

10.20.2023

Dear Mr. Roach and Mr. Stewart,

We write to follow-up on the recent announcement that you are piloting single-car trains across the system. We have grave concerns about this change, and have heard complaints from a number of residents. We urge you to reconsider this cut to service; ridership will not increase if the system is challenging to utilize for people. We have the following concerns about these cuts:

Less space for bicycles, wheelchairs, and people who need priority seating

We hear from and represent people across St. Louis who are utilizing multiple methods to get around the City — including combining their bikes, wheelchairs, and other vehicles with bus and train to make it feasible to travel across our region. A single car MetroLink train leaves limited appropriate space for someone with a bicycle or in a motorized wheelchair to fit without obstructing other riders. It also makes it nearly impossible for small groups of people with bikes or wheelchairs to travel together on transit. There's also a risk that people who may need priority seating would struggle to access those seats in a crowded car, making a trip on MetroLink potentially dangerous or uncomfortable for them. Part of the joy and pleasure of MetroLink is that it is feasible to bring along your bike, or easily access a car in a wheelchair. This change limits this option.

Less flexibility for high-use time periods

In addition, we've heard from a number of riders that the single car trains have ended up being quite crowded, since there's less flexibility for riders to spread out when there's a sudden and unplanned rush. While we understand that you are planning to run two cars during busier times and for special events, these may not all be obvious, and it leads to crowding and discomfort for riders. Additionally, when there is only one car, the distance from train to bus transfer, or train to covered shelter, is sometimes extended, making a more uncomfortable trip.

As we've written in the past, we cannot thrive as a region if we do not have a strong, reliable transit system that people feel like they utilize to get to all the places they need to go. We urge you to reconsider this pilot and return to the use of two cars on the MetroLink at most times.

Thank you,

Voting Members of the Community Mobility Committee

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