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Metro Transit is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Metro Transit January 2024 Board Meeting

Time: Jan 25, 2024 08:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

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AGENDA

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA

2222 Cuming Street

Omaha, Nebraska, 68102

January 25, 2024

8:30 a.m.

Metro connects people, places, and opportunities through quality transit services.

1. Call to Order: Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on January 19, 2024
2. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:
 - a. Regular Meeting: December 21, 2023
3. General Public Comment Period
This is an opportunity for members of the audience to be heard regarding topics related to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, not on the agenda for a maximum of 2 minutes.
4. Administrative Report (L. Cencic)
5. Administrative Reports:
 - a. Administration/Human Resources (D. Grant)
 - b. Programs/Operation (I. Maldonado)
 - c. Communications (N. Ebat)
6. Resolution 2024-01: Request Approval of Title VI Fare Equity Analysis for the K-12 Rides Free Program (A. Johnson)
7. Board Chair Report (D. Lawse)
8. Date, Time, and Place of Next Regular Board Meeting
Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.
Authority's Administrative Building
9. Adjournment

Resolution: 2024-01 Request Approval of Title VI Fare Equity Analysis for the K-12 Rides Free Program

Explanation: In compliance with Metro's Title VI Program, a Fare Equity Analysis was conducted on the K-12 Rides Free Pass Program to identify the impact of the proposed changes on low-income and minority populations. The program provides free bus, MOBY, and ORBT rides during Metro's regular service hours for any K-12 student in Omaha and the surrounding area. Initially started as a pilot program (May 10, 2021, through June 1, 2022), the program has continued in the pilot phase with temporary funding. On January 11, 2024, the Omaha Public Schools Board of Educated approved a contract to provide funding through July 31, 2025.

Metro's Title VI Policy requires a Fare Equity Analysis be completed for any proposed increases, decreases or elimination of a fare type to determine if the proposal has a discriminatory impact on minority and/or low-income populations.

The Title VI Fare Equity Analysis found:

- No disparate impact on minority riders.
- No disproportionate burden on low-income riders.
- Minority and/or low-income riders will not be limited by or denied the benefits of the proposed fare change.

Board approval will ensure Metro's continued compliance with the Federal Transit Administration's Title VI requirements.

Staff Recommends Approval.

Fare Equity Analysis

K-12 Rides Free Program

January 2024



Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha (dba Metro)

2222 Cuming Street

Omaha, NE 68102

www.ometro.com

I. Introduction

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha (hereinafter Metro) began the K-12 Rides Free program as a pilot program (May 10, 2021, through June 1, 2022). The program provides free bus, MOBY, and ORBT rides during Metro's regular service hours for any K-12 student in Omaha and the surrounding area. The pilot has been extended with temporary funding since the original dates. On January 11, 2024, the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education approved a contract to provide funding for the program through July 31, 2025. The program is now an established program and beyond the pilot phase, thus prompting this fare equity analysis.

As shown in Table 1 below, prior to the piloting of the K-12 Rides Free program, K-12 students older than 8 years were charged \$1.00 fare, children ages 6-8 were charged \$0.50, and children 5 years and under were free. These reduced fares were only available on school days prior to 6:00 p.m. Outside of these times, students and children (6-8 years) paid the standard \$1.25 fare. The K-12 Rides Free program makes rides for all three categories of youth free with no restrictions on the time of day, week, or year. The K-12 Rides Free program is intended to provide greater access to educational opportunities, extracurricular activities, healthcare, employment opportunities, and social activities for K-12 students.

Table 1: Current and Proposed Metro Fare Prices for Students and Children

Fare Type	Current Price for School Travel	Current Price for Non-School Travel	Proposed Price for All Travel
Student	\$1.00	\$1.25	Free
Child (6-8 years)	\$0.50	\$1.25	Free
Child (5 years & under)	Free	Free	Free

High school students must show a valid school or Metro issued student identification to access the program. Elementary and middle school students can simply identify themselves as students to the driver in order to access the free fares. To accommodate home-schooled students, Metro issues free photo identification for students who show proof of enrollment. Accepted forms of proof of enrollment include enrollment documentation from a student's high school (including class schedules, confirmation letters, or any other indication of enrollment), a signed acknowledgement letter from the Commissioner of Education if home-schooled in Nebraska, a Competent Private Instruction (CPI) Form A, Independent Private Instruction (IPI) Response to Written Request Report Form, or another proof of home school enrollment if home-schooled in Iowa, and GED class registration.

From May 10, 2021, to May 31, 2022, Metro recorded more than 157,000 student rides. When comparing data to calendar year 2019 (prior to the pandemic), there was approximately an 86% increase in student ridership. This marked the highest student ridership rates in at least a decade. Through November 2023, Metro has provided 846,069 student trips since the program began. K-12 student ridership continues to increase. Comparing the second half of 2022 to 2023, there was a 41% increase in average monthly ridership.

In addition to the overall increase in student ridership, Metro saw an increase in demand from students for services on weeknights and weekends. Approximately 20% of the overall K-12 ridership occurs on weeknights and weekends, outside of the eligible hours of the previous student fare program. By allowing free student trips during these hours, more students can participate in extracurricular activities and after-school programming, assist with household errands, earn an income through part-time employment, and access other important services and resources.

In accordance with Title VI regulations as a part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Metro’s Title VI Plan submitted to the Federal Transit Administration, Metro undertook this fare equity analysis to identify any potential disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens of this proposed fare change on protected populations.

II. Metro’s Fare Equity Analysis Policy

Metro’s Fare Equity Analysis Policy in compliance with applicable federal requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including 49 CFR Section 21, the Environmental Justice requirements under Executive Order 12898, and FTA Circular 4702.1B. Except for those limited and unique conditions noted below, the FTA requires that recipients of FTA funding prepare and submit fare equity analyses for all proposed fare changes, regardless of whether the proposed change is an increase or decrease. As with the service equity analyses required under Title VI and Federal Environmental Justice requirements, FTA requires Metro to evaluate the effects of fare changes on minority populations and low-income populations. Metro’s Fare Equity Analysis Policy is a stand-alone provision, separate from Metro’s Major Service Change Policy. Metro’s Fare Equity Analysis Policy operates in tandem with all other Metro policies for changing the fare structure, fare media, or fare price.

For purposes of this policy, “minority population” is defined as: Any readily identifiable group of minority persons (persons identified by race, color, or national origin) who live in geographic proximity.

For purposes of this policy, “low-income population” is defined as: Any readily identifiable group of households who live in geographic proximity and whose median household income is at or below of the Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines. Table 2 is the 2024 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia as published online (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>).

Table 2: HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2024

2024 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	
<i>Persons in family/household</i>	<i>Poverty guideline</i>
1	\$15,060
2	\$20,440
3	\$25,820
4	\$31,200
5	\$36,580
6	\$41,960
7	\$47,340
8	\$52,720
<i>For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,380 for each additional person.</i>	

This policy incorporates by reference the definitions of “Disparate Impact” and “Disproportionate Burden” from Metro’s Title VI Disparate Impact Policy and Disproportionate Burden Policy, respectively. This policy incorporates by reference the percentage thresholds for “Disparate Impact” and “Disproportionate Burden” from Metro’s Title VI Disparate Impact Policy and Metro’s Disproportionate Burden Policy, respectively. For proposed changes that would increase or decrease the fares on the entire system, on certain transit modes, or by fare payment type or fare media, Metro shall analyze ridership

surveys, census demographic data, fare box reports, and other sources of information as available to determine whether minority and/or low-income riders are disproportionately more likely to use the mode of service, payment type, or payment media that would be subject to the fare change.

Metro shall then—

- a. Determine the number and percent of users of each fare media being changed.
- b. Review fares before and after the change.
- c. Compare the percentage differences for each particular fare media between minority users and overall users.
- d. Compare the percentage differences for each particular fare media between low-income users and overall users.

Metro will analyze proposed fare changes to see if the proposed change would result in a disparate impact on minority populations or a disproportionate burden on low-income populations. If a disparate impact or disproportionate burden is identified, Metro must attempt to modify the proposed changes to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential disparate impacts and/or disproportionate burdens. Metro shall then reanalyze the proposed changes to determine whether the modifications removed, minimized, or mitigated the disparate impacts of the changes.

Where disparate impacts and/or disproportionate burdens are identified, Metro shall provide a meaningful opportunity for public comment on any proposed mitigation measures, including any less discriminatory alternatives that may be available.

If Metro chooses not to alter the proposed fare changes despite a disparate impact on minority ridership or disproportionate burden on low-income riders, or if Metro finds, even after the revisions, those minority or low-income riders will continue to bear a disproportionate share of the proposed fare change, Metro may implement the fare change only if:

- a. Metro has a substantial justification for the proposed change and
- b. Metro can show that there are no alternatives that would have a less disparate impact on minority riders but would still accomplish Metro's legitimate program goals.

Exceptions: Metro will not require a fare equity analysis for the following conditions:

- a. Emergencies, or other instances in which Metro may declare that all passengers ride free.
- b. Temporary fare reductions that are mitigating measures for other actions.
- c. Promotional fare reductions lasting less than six months in duration.

III. Disproportionate Burden Policy

Metro's Disproportionate Burden Policy, in compliance with applicable federal Environmental Justice requirements under Executive Order 12898 and FTA Circulars 4703.1 and 4702.1B requires that recipients of FTA funding prepare and submit service and/or fare equity analyses.

The Disproportionate Burden Policy establishes a threshold for determining whether proposed service or fare changes have a disproportionate effect on low-income populations relative to non-low-income populations.

The threshold is the difference between the burdens borne by, and benefits experienced by, low-income populations compared to non-low-income populations. Exceeding the threshold means either that a

service or fare change negatively impacts low-income populations more than non-low-income populations, or that the change benefits non-low-income populations more than low-income populations.

If the threshold is exceeded, Metro must avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts where practicable.

For purposes of this policy, “low-income population” is defined as any readily identifiable group of households who live in geographic proximity and whose median household income is at or below of the Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines.

Metro establishes the threshold for a “disproportionate burden” as follows: Should the burden of any fare or major service changes require a low-income population to bear adverse effects fifteen percent or greater of the cumulative burden compared to the effects borne by the non-low-income population, that impact will be considered a disproportionate burden.

Disproportionate Burden will be reviewed on the affected changes on a cumulative basis.

Should a proposed fare or major service change result in a disproportionate burden, Metro will consider modifying the proposed change to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the disproportionate burden of the change. If Metro finds a potentially disproportionate burden and then modifies the proposed changes to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential disproportionate burdens, Metro will reanalyze the proposed changes to determine whether the modifications removed the potential disproportionate burden of the changes.

If Metro chooses not to alter the proposed changes, Metro may implement the service change if:

- a. There is substantial legitimate justification for the change; and
- b. The agency can show that there are no alternatives that would have less impact on the low-income population and would still accomplish the agency's legitimate program goals.

In accordance with FTA guidance, Metro will not alter this Disproportionate Burden Policy until its next Title VI Program Submission, though Metro maintains the freedom to select the most appropriate and informative dataset for use in low-income population service equity analyses. Metro shall, however, use the same comparison population data in low-income population service equity analyses as it uses for minority population service equity analyses. For example, if Metro uses ridership surveys to determine the comparison population in minority population service equity analyses, Metro will also use ridership surveys to determine the comparison population for low-income service equity analyses.

Metro engaged the public in the decision-making process prior to adopting this Policy and will do so when altering, or amending this Disproportionate Burden Policy, if needed at the next submission.

IV. Disparate Impact Policy

Metro has established a Disparate Impact Policy in compliance with applicable federal requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including 49 CFR Section 21 and FTA Circular 4702.1B requiring that recipients of FTA funding prepare and submit service equity analyses for proposed major service or fare changes.

The Disparate Impact Policy establishes a threshold for determining whether proposed service or fare changes disproportionately affect minority populations relative to non-minority populations on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin.

The threshold is the difference between the burdens borne by, and benefits experienced by, minority populations compared to non-minority populations. Exceeding the threshold means either that a service

or fare change negatively impacts minority populations more than non-minority populations or that the change benefits non-minority populations more than minority populations.

A “disparate impact” refers to a facially neutral policy or practice that disproportionately affects members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin, where Metro’s policy or practice lacks a substantial legitimate justification and where there exist one or more alternatives that would serve the same legitimate objectives but with less disproportionate effect on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

Metro defines the threshold for a “disparate impact” as follows: Should the impact of any fare or major service change require a minority population to bear adverse effects fifteen percent or greater of a cumulative impact compared to those adverse effects borne by the non-minority population, that impact will be deemed a disparate impact.

Disparate impacts will be reviewed on the affected changes on a cumulative basis.

