

Disciples Go Downtown

By Joshua Gribbin

Learning does not stop at the edge of Wesley's uptown campus on Massachusetts Ave. An unknown number of opportunities to grow, to serve, and to explore exist just within the DC Metro area, and having a handle on how to get around can open new horizons. (It can also be extremely useful in getting to those classes held at Wesley Downtown!)

In this edition, we offer some tips on how to use the mass transit system (known as "the Metro" here in DC), which provides a safe and inexpensive way to travel locally. Below are some basic points to get you started, then get out there! And reach out to your peers on campus with questions about getting around. Many are seasoned DC commuters.

The Metro system consists of both trains (or subway) and buses, but in local parlance it's all "the Metro."

Trains

Though there are multiple rail lines, you will find the Red Line your primary travel route to and from the Massachusetts Avenue campus. Wesley students can pick up the free American University shuttle bus (either red or blue) to the Tenleytown station at the stop located just inside AU's main gates. (When returning from your latest adventure, the blue AU shuttle will return you to the art building across the street from the main gates.)

Don't want to look like a tourist? Remember the mantra "walk on the left, stand on the right" when it comes to using escalators in DC. Nothing gets tempers flaring faster than someone who doesn't abide by this local standard of courtesy.

Each station is equipped with a map of the rail system, which also details how much the fare is to ride the Metro to another station, as well as machines for purchasing fare cards and/or for adding money to a

fare card. Feel free to ask a station attendant for help on how to operate the machines - that's why they are there, and they'll often provide great advice on what type of fare card will work best for you. (Hint: If you're living on campus and going downtown regularly, you'll probably want to make the small investment in a SmarTrip® card.) You will pass your fare card through a machine at the beginning of your trip to get onto the platform and again when you leave the station after you have reached your destination.

Another hint: look at the map to find the station to which you are traveling and then figure out the name of the station at the end of the line. This will be a huge help when determining which platform you need to be on to catch the train going in the right direction toward your destination. For example, students traveling to classes at Mt. Vernon UMC will disembark at the Gallery Place/Chinatown station, so you'll want to take the train heading toward Glenmont.

Lights embedded in the pavement near the edge of the platform will blink to signal that a train is arriving. When the train has come to a stop, wait until all the passengers have gotten off before pushing your way onto the train. Again, like the escalator, this is a local standard of courtesy - even though it can be difficult to follow during rush hours.

Hint: Because your fare card is needed both to enter the platform at your starting point and to exit the station at your destination, it is best to keep it in a safe but convenient place where it is easily accessible.

To Reach Wesley Downtown by Train

Upon reaching the Gallery Place/Chinatown station, get off the train, go up the escalators, and use your fare card to get through the turnstile to exit the station. Once out on the sidewalk, turn north to walk .42 mi to 900 Massachusetts Avenue. This is the only accessible entrance

to the downtown campus building and press the call button to the left of the double doors to gain access.

Buses

Two bus lines (N4 and N6) make stops on Massachusetts Avenue in front of the Trott Building, as well as at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and University Avenue. Both of these buses will stop at Farragut Square for those who are heading to the Wesley Downtown campus. Bus operators do not carry money, so you will either need to have the exact fare in cash (\$1.75) or use a SmarTrip® card.

To Reach Wesley Downtown by Bus

Upon reaching the stop at Farragut Square, walk across the square to the line of buses near K and 17th Streets. Take the free Circulator bus (though free you will still need to show your Metro fare card) labeled "Union Station." Disembark at the stop in front of Potbelly Sandwich Shop at K and 11th Streets. Then walk toward 10th Street, where you will make a right to get to the front of the building on Massachusetts Avenue.

Some Last Words of Advice

Metro's website (www.wmata.com) as well as Google Maps can both be useful for planning your trip and determining approximately how long it will take to get there. Give yourself at least a 10-minute buffer for unforeseen delays. Finally, pack light! Buses and trains can become overcrowded, and they tend to be hot the majority of the year (late spring through fall).

Now get out there and use these tips to explore all the opportunities