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## Gateway Sector Staff, Operators Work Together to Solve Problems

By DAVID HERSHENSON

(Aug. 10, 2004) It's all about attention to detail.

Gateway Cities Service Sector management and staff conduct frequent line rides, inspections of buses leaving the bus yard. They also convene small focus groups in an effort to experience the rides as the customers do and to hear firsthand from operator and mechanic team members.

"The beauty of this approach is that no one holds back on their thoughts and opinions," said General Manager Alex Clifford. "When the customers, operators, mechanics, service attendants, and other employees take their valuable time to express an opinion or concern, the sector is listening and ready to act."

For example, Operator Gregory McCoy had issues with running time and pullout on Line 265 (Paramount-Whittier-Cerritos), as a result of schedule problems. The running time complaint was forwarded to the Gateway Cities scheduling department.

### Made the adjustments

After validating the running time and pullout problem, the Gateway Cities scheduling department, working with McCoy, were able to make adjustments in the line to improve pullout and running time. As a result of that improvement, layover on this line was improved to the appropriate standard.

In another instance, the sector staff quickly remedied a safety issue reported by Operator Teresa Thomas, who drives Line 362 (LA-Santa Fe Springs-Norwalk-Hawaiian Gardens).

The operator explained to Clifford that it was difficult to see the traffic light from a particular bus stop location because both the light and the stop were located on the near side. The stop was moved to the far side within a week.

"They need to have more staff riding along on selected Metro Lines so management can look for themselves," said Thomas. "It's great for managers and supervisors to get involved."

Clifford also was able to respond to a safety concern on Line 254 (Imperial-Wilmington Station-Gage Ave.-Lorena St.) relayed to the sector office by Supervisor Gloria Molina's office. The problem involved bus movements on a narrow and congested street adjacent to Graham Elementary School in unincorporated LA County.

### Did a site visit

Clifford and the sector team met with the school principal, did a site visit, and determined that bus movements on the street served to only aggravate existing non-MTA related problems caused by parents double

parking when dropping off and picking up their kids.

The sector scheduling team devised a detour route and, after getting approval from the Gateway Cities Governance Council, rerouted the bus away from the congested street.

Molina's office and Graham Elementary School Principal Mary Harris expressed their gratitude for making the change to help relieve congestion on the street.

The bus ride-along program has provided Clifford with a better working knowledge of the issues operators and customers face on a daily basis. The ride-along program also gives operators the opportunity to be actively involved in the process of making running time and safety adjustments.

Line 362 Operator Thomas was grateful for the action taken. "I was relieved that the stop was fixed. It made me feel like somebody cared and did something rather than saying okay and ignoring it."

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