Should a proposed major service change or any fare change result in a disparate impact, Metro will consider modifying the proposed change to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the disparate impact of the change. If Metro finds potential disparate impacts and then modifies the proposed changes to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential disparate impacts, Metro will reanalyze the proposed changes to determine whether the modifications removed the potential disparate impacts of the changes.

In accordance with FTA guidance, Metro will not alter this Disparate Impact Policy until its next Title VI Program Submission, though Metro maintains the freedom to select the most appropriate and informative dataset for use in minority population service and fare equity analyses. Metro shall, however, use the same comparison population data in low-income population equity analyses as it uses for minority population equity analyses. For example, if Metro uses ridership surveys to determine the comparison population in minority population equity analyses, Metro will also use ridership surveys to determine the comparison population for low-income equity analyses. Metro engaged the public in the decision-making process prior to adopting this Policy and will do so when altering, or amending this Disparate Impact Policy, needed at the next submission.

V. Methodology and Data Used

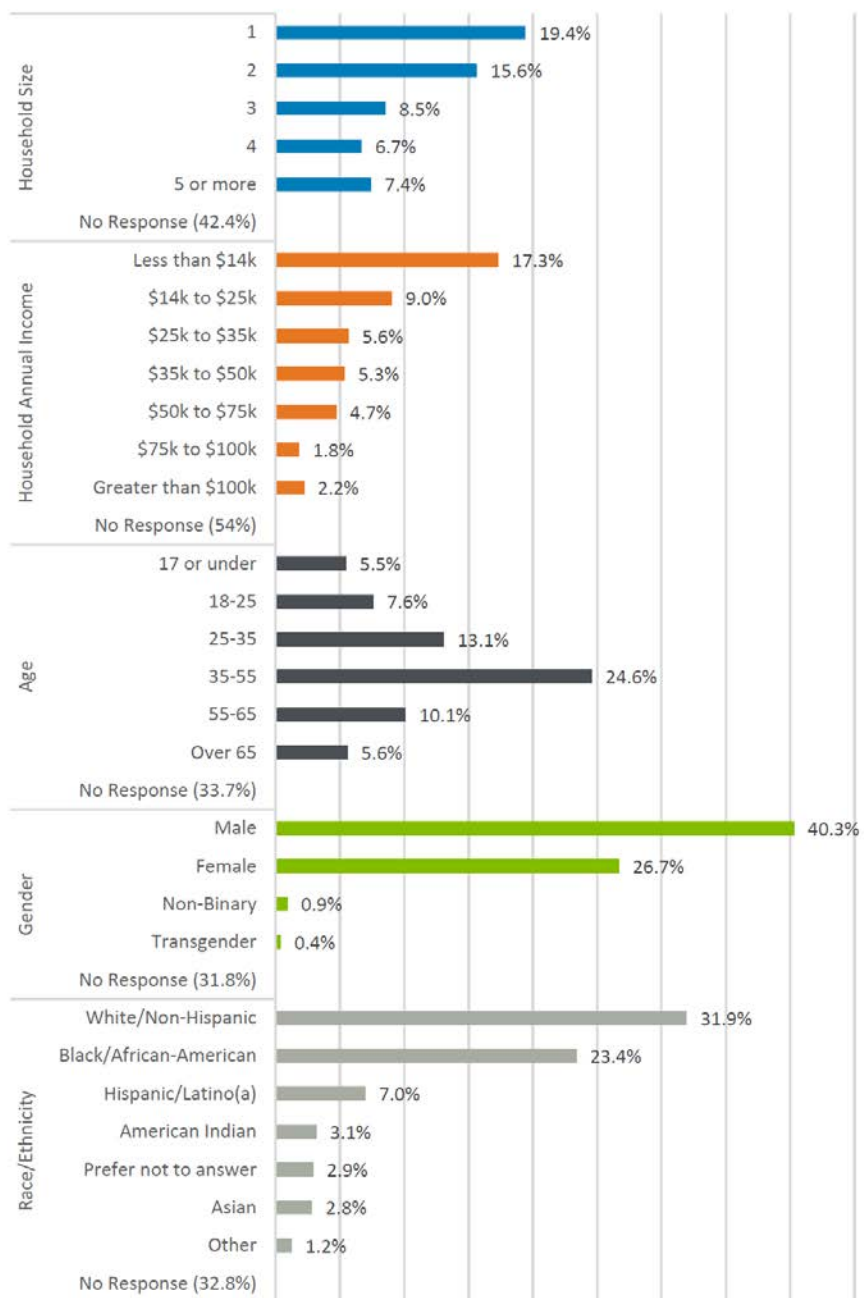
In order to analyze the impact of the elimination of fares for K-12 students on low-income and minority passengers, data from the 2022 Metro Onboard Survey, Nebraska and Iowa Departments of Education, Omaha Public Schools District, Council Bluffs Community School District, the Council on Environmental Quality Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, and the USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer was utilized. This data was analyzed for the purposes of identifying any potential disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens.

2022 Metro Onboard Survey

The onboard survey was conducted system-wide on Metro’s fixed route service in October 2022 by SRF Consulting Group. The onboard survey yielded 2,711 responses, which was 278% of the sample size target. The survey participant demographics are detailed in Figure 1.

Excluding trips to/from home, 8.7% of participants indicated that school, separate from college, was the purpose of their trip. The K-12 Rides Free program accounted for 4.3% of fare payment types recorded through the survey.

Figure 1: 2022 Metro Onboard Survey Participant Demographics



Omaha Public Schools

Per the Nebraska Department of Education, the Omaha Public Schools (OPS) District has 51,693 enrolled students. Within the district, there are 65 elementary schools, 13 middle schools, nine high schools, and eight programs.

Council Bluffs Community School District

Per the Iowa Department of Education PK-12 Education Statistics, the Council Bluffs Community School District (CBCSD) has 8,784 students enrolled in PK-12. When limited to K-12 (minus PK), CBCSD has 8,265 enrolled students. There are 10 elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, and one program in the CBCSD.

Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

In response to the January 2021 Executive Order 14008, the Council on Environmental Quality developed the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). The tool is an interactive map that can be used to identify communities (Census tracts) experiencing burdens in eight categories: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water and wastewater, and workforce development. A community is considered disadvantaged when it meets more than one burden threshold AND the associated socioeconomic threshold. A low-income household is when household income is at or below 200% of the Federal poverty level, not including students enrolled in higher education. Table 3 defines the burden categories and thresholds and socioeconomic thresholds.

Table 3: Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool Burden Categories and Thresholds

Burden Category	Burden Threshold	Socioeconomic Threshold
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">at or above the 90th percentile for expected agriculture loss rate ORexpected building loss rate ORexpected population loss rate ORprojected flood risk ORprojected wildfire risk	at or above the 65th percentile for low income
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">at or above the 90th percentile for energy cost ORPM2.5 in the air	at or above the 65th percentile for low income
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">at or above the 90th percentile for asthma ORdiabetes ORheart disease ORlow life expectancy	at or above the 65th percentile for low income
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experienced historic underinvestment ORare at or above the 90th percentile for housing cost ORlack of green space ORlack of indoor plumbing ORlead paint	at or above the 65th percentile for low income
Legacy Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Have at least one abandoned mine land ORFormerly Used Defense Sites ORat or above the 90th percentile for proximity to hazardous waste facilities ORproximity to Superfund sites (National Priorities List (NPL) OR proximity to Risk Management Plan (RMP) facilities	at or above the 65th percentile for low income

Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at or above the 90th percentile for diesel particulate matter exposure OR • transportation barriers OR • traffic proximity and volume 	at or above the 65th percentile for low income
Water and Wastewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at or above the 90th percentile for underground storage tanks and releases OR • wastewater discharge 	at or above the 65th percentile for low income
Workforce Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at or above the 90th percentile for linguistic isolation OR • low median income OR • poverty OR • unemployment 	more than 10% of people ages 25 years or older whose high school education is less than a high school diploma

<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/methodology>

Figure 2: Screenshot of Fare Equity Analysis Geography in the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

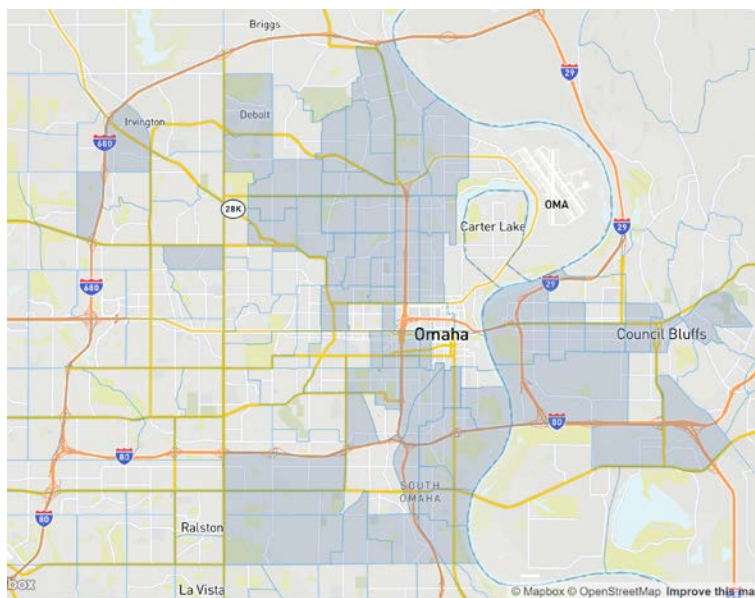


Figure 2 is a screenshot of the geographic area that is the subject of this fare equity analysis from the CEJST. The shaded areas are census tracts identified as disadvantaged based on the previously described CEJST methodology.

USDOT Equitable Transportation Community Explorer

The USDOT Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer is a tool designed to complement the CEJST by providing the opportunity to focus more on the transportation disadvantage component. The ETC Explorer, like the CEJST, uses the 2020 Census Tracts for defining communities. For the fare equity analysis of Metro’s K-12 Rides Free program, the Cost and Access Tracts were used. The Cost and Access Tracts layer contains the underlying data associated with the ETC Explorer Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool. Two of the cost burden measures that are part of the Cost and Access Tracts layer are Poverty Level and Transportation. The Cost Burden-Poverty Level is the percentage of the population in the Census tract that is at 200% or less of the federal poverty level. The Cost Burden-Transportation is the

percentage of household income spent on transportation for the average household in the respective Census tract.

School District Data from the CEJST and ETC Explorer Tools

Utilizing the CEJST and ETC Explorer Tools, the locations of schools and programs in the Omaha Public Schools and Council Bluffs Community School District are assessed for the qualification as a disadvantaged community and affiliated cost burdens (Appendix A). The analysis is based on the address of the school, not the entire school assignment area. The location was determined to be within the service area if it was within the designated paratransit service area (3/4 mile around a fixed route). Even though paratransit service is delivered by an entity other than Metro in Council Bluffs, the same measure was used to determine if a CBCSD school or program was in the Metro service area.

Within OPS, Metro currently provides service to 55 of 65 elementary schools (35 of 55 are disadvantaged, one of 10 not served are disadvantaged), eight of 13 middle schools (five of eight are disadvantaged, one of five not served is disadvantaged), and seven of nine high schools (four of nine are disadvantaged, zero not served are disadvantaged). The eight OPS alternative programs have nine locations, one of which is a virtual school. Eight of the physical locations for the alternative programs are within Metro's service area (six of eight are disadvantaged).

Within CBCSD, Metro currently provides service to seven of 10 elementary schools (four of seven are disadvantaged, zero not served are disadvantaged), two of two middle schools (none are disadvantaged), and two of two high schools (one is disadvantaged). The CBCSD alternative program is also served and is not categorized as disadvantaged.

VI. Fare Equity Analysis – K-12 Rides Free Program

As stated in the Fare Equity Analysis Policy (Section II), FTA requires Metro to evaluate the effects of fare changes on minority populations and low-income populations whether the fare change is an increase, decrease, or elimination. Per the policy, the steps below were followed to conduct the fare equity analysis.

Determine the number and percent of users of each fare media being changed.

The number of potential users of the K-12 Rides Free program is 60,477 (the number of enrolled students at Omaha Public Schools and Council Bluffs Community Schools combined). Through November 2023, Metro has provided 846,069 student trips since the program began in May 2021. Most of these trips occur for the purpose of traveling to or from school, but approximately 20%, or 169,214 trips, are outside school days or hours (e.g., evenings, weekends).

Review fares before and after the change.

The proposed fare change is a fare elimination for children ages 6-8 and students through Grade 12. Prior to the change, children ages 6-8 were charged \$0.50 and K-12 students older than 8 years were charged \$1.00 fare, as outlined in Table 1. These reduced fares were only available on school days prior to 6:00 p.m. Outside of these times, students, and children (6-8 years) paid the standard \$1.25 fare.

