

September 10, 2019

Shoreline Metro Tripper Service

Tripper Service:

Shoreline Metro acknowledges tripper service as public transit routes that are used to supplement and compliment Shoreline Metro's regular fixed routes. These routes are also fixed routes, published for general public use and are only in service on school days during the year. Fares are identical to the regular fixed routes.

FTA views Tripper Service as regularly scheduled mass transportation service which is open to the public, and which is designed or modified to accommodate the needs of school students and personnel, using various fare collections or subsidy systems. Buses used in tripper service must be clearly marked as open to the public and may not carry designations such as "school bus" or "school special". These buses may stop only at a grantee or operator's regular service stop. All routes traveled by tripper buses must be within a grantee's or operator's regular route service as indicated in their published route schedules. (49 CFR, Part 605.3)

History of Tripper Service:

- Prior to 2012 – 7 morning trippers (15 years ago); 3-4 midday trippers; 7 afternoon trippers.
- 2012 – 4 morning Tripper routes; 4 afternoon Tripper routes.
- 2013 to 2015 – 3 morning Tripper routes; 4 afternoon Tripper routes.
- 2016 – 2 morning Tripper routes; 2 afternoon Tripper routes.
- 2017 – 2 morning Tripper routes; 2 afternoon Tripper routes.
- 2018 – 2 morning Tripper routes; 2 afternoon Tripper routes.
- 2019 – 2 morning Tripper routes; 2 afternoon Tripper routes.

In 2015, all high schools were removed from tripper service. Regular fixed route public transit routes were able to adequately service these locations without the need of the supplemental tripper routes. In 2014, by virtue of school start and end times, the regular fixed routes were able to service the high schools, especially South HS, in a more timely manner resulting in students forgoing the tripper routes and opting to ride the regular fixed routes; thus, was the basis for the tripper service alteration involving the high schools.

In 2016, Shoreline Metro removed the middle schools from tripper service. Again, the philosophy here was that the regular fixed routes were able to adequately service these locations without the need of the supplemental Tripper routes.

Stigma of Regular Fixed Routes:

The general public may have a misguided and mislead interpretation of the customers utilizing Shoreline Metro (formerly Sheboygan Transit). While Shoreline Metro provides service to some individuals with an alleged or perceived "history", service is also provided to students, elderly individuals, disabled individuals and individuals without a "history". While Shoreline Metro isn't able to do background

checks on our customers, the vast majority of Shoreline Metro customers are hardworking, educated individuals making a living and contributing to the local economy in Sheboygan.

Further, Shoreline Metro is consistently one of the safest transit systems in the state of Wisconsin each year. On average, Shoreline Metro averages 1.5 at fault accidents per year and roughly 10-15 incidents ranging from trips and falls to accidents caused by a third party. In fact, Shoreline Metro operates roughly 550,000 miles each year. This means:

- An incident occurs roughly every 40,000 to 60,000 miles;
- An at fault accident occurs roughly every 400,000 miles;

Safety is the number one initiative at Shoreline Metro. Safety onboard the bus and outside the bus is taken very seriously. Drivers are trained annually in several areas. All fixed route buses have internal (and some with external) cameras for passenger safety. While these cameras don't necessarily prevent things from happening, they drastically deter activities from happening.

In the event that something serious does happen on board the bus, police and fire are a quick call away on the internal two-way radio systems as well as a message alert on the external sign boards. Supervisors and/or Shoreline Metro personnel are required to be on site at all accidents and be notified of all incidents.

Finally, there have been no reported issues or incidents relating to harassment of customers by individuals with an alleged "history" in the past five years! Again, passenger safety is important to Shoreline Metro!

