

COTA May 2023 Service Change Meeting
Thursday, January 26 at 6pm

Meeting Purpose, Meeting Format, Introductions

Tanya Salyers, Manager, Community Relations

We're going to go ahead and get started in the interest of time. I know some folks may still be trickling in, but that's OK. We will also have some more presentations available for folks that would like a hard copy by paper.

So, the purpose of this meeting is to take public comment on proposed service changes that will take effect on May 1st 2023. No final decisions have been made for the May 2023 Service Change. So, we are recording this meeting. The recording will be posted on our website at COTA.com. If you're joining us by computer or phone, please know that we cannot see or hear you. Please be considerate of meeting attendees and COTA staff.

So, to communicate with us during this meeting, if you're joining by computer, you can submit comments and questions Via the Q&A chat box on Webex. If you're joining by phone, please direct all questions or comments to COTA's Customer Care Center at (614) 228-1776. If you're joining by Facebook Live, please submit your question by commenting in the live stream and we'll be able to address those in this meeting today. It's a little bit of a delay. If you're joining us by WebEx, there is a Q&A chat function. There we go, down at the bottom right you can click chat. You can type your message and then you'll be able to send it to all panelists and we'll be able to see it here in the room. OK, so we'll dive into just the first part.

COTA is still experiencing and is impacted by the nationwide worker shortage. COTA continues to recruit and hire new transit operators, but the new hires are not enough to offset retirements and other departures. COTA will continue to adjust transit schedules due to the unprecedented workforce challenges. Adjustments will be made to improve service reliability and help minimize adverse service impacts to our customers and staff. We hope to begin adding service in future trimesters when we we're able to hire, train, and retain more operators.

With that we are recruiting. So, we have embarked on a robust moving forward recruitment campaign to address workforce reductions throughout the organization and return to normal service hours as soon as possible. This includes, you know, updating our website incentives like hiring bonuses, upwards of \$2000 and a \$2500 signing bonus for folks with a CDL and other marketing efforts. So, if you're interested in working for COTA, or knows someone who might be our wages, start at \$21.10 an hour operators can make more than \$33 an hour over five years. Comprehensive Insurance, health flex accounts, retirement, sick pay, all sorts of things listed up there available to operators, including some exciting new benefits. With that, I'll turn it over to Amber to begin discussing service changes for May 2023.

May 2023 Proposed Service Changes

Amber Boyd, Service Planner

Thanks Tanya and good evening, everyone. My name is Amber Boyd. I'm a Service Planner with COTA's Planning Team and will share some proposed service changes under consideration for May 2023. The recommendations in this presentation have not been finalized and staff will continue to monitor route performance before we make any final decisions. With that, we're proposing service on Lines 1-12, 22, 41-46, 71-75, 102, CMAX, and Zoo Bus.

Beginning with frequency adjustments, we are proposing to reduce frequency on weekends only for COTA Lines 1 Kenny/Livingston, 2 East Main/N High, 10 East Broad/West Broad, and the CMAX. Currently, these lines are operating 15 minutes in the busier sections of the route, with a 30-minute frequency beyond the short turn on Saturday. We are proposing to reduce that by 5 minutes, so it'll be 20 minutes between the busier section of the route and then 40 minutes beyond that short turn. On Sundays, we're proposing 30-minute frequency the entire alignment, so that's from end to end on the lines that I've mentioned. And just to clarify, weekday service will not be adjusted.

On the Line 8, we're proposing to reduce that Monday through Saturday, 20 minutes north of High Street and then 40 minutes along Parsons and South High, and that's Monday through Saturday. And then on Sunday we're proposing 30 minutes north of Livingston Ave and then 60 minutes South of downtown. So again, Parsons and S High St. For Line 22, we're proposing to improve that frequency to 30 minutes on Sundays. And again, these are not final changes, these are still proposals. We are proposing some schedule adjustments. That's just minor scheduling adjustments on weekdays only on Lines 5 and CMAX. And then specifically on the CMAX, we're also going to do an analysis of stop spacing along Cleveland Ave following the removal of the Line 6, at a previous service change.

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 only for local lines. So that is Lines 1-11, 102 and the CMAX. Similar to our existing Late-Night Lineup, all lines would meet near the Spring Street Transit terminal to provide transfer opportunities for passengers. Each line would dwell at a specific location which you can see pictured here to the right around the terminal for passengers to be able to transfer. And then for Lines 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and CMAX, those will meet up every 30 minutes and Lines 3, 4, 9, 11 and 102 would meet up on the hour.

The McKinley Operations Center will close on Saturday and Sunday, so COTA is proposing to modify Line 12 alignment on weekends. Instead, the 12 would operate between the Fields Operations Center and downtown Columbus using Front and Gay St as a turn around on Saturday and Sunday only. Weekday service would not be impacted with this proposal. And then for customers who would be impacted by this change, we're suggesting they use Line 10 for travel on Broad Street.

Based on historically low ridership, COTA is proposing to remove the Line 61 from Gantz Rd, which you can see pictured to the right. That's the black alignment with the white dashes to South Park Industrial Complex. Again, this has had historically low ridership, and in order to streamline service for Rush Hour passengers, we're proposing to remove that alignment. Any customers who would be impacted are encouraged to use the COTA/Plus zone. That's fully encompassed in the blue area that you see. It will fully encompass that alignment, so customers will still be able to travel to South Park Industrial Complex. And then COTA is proposing a new downtown layover for COTA Lines 41-46, 71-75 and the 102. As a part of this proposal, those lines would no longer use the COTA Transit Terminal. Instead, they would receive a new downtown layover location along E Mound St between 4th and Grant Ave. For customers that would be impacted, there are two existing stops that you can use to catch those lines. So, for the

40s or the 102, there is an existing CMAX station located to the left of the transit terminal, along S High St. And then for passengers needing to connect to any of the 70s, there is an existing stop located directly behind the transit terminal on East Main. And again, to reiterate, these are all proposals no changes are finalized at this time.

And we are recommending to bring back COTA's seasonal Zoo Bus service in May. Weekend service will begin Saturday, May 6 and operate until Memorial Day, that's May 29th. And then from May 29th on to Labor Day, September 4th daily Service would operate, so that seven days a week. On holidays so Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day, the Zoo Bus will operate using our Sunday schedules. For more information you can visit COTA.com/zoobus or call (614) 228-1776.

And then finally we did want to encourage our passengers and give you a heads up. We will be operating, shuttling passengers back and forth for the Red, White and BOOM! presentation, usually in downtown Columbus. And it will be \$4.00 for a round trip. More information will be posted to our website closer to this summer. And with that, that concludes the service recommendations for May. I'll pass it back to Tanya.

Meeting Close

Tanya Salyers, Manager, Community Relations

OK, so if you'd like to get involved with future service changes, we always welcome questions about service change reactions to our methodology and ideas about how we can continue to search for service solutions that better meet our community needs. Final service changes for May will be announced Thursday, April 13th at 6:00 PM in this room or online or by phone however you're joining right now. And on Tuesday, April 18th at noon. You can also always reach us at COTA.com/contact and share your feedback with us there on how we can best improve COTA service.