



The Better Bus Project is a redesign of the County bus system, led by Transit Alliance Miami in partnership with Miami-Dade County. This is the first project that aims to integrate County and Municipal transit services, starting with the City of Miami, Miami Beach and Coral Gables.

Introduction

Transit networks are only as strong as their weakest link. Every weekday – the Coral Gables trolley is one of the strongest links in the system. However, every evening, and every weekend – it becomes the missing link.

Context

The Coral Gables trolley Ponce de Leon route began operations in November 2003 and now carries approximately 5,000 daily weekday riders¹. However, the service ends at 8pm on weekdays (10pm on the first Friday of the month), and does not operate on the weekends.

Analysis

The Coral Gables trolley is one of the most frequent trolley services in all of Miami-Dade County, operating at a 15 minute headway. The trolley provides a critical connection with Metrorail, City of Miami Trolley routes (Little Havana, Coral Way, Coconut Grove) and County transit routes (24, 37 and 42).

Of the high frequency services that currently exist in the County, the Coral Gables trolley is one of only two services that does not operate on Saturdays, and the only service that does not operate on Sunday.

The high productivity of this route strongly suggests that demand for evening and weekend service exists, and it's absence represents a crucial missing link within the regional transit network.

Benefits

By extending trolley services the city of Coral Gables can improve accessibility for residents, attract more workers and visitors, as well as uphold the trolley's mission to "help reduce pollution, ensure open access, and lessen the dependency on car trips." These goals are fiercely dependent on 7-day and evening transit service.

¹ <https://www.coralgables.com/trolley-services>

Recommendation

The Better Bus Project recommends that the Coral Gables trolley operate during evenings and weekends. An operation schedule to consider is:

- Weekdays
 - 30 min service from 4-6am
 - 15 min service from 6am-10pm
 - 30 min service from 10pm-midnight
- Saturdays
 - 30 min service from 5-7am
 - 15 min service from 7am-10pm
 - 30 min service from 10pm-midnight
- Sundays
 - 30 min service from 5am-8am
 - 20 min service from 8am-8pm
 - 30 min service from 8pm-midnight

These recommendations are similar to those that will be put forth for County services, City of Miami, and Miami Beach trolley services as part of the Better Bus Project.

An integrated and seamless transit system depends on matching service spans between services, and this project aims to create a transit system that is more useful for more people.

The full benefits of operating a local trolley service can only be realized if it operates at standards similar to those of surrounding and connecting routes.

Additional Context

As a major employment hub, Coral Gables has a labor force of 27,030 with a total of 9,276 businesses.² In May 2019 Coral Gables was recognized by Verizon's partner company, Go.Verizon.com as the third best city in the nation for small businesses where entrepreneurs can thrive due to its lower taxes, loans per capita, and travel time to work, among other things.

In relation to the rest of the county, Coral Gables has a shorter average commute time of 22.3 minutes and the County has a commute time of 30.7 minutes. This suggests Coral Gables residents are working closer to home – only .98% of the workforce in Coral Gables have "super commutes" (excess of 90 minutes). Comparatively, 3.07% of the workforce in Miami-Dade County have "super commutes" (excess of 90 minutes)³

² <https://www.beaconcouncil.com/why-miami-dade/cities/coral-gables/>

³ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/coral-gables-fl/?compare=miami-dade-county-fl>

Coral Gables also has strong entertainment, commercial, educational, and cultural institutions and is home to several international consulates – many of which can be accessed by the trolley (Giralda Plaza, Miracle Mile, Shops at Merrick Park, Coral Gables Museum).

Attachments

1. Frequency and Span Chart for Countywide Services
2. Existing County Frequency Map with Coral Gables Highlighted

Existing Network

Figure 26 shows the existing bus network highlighting the frequency of service. Red lines are frequent routes, which means that they run every 15 minutes or better, in the midday and peak periods. Purple lines run about every 20 minutes, dark blue lines about every 30-40 minutes and light blue lines are the least frequent, 41-60 minutes.

We use this style because frequency is a critical element of service, and a network can only be fully understood if the patterns of frequency are apparent. We have categorized each route based on its midday frequency, which is the typical frequency of service between 10 am and 3 pm. The frequency of service on many routes is higher in the peak periods (generally 6 am to 9 am and 3 pm to 6 pm).

