

Renew the Blue Phase 2 Evaluation & 2027 Preview

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Metro Transit

Agenda

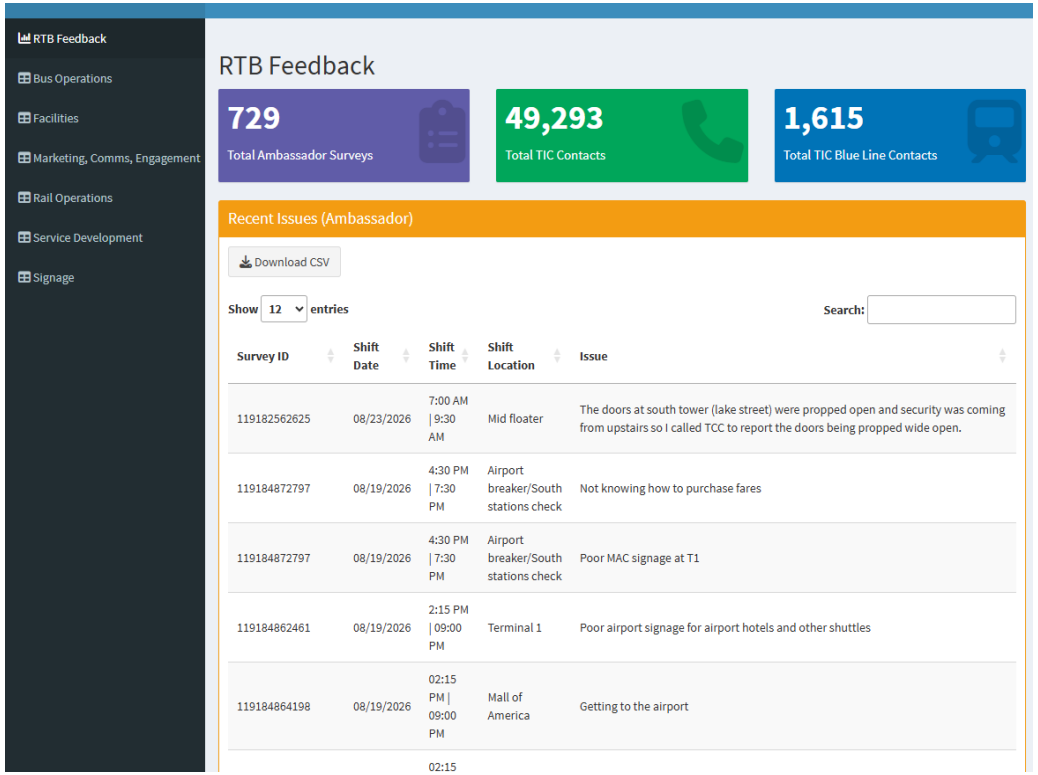
1 Rider Feedback & Evaluation

2 Lessons Learned to Inform Renew the Blue Phase 3

3. Questions & Discussion

New Ways of Working

- Focus areas
  - Triage different issues
  - Weekly meetings with CX for coordination
  - Single focus area leads
- New tools for business units to gather, review, and act on feedback
- Customer Experience Investigators (CXIs) dispatched to further examine issues noted



Feedback To Action Examples

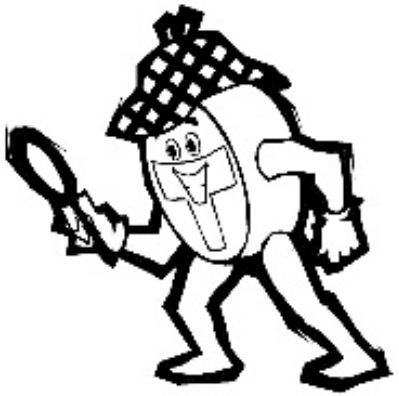
- West Bank wayfinding improvements
  - Ambassador reported issue 7/2
  - CXI followed-up
  - CX Signage created and deployed improved signage 7/10





Feedback To Action Examples

- Station announcements along Green Line
  - Report of incorrect announcements after Green Line reopened in downtown Minneapolis
  - CXIs audited the on-platform announcements and identified which stations were playing incorrect information
  - Marketing was able to update announcements



