

**D-DOT Statement on Sept. 29 route changes, through Mayor Dave Bing's director of communications Naomi Patton:**

**For clarity, DDOT develops school-open and school-close service changes annually to accommodate the needs of our customers. For example, the school-open schedule is built to add bus service on designated routes in transporting students to schools within Detroit. When school activities are closed for the summer, DDOT provides school-close schedules, which eliminate these specific school-route stops. DDOT's bus-riding passengers are very aware of these annual changes, and specifics of the changes are always provided to the media via a press release.**

**Responses to your inquiries follow:**

- 1) VOD: Why are no public hearings, or even a mayoral press conference, being held on these changes? According to the DDOT website, Title VI requires public hearings on all MAJOR CHANGES, which include route eliminations and increases in wait times of more than 20 minutes during non-peak hours. At least the following changes fit those categories:

**DDOT's ANSWER: Public hearings are required for major service changes only. The September 29, 2012 scheduled service changes are not major changes and affect far less than the 25% service-standard requirement. What is considered a major service change? A major change is identified as a reduction in bus service of 25% or more of the number of transit route miles of a route, or 25% or more of the number of transit revenue vehicles miles of a route computed on a daily basis for the day of the week for which the change is made. If these criteria are not met, public hearings are not required. For more information on public hearing requirements, please go to our Website at [www.RideDetroitTransit.com](http://www.RideDetroitTransit.com) and then click on Service Standards.**

- 2) VOD: #19 Fort Bus service is combined with Route #25 Jefferson. Route #19 Fort will now be known as Route #25 Jefferson/Fort. (*elimination of Route 19*).

**DDOT's ANSWER: Route #19 Fort is not eliminated; it is integrated into Route #25 Jefferson. By analyzing our customer travel patterns and, most of all, listening to our customers, DDOT designed easier travels for our customers with this adjustment. Both the #25 Jefferson and #19 Fort routes remain the same; there are no cuts in service on either. Why was this done? This strategy greatly benefits our customers by eliminating transferring from one bus to another. The passenger can now remain on the bus and get to his/her designation from southeast Detroit to southwest Detroit in a single-seat ride.**

- 3) VOD: #25 Jefferson/Fort: Bus service is combined with Route #19 Fort. The Jefferson Ave. time period between the hours of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. has increased from

20 minutes to 30 minutes. The Fort St. time period between the hours of 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. has decreased from 30 minutes to 20 minutes.

**DDOT's ANSWER: (See answer to #19 Fort above) Combining the #25 Jefferson and #19 Fort routes are the reason for the a.m. increase of ten minutes. There is an advantage in the p.m., however, as bus service has decreased by ten minutes. In the end, our customers are pleased with not having to transfer between buses and reaching their southeast and southwest destinations of choice by conveniently being transported in a one-seat ride.**

4) VOD: #37 Michigan: The time period between buses will increase from 30 minutes to 60 minutes between the hours of 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. (*service reduced more than 20 min. during non-peak hours.*)

**DDOT's ANSWER: For two hours on Route #37 Michigan, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., the bus service increased from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. Why? During this two-hour time period, bus service failed to meet service-standard requirements. For instance, DDOT's service average per revenue bus trip is 33.92 passengers. Our service benchmark is gauged at 16.96 passengers (or 50% of the average). If bus service reduces to 40% of the average (or 13.57 passengers), DDOT puts the route on a Watch List and monitors service closely. The processes include monitoring the route for six months to allow new and existing passenger ridership patterns to develop. If implementation of the strategy fails to improve the route's performance, staff may create a new strategy, allowing an additional six months to establish improved ridership. For instance, if the route consistently registers below the Watch List standards ~ say 13.02 passengers, the route fails to meet the service standards and requires service adjustments. The two-hour period (7 p.m. to 9 p.m.) on Route #37 Michigan failed to meet the required criterion.**

5) VOD: The reasons given for these changes are "route efficiencies," etc. The D-DOT officials holding the "customer information meeting" (which does not qualify as a public hearing) were not able to answer my questions regarding whether there is a financial necessity for these changes. Please explain the financial necessity for these changes, which do involve further reduction in service on top of the March 3 changes.

**DDOT'S ANSWER: The September 29, 2012 school-open service changes are minor (less than 25% of service affected) and occur annually to satisfy student traveling needs. As previously stated, the changes do not require public hearings.**

6) VOD: Envisurage/Transpro or whatever its name may be, was hired to increase ridership on DDOT. Please provide monthly figures on ridership since February, 2012. If it has increased since they took over, please provide the dollar amount of bonuses they have received per their contract. Transpro has not received any bonuses or incentives.

**DDOT's ANSWER:** At the beginning of this year, it is no secret that DDOT was in dire need of service improvements, as several complaints emerged from the communities, as well as bus-passenger call-ins to the Detroit City Council. As well, the Mayor's Office received and listened to numerous individuals who were unable to get to jobs, schools, medical facilities, and even those who lost jobs in the process. At the request of many, the Mayor took immediate action to improve DDOT's daily operations and restore customer confidence in meeting travel needs. In February 2012, Envisurage came on board and greatly improved bus service to date.

Although DDOT's budget was cut more than \$30 million due to the City's economic crisis, please note the following information:

- **Ridership – Within the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter (August 2011), ridership tallied at 2,625,204 bus-riding passengers. Within the same period for August 2012, the ridership amount totaled 2,608,718.**
- **Customer Complaints – Within DDOT's 1<sup>st</sup> quarter customer complaint period (August 2011), the complaints register at 547. The numbers shows a significant reduction in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for August 2012, as the decrease is registered at 293. As noted, customers are more satisfied with bus service. Our focus is to continue building upon and improving customer-friendly strategies, techniques and processes.**

7) VOD: Please provide regular monthly budget figures for D-DOT since February, 2012, including revenues, revenue sources, expenses, and expense sources.

**DDOT's ANSWER:** A Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request is necessary to obtain the requested budgeted information.