

Operations Committee to Consider MTA Cleanliness Policy

(Jan. 13, 2004) The Operations Committee is scheduled to consider a motion, this week, to establish a first-ever agency cleanliness policy aimed at reducing graffiti vandalism.

The item is one of a number on the agenda for Wednesday and Thursday committee meetings. Also included is a report on the value of reestablishing the MTA Transit Police Department and a report on streamlining the student pass program.

January Committee Meetings:
Planning and Programming: 1 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 14
Executive Management and Audit: 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 15
Finance and Budget: 10:30 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 15
Operations: 1 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 15

Cleanliness Policy

The Operations Committee will consider Item 36, adoption of MTA's "first formal" Cleanliness Policy. The intent of the policy is to "improve our customers' quality of life...and...remove the effects of vandalism on bus and rail vehicles...and other MTA owned facilities."

The seven elements of the proposed policy include maintaining a high level of cleanliness, developing cleanliness procedures and a "stringent vehicle inspection" program for the bus and rail fleet, cooperation with law enforcement and a community education program.

A report attached to the proposed policy notes that, although MTA has had at least five anti-graffiti programs in the past, most faded out due to budget cuts and changing agency priorities. Components of these programs will be consolidated into the Cleanliness Policy, which will be implemented through the Metro Clean Program.

Item 31, also on the Operations Committee agenda, is a motion to award a one-year, \$497,600 contract extension to Graffiti Control Systems of North Hollywood.

For more than five years, the company has been under contract to remove graffiti from Metro stations and rail facilities. The contract extension would increase the number of graffiti control technicians assigned to this task from seven to 10 and would assign one technician to the Metro Gold Line.

Transit Police

The report to the Operations Committee on reestablishing the Transit Police Department, Item 27, estimates that MTA could save 20 to 40 percent annually by operating its own police force instead of contracting with the Sheriff's Department.

The report outlines such challenges as staffing "a sound, capable and professional" department, the cost of recruiting, training, equipping and providing administrative and operational support. It also cites increased MTA liability, the potential for negative publicity and the reluctance of other law enforcement agencies to cooperate with the new department.

"These cost savings and other benefits must be carefully weighed against the start-up costs and operational challenges of reestablishing a major modern law enforcement agency," the report

says, noting that it would take about five years to develop the department.

Student passes

The Executive Management and Audit Committee will hear a report, Item 17, on the staff's efforts to cooperate with LAUSD in streamlining the student ID card program.

In mid-2002, MTA implemented an automated digital ID card system. Many student ID card requests are processed and ID cards mailed within five days after the vendor receives them, although the procedure may take between 12 and 15 days.

While 75 percent of all student pass applications are acceptable, the longest delays typically occur when applications are incomplete or are submitted with an unacceptable photo and must be returned for correction.

Among the options being considered by MTA and LAUSD to improve the student pass process is a pilot program with seven secondary schools, beginning in April. Under a streamlined application process, the schools would sell student stamps and receive sales commissions. If successful, the program could be extended to other secondary schools in the fall.

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