CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

metro
MOUNTAIN METROPOLITAN TRANSIT
TRANSIT SERVICES

To: **Craig Blewitt, Transit Services Manager**
From: **Brian Vitulli, Transit Planning Supervisor**
Date: **July 28, 2016**

Re: **Recommended Fall 2016 Service Changes**

Below is a summary of our Fall 2016 Service Change proposal, the public outreach/public input efforts we carried out, the feedback we received and our analysis of that feedback, and a recommendation for which improvements to implement on Sunday, September 18, 2016.

SUMMARY

The Fall 2016 Service Change proposal (see attachment) was released in June 2016 after feedback was received regarding our Spring 2016 service changes and briefings to regional stakeholders. A press release was distributed to publicize our meeting schedule. The service improvements identified in the proposal are made possible by additional Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority (PPRTA) sales tax revenues, additional fare revenue, and savings from the 2015 PPRTA expenditure budget. The Fall 2016 service improvements were grouped into three categories:

1. Service Increases
2. Scheduling Modifications
3. Route Modifications

The **Service Increases** are improvements to existing routes during off-peak hours such as weekday evenings and weekends. The routes selected for increased service have been suggested by our customers. These routes expand the footprint of transit services that are available during weekday-evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays; and improve access to jobs for our customers. **Scheduling Modifications** are minor timing changes to facilitate better connections between routes. One **Route Modification** on Route 5 was designed to lessen walking distances and to improve customer access; and two (2) alternatives were presented in response to input from North Nevada Avenue residents and the Old North End Neighborhood.

These transit enhancements continue Mountain Metropolitan Transit's (MMT) momentum toward improving system productivity and on-time performance, increasing frequency along high ridership corridors, adding off-peak service to enable better access to employment opportunities, improving customer service for our existing customers, and attracting new riders.

The objectives above highlight the intent of our future direction, and are consistent with our *2013 Comprehensive Operational Analysis* and the *2040 Regional Transit Plan*.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

MMT staff performed a public outreach campaign prior to the proposal being released and during the public comment period, with information briefings to numerous regional boards and committees, including: the Colorado Springs Citizens' Transportation Advisory Board and Transit Passenger Advisory Committee; PPACG's Transportation Advisory Committee, Community Advisory Committee, and Mobility Coordinating Committee; and PPRTA's Board and Citizen Advisory Committee. MMT staff also met with the Community Transit Coalition (which is composed of numerous entities and organizations) and engaged in dialogue with the Old North End Neighborhood, including a Neighborhood Town Hall meeting on Monday, June 20. *Rider Alert* notices were placed on all buses announcing the 2016 Fall Service Change proposal and upcoming public meetings. Detailed brochures (included in the attachment) explaining the proposed changes accompanied the on-board *Rider Alerts*. Complete service change information was also placed on the Mountain Metro Transit (MMT) website and was announced via Facebook and Twitter. A press release was also issued, which resulted in coverage by the following news outlets:

- The Gazette;
- The Colorado Springs Independent;
- KOAA – Channel 5.

MMT received approximately 100 comments via e-mail, letter, phone, or fax regarding the service changes. Regarding transit service along North Nevada Avenue, two petitions were also received: one with 207 signatures (35% are from North Nevada Avenue residents) from the Old North End Neighborhood recommending Alternative 2 – service on Cascade and Wahsatch Avenues; and one with 235 signatures (73% are from current transit riders) from the Community Transit Coalition recommending Alternative 1 – service on Nevada Avenue and Weber Street. Other comments received were suggestions and questions not related to the service change proposal or were requests for additional service that we currently do not have funding for (i.e. later evening service; weekend service). Comments received through e-mail, letter, phone, or fax can be found in the attachment.

Three (3) public meetings were held during the week of July 11th at various locations throughout the service area, and attendance totaled 71. MMT Planning and Public Relations & Marketing staff attended each meeting, presented details of the proposal, received comments, and answered questions about the proposed changes. During all three (3) public meetings, there were very few comments regarding the service increases being proposed (Routes 4, 7, 27, and 39), but those comments were all in support of the added service. The majority of comments were related to transit service in the Old North End Neighborhood (ONEN). The public meeting sign-in sheets have been included in the attachment, as have the comments received during the public meetings. A summary of input received at each public meeting can be found below:

The Independence Center – July 12, 2016; 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM.

28 attendees. Many comments in support of Alternative 2 (ONEN suggestion – Cascade and Wahsatch). Several comments in support of the 15-minute transit corridor and Alternative 1 (Nevada and Weber). Several comments suggesting reestablishment of transit service on Wahsatch Avenue.

Library 21 C – July 12, 2016; 5:00 to 6:00 PM.

13 attendees. Many comments in support of Alternative 2 (ONEN suggestion – Cascade and Wahsatch). One comment in support of the 15-minute transit corridor on North Nevada Avenue. Several comments suggesting reestablishment of transit service on Wahsatch Avenue.

Colorado Springs City Hall – July 14, 2016; 5:00 to 6:00 PM.
30 attendees. Many comments in support of Alternative 2 (ONEN suggestion – Cascade and Wahsatch). Several comments in support of the 15-minute transit corridor and Alternative 1 (Nevada and Weber). Several comments suggested reinstating transit service on Wahsatch Avenue.

The public comment period remained open until Thursday, July 21, 2016, to allow for additional comments generated by the public meetings. Overall, attendance at this series of public meetings was much higher than usual. This can be attributed to several factors: The growing interest in public transportation in the area and alternative forms of transportation; the significant revisions proposed to the transit system; the significant input from the ONEN regarding transit routing changes through the neighborhood; and the result of a public outreach effort intended to generate substantial feedback.

MMT staff performed a Civil Rights Act Title VI analysis on our Fall 2016 Service Change proposal and the result shows NO negative disproportionate impact of these service changes to minority and low income populations. The service changes provide very significant improvements for many existing riders from a variety of neighborhoods, and make transit a viable transportation option for many others.

RECOMMENDATION
Based on the extensive public outreach/public input process conducted and in consideration of the comments received, the overall transit system productivity improvements and additional service enhancements, benefits and other impacts to the community and the riding public, transit system operational requirements, and consistency with the City of Colorado Springs - Mountain Metropolitan Transit's objectives that are identified on page 1 of the Proposal (see attachment), and the availability of funds to operate the improved and additional service, I recommend approval and implementation of the entire 2016 Fall Service Change package with the following clarification:

1. **Transit service through the Old North End Neighborhood (ONEN) is recommended to operate on the Nevada Avenue and Weber Street corridors.** This option (Alternative 1) will be operated between Cache La Poudre Street on the south, and Jackson Street on the north, whereby Route 9 remains on North Nevada Avenue to operate on 30-minute headways, and Route 19 moves one block east to operate on Weber Street, also on 30-minute headways. I believe this recommendation incorporates and achieves a significant balance between meeting the needs of the riding public and the transit system as a whole by effectively maintaining 15-minute frequencies with one block of seperation, addressing concerns of the ONEN, and being sensitive to neighborhood impacts.

   Retaining transit service on North Nevada Avenue is also desired from a transit operations perspective, as this corridor is a more direct routing from Downtown to destinations north of the ONEN. It is this directness that enables route on-time performance to remain high and for our customers to get to their destinations quickly and reliably. On-time performance and system reliability are two keys components to providing quality transit service to our existing customers, and a major factor for attracting new riders.

The effective date for implementation of the Spring 2016 Service Change will be Sunday, September 18, 2016. Please let me know if you have any questions.