



TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

July 14, 2022
4:00- 5:30 pm
Zoom

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| I. Call to Order
Approval of June Summary | Chair Krissy Oechslin |
| II. Public Comment | |
| III. Information Item: | |
| A. Service Issues and Operator Shortages | John Lewis/Jason Lawrence |
| IV. Action Item: | |
| A. Operator Availability Service Strategy | Jason Lawrence |
| B. In person or Virtual TSAC Meeting | TSAC |
| V. Chair Report | Krissy Oechslin |
| Service Issues | All |
| Operation Planning Report | Pamela White |

Zoom Information:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89509815765?pwd=NmhLZ3hDQ3cxTDEzWjBvYUxJYUU1UT09>

Meeting ID: 895 0981 5765

Passcode: 0p3P3V

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,89509815765#,,,,*702763# US

+13017158592,,89509815765#,,,,*702763# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 646 931 3860 US

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

NEXT MONTH'S TSAC MEETING IS August 14, 2022

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

Thursday, June 9, 2022

TSAC Members Present: Krissy Oechslin, Charlotte
Jack Zovistoski, Huntersville
Sam Grundman, Charlotte
Walt Horstman, Matthews
Jarrett Hurms, Charlotte
Heather Maloney, Davidson
David Snyder, Cornelius
Sherri Thompson, Charlotte
Linda Webb, Charlotte

CATS/City of Charlotte Staff: Jason Lawrence, Pamela White, Kelly Goforth, Rachel Gragg, Jennifer Fehribach, Krystal Green, Kimera Coburn, Zachary Szczepaniak, Edwin Johnson, Natalie Bouchard, Lashima Tate, Logan Lover, Jayla Gittens, Deltrin Harris, Brandon Hunter, Arlanda Rouse, Laura Johnson, Todd Thoren

Meeting Time 4:00-5:30 PM

I. **Call to Order**

Chair Krissy Oechslin called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Approval of May 2022 Meeting Summary

Chair Krissy asked for a motion to approve the meeting summary from May 2022. Jarrett motion to approve the summary. Sherri seconded the motion. The May 2022 meeting summary was approved unanimously.

II. **Public Comment on Agenda Items:**

John has been interviewing people that ride CATS and one of the consistent things that he has been hearing is that there is a huge time delay with the buses and also a number of issues regarding ghost buses specifically the #3, #17, #23, and #29. It has been a consistent issue. John showed up 25 minutes early to the #3 bus route and bus did not show up for an hour, so he was late to the event that he had to go to. People wish that the fare payment was easier for those without a cell phone. People have been asking that it be refined a little bit to perhaps not just be cash based. John would like to see more amenities provided for CATS.

III. Action Item:

A. Title VI COVID-19 Review and 2022-2024 Service Plan

FTA requires agencies across the United States who made changes there were the result of the impact of COVID. Anytime there is a change, and that change is implemented for more than 12 months. In the process of restoring those routes, FTA considers those permanent changes. Anytime there are permanent changes systemwide that is considered a major service change. CATS is receiving feedback from customers concerning those changes that were made.

March 25, 2020 is when the Nationwide Stay at Home was implemented. LYNX Blue Line went to a Sunday service and the local bus services implemented a Saturday service through the weekday. Monday through Friday operated a modified Saturday service and on Saturday operated a regular Saturday service. Sundays operated a regular Sunday services. On Saturdays, typically Express services does not operate but while there was a stay at home charge there were still those essential employees who still needed to travel to workplaces. CATS did provide a limited amount of Express bus services. Those services were implemented into weekday service as a modified Saturday service. The Express routes 41, 61, 65 and 88 were suspended at that time. The reason for the suspension is because each one of those routes have an underlying local route that provided a service not just weekdays but Saturdays and Sundays. In addition, CATS suspended route 290 which is a service that operates in the North Meck area. Also had the village rider services. In June, CATS began to restore some of the services. Still operated a modified Saturday service but began to operate a 15-minute between 6:00am-7:00pm during the weekday. Implemented frequencies on 5,7,8,9,10,11,16,21,27, and route 34.

CATS continued to add services. Added additional trips in October 2020 to route 9 and 27. In February 2021 added additional frequencies on the Sprinter the 6, 16 and 27. Continued to monitor services and additional frequencies to 20 minutes throughout the day was implemented on the 8, 10, 11, 21 and 34. In July of 2021 added some frequency to Express routes 40,46,48,52,53,62,63,64 and 77X. In November of 2021, extended route 64 into downtown Matthews. Continuing to look at services. There are still some services that are at post pandemic or initial change level. Continue to monitor services to determine how to bring services back. Monitoring at ridership levels as well as listening to the customers who are a part of this particular process and through ride.transit.org and customer call ins.

Pamela then discusses the Envision My Ride future planned service adjustment. Service adjustments are a continuation of restoration of services, increase frequency, new services that were planned prior to COVID now have a stronger push from customers on desired locations, adjusted services and proposed microtransit service areas.

One of the changes that CATS is proposing is Route 34. Route 34 is one of the stronger routes and is one of the routes that would continually come up for additional services as part of CATS service restoration. The dotted red lines are the areas that CATS is proposing to discontinue. It doesn't mean that passengers will be without service. This route is Freedom Drive and allows CATS to extend services along a greater part of Freedom Drive. Areas where currently there are gaps and where customers are currently walking but have a strong desire and need to travel to those areas. It allows passengers to travel a longer distance along Freedom Drive. In addition, the service will be a faster service and meet the needs of CATS passengers as the passengers travel along the corridor. The route 88X is a route that is currently suspended, and CATS is looking at bringing that back. CATS has secured a park and ride at the Riverbend Village Shopping Center.

There are some changes that CATS feel are necessary. The dotted line is proposed to be discontinued. CLT Cargo Terminal and Carson trip that is near uptown are considered variances. Working with groups within the area prior to the pandemic the services along the variances which were a couple of times in the morning and again in the evening were significantly underused. Worked with the businesses along the areas that originally requested those trips but were significantly underutilized. Proposing to discontinue those variances. Route 10 will still be services that customers will enjoy. Street network inside the Renaissance area has opened up so there is direct access to the CPCC Mooresville campus. Desire to extend service to allow passengers access to education. Route 235 is one of CATS neighborhood shuttle services. It is a route that is doing a lot but there are inefficiencies within the service. Want to maintain the stronger parts of the route. The modification of this would allow CATS to provide weekend service and more frequent service while discontinuing the inefficient services. There is an underlying local service that is very good service. Opportunity to discontinue the inefficient services but still put the service back into the service and provide more service to CATS customers.

Route 41x is currently suspended. The federal government considered it a permanent change, but CATS always knew it was temporary. Desire to put service back. Understand that Express bus services are supposed to be Express. Proposal to allow the 41x to operate on the express way. Customers between Billy Graham and just below Arrowood would continue to utilize the Route 16 which provides adequate service.

Proposal for route 12. Route 12 is a local route that is currently on detour. It is a neighborhood where services are necessary. Proposing to have microtransit. The microtransit implementation of service in this area will allow passengers access to light rail stations and access to main transfer bus stops along the route as well as destinations along South Boulevard.

