

ATTACHMENT D

PRESENTATION NOTES FOR MEETING 6/14/06 REGARDING MTA LINE #26 SHUTTLE.

OFFERED BY THE FRANKLIN AVENUE RIDERS GROUP

Low Ridership

Your brochure regarding possible cancellation of the #26 Shuttle advises that the proposed discontinuation is due to “low ridership.”

- Before moving to the Hollywood/Franklin area about 2 years ago, I lived (for over 20 years,) in the Silverlake area.
- In order to arrive at my work, which was located in Santa Monica also at that time, I had to take the #4 Bus westbound on Sunset/Santa Monica Blvd. at approximately 5:30 in the morning. At that time of the day, even though the bus had made **many** stops downtown and in Echo Park, there were often no more than 4 people on the bus when I boarded.
- We usually did not pick up more than about 3 more passengers (taking in about 6 stops) until we reached Vermont Ave. At that point, the bus would begin to fill, but never to a “full standing load” for more than a few stops – and these on the Westside. The bus was comfortably full by the time we reached the Westside and mostly empty by the time we reached Santa Monica.
- This bus line was never discontinued or shortened because of this.
- Our ridership now consists of roughly 3 to as many as 10 persons on the early #26 Shuttle. No less number than that of the riders who occupied those early morning trips on the #4 bus from Downtown until it reached the Hollywood area.
- Indeed, the exact same situation is now experienced by riders of the #26 Shuttle and the regular #26...except that the distance traveled by the Shuttle is considerably shorter than that of the first part of the #4. But no attempt that I know of has been made to remove part of the #4 line (even in the early morning hours.)

ACCESS TO OTHER LINES

The brochure also advised that we should access “alternative” services on Hollywood Blvd “just to the South of Franklin Ave.” I must assume that the MTA is unfamiliar with the areas served by the MTA in the Hollywood area.

- The Hollywood/Argyle (Vine) Metro Station is directly accessed from Franklin Ave. by proceeding through the 101 Freeway Underpass at Argyle. This underpass is unlit at night and even during the day is often populated by “street people” and drug addicts.

- The other alternatives you suggest also require walks through darkened (in winter) and empty side streets (except for addicts and drunks) to Hollywood Blvd. (which is referred to as a “corridor.”)
- In all cases, the MTA is not only advising us to walk for 20-40 minutes through areas which we take the bus to avoid—you are telling us to do so **before dawn during winter months—**
- Of the other bus services you indicate, lines 780, 180 & 181, and 217--all require a pre-dawn walk to Hollywood Blvd. during the winter months, and empty streets (except for street people) during summer – either down Argyle and through the underpass or down other side streets... and:
 1. The new Line 780 goes to Hollywood Blvd. and Vermont and does not access Line #26 Sunset/Virgil stop, but rather goes north to the cities of Glendale and Pasadena. In the near future, it will combine with the late #717 and go east/west on Hollywood Blvd. to or from the Fairfax area. Again, it must be accessed on **Hollywood Blvd. It only connects with Franklin Avenue at Vermont, which is too far to the east for any of us to walk to it.**
 2. The Line 217 would connect with Santa Monica Blvd. but would be of no help to those going to Shriners’ Hospital (which is directly on the regular #26 Line) or Downtown areas directly reached by the regular #26 bus. And it, also, can only be accessed by us on Hollywood Blvd.
 3. The lines 180 and 181 go to Hollywood and Vermont, do not access Line #26 Sunset/Virgil stop and then also proceed north, not south, on Vermont, to the cities of Glendale and Pasadena.

Again:

- We must be at our places of employment by 7:00 or 7:30 A.M. and find no help for our situation in the brochure
- Suggestions are offered and directions to “alternative” transportation are offered that are either incorrect or useless and would place us in harm’s way.

With regard to the last point, I must advise you that I am 63 years old. I have been “mugged” and hospitalized for it. And I do not wish anyone else to have to experience what I did.

We have received explanations from MTA employees that the Shuttle would cost approximately \$100 per trip to operate. We were further told that roughly 98% of this cost was due to “bus maintenance.”

