

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2025 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers**

March 28, 2024

Question:

What would it cost to increase the frequency of DASH Bus 103 to 20-minute headways between 6:45 am and 8:30 am and between 3:30 pm and 5:00 pm on weekdays? How does this route measure in terms of utilization and equity scores?

Response:

The proposed improvement would increase headways from every 30 minutes to every 20 minutes on weekdays from 6:45 to 8:00 AM and from 3:30 to 5:00 PM resulting in approximately 10 additional trips, five in each direction. To implement this enhanced service, DASH would need to put two additional buses into service during weekday peaks which would require two extra bus operators or additional overtime hours for existing operators. The estimated annual cost to operate this additional service is \$300,000, covering operator labor (wages & benefits), fuel, and mileage-related consumables. While DASH could absorb this within its current spare ratio, it might have a negative impact on the fleet availability and service reliability.

The FY 2025 Alexandria Transit Strategic Plan (ATSP) draft proposes restoring Line 103 service to pre-pandemic levels in FY 2026, involving trips every 20 minutes throughout peak periods. This enhancement is projected to cost \$430,000 in FY 2026 and would be more feasible with additional bus purchases in the next two years (www.dashbus.com/strategicplan).

The communities served within ¼ mile of Line 103 bus stops are comprised of roughly 10% low income and 45% minority residents based on recent U.S. Census data. These are proximate to the citywide averages for all residents, which are 10.3% low income and 48.1% minority. A recent rider survey indicated that Line 103 riders are 32.5% low income and 57.0% minority, as compared to the systemwide averages for all DASH riders of 64% low income and 74% minority.