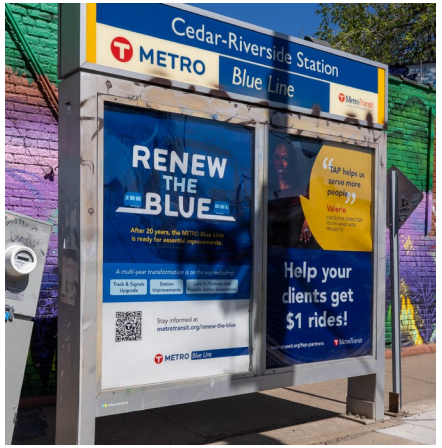


Methods for Evaluation

Transit app Rate-My-Ride



Ambassador Survey



Marketing Survey

Most respondents were aware that buses were replacing Blue Line trains

- Throughout the whole Metro Transit system, about **70%** of RMR respondents were generally or very aware

- On Marketing Survey, **90%** were aware before June 29th (+5 from 2025)



Rate-My-Ride, Marketing Survey

Lower awareness that Green Line was affected

- Buses replaced Green Line trains in downtown Minneapolis during 2 periods
- Lower awareness that Green Line service was affected
- Back-to-back service changes may be confusing
- Blue Line Bus stopping at West Bank may be confusing

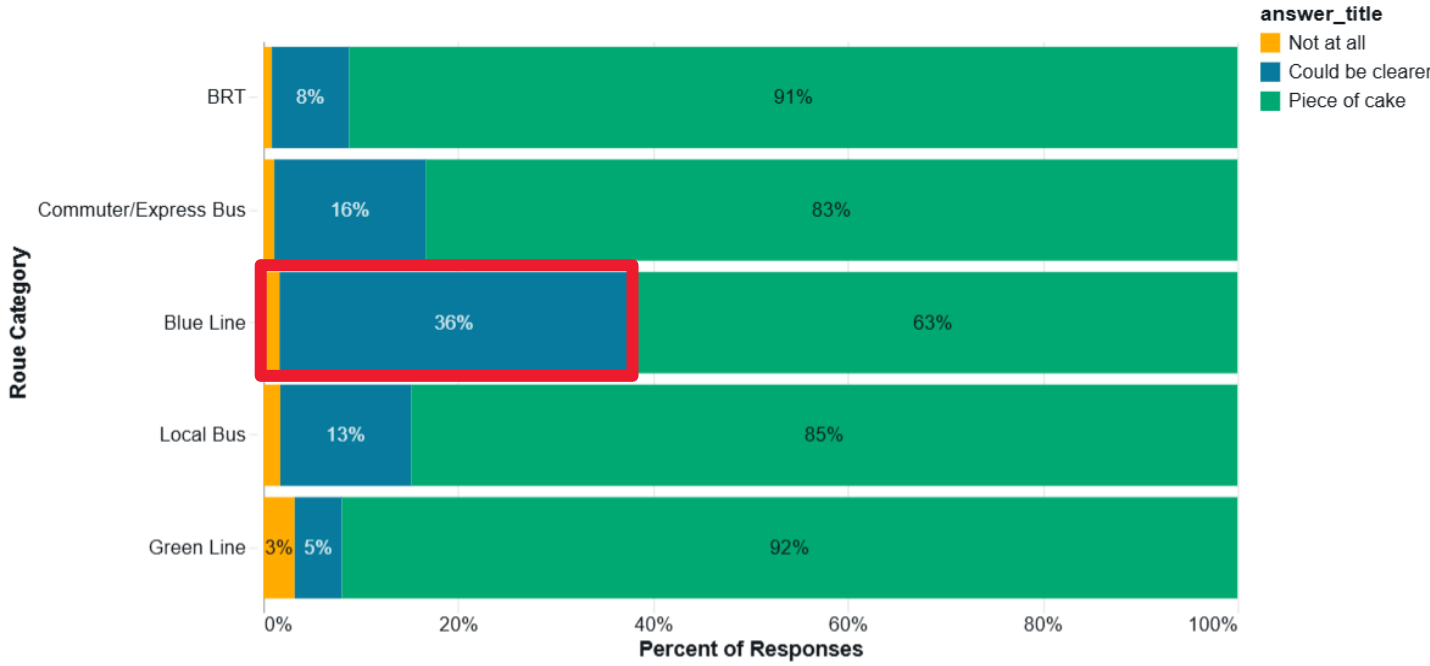


Ambassador Survey, Marketing Survey, Rate-My-Ride

Riders had more difficulty finding Blue Line Bus stops

- “How often do you use this stop?” and “Was it easy to find this stop?”
- Riders were more likely to be unfamiliar with Blue Line Bus stops
- Riders unfamiliar with Blue Line Bus stops still had more difficulty than riders unfamiliar with other stops
- Blue Line Bus riders were more likely to say they could have used more information to take their trip

