

Frequency

2025 Service and Ridership Changes

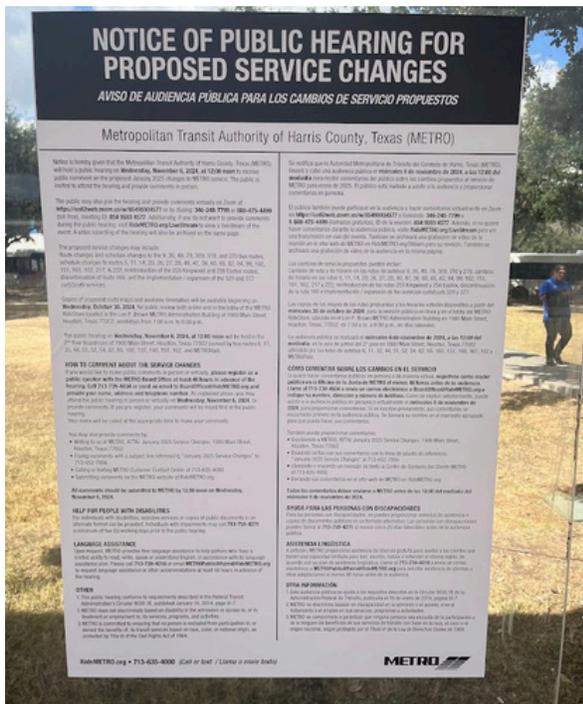
Ridership increased in 2025, and routes with better frequency accounted for the bulk of the increase. LINK Houston took a deep dive on service and ridership changes over the past year to understand which routes are running more frequently, which are running less, and how ridership was affected.

Read on to learn more about:

- **Weekday Service and Ridership Changes**
- **Weekend Service and Ridership Changes**
- **State of the Frequent Network in 2025**
- **Overall Ridership Trends**



Riders waiting to board the 25 Richmond bus.



METRO signage posted detailing proposed service changes.

A note on data:

METRO generally makes three service changes per year: in January, June, and August. In the following tables, we've included all routes with modified as of the June 2025 service change. We've evaluated ridership changes only for routes with modified service as of the January 2025 service change or before. For these routes, we've compared ridership data from April 2025 – three months after the January service change, and enough time for riders' habits to change – with ridership from April 2024.

Weekday Service and Ridership Changes

As of the June 2025 service change, 17 routes were modified on weekdays compared to May 2024. 12 routes ran more frequently, 3 routes ran less frequently, 1 route was discontinued, and 1 route was replaced with on-demand service.

The table below shows service changes for all of these routes, as well as ridership changes for 9 routes running more or less frequently since the January 2025 service change or before.

Route	WEEKDAY						Ridership		
	Frequency (Minutes)				Change		2024	2025	Change
	2024		2025		Peak	Midday			
014 HIRAM CLARKE	15	30	15	15	0	15	1604	1941	21%
020 CANAL / MEMORIAL	15	28	15	20	0	8	2471	2690	9%
027 SHEPHERD	15	15	20	20	-5	-5	2662	2594	-3%
028 OST - WAYSIDE	20	30	20	20*	0	10	2582	2837	10%
045 TIDWELL	15	22	15	15	0	7	4109	4620	12%
047 HILLCROFT	15	30	15	15	0	15	3755	4220	12%
084 BUFFALO SPEEDWAY	15	30	15	15*	0	15	1597	1940	24%
102 BUSH IAH EXPRESS	15	26	15	15	0	11	3426	3653	7%
433 SILVER LINE	12	12	12	20	-8	-8	1021	443	-57%
<i>*For short periods at midday (1-2 hours), these routes run every 30 minutes.</i>									
032 RENWICK	30	30	15	15	15	15	Ridership changes are not comparable due to changes of route alignments or discontinuations.		
035 SAN FELIPE	30	30	60	60	-30	-30			
071 COTTAGE GROVE	60	60	-	-	-	-			
151 WESTPARK EXPRESS	23	-	23	30	0	30			
160 MEMORIAL CITY EXPRESS	60	-	-	-	-	-			
162 MEMORIAL EXPRESS	60	60	30	30	30	30			
003 LANGLEY - LITTLE YORK	45	45	40	40	5	5	Service increases were implemented after most recent ridership report.		
098 BRIARGATE	60	60	45	45	15	15			

