

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

ORDER NO. 1030

IN THE MATTER OF:

Served March 24, 1970

Proposed Time Schedule Change )  
By D. C. Transit System, Inc., )  
For the D. C. Downtowner )  
Service. )

Docket No. 209

On December 10, 1969, D. C. Transit System, Inc., filed a new timetable for its D. C. Downtowner (Minibus) service which would lengthen the headway from three to four minutes. The proposed timetable was suspended and a public hearing was held on March 9, 1970. At the hearing Transit and the Commission staff presented witnesses, and although no other parties appeared, we received a letter from the D. C. Federation of Civic Associations endorsing the proposal to increase the headway, and a letter from Downtown Progress, opposing.

The record developed at the hearing indicates that it is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the schedule based on a three minute headway. The result is that bunching of the buses occurs along the route. Frequently, because a bus has not been able to maintain its schedule and thus has missed its departure for the next schedule, it lays over at the end of the line for considerably more than three minutes waiting for its next departure time. By increasing the headway to four minutes and using seven rather than eight buses, Transit believes it will solve the schedule maintenance problem. Transit further believes that all of the patrons of the Minibus now being served will be adequately accommodated by the new schedule. For several days in January, due to the shortage of available Minibuses, Transit actually operated a four minute headway. Mr. Marshall Utterback, a Minibus driver, testified that during that period the schedule was maintained.

The Chief Engineer of the Commission offered a slightly different solution to the problem of schedule maintenance. He suggested that the problem would be alleviated by increasing the headway to 3-1/2 minutes and establishing an additional layover point at the other end of the loop from the layover point at 14th and F Streets, N. W. The additional layover point would provide an additional recovery point and thus a means of minimizing the bunching problem.

We will allow the proposed four minute headway to become effective. The question of schedule maintenance is a technical one which can be approached in various ways. We believe that the company should be permitted to test its proposal for solving the problem. However, as we are concerned that the Minibus operation should continue to be a useful service to downtown shoppers, we will require monthly reports to be submitted to us during the six months following this order to permit us to maintain a close scrutiny of the results of the increased headway. If it develops that the company's approach is not having desirable results, we will then require that some other approach be tried.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED:

1. That the proposal of D. C. Transit System, Inc., to increase the D. C. Downtowner (Minibus) headway from three to four minutes be, and it is hereby, approved effective March 30, 1970.

2. That D. C. Transit System, Inc., shall submit a monthly report showing the effect the new schedule has had on the ability to maintain the schedule established, and the total revenues by day.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION:



MELVIN E. LEWIS  
Executive Director