Another proposal is the consolidation of the 65 and 64. In November, extended route 64 into downtown Matthews. The dotted line would be discontinued. Route

27 is still service that passengers would be able to access.

The route 29 and route 222. Looking at terminating route 29 at Eastland Transit Center and provide the service from Eastland Transit Center to the UNCC campus area. Passengers on the 222 would be able to access service between Walmart and the Lawyers Park & Ride lot where passengers can transfer to other services. Light blue area is a proposed microtransit area.

New proposal to extend services along Sugar Creek. New proposed service would operate from Sugar Creek light rail station to the Derita area. Today the extension over 85 along Sugar Creek does not exist but it is something that CATS customers have continuously expressed the need. Route 211 proposal to mainstream it. Operate both ways along Tom Hunter and would serve the Tom Hunter Station as well as continue to the Walmart.

Pamela talked about microtransit in the Charlotte area, but today there are village riders that operate in North Meck area and there are three routes that operate in that area. Current village riders operate a fixed deviated service which means that it is a fixed route that will deviate up to three quarters of a mile from a bus stop in order to provide transit service to customers. Today, customers do that by calling 24 hours in advance. Transitioning this to a microtransit area or microtransit service will allow access to all customers within the shaded area. It would not require a 24 hour request. Proposal for North Meck area. The 290 as it operates today in this area would be discontinued.

Jarrett commented that when it comes to microtransit and discontinued routes is there consideration in the future whenever a route or a portion of a route is to be discontinued that there be consideration for microtransit and or priority for microtransit. For example, Route 34 the route that would be discontinued goes along Alleghany and also services Phillip O. Berry. The 29 where it goes into east Charlotte and east Charlotte could be very underserved when it comes to infrastructure and other areas, Jarrett is glad that there is a proposed microtransit for the area. The part will be discontinued from the 29 is it going to be well serviced by the 222 or is there potential for additional microtransit areas that the 29 will not pick up anymore and the 222 might not be able to reach quite as well.

Pamela responded that whenever CATS discontinues a service particularly services where the effect is 25% CATS does a public outreach. Pamela will get with Ms. Love because it is an area where she lives and that she has a strong interest in. There is a grant that CATS received will allow CATS to take a good look at microtransit and to see how that service might be distributed along the service area. That particular study will help guide what it should look like, and when microtransit might be initiated. These are areas that preliminary and some of them as part of Bruce study also took a look at. CATS will look at it a little deeper. Areas where there is low density neighborhood areas is where microtransit works best and work better than the 40 foot bus that could serve it.

Clayton while making microtransit happen and studying it, is there any intentions for CATS to bring back first/last program where CATS had with LYFT where \$4 was taken off when people are within one mile of the train station so they can easily access it? Took a tour of Camp North End and the owner was talking at length about the program and how it used to serve them and how it no longer serves them.

Pamela responded that the services that CATS will be providing as part of microtransit and look at it as part of that. The microtransit is a service that has the opportunity to replace some of the things that first/last mile actually operated but the study that CATS is going to undertake will help identify the needs.

Clayton feels that it would be a worthwhile and previously used stopgap while studying.

Jason responded that questions around microtransit be held until next presentation. Certainly, get into those details and talk about first/last mile program and how successful that was, and the lessons learned. Jason doesn't think that CATS wants to bring back exactly the program that CATS had with the pilot. CATS has learned a lot since then and the technology has changed.

Jarrett is glad that the number 25 route is going to become into realization.

Krissy commented that it looks like adding the 25 means mainstreaming the 211 which the green dotted line used to go through the neighborhood and now it is up on Tom Hunter. There are pros and cons. It is faster for a bus to take a major street, but it is a lot farther for people to get to the bus. Krissy wanted to know if CATS has done the neighborhood outreach. Has CATS had the chance to talk to the neighborhood to find out the feedback?

Pamela responded that what TSAC's approval does is it allows CATS to continue to the process of taking a look at this for implementation. These proposals would be implemented as CATS continues with outreach between 2022-2024. The Hidden Valley Neighborhood Association is a group that CATS is very familiar with. Some former employees live in that neighborhood and are a part of that community. Doesn't mean this exact service is going to be implemented without the customers feedback.

Krissy asked if TSAC votes tonight is for CATS to continue working on these then in theory couldn't all routes change based on feedback?

Pamela responded that it is a possibility. One of the main things CATS is doing is fulfilling the FTA requirement for the Title VI COVID feedback. As part of that, CATS is introducing these proposed changes that could take place between 2022-2024. The restoration of services and things like that. CATS will still bring back to TSAC as part of the service change for either October, June, or February. This plan is what would be adopted but TSAC will see it again as part of service change

in which the changes will be implemented.

Krissy asked if TSAC were to vote no would that mean that CATS would stop working on that? Voting to have CATS go ahead and keep working on these new and changed routes.

Jason responded that what Pamela presented tonight are service equity analysis the changes that were done during the pandemic period. Those changes are now permanent and formalizing that through action tonight. Those are things like adding more frequency throughout the day on a number of routes. While doing the public involvement for this analysis also did service equity analysis for proposed changes. Take action on is the action for the Title VI analysis service equity for the pandemic related changes. This is the action that CATS is putting in front of FTA and what CATS will take to MTC. If TSAC said not tonight on route changes then CATS would adjust and do more public outreach. The real action is on the pandemic level changes. As the TSAC committee can make the decision to vote on those that the committee sees fit.

Sam commented if CATS is looking to expand service and routes but having difficulty manning the current routes. How do those two work together?

Pamela responded that CATS does not stop planning on what the services look like in the future. It is like Envision My Ride initiative. CATS understands that there is work to do for now but also understand as CATS continues to solidify and improve those that CATS does not want to be behind the eight ball in making sure that customer's future needs are accounted for and those changes available to be implemented when the right time comes along. Continue to plan what the future should look like because CATS does not want to stop future planning while fixing and improving things that CATS knows need to be improved. Addressing some challenges today and planning for the future.

Krissy asked if there was a motion to approve the study that has been placed before TSAC the proposal.

Linda asked Krissy if she was asking TSAC to approve the report that Pamela submitted.

Pamela responded that she has done a Title VI analysis that addresses the changes that were made as part of COVID that the FTA said were permanent and said that CATS should be doing a Title VI analysis to determine whether or not there is disparity in the changes that were made. CATS did a Title VI analysis on these particular services that were already implemented. As part of that, CATS did some changes that CATS believes need to be made. Before making those changes, the changes require a Title VI analysis. Asking TSAC to approve the Title VI analysis done on every single one of the route changes that are proposed to be made. There are still things that CATS needs to do to implement the change but looked at proposed changes to make a determination on whether or not there

was disparity in the proposals to implement these.

Krissy commented that she saw the Title VI analysis for when fares were going to resume being collected on the Gold Line and talked about percentage of riders of color, and income levels. Is that a similar analysis to what you did for each of the routes which had an impact during Covid service changes?

Pamela responded that fare analysis and service analysis are different. There is a lot more required as part of that. What prompts a Title VI analysis is that it is either a low income area or a minority area.

Krissy commented that on the one hand she knows the changes have already been done it is a bit of a FTA formality to get approval. What was the result of the analysis?

