

TITLE VI EQUITY ANALYSIS

New Bedford Route 5 – Rivet Street: Weekday Headway Increase

Introduction

The Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) is proposing a change to the weekday service schedule for the New Bedford Route 5 – Rivet Street (NB5) that will increase route headways from forty-minutes to sixty-minutes. The change is proposed due to an operational analysis that determined that actual trip travel times (time needed to travel between the trip origin and trip terminus) regularly exceed the times on the public time table. The public timetable has not been updated in more than five years, during which time the route alignment has changed, passenger travel patterns have changed, and development and vehicular traffic have changed. Scheduling practice for the route has removed layover time at the end of each trip to maximize operational efficiency. The result of this practice leaves the route vulnerable to late arrivals because a single late trip has a compounding effect on travel time the rest of trips for the day.

Correcting the problem requires additional travel time scheduled for the route. To maintain the current forty-minute headway as shown on the public time table would require scheduling additional vehicles and drivers to operate the route.

Major Service Change Analysis

This change will affect all trips operated on weekdays. Currently, the NB5 operates a total of 115.7 revenue miles in weekday service; the proposed change will reduce revenue miles by 34.2 revenue miles, resulting in a change of 29.6% fewer revenue miles. The table below shows the details of the change.

NB 5 Weekday		
Outbound	Existing Condition	Proposed Condition
Miles/Trip		
Minutes/Trip		
# Trips	16	12
Rev. Miles/Day	51.8	38.9
Rev. Hours/Day	4.53	3.40
Inbound		
Miles/Trip		
Minutes/Trip		
# Trips	18	12
Rev. Miles/Day	63.9	42.6
Rev. Hours/Day	5.70	3.80
Weekday Total		
Miles/Trip		
Minutes/Trip		
# Trips	34	24
Rev. Miles/Day	115.7	81.5
Rev. Hours/Day	10.23	7.20

In accordance with the SRTA Title VI Program dated February 19, 2019, any service change that changes more than twenty-five percent of either total route mileage or revenue mileage is considered a Major Service Change and requires an equity analysis. The analysis evaluates the potential for disparate impact on minority riders and disproportionate burden on low-income riders. The SRTA Title VI program specifies that “changes affecting headways are evaluated against the existing systemwide conditions.” This means that a change in headway for one route must be comparable to all other routes in the system such that headways are generally equitable for the population served by the route subject to the proposed change. For the purpose of this change, the system is defined as all routes that serve the New Bedford Terminal.

Weekday service in New Bedford operates eleven routes with varying headways. Headways vary from twenty-minutes to sixty-minutes; no routes operate with headways greater than sixty-minutes. Headways and route counts are shown in the table below.

Headway	Route Count
20	2
30	4
40	2
45	2
60	1

The increased headways from forty-five-minutes to sixty-minutes is generally inconsistent with weekday operations, the majority of routes operate with headways of forty-minutes or less.

Determination of Disparate Impact

The SRTA Title VI plan identifies a disparate impact when a major service change affects a minority population twenty-percent more than non-minority populations. Survey data indicates that NB5 is a route that serves minority population; 47% of riders were identified as minority. Based on survey data, there is no disparate impact due to the fact that the difference between minority and non-minority riders is less than 20%.

Determination of Disproportionate Burden

The SRTA Title VI plan identifies a disproportionate burden when a major service change affects a low-income population twenty-percent more than non-low-income population. Survey data indicates that NB5 is a route that predominantly serves a low-income population; 100% of riders were identified as low-income. Based on survey data, there is a potential for a disproportionate burden due to the fact that the difference between low-income and non-low-income exceeds 20%.

Mitigation for Disparate Impact/Disproportionate Burden

The SRTA Title VI plan requires that when a major service change has a Disparate Impact and/or Disproportionate Burden (DI/DB), efforts must be made to minimize or mitigate the

effects. In the case of the proposed NB5 service change, the increase in headways is a response to underperforming ridership trend and is an alternative approach to eliminating service on the route completely.

The change does have potential for a Disproportionate Burden for Low-Income riders. The ideal mitigation would be to decrease headways to operate more frequently than the current forty-five-minute headway, however, SRTA does not have the capacity within the operating budget to decrease headways. This is a sub-optimal approach, however NB5 is one of the lowest performing routes in the SRTA fixed route system, ranked 10 out of 11 routes in order of annual ridership. The change in headways is not expected to increase ridership, however with limited resources, this service reduction is preferred over route elimination.