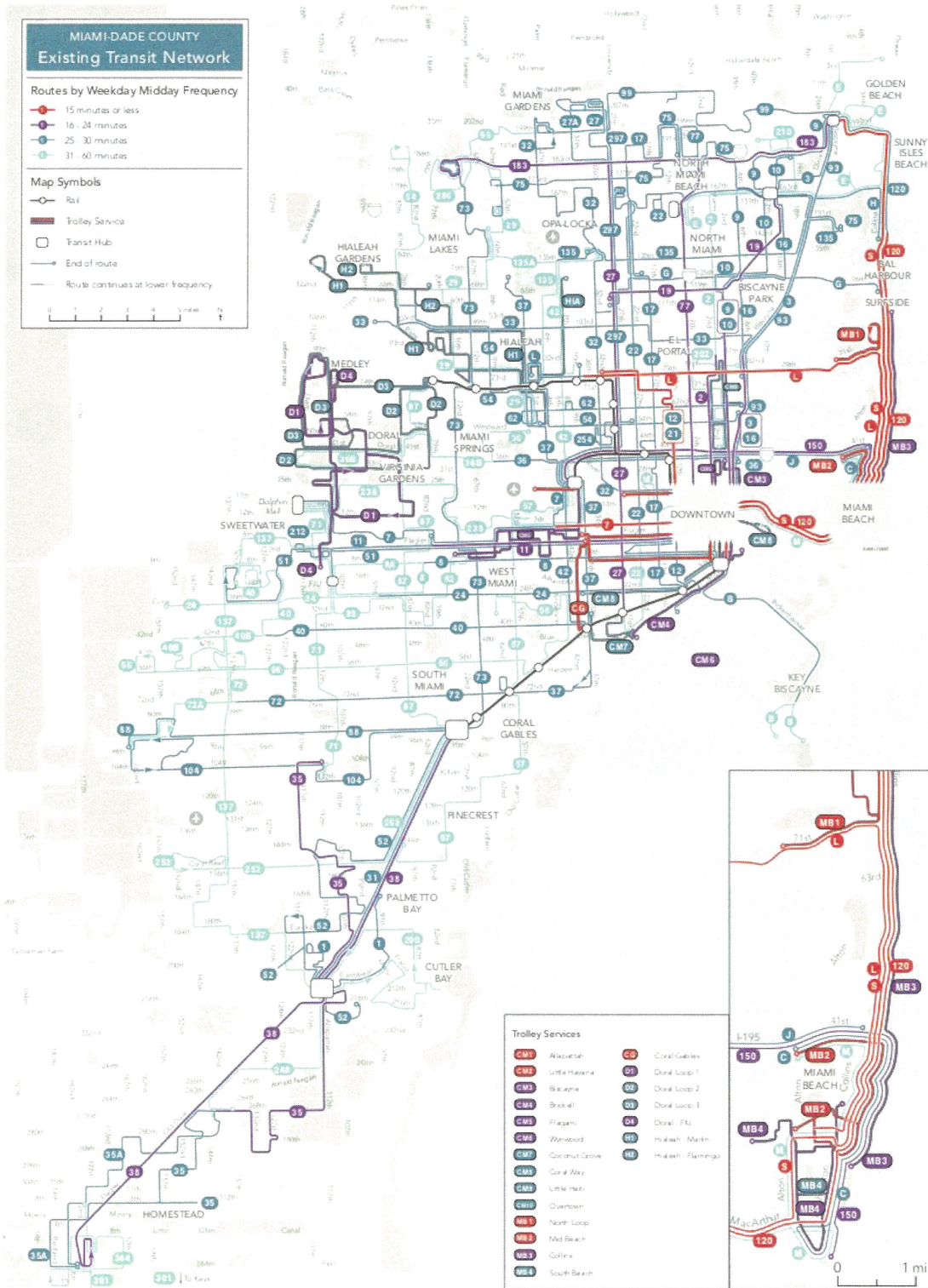
The Miami-Dade bus network covers nearly all developed parts of the county. During the midday there are only a few high frequency bus routes mostly serving Miami and Miami Beach. **Only five Miami-Dade routes or corridors are frequent (15 minutes or better) at midday.** Trolley routes operated by municipalities are shown with a dark outline. Only five trolley routes are frequent at midday.

On the mainland, much of the Miami-Dade bus network is designed in a grid pattern, with most bus routes following the major, section-line streets that are about every 1/2 mile. For example, in Little Havana, Routes 7, 11, and 8 each run east-west on while routes 12, 17, 22, and 27 each run north-south. Each of these streets is about 1/2 mile apart, and thus most people and jobs in this area are within 1/4 mile of a bus stop that could take them north-south or east-west.