Pamela responded that the part of the analysis will be the Civil Rights Department. The Civil Rights Department is the one that provides whether or not there were disparities. Pamela's explained that the analysis that is done by Civil Rights is one that TSAC will be able to see in the future.

Krissy commented that the analysis that Pamela is asking TSAC to approve is where Pamela went through and said "CATS suspended this one because there is already a route there or CATS moved this because this other route serves that" that is the analysis. That is what the maps show.

Krissy asked if there was a motion to approve service analysis.

Jack approved, Linda seconds. Motion is passed.

B. TSAC Summer Schedule

Krissy commented that TSAC traditionally does not meet in July. MTC has not voted yet on which months to skip. Krissy thinks last year MTC missed July and August, but TSAC voted last year to skip just July. Motion about summer schedule such as to skip July, to skip July and August.

Pamela responded that this group typically skips the July meeting, but TSAC has always had the meeting in August. One of the reasons is that CATS brings service changes to TSAC. If TSAC skips July and August, September will be very late for TSAC to vote on service changes.

Jack proposed skipping July meeting and reconvening in August. Linda seconds.

Krissy motion has passed and is approved.

IV. Information Items:

A. FTA Route Restoration Grant Award

CATS was invited to be part of NCDOT update to the Connected Autonomous Vehicle Policy. Set up a road map back in 2017 with a lot of people with this type of technology. It is 2022 and doesn't see self-driving cars. It is probably time to update policy. Invited to be a part of that conversation. Jason feels that there is a space for CATS to be a part of connected vehicles.

Jason announced that Krystal Green Director of Marketing and Communication last day is Friday, June 17th. Krystal will be missed. Jason thanked Krystal for her time. She will leave her legacy and mark with the organization.

Jason did want to focus on the service equity analysis because the microtransit topic is big and fast. As CATS talks through the Bus Priority Study looking at the different use cases there are many things that are involved with implementing this type of strategy. Have had in the past certain pilots that do this kind of work. There was a pilot not only connecting Camp North End over to the Parkwood Station but also from the JW Clay Boulevard Station over to the University Research Park. That was done through CATS Pass App that CATS used to have. What CATS learned through that is people's expectations for the app truly need to be on demand, truly very frequent and truly connected with how the trip is planned. One thing that CATS is really excited about is CATS new app has more capability than the old app. As CATS works through the technology be able work up microtransit in the current app. Already done a pilot. Jason thinks maybe agencies realize that the time for pilots is over when it comes to first/last mile and for on demand connected services and need to start moving towards implementation. Need to go through more formal procurement processes to bring on providers and more conversations internally. Who does CATS bring back Uber or Lyft? Does CATS bring in a third party?

The transit work that was just wrapped up with the Bus Priority Study is not all by itself. CATS has been working with strategic mobility plan, CDOT, 2030 System Plan, 2040 Charlotte Plan creating 10-minute neighborhoods and CONNECT Beyond effort. The Bus Priority Study really touches all pieces of those, and all are linked directly with the success of what was proposed with that effort.

The vision is to improve time not just passenger time. Enhancing customer experiences at the bus stops. Increasing access is where the microtransit effort really comes to support. Jason shared the resolution that was put in front of MTC last month. The resolution lays out division and framework of the plan Envision My Ride back to 2016 of a high frequency network and priority corridors. Also, using the map and analysis to establish microtransit strategy not just for on demand zones but looking at each station along the Lynx Blue Line about first/last mile and that could take many forms. It could be bikes and it could be scooters. Recommending using a strategy that was put forward increased amenities in CATS system by looking at a more equitable based focus on how CATS ranks, and

scores stops not only on ridership but looking at access destinations, wait time and other factors not just ridership. Really guide bus capital and operating plan.

Microtransit is an on-demand transit type of service, provides first/last mile. It could act as a feeder service to more frequent routes. It could operate within designated zone or boundary and typically it is smaller transit vehicles. One thing CATS has learned is that CATS needs to expand toolbox when it comes to fleet not have a broader set of vehicles.

Various use cases in Envision My Ride Bus Priority Study cover new service areas that may not be suited for fixed route be better for more on-demand it would be lower density. There is the first/last mile types of connections other rideshare companies but also bike and scooter. There is fixed route replacement. Looking at routes that are underperforming carrying less than five passengers per hour look at placing them with on-demand services.

The analysis looked at the entire system. Look at suitability for on-demand services. CATS recommended a number of zones that was adopted by MTC Intentionally to look at more on-demand more shuttle like services. Areas to focus on first like Village Rider, Steele Creek area, Matthews, Pineville, and Ballantyne area that would be more suited for more route conversion to on-demand.

Last September CATS submitted an application to the FTA to the Route Restoration Program. It was intended to help transit agencies come up with strategies to help improve ridership and to improve access to primarily to lower income and disadvantaged communities. The eligible activities to help CATS undertake transit route planning activities but also looking at new technology as well as electrification of fleet.

A lot has changed since September, CATS now has an app that could potentially be a platform for this. Moving towards electrification and talking to the Bus Operations group about working through a procurement process to bring in microtransit providers. FTA awarded \$25 million to 50 transit agencies across 24 states. CATS was awarded \$750,000 to develop program and key tasks will be heavily around public involvement education, CATS will do some equity mapping, technology integration and technology across the transportation space, fleet planning, on-demand service planning, first/last mile plan and mobility hub electrification assessment. Build connected networks. The plan will focus on all the zones and the areas identified in the suitability analysis.

The microtransit planning study will help build out connected network between frequent service, mobility hubs to bike, scooter, and pedestrian connections to microtransit and rideshare. Really part of the ultimate goal that CATS is part of overall solution within a connection network.

What would be the timescale over which this would put into place?

Jason responded that CATS is just now is just getting started into this. Not starting from zero. CATS had a pilot and know lessons from that. Jason feels that certain things could be run parallel. He doesn't believe that CATS would have to complete the study to implement parts of the program. Look at ways of doing things in the interim like connecting people to the Blue Line. Need time to layout strategy and timeline.

B. Charlotte Transportation Center Redevelopment

Seen in the news conversations around Charlotte Transportation Center redevelopment across from the Spectrum Center. This is not something that is brand new to CATS. Jason provided a preview of CTC redevelopment. Jason showed a map of uptown area and Blue Line, LYNX Silver Line around 11 street proposed to connect over to Charlotte Gateway Center, the Gold Line through the middle of the map, and the LYNX Red Line commuter rail going to Charlotte Gateway Center. The two stars on the map are the Charlotte Transportation Center and Charlotte Gateway Station also a public/private partnership that CATS is working with another developer. Two stations are becoming very important and will be key to uptown mobility.

CATS has come a long way. Jason showed an old image of Charlotte Transportation Center when it was still Charlotte transit in the uptown area right beside Candy's. Used to transfer at the square (Trade & Tryon), in the mid 90's in partnership with Bank of America relocated to what used to be the old convention center. The center has served Charlotte well over that time and is in need of an update or renovations.

The train station which will be the Charlotte Gateway Station survived as a train station in the uptown area. Jason showed a picture of the 1960's that shows where the rail lines were at-grade in uptown Charlotte. The old train station was demolished and relocated in its current location off North Tryon.