After the change, rides would be free without restrictions on the time of day, day of week, or time of year for all youth through their senior year of high school. This would be a savings for riders and families of \$0.50 per trip for children ages 6-8 and \$1.00 per trip for students before 6:00 p.m. on school days and a savings of \$1.25 per trip for both populations at all other times. For school trips alone (both to and from school), this could save a family within the Omaha Public School District approximately \$170 per student

aged 6-8 and \$340 per student older than 8 years based on 170 school days per year. The State of Iowa mandates a minimum of 180 school days each year. Families within the Council Bluffs Community School District could save approximately \$180 per student aged 6-8 and \$360 per student older than 8 years. These numbers do not capture the additional savings for non-school trips where the student would previously have had to pay the full \$1.25 fare. Considering that such trips are estimated to account for 20% of all K-12 rides, that would be a cost savings of \$211,518 for families through November 2023.

Disparate Impact Analysis - Compare the percentage differences for each particular fare media between minority users and overall users.

The participant demographics of the 2022 Metro Onboard Survey are outlined in Figure 1. Of the participants, 31.9% were White, Non-Hispanic, 23.4% were Black/African American, 7.0% were Hispanic/Latino(a), 3.1% were American Indian/Native American, 2.8% were Asian, and 1.2% were Other. The remaining participants either preferred not to answer or did not respond. For the purpose of this analysis, there were 31.9% non-minority and 37.5% minority respondents, meaning there is greater minority than non-minority representation in the survey results.

When looking at trip purposes by minority status, school accounted for 9.0% of trip purposes for minorities and 4.9% for non-minorities. For fare payment type, the K-12 Rides Free program was used by 8.0% of minority and 3.7% of non-minority respondents. Minority respondents were more likely to be using the K-12 Rides Free program as their method of fare payment.

The race and ethnicity of students attending Omaha Public Schools are detailed below in Table 4. For the purpose of this analysis, 21.9% of OPS students are non-minorities and 78.2% are minorities.

As reported in the 2022-2023 OPS Data Book, of all OPS students, 4.6% are refugees, 0.8% are current migrants, and 2.9% are former migrants. Refugee students are students who have been identified as refugees immigrating from one of 17 countries (i.e., Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burundi, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, and Uganda). Current migrant students are students who have been living in Omaha for three years or less and whose families work in the agricultural industry.

Table 4: Race/Ethnicity of Students Attending Omaha Public Schools

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Students	Number of Students
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.8%	391
Asian	7.3%	3,786
Black or African American	23.7%	12,235
Hispanic or Latino	40.0%	20,677
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	60
Two or More Races	6.3%	3,238
White	21.9%	11,306

The race and ethnicity of PK-12 students enrolled within the Council Bluffs Community School District are detailed below in Table 5. For the purpose of this analysis, 75.1% of CBCSD students are non-minorities and 24.9% are minorities.

Of the K-12 students (8,265), 6.1% (501) students are English Language Learners and 1.1% (92) are immigrants.

Table 5: Race/Ethnicity of PK-12 Students Enrolled in the Council Bluffs Community School District

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Students	Number of Students
Asian	0.8%	72
Black	4.1%	357
Hispanic	15.3%	1348
Multi-Race	3.8%	337
Native American	0.6%	49
Pacific Islander	0.3%	25
White	75.1%	6596

Considering that minority students are more likely to use the K-12 Rides Free program as their method of fare payment, makeup 78.2% of all students attending OPS and 24.9% of all students attending CBCSD and that the fare is proposed to be eliminated for all students regardless of minority status, no adverse effects were identified for the removal of fare for K-12 students. Considering access to the benefits of the program, elementary and middle school students are only asked to tell the bus operator that they are a K-12 student to board for free. High school students are asked to show an ID as described in the Introduction (Section I). If there are future changes to the way in which students access the benefits of the K-12 Rides Free program, such as requiring all students to obtain a Metro-issued ID, the changes will be implemented in a way that does not create, or at minimum mitigates, any disparate impact. The elimination of fare for K-12 students does not result in a disparate impact and no mitigation steps are currently necessary.

Disproportionate Burden Analysis - Compare the percentage differences for each particular fare media between low-income users and overall users.

The participant demographics of the 2022 Metro Onboard Survey are outlined in Figure 1. The breakdown by household annual income is shown in Table 6. The 2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines by household size are listed in Table 1. Combining the two, Table 7 shows the 2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines affiliated with each household size reported by participants in the 2022 Metro Onboard Survey. While the data that crosses household annual income by household size is not currently available, a majority of survey participants would likely meet the low-income threshold for Metro’s Disproportionate Burden Policy.

Table 6: Household Annual Income of 2022 Metro Onboard Survey Participants

Household Annual Income	Percent of Survey Participants
Less than \$14k	17.3%
\$14k to \$25k	9.0%
\$25k to \$35k	5.6%
\$35k to \$50k	5.3%
\$50k to \$75k	4.7%
\$75k to \$100k	1.8%
Greater than \$100k	2.2%
No Response	54%

Table 7: Reported Household Size and Federal Poverty Threshold

Household Size	Percent of Survey Participants	Associated Federal Poverty Guideline
1	19.4%	\$15,060
2	15.6%	\$20,440
3	8.5%	\$25,820
4	6.7%	\$31,200
5 or more	7.4%	\$36,580 +
No Response	42.4%	-

For non-home trip purposes reported by survey participants and broken down by poverty status, school accounted for 4.7% of trip purposes for those with a household income of less than \$25,000 and 2.9% for those with a household income of more than \$25,000. For the method of fare payment by poverty status, the K-12 Rides Free program was cited by 2.9% of respondents with household incomes less than and 3.4% with household incomes more than \$25,000. While students from household incomes greater than \$25,000 were more likely to be using the K-12 Rides Free as their method of fare payment, student survey respondents may not have had knowledge of household income to accurately report it to the surveyor. More than half (54%) of all survey participants did not report household income.

A common low-income indicator within public schools is a student’s eligibility for school-free or reduced lunch. Within OPS, 67% of students participate in school free or reduced lunch or educational benefits programs. Of the K-12 students attending CBCSD, 62% are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Given the high prevalence of low-income participants and students, and that the K-12 Rides Free program alleviates costs for students from all household annual incomes, no adverse effects were identified. As stated in the disparate impact analysis conclusion above, if there are any changes to the ways in which students may access the benefits of the K-12 Rides Free program, the changes will be made so that they do not create, or at minimum mitigates, any disproportionate burden. The elimination of fares for K-12 students does not result in a disproportionate burden and no mitigation steps are currently necessary.

Public Participation

The approach for public participation in the K-12 Rides Free Program has been early, continuous, and meaningful participation. Metro staff have been actively engaged with the schools and community-based organizations by sharing information about the program, attending school open houses, participating in targeted outreach events for refugees and disadvantaged communities, and leveraging various forms of media. Many of these events have provided informal opportunities for feedback and input on the K-12 Rides Free program. Metro continues to build staff capacity to ensure that all families know of the benefits provided by the K-12 Rides Free program.

In accordance with open meeting laws, there was also an opportunity for public comment when the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education met on January 11, 2024, to approve the contract for continuing the K-12 Rides Free program. No comments about the program were made at this meeting.

VII. Conclusion

The proposed elimination of two fare categories, as shown in Table 1, allows all youth to access Metro services fare-free through Grade 12. Many of the existing users of this program are from low-income and minority populations, allowing these families to access financial and time savings. There may be students

not captured in the above analysis who currently or in the future may utilize the K-12 Rides Free program, such as students who attend private schools, homeschool, or public school districts on the outskirts of the City of Omaha limits beyond Metro's current service area. These students are eligible for the program, and it is not anticipated that inclusion of these students in this analysis would alter the outcome. No current disparate impact or disproportionate burden has been identified through this fare equity analysis of the K-12 Rides Free program. If there are future changes to the program as it matures, such as a change in how students can access the program benefits, considerations will be made to ensure no disparate impact or disproportionate burden is created, or that any identified is mitigated, and that access to the K-12 Rides Free program is not overly burdensome to minority and low-income populations. Communication and promotion of the program will continue in accordance with Metro's outreach policies and in compliance with the requirements of Metro's Language Assistance Plan.

The proposed elimination of fare for children (6-8 years) and students (older than 8 years) are in compliance with the requirements of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

The proposed fare change will not have a disparate impact or disproportionate burden on protected populations and is equitable under Metro's Title VI plan, as submitted to the Federal Transit Administration in December 2022.

Appendix A: Analysis of School Locations Using the CEJST and ETC Explorer Tools

Omaha Public School District

School Name	School Level	Within service area?	Disadvantaged Community?	Cost Burden-Poverty Level	Cost Burden-Transportation
Adams	Elementary	Yes	No	38.0%	17.39%
Ashland Park-Robbins	Elementary	Yes	Yes	44.3%	19.89%
Bancroft	Elementary	Yes	Yes	61.9%	23.14%
Beals	Elementary	Yes	No	15.1%	12.38%
Belle Ryan	Elementary	Yes	No	21.8%	13.61%
Belvedere	Elementary	Yes	Yes	59.2%	23.81%
Benson West	Elementary	Yes	No	28.3%	16.37%
Boyd	Elementary	Yes	No	12.2%	12.51%
Castelar	Elementary	Yes	Yes	52.9%	17.63%
Catlin	Elementary	Yes	No	18.7%	12.58%
Central Park	Elementary	Yes	Yes	69.5%	24.77%
Chandler View	Elementary	Yes	No	34.9%	16.80%
Columbian	Elementary	No	No	6.6%	7.98%
Conestoga	Elementary	Yes	Yes	75.6%	28.94%
Crestridge	Elementary	Yes	No	18.6%	13.26%
Dodge	Elementary	Yes	No	32.2%	16.33%
Druid Hill	Elementary	Yes	Yes	63.0%	26.78%
Dundee	Elementary	Yes	No	33.5%	17.11%
Edison	Elementary	Yes	No	22.6%	16.39%
Field Club	Elementary	Yes	Yes	34.6%	19.17%
Florence	Elementary	Yes	Yes	38.3%	17.56%
Fontenelle	Elementary	Yes	Yes	50.4%	15.92%
Forest Station	Elementary	No	No	32.7%	13.82%
Franklin	Elementary	Yes	Yes	77.8%	31.39%
Fullerton	Elementary	No	No	13.9%	9.95%
Gateway	Elementary	No	Yes	52.1%	15.43%
Gifford Park	Elementary	Yes	Yes	44.0%	22.0%
Gilder	Elementary	No	No	27.5%	16.02%
Gomez Heritage	Elementary	Yes	Yes	54.1%	18.30%
Harrison	Elementary	Yes	No	4.6%	9.61%
Hartman	Elementary	Yes	Yes	52.9%	24.40%
Highland	Elementary	Yes	Yes	64.4%	23.78%
Indian Hill	Elementary	Yes	Yes	64.4%	23.78%
Jackson	Elementary	Yes	Yes	39.8%	23.08%
Jefferson	Elementary	Yes	Yes	47.3%	20.07%
Joslyn	Elementary	Yes	No	24.8%	16.83%
Kellom	Elementary	Yes	Yes	75.6%	28.94%
Kennedy	Elementary	Yes	Yes	73.7%	32.10%
King	Elementary	Yes	Yes	73.7%	32.10%
Liberty	Elementary	Yes	Yes	51.4%	24.94%
Lothrop	Elementary	Yes	Yes	46.6%	20.41%
Masters	Elementary	Yes	Yes	49.4%	21.98%
Miller Park	Elementary	Yes	Yes	59.6%	31.01%
Minne Lusa	Elementary	Yes	Yes	37.9%	18.54%
Mount View	Elementary	Yes	Yes	59.5%	19.55%
Oak Valley	Elementary	Yes	No	25.2%	14.74%
Pawnee	Elementary	No	No	23.0%	12.52%
Picotte	Elementary	No	No	14.4%	10.22%
Pine	Elementary	Yes	No	35.7%	16.77%
Pinewood	Elementary	Yes	Yes	22.7%	13.56%
Ponca	Elementary	No	No	14.2%	10.75%
Prairie Wind	Elementary	Yes	No	43.0%	15.55%

