



MAJOR SERVICE CHANGE POLICY



Major Service Change Policy

I. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the Major Service Change and Service Equity Policy is to define thresholds for determining major service changes and whether potential changes to existing transit services will have a disparate impact based on race, color, or national origin, or whether potential service changes will have a disproportionately high and adverse impact on minority and/or low-income populations.

II. Basis for Policy Standards

Federal law requires CATS to evaluate changes to transit services, as outlined in FTA Circular 4702.1B, effective October 1, 2012. In order to comply with 49 CFR Section 21.5(b)(a), 49 CFR Section 21.5 (b)(7) and Appendix C to 49 CFR part 21, recipients shall:

“Evaluate significant system-wide service and fare changes and proposed improvements at the planning and programming stages to determine whether those changes have a discriminatory impact. For service changes, this requirement applies to ‘major service changes’ only. The recipient should have established guidelines or threshold for what it considers a ‘major’ change to be.”

III. Major Service Change Policy

The following defines when a change in the transit service at CATS is considered a major service change and will trigger a service equity analysis in accordance with the regulatory requirements set forth in FTA Circular 4702.1B.

- The establishment of new bus routes or BRT routes
- The reduction of service on a given route of more than 25% of its route miles on any bus route
- The elimination of any bus route
- A major modification that results in a 25% or greater reduction in the number of daily service hours provided

A. Minority Disparate Impact Policy (Service Equity Analysis)

When conducting a service change equity analysis, the following thresholds will be used to determine when a service change would have a disparate impact on minority populations.

- If the percentage of minority passengers on an affected bus route is greater than the transit system’s minority ridership by bus route classification.
- If a service level expansion or service area expansion is considered that coincides with a reduction in transit service on the same route or other routes, AND the route(s) considered for service expansion predominantly

serve non-minority and/or non-low-income geographic areas while the route(s) considered for reduction predominantly serve minority and/or low-income geographic areas, then a disparate impact may be determined.

- The determination of a disparate impact will be based on meeting both of the following criteria:
- If the percentage of minority passengers on an affected route considered for service expansion is less than the transit system's minority ridership percentage by bus route classification, AND
- If the percentage of minority passengers on an affected route considered for service reduction is greater than the transit system's minority ridership percentage by bus route classification.

B. Low-Income Disproportionate Burden Policy (Service Equity Analysis)

When conducting a service change equity analysis, the following thresholds will be used to determine when a service change would have a disproportionate burden on low-income populations.

- If the percentage of low-income passengers on an affected bus route is greater than the transit system's low-income ridership by bus route classification.
- If a service level expansion or service area expansion is considered that coincides with a reduction in transit service on the same route or other routes, and the route(s) considered for service expansion predominantly serve non-minority and/or non-low-income geographic areas AND the route(s) considered for reduction predominantly serve minority and/or low-income geographic areas, then a disproportionate burden may be determined. The determination of a disproportionate burden will be based on meeting both of the following criteria:
- If the percentage of low-income passengers on an affected route considered for service expansion is less than the transit system's low-income ridership percentage by bus route classification, AND
- If the percentage of low-income passengers on an affected route considered for service reduction is greater than the transit system's low-income ridership percentage by transit classification.

C. Exceptions

The major service change thresholds exclude any changes to service that are caused by the following:

- Discontinuance of Temporary or Demonstration Services – The discontinuance of a temporary transit service or demonstration service that has been in effect for less than 180 days.
- Headway Adjustments – Headways for transit routes may be adjusted up to 15 minutes during the peak hour periods, and 30 minutes during non-peak hour periods.
- New Transit Service “Break-In” Period – An adjustment to service frequencies and/or span of service for new transit routes that have been in revenue service for less than 180 days.
- Other Service Providers or Agencies – Actions of other service providers or public agencies providing/administering transit services that are not the responsibility of CATS.
- Natural or Catastrophic Disasters – Forces of nature such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or other natural disasters, or human-caused catastrophic disasters that may force the suspension of scheduled transit service for public safety or technical reasons.

- Auxiliary Transportation Infrastructure Failures – Failures of auxiliary transportation infrastructure such as vehicular bridges, highway bridge overpasses, tunnels, or elevated highways that force the suspension of transit service.
- Overlapping Services – A reduction in revenue miles on one line that is offset by an increase in revenue miles on the overlapping section of an alternative transit route (an overlapping section is where two or more bus routes or rail lines share the same alignment, stops, or stations for a short distance).
- Seasonal Service and Special Events – Changes to bus service levels on routes which occur because of seasonal ridership changes and event activities served by dedicated temporary bus routes or increased service frequencies.
- Temporary Route Detours – A short-term change to a route caused by road construction, routine road maintenance, road closures, emergency road conditions, fiscal crisis, civil demonstrations, or any uncontrollable circumstance.
- Pilot projects lasting no more than 12 months.

D. Public Participatory Procedures

For all proposed major service changes, CATS will hold at least one public hearing, preferably in the area affected, with a minimum of two public notices prior to the hearing in order to receive public comments on the potential service changes. The first meeting notice will occur at least 30 days prior to the scheduled hearing date in *The Advocate*, the official journal of CATS as set forth in the Agency bylaws. The second notice will be made at least 10 days prior to the scheduled hearing date. Public materials will be produced in English. Upon request, translation of materials may be available to ensure Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations within the transit service area are informed of the proposed service changes and can participate in community discussions. CATS will employ a sign language interpreter as well as a Spanish-speaking language interpreter if requested. CATS will conduct a service equity analysis for approval by the CATS Board of Commissioners, and consideration of the public prior to any public hearings associated with the proposed service changes.

As part of our public involvement process, CATS uses varied tools to encourage, facilitate, and engage the public in dialogue and activities. Methods of outreach are tailored to engage our diverse population. We are mindful in identifying and including in this process minority and low-income participants, people with limited English proficiency, and people with disabilities. We provide meaningful access to our outreach activities by making available the service of translators and providing materials in appropriate languages, adapting a wide range of media communications to advertise and increase public participation. Detailed methods and commitments are available in the Public Participation Plan and the Language Assistance Plan.