In partnership with NCDOT, Federal Railroad Administration and public/private developer and will be building over the yellow parcels a transportation center inside a mixed use development that is connected by the LYNX Silver Line, the Gold Line, and the Red Line.

A few years ago, CATS had an unsolicited proposal to redevelop the Charlotte Transportation Center and when through a procurement process in June 2019 to begin a process to select a developer. Through the procurement process, CATS selected the joint venture partnership of Charlotte-based White Point Partners and Dart Interests to redevelop transit center within a mixed use development.

Jason presented the current bay assignment at the Charlotte Transportation Center. There are 20 bays within the transit center and two bays on the outside. Converting to a new transit center will result within a reduction of bays. Roughly around 16-18 bays at that location and will be there during the construction of the

permanent facility. Still working through the details of that but would be accessible by a new road connection between 3rd and 4th.

Jason provided some images of the were submitted as part of CATS Raise Grant proposal. Some renderings of the mixed use development that will be above the transit center and another cross section showing the LYNX Blue Line, the Gold Line, and the connections down to the street level from the Blue Line.

The current proposal for the redevelopment is to do a below grade option for the new transit center. This is a cross section. Roughly one level down below street for a new facility connecting primarily off of 4th street into new facility.

Jason shared the current proposal for the below grade facility that would be in a circular pattern so roughly 14 bays inside the facility entering off of 4th street exiting off of 4th street. Secondary exit off of Trade Street and the buses will enter into circular motion. Still retain all the current things at the transit center which would include Safety and Security, customer service and operator facility as well. Often times passengers have to cross lanes of travel to facilitate transfer to vehicles to other buses. In this scenario people would get off at a bay and walk through a concourse across to other buses.

CATS submitted a Raise Grant in 2021 to assist in the funding of this effort. Awarded \$15 million dollars towards the public/private development. Jason showed an example of things that CATS is still working through. One of CATS requirements and asks of the developer is that natural light come down into the facility. Want natural light to come through either side of the facility but also down from the top.

Jason listed the project benefits. He feels that this project will improve passenger experience. It is great opportunity to include charging infrastructure. How to bring in electrification of the fleet into this facility. It is consistent with goals of Envision My Ride for a more decentralized bus network. Will have less bays but as CATS move towards more decentralization will be able to accommodate transfers outside of uptown at either light rail stations or new mobility hub locations. CATS is very early in the process of this and have a conceptual design with a developer and will have to do a service equity analysis and public outreach and engagement.

Jarrett commented that CTC is a transfer for both buses and Blue Line and now Gold Line. Any different boarding/deboarding either the Blue Line or Gold Line. Once the new below grade transit center.

Jason asked if Jarrett meant would there be any changes to platform to Blue line or the platform of the Gold Line. CTC and 3rd Street Station will remain at current locations. Over long term would like to increase all of the platforms on the light rail with the ability to accommodate three car trains. The CTC and 3rd street stations currently do not allow that but during planning would think through how three car platforms could work with this development but the locations will not change.

Same with Gold Line not proposing any changes to the Gold Line station at its current location. The access that CATS currently has today will continue to have that access down to the bus and then probably additional access down to the street level on the transit center side currently doesn't exist today only on the spectrum center side.

Jarrett responded that Jason had said the ability to have three car trains as far as CTC and 3rd Street. Are you referring to the actual bridges where above the grade of both Trade and 3rd Street of being able to carry the weight of two passing three car trains as far as being able to carry the load?

Jason responded that the original project for the Blue Line was supposed to be three car trains. Through design and engineering throughout the ridership that CATS was estimating at the time FTA did not feel that it was exactly justified. The Blue Line Extension can accommodate all three car trains. Already upgraded four of the fifteen Blue Line stations to three cars. The design of the Blue Line was always meant to accommodate three car trains. Talking about extending the platform so that the third train could be accommodated.

Sam commented that a parking deck on a bus station is a bad idea. Put the parking at park and ride stations outside of uptown so everyone takes the bus and train into uptown to this one spot.

Clayton commented that extending of the platform at CTC largely is pretty easy to expand. That parking is going to be vital to getting financing for the project.

Jason responded that parking is always a conversation near transit facilities and the financing of it.

Walt had an overall concern about when he read the original proposal about underground. Walt has been at three of the light rails Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. When going underground the smelly urine hits you and quality of life and concerns go up rapidly. Walt has two daughters that live in Manhattan and both daughters don't take the subway because they don't trust it. It is going underground, and you are more protected from bad guys. The three transit centers that Walt has been on in the last year have not been really excited.

Jason responded that part of the conversation with any new facility particularly underground would be safety and security is a big part of the review process. Jason would be happy to bring examples of transit facilities below grade as CATS goes through this process. One thing to think about in context to all this is transit center has some years on it and CATS is faced at a point to either redevelop the site on site, do upgrades to give more time on it, find a new location or redevelop in its exact location. Faced with choices and CATS feels it is an important move to achieve the goal of a well-connected system.

Krissy feels like there are still questions like how to deal with diesel fumes. What

kind of exposure to outside air and things like that? This is the beginning of a long process.

C. South End Station

South End Station is a proposed new light rail station. When the Blue Line first opened the station sites were selected based on the needs at the time. The amount of development that was out in South End all along the south corridor. Today the South End has rapidly developed and there is much more density and people and demand. An issue that came up fairly quickly after the Blue Line opened was that it is difficult to get from one side of the tracks to the other in this area. There are not a lot of road connections. In 2017 the city began a study to look at a potential pedestrian connection close to the exclamation mark on the map. When the study wrapped up in 2019, CATS decided that this area would best be served by putting in a new light rail station. CATS has hired Kimley Horn to be the lead consultant. Right now, going through a planning study of this area to determine what the best site for a station.

Coming out of the study there were two options for a station. The North Option and South Option and are both about midway between East West and New Bern station. The North Option is adjacent to Atherton Lofts just south of Atherton Mill on one side. On the other side is adjacent to 2161 Hawkins which is another tower that is going to be a new high rise residential tower right next 2151 Hawkins which is another tower that is just wrapping up construction. Proposing to put out a station platform similar to the Blue Line Extension. This will accommodate three car trains so will not have to extend it in the future. Two side platforms 15 foot wide similar to the other stations. It will displace the rail trail a little bit so will have to rebuild sections of the rail trail to wrap around the station platform but otherwise once that is reconstructed it will be as close to adjacent to the station platform as possible. On the north side, the rail trail splits off from beside the tracks and rises up above the track level to get behind the old trolley barn. That rail trail will be sort of ramping up to tie into the rest of the trail. On the other side everything is flatter. One big issue trying to work out is that the development at 2161 and that is Sycamore Brewery today that development is already designed and working now trying to resolve and come up with a plan that would allow the platform and trail to be as its shown. Construction to move forward and for the two to co-exist. They designed their development without leaving room for a station platform. They left for the rail trail but not the platform. In this option, more than likely the building is not there yet could overhang the rail trail.

