



Customer Experience Action Plan 2025



A list of near-term initiatives designed to respond to rider input and improve quality of their transit journey.

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Message from the Administrator

Dear MTA Riders,

Public transit is more than just a way to get from one place to another—it's an essential part of daily life. That's why we are committed to not only providing safe, efficient, and reliable service but also to enhancing overall experience of our riders. With this Customer Experience (CX) Action Plan, we are taking a fresh approach. Rather than focusing only on customer service—the way we respond to riders isolated incidents—we are looking at the full journey. From service reliability and real time information to station amenities and safety, this plan ensures that every part of your trip is considered. This plan was shaped by your feedback—through rider conversations, surveys, and data analysis—and reflects what matters most to you. It is also a living document, updated annually to track progress and adapt to evolving rider needs. We appreciate your continued support and look forward to making transit in Maryland better, more seamless, and more comfortable for you.



Holly Arnold

Administrator

Maryland Transit Administration



What is Transit Customer Experience (CX)?

The Maryland Transit Administration defines Customer Experience as the overall journey and interactions that a rider has while using public transportation services. It includes every step that a rider takes from trip planning to reaching their destination.

This document outlines MTA's approach to enhancing the customer experience, defining its key priorities for 2025. Public transit is more than just a means of transportation; it serves as a vital connection between communities, workplaces, and essential services. To improve the daily experience of its riders, MTA is committed to fostering a seamless, reliable, and accessible journey for all passengers.

Customer experience for transit encompasses every touchpoint between the transit system and the passengers, from the moment they plan their trip to the completion of their journey. It includes service reliability, accessibility, safety, cleanliness, and communication provided to passengers to make informed decisions. An improved customer experience ensures that transit is not only functional but also intuitive, welcoming, and responsive to the needs of all riders.



MTA recognizes that meeting evolving customer expectations requires a proactive and data-driven approach, leveraging technology, staff training, and infrastructure improvements to deliver meaningful enhancements. By placing customers at the center of every decision, MTA strives to foster trust, innovation, and continuous improvement, building a transit system that reflects the values and aspirations of the communities served.



What is MTA's Customer Experience (CX) Action Plan?

MTA's CX Action Plan is a focused, short-term roadmap outlining key initiatives implemented within the year to enhance the customer experience. It is not a long-term strategic plan nor an exhaustive list of every effort in this space. Instead, it highlights the impactful and near-term actions aimed at driving meaningful improvements.

The plan will be updated annually to reflect progress and to introduce new initiatives.

While this Action Plan highlights near-term efforts, the MTA has a variety of longer-term visions and goals highlighted in the following documents:

Regional Transit Plan - A 25-year regional plan for Central Maryland.

Rebuilding Better - MTA's 5-year Strategic Plan

Other Efforts - Major Projects and Studies including modal growth and transformation plans, Red Line, etc. can be found at mta.maryland.gov/transit-projects



A Foundation Built On Rider Voices

To ensure the agency continuously engages with riders and make meaningful improvements based on their needs, the Office of Customer Experience was created. As part of this effort, the Rider Experience Team was established—a dedicated group focused on talking to riders, gathering feedback, and advocating for system-wide enhancements. This team ensures that rider voices are directly shaping agency decisions and service improvements.

To identify the areas of focus outlined in this CX Action Plan, the agency conducted an in-depth analysis using a range of engagement methods and data sources listed on this page. These efforts ensured that the plan reflects the most prevalent concerns of the community.



1,300+
One on One Rider
Conversations



8+
Workshops with
Rider Advocacy
Groups



4000+
Customer
Satisfaction
Surveys



120,000+
Rider Feedback
and Complaints



From Talk to Transformation: The Eight Focus Areas

With the foundation built through rider engagement, the result is eight focus areas that reflect the improvements riders most want to see across the system.

