



Metro

June 2, 2008

Honorable Wendy Greuel
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring St - Room 475
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (LACMTA)
Concerns Regarding Proposed Hail-A-Taxi Pilot Program**

Dear Council Member Greuel:

The Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee recently considered the implementation of a Hail-A-Taxi pilot program in Downtown and Hollywood. As our Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers testified in Committee, LACMTA is in support of programs and initiatives that strive to improve the mobility of people and goods in our County. Given the unprecedented growth in Downtown Los Angeles, we are not opposed to the concept outlined in the Hail-A-Taxi program. However, we do have strong concerns regarding some of the provisions of the program, especially taxis utilizing Metro bus stops. This provision would greatly impact our bus operations as follows:

Limited Capacity – As the LADOT committee report indicates, potential congestion caused by this program is a significant concern. We share this concern, specifically at bus stops. Most of the downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood area bus stops are already at operational 'bus only' capacity during the rush hours. This limited curb space is used judiciously by bus operators to ensure that buses have enough space to pull in and out of the flow of traffic when boarding and alighting passengers. Additional taxi traffic in bus zones would hinder this coordinated effort and result in buses queuing up in the traffic lane and increasing congestion.

Safety – The report also indicates safety as a major concern of the program. Bus zones are one of the primary areas of bus collisions. Adding another element of conflict and complexity in allowing taxi staging, loading, and unloading would significantly increase the risk of pedestrian and vehicular accidents.

Operational Efficiency – Efficiently moving buses in and out of bus zones is imperative to keeping bus service reliable for passengers. Taxis potentially “standing” at bus zones would impede the efficient flow of buses in and out of stops, significantly impacting station dwell times, running times, operating costs, and would potentially increase “pass-ups” of passengers if the stop were too crowded for a bus to pull safely into a zone.

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Enforcement – Enforcement of this program is imperative to ensuring that this program does not cause safety and gridlock concerns along City streets. LACMTA maintains over 1,000 bus zones within the downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood areas. Given that enforcement of the program is up to the discretion of the Traffic Officer, there is a concern of not enough personnel to provide enforcement at bus zones.

Also, Mr. Hamid Behdad, President of the Central City Development Group (CCDG), had stated at the Transportation Committee that LACMTA staff had previously endorsed the project. In communications with our staff subsequent to the committee meeting, Mr. Behdad states that the CCDG would not advocate for including bus zones if there were significant safety or other concerns.

We appreciate the opportunity that you and the committee have provided for us to work with LADOT to resolve specific aspects of the program. My understanding is that our respective staffs are meeting on Thursday June 5th to discuss these issues. Please feel free to contact me directly at (213) 922-6888.

Sincerely,



Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer

CC:

Honorable Tom LaBonge, Councilmember 4th District
Honorable Richard Alarcón, Councilmember 7th District
Honorable Bernard Parks, Councilmember 8th District
Honorable Jan Perry, Councilmember 9th District
Honorable Bill Rosendahl, Councilmember 11th District
Jaime de la Vega, Deputy Mayor
Rita L. Robinson, General Manager, LADOT
Carolyn Flowers, Chief Operating Officer, Metro
Hamid Behdad, President, Central City Development Group