

Memorandum: Methodology for PRT’s Transit Service Cut Proposal

Pittsburgh Regional Transit

Planning and Service Development Department

Memorandum written March 2025 for proposed February 2026 Service Cuts

Background on Categorizing Routes

PRT approached service reduction planning to strategically organize all routes in the system by performance, and account for transit demand, transit need, and coverage area, to minimize the impact on riders and communities across Allegheny County. Given the significant funding deficit, PRT identified up to 35% service reductions. Three main goals guided this work, including the goal of maintaining high ridership and high efficiency routes, minimizing adverse impacts for riders who depend on transit, and minimizing service coverage impacts to impact as few areas as possible. Passengers carried per hour of service (pph) was the main measurement used to determine route performance, and routes were grouped into categories of efficiency as outlined in the below chart (using October 2024 service level data). Commuter routes and local bus routes were defined and analyzed separately because commuter routes require the agency own and maintain more vehicles and facility space to maintain them due to their use only during rush hours, which adds costs for the agency.

Route Efficiency ¹ Type	Routes
Bus	
Commuter Bus Routes	
High Efficiency (greater than 20 pph)	19L, 51L, O12, P17, P67, P69, G31, Y1
Moderate – Low Efficiency (less than 20 pph)	52L, O1, P7, P10, P12, P16, P71, P76, G3
Very Low Efficiency (less than 100 weekday riders)	O5, P13, Y45
Non-Commuter Bus Routes	
High Efficiency (greater than 20 pph)	8, 16, 48, 51, 54, 64, 67, 75, 82, 83, 86, 93, 61A, 61B, 61C, 61D, 71A, 71B, 71C, 71D, P1, P3
Moderate Efficiency (15 – 20 pph)	1, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28X, 29, 31, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 53L, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 69, 74, 77, 81, 87, 88, 91, G2, P68, P78, Y46, Y47, Y49
Low Efficiency (less than 15 pph)	2, 4, 20, 36, 40, 53, 58, 65, 89
Very Low Efficiency (less than 100 weekday riders)	7, 18, 71
Light Rail and Incline Routes	
High Efficiency (greater than 20 pph on unique route portions)	Monongahela Incline, Red, Blue
Moderate Efficiency (15 - 20 pph on unique route portions)	-
Low Efficiency (less than 15 pph on unique route portions)	Silver

The funding deficit is so severe that the proposed service reductions no longer allow PRT to provide service to each of the top 25% equity communities in the service area, which is a typical sub-population that we strive to focus on. However, service to the top 10% equity communities could be retained. There are several routes proposed to be eliminated that serve equity communities, but by retaining other duplicative routes in the system, at least one route in those equity communities could be retained.

The following 67 routes serve a top 10% equity community, but if are indicated for elimination below, overlap with other routes that serve the same community at a higher efficiency: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19L, 20, 21, 22, 24, 28X, 48, 51, 51L, 52L, 53, 53L, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 64, 65, 61A, 61B, 61C, 61D, 64, 67, 69, 71, 71A, 71B, 71C, 71D, 74, 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 86, 87, 88, 89, 93, Blue, G2, P1, P3, P68, P7, P78, Silver, Y46.

Process for Service Reductions

From highest to lowest level of priority to minimize impact on transit riders, the following steps are what PRT would follow if any or all service reductions are necessary (and follows in table format):

1. Eliminate very low efficiency routes, which are the routes with less than 100 riders per day, for both commuter and local routes. Routes 7, 18, 71, O5, P13, and Y45 would be eliminated. Eliminating these routes would save 0.6% of PRT's operating costs.
2. Eliminate commuter and local routes that have substantial service duplication or routing overlaps with other routes. The following routes would be eliminated 65, 19L, G31, P67, P71, and Y1. Eliminating these routes would save 0.9% of PRT's operating costs. (The following duplicative routes would remain in the system providing service to these eliminated routes: 61C/D, 16, 31, G2, 67, 61B, Y46, respectively.)
3. Shorten routes to become feeders to a busway or rail station. Routes 28X, 44, 69, and the Red Line would be shortened. The 28X would only operate between PIT Airport and Carnegie Station on the West Busway, the 44 would only operate between Kohne St at Fisher St in St. Clair and South Hills Junction, the 69 would only operate between Wilmerding and Wilkinsburg Station on the East Busway, and the Red Line would only operate between Overbrook Junction Station and Allegheny Station. Shortening these routes would save 2.0% of PRT's operating costs.

