



A Geezer's Guide to  
Riding the Washington Metro



# Riding the Washington Metro

## Introduction

The Metro system is by far the fastest, least costly, and most convenient mode of ground transportation in the Washington metropolitan area. On Metrorail trains violence and theft are practically nonexistent because of full-coverage, video surveillance and Metro Police patrolling many of the platforms and randomly riding on the trains.

On street parking is virtually impossible to find in downtown Washington, and garage parking is expensive (\$25/day). Metro will get you downtown in the vicinity of most attractions that you want to visit.

The Metro consists of rail routes (or lines) that are a combination of subway, surface, and elevated tracks. Each line is identified by a *COLOR* AND the *FINAL STATION* for a direction of travel. For example, the *Red Line* to *Shady Grove* or the *Red Line* to *Glenmont*. Lines are interconnected at locations called “Transfer Stations.” Thus, one might have to transfer more than once to reach a final destination.

## Frequency of Train Arrivals

During the AM and PM rush hours, trains operate frequently — a 5-10 minute wait for a specific train. In the late evening, one might wait for as long as 20 minutes for a train. Metro’s hours of operation are as follows:

- **Mon.-Thurs.: 5 a.m. – midnight**
- **Fri.: 5 a.m. – 3 a.m.**
- **Sat.: 7 a.m. – 3 a.m.**
- **Sun.: 7 a.m. - midnight**

## Direction of Travel

You must determine the required direction of travel to your destination and find the particular train platform for that direction. Some stations have single platforms that serve both directions of travel. In this case, tracks will run on both sides of that platform. Some platforms will serve only one direction of travel—such platforms will have only one track for one direction of travel.

Many system maps and other helpful postings are located throughout each station. Each train car has system maps posted adjacent to its front and rear doors (not near the center doors).

You need to board the proper train line [color] in the proper direction of travel. Metro System Maps are plentiful and posted in the vestibules at all stations and on station platforms. If you board a train traveling in the wrong direction, DO NOT PANIC; simply get off at the next station and board the next train traveling in the opposite direction. Boarding incorrect trains will not increase the cost of your Metro trip provided that you depart the Metro only at your intended departure station. The fare system charges only for the trip between your entrance and exit stations.

## Fares & SMARTRIP Cards

You must purchase a SMARTRIP card before you can access a Metro station’s platform. This plastic card is the only means of paying fares for travel on the Metro. It is akin to a debit card—you place money into an account that is linked to the card. When you ride the Metro, the fare for that trip is

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deducted from the account. The card readers at turnstiles deduct money from the account based upon your entrance and exit stations and the time of day (peak or off-peak fares).

You can purchase a SMARTRIP card on line!

On SmarTrip/Wmata web site: <https://wmata.com> look to the left. Under SMARTRIP the first option is Buy Now. \$10 for a card with \$8 value loaded on it. Allow a week (5 working days) for the card to be delivered.

If you choose to purchase your card at a Metro station, you will have to deal with what might appear to be the most complex ticket machine on the planet! If the machine confuses you, get help from a uniformed Metro worker who is always available to assist riders.

You cannot purchase your SMARTRIP card from a ticket agent or pay your fare with cash. Moreover, each person travelling must purchase a SMARTRIP card; **one card cannot be shared for simultaneous travel with others.**

I recommend that you purchase a SMARTRIP card on line. It costs \$10--\$2 for the card and a value of \$8; that will get you started. If later you need to add value to the card, ask a uniformed Metro employee for help. The remaining value on a card is briefly shown on a display atop the turnstile readers that you must pass through when entering/exiting a station; you won't notice that display unless you are looking for it.

The entry turnstile will not allow you to enter if the value of your card falls to less than \$2.70. Similarly if the value of your SMARTRIP card is less than the fare, the exit turnstile will not allow you to exit. In both cases you will have to add value at the same kind of machine where you initially put value on the card. The solution: ask for help from a uniformed Metro employee. Once you have done gone through the process of adding value to the card, you won't need help again.

There is a Senior SMARTRIP card, but it is not worth the effort to get one unless you reside in the Washington area. Senior SMARTRIP cards are only sold at one location at the Metro Center station. If your card has value on it at the end of the reunion, give it to a local. They can add the remaining value to their card, and they'll be thankful.

### Reminders

Here are some reminders about key Metro facts:

- Fare: Fares vary with the time of day and the length of the trip. They are posted at every station. To ride Metro you must purchase a Smart Card, which looks like a credit card, from a vending machine and load it with a sum of money. When you enter the Metro, the entry reader notes how much money is on the card and lets you enter. When you exit, the exit reader subtracts the fare and tells you how much money is left on the card.
- Metro System Map (Attached): Keep it handy during your travel on the Metro. Every Metro car has the same map, but you will be more comfortable if you have a map of your own.
- Direction of Travel: Take care to ensure that you are on the correct platform for the Line Color AND direction. You can determine the Line Color from the external train identifiers. You can identify the direction of travel from the posts in the station and from the sign on the front of the incoming train. (Next paragraph)

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- External Train Identifiers: The Line Color and end destination of the train are displayed on the outside of each car of a train. The color of the display also matches the color of the line.
- Station Announcements aboard the Trains: Determining the train's next station stop while on board will likely be problematic. The Metro cars' sound system is lousy, and the clarity of the announcements depends on the train driver. Many are simply unintelligible.
- Transferring: If you must transfer train lines to arrive at your destination, there will be signage in the transfer station telling you where to go to get the next train.

