

To: CapMetro Board of Directors  
From: Sharmila Mukherjee, EVP, Chief Strategic Planning and Development Officer  
Date: February 8, 2024  
Re: Proposed Summer 2024 Service Changes

Service changes provide CapMetro an opportunity to adjust its services to meet the needs of customers and efficiently use our resources. Service changes occur up to three times a year typically in January, June, and August to coincide with local school and university calendars.

The service change process is guided by the revised Board-approved Service Standards and Guidelines. Additional information about how service changes are developed, evaluated, approved and ultimately implemented is available on our website at [capmetro.org/servicechange](https://capmetro.org/servicechange).

### **Summary of Proposed Changes & Process**

The following is a high-level summary of the proposed service changes for Summer 2024.

- **School Trip Adjustments** – Select trips on bus routes will return to summer service levels. To improve service to overall customers and operations, select school trips that have duplicative service or low performance would be permanently eliminated.
- **UT Service Adjustments** – Typical transition to summer service levels will occur on UT Shuttle routes.
- **Minor Bus Schedule Adjustments** – To improve on-time performance, select routes may receive minor adjustments to their schedules. This does not impact routes or stop locations.
- **Minor Rail Schedule Adjustments** – Rail on weekdays and/or Saturdays may receive minor schedule adjustments to ensure more efficient and reliable service.
- **Pickup** – No Pickup zone changes are proposed at this time. However, the Summer 2024 Service Change presentation will include the biannual Pickup zone scores as part of the ongoing effort to evaluate and report Pickup performance.

The proposed Summer 2024 service change process includes a public involvement plan to notify key stakeholders and communities at-large, and solicit input from potentially impacted people. Community engagement will kick off on February 12, 2024. Input will also be solicited from advisory committees and impacted schools, among others. As part of our commitment to public involvement, the community will have an additional opportunity to participate by providing a formal comment opportunity on the proposed service change during a scheduled public hearing on March 18, 2024, before the board considers acting on this item. Engagement efforts will be summarized, and community feedback will be reviewed prior to bringing the proposed service change to the board for approval on March 25, 2024.

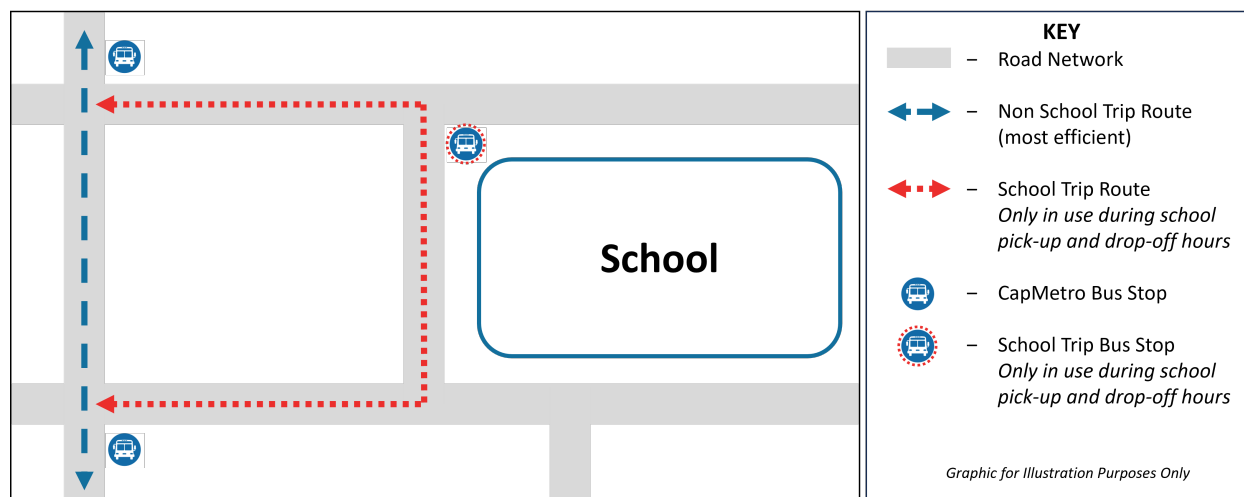
This service change includes minor adjustments proposed for the system.<sup>1</sup> Although a Title VI analysis is not required for this service change, understanding and balancing our customers' needs with our operational resources is how we conduct our service change process. Equity is consistently considered in this process to ensure we are meeting our community's needs. The proposed changes are in accordance with CapMetro's proposed FY 2024 budget. If approved, the changes would be implemented on Sunday, May 26, 2024.

