

## **Music City Star Service Changes** **FAQs**

### **What service is being changed on the Music City Star?**

The RTA must reduce the number of train trips on Fridays. In order to have the least impact on Music City Star riders, the RTA has elected to remove the Friday evening/night train to and from Nashville rather than eliminating one of the commuter trains during the day.

### **Why does the RTA need to remove train trips from Friday service?**

Friday is the only day where the number of trains in service is greater than the minimum number of trains allowed without implementing a new rail technology called Positive Train Control (PTC). The PTC requirement comes from Federal Railroad Administration regulations as mandated by the US Congress no later than December 31, 2018. In order to continue to operate all trains currently in service on Fridays, the RTA would have to design and install PTC technology at a cost estimated to be greater than \$20 Million.

### **What does this mean for special event trains?**

RTA will continue to operate sponsored special event trains on weekends and holidays. However, special event trains will not be allowed during normal commuter work days when the train commuter service is already operating at its maximum service limit.

### **What is Positive Train Control (PTC)?**

Positive Train Control (PTC) is an advanced technology system designed to automatically stop a train before certain accidents occur. In particular, PTC is designed to prevent:

- Train-to-train collisions
- Derailments caused by excessive train speed
- Train movements through misaligned track switches
- Unauthorized train entry into work zones.

PTC will not prevent:

- vehicle-train accidents at railroad crossings, or
- accidents due to track and equipment failures.

### **Isn't PTC a good thing? Why is RTA not implementing this technology?**

PTC is for train lines where there are high train speeds, high train volumes, multiple independent operators, and other high risk factors for train collisions. RTA does recognize that PTC regulations were implemented due to significant tragedies associated with train collisions that could have been prevented with this technology.

However, RTA does not operate on one of these lines. Our low volume, low speed commuter service is separated from the corridor's low volume, low speed freight service since these trains do not operate at the same times of the day. Freight and commuter service is managed and controlled inter-dependently by the freight operator, NERR, so it is always known what trains are supposed to be in service on the tracks and where they are located.

### **If RTA is not implementing PTC, what would it spend that money on instead?**

RTA prioritizes the needs of the corridor to ensure the safety of the line and that assets are maintained in a state of good repair. Currently, RTA is focused on the overhaul and replacement of its existing rail fleet. Our rail vehicles are old and are at or near the end of their useful life. In order to maintain service and ensure a positive commuting experience for our riders, RTA is prioritizing the repair and replacement of the Locomotives and Rail Cars as it will not place unsafe vehicles into service.

RTA is also funding infrastructure needs for the rail tracks. While the current tracks are acceptable for freight operations, the infrastructure needs for commuter operations requires track improvements both for the longevity of our rail vehicles as well as for the comfort of our passengers.

### **When will RTA implement PTC?**

RTA is also initiating a study to better identify the needs and costs to expand service for the MCS in the future. Service expansion would require areas of new rail passing sidings, new tracks to serve areas such as the Lebanon Expo Center, additional rail vehicles, additional operating costs, and of course, PTC. This study will be completed by mid-2019. Once RTA and the region understand the full cost of service expansion, we can partner to develop a strategy to get there, together.

### **What are the other service changes that are being proposed for the MCS?**

RTA has received comments from many regional businesses and residents asking for commuter trains to arrive in Nashville earlier in the morning or to leave Nashville later in the evening. We have also had requests for the last morning trip and first afternoon trip to travel further into Wilson County rather than stopping at Mt Juliet Station. The required change in Friday service prompted an opportunity for RTA to talk to current and future riders regarding possible options available to the authority to satisfy these comments.

### **What are the proposed service alternatives?**

RTA looked at a broad range of alternatives but had to narrow the extent of schedule changes to ensure bus connections could still be met at Riverfront Station. We are unable to extend service fully to Lebanon due to connections between train and WeGo bus service in Nashville; extending the service would create significant capacity issues on bus connections at the Riverfront or would incur significant cost to the RTA to expand WeGo bus service.

Below is a summary of possible schedule shifts RTA could implement. All of these options include removing the Friday night train service.

1. No Change from current weekday commuter service
2. Adjustments of between 5-15 minutes earlier for departing trains in the AM and later for departing trains in the PM
3. Adjustments of between 5-30 minutes for departing trains in the AM and the PM with the last morning and first afternoon trips extended to Martha Station

### **How can I provide comments on these changes or select my preferred service options?**

Public comment period will be held between September 12 and October 15, 2018. You can attend a meeting in person at one or more of the following meeting dates:

- Thursday, September 27  
4:30-6:30pm  
FiftyForward Donelson Conference Room  
108 Donelson Pk  
Nashville, TN 37214
- Tuesday, October 2  
4:30-7pm  
Mt. Juliet Chamber of Commerce  
2055 N Mt Juliet Rd #200  
Mt Juliet, TN 37122
- Thursday, October 4  
5:30-7:30pm  
Lebanon City Hall, Town Meeting Hall  
200 N Castle Heights Ave  
Lebanon, TN 37087

You can also provide comments by :

- Completing survey online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/StarSurvey](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StarSurvey)
- Going online and providing customer comment at [musiccitystar.org](http://musiccitystar.org)
- Emailing [rtaplanning@nashville.gov](mailto:rtaplanning@nashville.gov)
- Calling 615-862-5625

### **When will the actual changes take effect?**

RTA staff will present the finding from the public comment period to the RTA Board on November 14, 2018, and the Board will take official action to adopt the preferred service option. RTA staff will notify the public throughout November and early December. The effective date of the change is still to be determined, but will be no later than December 31, 2018.

### **What happens to the bus schedules with the proposed changes?**

Bus schedules would be adjusted at Riverfront to match train arrival / departure times.