The agency is dedicated to enhancing rider satisfaction by addressing key pain points and proactively improving customer interactions. In 2025, MTA's focus will be on delivering meaningful improvements that prioritize ease of use, communication, and comfort. To achieve this, MTA is aligning its CX efforts around eight core focus areas:



Service Reliability



Safety



Accessibility & Navigation



Transit App Experience



Disruption Communication



Cleanliness & Comfort



Fare Collection



Rider Engagement

IMPROVE SERVICE RELIABILITY

Challenge: Riders need on-time and reliable service



Ongoing

Recruit to Reduce Staff-Related Service Cancellations

The agency successfully hired operations staff to reduce post-pandemic vacancies. We will continue to focus building a strong candidate pipeline to maintain high staffing levels to minimize service cancellations.

Summer 2025

Improve Rail Fleet Reliability

We're improving rail service by replacing metro trains which are 40+ years old with brand-new ones. For light rail, we're using predictive analytics to catch problems before they happen and assure that more vehicles are available for service everyday.

Fall 2025

Improve Light Rail and Metro Subway On-Time Performance Metrics

Currently, rail on-time performance is measured only at the first departing stop. Moving forward, the agency will implement a more comprehensive approach by tracking performance at multiple points along the route, aligning measurements with rider expectations.

ADDRESS RIDER SAFETY CONCERNS

Challenge: Riders are looking for more proactive engagement from the agency to help them feel safer throughout their journey



Summer 2025

Increase Enforcement of Fares

To reduce fare evasion and allow concentrated fare enforcement efforts, riders will no longer be required to tap their ticket when exiting metro subway stations. For Bus and Light Rail the agency will continue exploring new ways to leverage staff and police resources to prioritize evasion hot spots.

Summer 2025

Implement Live Look-in for Onboard Bus Cameras

The agency will roll out the capability to view live video feeds from onboard bus cameras across the fleet. This will allow our law enforcement staff to have a more direct understanding of incidents as they occur onboard and improve situational awareness.

Summer 2025

Publish Cellular in Metro Subway Tunnels Request for Proposals (RFP)

Cellular service will be introduced in underground metro tunnels to enhance rider communication and emergency connectivity. This project will take multiple years to complete but the request for proposals (RFP) will be issued in Summer 2025 to kick off the effort.

Fall 2025

Implement a Rider Code of Conduct

A Rider Code of Conduct will be introduced and actively promoted to foster a more respectful and safe transit experience for all passengers and staff. The code of conduct will allow the agency to ban repeat offenders from riding on the system.

Fall 2025

Launch App that Allows for Discrete Reporting of Onboard Security Incidents

Our system is very safe but unfortunately security incidents do happen from time to time. When they do, we want our riders to be able to safely report the incident in real-time to transit police. This app will allow a rider to have a live and discrete text conversation with transit police during the incident.

ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY & NAVIGATION

Challenge: Riders struggle to access schedules, navigate stations, and contact the agency



Completed

Shift Mobility Call Center Staff to Meet Caller Loads

To improve customer support, our Mobility call center operations have been restructured to better manage peak call volumes. By optimizing staffing levels, wait times were reduced to ensure that riders receive prompt and efficient assistance.

Fall 2025

Improve Communications to Riders while Onboard Vehicles

We are implementing several improvements to enhance the rider experience while onboard. Route ladders will be installed on all new buses to provide clear and consistent route information. Onboard announcements will be upgraded to improve clarity and emphasize key points of interest. Additionally, Light Rail displays will be enhanced to offer real-time updates on service disruptions, important destinations, and trip details, ensuring riders have the most up-to-date travel information.

Winter 2025

Improve Signage and Wayfinding

To improve navigation across the transit system, we are implementing updates to signage and wayfinding. Planned initiatives include pilot improvements at Charles Center Metro Subway station, a comprehensive overhaul of Light Rail system signage, and the development of a new signage, branding, and wayfinding guide for MARC services. These enhancements will provide clearer directions and improve the overall travel experience for riders.

