

Maximizing Mobility Study

By

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This study explores the idea of maximizing the mobility of the CTA by simplifying the bus system's service hours, creating a core network of frequent routes and branding and marketing these services through signage and way-finding techniques. A more accessible system will be created with improved customer benefits including enhanced information and signage, branding, improved reliability and a new confidence in service.

The CTA bus system's service hours are displayed to customers in a complex and non user-friendly fashion making transit planning and the opportunity to make connections difficult. Rather than listing the exact times bus routes start and end, operating hours should be simplified. Replacing the current last bus times such as "6:10 pm" and "11:45 pm" into groups with end times such as "6:00 pm" and "12:00 am" will make identifying hours of operation much easier for riders. A quick and more understandable idea of a route's hours of operation will be achieved.

Within the CTA bus system, a hierarchy of routes based on the quality of service is present. Only customers familiar with CTA's service or who look to the bus schedules understand this hierarchy and are thus able to utilize it. For non-customers, the target group for increasing ridership, understanding services they can count on is complex. Market Research studies show about 82% of non-customers compared to about 70% of CTA current customers, rate *easily setting their own schedule* important. Promoting mobility by developing a core network consisting of bus routes and rail lines that run frequently most of the day should be marketed with the goal of attracting customers and making the best services already offered visible. Emphasizing frequent service will provide a better understanding and awareness of the network and services in which customers can rely on.

Selecting a frequent network was accomplished by analyzing the number of trips by route or line during all hours of operation and figuring out the appropriate number that would produce a high quality network of frequent service. Three frequent network scenarios were created: *12-20* (20 bus routes and all rail lines with frequency at 12 minutes or better from 6:30 am - 7:00 pm and 20 minutes or better from 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm), *10-15-20* (16 routes and most rail lines with frequency at 10 minutes or better during rush periods, 15 minutes or better during the mid-day and 20 minutes or better from 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm) and *12-15-20* (27 routes and most rail lines with frequency at 12 minutes or better during rush periods, 15 minutes or better during the mid-day and 20 minutes of better from 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm). The scenarios are based on bi-directional service operating only during the weekday. If up to two half hours in the non-peak direction are less than the listed frequency, the route is still counted. A segment of a route which may have less service is also noted. Each scenario produced a different number of bus routes and rail lines due to different frequency levels at different times. The desired scenario is the *12-20*, striking a good balance between frequency and the number of routes and lines to be included in a network.

**12-20 min Network
(Weekday Only)**

<i>12 min or less</i> All Day (6.5-19.0)	<i>20 min or less</i> Evening (19.0-22.0)
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20 Routes / All Rail Lines	
9	55
4	63
6	66
9	67
12	77
20	79
22	80
47	81
49	87
54	151

**10-15-20 min Network
(Weekday Only)**

<i>10 min or less</i> Rush Periods (6.5-9.0 & 15.5-18.5)	<i>15 min or less</i> Mid-Day (9.0-15.5)	<i>20 min or less</i> Evening (18.5-22.0)
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16 Routes / Most Rail Lines	
3	79
20	80
49	81
53	82
53A	87
54	151
55	
63	
66	
77	

**12-15-20 min Network
(Weekday Only)**

<i>10 min or less</i> Rush Periods (6.5-9.0 & 15.5-18.5)	<i>15 min or less</i> Mid-Day (9.0-15.5)	<i>20 min or less</i> Evening (18.5-22.0)
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27 Routes / Most Rail Lines		
3	49B	80
4	53	81
6	54	82
9	55	85
12	63	87
20	66	151
22	72	155
29	74	
47	77	
49	79	

The frequent network and service hour groups need to be properly marketed and readily available for both walk-up customers and those planning ahead. Information should be posted at CTA Rail Stations, on the Internet, at selected bus shelters and signs and at key locations in order to promote the services. A quick ride guide consisting of frequent reliable service and service hour groups should also be distributed for a simple, handy reference of the system.

Enhancing connections between bus routes & among rail lines strengthens a transit system by making it simple to traverse the network. Reworking and providing a clear understanding of the CTA's bus network and its wide ranging service hours can help attract new customers and increase the opportunity for riders to utilize existing services and make connections in a painless process. Discovering new paths to increasing ridership, such

as differentiating reliable service from standard service, is an important aspect of improving the CTA system. Promoting mobility and revealing the system to customers and potential riders by marketing a clear set of routes that are reliable will allow people to better use the network. In turn, an increase in ridership and productivity can potentially be achieved.