

COTA May 2023 Service Change Meeting
Thursday, January 31 at noon

Meeting Purpose, Meeting Format, Introductions

Jeff Pullin, Manager, Public & Media Relations

We're going to go ahead and get started. We're going to wait until Amber turns down that monitor so I don't hear myself ... with a 3 second delay, we're going to get started here. This is the noon Service Change public comment meeting for May Service Change. Thank you for joining us and participating today. The purpose of this meeting is to take public comments on the proposed service changes that will take effect on May 1st, 2023. It's important to note that no final decisions have been made for the May 2023 service changes. This is an opportunity to get public comment on proposed changes.

So, our meeting format, we're recording this meeting and we will be posting it on our website at COTA.com. If you are joining us by computer, just please know we can't see or hear you and we ask everyone to be considerate of meeting attendees and COTA staff. If you're joining by computer, we will show you in a second how to submit comments via the Q&A chat box. If you're joining by phone, please direct all your questions or comments to COTA's Customer Care at (614) 228-1776. And if you're joining on Facebook Live, please submit your questions by commenting and the live stream. Let's show you a little bit on how to use the Q&A chat. If you're using our WebEx, you'll just go to the bottom right corner and click on chat then you will make sure that you click on the all-panelists tab and put your question in the comment provided below that. And then, once you've submitted that, or once you've written that question, just submit it and we will get to it once we start the public comment portion of this meeting.

Again, as we say, like most organizations, COTA is impacted by nationwide worker shortage COTA continues to recruit and hire new transit operators, but those hires have not been enough to offset retirements and other departures. COTA will continue to adjust transit schedules due to unprecedented workforce challenges. These adjustments we made to improve service reliability and help minimize adverse impacts on our customers and staff. When possible, we hope to be adding service in future trimesters when we're able to hire, train and retain more operators.

We do want to tell you a little bit about what we are doing to recruit new operators. We have launched, late last year, we've launched a careers landing page that provided, and we've also provided internal and external recruitment incentives including a monetary referral and hiring bonuses upwards of \$2000. And if you have a commercial driver's license already, you're eligible to receive a \$2500 signing bonus. We have also launched a marketing campaign to talk about our benefits and wages, which I will talk about that in a moment. And we're partnering with local and state organizations to host hiring events. Let's talk a little bit about those benefits. We offer our operators starting at \$21.10 an hour and operators can make around \$33 in five years. We have comprehensive insurance. That's medical, dental, vision, flexible health, spending accounts, retirement savings from OPERS, deferred compensation, plenty of vacation holiday, and sick pay. Coming up later this year, we'll be offering benefits for people who are starting a family or expanding theirs. We've also we have also announced domestic partner benefits and a monthly student loan stipend. After six months, we will pay \$100 per month towards your student loan payment. We offer biometric screening, fitness and wellness reimbursement, and personal training and development, job advancement and employee assistance program. So, if you are

looking for a career or if you know someone who is looking for a career? Just apply at COTA.com/careers. For that with that, let's take a look at the service changes that are proposed for to begin on Monday, May 1st, 2023. Again, no final decisions have been made, but Amber will have those details for you.

May 2023 Proposed Service Changes

Amber Boyd, Service Planner

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Amber Boyd. I'm a service planner with COTA's Planning Team and I'm here to discuss some of the proposed changes under recommendation for May 2023. Looking into the frequency reductions on frequent lines 1 Kenny/Livingston, 2 E Main/N High, 10 E Broad/W Broad, and CMAX. Currently these lines are operating every 15 minutes on the busier parts of the line, and then every 30 minutes beyond the short turn. That's on weekdays. And Saturdays, looking into May, we're proposing to make that the same frequency on Saturdays, and then we're looking to make that 30 minute the entire alignment on Sunday.