Further to Ms. Walsh’s remarks, (which follow) I must state that over roughly half of the time, we find no evidence of any maintenance have been performed on our Shuttles at all! Rather, floors and windows are dirty, and often the buses cannot be operated properly and

stall out before they reach our stops. There is also the "happy surprise" of finding a cockroach or two crawling out of the vents at the bottom of the windows.

Again, we take strong issue that cost of maintenance could be a factor in discontinuing the Shuttle, because of the usual conditions of the buses in the morning. I assure you all, that if there were another method of transportation, operating at the same time and on Franklin Avenue, we would take it.

We were further advised that MTA considered the Shuttle to be a duplicate of service offered by LADOT's DASH buses. These buses do not come on line until 7:00 AM...the time some of us have to be at work

We are all very disappointed to find that at this time in the history of the MTA, attempts on the part of the bus riding public to secure service from the MTA can still be so frustrating.

We find it difficult to understand why a public transportation agency, paid for by public and federal monies, would be so dismissive of the needs of the public it is supposed to serve.

We repeat our request that the MTA continue to offer service on Franklin Avenue by Line #26 Shuttle during weekdays in the early morning hours until the DASH buses come into service.

In closing, I would like to thank Mr. Alex Clifford of Gateway Cities for his efforts in arranging the Shuttle for us and for his encouragement and courtesy to us.

Diane Harrison, AIC
FRANKLIN AVENUE RIDERS GROUP

NOTES FROM MARY WALSH TO ALEX CLIFFORD-GATEWAY CITIES
6/13/06

Dear Mr. Clifford

I apologize for the lateness of this e-mail but problems with my hands have not allowed me to use my fingers for any length of time but here goes anyway. Please pass this along to the decision makers for I am unable to attend Wednesday's meeting although one of our faithful riders will be there representing us, Diane Harrison.

I have spoken to a couple of the MTA representatives recently and here are the following reasons that I have been given in regards to discontinuing the morning shuttle on the #26 Line..

Duplicate Line

I'm assuming you mean the Dash line, which runs a portion of the same route as the 26 line. The first Dash of the morning arrives at my location of Franklin and Normandie at approx. 7:15. I need to be at my downtown LA workplace at 7:30. So this does not work for me. Did anyone think to research the schedule of the Dash or was this of no concern to you. A one hour earlier starting time would make all the difference to us.

Cost of Service

The maintenance cost to run the bus the few extra blocks it takes to start at Argyle and then along Franklin Ave to Hillhurst, etc.. Well this one gave me a chuckle to say the least. It is a well known fact that over the years we have been given "bottom of the line" buses where even the drivers admit they barely make it out of the yard let alone to the scheduled bus stops. Buses that are so dirty you can't even see out of the windows and you wonder how the first bus of the day can have such unclean floors. Buses where the back door won't close therefore the bus can't run. Air conditioners in the heart of summer that don't work or heaters in the dead of winter that can't be turned on for some reason or other. Wipers that don't work on the drivers side. Drivers that come on their own schedule or not at all because they went on vacation or called in sick and no replacement was sent out.. Or my personal favorite, the bus that finally arrives at my stop, while not on schedule, and dies at the curb.

We have put up with rude, surly and unprofessional drivers who at times pick and choose who to pick up, who seem to be saying, maybe we'll just skip this elderly lady, she moves to slow anyway, need to keep on my schedule.

Years of that type of service could dissuade some riders from using the 26 bus to further add credence to your deleting the line? Is there any wonder why ridership is now so low?

We fought years ago to keep this line going with a petition of a few hundred signatures and again recently where we corresponded with Mr. Clifford. Now we're down to 2 early morning shuttles and you want to take that away from us.

The MTA and others have encouraged people to take public transportation, well that's what we're trying to do. We need this bus for the convenience to get to our various work locations whether we connect to another bus or not. On behalf of our small but loyal group I urge you to continue this shuttle for as long as possible. .

Additionally, I would like to personally thank Mr. Alex Clifford for his part, big or small in helping us acquire these shuttles as well as keeping us informed in matters of importance to us. Finally, someone who cares.

Sincerely,

Mary Walsh

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