



REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Metropolitan Planning • Public Transportation & Operations • Engineering & Construction

Metropolitan Planning Organization of Washoe County, Nevada

MEETING DATE: October 15, 2021

AGENDA ITEM 5.1

From: Mark Maloney, Director of Public Transportation

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Conduct a public hearing on potential service changes to reduce service for RTC RIDE (Routes 9, 13, 16, 21 and 26), RTC ACCESS (service area and hours) and RTC FlexRIDE (service areas and hours), beginning on or after January 1, 2022, as may be necessary as a result of ongoing staffing shortages being experienced by RTC's primary transit contractors, Keolis Transit Services, LLC and MTM Transit, LLC; approve the service changes.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

While the transit industry has been experiencing a national shortage of drivers for many years, this shortage has become more extreme primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Various reasons for the shortage in labor include:

- Job openings in the Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities sector are at an all-time high and have increased 470% since January 2011. The number of available driving jobs has increased due to the rise in delivery jobs and the gig economy (Amazon, Uber, Lyft, DoorDash, etc.).
- The size of the total labor force is down due to the pandemic.
- The labor force participation rate is also down due to the pandemic.
- A decrease in CDL training due to the pandemic has reduced the number of new CDL drivers. As a result, the number of new drivers has not kept pace with the number of drivers resigning/retiring and has caused increased competition for existing CDL drivers. CDL driver training decreased as there are no virtual/online options for obtaining CDL status due to the nature of the job.
- Lack of childcare / in-person schooling due to COVID-19, leading to more employees choosing to stay home.
- Unemployment compensation changes.
- Fear of re-entering the workforce due to COVID-19.

- Local legalization of marijuana making it more difficult to pass CDL required new hire and random drug testing.
- Federal medical restrictions associated with an individual’s ability to obtain a CDL. Certain conditions such as hypertension, respiratory dysfunction, sleep apnea, diabetes, vision impairment, epilepsy and mental orders disqualify drivers from operating commercial vehicles.

RTC’s primary transit contractors, Keolis Transit Services, LLC and MTM Transit, LLC are both experiencing staffing shortages. As a result, RTC has had to consider implementing temporary service changes to be able to provide on-time reliable service for its customers. RTC previously implemented temporary service level reductions to RTC RIDE on the Virginia St. BRT, the 4th Prater BRT, and Route 2, effective August 14, 2021. Now, RTC is considering further service changes to RTC RIDE, along with service changes to RTC ACCESS and RTC FlexRIDE.

Assuming that staffing shortages continue, the service changes would begin on or after January 1, 2022, and may include the following depending on the level of staffing shortages:

1. RTC RIDE

- Proposed provisional service reduction to meet current operator pool. These trips were selected based upon both the time of day and recent ridership history and represent a 1.92% reduction in the number of total trips.

Route 9:	Proposed Trips to Reduce:	Number of Trips
Weekday	From 5:00 AM to 6:36 AM	3
	From 9:56 PM to 1:21 AM	6
Saturday	From 5:00 AM to 6:36 AM	3
	From 1:00 AM to 1:31 AM	1
Sunday	From 5:29 AM to 6:26 AM	2
Route 13:	Proposed Trips to Reduce:	Number of Trips
Saturday	From 6:15 AM to 6:57 AM	2
Route 16:	Proposed Trips to Reduce:	Number of Trips
Saturday	From 6:15 AM to 6:39 AM	2
	From 7:15 PM to 7:40 PM	2
Route 21:	Proposed Trips to Reduce:	Number of Trips
Weekday	From 4:20 AM to 4:54 AM	2
	From 12:06 AM to 12:22 AM	1
Route 26:	Proposed Trips to Reduce:	Number of Trips
Weekday	From 7:35 PM to 11:39 PM	16
Sunday	From 6:05 AM to 6:35 AM	2
	From 9:05 PM to 9:34 PM	2

- b. Routine Schedule Time Adjustments - As part of RTC’s on-going effort to provide reliable and on-time service, staff monitors bus travel times and speeds, as well as other statistics. As traffic patterns change, passenger habits change and street networks change, these have an effect on the reliability and on-time performance of each route. Therefore, each service change contains small adjustments to the schedule timetables to maintain their relevance to what the bus can actually perform; thereby, improving reliability and on-time performance, as well as customer service. This service change will contain these small adjustments to a small group of routes.

2. RTC ACCESS

- a. Modify reservation times per the schedule below:

Current Hours	Proposed Hours
Monday – Friday: 6:00AM to 6:00PM	Monday – Friday: 8:00AM to 5:00PM
Weekends & Holidays: 9:00AM to 6:00PM	Weekends & Holidays: 8:00AM to 5:00PM

- b. Reduce the service area to match the legal ADA standards as these areas are now served by our replacement FlexRIDE services.
- c. Increase agreements with private providers, such as Uber and Whittlesea Taxi, to provide additional options for non-ADA trips to reduce the burden on the RTC ACCESS fleet.

3. RTC FlexRIDE

- a. Adjustments to hours of service per the schedule below. These adjustments are based upon the ongoing ridership of the service.

Sparks – Spanish Springs	
Current Hours	Proposed Hours
Monday – Friday: 5:30AM to 11:00PM	Monday – Friday: 5:30AM to 10:00PM
Saturday: 6:00AM to 10:30PM	Saturday: 6:00AM to 10:00PM
Sunday: 6:00AM to 10:30PM	Sunday: 6:00AM to 10:00PM

North Valleys	
Current Hours	Proposed Hours
Monday – Friday: 5:30AM to 11:00PM	Monday – Friday: 5:30AM to 9:00PM
Saturday: 6:20AM to 9:00PM	Saturday: 6:20AM to 8:00PM
Sunday: 6:20AM to 9:00PM	Sunday: 6:20AM to 8:00PM

Verdi - Somerset	
<u>Current Hours</u>	<u>Proposed Hours</u>
Monday – Friday: 5:30AM to 11:00PM	Monday – Friday: 8:00AM to 9:00PM
Saturday: 6:20AM to 9:00PM	Saturday: 8:00AM to 8:00PM
Sunday: 6:20AM to 9:00PM	Sunday: 8:00AM to 8:00PM

- b. Discontinuation of Tahoe Service pilot depending on driver availability.

RTC may only implement a portion of these service changes if staffing levels improve before January 1, 2022, and may add additional service after January 1, 2022, if and when staffing levels improve.

Title VI Analysis

Under FTA’s Title VI Circular 4702.1B, transit providers that operate 50-or-more fixed route vehicles in peak service and are located in an urbanized area (UZA) with a population of 200,000 or more, must perform a service equity analysis whenever they make a major service change or any change in fare. This service equity analysis evaluates the impacts of the proposed service changes on Title VI-protected populations and low-income populations. However, FTA has removed this requirement for temporary service changes, as a result of COVID-19, if the change does not last longer than 12 months. After 12 months, the change is no longer considered temporary and the service equity analysis is required.

FISCAL IMPACT

These changes may result in a minor reduction in costs for the RTC depending on the length and extent of the changes.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

There has been no previous Board action or direction on this matter.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) RECOMMENDATION

The proposed service change concepts discussed above were going to be presented to the Citizens Multimodal Advisory Committee on October 6, 2021, but the meeting was cancelled. The concepts were presented to the Technical Advisory Committee on October 7, 2021.