

**Columbus Consolidated Government  
Council Meeting**

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Councilors
<b>AGENDA SUBJECT:</b>	<b>METRA/TIA</b>
<b>AGENDA SUMMARY:</b>	Approval is requested to adopt the resolution authorizing METRA to make proposed changes to its services.
<b>INITIATED BY:</b>	<b>METRA Transit System and the Planning Department</b>

**Recommendations:** Approval is requested to adopt the resolution authorizing METRA to make proposed changes to its services.

**Background:** On October 22, 2016, METRA Transit System implemented changes to its existing bus service by adding three new Fixed Route, two Paratransit Routes and extending service until 11:30 p.m., using Transportation Investment Act (TIA) funding.

**Analysis:** Since the TIA funded route changes were made in 2016, METRA has two service reviews of the new routes and service effectiveness. Ridership data was collected and bus stops surveys have been compiled by Connetics Transportation Group (CTG) and they have provided the results. Recommendations for proposed 2020 service changes were presented to Council on December 10, 2019, and a public review period was open for the period March 1 through March 30, 2020. The proposed changes recommended elimination all routes lining up after 8:30 pm at the Transit Center. METRA published all required notices of the proposed change, provided information on City and METRA web-sites, conducted a Public Hearing at the METRA’s Administration Building on the March 12, 2020, and collected customer comments via telephone and email. During March 2020, the COVID-19 public health emergency caused the reduction of times and numbers of buses. METRA is now able to re-establish service as previously scheduled up until 6:30 pm., and request approval of the permanent elimination of all routes lining up after 8:30 pm. If feasible, on January 2, 2021, METRA intends to restore routes lining up after 6:30 pm and until 8:30. Further details are contained in CTG’s Annual Transit Service Effectiveness Analysis presented to Council on June 16, 2020.

**Financial Considerations:** The route changes would reduce the number of service hours with the last line-up at 6:30 p.m., until further notice as a result of COVID-19, and permanently with the reduction of all routes lining up after 8:30 pm. This will result in the reduction of two Bus Operator positions, resulting in some cost savings for the City.

**Projected Annual Fiscal Impact Statement:** The reduction of service after 6:30 p.m. until the end of the year and after 8:30 permanently would help to extend the life of the TIA funding beyond year 2022.

**Legal Considerations:** Council must approve all changes to METRA’s bus service, and METRA is required to meet the Federal Administration (FTA) Public Participation Process for major service reductions.

**Recommendation/Action:** Approval is requested to adopt the resolution authorizing METRA to make proposed service changes as presented to Council on June 16, 2020.

**A RESOLUTION**

**No. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF METRA ROUTE PROPOSALS UNDER THE TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT ACT (TIA).**

**WHEREAS**, on October 22, 2016, METRA Transit System implemented new bus service as a result of a voter's approved one percent sales tax under the Transportation Investment Act of 2012; and,

**WHEREAS**, on January 9, 2018, METRA Transit System provided Council with a brief update of how the routes were progressing and requested approval for Connetics Transportation Group (CTG) consultants to conduct an assessment of all routes; and,

**WHEREAS**, on January 30, 2018, the first Public Hearing was held at METRA Transit Administration Office, 814 Linwood Blvd. by METRA and the consultants to present the proposed changes and to solicit public input on the farebox and bus stop ridership data collected; and,

**WHEREAS**, on February 1, 2018, a second Public Hearing was held at METRA Transit System Administration Office, to inform the public of the proposed route changes and to solicit public input; and,

**WHEREAS**, on February 27, 2018, a third Public Hearing was held, and CTG presented Council the proposed changes to METRA routes that would reduce the number of service hours on low performing routes and increase service hours on over performing routes, extending the life of the TIA funding beyond year 2022; and,

**WHEREAS**, on December 10, 2019 Council was briefed that METRA was contracting with CTG to undertake a second service review; and,

**WHEREAS**, the public was notified of proposed scheduling changes to eliminate all route line ups after 8:30 pm and afforded a period of public comment from March 1 through March 30,2020; and,

**WHEREAS**, on March 12, 2020, a Public Hearing was held on the proposed route changes; and,

**WHEREAS**, during the month of March, the COVID-19 emergency required the reduction of the current METRA schedule and the number of buses used; and,

**WHEREAS**, on June 16, 2020, CTG presented the results of its Annual Transit Service Effectiveness Analysis to Council and proposed changes to METRA routes; and,

**WHEREAS**, METRA Transit System and the Planning Department agree with the proposed route changes and request Council's approval to implement the changes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

The following route changes, as specified in the CTG analysis, shall be adopted:

- 1) Any routes lining up after 8:30 pm are permanently discontinued and will not be reinstated;
- 2) The weekday bus service will be restored to pre-COVID-19 levels, effective August 1, 2020;
- 3) The reduced service after hours with the last line-up at 6:30 pm will continue until at least January 2, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020, and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Baker voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Buck voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Henderson voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Thompson voting	_____.
Councilor Thomas voting	_____.
Councilor Woodson voting	_____.

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Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

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B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor