

Route 208 – Mount Pleasant: Service Change Proposal

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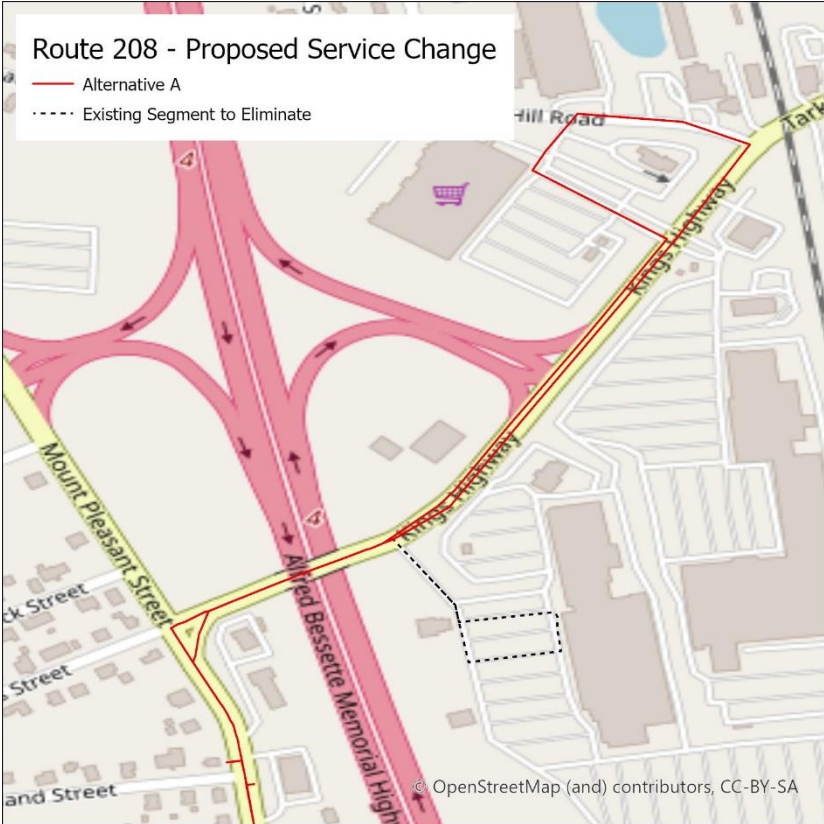
I. Description

Route 208 is a local, primarily north-south running route that connects Downtown New Bedford to Fieldstone Marketplace via Mount Pleasant Street. Route 208 provides service to medium- to high-density residential neighborhoods and shopping centers in the North End, and lower density areas in the northern part of the route. On weekdays, this route operates every 40 minutes from 6:45 AM to 5:45 PM. On Saturdays, this route operates every 40 minutes from 8:05 AM to 4:55 PM.

The current alignment of Route 208 terminates at the Fieldstone Marketplace. The route is interlined with the Route 221 in such a way that after completing the outbound Route 208 pattern, that bus will continue on to the Route 221; after returning from the Route 221 to Fieldstone Marketplace, the bus will continue with the Route 208 inbound pattern. Route 221 is subject to a service change proposal that eliminates service, which provides an opportunity to make a minor change to Route 208 that will benefit SRTA customers.

II. Proposed Changes

The proposal for Route 208 realigns service from the Fieldstone Marketplace plaza, the current terminus of the route, to the King’s Highway Stop & Shop, the proposed new terminus of the route.



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. Both alternatives exceed the 25% threshold and warrant an equity analysis. The parameters for a Title VI equity analysis is described in Chapter 8 to the 2022 SRTA Title VI Program and evaluates two factors: the effects of the change on racial minority groups and the effects of the change on low-income populations. In both measures, the effects are measured against the current conditions by establishing a baseline for racial minorities and low-income populations. If the affected population is more than 60% of the total, the change is determined to have an adverse impact.

The proposed alignment change increases weekday revenue miles from 120.4 to 128.0, a 6% increase; the Saturday revenue miles go from 99.1 to 105.4, a 6% reduction. The realignment does not meet the criteria for a Major Service Change and does not require a Title VI Equity Analysis.

IV. Discussion

The proposal for Route 208 is part of a larger service change relating to the proposed elimination of Route 221. The elimination of Route 221 leaves a popular destination, King’s Highway Stop & Shop, without service. The close proximity of this destination to the current terminus of Route 208 makes this an obvious and relatively inconvenient service change. The Fieldstone Plaza can continue to be served with a streetside stop on King’s Highway before Route 208 enters Stop & Shop plaza. Recent improvements to King’s Highway have upgraded sidewalks and crossings that will make this a reasonably safe alternative to the service that is currently operated.

This proposal brings about an additional benefit to customers: a free transfer at the New Bedford Terminal. Currently, customers that board Route 221 at Stop & Shop with the intention of riding to the New Bedford Terminal are required to use a transfer at the end of the line of Route 221, at Fieldstone Marketplace, to continue on the inbound Route 208. Realigning the terminus to Stop & Shop provides customers with a direct inbound trip to the New Bedford Terminal and allows them an opportunity to transfer to a connecting route free of charge under the fare policy. This benefits customers by making the service easier to understand and more affordable to use.

V. Public Input

VI. Recommendation