First time / Once in a while



Riders' on-board experience was *slightly* worse on Blue Line Bus than LRT

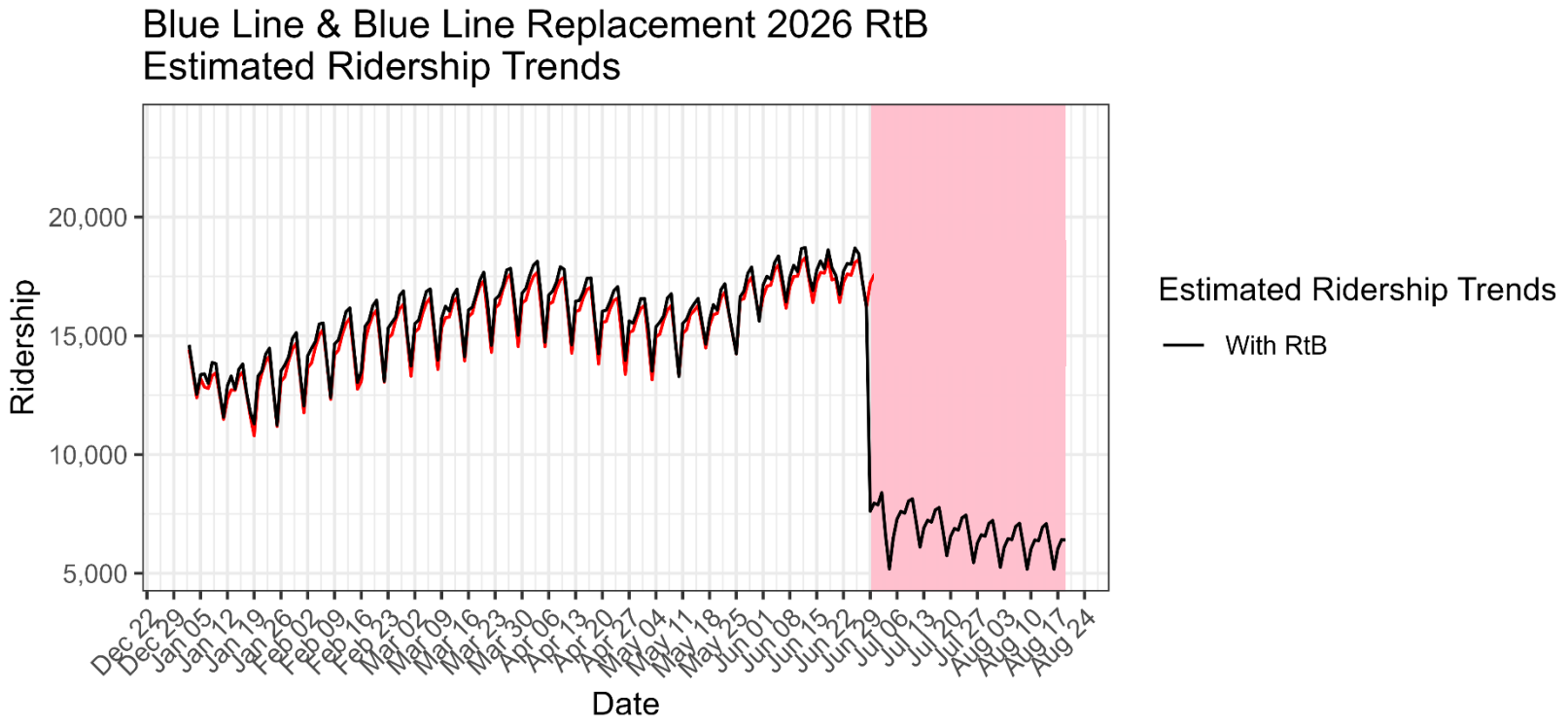
- Compared to before and after on Blue Line LRT
  - Less frequent service
  - More crowded
  - Slightly lower trip rating

