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METRO adds Six New Replacement Buses to its Fleet, Introduces Automated Voice Announcements (AVA) to Greater Portland

2005 METRO BUS



Portland, Maine) – Throughout this month, September 2019, Greater Portland METRO is adding six new replacement buses to its fleet, replacing older 2005 vehicles.

2019 METRO BUS



The new low-floor, 40-foot diesel buses are larger than the buses they are replacing and feature several upgrades and enhancements, including; METRO’s new branding, more seating, bike racks with room for three bikes instead of two, Wi-Fi and USB ports, and the introduction of Automated Voice Announcements (AVA) to the Greater Portland Region.

“Stop announcements help hearing and visually impaired transit users through audio announcements and visual signage,” says METRO General Manager Greg Jordan.

“New transit passengers and visitors who may be unfamiliar with our routes will also benefit from advanced notice of upcoming stops.” Stop announcements are programmed messages that play onboard and outside of the bus. AVA uses the GPS locations of the bus in relation to the upcoming stop to determine when to play the next announcement. Voice and digital announcements are available only on the new buses. METRO plans to add AVA technology to all future replacement buses, which include seven to nine new vehicles expected in the fall 2020 and two new electric buses expected to join the fleet in 2021.

Riders are asked to be patient with implementation of this new technology and contact METRO, at info@gpmetro.org, if they hear or see wrong information on display signs so corrections can be made if needed.



“These announcements will help visually impaired riders to travel independently on METRO,” says Randy Bellavance, a long-time resident at the Iris Network and facilitator of a support group for visually impaired individuals. He also serves, along with his wife Sarah, on local and state chapters for the National Federation of the Blind. “With the new AVA, we won’t have to ask the driver or other passengers where the bus is going,” he added.

Technological enhancements, along with system modernization; partnerships; route expansions; and public awareness have helped Greater Portland METRO increase its ridership by almost 35% in the last five years.

With annual ridership of nearly 2 million, METRO is the largest public transit agency in Maine. Greater Portland METRO provides bus service between Brunswick, Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, Portland, South Portland, Westbrook, and Yarmouth.

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