




Detroit Department of Transportation

100 Mack Avenue • Detroit, MI 48201 • 313.933.1300 • Detroitmi.gov/DDOT

TO: Council President Pro-Tem, James Tate, District 1, City of Detroit

VIA: Council President, Mary Sheffield, District 5, City of Detroit

FROM: G. Michael Staley, Interim Executive Director of Transit 
Detroit Department of Transportation

DATE: February 23, 2024

RE: Response to DDOT Inquiries Memo

Dear Council President Pro-Tem Tate,

In response to your memo inquiry to the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) dated February 16, 2024, regarding maintenance of DDOT buses and the DDOT Bus Tracker, I offer the following response:

When were bus seat covers switched from vinyl to cloth?

DDOT switched the passenger seats from cloth to vinyl with the 2019 bus purchase onward. The seats are made of thermoplastics, which is highly regarded for its antibacterial properties.

Why did the transition take place?

The vinyl seats do not stain or tear as readily as the cloth seats. Also, it allows for better efficiency when cleaning the bus. DDOT is currently investigating other products used in the transit industry for the safety and comfort of passengers.

How has feedback on bus seats been collected?

There was no survey conducted on the switch from cloth to vinyl seats. However, several complaints and feedback about the buses being heavily soiled from the riding public as well as Council informed the previous administration's decision.

How is DDOT addressing seat sanitation concerns that arise with cloth seats such as pests, bed bugs, and liquid spills?

Coach Service Attendants (CSAs) conduct minor cleaning daily when the buses return to the terminals. DDOT Vehicle Maintenance division ensures all buses are scheduled for a major cleaning (which includes cleaning and sanitization of seats) every 30 days. The seats are cleaned using a steam pressure washer and soap.

It is understood that DDOT does not contract with the Transit App. How does the Transit App report arrival predictions if not contracted?

DDOT provides a GTFS (General Transit Feed Specification) file to Google with DDOT scheduled information. This information is public domain for Transit App to access.



Detroit Department of Transportation

100 Mack Avenue • Detroit, MI 48201 • 313.933.1300 • Detroitmi.gov/DDOT

What is the mechanism to provide real-time updates to the DDOT Bus Tracker?

The DDOT Bus Tracker App is a real-time application based on scheduled daily and actual runs and trips in our Clever Devices software. The information is refreshed every few seconds. Cell signal/GPS may have some impact on the refreshing rate of the data.

Riders have reported that the app does not reflect accurate delays. What is the process to improve this reporting?

The DDOT Bus Tracker App estimates bus arrival times based on the current position of the bus, the stop where the passenger is waiting, and the travel time based on the scheduled speed of the bus. These estimates do not account for the conditions on the route that may change the speed and travel time. We acknowledge that the technology is not perfect, and we are working with the vendor on addressing any reported issues regarding the Bus Tracker.

Thank you for reaching out to my office. If I can provide any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

G. Michael Staley
Interim Executive Director of Transit
Department of Transportation

cc: Todd Bettison, Deputy Mayor, City of Detroit
Malik Washington, City Council Liaison, Mayor's Office