## **Detailed Overview of Proposed Changes**

### **School Trip Adjustments**

As part of our ongoing commitment to best serve the community and stewarding limited resources, CapMetro identified a need to evaluate all school trips. A school trip is a segment on an overall route specifically connecting an existing route to a school in coordination with pick-up and drop-off times for students and school personnel (Figure 1). School trips are offered to increase accessibility, safety, and convenience for customers traveling to and from schools. However, if few riders use the school trip, the extended trip can result in unnecessary delays for other customers on the same route. Matching service with demand helps improve service to overall customers and operations.

Figure 1. Illustrative Example of a School Trip:



CapMetro proposes the elimination of the following select school trips due to duplicative service or low ridership. Note – elimination of the school trip is not the elimination of an overall route:

- **Route 4 (7th Street) to the Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA)** due to duplicative service with the East Austin Pickup zone. *No changes are proposed to Route 4's school trip to Austin High School.*

<sup>1</sup> [1] Board Policy "Title VI Major Service Change Policy OOD-103" defines a major service change as the establishment of new bus routes, a substantial geographical alteration on a given route of more than 25% of its route miles, the elimination of any bus service, or a major modification which causes a 25% or greater change in the number of daily service hours provided.

- **Route 217 (Montopolis Feeder) to the Allison Elementary School** due to extremely low ridership, averaging one customer per day at the nearby stop.
- **Route 315 (Ben White) to the Small Middle School** due to extremely low ridership, averaging zero customers per day at the nearby stop.
- **Route 333 (William Cannon) to the Perez Elementary School** due to extremely low ridership, averaging zero customers per day at the nearby stop.
- **Route 337 (Koenig/Colony Park) to LBJ Early College High School in the afternoon only** due to extremely low ridership, averaging zero customers per day at the nearby stop. *No changes are proposed to Route 337's school trip in the morning.*

### **Pickup**

Over the last several years, CapMetro staff have monitored Pickup performance for each zone and provided regular reports to the Board. CapMetro now operates eleven Pickup zones and frequently receives requests for either new zones or expanded operations within existing zones. Due to resource limitations (available funding, vehicles and operators), we are not able to meet all demands and reviewing the performance of existing zones helps determine opportunities for improvement and balance requests for changes.

In 2023, the Exposition Zone, in particular, was struggling to meet a sustainable level of service, and CapMetro staff highlighted that if performance did not improve, changes would be warranted. CapMetro launched a marketing and outreach campaign in Fall 2023 to promote the Exposition Pickup zone and increase ridership within the zone. As a result, Pickup Exposition ridership increased 27% in December over the average of the previous 11 months and Expositions overall performance ranking improved by three compared to other zones. Staff recommends keeping the current zone in place due to increased ridership and the overall Pickup Exposition zone score and continuing to monitor for sustained success.

CapMetro staff will reevaluate the performance of Pickup Exposition and all Pickup zones in July 2024 when calculating the biannual Pickup Zone scores. CapMetro staff wants to see sustained success in terms of performance, and reviewing performance every six months allows for action to occur if performance declines or improves.

### **Regional Coordination**

Collaborating with regional partners and member cities is essential to achieving our vision. Together, we address concerns, assess service effectiveness, and make collective decisions that shape a prosperous transit landscape for our region. The CapMetro Government Affairs team, in close coordination with Planning and Development staff, continues to facilitate engagement opportunities and ongoing communication with all cities within CapMetro's service area. We continue to work with each jurisdiction to understand their concerns, evaluate existing and future service, and address issues. As part of CapMetro's upcoming Service Planning process, staff will also coordinate with the Regional Planning team on communicating proposed service changes to help facilitate an exchange of information and understanding among our regional partners and address any concerns.

### **Service Plan Update**

CapMetro is about to kick off CapMetro's next 5-10-Year Transit Plan. Our previous 5-10-year plan, Connections 2025, yielded our most recent transit system re-design, Cap Remap, that increased the frequency and reliability of our services and resulted in a month-over-month, year-over-year increase

in ridership from Summer 2018 until March 2020. The upcoming service planning effort will culminate in a detailed implementation and vision plan to coordinate and implement all current and future CapMetro services in a way that aligns with community needs today. During this process we will identify how people are traveling in the central Texas region and evaluate the entire system to identify where services are meeting our customer's needs and where there are opportunities for improvements. The process includes meaningful and robust engagement with the community and prioritize a public participatory and inclusive process to ensure we capture representative feedback and equip the board with information to make informed decisions.

Should Board Members have any questions regarding the proposed changes, they should contact [Ed.Easton@capmetro.org](mailto:Ed.Easton@capmetro.org).