    ★★★★½
  - BUT safer



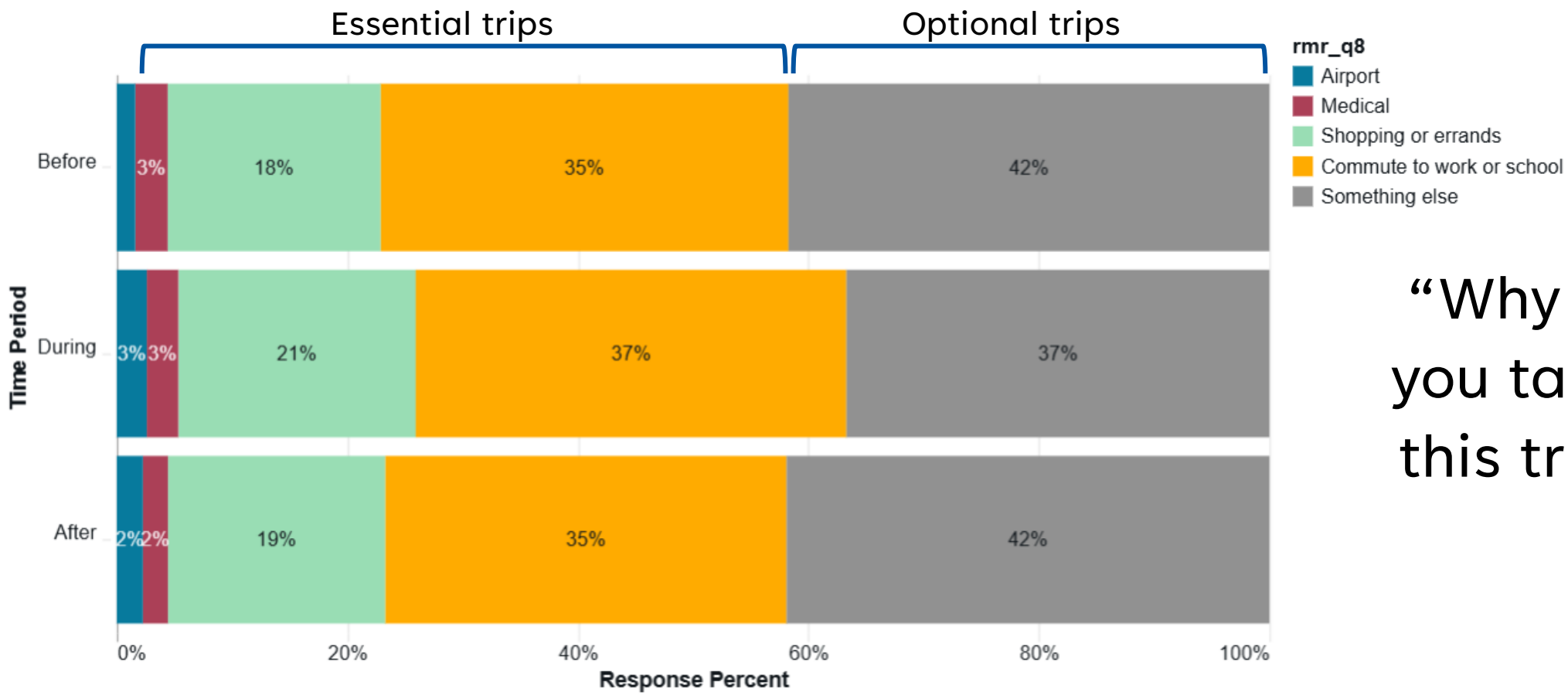
Rate-My-Ride

Blue Line Bus ridership was about half of what we'd expect without RtB Phase II



Blue Line Bus ridership was **slightly over half** of what we would expect if Renew the Blue Phase II had not happened

Blue Line Bus retained essential trips, lost optional trips



"Why are you taking this trip?"

Rate-My-Ride

Travel time was a main motivator for shifting modes

- Top reasons for changing travel
  1. Increased travel time
  2. Better alternatives
  3. OTP / Reliability
  4. Decreased frequency