The South Option is between Publix and Spectrum apartments. One of the original concerns that was addressed in the original study was that a lot of people trying to get from Spectrum apartments on west side of the tracks and trying to get Publix when it opened. A lot of people were jumping the fence and making unsafe crossings. Part of this station is not just to have a station but also the track crossing is very important so it can be accessible from the rail trail. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity improved in this area. There are no public streets coming into either of

the station options and makes it very tricky and difficult for anyone to construct a station at either of these sites and there is little unused land for staging construction. Working right up close to apartment complexes and people are living right next to the construction. On this South Option the Rail Trail is 20 foot wide instead of 12 foot wide. The rail trail behind Spectrum apartments is wider there because it is also being used as fire access for the apartment complex. Spectrum apartments CATS would have to keep rail trail open at all times during construction while widening in order to maintain fire protection to the apartments. Infrastructure behind the Spectrum apartments that would be have to be reconstructed. Came to the conclusion that Spectrum apartments is not going to be a great site and the South Option may not work to build a station platform because of the impacts and reconstruction required there.

Also considering a hybrid of the two which would involve having the station platform beside Publix and a second station platform on the north side beside Sycamore Brewery or 2161 Hawkins. It would be slightly south so that it would line up a little better with the track crossing and would have one main track crossing serving both platforms to the north of one and to the south of the other. Where people want to cross is right in the middle between the two options.

Right now, working through the planning and the environmental process which is NEPA. It is federally required in order to get federal funding locked in. Evaluating these two alternatives actually three now and once one is selected and take it to MTC to be adopted into a locally preferred alternative then FTA will allow to complete and work through the remainder of the environmental process.

Developed some evaluation criteria to guide CATS in gathering information and selecting where the best location for the station would be. Always start with safety considerations. There are some but there are none that dramatically favor one location over the other. Looking at safety and connectivity and both go together. ADA is a big issue for the grades out at Atherton Lofts. All approaches to the station will need to be ADA compliant. Looking at connectivity it is not just connectivity to the rail trail but also looking at how people will get to the station since there will not be a public street and a public sidewalk. What sort of paths are available to make it comfortable for people to get from the station to South Boulevard or to Hawkins Street back and forth. Looking closely at how this will disrupt operations on the Blue Line during construction and after and how much reconstruction is needed. If the North Option is selected that by far has the most impact and have to reconstruct significant amount of overhead catenary system OCS poles. Whereas if the South or spilt option is selected then have a lot less impact. Have had stakeholders meeting and have talked to almost everyone in the corridor. Looking at lighting levels and noise levels and how that would impact anyone close to the new station.

Trying to minimize infrastructure conflicts draining including some underground detention required by code for some of these adjacent developments that may be building over or relocating in some cases. Working with Planning and closely with

Center City Partners to understand the best way to set this station up so it integrates well with other land uses and how it can be done the best way. Most economic development impact in the area. Looking at overall cost of the project to make sure that CATS is being responsible with project budget and making sure not creating additional maintenance concerns in the future.

Todd went over the schedule. Right now, CATS is in planning. The presentation Todd showed today going to MTC and present the project on June 22nd and will go to City Council. Have quite a bit of public outreach, stakeholder meetings and individual meetings. Have a general public meeting in late July early August. There will be a second stakeholder meeting around that time. Intend to take this to MTC once have staff recommendation for adoption into a locally preferred alternative in late August. Allow complete the Environmental NEPA process this fall. Evaluate project delivery considering bringing in a contractor early for this project and process called Construction Manager at Risk to see if appropriate for this project. Might allow CATS to better be able to address some of the issues of trying to build this project while the Blue Line continues operation with limited workspace and access areas. Design should probably take 1.5 years have in construction in 2025 and finished in 2026 when CATS would begin operations.

Jarrett asked if would have to terminate at New Bern or would there have to be a bus bridge at New Bern and East West for a temporary period of time or would it be more of a singular track kind of situation when that time does arise.

Todd responded that construction is going to be challenging. Going to have to work out some of those issues. Intent is to do as much of this project pre-fabricated as possible and bring it in and install it. It will be very different construction from how the Blue Line Extension was built. Some of the work will be done from one side or the other tracks, some of the work will be done from the tracks using rail equipment and some of the work will be done at night when Blue Line is not operating. Intent is not to have shutdowns and bus bridges and Todd can't say that it defiantly will not happen. The idea is would have some single track operations while using rail equipment to construct the station. At other times working from the side and would not have any impact on operations. Do not intend to have bus bridges and total shutdowns of the Blue Line between New Bern and East West.

Walt asked if the construction is at night to avoid shutdown of the line does Atherton Mills when telling them that the majority of the construction would happen when sleeping or do, they assume it is during the day? Does this impact any of the other lines, does it take funding, tie up people resources or is this all new hires so not slowing down whatever is going on with the Silver Line and Red Line?

Todd responded that he wouldn't say the majority of this would be done at night. There is a fairly narrow window when the Blue Line is not operating. Never would get it built if done primarily during those hours. Generally, this will be built during the day. This project is being funded by using unspent money from the Blue Line

Extension as well as some investor private funding from some developments in the area. Does not affect Silver Line or Gold Line or any other expansion of rail or transit.

Clayton commented that when he first learned of the project the initial intent was to provide an at-grade crossing and then a station next. Is the at-grade crossing no longer a thing because there are 3500 apartments under construction on that side of the line that can't get to Publix. From Clayton's understanding there was originally a station planned where the Publix is but was axed early on. Not a new station but a reinstall of a station that was left off at the beginning phase. What is the timeline of the at-grade connection?

Todd responded that the at-grade crossing is part of the project. At each of the stations there is an at-grade crossing at either at the North or the South ends of the station platforms. Even on the north option which may not have a connection directly from north end of the station up to Atherton Mill because of grade concerns would have a track crossing that would connect the east platform to the west platform. There will be a crossing basically between the two platforms.

Clayton commented that in both sceneries have to wait for the full built of the station in 2025- 2026 to be able to cross the road.

Todd responded not necessarily. Like to be able to open up a pedestrian/bicycle crossing during construction that would help with routing people on the rail trail. Will have closure on the rail trail at times during construction. Intent is to close the gap in the rail trail behind the Autobell. Try to have as good of accessibility for the rail trail while in construction because that is going to be impacted for an extended period of time. Intent is to try to have some sort of pedestrian crossing in the area and hopefully will become permanent crossing. It might not be able to be open at all times might have to be closed at times for safety reasons.

Clayton has heard that there is an additional station planned Southside Drive by developers in that area and have started engaging with CATS.

Todd responded that he has not heard about that.

V. Chair Report

Krissy started off the Chair Report MTC approved Envision My Ride Bus Priority Study. There was a discussion about the Gold Line Phase III Study and Krissy believes that City Council will have to pay for that and delayed voting looking at the next phase of Gold Line development. MTC approved MetroRapid North Corridor BRT staff recommendations. John Lewis talked a bit about trying to fill labor shortage with bus operators. The management company that manages the bus operators has pledged to fill 100 open positions in 100 days which started on May 16th. Krissy is curious to know how that is going since it is one of the driving causes behind the ghost bus issue where the buses are pulled out of service because

there are not enough operators.

