Riding the bus will soon be free in Miami-Dade County.

What to know about the changes

By Grethel Aguila and Douglas Hanks Updated October 23, 2023 2:42 PM Miami Herald

If you take the bus to commute around Miami-Dade, you're in luck. You can soon ride for free. Miami-Dade's Department of Transportation and Public Works confirmed Monday **that fares will be suspended for both bus service and the Metrorail system from Nov. 13 through the rest of 2023.** Fares for both are usually $2.25 per trip. The county did not release a cost estimate for the transit system not collecting fares for roughly six weeks. The 2024 budget forecast estimates $76 million in fares this year, meaning an average of roughly $1.5 million a week. For six weeks, the average fare revenue would be roughly $9 million.

Can Miami-Dade County finally streamline its public bus service, reduce waiting time? But the free services come as the county rolls out new "Better Bus" routes on Nov. 13. Here's what to know. How will routes change? • The Better Bus plan is designed to increase ridership on the county's bus system. The strategy aims to cut waiting time, and end or consolidate low-ridership routes while increasing the number of buses serving high-ridership routes. • The redesign means many changes, including new route names, fewer neighborhood stops and the cancellation of some routes. • To check how your commute could change, visit the county's website for more information.

Will bus fares stay free? • There's no mention of suspended fares in the 2024 budget plan for Transportation and Public Works. During the pandemic, Miami-Dade Transit ran free bus service. • The budget sets aside $6.25 million for Better Bus implementation, which could include revenue to cover missing fare dollars. • Metromover, the driverless people mover that loops around downtown Miami and extends to Brickell and the Omni areas, also is free.