

DRIVING METRO FORWARD PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions – June 2016 Round 2 Public Meetings

1. ***What is METRO proposing as part of this project and why?***

METRO is conducting an 18-month effort to evaluate and re-design our entire fixed route bus system. This is being done at the direction of our Board of Trustees to address our trends of flat to declining ridership and increasing costs. METRO staff is doing the work in-house, utilizing new data sources that were recently made available with implementation of our Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) system, especially more detailed passenger counts and schedule adherence.

2. ***What types of changes are being considered by METRO?***

We are considering changes to all 36 regularly scheduled fixed routes, including the areas with service coverage, streets that routes operate on, the number and location of bus stops along routes, the frequency of scheduled trips by time of day and day of the week, how routes connect to each other, and how the schedules are organized across the entire system. Our Guiding Principles are: 1) Match service to modern travel patterns; 2) Strengthen network structure; 3) Simplify our routes; 4) Foster a transit-first lifestyle; and 5) Build financial stability.

3. ***Where and when are public meetings going to be held?***

There will be several rounds of public input conducted before changes are made in Fall 2017. METRO held a first round of 13 public meetings within a two week period in April 2016 focused on the Guiding Principles. In June 2016 we have scheduled 2 public meetings at our Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center and 4 more at public libraries that are convenient to transit service, when regular route service is available. The subject of this 2nd round of outreach is the initial route map and frequency proposal. The meeting times and locations are provided below:

JUNE 22 – WEDNESDAY

- 12:30 p.m., Cuyahoga Falls Library, 2015 3rd St, Cuyahoga Falls 44221
- 4:00 p.m., Highland Square Library, 807 W. Market St., Akron 44303

JUNE 23 – THURSDAY

- 11:00 a.m. Akron-Summit Co. Main Library, 60 S. High St., Akron 44326

JUNE 27 – MONDAY

- 10:00 a.m. Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center, 631 S. Broadway, Akron 44311
- 4:00 p.m. Robert K. Pfaff Transit Center, 631 S. Broadway, Akron 44311

JUNE 28 – TUESDAY

- 1:00 p.m. Ellet Branch Library, 2470 E. Market St., Akron 44312

A 3rd round of outreach is planned in September 2016 to share METRO's Preferred Alternative Fixed Route System proposal with transit stakeholders. That will provide the basis for building a detailed schedule for the entire fixed route system.

4. ***What input is METRO looking for from the public outreach process at this time?***

METRO has prepared an initial line service change proposal that responds to what we heard from our customers and bus operators in April. The requests we heard were to increase service frequency (more scheduled bus trips per hour), to simplify our routes and schedules with clock-face headways (more regular routes and times), and to increase our service span (add more

evening and weekend trips). In order to do that in a cost-neutral way as METRO's Board has directed, staff's proposal would cut service on suburban (100 series) and circulator (50 series) routes in order to reallocate some buses and operators to urban routes (1-34 series) that serve the largest proportion of METRO's regular riders. Additional change proposals would reduce duplicated service on some streets and break up long complicated routes into shorter, simpler ones that would fit clockface operating schedules. METRO's initial system proposal includes six routes with 20-minute schedule frequency from 6 am to 6 pm on weekdays, 5 routes with 30-minute frequency, 2 routes with 40-minute frequency and 1 with 60-minute frequency. A large majority of METRO's existing riders would enjoy improved transit service. Staff would like to hear reactions from customers and other stakeholders about the proposals, whether they agree with the direction of the proposed changes and what concerns they may have that we should address in our ongoing planning process.

5. *How can the public provide input to the proposed route and schedule changes?*

METRO is committed to conducting a very open and transparent planning process, with opportunities for public input throughout, but especially prior to decision-points. Input on the First System Map is happening in this 2nd outreach round in June. A 3rd round of public input is scheduled for September 2016 on the Preferred Alternative. The expected public rollout of schedule information to go with the Preferred Alternative is planned to occur in April 2017.

6. *How can I offer input if I cannot attend one of the public meetings?*

METRO is inviting input to the project in whatever way is most convenient for people: by phone, e-mail, text message, or regular mail. All comments or questions will be treated the same as if one attends a public meeting. Our project information is available on the website at <http://www.akronmetro.org/driving-forward.aspx>. A project-specific email box has been created to collect comments. It is DrivingForward@akronmetro.org.

7. *When will METRO have more specific route schedules to go along with the proposed system map?*

Our schedule is to use the summer months of July and August 2016 to: 1) Document and review the input from the outreach process; 2) Analyze the impact of our proposed changes on operating and maintenance functions, paratransit customers, and protected populations; and 3) Refine our proposed changes into a Preferred Alternative map of proposed route changes. By September 2016 when our next round of outreach is planned we should be able to identify for each proposed route, the number of bus trips daily and amount of time between bus trips by time of day and day of the week. However, a detailed time schedule for the entire route system is a complex and difficult task. We do not plan to start on that until December 2016, and we expect to finish that in April 2017.

8. *What information will METRO be preparing to support project-related decisions?*

The amount of data available on the existing fixed route system is much better than has been available previously due to the new Automated Vehicle Location system that became operational in 2016. This will provide ridership and schedule adherence data for existing bus service on a route segment basis, and passenger boarding/alighting data at the bus stop level. In

addition, METRO is planning to generate analysis tied to the Guiding Principles that will help support decision-making. Some of these analyses will include evaluating proposed changes in access to jobs and housing, transit travel time, service reliability, support for urban density lifestyles, and cost effectiveness/productivity. We intend to share this information widely through our website and at project-related meetings, especially prior to decision-points.

9. *Who will make the decisions about what changes will ultimately be put into effect?*

METRO's Board of Trustees is the final decision-maker. Day-to-day management of the project is overseen by Richard M. Enty, the Executive Director/Secretary-Treasurer and his Leadership Team, made up of department directors and assistant directors. An internal Service Planning Committee offers interdepartmental review of all proposed route and schedule changes prior to consideration by the Leadership Team or Board of Trustees.

10. *Who do I contact to get the most current available project information in coming months?*

Email: DrivingForward@akronmetro.org

Website: <http://www.akronmetro.org/driving-forward.aspx>

Phone: 330-762-0341 – Customer Service will direct you to the appropriate contact person.