Service Issues

Jarrett wanted to know the progress as far as the hiring of more drivers. The ghost bus issue is still an ongoing issue. According to a report there has been approximately 98 missed trips per day between January 1st and March 31st. Update as far as the process of being able to get those types of drivers to fill those gaps. How do you collect ridership data if the bus has a nonfunctioning fare box?

Jason responded the MTC meeting was only a few weeks ago on May 25th. Jason will come back to the next TSAC meeting and give an update on initiative that John mentioned at that meeting. As far as ridership and how that is collected, if there is an issue with the farebox the operator does click onto the fare box to indicate there is a ride.

Jarrett commented that CATS will be receiving more public attention on ghost bus issues. Has there been an analysis on what routes might have buses not showing up and how to be able to reallocate certain routes?

Jason responded that he can more information when he can provide a more informed detailed response. There are a lot of issues at play as it relates to situations.

Krissy commented before the CTC redevelopment broke in the news wanted to talk about ghost buses at a TSAC meeting. Try to keep on agenda for August meeting and also to see if there has been any progress in figuring out a way to account for missed buses in the app.

Operation Planning Report

Pamela started off the Operation Planning Report by Gold Line and streetcar feeds available on the app. Will be official on Monday. Route 9 identified and looking on ways to improve.

Krystal commented if you open the CATS Pass App and click on plan and go to route and put 510 which is the City LYNX Gold Line. You can see stations and see a streetcar. Click on it and it will tell you if it is early, on time or scheduled. If it says scheduled, then may be waiting for data from the vehicle to reach app. Going Live on Monday. QR Codes at stations beginning next week.

Chat

Sam Grundman
CATS needs more bus operators

Mita Ghude

do we know if the microtransit will allow transfer to an express bus

Sam Grundman

Mita, it may for an upcharge. Local is currently \$2.20 but express is \$3.00. So when you transfer from local to expres you have to pay that extra \$0.80

Mita Ghude

There is currently no way to transfer to an express bus from a village rider, as it starts running after the express buses stop service in the morning. The question isn't about cost, it would be about expansion of service with either changed times or an extra trip to north Mecklenburg

Sam Grundman

There used to be a plan to put the bus station directly under The Square

Jack Zovistoski

In case I miss service issues: Mita is from Huntersville and sent me a note. Please see her comment, "There is currently no way to transfer to an express bus from a village rider, as it starts running after the express buses stop service in the morning. The question isn't about cost, it would be about expansion of service with either changed times or an extra trip to north Mecklenburg"

Walt Horstman

concerns about underground bus bays, which could lead to increased crime.

Sam Grundman

crime in an underground station can't be worse than an above-ground station.

What matters is if there are people there

That picture on the left needs to be posted around CTC

Sam Grundman

Putting a parking deck on a transit station is a bad idea

Can we work with the developer and city to move the parking deck to park-and-ride stations outside Uptown?

Landon

How will the new proposed CTC with the buses underground connect to the blue line which is elevated above ground?

Sam Grundman

stairs and elevator to the main level then another up to the station level

Krissy Oechslin

Landon, I think it's yet to be determined. The rendering also has escalators

Walt Horstman

1. Would the blue line not be able to go end to end during construction?
2. Would this impact the planing/construction of the other lines?

Sam Grundman

Once they pick a station placement, they could open the crossing first and then build the rest of the station

Action Items:

Person Responsible	Action Item/Comments
Jason Lawrence	Initiative – Give you an update on the Initiative that John Lewis presented at MTC on May 25th
	August TSAC Agenda: ghost buses and if there has been any progress in figuring out a way to account for missed buses in the App

The meeting was concluded and adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY July 14, 2022

Charlotte Area Transit System Service and Labor Update

Transit Services Advisory Committee Meeting

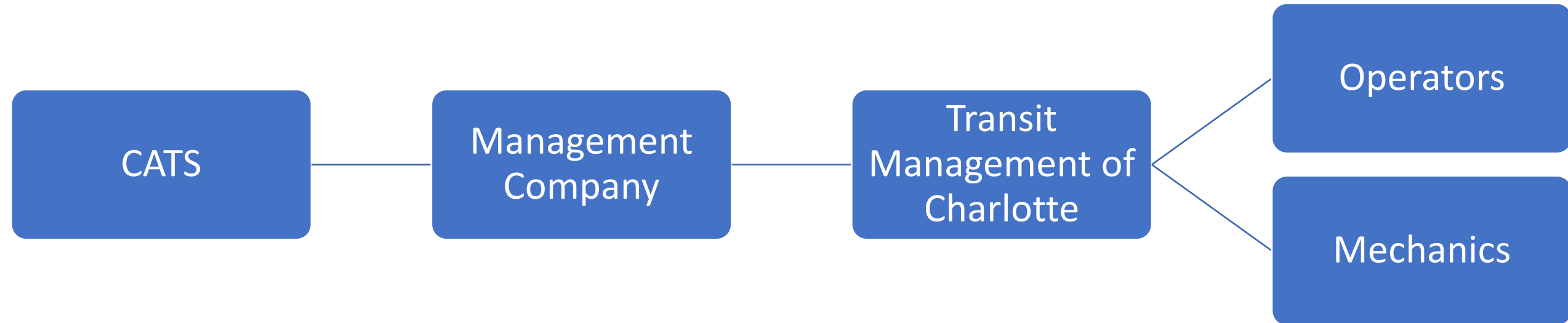
July 14, 2022



Service and Labor Update

- ▶ CATS Bus Operations Organizational Structure
- ▶ Labor Issues: Local & National
- ▶ Proposed Strategy

CATS Bus Operations Organizational Structure



National - Operator Shortages

▶ TriMet: Portland, Oregon

- “Starting January 10, 2022, 20 of our 84 bus lines will run less frequently on weekdays due to a shortage of bus operators and other workers” Source: [TriMet News Release \(January 2022\)](#)
- “Starting Sept. 18, 2022, ten bus lines will have service reduced, including two that will have service canceled due to a shortage of bus operators.” “Temporarily reducing service to match our staffing levels means that buses will run more true to schedule and riders will encounter far fewer canceled buses.” Source: [TriMet Service Alert \(July 2022\)](#)

▶ MARTA: Atlanta, Georgia

- “Ninety-six of MARTA’s 113 routes will run less frequently – they’ll operate on a Saturday schedule, even on weekdays. The remaining 17 routes will maintain regular weekday schedules.” Source: [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution \(December 2021\)](#)