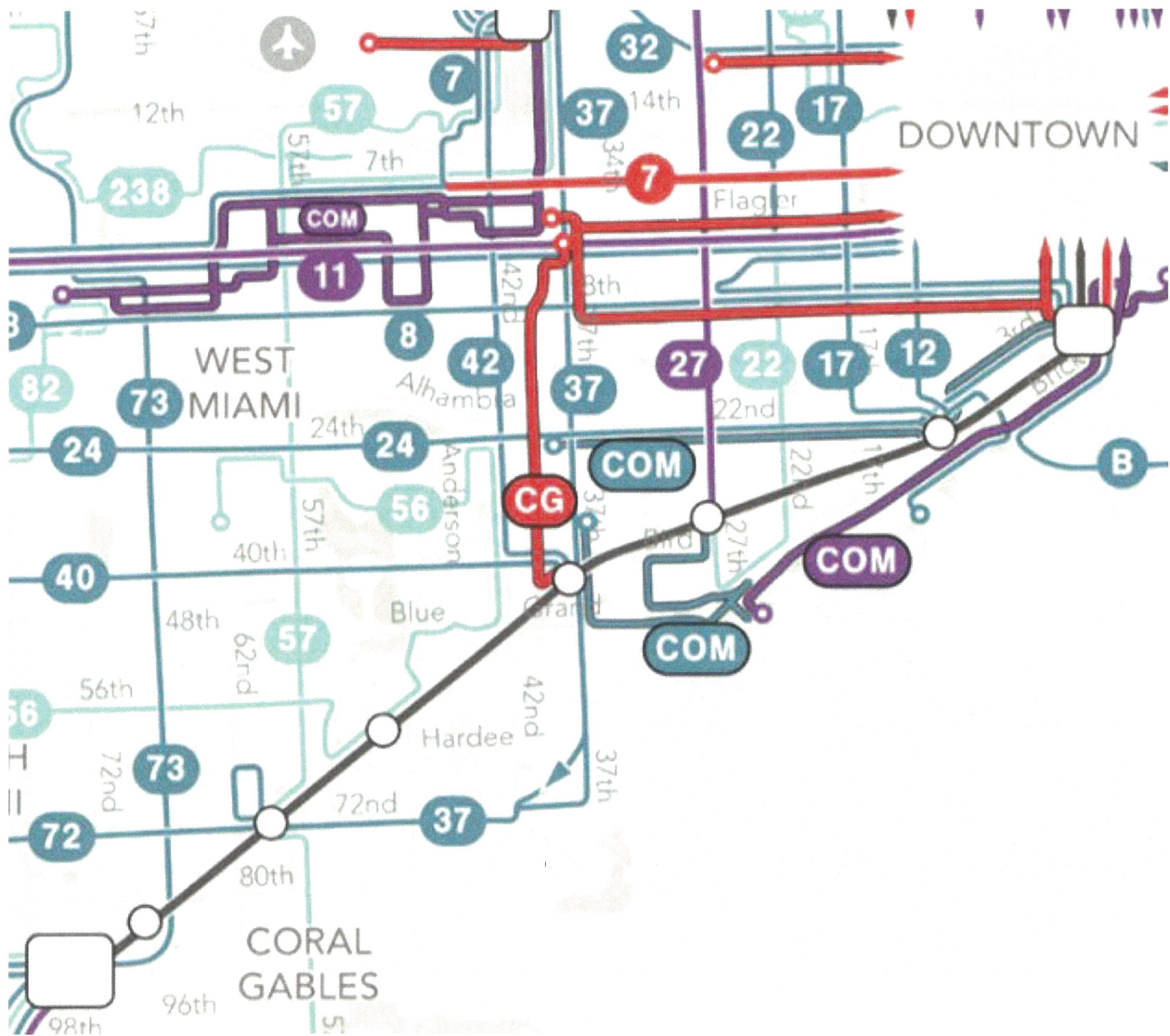
If a rider wishes to go somewhere along this grid of routes, it *would* be easy to go from nearly any two points on the grid with one transfer, as show in Figure 25, **if the frequency of service were high enough to make these connections quickly and easily.** The grid of routes is not consistent across the whole county, however. West of 27th Avenue and south of SW 8th Street, not all section-line streets have a bus route, so route spacing may increase to every mile or more. Also, north of NE/NW 79th Street, the grid is not as consistent due to gaps in the street or bus network.