Rose Hill	Elementary	Yes	Yes	42.9%	18.70%
Saddlebrook	Elementary	No	No	2.1%	7.51%
Sherman	Elementary	Yes	Yes	66.8%	35.07%
Skinner	Elementary	Yes	Yes	63.0%	26.78%
Spring Lake	Elementary	Yes	Yes	55.6%	21.00%
Springville	Elementary	Yes	Yes	22.7%	13.56%
Standing Bear	Elementary	No	No	11.0%	8.95%
Sunny Slope	Elementary	Yes	No	25.3%	13.96%
Wakonda	Elementary	Yes	No	34.4%	21.56%
Walnut Hill	Elementary	Yes	Yes	58.5%	21.62%
Washington	Elementary	Yes	No	21.6%	14.64%
Western Hills	Elementary	Yes	No	22.9%	17.55%
Wilson Focus	Elementary	Yes	Yes	34.3%	17.07%
Beveridge	Middle	Yes	No	18.7%	12.58%
Bluestem	Middle	No	Yes	52.1%	15.43%
Bryan	Middle	No	No	27.5%	16.02%
Buffett	Middle	No	No	13.9%	9.95%
Davis	Middle	No	No	8.4%	10.82%
Hale	Middle	Yes	Yes	22.7%	13.56%
King Science & Technology	Middle	Yes	Yes	46.6%	20.41%
Lewis & Clark	Middle	Yes	No	22.9%	17.55%
Marrs	Middle	Yes	Yes	38.0%	15.47%
McMillan	Middle	Yes	Yes	59.2%	23.81%
Monroe	Middle	Yes	Yes	50.4%	15.92%
Morton	Middle	No	No	20.9%	14.28%
Norris	Middle	Yes	No	28.8%	16.84%
Benson	High	Yes	Yes	50.4%	15.92%
Bryan	High	No	No	27.5%	16.02%
Buena Vista	High	Yes	Yes	34.3%	17.07%
Burke	High	Yes	No	6.6%	7.98%
Central	High	Yes	No	11.9%	29.29%
North	High	Yes	Yes	63.0%	26.78%
Northwest	High	Yes	No	12.0%	12.77%
South	High	Yes	Yes	55.6%	21.00%
Westview	High	No	No	4.8%	7.80%
Blackburn Alternative Program	High	Yes	Yes	71.8%	31.90%
Integrated Learning Program at Saratoga	All	Yes	Yes	77.5%	34.57%
J.P. Lord School	All	Yes	No	28.8%	16.84%
Multiple Pathways	High	Yes	Yes	71.8%	31.90%
Omaha Virtual School	All	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Transition Program – North Site	High	Yes	No	28.3%	16.37%
Transition Program – South Site	High	Yes	Yes	34.3%	17.07%
Secondary Success	Middle	Yes	Yes	44.0%	22.0%
Parrish Alternative Program	Middle & High	Yes	Yes	44.0%	22.0%

Council Bluffs Community School District

School Name	School Level	Within service area?	Disadvantaged Community?	Cost Burden-Poverty Level	Cost Burden-Transportation
Bloomer	Elementary	Yes	Yes	60.9%	45.98%
Carter Lake	Elementary	No	No	36.0%	18.28%
College View	Elementary	No	No	17.0%	11.45%
Edison	Elementary	Yes	Yes	49.7%	23.31%
Franklin	Elementary	Yes	Yes	32.2%	16.61%
Hoover	Elementary	Yes	No	30.2%	16.93%
Lewis & Clark	Elementary	No	No	30.2%	16.93%
Longfellow	Elementary	Yes	No	25.1%	15.31%
Roosevelt	Elementary	Yes	No	28.5%	16.75%
Rue	Elementary	Yes	Yes	34.3%	19.49%
Kirn	Middle	Yes	No	30.2%	16.93%
Wilson	Middle	Yes	No	26.2%	18.14%
Abraham Lincoln	High	Yes	No	17.0%	11.45%
Thomas Jefferson	High	Yes	Yes	39.9%	18.23%
Kanesville Learning Center	All	Yes	No	30.6%	16.21%

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha at a meeting held on 25th day of January 2024, and the undersigned, hereby certifies the adoption of this resolution.

Daniel Lawse, Board Chair

Selina Perry, Board Secretary

PURPOSE

The Omaha metro area needs reliable, quality public transportation to grow sustainably and serve the diverse needs of our residents.

MISSION

Metro connects people, places and opportunities through quality transit services.

VISION

Metro is a valued transportation choice for all members of our community and a vital partner in Omaha's future.

Metro aims to realize this vision by cultivating and investing in:

- Collaborative communication
- Employee empowerment
- Culture of respect & appreciation
- Well-maintained equipment & facilities
- Up-to-date technology & processes
- Ongoing training & safety efforts
- Collaborative partnerships to improve our service
- Outstanding rider communication & experience
- Recognition of Metro's value to the community

VALUES

Unity: We are a team with a common purpose.

Responsibility: We take pride in our work and are committed to going above and beyond.

Care: We care about our customers and each other.

Resourcefulness: We are adaptable and driven to overcome challenges.

Learning: We are always training for tomorrow.

Appreciation: We are motivated to provide a quality of life for those we love through competitive wages and compensation.

VISION:

METRO IS A VALUED TRANSPORTATION CHOICE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY AND A VITAL PARTNER IN OMAHA'S FUTURE.

Project Phoenix aims to make Metro a great place to work by creating a stronger culture and improving the way we work together



SERVICE COLLABORATIONS,
RIDER EXPERIENCE

RECOGNITION
OF METRO'S
VALUE TO THE
COMMUNITY

COLLABORATIVE
PARTNERSHIPS
TO IMPROVE OUR
SERVICE

OUTSTANDING RIDER
COMMUNICATION AND
EXPERIENCE -
"THE RIDER COMES
FIRST"

MAINTENANCE, EQUIPMENT,
AND TRAINING

CLEAN,
FUNCTIONING,
WELL-MAINTAINED
EQUIPMENT &
FACILITIES

UP-TO-DATE
TECHNOLOGY AND
PROCESSES TO ENSURE
QUALITY EQUIPMENT
AND SERVICE

ONGOING
TRAINING &
SAFETY EFFORTS
FOR ALL
DEPARTMENTS

COMMUNICATION,
CULTURE, AND
CAREERS

TRANSPARENT
2-WAY
COLLABORATIVE
COMMUNICATION

EMPLOYEE
EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH CAREER
ADVANCEMENT
AND REWARD

A CULTURE OF
MUTUAL RESPECT,
APPRECIATION, AND
TEAMWORK

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
December 21, 2023
8:30 a.m.**

MINUTES

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Board met on Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 8:30 a.m., in person at the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, and virtually. Notice was published in the Omaha Daily Record on December 15, 2023, in advance of the meeting. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meetings Law is posted in the meeting room and the Agenda is published on the display in the facility lobby. The following persons were in attendance at the meeting:

Authority Board:

Mr. Daniel Lawse, Chair
Mr. Othello Meadows, Vice Chair
Mr. Jay Lund (Absent)
Ms. Amy Haase (Absent)
Ms. Julia Plucker

Authority Staff:

L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
I. Maldonado, Deputy Executive Officer
D. Grant, Human Capital and Talent Development Director
E. Simpson, Legal Director (Absent)
K. Pendland, IT Director (Virtually)
W. Clingman, Finance Director
D. Kelsey, Operations Director (Absent)
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Absent)
R. Sherping, Safety Director (Absent)
A. Johnson, Civil Rights & Inclusion Director (Virtually)
J. Beverage, Maintenance Director (Virtually)
N. Ebat, Sr. Manager of Communications & Community Relations
S. Perry, Executive Administrator & Board Secretary

Others Present:

Other Metro staff
Members of the public

Metro connects people, places, and opportunities through quality transit services.

Agenda Item #1 Call to Order Call to Order at 8:33 am

Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on December 15, 2023. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meeting Law is posted in the meeting room, and the Agenda is published on the display located in the facility lobby and online at ometro.com.

Agenda Item #2 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The first item of business is the approval of minutes from the previous meeting.

Regular Meeting: November 30, 2023

Motioned by Meadows; Seconded by Plucker

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, HAASE ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #3 General Public Comment Period

This is an opportunity for members of the audience to be heard regarding topics related to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, not on the agenda for a maximum of 2 minutes.

No comments were communicated before the board.

Agenda Item #3 Administrative Report

(L. Cencic)

As we are rapidly approaching the end of the year, Ms. Cencic reflected on some of Metro's accomplishments and statistics in 2023.

Metro made notable progress in implementing our MetroNEXT plan and increased service on Routes 3, 4, 11, 13, 15, 16, 24, and 30, improving our frequency and overall service delivery for our customers.

Ridership

- Ridership has grown throughout 2023 accordingly showing the need for these improvements and more in the future.
- Through November of 2023, Metro carried 2,932,586 bus trips and 6,912 trips on MOBY. Compared to 2022, this represents an 18% increase in average weekly ridership across the system.
- The top five used routes in the system are Routes 18, ORBT, 24, 4, and 15.
- The highest day of ridership this year was October 4th carrying 13,740 rides in a single day. Over 500,000 of the trips through November of 2023 were on ORBT, representing approximately a 35% increase in total ORBT ridership over 2022.

K-12 Rides Free Program

- Metro successfully renewed our K-12 Rides Free program through July 2025.
- In November, Metro carried 51,053 student trips: making the total rides this school year (since June 2023) 264,326. In total, the program has provided just shy of 800,000 student trips since its inception.
- Comparing the second half of 2022 to 2023, the K-12 Rides Free program utilization saw a 41% increase in average monthly ridership.

Administration

- Additionally, the staff has done a commendable job in recruiting and onboarding near-record numbers of staff to support Metro's work. Staff has been continually reviewing, updating, and improving our training programs and serving our staff.
- Metro successfully negotiated new contracts with both the Transport Workers Union and Teamsters that are mutually beneficial to Metro's employees and the needs of the agency to continue to provide vital services. These contracts represent the most substantial updates to these contracts in many years.
- Metro has also made significant strides in building up our technology, policies, and procedures to support the agency's growth. New finance, payroll, and HR software have been implemented and staff is working diligently on modernizing the maintenance, parts inventory, bus assignment, and yard management system which is anticipated to be implemented in early 2024.
- Additional protocols and practices to improve our cybersecurity have been initiated. With the help of the Planning and Policy Committee, numerous formal policies have been updated this year.

Community

- Metro staff have been actively involved in engagement efforts, increasing Metro's presence in the community at special events and with stakeholders.
- Metro has and is continuing to build strong partnerships throughout the region and has added new opportunities for the public and key stakeholders to engage with Metro including our joint symposium with MAPA and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center on Transportation, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that was held this summer.
- Metro has done the groundwork to revitalize and refocus our Transit Advisory Committee and looks forward to seeing the benefits of this work early next year.

Challenges

- Issues with our bus fleet due to supply chain issues, mechanic shortages, and long lead times with outside vendors for bodywork and specialty repairs.
- These issues have resulted in the need to supplement our fixed route fleet with MOBY vehicles primarily on express routes to continue to provide our needed service.

While staff anticipates needing to continue to augment our fleet with these smaller vehicles through the first quarter of 2024, the staff is doing an admirable job of finding creative solutions to the underlying issues of supply chain disruptions and vendor management.

Leadership Academy

- Staff is currently accepting applications for participation in this program and is seeing strong interest from our workforce.
- Applications are due tomorrow, the 22nd, but as of this morning, 31 applications that are either fully or partially completed have been initiated, and we anticipate additional submissions before the deadline.

Meeting Minutes: December 21, 2023

- As we are limited to 12-15 slots in this first cohort, Ms. Cencic reported that she and the rest of the selection committee are going to have some tough decisions to make.
- Our first class of the Leadership Academy will be held on January 24th. Ms. Cencic reported that she anticipates updating the Board in her report next month on the makeup of the cohort and the initial session.

On Sunday, December 24th, Metro's services will be ending early at 8 pm in recognition of Christmas Eve. Ms. Cencic extended wishes to everyone in attendance for a very happy holiday season and offered to answer any questions that the Board had.

The Board appreciated the time reflected on the year. There were no questions.

Agenda Item #4 Administrative Reports

a. Administration/Human Resources (D. Grant)

Mr. Grant reports the following:

Due to no CDL classes in November, no new operators started. There were two promotions Deanna Coleman Custodian Supervisor and Tyler Rocha, Network Security Manager, and one new hire Juanite Hall, HR Generalist.

Mr. Grant concluded his report, there were no questions.

The Board appreciated promoting within and the recruiting of new staff.

b. Programs/Operation (I. Maldonado)

Mr. Maldonado reports the following:

Metro has experienced gradual but continuous improvement regarding operator attendance, the availability of buses for service delivery, the delivery of bus parts, and the increase in inventory. The temporary assignment of paratransit buses with bike racks on express routes has been beneficial to customers.

Staff attended the Omaha 360 meeting in collaboration with community stakeholders in North Omaha. Currently Metro is checking inventory of signage, ensuring the video and audio surveillance system is fully operational, and looking at ways to ensure customers are being dropped off and picked up safely at the North Omaha Transit Center.

Quarterly safety training was conducted for dispatchers, supervisors, and operators with an emphasis on safety and driving.

