MCTS NEXT

Improving Run Times and Layovers for Bus Operators

Milwaukee County
Transportation and Transit Committee

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Making Driving a Bus Better for Operators

- MCTS was intentional about making driving a bus a better job for operators during last year's NEXT System Redesign:

  - Respond to Operators Requests to Improve Run Times
  - Provide Operators with More Time at the Layover
  - Ensure Operators have Access to Restrooms at the Layover

- Moving forward, MCTS will continue to collaborate with operators and ATU Local 998 on these important issues.

Scheduling Run Times - Background

- Most transit systems develop run times based on an *average* of data collected from on board equipment and from doing individual test runs

- MCTS relies on multiple sources of data:

  - Automated Vehicle Location and Automated Passenger Counters (on board equipment)

  - Professional experience from staff in the Safety, Security, and Training Department and the Transportation Department

Scheduling Run Times - Goals

- Provide operators with a realistic schedule they can drive at a safe, reasonable speed.
- Provide customers with an accurate schedule they can rely on to get to their destination.
- Avoid instances where operators run early (will miss passengers or wait through green traffic signals) or late (buses will "bunch" or run back-to-back).
- Maximize On Time Performance (defined as being 2 min. early to 5 minutes late).
  - Goal is to be on time 90% of the time.

Factors that Influence being On Time

- Ridership and number of bus stops on the route
- Road construction
- Weather conditions
- Traffic congestion
- Traffic Signal timing

- *In the end, transit systems write schedules for an "average" day, but there is no average day!*

Improving Run Times – Current Status

MCTS has updated run times for nearly every route within the past two years:

- 37 fixed routes each with a weekday, Saturday, and Sunday schedule = 111 schedules
- 50% of schedules were updated in 2021 and 50% this year alone

- 46 schedules were updated in 2022 at the request of operators and / or ATU Local 998 Leadership

Improving Run Times - Process

Operator Service Report:

- Provides opportunity to inform MCTS about schedule changes
- Planners analyze comments by reviewing on time performance data and reaching out to staff, e.g., dispatchers.
- A recommendation is prepared to add or shift time in the schedule.
  - Schedule makers create the new schedule for the next major change

OSR Operator's Service Report

Today's Date: ___ / ___ / ___

The on-time operation of buses is an important part of providing high quality service to our customers. Per the Operator Manual, drivers shall never run ahead of schedule or arrive early at any time point. Operators shall pull-out and pull-in on time and leave layovers on time.

If you consistently run late and are unable to keep up with the times on the paddle or there is excess running time, please complete this form and give to the Station Clerk. Schedule & Planning staff will investigate your concerns and determine if a change is needed after examining on-time performance data, checking with Dispatchers / Station personnel, or by riding the trips in question. Thank You.

Operator Information

Name _____ Badge # _____

Please Circle
Regular Operator   Day Extra
Hold Operator   Night Extra
GB Operator

Running Time Concerns

Route _____ Block # _____ Duty # _____

Briefly describe in detail your suggestions below. Attach a paddle with your written suggestions if you need additional space.

Start		End				
Timepoint or Location	Time of Day (am or pm)	Timepoint or Location	Time of Day (am or pm)	Scheduled Time (min.)	Suggested Time (min.)	Reasons for Suggested Change

Overload / Passing Up Passengers
Briefly describe in detail your concerns and suggestions below. An overload is where there are more than approximately 50 people on the bus.

Start		End			
Timepoint or Location	Time of Day (am or pm)	Timepoint or Location	Time of Day (am or pm)	Maximum Number of Passengers on Bus	Were Any Passengers Passed Up?

Other Concerns
Briefly describe in detail your concern and suggestions below.
Short Pull In Time   Long Pull In Time   Paddle Error   Restroom
Short Pull Out Time   Long Pull Out Time   Missed Connection   Other

Making Layovers Longer

- According to the Labor Agreement, the time in a layover cannot be less than 4 minutes or 7% of the round trip run time.

- As routes were changed and schedules updated during NEXT System Redesign, MCTS added time to many layovers:
    - The average layover today is 8 min. or 2x the minimum in the contract
    - There are no 4 min. minimum layovers on any route.
    - Longer routes are given even more time – 10 to 12 minutes.
    - A review of the percent of bus hours in layover shows MCTS is comparable to our peer transit systems.

Improving Access to Restrooms

- Beginning this Fall, every route will provide operators with access to a restroom at both layover locations.
    - Prior to NEXT, only 75% of routes had a restroom at the layover

- This change came about for two reasons:
    - Planners made sure new routes would have restrooms at the layover
    - Route supervisors provided estimates of the time it took to walk from the layover to the nearest restroom.

- MCTS will continue to monitor access as routes change in the future.

Thank you! Questions?

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