▶ CapMetro: Austin, Texas

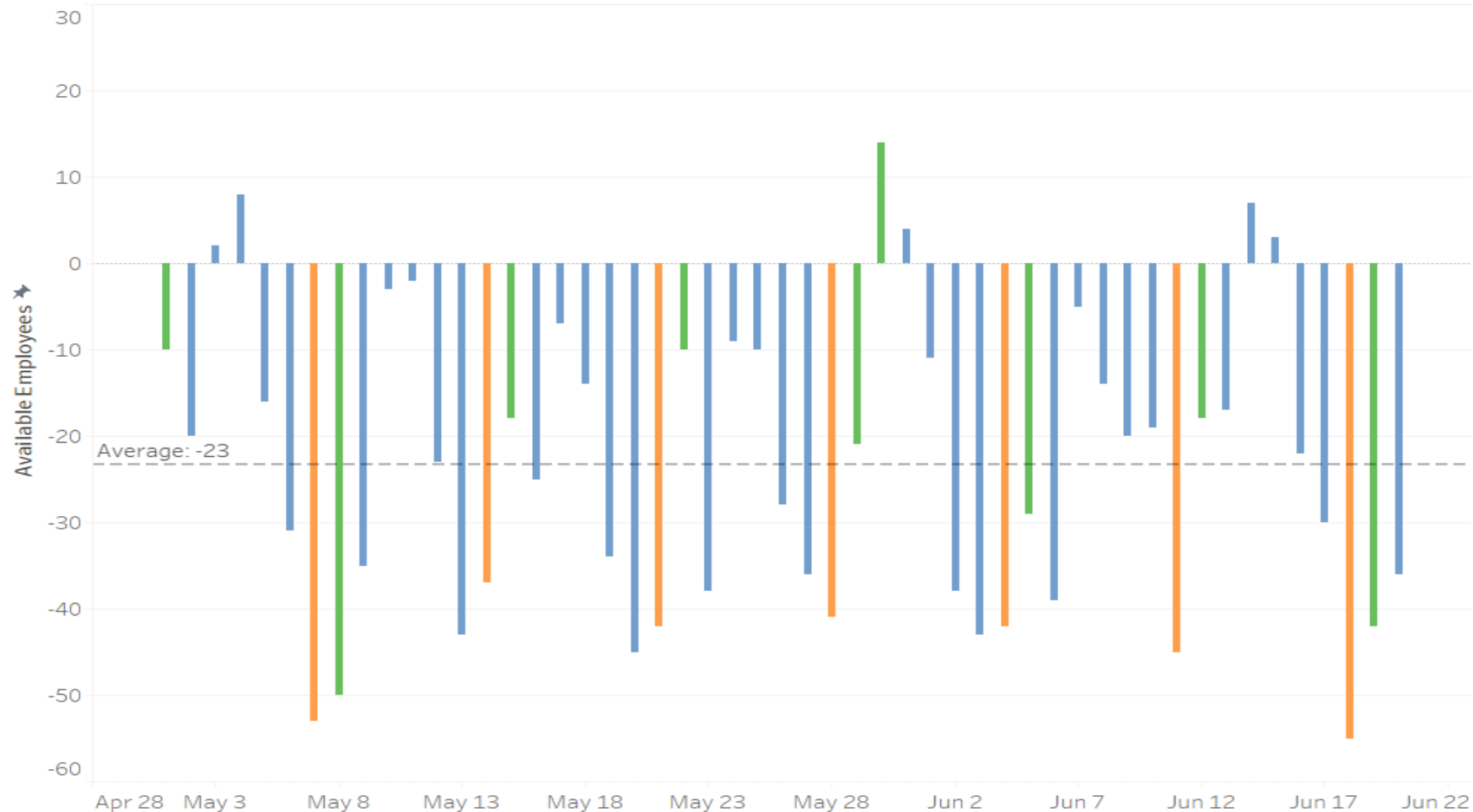
- Service reductions adopted September 2021 due to labor shortages will remain in place through August 2022. Source: [KUT 90.5 Austin NPR](#)

Local – Operational Challenges

- ▶ **Lack of available bus operators to meet daily service levels:**
 - Total bus operator funded positions – 571
 - Open positions – 74
 - Operators needed for weekday service – 292/Scheduled Day Off – 89
 - Saturday Service – 227/Scheduled Day Off – 159
 - Sunday Service – 151/Scheduled Day Off – 230
 - Vacation – 35
 - Unexcused Absences – 107

Current Operational Shortages

Available Employees



- ▶ We have been short 23 employees on average per day since May 1, 2022,
- ▶ Daily deficit regularly approach 40-50 operators

Current Operational Shortages

- ▶ With increased absences, low retention rates, and high level of vacancies, there are not enough operators to cover scheduled bus service.
- ▶ Each day CATS must reallocate operators from higher frequency routes to low frequency routes
- ▶ This approach requires active management of resources throughout the service day
- ▶ Depending on the number of available operators the routes impacted change from day to day
- ▶ Operator shortages have recently impacted the ability to deliver scheduled LYNX Blue Line and CityLYNX Gold Line services

Strategies to Improve reliability

▶ Labor Shortages

- Increased oversight of contractor through contractual mechanisms and requiring hiring/retention strategies

▶ Bus Service

- Development of a temporary modified schedule based upon ridership analysis and operator availability
- Analyzing absences to better allocate spare operators

▶ Rail Service

- Begin assessment of trip level data to determine modified schedule to match operator availability.

Labor Shortages Strategy

- ▶ RATPDEV negotiations with SMART Union
- ▶ Significant investment by CATS in employee salary and benefits enhancements
- ▶ More flexible bus route scheduling
- ▶ Closing attendance policy loopholes

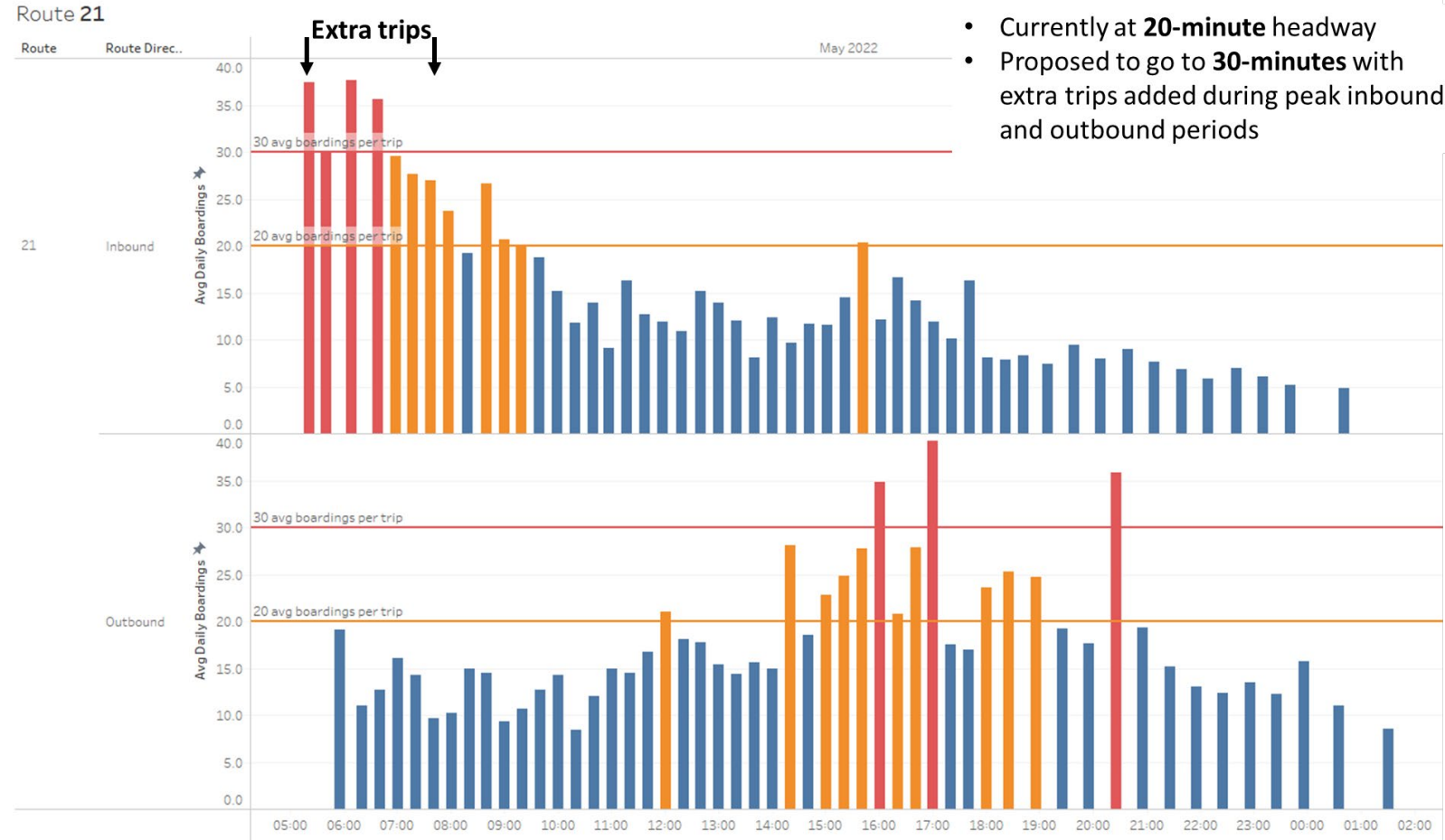
Proposed Short Term Modified Bus Service Scenario