Table 1: Weekday frequency and ridership comparison for select routes, April 2024 vs April 2025

7 routes running more frequently since the January 2025 service change or before all gained riders, with increasing ranging from 7% to 24%. The 2 routes running less frequently since then all lost riders. The 433 Silver Line, which had been gaining weekday riders each month until frequencies increased from 12 to 20 minutes in June 2024, saw a particularly sharp drop of 57%.

3 other routes running more frequently since the January 2025 service change or before also gained riders, but these changes are not comparable due to alignment changes or discontinued service on other routes. These routes include:

- **32 Renwick / San Felipe** was split into two routes in August 2024: the **32 Renwick** and the **35 San Felipe**. The new 32 Renwick has higher ridership than the same segment of

the old 32 Renwick / San Felipe, but the 35 San Felipe has lower ridership on its segment – and the combination of the new 32 and 35 has lower overall ridership than the old 32.

- **151 Westpark Express** increased ridership by 95% from 2024 to 2025 after adding new midday service every 30 minutes. However, some of these new riders likely used to take the 269 Southwest Freeway, which no longer serves Hillcroft Park and Ride.
- **162 Memorial Express** increased its weekday ridership by 77%. However, some of these new riders likely used to take the 160 Memorial City Express, which was discontinued.

Weekend Service and Ridership Changes

As of the June 2025 service change, 13 routes were modified on weekends compared to May 2024. 9 routes ran more frequently, 3 routes ran less frequently, 1 route was discontinued, and 1 route was replaced with on-demand service.

The table below shows service changes for all of these routes, as well as ridership changes for 5 routes running more or less frequently since the January 2025 service change or before.

Route	WEEKEND			Ridership		
	Frequency (Minutes)			2024	2025	Change
	2024	2025	Change	2024	2025	Change
014 HIRAM CLARKE	30	20	10	1090	1283	18%
026 LONG POINT / CAVALCADE	30	15	15	2499	2593	4%
047 HILLCROFT	30	15	15	2131	2545	19%
065 BISSONNET	20	15	5	3931	3954	1%
433 SILVER LINE	12	20	-8	911	396	-57%
032 RENWICK	30	15	15	Ridership changes are not comparable due to changes of route alignments or discontinuations.		
035 SAN FELIPE	30	60	-30			
071 COTTAGE GROVE	60	-	-			
160 MEMORIAL CITY EXPRESS	60	-	-			
162 MEMORIAL EXPRESS	60	30	30			
003 LANGLEY - LITTLE YORK	45	40	5	Service increases were implemented after most recent ridership report.		
045 TIDWELL	30	20	10			
098 BRIARGATE	60	45	15			

Table 2: Weekend frequency and ridership comparison for select routes, April 2024 vs April 2025

4 routes running more frequently since the January 2025 service change or before all gained riders, with increasing ranging from 1% to 19%. The route running less frequently lost riders: the 433 Silver Line, which had been gaining weekend riders each month until frequencies increased from 12 to 20 minutes in June 2024, saw a particularly sharp drop of 57%.

2 other routes running more frequently since the January 2025 service change or before also gained riders, but these changes are not comparable due to alignment changes or discontinued service on other routes described in the previous section.



Riders sitting and standing on a local bus.