ENHANCE THE TRANSIT APP EXPERIENCE

Challenge: Riders face issues using and trusting the Transit App, the agency's primary real-time communication tool



**Spring
2025**

Increase Trust in the Predictions

The agency will minimize “ghost” buses—vehicles that appear in the app but do not arrive—as well as instances where buses lack real-time arrival predictions. These improvements will increase rider confidence in the app’s reliability.

**Summer
2025**

Improve Service Disruption Messages

Service alerts will be improved to provide clearer, more concise, and timely updates. Recent rail alert enhancements have already received positive feedback, and similar improvements will be extended to bus and MARC services.

**Fall
2025**

Refresh Public Awareness of the App

The agency has not undertaken a major outreach effort since our initial integration with the Transit App in 2017. The app has changed since then and so have our riders. To increase awareness and understanding of the app, the agency will launch a robust public outreach effort to reacquaint riders with its features. This campaign will provide updated training and highlight new functionalities to enhance the rider experience.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION DURING DISRUPTIONS

Challenge: Service disruptions and city events make the system more difficult to use



**Fall
2025**

Standardize How We Handle Rail Disruptions

Shuttle buses are a necessary solution to major rail system disruptions. While they are stressful for riders, the MTA will work to improve that experience by taking a completely fresh look at how we operate and communicate during those times. We will improve standard operating procedures, enhance digital communications at stations, and provide more accurate and timely information in the Transit App.

**Fall
2025**

Inform Our Riders Further in Advance of Major Closures

No one likes to learn of a long term closure only a few days in advance. To keep riders better informed, MTA is developing an agency-wide work and disruption calendar to provide advance notice of planned closures. This will help riders plan their trips more effectively, reduce unexpected inconveniences, and improve overall communication about service impacts.

**Fall
2025**

Improve Disruption Station Signage and Wayfinding

Knowing where to go during disruptions is key. MTA is improving station signage and wayfinding to make navigation easier for riders. This includes installing clearer, more effective static signage at shuttle stop locations, ensuring passengers can easily find alternative transit options during service changes or disruptions.

**Winter
2026**

Conduct Digital Signage Replacement & Modernization Study

MTA is conducting a comprehensive study to assess the replacement and modernization of outdated station digital signage. This study will evaluate the feasibility, benefits, and potential implementation strategies for upgrading to modern, dynamic displays.

IMPROVE CLEANLINESS AND COMFORT

Challenge: Riders desire cleaner and more comfortable environments



Ongoing

Implement Agency Management Walkthroughs

Agency leadership regularly observe transit conditions, report issues and take action to improve cleanliness, maintenance, and rider experience. These walkthroughs empower management and accountability to address concerns more effectively.

Summer 2025

Deploy New Metro Subway Railcars

New metro subway railcars will be introduced to provide a more modern, comfortable and reliable travel experience. These upgraded vehicles will provide a more modern and enjoyable travel experience.

Summer 2025

Make it Easier to Report Issues

A more user-friendly webpage will be developed to make it easier for riders to report cleanliness and comfort concerns. Additionally, feedback from the Transit App's Rate My Ride feature will be used to identify and resolve issues more efficiently.

Fall 2025

End of Line Vehicle Cleaning on Light Rail

To increase Light Rail Vehicle cleanliness, the MTA will be adding staff at Hunt Valley, Glen Burnie, and BWI stations to clean the vehicles between trips.

Fall 2025

Flexible Seating and Increased Bike Capacity on Buses

The agency will test new bus seating to better serve riders with strollers, carts, young children, and plus-sized needs. The agency will also explore bike racks with more capacity, including space for big-wheel bikes.

ENHANCE FARE COLLECTION SYSTEMS

Challenge: Fare collection is inconsistent and confusing



Completed

Improve Metro Subway/Light Rail Ticket Vending Machines

The agency will restore credit card functionality to Metro and Light Rail ticket vending machines, making it easier for riders to purchase fares seamlessly.

Fall
2025

Expand Fare Payment Options

Digital payment options will be expanded across all transit modes through enhanced integrations with fare boxes. This includes increasing the availability of CharmPass and other contactless payment methods for greater convenience.