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Download the report at:
www.betterbus.miami/choices



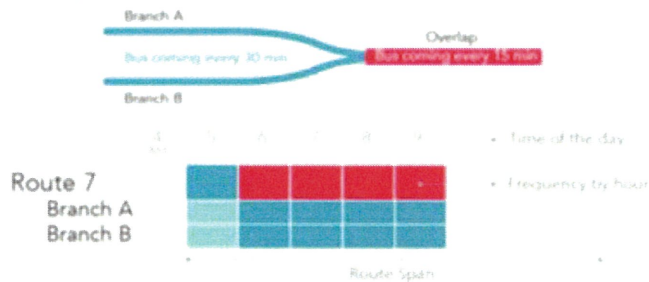
County transit system with routes color-coded by frequency
 Frequent lines are marked in red



Extract from Existing Service Map showing Coral Gables

Frequency and Span

Figure 27 shows the frequency by time of day for the most frequent routes in the Miami-Dade Transit network and the municipal trolleys. The example below shows how to use the network map and these charts to understand the span and frequency of service for every route.

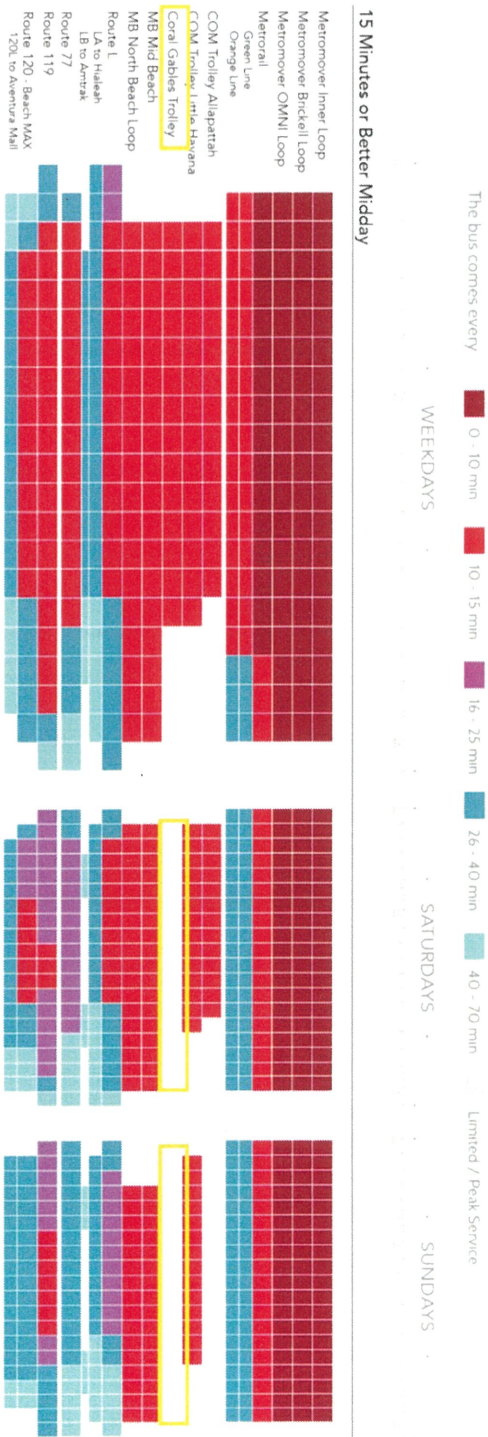


The example shows a route with a bus every 15 minutes on the "Overlap" portion and a bus every 30 minutes on "Branch A" and "Branch B". The span chart shows how to read the frequency by time of day. In the example, Route 7 starts operating at 5am, with service every 30 minutes on the "Overlap"—the dark blue square under 5am. Each branch operates hourly during this time. At 6am the branches are every 30 minutes and the "Overlap" is every 15 minutes.

For the MDT routes in the high frequency groups on this page, service is provided late into the night, and often overnight, and seven days a week. Many municipal trolley services, however, do not run in the evenings or parts of the weekend.

- Miami's Little Havana and Allapattah trolleys are frequent, but do not run after 8pm on weekdays and the Allapattah trolley does not run Sundays.
- Miami's Biscayne and Brickell trolleys run every 20 minutes, but run weekends and evening hours. The Flagami, Health District, Stadium, and Wynwood trolleys have shorter hours and no Sunday service.
- **The Coral Gables Trolley is frequent, and runs weekday evenings, but does not run on Saturday or Sunday.**
- Miami Beach Trolleys are primarily every 15 or every 20 minutes and have evening and weekend service.

Existing Network Route Frequencies and Spans



High frequency routes span chart with Coral Gables Trolley highlighted
 One of two services that does not run on Saturday, the only one that doesn't run on Sunday