



# Ongoing Driver Shortage: MCT Proposes Limited Short-Term Service Reductions

by Ellie Carrow  
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PONTOON BEACH - Following three years of an ongoing driver workforce shortage, Madison County Transit (MCT) is proposing to make limited service reductions on five fixed-routes, effective December 3, 2023. Despite several years of aggressive efforts to recruit and retain drivers, a workforce shortfall in the double digits persists, which has necessitated mandatory overtime and could lead to driver frustration and fatigue, as well as the compromising of service reliability. In response, staff has recommended making short term frequency reductions on three routes and discontinuing two under-utilized express routes that operate only in the peaks. In addition, staff recommended to the Board that the usual January service change be implemented five weeks earlier than normal to make the adjustments as soon as possible.

**Reduction of Running Times and Service Hours:** MCT is proposing to reduce the frequency on three bus routes from every 30 minutes to every 60 minutes. Those routes are the: #7 Alton-Edwardsville, #10 State & Elm Shuttle, and #18 Collinsville Regional. Additionally, the #10 in the Alton would stop operating at 6:00 p.m.

**Discontinuation of Underutilized Routes:** Taking limited ridership and demand into consideration, MCT is also proposing to discontinue trips on the #24X Riverbend-Gateway Commerce Center Express and the #25X Collinsville-Gateway Commerce Center routes.

MCT recognizes that any changes to bus schedules are significant to the ridership, so passengers and community members are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the proposed service changes either via email to [info@mct.org](mailto:info@mct.org), by calling (618) 797-4600, or by sending a letter to MCT, c/o proposed Service Change 1 Transit Way Pontoon Beach, IL 62040.

This is not the first time that MCT has contemplated service reductions due to the driver shortage. A similar proposal was considered in October 2022 but wasn't implemented due to a combination of hiring, schedule adjustments, and mandatory overtime work.

"Unfortunately, this issue is not unique to our region and isn't going away anytime soon. Transit agencies across the country have been struggling to recruit and retain bus drivers for years," said MCT Managing Director SJ Morrison. "We know that requiring our drivers to work overtime hours each week will take its toll on them personally and could impact the quality of our service, so we have to make limited adjustments, even if it's only for a short time."

Agency for Community Transit (ACT), which operates all services for MCT, is always seeking friendly, customer-oriented professionals to drive the fixed-route and paratransit buses. No experience is required and all necessary training is provided. ACT drivers start at \$19.00/hour with an increase upon completion of a probationary period.

Full-time work is available upon hire, as well as healthcare and 401(k) benefits. ACT positions that are in the highest demand, such as drivers, fuelers, cleaners, and mechanics qualify for a \$1,000 sign-on bonus. To learn about the next “Hiring Bus” event and for a list of all open positions and their descriptions, or to apply online, visit [ACTinfo.org/employment](http://ACTinfo.org/employment). ACT is a drug free workplace and an equal opportunity employer.

For more information about Madison County Transit and its efforts to address the driver shortage and proposed service changes, please visit our website at [www.mct.org](http://www.mct.org), email [info@mct.org](mailto:info@mct.org), or call 618-797-INFO (4636).