

Policy Bulletin

2010

Estuary Transit District

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BY: ETD Board of Directors

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Fare and Service Change Policy

The Estuary Transit District is committed to soliciting and considering public comments when considering fare increases and service changes. As such, ETD has developed the following policy to ensure public comments are sought before imposing any fare increase or major service changes.

This policy will apply to any fare increase and any major service change. A major service change is defined as the elimination of a route, a reduction of 10% of service hours of a route, the addition of a route or the elimination of one or more timepoints on a route.

ETD will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities at all public hearings with one week's notice of necessary accommodations.

Fare Changes

Should ETD wish to propose a fare increase, the ETD Board of Directors and/or ETD staff will hold a public hearing. ETD will publish notice of the hearing in the local newspaper of record (currently the Hartford Courant). The notice will include the proposed fare increase and the date, time, and location of the public hearing. The notice will be published for at least one day. ETD shall also post the same notice on all ETD buses and be sent to all member town clerks.

ETD may include the hearing as part of its regular meeting agenda, as a special meeting, or as a stand alone public hearing. The hearing will be held at a public, ADA accessible location on an ETD bus route. Minutes of the hearing will be taken. All fare increases will be presented to the Board of Directors in the form of a resolution, and may be voted on immediately following the public hearing if the Board is in legal session. If the public hearing is held at a meeting separate from that at which the fare increase will be voted on, the minutes of the hearing will be provided to the Board of Directors prior to voting.

All fare increase resolutions will be passed pending Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) approval. Upon adoption of the fare increase, the Chairman or

Executive Director will send a written request to the DOT requesting approval of the fare increase. Following DOT approval, the increase will be implemented with at least 14 days notice to the public, which must, at minimum, be posted in all ETD vehicles.

Should ETD wish to propose a fare decrease or a discounted pre-paid fare, the Board of Directors will vote on a resolution providing for said decrease or pre-paid fare. The resolution will be passed pending DOT approval. Upon passage of the resolution, the Chairman or Executive Director will send a written request to the DOT for approval of the fare decrease or discounted pre-paid fare. No public hearing is required for such a fare change.

In order to comply with 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(2), 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(7) and Appendix C to 49 CFR part 21, ETD evaluates future significant system-wide service and fare changes and proposed improvements at the planning and programming stages to determine whether those changes have a discriminatory or disparate impact.

All future fare changes will warrant an Equity Analysis.

- Any “fare change,” as defined above, will require a public hearing and a service impact assessment.
- For future proposed changes that would increase or decrease fares or change payment type or payment media, information will be analyzed from available information (e.g. ridership surveys) indicating whether minority and low-income riders are disproportionately more likely to use the mode of service, payment type, or payment media that would be subject to the fare increase.

Service Changes

Should ETD wish to propose a major service change, the Chairman or Executive Director shall send a written request to the DOT for said change. Upon DOT approval, ETD will schedule a public hearing. ETD will publish notice of the hearing in the local newspaper of record (currently the Hartford Courant) for at least one day. The notice will include the name of the route(s) that will be affected by the change, a brief summary of the change, and the date, time, and location of the public hearing. The same notice will be posted on all ETD buses and be sent to all member town clerks. The hearing will be held at a public, ADA accessible location on an ETD bus route. Minutes of the hearing will be taken and a copy provided to DOT.

In order to comply with 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(2), 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(7) and Appendix C to 49 CFR part 21, ETD evaluates future significant system-wide service and fare changes and proposed improvements at the planning and programming stages to determine whether those changes have a discriminatory or disparate impact.

The ETD Board of Directors has adopted the following definition of “major services changes” for the purpose of Title VI compliance:

1. Discontinuation of existing fixed-route service to any part of the ETD service area, including elimination of an existing route or route segment and/or replacement of fixed-route service with demand-response service.
 2. Replacement of public demand-response service in an area with a fixed-route.
 3. Discontinuing service on weekend days and/or holidays, even if such discontinuation does not exceed the threshold in Item #7 below.
 4. Implementation of a new route.
 5. Systemwide service reduction or increase involving 15% or more of total route miles or service hours.
 6. Reducing the span of service on any route (i.e., eliminating first and/or last trips).
 7. Reducing the revenue miles and/or hours of service on any route by 20% or more.
- Route changes will be analyzed by listing:
 - Existing route miles versus existing route miles preserved resulting in a percent change for each route; and
 - Existing route miles versus miles extended resulting in a percent miles extended for each route.

If the elimination of current routing or establishment of new routing show a major service change as defined above, then a Service Equity Analysis will be performed. With the exception of any demand response, pilot or temporary service.

ETD staff will consider the public comments prior to making a final decision on the change. Notice of the changes will be posted on all ETD buses at least 14 days prior to the change. Updated schedules will be printed and distributed at least 7 days prior to the change.

Service Equity Analysis

Service Equity Analysis will analyze the disparate impacts to minority and low income populations. ETD’s disparate impact policy is as follows:

When the percentages for impacted minority and/or low-income populations are higher than 15% of the service area average for these populations, impacts are considered disproportionate.

- ETD uses census data at the tract or block group level depending on data availability to determine the route-level impacts. Routes with “major service changes” will be mapped, showing the individual route, the segment of the route that would be eliminated or any established new routing, overlaid on a demographic map of the route area, that highlights those census tracts where the total minority and low-income population is greater than 15% of the service area average. Route changes and span of service changes are quantified separately, per guidelines provided in FTA Circular 4702.1A.

- Using these figures, percentages for impacted minority and low-income populations are recalculated for each change on each route as follows:
 - $\text{Minority or Low-income Population} / \text{Total Population} = \text{Percentage of Minority or Low-income Population within tract}$
 - The percentages are then compared to the district’s service area averages for minority and low income populations.
 - When the percentages for impacted minority and low-income populations are higher than 15% of the service area average for these populations, impacts are considered disproportionate.