The operator schedule change will take place on January 14th no major service changes will be made at this time other than a slight increase in the frequency of service on ORBT during the early evening hours on the weekdays and from every 15 minutes to 12 minutes on Saturdays and the return of Route 3 to its regular route with the completion of the 42nd Street bridge.

Mr. Maldonado concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

The Board asked for Mr. Maldonado to repeat the service increase for the ORBT and Mr. Maldonado confirmed the change to the route will also occur on January 14th.

Meeting Minutes: December 21, 2023

Mr. Lawse also asked about operator attendance. Mr. Maldonado further stated to the Board that attendance has begun to improve from November now that the new attendance policy and contract have been in place. Additionally, Ms. Cencic added that our extra board assignments that cover vacation and sick callouts are smaller than desired. New operators coming out of training will be assigned to the extra board to help cover absences. Desired improvements in service due to absences will not be fully realized until enough operators are hired and trained to fully staff the extra board.

c. Communications

(N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat reports the following:

Coming into the end of the year, Communications has been focusing on the K-12 Rides Free Program moving forward successfully by helping the community become or stay aware of this program. As large as this program has grown, staff are still finding that many haven't heard about it or how to access the program. One focus has been on updating and enhancing education materials. Various weekends were spent at community and family-focused events to help with awareness of this program. Metro attended the Empowerment Network Education Summit follow-up to address issues that were brought up during a previous summit. Transportation was previously identified as one of the top barriers to accessing the classroom and education overall. The most recent discussion with the Step-up Program was how to maximize the K-12 Program which included OPS students and parents.

Communications is working towards the New Year with the Transit Advisory Committee; notifications have started to be sent out to the Committee Applicants.

Metro is also working with organizers of large events ways to partner to encourage people to use public transit to access the various events next summer.

The Board Chairman asked about utilizing the bus lanes during downtown events and if people see the bus getting through perhaps it will help increase ridership. Ms. Ebat did bring up the fact that during these events the bus lanes are at times blocked by traffic entering and exiting garages for parking and how her team is discussing with the city to partner about how to ensure bus lanes are kept clear for bus usage only during these events.

Ms. Ebat concluded her report and opened the floor to additional questions. There were no questions.

Agenda Item #6 Resolution: Request Approval for the Amendment of Operating Policy 36, Hospitalization / Medical/ Insurance Benefits

(W. Clingman)

Staff recommends the amendment of Operating Policy 36 which addresses group health insurance benefits for eligible Metro employees. Operating Policy 36 was last amended in January 2014.

The proposed updated policy, now titled the "Employee Health Insurance Benefit Plans", will provide better clarity regarding the policy's scope. The changes will streamline the policy, eliminating ambiguity between the policy and the plan documents that govern the provision of medical, prescription drug, dental, and vision benefits. The updated policy formalizes practices that have been in effect, but not explicitly addressed in earlier versions of Operating Policy 36. The practices include, but are not limited to, waiving participation in the health plan, the annual open enrollment process, qualifying life events, participation in the health Flexible Spending Account, and COBRA.

Redlined and clean copies of the proposed policy are included in the Board packet. The proposed amendments to Operating Policy 36 were discussed with the Planning & Policy Committee. Assuming Committee concurrence, recommend approval.

Mr. Clingman acknowledged Ms. Cencic and Ms. Simpson's time working on the policy changes. Mr. Clingman reported that some of the changes were to clarify and remove redundant language from the policy.

The Planning and Policy Committee met to review the policy and recommended it for approval.

Motion by Meadows; Seconded by Plucker

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, HAASE ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item # 7 Resolution: Request Approval for the Amendment of Operating Policy 19, Holidays

(W. Clingman)

Staff recommends the amendment of Operating Policy 19 addressing holidays for all regular administrative employees not covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement. Operating Policy 19 was last revised in October 2006. This policy covers observed holidays as well as floating holidays. Overall, the policy has been separated into two distinct sections to provide better clarity between observed and floating holidays.

The policy identifies seven (7) paid observed holidays each calendar year. In the proposed amendment, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is converted to a floating holiday from a required observed holiday. This change is being made as fixed and paratransit services remain operational and often administrative staff are required to work that day as well. The second key modification to observed holidays is a clarification that part-time staff will receive four hours of observed holiday pay.

Full-time employees covered by this policy will receive four (4) days of floating holidays per year. Full-time employees employed on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Juneteenth shall be awarded one floating holiday on each of those days. Additionally, after one (1) year of full-time continuous service, employees will receive one (1) floating holiday on January 1st and a second floating holiday on June 19th of each calendar year.

Redlined and clean copies of the proposed policy are included in the Board packet. The proposed amendment to Operating Policy 19 was discussed with the Planning & Policy Committee. Assuming Committee concurrence, recommend approval.

Mr. Clingman presented that this policy is reorganizing and clarifying several changes and differentiates holiday pay as observed holidays and floating holidays. Martin Luther King Day and Juneteenth have been moved from observed holidays to floating since Metro operates during these days. Metro is trying to better align these holidays with the days of operation.

Staff are not allowed to convert observed holidays to floating holidays. Staff will now receive four floating holidays a year and this only affects administration.

The Planning and Policy Committee has reviewed this policy and recommended it for approval.

Motion by Meadows; Seconded by Plucker

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, HAASE ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #8 Resolution: Request Approval of Standing Purchase Orders

(W. Clingman)

Staff is requesting approval of the standing purchase orders that are in excess of \$25,000.00 for 2024. The Purchasing Policy stipulates that the Board shall approve all Standing Purchase Orders exceeding \$25,000.00 on an annual basis. A copy of the Standing Purchase Order list is included in the Board packet.

This list was distributed to the responsible Directors for review, then sent to the Finance/Procurement Committee for review prior to the Thursday, December 21, 2023, Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha d/b/a Metro Board Meeting.

Staff recommends approval of the Resolution.

Mr. Clingman presented the annual request with no significant changes.

The Procurement Committee did review and recommend for approval.

Motion by Plucker; Seconded by Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, HAASE ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #9 Resolution: Rescind Operating Policy 32, Bus Advertising

(W. Clingman)

Staff is requesting approval of a resolution to rescind Operating Policy 32, Bus Advertising which was adopted in March of 1986 and last revised in August 1988.

In September 2022, Administrative Policy 1, Advertising was adopted by the Board. Administrative Policy 1 outlines the framework by which Metro manages advertising on buses and throughout its operations and in effect replaces Operating Policy 32. Staff is requesting the Board rescind Operating Policy 32 in order to avoid confusion or potential conflicting guidance as it pertains to commercial advertising on or within Metro's facilities and vehicles. A copy of both Operating Policy 32 and Administrative Policy 1 are included in the Board packet.

Recommend Approval.

Mr. Clingman indicated rescinding Policy 32 so it would not conflict with Administrative Policy 1.

The Planning and Policy Committee reviewed and recommended for approval.

Motion by Meadows; Seconded by Plucker

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, HAASE ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #10 Resolution: Request Approval of Fuel Contracts

(L. Cencic)

Metro determined that it was prudent to obtain bids for both diesel and gasoline fuel due to a decrease in fuel market prices. Metro's existing contract with Agriland is anticipated to end in January 2024.

On December 7, 2023, Metro requested bids for both diesel and gasoline for a six (6) month period beginning in February 2024. Metro received 5 bids for these contracts. The low, responsive, compliant bid for ultra-low sulfur diesel was from Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc. at \$2.5643 per gallon for 232,500 gallons. The low, responsive, compliant bid for gasoline was also from Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc. at \$2.0499 per gallon for 90,000 gallons.

Meeting Minutes: December 21, 2023

The CEO/Executive Director advised the Board Chair, Mr. Lawse, who agreed to the award of these contracts. Both proposed contracts are below the \$3/gallon budgeted for fuel for 2024. Metro's existing diesel contract which is expiring in January 2024 is \$2.533/gallon.

We are requesting full Board concurrence for two contract awards to Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc. in accordance with Metro's Procurement Policy. The contracts with Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc. will be in the amount of \$596,199.75 for the diesel purchase and \$184,491 for the gasoline.

Sapp Bros Petroleum, Inc. is paid upon invoicing after delivery, which is spread out incrementally throughout the contract period.

Recommend Full Board Approval

Ms. Cencic presented this Resolution and indicated that the current contract ends on January 31st 2024.

The Board expressed appreciation for watching the markets. Ms. Cencic indicated that Kelly Benesch should receive the credit for stepping up in this area over the last two years.

Motion by Plucker; Seconded by Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, HAASE ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #11 Board Chair Report

(D. Lawse)

Mr. Lawse did not have a board report but expressed his appreciation to staff for the work that is done at Metro and wished everyone Happy Holidays!

More policies will be updated in the new year. It is believed to be halfway through the process.

Happy holidays however you celebrate this time of year.

Agenda Item #12 Date, Time, and Place of Next Regular Board Meeting

January 2024 Board Meeting will be held Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. at the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority's - Administrative Building

Agenda Item #13 Adjournment at 9:09 am

Motion by Plucker; Seconded by Meadows

ROLL CALL:

UNANIMOUS (LUND ABSENT, HAASE ABSENT), MOTION CARRIES

Daniel Lawse, Board Chair

Selina Perry, Board Secretary

Dec

Recruiting Report

	Monthly Hires	Proj. Remaining Need	Recruiting Activity Notes
All Roles	11	25	11 people started new roles at Metro in the month of December. Additionally, Metro posted job openings for a Safety & Security Specialist, Community Mobility Coordinator, Inventory Specialist, & Transit Field Supervisor.

Operations			
Bus Operators - Omaha	7	7	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.
Paratransit Operators		1	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.

Maintenance			
Mechanic		4	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.
Utility		1	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.
Body Shop Mechanic		1	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.

BG&E			
BG&E - Field	1		Candidate anticipated to start in January

Custodial			
Custodian	1	5	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.

Dec

Recruiting Report

Role	Hires	Proj. Remaining Need	Recruiting Activity Notes
Admin Staff	2	6	
Mechanic Supervisor	1	1	Started December 20th.
Safety & Security Specialist		1	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.
Transit Field Supervisor		1	Currently reviewing candidates.
Inventory Specialist		1	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.
Community Mobility Specialist		1	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.
HR Generalist		1	Currently reviewing and interviewing candidates.
Project Manager	1		Started December 27th.

Jobs are posted internally, on Indeed, NEworks, LinkedIn, CareerLink, print ads, social media, www.ometro.com, exterior bus signage, and hood signs.

SOCIAL MEDIA SUMMARY

12.1.23 - 12.31.23



Facebook: [Metro Transit Omaha](#)

Posts: 15
Reach: 9,171
Reactions: 190
Comments: 46
Shares: 47
18 new followers | 0.66% increase



Twitter: [@rideORBT](#)

Tweets: 18
Impressions: 4,500
Avg. 789 impressions/post for the year
Likes: 59
Retweets: 9
Replies: 13
4 new followers | 0.35% increase



Instagram: [@metrotransitoma](#)

Posts: 7
Likes: 144
Avg. 23.6 likes/post for the year
Comments: 4
2 new followers | 0.13% increase



EARNED MEDIA SUMMARY

12.1.23 - 12.31.23

6 stories | 5 outlets

Streetcar FAQ: Why Not Buses?

Published by Nikki Palmer on Mon, 12/04/2023 - 1:00am



Daily Record - Streetcar & buses

Omaha's Metro bus service modifying Tuesday service

Updated Dec 24, 2023 at 5:00 PM CST



WOWT - Weather service

Winter Weather To Effect Omaha Transit Schedule

By Craig Michaels



iHeartRadio - Weather service

OUTREACH

12.1.23 - 12.31.23

Christmas in the Village

DEC. 2

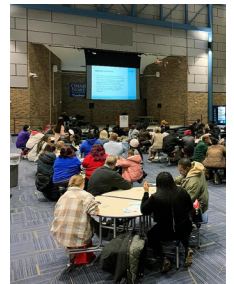
Metro staff worked in the Christmas in the Village partner tent, speaking with community members about K-12 Rides Free and passing out free paper ORBT buses.



Empowerment Network Education Summit

DEC. 9

Staff spoke with students and educators about their transportation needs and how they can maximize the opportunities of the K-12 Rides Free program.



In December and January, the Communications team provided information about winter riding and any service changes due to weather and road conditions. In addition to the website and MyRide OMA updates, other touchpoints for these communications include:

- Social media
- ORBT Station Kiosks
- News releases to the media

From routes on snow route options to different start and end times for service, the Planning, Operations, and Communication teams have strived to keep riders in the know before they're on the go.

