since the [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority \(WMATA\)](#) acquired four regional bus systems. While progress is being made in certain areas, MetroNow's report shows that more must be done to meet the region's bold goal.

“The bus is a critical, too-often overlooked component of our regional mobility system,” said **Kathy Hollinger, CEO of the Greater Washington Partnership**, a driving force behind the report. “In fact, recent data has shown that riders took three million more trips by bus than rail in 2022 and we know more people have relied on the bus over the course of the pandemic than our Metrorail system. This report is the business community's way of acknowledging the great work, but we must do more together. Creating a better bus system is key to the region's continued economic competitiveness.”

The report is a call to action for the region's leaders to re-prioritize the vision of the [Bus Transformation Project](#) and recognize the critical partnership required between local jurisdictions, states, and elected leaders throughout the entire region to accelerate the transformation of our bus network.

“Last year, our report highlighted how we were making progress to improve our bus systems, despite the pandemic,” said **Tony Williams, CEO and Executive Director of the Federal City Council**. “This year, as we enter our fourth year of living with the pandemic, we are raising the bar of our collective expectations and issuing a warning call that we are not on track to create the strong and inclusive regional mobility system that we envisioned back in 2019.”

The 2023 Bus Transformation Project Progress Report focuses on the six key bus transformation initiatives MetroNow called for in 2022:

1. Support WMATA's Regional Bus Network Redesign Process
2. Build Ten Miles of New Bus Lanes & Implement an Enforcement Strategy
3. Create a Regional Strategy to Recruit & Retain Bus Operators



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4. Create a Strategy for Zero Emissions Infrastructure & the Workforce
  5. Consolidate Regional Bus Operations Data & Best Practices
  6. Create a Regional Strategy to Address the Transit Funding Cliff

MetroNow gave passing grades to the first five of the six initiatives. Unfortunately, the region has not come together to identify and work towards solutions to Metro's looming fiscal cliff.

In 2023, MetroNow recommends that the region prioritizes:

1. Creating a Regional Strategy to Address the Transit Funding Cliff
2. Aligning Behind a Better Bus Network Redesign Option
3. Building Ten Miles of New Bus Lanes & Implementing an Enforcement Strategy
4. Creating a Regional Bus Stop Improvement Plan
5. Monitoring Regional Policy & Investment Impacts of Bus Transformation

The MetroNow Coalition - comprised of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, Federal City Council, Greater Washington Board of Trade, Greater Washington Partnership, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Prince George's Chamber of Commerce, and Tysons Community Alliance - recognizes that the region's bus network is a necessary, tool to enhance social, economic, and environmental equity. The coalition is committed to working with elected leaders, public sector officials, and partners throughout the region to catalyze focus and enhance regional collaboration to meet the vision for 2030.

Click [here](#) to download the report.

#### QUOTES FROM METRONOW LEADERS

"This is the first time since WMATA took over region bus service 50 years ago that we are redesigning the regional bus network," said **Bob Buchanan, Founding Member of the MetroNow Coalition**. "As a member of the Executive Steering Committee of the Bus Transformation Study in 2019, I am encouraged by the launch of WMATA's Better Bus initiative, but we have so much more work to make our bus transit more appealing, effective, and viable for our region's future. I encourage our elected leaders to think big and bold about how to truly prioritize bus riders, especially as we seek solutions to address the looming fiscal cliff."

"Bus lanes continue to be a critical component of an overall integrated transportation strategy for the Greater Washington region, one that also ensures equitable access and inclusive economic growth," said **Jack McDougle, President and CEO of the Greater Washington Board of Trade**. "The Board of Trade supports Metro as well as dedicated bus lanes, yet there still needs to be better alignment across all transportation modes to alleviate congestion pressures while pursuing longer-term goals."



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“It is no secret that regional coordination has always been a challenge when it comes to our transit systems, but it is also the source of our greatest strength and some of our biggest achievements,” said **Julie Coons, President and CEO of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce**. “We hope this report helps our leaders, in Northern Virginia, Maryland, and the District, recognize that for our economy to thrive, everyone should be able to seamlessly move between and across our jurisdictional borders.”

“As I settle into this new role, I look forward to working with my colleagues across the Coalition to advance a more efficient and equitable regional transit system,” said **Alexander K. Austin, CEO of the Prince George’s Chamber of Commerce**. “In Prince George’s, the business community recognizes County Executive Alsobrooks’ transit vision and the value she is creating along WMATA’s Blue Line, but we also know that better buses that feed into and support the rail network are just as important.”

“The opening of Silver Line Phase II was a huge achievement for the region last year, said **Richard Bradley, Acting Executive Director of the Tysons Community Alliance**.” We need to apply the lessons learned from that project, and the long-term dedication and commitment from so many stakeholders, to drive bus transformation. “As the ridership numbers in the report show, the regional bus system is just as important an artery for our region’s economy as our Metrorail system. It’s time to treat it as such.”

“I commend the region’s business leadership for their commitment to transit and especially better bus service. Few regions have a business community as committed to better bus service, which they recognize as critical to our workforce and economic progress,” said **Stewart Schwartz, Executive Director of the Coalition for Smarter Growth (CSG)**. “We join with these business leaders in urging the region to prioritize the bus and make it the best option on the roads.”

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To learn more about the Bus Transformation Report, click [here](#).

### About the MetroNow Coalition

The MetroNow Coalition is a group of regional leaders from organizations representing businesses and non-profit advocates who came together to ensure that action was taken to put Metro—the backbone of Greater Washington’s transportation infrastructure—on a safe, smart and sustainable path forward. We are dedicated to securing comprehensive improvement of Metro’s governance, funding and operational structures. Since our successful 2018 campaign for dedicated capital funding for Metrorail from each jurisdiction, we doubled down on our commitment to regional mobility by expanding our focus to include making the region’s bus systems more frequent, reliable, faster, and affordable.

Visit [www.MetroNow.com](http://www.MetroNow.com) for more information and get the monthly roundup of the region’s top transit news straight to your inbox by [subscribing to the MetroNow Dispatch](#) today.