

Fall River Route 2 – North Main: Service Change Proposal

April 2023

I. Description

The Fall River Route 2 – North Main (FR2) serves the North Main corridor, the Fall River Industrial Park, and the Stop & Shop Distribution Center in Freetown. The route is lengthy and confusing with twelve distinct patterns of travel; more than any SRTA route. The route has a weekday span of service from 6:00 AM to 9:25 PM and a Saturday span of service from 6:30 AM to 7:25 PM. The route operates with thirty-minute headways on both Weekday and Saturday service.

The FR2 is confusing to riders. The route operates a one-way loop in the Fall River Industrial Park and travels the loop in a different direction depending on the time of day. The route deviates from North Main St to serve Holmes Apartments four times per weekday, despite very low ridership and reasonably close proximity to North Main St. During inclement weather, the bus is unable to serve Holmes Apartments due to the narrow streets and tight radius turns on the route. Additionally, the route serves the Stop & Shop Distribution Center in Freetown three times each weekday. The deviation experiences very low ridership and often is delayed entering the property through a security check-point.

II. Proposed Changes

The proposed changes will simplify the routing and eliminate low-ridership deviations to Holmes Apartments and Stop & Shop Distribution Center. The route will serve the Fall River Industrial Park in a one-way directional loop that will follow the same alignment throughout the day. There are two proposed outbound patterns: the first will follow the current outbound alignment serve the Fall River Industrial Park and Amazon warehouse and end at Four Winds Apartments, the current terminus for the route; the second will follow this same alignment however it will serve Commerce Drive before turning on to Airport Road. The first alignment is 9.83 miles, the second is 11.11 miles.

There is one inbound pattern proposed. Beginning at Four Winds Apartments, the alignment follows the current inbound alignment with no deviations. The proposed inbound alignment is 6.10 miles.

No changes are proposed to the span of service or the frequency of service for either weekday or Saturday service.

III. Title VI Equity Analysis

A Title VI Equity Analysis is required by the SRTA Title VI Program whenever a service change will result in a change of more than 25% of the revenue mileage for the route. This service change will reduce weekday revenue miles by 10% and Saturday revenue miles by 23%. Neither change exceeds the 25% change threshold and does not require a Title VI Equity Analysis.

IV. Discussion

The FR2 is a confusing route due to the numerous service patterns it follows. It also serves several unproductive deviations that warrant elimination. The elimination of the Holmes Apartments deviation will benefit route operations by removing a low ridership stop and a challenging street grid to operate a bus. The distance to North Main Street from points along this deviation are relatively short and are traversed on sidewalk.

The deviation to Stop & Shop was introduced in 2019 as a pilot to provide an alternative means to work for employees, however it failed to attract substantial ridership. A significant challenge was that the service did not align well with employee shifts and typically could only provide one-way travel for shift workers. The rolling nature of shift change over meant that workers would have lengthy waits before and after their shifts to use the service. Accessing the stop is impeded by having to travel through a security check-point, which can frequently cause delays when traffic is backed up; the bus does not get priority to pass through the check-point.

This service change will simplify the routing and make it easier for customers to use the route. The change will benefit most of the riders on the FR2 by making the service more predictable, understandable, and reliable.

V. Recommendation

The FR2 service change proposal is recommended for implementation.