State of the Frequent Network in 2025

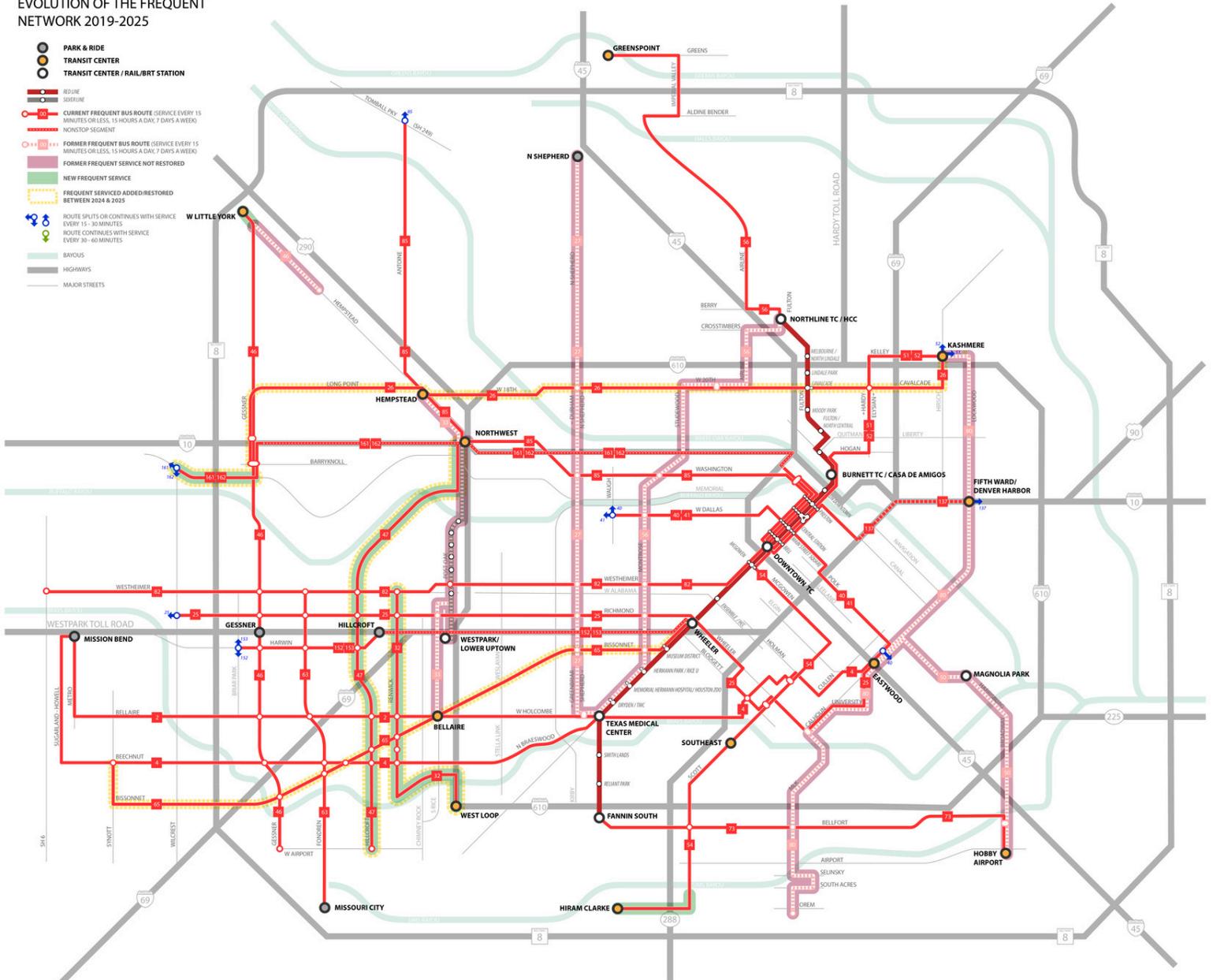
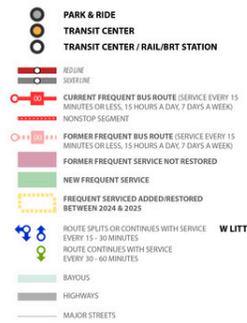
The Frequent Network of routes that run every 15 minutes, 7 days a week, is more expansive in 2025 than 2024. Four routes were upgraded to this standard in 2025:

- **26 Long Point / Cavalcade**  Restored from 2019
- **32 Renwick**  Restored from 2019
- **47 Hillcroft**
- **65 Bissonnet**  Restored from 2019

The Frequent Network was first introduced in 2016 as part of METRO's New Bus Network. Access to the Frequent Network allows riders to reach a broad range of destinations with quick transfers.

