

[Metro.net](#) (web)**Resources**▶ [Safety](#)▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)▶ [CEO Hotline](#)▶ [Metro Projects](#)▶ [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)▶ [Archives](#)▶ [Events Calendar](#)▶ [Research Center/
Library](#)▶ [Metro Cafe](#) (pdf)▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)▶ [Retirement
Round-up](#)**Metro Info**▶ [Strategic Plan](#) (pdf)▶ [Org Chart](#) (pdf)▶ [Policies](#)▶ [Training](#)▶ [Help Desk](#)▶ [Intranet Policy](#)**Need e-Help?**

Call the Help Desk
at 2-4357

[E-Mail Webmaster](#)

Operators' Comments Help South Bay Schedule Makers Keep Buses on Time

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 3, 2004) Schedule Maker Steve Tontz flipped the pages of his South Bay bus lines. An operator had just told him that the published Line 212 bus stop arrival time at Slauson Avenue and La Brea Avenue might be different from the list used by operators to stay on schedule.

"I may be precisely on time at that bus stop but if the public has a different schedule they may think I'm late," the operator said.

Tontz, a 23-year Metro employee, nodded as he looked for the specific document among his schedules. As part of the South Bay Sector scheduling team responsible for the production and maintenance of 42 bus line schedules covering hundreds of miles and even more bus stops throughout Los Angeles County, he would later research the documents involved.

"We'll definitely look further into this, and thanks for the feedback and information," he remarked to the operator.

And information and feedback were exactly what Tontz and fellow-scheduler Virginia Ward were seeking that early August morning in the training room of Arthur Winston Division 5.

Comments from operators

They were getting comments from operators after the semi-annual "shakeup" in June when many agency-wide bus service changes were made in Los Angeles. Twice a year, in June and December, Metro adjusts its bus service to respond to ridership demand and allow an opportunity for the operators to bid for new bus line assignments.

"This post-shakeup visit to the division provides the staff a chance to talk directly to the bus operators about our bus schedules," said Schedule Supervisor Thang 'Tom' Tran. "We ask them what is working well or what can be improved schedulewise."



Steve Tontz, left, goes over bus line information with Metro Bus Operator Leonardo Solis at Arthur Winston Division 5. Below, Schedule Maker Virginia Ward in a scheduling feedback session with Operator Christian Vasquez.



That morning Tontz and Ward talked to several other operators.

"One operator mentioned that he had experienced heavy ridership on Line 206 southbound from Hollywood Boulevard and Vermont Avenue," said Tontz, who has eight years experience in scheduling.

Passenger crowding on a line could lead to schedule delays as the bus waits for additional riders to board and exit. " We would take a closer look at that corridor; this could lead to adding another bus trip to that line," he said.

'More recovery time'

"One common request from transportation staff is for more recovery time," added Tontz, explaining how some operators have difficulty arriving at a layover in time to depart on schedule for the return trip.

Increasing the time for a bus to remain at a layover location would help make up the minutes that may have been lost earlier by traffic congestion, accidents and detours. The additional time would also enable an operator to start his return trip without any delay, staying on schedule with the printed bus line timetable in the public's hands.

Back at sector headquarters after the feedback sessions, schedule work continues for Tontz, Ward, Thang, fellow schedule makers Hung Le and Will Hooper, and Transportation Planning Manager Scott Greene. They will discuss and evaluate various scheduling factors such as passengers loads and run-time analysis, and evaluate operator suggestions .

"Comments from operators, when intended to be constructive and supportive of improving operations, are very welcome to us," said Tontz, as he and the schedule team doggedly perfect their timetables.

"This will help operators efficiently navigate city streets," he said, "so the agency can offer reliable, safe and on-time bus service to Los Angeles residents."