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Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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June 26, 2007

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE *RS*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: MATT RAYMOND *MR*
CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

CAROLYN FLOWERS *CF*
INTERIM CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

SUBJECT: BUS OPERATIONS AND SECTOR OUTREACH AND
CUSTOMER AWARENESS

ISSUE

This is in response to the motion introduced by Director Antonovich at the June 21st 2007 Operations Committee on how best to improve bus operations and sector customer and stakeholder communications..

BACKGROUND OR DISCUSSION

Bus operations and all six sectors, including rail, have identified a clear need to be able to communicate important information to our customers and community stakeholders. The Sector Governance Councils have specifically requested better support from Metro in the following areas:

- a. Community Relations
- b. Public Relations
- c. Marketing

Currently two people on the Communications staff are assigned to assist the sectors. From time to time other Community Relations staffs are asked to assist on specific projects such as Division 6 relocation or the Wilshire Bus Only lane. Community relations staffing has been reduced over the last several years to achieve budget cost reductions. In 2002 there were 23 community relations people. Today there are nine and these are divided into construction (3) safety (3) and constituent relations (3).

Metro's approach to marketing transit services focuses primarily on generating ridership. It promotes corridors, products and services that have the greatest potential for attracting new customers. It promotes the inter-connectivity of the system and positions Metro in the most positive and productive light. There is, however, a need to more directly communicate with local communities, address specific concerns and take advantage of finite marketing opportunities within smaller populations.

The solution sought by the sectors is to add one community relations position to each of the sectors staffs and provide each sector with a specific budget to cover promotional efforts and to insure quick turn around. However, finding all of these skills in one person is very unusual as they are very different disciplines. Five additional FTEs would be an estimated cost of \$500,000.

Instead of adding this additional cost, staff has developed an alternative approach that would help to achieve some of the goals of the bus and rail operations and the sectors while being cost neutral. This approach would improve outreach to communities and begin a process to develop within bus operations target marketing to our customers.

THE PROPOSAL

The operations community relations function will be centralized in the office of the Chief Operations Officer. This will facilitate the overall coordination of the community relations efforts and enable programs to be prioritized for optimal use of the resources. Staff can be coordinated on strategic issues for the bus restructuring, speed improvements, impacts of artic implementation, corridor studies that impact bus service as well as tactical support for community events.

Create a staff taskforce that will develop specific marketing plans and standards to be utilized by the sectors.

Transfer \$225,000 to the Central Operations budget. Three FTEs will be transferring from Communications to Operations and one FTE from rail will be assigned to this group to perform the following, but not limited to, functions:

- Participating sector and community meetings
- Notifying board of serious accidents and incidents
- Coordinating with other transportation related agencies (LADOT, CRA, Caltrans) to ensure that Metro is effectively using resources and communicating needs to other agencies.
- Coordinating local events and volunteer support for events
- Working with corridor cities regarding the bus issues (such as dedicated lanes, BRT candidate lines, artic bus impacts etc, transportation security) and the Downtown Restructuring project.
- Representing Metro at career fairs, community and special events
- Attend Sector Council, or community meetings

- Disseminating public information, assisting in or attending special events, and interacting with community groups to obtain their input

NEXT STEPS

A joint taskforce, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer, Interim Chief Operations Officer, Chief Communications Officer, Sector General Manager and other appropriate staff, will be formed to develop and implement sector marketing plans, establish information standards, address system signage requirements and strategically direct sector communications efforts. This team approach will ensure that consensus is reached among all participants with regard to sector communications.

These modifications will be implemented as part of the FY08 budget.