From 2016 to 2020, METRO was one of two US agencies to increase bus ridership, largely as a result of the Frequent Network.

EVOLUTION OF THE FREQUENT NETWORK 2019-2025



Map 3: Evolution of the Frequent Network 2019-2025

By providing 15-minute service on four additional routes, **METRO increased the share of Houstonians who have access to truly frequent transit.** METRO can continue this progress by upgrading the routes on the left to 15-minute service, putting tens of thousands more people and jobs within reach.

Route	More People	More Jobs
20 CANAL / MEMORIAL	37,300	24,800
45 TIDWELL	59,300	29,100
50 BROADWAY	29,500	6,800
56 AIRLINE / MONTROSE	12,300	1,800
102 BUSH IAH EXPRESS	1,300	32,600
137 NORTSHORE EXPRESS	21,400	4,400
433 SILVER LINE	5,700	27,500
METRORAIL GREEN LINE	12,600	5,500
METRORAIL PURPLE LINE	5,300	500

Table 4: Making these routes run every 15-minutes, 7 days a week would connect thousands more people and jobs to truly frequent transit.

Overall Ridership Trends

METRO’s ridership grew overall in 2025: by 5% systemwide, and by 8% on the local bus network when comparing the 12-month period from July 2024 to June 2025 with the same period from July 2023 to June 2024.

Ridership in October 2024 stood at **87% of pre-pandemic ridership** from October 2019, making METRO the **fourth-most recovered** of the 25 largest US transit agencies behind Miami, San Diego, and New Jersey Transit. Ridership on METRO’s local bus network regularly exceeds pre-pandemic numbers.

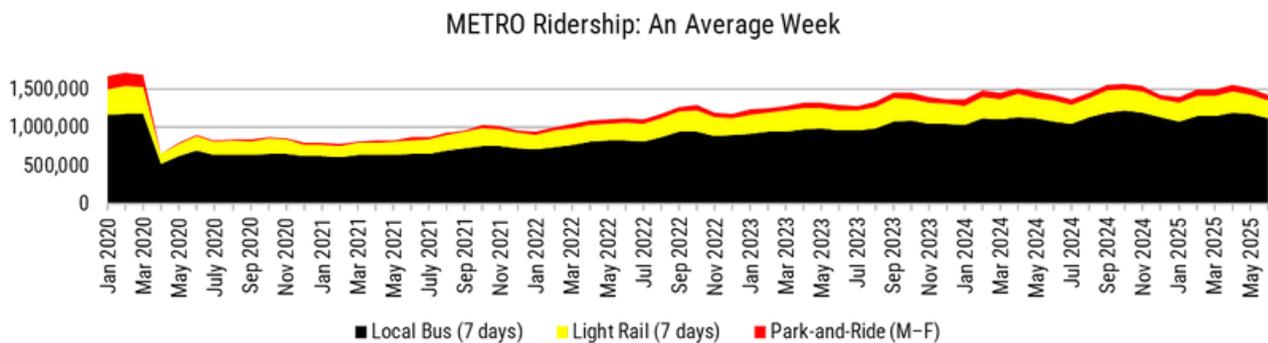


Chart 5: Average weekly METRO ridership, Jan 2020 to June 2025

The nature of METRO’s ridership growth in 2025 – **with most riders gained outside of traditional commute hours** – mirrors national and global trends in the post Covid-era. The pandemic profoundly altered travel patterns: trips are much less concentrated at traditional commute hours and more evenly distributed throughout the day and week. While fewer people may be taking transit to and from 9-5 jobs, more people are riding more a broader range of trip types: errands, recreation, visiting family, and other life activities.

By running service more frequently at midday and on weekends, METRO made transit more useful for a broader range of trips.

METRO is not the only transit agency seeing ridership growth as a result of providing more frequent service throughout the day.

Washington Metro, Boston’s MBTA, and other agencies have seen robust ridership recovery and growth not just by trying to bring old riders back but bringing new riders in as well.