# Metrorail Map



Note: The station nearest to the Reunion Hotel is the **Wiehle-Reston East** station along the **Silver Line**

## Acknowledgment

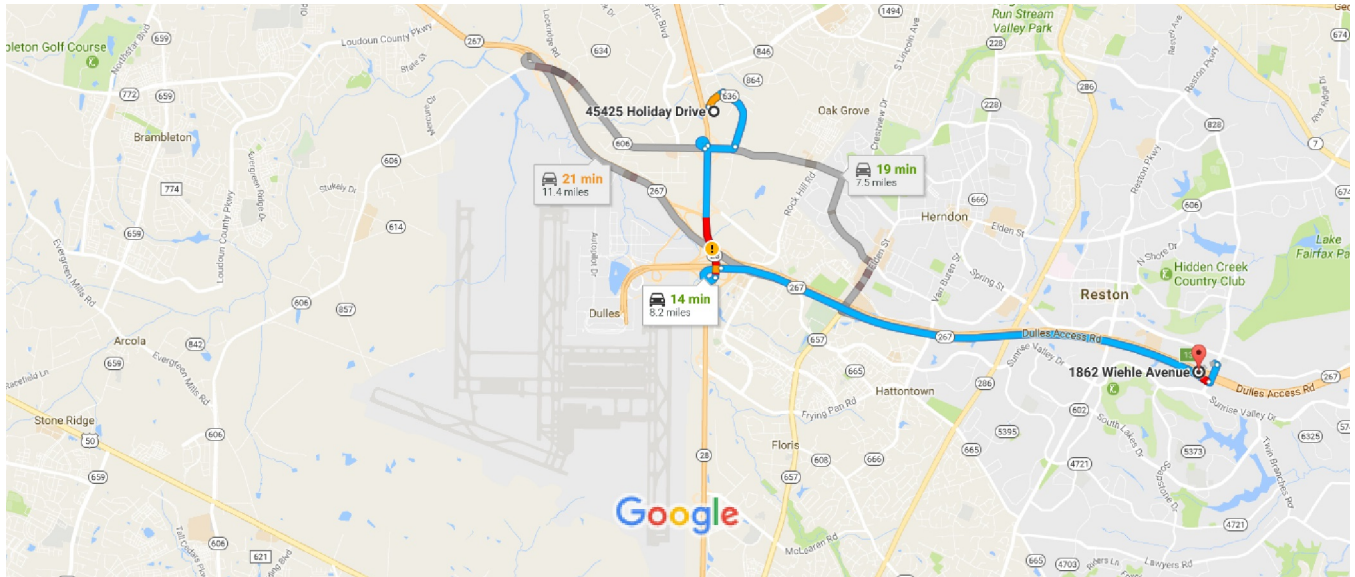
The USS Sargo (SSN 583) Association would like to thank John J. Hyland, III for all of his help putting this together and helping the Association make this reunion a success.

Thank you Shipmate!



45425 Holiday Dr, Sterling, VA 20166 to 1862 Wiehle Ave, Reston, VA 20190

Drive 8.2 miles, 14 min



Map data ©2017 Google 1 mi

### 45425 Holiday Dr

Sterling, VA 20166

#### Get on VA-28 S from VA-636

- ↑ 1. Head northeast on Holiday Dr toward Holiday Park Dr 4 min (1.4 mi)

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- ↘ 2. Turn right onto VA-636 0.2 mi

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- ↘ 3. Turn right onto VA-606 W 0.6 mi

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- ⤴ 4. Use the right lane to merge onto VA-28 S via the ramp to Dulles Airport 0.3 mi

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- ⤴ 5. Merge onto VA-28 S 0.2 mi

#### Take VA-267 E to Wiehle Ave in Reston. Take exit 13 from VA-267 E



- ⤴ 5. Merge onto VA-28 S 8 min (6.6 mi)

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- ↘ 6. Take the VA-267 exit toward Washington 1.3 mi

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- ↘ 7. Take the VA-267 exit toward Washington 0.4 mi

-  7. Keep left at the fork and merge onto VA-267 E  
 Partial toll road  


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4.7 mi
-  8. Take exit 13 for State Route 828/Wiehle Avenue  


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0.2 mi

**Continue on Wiehle Ave. Drive to Reston Station Blvd**

- 1 min (0.2 mi)
-  9. Use the middle lane to turn left onto Wiehle Ave  

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0.2 mi
-  10. Turn left onto Reston Station Blvd  

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151 ft

## 1862 Wiehle Ave

Reston, VA 20190

These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route.