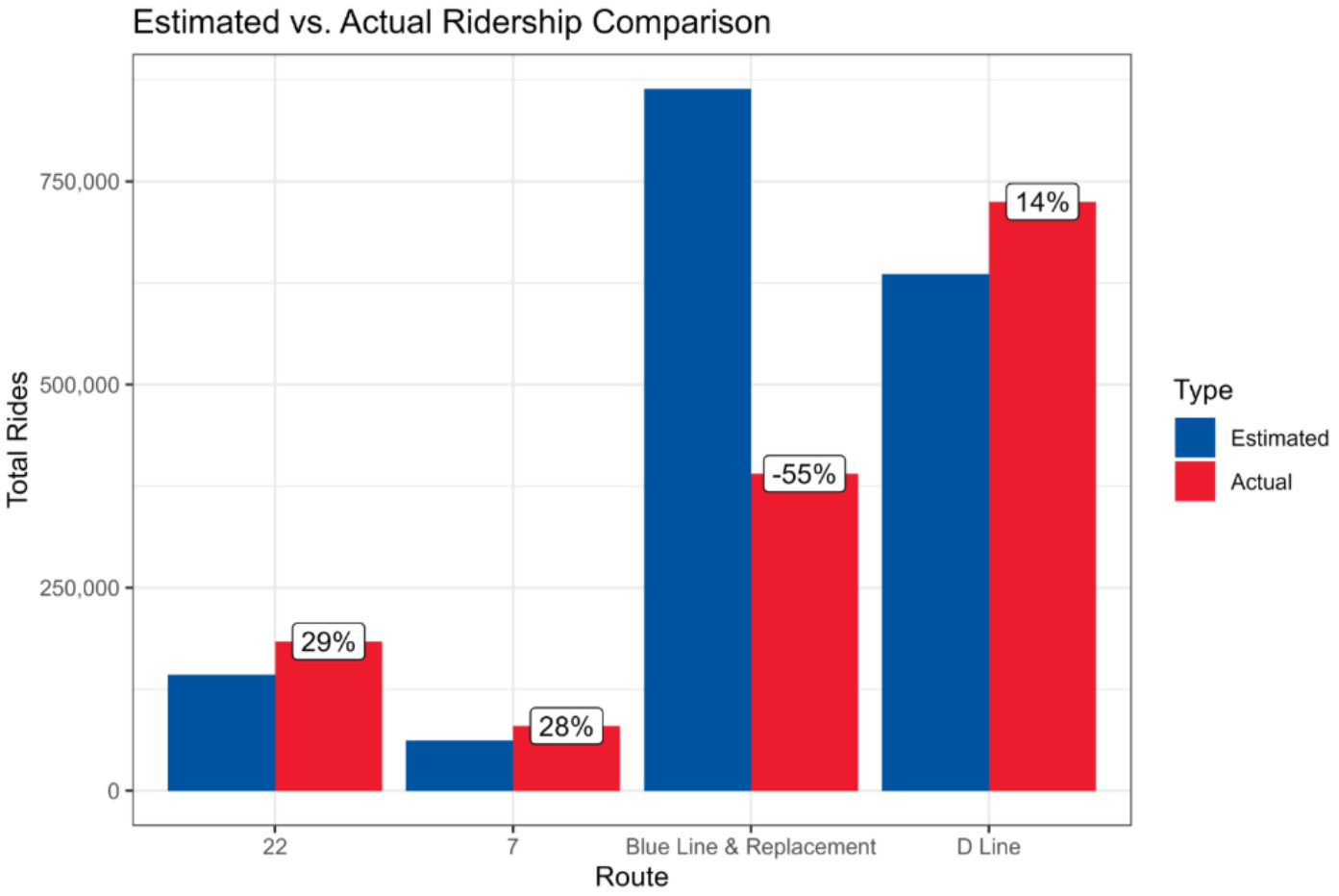
- Mode shift from Blue Line



31% 46% 62%

Marketing Survey

Riders likely tried alternative routes



- Top routes for riders reporting their usual transit trips were affected “a lot”

1. Blue Line Bus
2. Route 71
3. Route 7
4. Route 94
5. Route 22
6. Route 38
7. Route 54
8. D Line
9. Route 46

Rate-My-Ride

Conclusion

- In 2026, we made improvements for customers by developing better internal tools and processes to gather their feedback and to act on it
- For 2027, build on better overall awareness and continue to refine customer information and wayfinding
- For 2027, leverage the improvements we have made to our entire service by promoting alternative transit options
- It is important not only to plan for service, but also to plan for collecting and using customer feedback



Informing Renew the Blue Phase 3

Bob Westgate | Senior Manager - Operations Planning

Metro Transit

Bus Replacement Service – Top 10 Lessons Learned

2026 Lesson	2027 Change
1. Planning and execution were strong	Retain phased cross-functional planning but establish the 2027 service concept and key dependencies earlier. Kickoff meeting on 11/16.
2. Some items marked complete were not fully ready for service	Add formal readiness validation and sign-off, including field testing and verification.
3. Known ADA issues carried into service	Complete critical ADA work before launch; escalate any risks to the activation date well in advance.