WEATHER ALERT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11TH:

- Service will end at approx. 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12TH:

- Service will start at approx. 6 a.m.
- Routes will start on Snow Route Option B*

**Routes 4, 15, 16, 18, Yellow (43), 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, and ORBT will run on regular routing*

JUEVES 11 DE ENERO:

- El servicio terminará aproximadamente a las 10 de la noche

VIERNES 12 DE ENERO:

- El servicio comenzará aproximadamente a las 6 de la mañana
- Routes will start on Snow Route Option B*

**Las líneas 4, 15, 16, 18, Amarilla (43), 92, 93, 94, 95, 97 y ORBT seguirán su recorrido normal.*

Metro Transit Omaha
Published by metrooma · December 24, 2023 at 11:53 AM

UPDATE: All routes will resume regular service beginning at 7 a.m. Thank you for your patience while crews worked to make sure roads are clear for our buses to drive safely.

WINTER WEATHER ALERT

On Tuesday, December 26th, Metro will start 12 routes on Snow Route A because of expected inclement weather. Routes 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 24, 26, 30, 35, 36, 55, and 98 will begin service on Snow Route A. Riders will get at least a two-hour notice before routes return to regular.

Note: Routes 4, 15, 16, 18, Blue (41), Yellow (43), 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, and ORBT do not have snow routes at this time.

Riders can track buses with MyRide OMA. Download the app, send a text, or visit myride.metrooma.com.

Pro tip: create a MyRide OMA account to receive push notifications!

Reminder: Service will end early, around 8 p.m. on Dec. 24th (Christmas Eve) and there is no service on Dec. 25th (Christmas Day).

Bus Snow Routes

During inclement weather, Metro will sometimes have to put bus routes on detours called snow routes to ensure they can safely drop off and pick up riders. Below are drop down options for each bus route with its snow route options.

Check [MyRide OMA News](#) or call Customer Service at 402-341-0800 to know if any routes are on snow route currently.

Note: Routes 4, 15, 16, 18, Blue (41), Yellow (43), 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, and ORBT do not have snow routes at this time.

Route 3

Route 5

Morning Service Times:

ORBT

- First westbound bus leaves 8th & Farnam at 6:40 am, reaching Westroads at 7:10 am
- First eastbound bus leaves Westroads at 6:55 am, reaching Westroads at 7:25 am

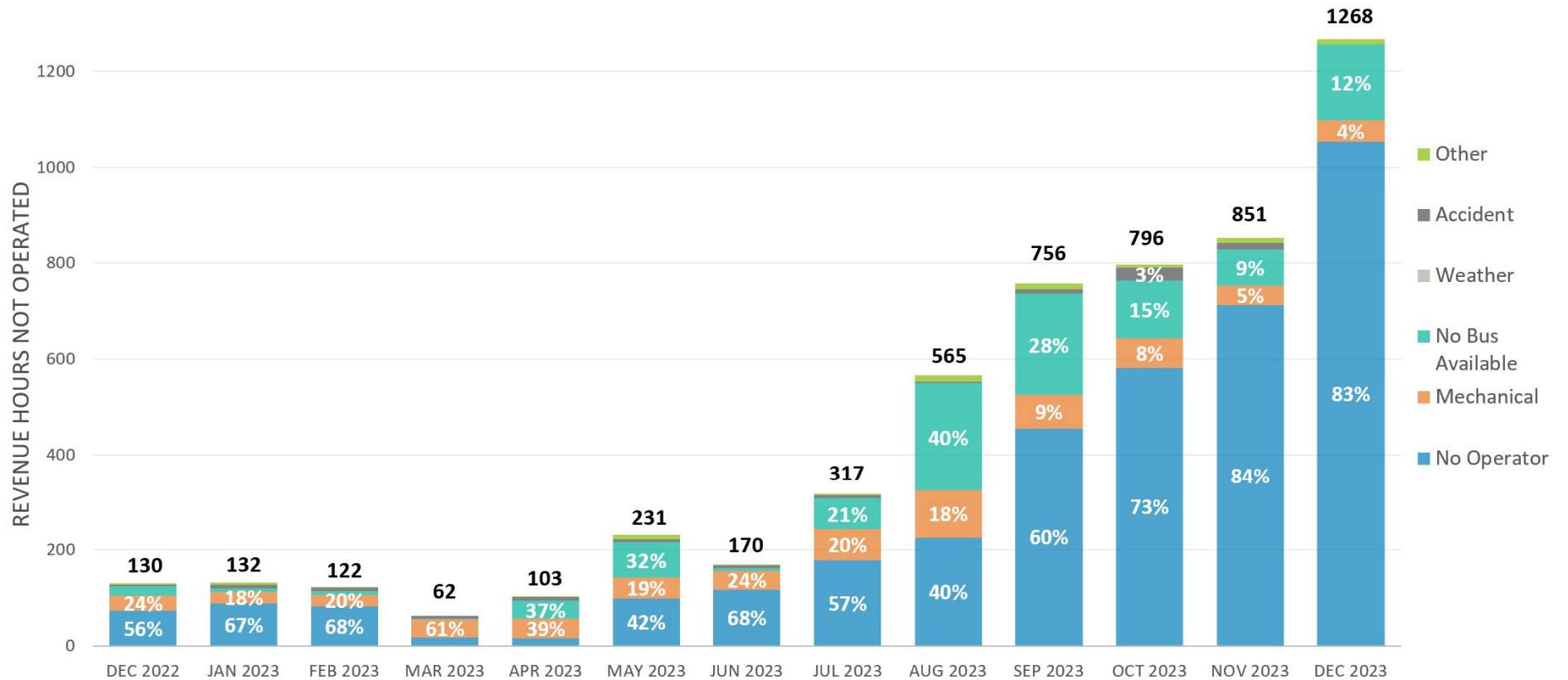
Route 3

- First short northbound bus leaves 40th & Cuming at 6:58 am, reaching NOTC at 7:12 am
- First full northbound bus leaves MCC South at 6:56 am, reaching NOTC at 7:32 am
- First southbound bus leaves NOTC at 6:55 am, reaching MCC South at 7:32 am