Fall
2025

Simplify Student Fare Access

Students will be integrated into the CharmPass system, allowing for more streamlined and efficient fare payment, reducing barriers to transit access for young riders.

Winter
2025

Improve Access for Low-Income Riders

The agency will explore establishing a program to enable SNAP recipients to easily enroll for fare discounts, ensuring that low-income riders have an easier and more equitable way to access affordable public transportation.

STRENGTHEN RIDER ENGAGEMENT

Challenge: Riders want to feel heard and see actionable improvements



Completed

Next-Day Follow-Ups to Improve Service

The Mobility division launched an active customer survey program where QA/QC agents call customers the day after making a reservation or taking a ride and ask a series of questions about the customer experience. When trends indicating poor performance are identified, individual agents and/or operators are coached and mentored.

Spring 2025

Increase Rider Conversations

Our Rider Talker team engaged with over 1,200 riders this year. We will increase that by 50% in 2025 to ensure that we are continuing to gain a better understanding of the needs, wants, and priorities of our riders. Being more aware will allow us to develop an even better 2026 Customer Experience Action Plan to continuously improve their experience

Fall 2025

Create a Focus Group Program

A new focus group program will be created to complement the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee for Accessible Transportation (CACAT). These sessions will gather insights from different demographic and user groups which will raise awareness of concerns for certain groups that often get lost when looking at issues across the entire ridership.



2025 Work Plan Summary



Service Reliability

- Recruit to Reduce Staff-Related Service Cancellations
- Improve Rail Fleet Reliability
- Improve Light Rail and Metro On-Time Performance Metrics



Cleanliness & Comfort

- Implement Agency Management Walkthroughs
- Deploy New Metro Subway Railcars
- Make it Easier to Report Issues
- End of Line Vehicle Cleaning on Light Rail
- Flexible Seating and Increased Bike Capacity on Buses



Safety

- Increase Enforcement of Fares
- Implement Live Look-in for Onboard Bus Cameras
- Publish Cellular in Metro Tunnels Request for Proposals (RFP)
- Implement a Rider Code of Conducts
- Launch App that Allows for Covert Reporting of Onboard Security Incidents



Fare Collection

- Improve Metro Subway/Light Rail Ticket Vending Machines
- Expand Fare Payment Options
- Simplify Student Fare Access
- Improve Access for Low-Income Riders



Accessibility & Navigation

- Shift Mobility Call Center Staff to Meet Caller Loads
- Improve Communications to Riders while Onboard Vehicles
- Improve Signage and Wayfinding



Transit App Experience

- Increase Trust in the Predictions
- Improve Service Disruption Messages
- Refresh Public Awareness of the App



Disruption Communication

- Standardize How We Handle Rail Disruptions
- Inform Our Riders Further in Advance of Major Closures
- Improve Disruption Station Signage and Wayfinding
- Conduct Digital Signage Replacement & Modernization Study



Rider Engagement

- Next-Day Follow-Ups to Improve Service
- Increase Rider Conversations
- Create Focus Group Program

Looking Ahead: A Living Commitment to Riders

Improving the rider experience is not a one-time effort—it's an ongoing journey. Transit needs and expectations continue to evolve, and MTA is committed to listening, learning, and continuously improving. This inaugural Action Plan marks an important milestone in that journey. As a living document, it will be updated annually to reflect new rider feedback, industry best practices, and progress on key initiatives. The format and focus of future plans may evolve as our CX efforts grow, but our commitment to transparency and accountability will remain constant. We're actively exploring ways to strengthen future versions and look forward to sharing updates and progress in the 2026 plan and beyond.

To ensure transparency and accountability, MTA will:

Track Progress

MTA will share regular updates on progress across the key focus areas to keep riders informed and engaged.

Continuously Engage

MTA will gather rider feedback year-round to assure that future annual iterations are grounded by the voices of our riders.

Explore CX Best Practices

MTA will look beyond the transit industry, drawing from broader customer experience best practices to set meaningful benchmarks and improve how CX is measured.



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MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

