



Dear members of the St. Louis City Community Mobility Committee,

We thank you for your thoughtful comments enclosed in your letter dated June 15, 2023, as well as for your patience as we have reflected on your letter and collected a response that we hope keeps the door open for continued dialogue.

We agree that in addition to future transit expansion, the region deserves robust bus service today, and Bi-State Development continues striving to provide just that. Our hub-and-spoke network relies on strong connections between bus and rail, and with approximately two-thirds of our average fixed route boardings occurring on MetroBus, it is clear that having frequent and consistent bus service is key to successfully navigating public transit in St. Louis.

We have been balancing community transportation needs with our shifting workforce, and understand how incredibly frustrating this cycle of missed trips and service reductions has been. Regarding your requested short-term items:

- 1) **Missed trips by month are published regularly in our BSD Board of Commissioners meeting packets**, which are available online one week before each Operations Committee or Full Board meeting. For quick reference here, see below in Appendix A our current record of total missed MetroBus trips by month in FY23 to date. We follow this data closely, updating how we monitor and use it for decision-making, and we will continue to be transparent about those missed trips figures going forward.
- 2) The parameters used to make decisions about route modifications stem primarily from balancing demand (i.e. – ridership/route productivity) and supply (i.e. – resource availability, which these days is limited by a workforce shortage). Metro Transit's service standards guide these decisions; typically we receive and evaluate service change proposals from customers and operators throughout the year. **The main criteria we apply when we have to undergo service reductions are:** historical, existing, and projected ridership; historical, existing, and projected operator availability; market and demographic implications of service and coverage changes; change in travel time and quality of service for existing customers.

When Metro Transit has had to undergo these truly difficult trade-offs when reducing service, **our aim has been to impact the fewest number of customers** given the data and information at our disposal. For instance, with the June 12th service change, we reduced frequency and span of service on the routes and the days of week / times of day when the fewest people ride. Weeknights after 6PM and weekends have lower ridership all across the system, but particularly on a handful of routes that we chose to suspend service on in order to instead focus our operator resources on the routes / times of day that serve more people. We recognize that this does not serve everyone well, and that some customers' commutes and daily lives are negatively affected by these decisions.

To that end, we appreciate your call for continued partnerships with alternative mobility providers to fill in the gaps in our current system. Metro will certainly keep working and

piloting in this space. Furthermore, **we think that groups like the CMC are a good fit for helping to move this alternative mobility work forward**, from providing connections and input as new partnerships are developed, to helping us gather community feedback as services are operated and monitored.

- 3) We regularly analyze the impacts of Metro service changes, resulting both in geographic and tabular documentation. Maps that show who is being impacted by different service changes could take many different forms, but in the short term, **Metro staff can prepare a set of “before and after” maps to display the modifications in coverage of the June 2023 service change**, in order to meet the committee’s request. These types of analyses take time to conduct, and so this item will be provided in follow-up communication.

Lastly, we appreciate your comments about our operators as well as our efforts for recruitment, retention, and training. Our operators and mechanics are the lifeblood of our agency, serving the region in jobs that can be both challenging and rewarding, and BSD leadership values these employees highly. In addition to financial increases and incentives, **other investments to improve the operator experience are well underway, and on many of the topics that you highlight**. For instance, we are exploring ways to improve the barriers within our vehicles for better operator security. We have focused on improving work/life balance by reducing the spread of any necessary split shifts. And we are working hard to improve workplace culture with more demonstrations of appreciation and supportive services, such as Metro’s mentorship program for new operators.

Our agency reexamines our network every few years, and we are currently underway with a new analysis. **Metro’s goal for the future is to deliver reliable and resilient transit service that spurs equitable economic development**. Perspectives from riders and concerned citizens are critical inputs to our decision-making, and the CMC will be asked to provide feedback on drafts and deliverables over the coming year. Please do stay engaged with our efforts to operate a service that you can safely depend on to get you where you’re going.

Thank you,

Charles A. Stewart
Chief Operating Officer Metro Transit

Appendix A:***Total Missed MetroBus Trips per month***

Month	Percentage
July 2022	4.1%
August 2022	2.5%
September 2022	2.4%
October 2022	4.3%
November 2022	6.1%
December 2022	2.9%
January 2023	2.1%
February 2023	3.6%
March 2023	2.7%
April 2023	3.1%
May 2023	3.9%