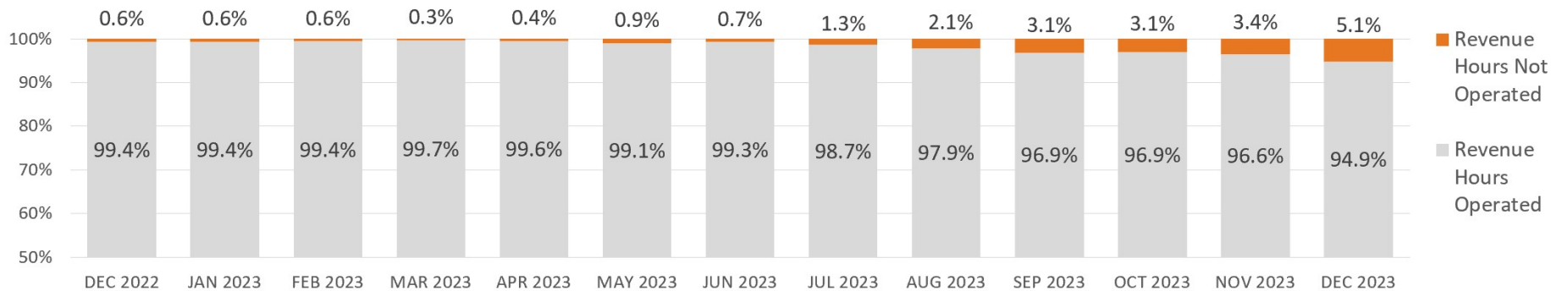
COMMUNICATIONS



MONTHLY SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS REVENUE HOURS NOT OPERATED BY TYPE

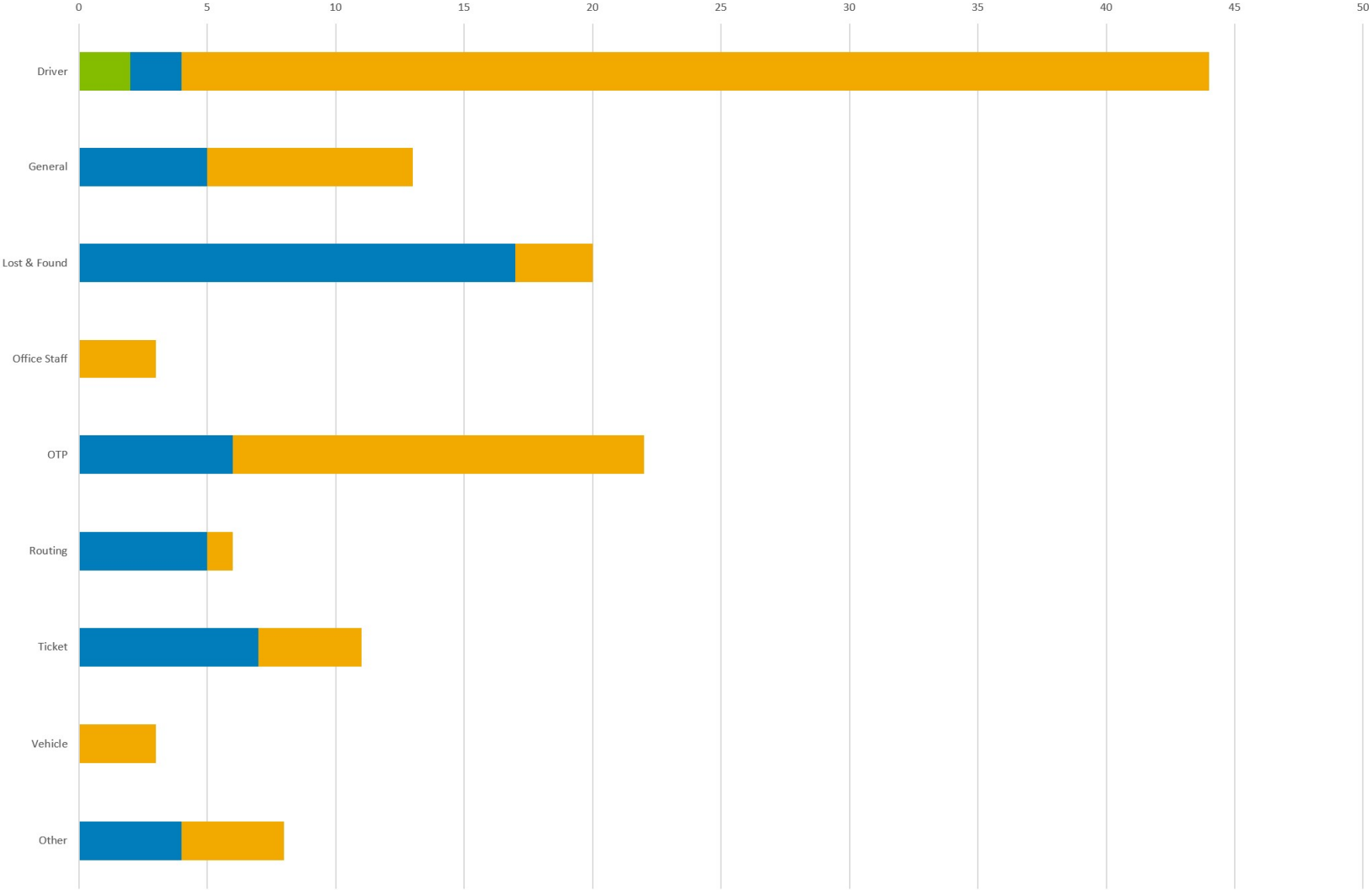


Percent of Total Revenue Hours

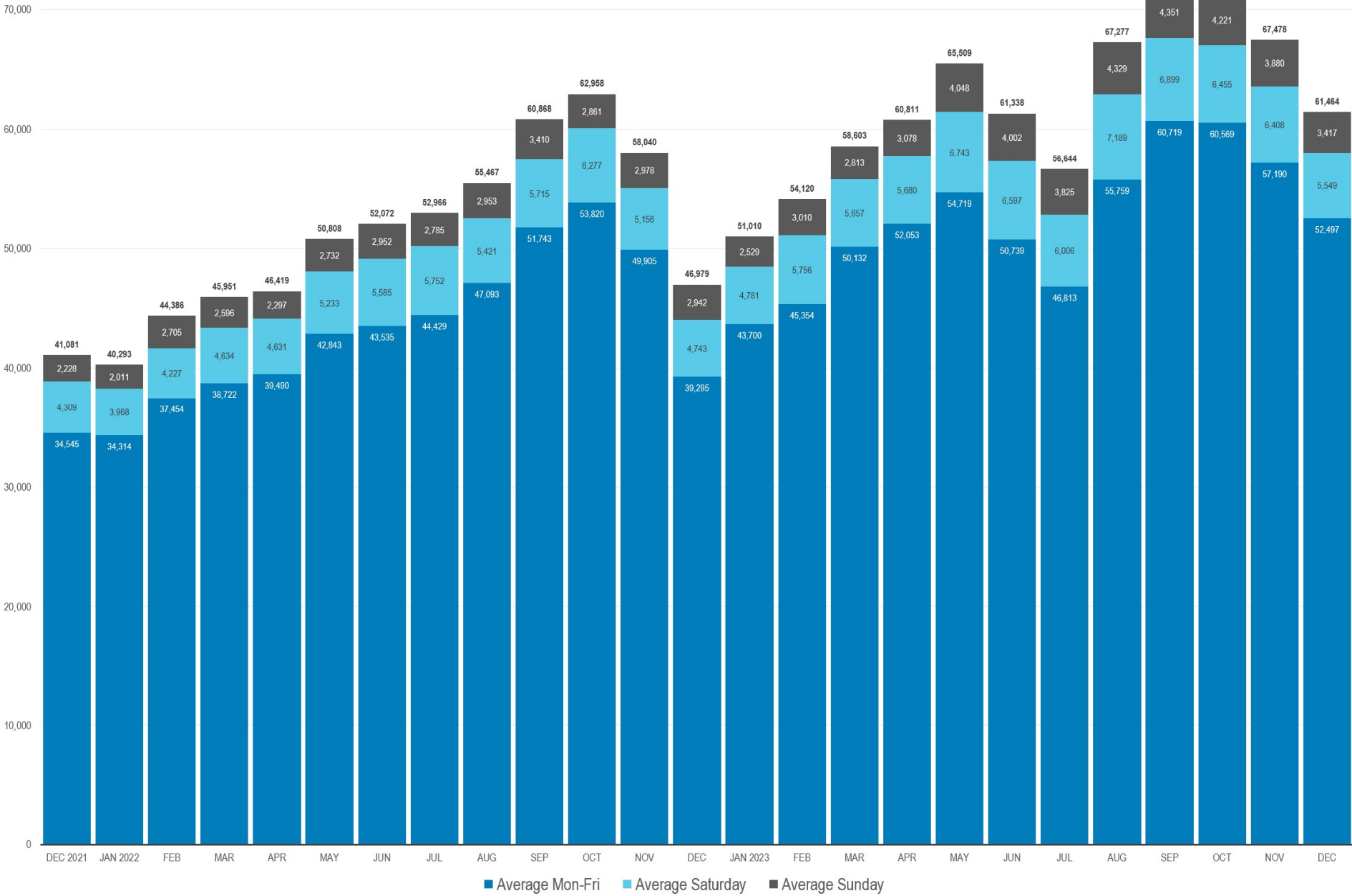


December 2023
Fixed Route Registered Customer Service Concerns by Category

■ Positive ■ Neutral ■ Negative



Average Weekly Ridership 2021 - 2023

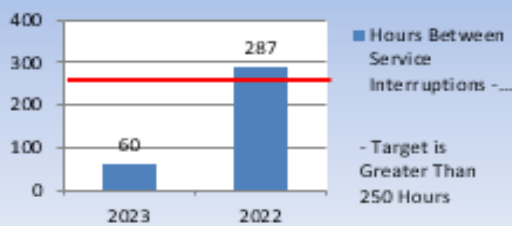


Metro Transit Operations Report

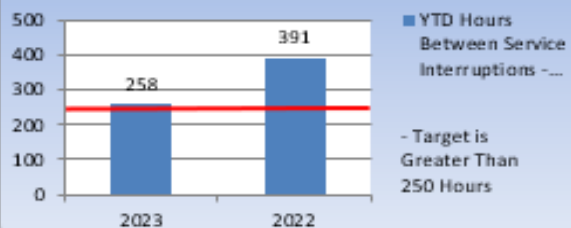
December 2023

Current Month	2023	2022	Variance	Year to Date	YTD 2023	YTD 2022	YTD Variance
Service				Service			
Service Hours	23506	22960	2.38%	Service Hours	288909	259863	11.18%
Service Miles	320953	318771	0.68%	Service Miles	3963695	3588932	10.44%
Interruptions				Interruptions			
Interruptions	392	80	390.00%	Interruptions	1121	664	68.83%
Hours Between Interruptions	60	287	-79.11%	Hours Between Interruptions	258	391	-34.15%
Miles Between Interruptions	819	3985	-79.45%	Miles Between Interruptions	3536	5405	-34.58%
Target Miles	3350	3350		Target Miles	3350	3350	
Road Calls				Road Calls			
Road Calls	39	25	56.00%	Road Calls	467	417	11.99%
Miles Between Road Calls	8230	12751	-35.46%	Miles Between Road Calls	8488	8607	-1.38%
Paratransit				Paratransit			
Total Van Trips	6910	6834	1.11%	Total Van Trips	77743	69669	11.59%
Passenger Hours	4298	4374	-1.74%	Passenger Hours	47569	36068	31.89%
Trips per Hour	1.61	1.56	2.90%	Trips per Hour	1.63	1.93	-15.39%
Passenger Miles	46320	49793	-6.97%	Passenger Miles	530174	453781	16.83%
Trips per Mile	0.1492	0.1372	8.69%	Trips per Mile	0.1466	0.1535	-4.49%
Taxi Trips	0	0	#DIV/0!	Taxi Trips	0	0	#DIV/0!
Total Trips - Van & Taxi	6910	6834	1.11%	Total Trips - Van & Taxi	77743	69669	11.59%

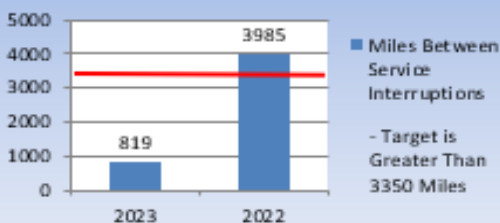
**Hours Between Service Interruptions -
December 2023 & 2022**



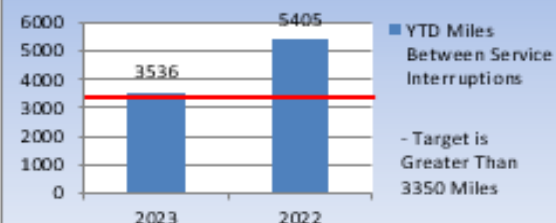
**YTD Hours Between Service Interruptions -
2023 & 2022**



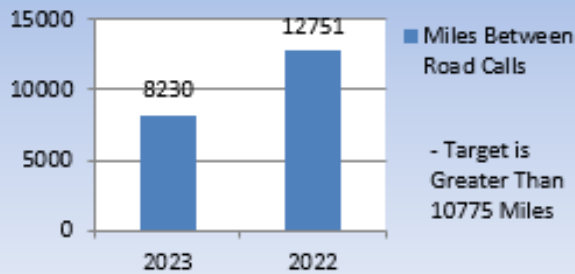
**Miles Between Service Interruptions -
December 2023 & 2022**



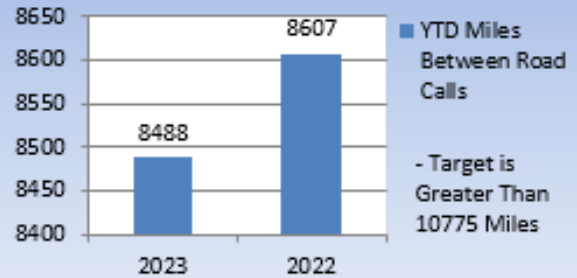
**YTD Miles Between Service Interruptions -
2023 & 2022**



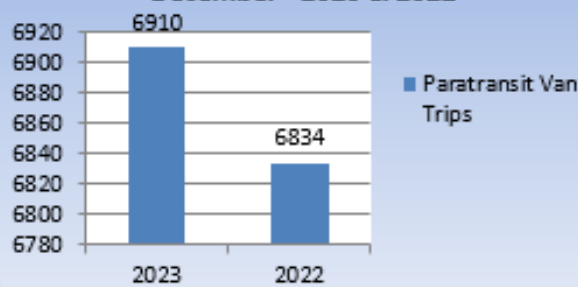
**Miles Between Road Calls
December- 2023 & 2022**



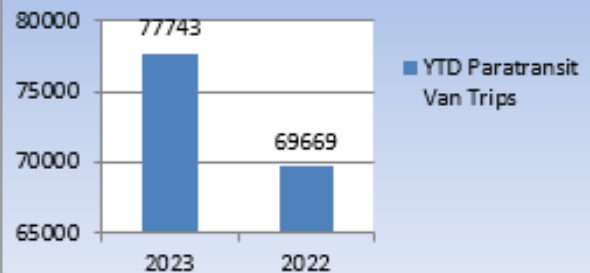
**YTD Miles Between Road Calls
- 2023 & 2022**



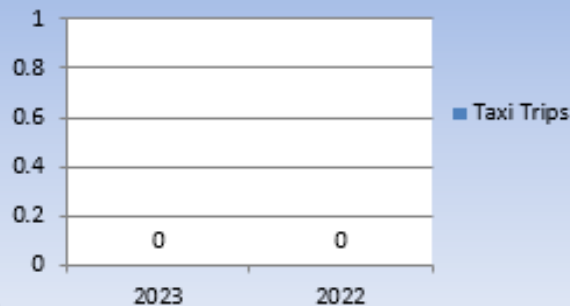
**Paratransit Van Trips
December - 2023 & 2022**



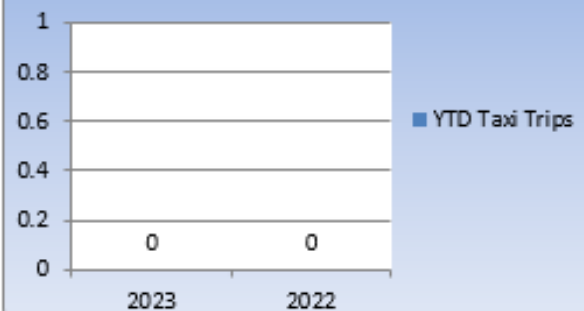
YTD Paratransit Van Trips - 2023 & 2022



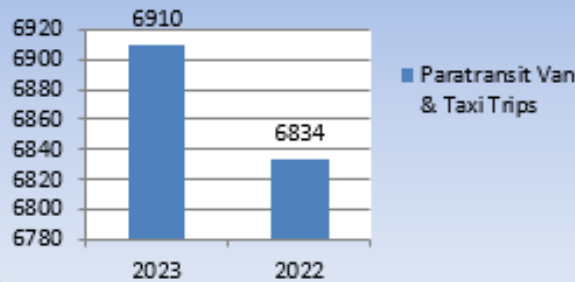
Taxi Trips December - 2023 & 2022



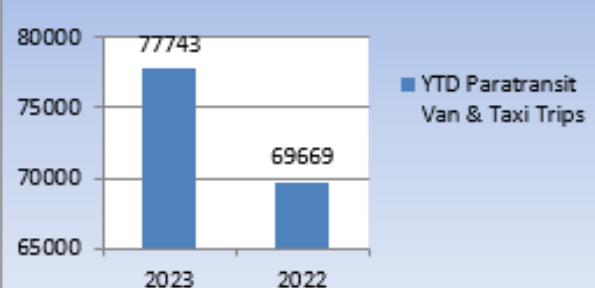
YTD Taxi Trips - 2023 & 2022



**Paratransit Van & Taxi Trips
December- 2023 & 2022**



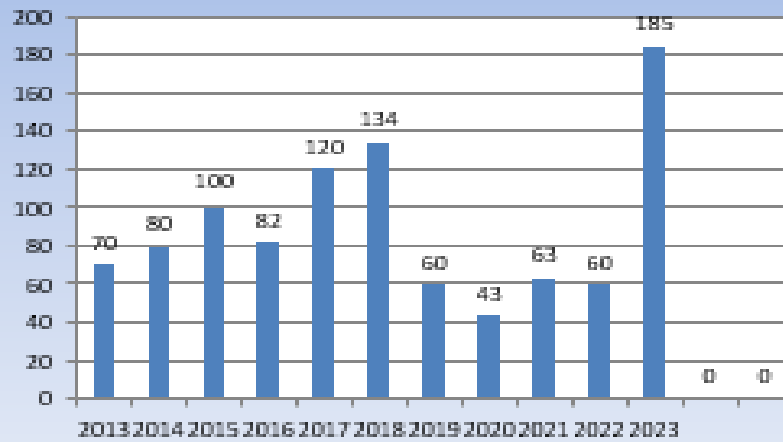
YTD Paratransit Van & Taxi Trips - 2023 & 2022