We are observing lower ridership on Line 8, so we're proposing to make reductions to that line seven days out of the week. Again, that will operate every 20 minutes north of Livingston Ave and then every 40 minutes along the branches on Parsons and South High Ave, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, we're looking to reduce that to every 30 minutes north of Livingston Ave, and then that would mean that line would be hourly along Parsons and South High on Sunday. On Line 22, we're actually looking to increase service to 30 minutes on Sundays.

On Lines 5 and CMAX, we're proposing minor scheduling adjustments on weekdays only. And a part of this for the CMAX, we're also reviewing some stops facing along Cleveland Ave following the removal of Line 6.

Moving into the next slide, based on passenger feedback at previous meetings regarding the longer transfer times due to COTA's ongoing service reductions, we're proposing all day lineups on Sundays for lines 1-11, 102 and the CMAX. Similar to the Late-Night Lineup, all lines would meet near or around the Spring Street Transit Terminal and that's just to provide transfer opportunities for passengers. And then, as you can see to the right here. Those are the locations along Spring Street Transit Terminal. If we do propose to move forward with this, we'll make sure there's a communication on where you can pick up each route. And then in the next slide you can see lines 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and CMAX that will meet up every 30 minutes and then lines 3, 4, 9, 11 and 102 would meet up on the hour.

On the next slide, so the McKinley Operations Center will close on Saturday and Sunday, and with this change, we're proposing that the Line 12 operate between Fields Ave And downtown Columbus laying over near Front and Gay, and that will be on Saturday and Sunday only. Weekday service will remain as is. And then for customers who will be impacted by this change, we're encouraging you to use Line 10, which operates along Broad St.

On Line 61, we're seeing lower ridership in this alignment that you can see picture to the right with the dashed black and white lines along Gantz Rd. We're proposing to remove this alignment. This service currently operates on weekdays only, and that's the streamline service for passengers in between the park & ride and downtown. Any customers impacted by this change we are proposing, we're

encouraging to use COTA//Plus Grove City, which you could see there pictured as the blue shape. It's fully that alignment is fully encompassed within that zone.

And then we're proposing a new downtown layover for Rush Hour lines 41-46, 71-75, and the 102. As a part of this new layover location where they would no longer use the COTA of Transit Terminal. And then to aid passengers and transferring in knowing where to pick up their lines, there's an existing CMAX station along S High St. to the left of the transit terminal that you can see in the picture there. Are there that you can catch the lines 41-46 and the 102. And then there's also an existing stop directly behind the transit terminal on East Main Street to pick up Line 71-75.

For Zoo Bus service, we're proposing to return in May. Weekend service would begin on Saturday, May 6 operating on weekends only until Memorial Day. That's May 29th. Daily Service would operate May 29th through Labor Day, September 4. The Zoo Bus operates holidays, which is Sunday schedules, on Memorial Day and 4th of July and Labor Day. For more information you can visit COTA.com/zoobus. And then in the next slide we will provide Red, White and BOOM! Service in 2023. Round trip tickets will cost \$4 and will run from select Park and ride locations to downtown Columbus. And then just monitor our website for more information. And with that that concludes the recommendations for May 2023. I'll pass it back to Jeff.

Meeting Close

Jeff Pullin, Manager, Public & Media Relations

Thank you for that. Now to the public comment portion, but we want to remind you on how to get involved in future search service changes. You're doing that right now by being here, but we welcome questions about your service change about our service changes, reactions to our methodology, and ideas of how we continue to search for better service solutions. For our community, our final service change meeting will be announced on will be those final service changes will be announced on Thursday, April 13th at 6:00 PM. And Tuesday, April 18th at noon for May service change. And you can always send your comments to COTA.com/contact any time of the day with that. Well, we'll go to the Q&A if you're joining us by Webex, just submit your comments in the chat box. If you're joining us by phone, wait to mute yourself until directed by the moderator, which I will do in a moment. And if joining us via Facebook live, just put your comments in the comment box and we will answer those in the live stream in a moment and remember again, you can always send submit comments to our website COTA.com/contact. And I'm going to go ahead and turn on the microphone here so you all can ask questions.