Misunderstanding of Tripper Routes:

Shoreline Metro has been made aware of several items that have been allegedly misunderstood by parents and schools alike. The following items are offered as clarification of Shoreline Metro's tripper service:

- 1) Tripper routes are only for students.
This is false and according to FTA's definition and Shoreline Metro's scope of service. All tripper routes are open to the general public and are published for use by all customers. These routes do occasionally pickup non-student passengers with the bulk of passengers being students.
- 2) Tripper routes take students directly from their home to school in the mornings.
This is partly true. Tripper routes are designed to pickup in areas where parents have indicated an interest. Sometimes, this might be on a corner very close to a home. Other times this might require the student to walk a block or two. Either way, Shoreline Metro does not typically pick up in front of a child's home. Once customers are on board, depending where the customers are going, the tripper route may go directly to the destination or it may pickup other customers and/or stop at other locations along the route. Trip time could be as little as five minutes or as long as twenty minutes.
- 3) Tripper routes take students directly home from school in the afternoons.
This again is partially true. Tripper routes are designed to drop off in areas where parents have indicated an interest. Sometimes, this might be on a corner very close to a home. Other times

this might require the student to walk a block or two. Either way, Shoreline Metro does not typically drop off in front of a child's home. Once customers are on board, depending where the customers live, the tripper route may go directly to the destination or it may pick up other customers and/or stop at other locations along the route. Trip time could be as little as five minutes or as long as twenty minutes. Shoreline Metro services Horace Mann and Urban Middle Middle Schools with both the regular fixed route buses and with supplemental Express Route buses. Students may both alight the bus along the routes or ride to the Transfer Station and transfer to other routes.

- 4) Middle school students do not belong on the regular routes.

In fact, the majority of students going to schools like Horace Mann and South High School were already taking the regular fixed routes. Route 7S to South High School is well utilized and has been prior to the consolidation of the tripper routes. Route 3S to Horace Mann was also well utilized by students. Shoreline Metro anticipates 3S to be very busy with customers travelling to Horace Mann. The important thing to consider here is that students this age have been using public transit and Shoreline Metro's regular fixed routes for a long time and are in fact able to and have the ability to use these routes safely.

- 5) Shoreline Metro has eliminated Tripper Service.

Shoreline Metro has not eliminated tripper routes. Tripper service focuses on the younger customers that perhaps are not at the appropriate age to use the regular fixed routes as a means for traveling to and from school. Shoreline Metro acknowledges this age group as being vulnerable and unsafe to travel alone on the regular fixed routes and therefore continues to offer tripper service for these customers.

How Tripper Routes are Created:

Shoreline Metro assembles tripper routes each summer after collecting information and request forms from schools and parents. Based on this information, Shoreline Metro is able to draft routes based on requests and school times. Creation of these routes prior to summer would be difficult and result in significant changes to the drafted routes. Shoreline Metro already critiques and re-publishes multiple editions of the tripper routes both prior to school starting and after school has commenced for the year. The task of creating tripper routes is a challenging and time-consuming process.

Shoreline Metro releases the tripper route information once it is completed and ready for publication. Unfortunately, this does not usually happen until late July and in most cases requires republication of the routes for customers several times before school commences.

In order to continue accommodating parents and schools, focusing the tripper routes on the younger students and utilizing the regular fixed routes for the older students are efficient use of Shoreline Metro's diminishing and exhausting resources.

Is Funding an Issue?

Shoreline Metro has been receiving decreased state and federal mass operating assistance for the last ten years. Funding levels for mass transportation assistance used to be funded at 59% of expenses. In 2019, this level is expected to again decrease to 53.25%. For example, a 1% decrease in funding results

in approximately \$100,000 less in funding for Shoreline Metro. Overall, Shoreline Metro operations have decreased around \$500,000 the past seven years.

The change in tripper service is not related to funding at this time. Rather, the changes were made for aforementioned reasons in this white paper. Future decisions on tripper service could be related to funding as funding levels are projected to keep decreasing in future years.

In 2016, service hours that were dedicated to tripper routes in the past have been redirected to shuttles and supplemental buses in the afternoon during peak service time. In order to maintain high quality, reliable and dependable service in the afternoons, Shoreline Metro needed to supplement its regular fixed routes with supplemental buses and shuttle service. These shuttles will accommodate students more effectively on their trip home from school.

Shoreline Metro intends to evaluate its service including tripper routes annually for efficiency, effectiveness and safety.

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