End all transit service (bus, light-rail, incline) at 11:00 p.m. on all days of the week. This would impact 1.8% of Weekday ridership, 3.9% of Saturday ridership, and 3.7% of Sunday ridership. Eliminating service after 11:00 p.m. would save 4.0% of PRT's operating costs.

The first four levels of priority only provided 7.5% of the 35% cost savings needed. The following levels of priority lay out even more extensive route eliminations and frequency reductions that

would have a greater impact on moderate- and high-efficiency routes and would have a widespread impact on riders across the county.

4. 5. Eliminate all low efficiency commuter routes and most low efficiency local routes. The commuter routes that would be eliminated are the 52L, G3, O1, P10, P12, P16, P7, P76. The local routes that would be eliminated are the 2, 4, 20, 36, 40, 58, and the Silver Line. Eliminating these routes would save 7.7% of PRT's operating costs. During this step, routes 15 and 89 were retained for equity reasons despite being low efficiency routes.
5. Significantly reduce service frequency, a loss of 30% or more of weekly service, on numerous moderate efficiency local routes, including the 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28X, 31, 44, 54, 56, 64, 69, 74, 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 87, 88, 91, G2, P68, P78, Y46. Major service frequency reductions on these routes would save 11.3% of PRT's operating costs.
6. Eliminate the remaining commuter routes despite their high efficiency, given the additional costs to the agency of operating these rush hour-only services, as outlined above. Commuter routes that would be eliminated at this step are the 51L, O12, P17, P69. Eliminating these commuter routes would save 1.4% of PRT's operating costs.
7. Eliminate some moderate efficiency local routes. Routes selected to be eliminated at this step do not serve a top 10% equity community, or there is remaining duplicative service coverage. Local routes eliminated are the 14, 26, 29, 38, 39, 41, 43, 53L, Y47, and Y49. Eliminating these routes would save 7.1% of PRT's operating costs.

If PRT were to receive some amount of additional funding but less than the full amount needed to completely avoid service cuts, some specific routes may shift from one step to another in the steps outlined above (for example, some "P" routes may be turned into feeder routes to be shortened to connect only to the East Busway and placed in step 3 rather than be eliminated entirely).

In conclusion, the eight steps in aggregate comprise 35% of PRT's current operating hours of service in Allegheny County, which reflects the magnitude of cuts that may be required to narrow if not completely fill the FY26 budget deficit. Reducing service according to this methodology would minimize, but certainly not limit, the community impact to the greatest extent possible.

More information is available on these changes at PRT's Customer Service Center (623 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh PA 15222), by calling Customer Service at 412-442-2000, or by visiting www.rideprt.org/funding-crisis.

Service Reduction Measure	In-Service Hrs Savings	Cumulative In-Service Hrs Savings	Cumulative % of In-Service Hrs Savings
#1 – Eliminate very low efficiency routes (local and commuter routes with less than 100 daily riders)	7,752	7,752	0.6%
#2 – Eliminate routes with substantial service duplication	12,572	20,324	1.5%
#3 – Shorten routes to become feeders to a busway or rail station	35,385	55,708	3.5%
#4 – End all transit service (bus, light-rail, and incline) at 11 PM on all days of the week	54,954	110,662	7.5%
#5 – Eliminate all low efficiency commuter routes and most low efficiency local routes	105,125	215,787	15.2%
#6 – Significantly reduce service frequency by 30% or more of weekly service on many moderate efficiency local routes	154,950	370,737	26.5%
#7 – Eliminate remaining commuter routes despite their efficiency due to additional cost burden of rush-hour only services	18,845	389,581	27.9%
#8 – Eliminate some moderate efficiency local routes that do not service communities with high equity need	90,385	485,831	35.0%

ⁱ For specifics on any route, please see the FY2024 Annual Service Report at www.rideprt.org/siteassets/board/meeting-documents/2025/feb/2.13.25_final_asr_fy2024.pdf