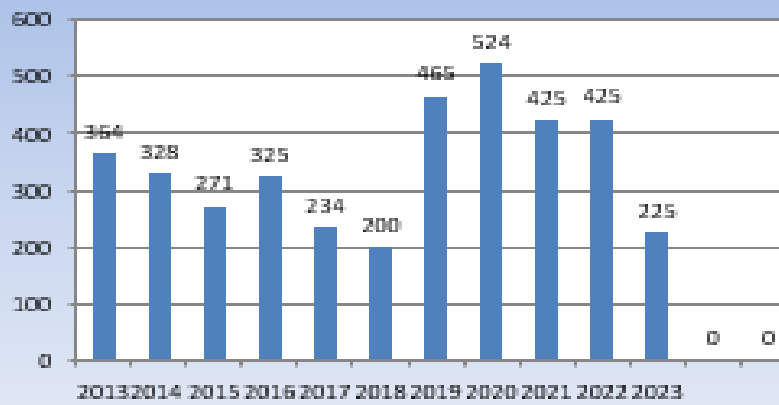
Service Interruptions Detail

Type	December 2022	December 2023	Difference	2022 YTD	2023 YTD	Difference
Accident	3	0	-3	30	64	34
Unsanitary Bus	0	2	2	4	18	14
Delayed Out Operator	22	259	237	317	961	644
Bus Operator Family Emerger	1	0	-1	5	1	-4
Drunk on Bus - Police Called	1	0	-1	2	3	1
Passenger Emergency	0	0	0	2	11	9
Weather	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mechanical	43	41	-2	274	504	230
Unknown	0	0	0	4	2	-2
Vandalism on Bus	0	0	0	0	1	1
Heavy Traffic	0	0	0	0	3	3
No Bus Available	10	90	80	48	602	554
Total	80	392	312	686	2170	1484
Mechanical Reasons						
Air Conditioner/Heater	1	0	-1	5	5	0
Air pressure went down	1	3	2	12	17	5
Brake Problem	1	2	1	20	23	3
Broken Belt	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bus Body Problem	0	0	0	4	4	0
Bus shut down	17	12	-5	122	123	1
Delayed by Train	0	0	0	1	1	0
Door Problem	1	0	-1	11	9	-2
Electrical Problem	2	0	-2	17	16	-1
Farebox	0	0	0	5	4	-1
Leaking Fluid	1	0	-1	21	22	1
Leaking fuel	0	0	0	1	3	2
Lift malfunction	0	0	0	5	4	-1
Light problem	1	0	-1	8	9	1
Low water	5	4	-1	21	15	-6
Mirror Broke	0	0	0	9	8	-1
No power	1	0	-1	24	25	1
Power Steering Problem	0	0	0	4	4	0
Oil Pressure	0	0	0	1	1	0
Overheated	0	2	2	16	25	9
Radiator Leak	0	0	0	5	7	2
Seat Problem	0	0	0	2	2	0
Starting problem	0	0	0	6	6	0
Suspension problem	1	2	1	14	23	9
Tire problem	3	2	-1	29	39	10
Transmission malfunction	1	1	0	13	13	0
Unknown Mechanical	6	13	7	67	85	18
Windshield/Window	1	0	-1	2	3	1
Total	43	41	-2	445	496	51

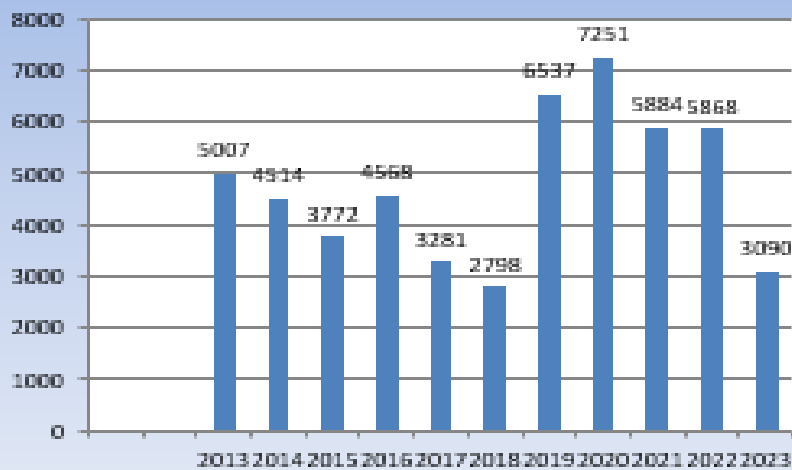
Service Interruptions



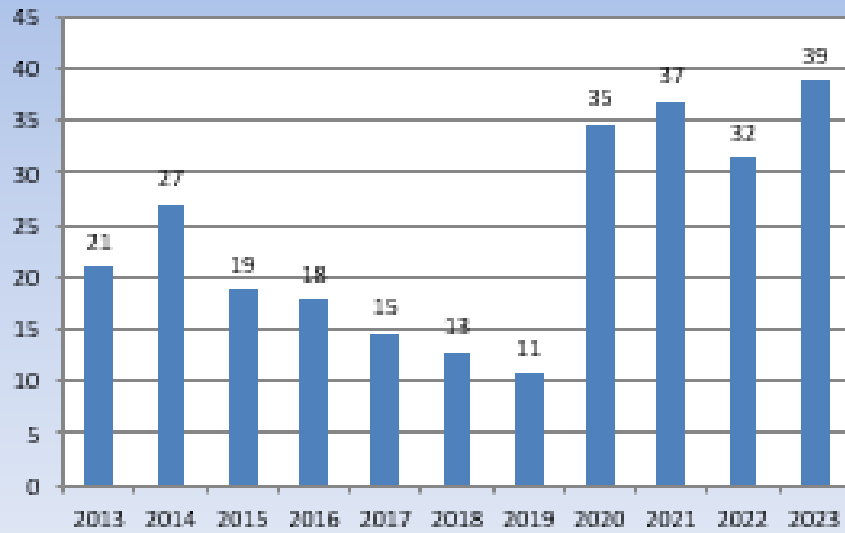
Hours Between Interruptions



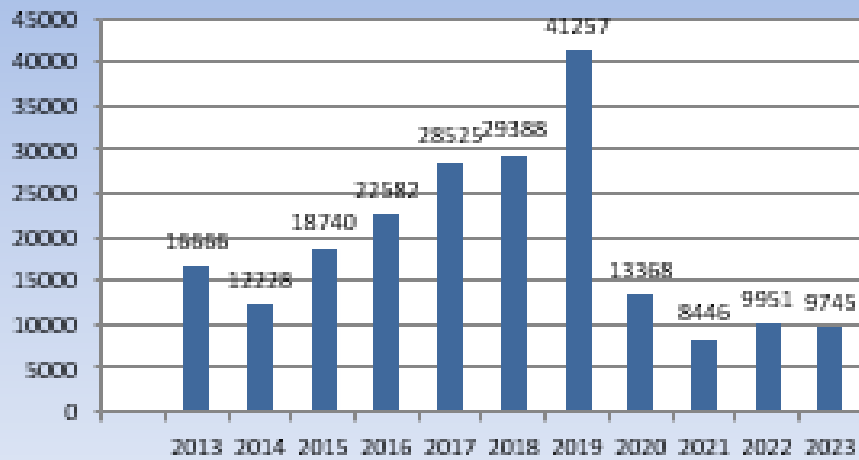
Miles Between Interruptions



Roadcalls



Miles Between Roadcalls



December 2023

Registered Customer Service Concerns by Category

Total Calls	12108
Bus	5899
MOBY	6209

Calls by Category

	Total	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Percentage
Driver	47	2	2	43	34.06%
General	14	0	6	8	10.14%
Lost and Found	21	0	18	3	15.22%
Office Staff	6	0	0	6	4.35%
Other	8	0	4	4	5.80%
OTP	22	0	6	16	15.94%
Routing	6	0	5	1	4.35%
Ticket	11	0	7	4	7.97%
Vehicle	3	0	0	3	2.17%
Wheelchair	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Total	138	2	48	88	100.00%
Percentage	100%	1.45%	34.78%	63.77%	

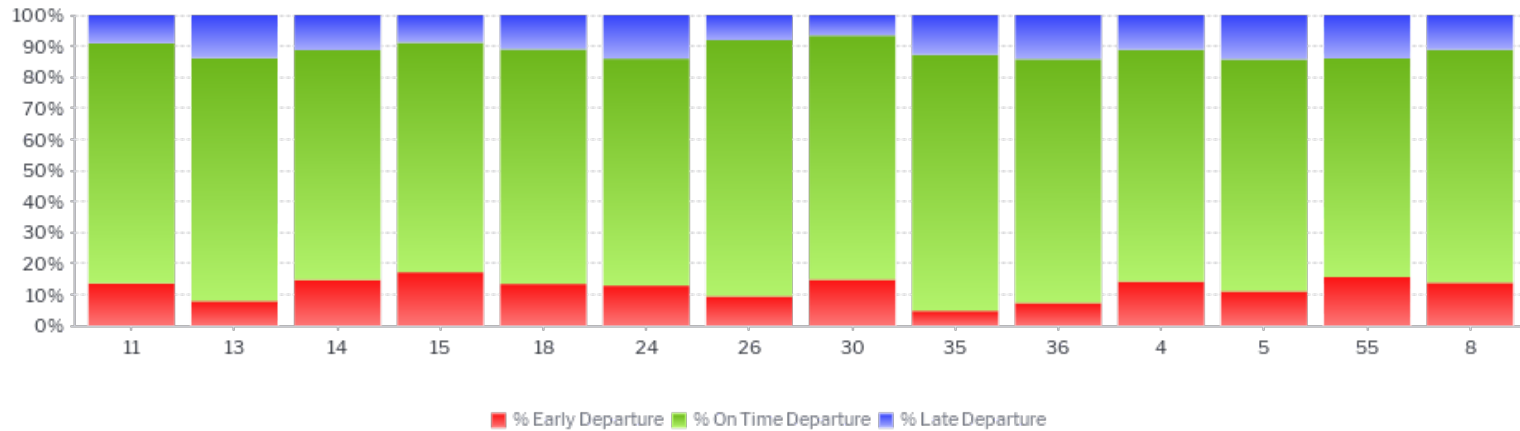
December 2023 OTP

Departures: On-Time Performance (System Wide)

■ % Early Departure ■ % On Time Departure ■ % Late Departure

Month	Start Date	End Date	Early Departs	% Early Departure	On Time Departs	% On Time Departure	Late Departs	% Late Departure	Total
December	12/1/23	12/31/23	18,465	12.8%	109,779	75.9%	16,412	11.3%	144,656

Departures: On-Time Performance by Route

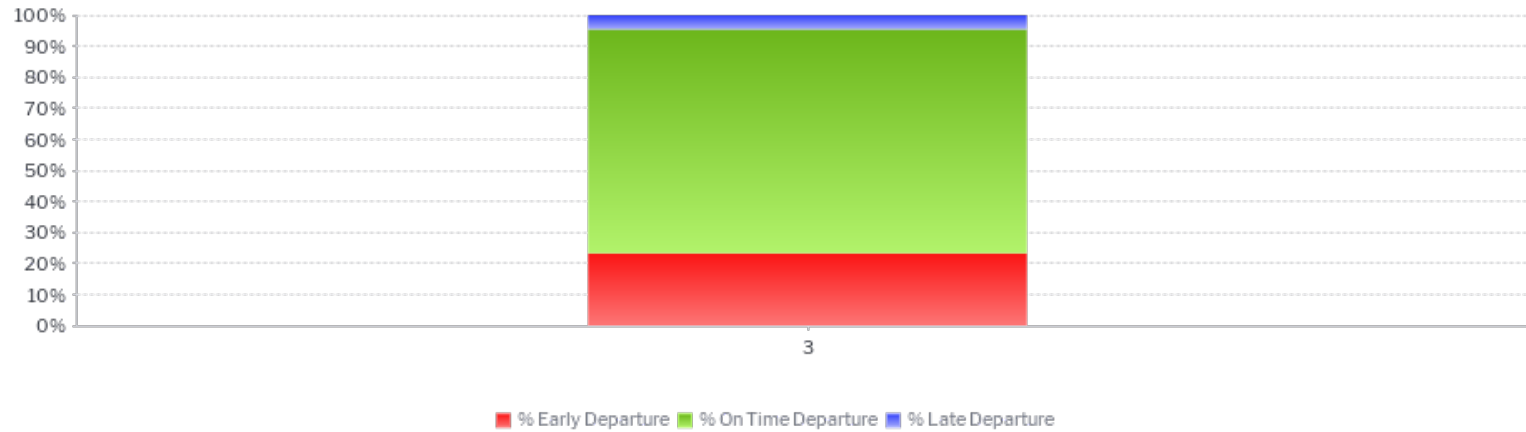


December 2023 OTP

Route 3 is listed separately due to the long term 42nd St. Bridge detour.

Route 3

Departures: On-Time Performance by Route



Start Date	End Date	Route	Route	Early Departs	% Early Departure	On Time Departs	% On Time Departure	Late Departs	% Late Departure	Total
12/1/23	12/31/23	3	North 40th / South 42nd	3,783	23.3%	11,726	72.2%	740	4.6%	16,249