MSP T-2 ADA compliance changes were completed on 10/14

Bus Replacement Service – Top 10 Lessons Learned (continued)



The elevator vestibule ADA paddles, as well as the elevators and HVAC, were an ongoing issue at West Bank Station

2026 Lesson	2027 Change
4. West Bank Station presented recurring operational and customer access challenges	Develop a dedicated West Bank operating plan focused on vertical access, Green Line connections and customer wayfinding.
5. Airport Ambassador staffing was very valuable	Include Ambassadors in the base plan, with enhanced training and greater use of Airport Volunteers.
6. Technology was not fully validated before launch	Formalize technology testing for all customer-facing and operational systems before activation.

Bus Replacement Service – Top 10 Lessons Learned (continued)

2026 Lesson	2027 Change
7. Customer information was not always consistent	Use end-to-end customer journey testing (“ghost riders”) to validate the customer experience, information and wayfinding.
8. Events competed for resources	Include major events in the base bus/operator requirement, with longer lead times for resource planning.
9. Some stop infrastructure wasn’t ready	Conduct 100% stop-readiness inspections using a standardized field checklist.
10. Post-activation meetings solved problems effectively	Retain post-activation Operations Reviews, using a risk-based meeting cadence.



Wayfinding at West Bank Station

Summary of Phase 2 of Renew the Blue



The planning framework worked.
The phased approach, cross-functional coordination, recurring meetings, route/run-time analysis, MAC coordination and 2025 experience provided a strong foundation.



The team successfully adapted during the shutdown.
Most customer-facing issues were identified and corrected quickly after launch.



Several issues identified during planning were not fully resolved before service began.
Examples include MSP T-2 ADA, West Bank “vertical station” complexity, stop amenities, technology/announcements, airport wayfinding.



2027 will therefore be about "readiness validation," not simply more planning.

Bus Replacement Service – 2027 Key Changes

- **Routing**
  - Post Road reopening improves access between MSP T-1 and T-2 (MAC).
  - Mill & overlay project along 34th Ave.
- **Stops**
  - MSP T-2 ADA improvements have been completed by MAC.
  - Move SB Ft. Snelling stop closer to the South Park & Ride if access approved.
  - Move SB 50th St. stop to north side of station to improve ADA access if planned construction not impeded.
  - Move NB stop at 46th to 45th to use new crosswalk (MnDOT).
- **Key Constraints**
  - Earlier construction start: Spring work requires bus stop work and Administrative Bus Fleet preparation earlier than in 2026.
  - MSP T-2 escalator refurbishment will significantly affect station access and requires advance mitigation.
  - MAC will be relocating hotel, parking and regional shuttle services to the T-1 Transit Center as they demo and replace the Green & Gold parking ramps.
  - 5th St./2nd Ave. rail replacement will affect BluBus and local route access to the 5th St. Transit Center and the BluBus northern layover.

2027 Renew the Blue Bus Replacement Plans

From	To	Days	
April 1	April 4	4	**Blue Line** trains replaced by buses Target Field – Mall of America • Additional 24x7 shuttle service provided between MSP Terminals 1 & 2 No **Green Line** service Target Field – US Bank Stadium
April 5	May 15	41	**Blue Line** trains replaced by buses Target Field – Mall of America • Additional 24x7 shuttle service provided between MSP Terminals 1 & 2 No **Green Line** service Target Field – Warehouse Station
May 16	June 5	21	**Blue Line** trains replaced by buses Target Field – Mall of America • Additional 24x7 shuttle service provided between MSP Terminals 1 & 2 **Green Line** trains operate normally Target Field – Union Depot
June 28	July 20	22	**Blue Line** trains replaced by buses 38th St. – Mall of America • Additional 24x7 shuttle service provided between MSP Terminals 1 & 2 **Green Line** trains operate normally SouthWest Station – Union Depot



Track & Signals project Phase 2 is now complete! Thank you for your patience.

Stay informed and
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metrotransit.org/renew-the-blue

RENEW THE BLUE

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 2027 planning and execution will continue to be a cross-functional effort.
- Customer feedback will continue to inform 2027 planning and execution.
- Questions?