Description	Daily Assignments				
	Operators Required	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	
Current Service	382	292	227	151	
Modified Schedule	332	-50	242	227	151

- ▶ Adjusted schedule on 14 local and express routes
- ▶ Minor adjustments to late night and early morning trips on 4 routes
- ▶ No service adjustments on 80% of routes
- ▶ Proposed schedule changes save 45-50 operator positions
- ▶ **Provides public with reliable schedule**

Service Analysis Approach

- ▶ Evaluated trip passenger load for all routes.
- ▶ Analyzed time of day and identified trips with 30 or more passengers.
- ▶ Prioritized routes that currently have higher frequency levels for reductions (i.e. shifting 15-minute routes to 20-minutes)



Route 1



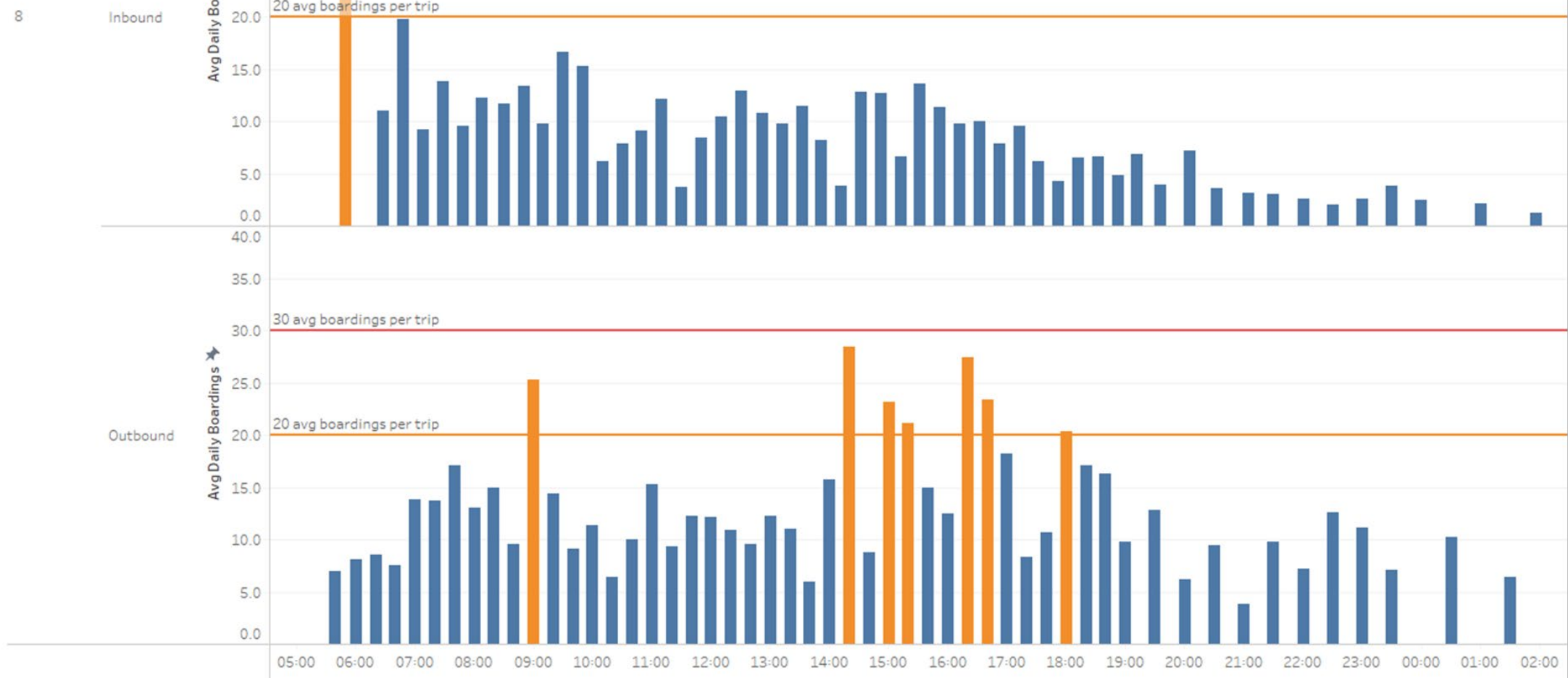
- Currently at **30-minute** headway
- Proposed to go to **60-minutes** for late night trips with low passenger loads

Route 8

Route Route Direc..

May 2022

- Currently at **20-minute** headway
- Proposed to go to **30-minutes** throughout the day
- Late night service currently at **60-minutes**



Additional Strategies & Next Steps

- ▶ Working with CATS-Pass app developer to incorporate future on demand transit services and ride share companies (Uber, LYFT)
- ▶ Evaluating Envision My Ride Bus Priority Microtransit zones for early pilot implementation
- ▶ July 14 –Transit Service Advisory Committee
- ▶ July 27 –Metropolitan Transit Commission
- ▶ Proposed modified service can be implemented in Mid-August
- ▶ Improved communication through CATS-Pass app
- ▶ Schedule changes to remain in place until operator availability improves

Recommended Path Forward

- ▶ CATS is recommending a temporary adjustment to 20% of local and express routes as well as modifications to rail service to improve service reliability.
- ▶ Adjustments will be based on trip level ridership to lessen service impacts to current passengers.
- ▶ Adjusted schedule will provide transit users a consistent and reliable schedule to plan their travel.
- ▶ As operator availability improves, service will be added back based upon trip level ridership analysis.

Action Item

Approve strategic ridership analysis to temporally modify service levels to match operator availability in order to improve service reliability.

Questions?

