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A New Link for Metro Connections: Culver City to Beverly Hills

- Modifying Metro's Line 220 promises better customer service

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 9, 2006) Metro Bus Line 220 runs south out of Beverly Hills, doglegs southwest across Culver City and jogs past Marina Del Rey before making a giant loop south around LAX.

With such a circuitous route through a number of low-density areas, Line 220 falls below Metro's route performance standards, attracting less than 20 boardings per hour on weekdays and even fewer on weekends.

That was the situation the Westside/Central Governance Council faced, Tuesday evening, when members approved a modification of Line 220 that not only promises to improve service on the 22-mile line, but is consistent with the system efficiency and ridership goals of Metro Connections.

Beginning with the June service change, Line 220 will be split. Metro will continue to operate the northern portion of the route along Robertson Boulevard between West Hollywood and Venice and Culver boulevards.

Culver City Bus will take over the southern portion of the line from Venice/Culver to Fisherman's Village in Marina Del Rey and operate it as Culver Line 7. Line 7 also will connect with Santa Monica Rapid 3.

The portion of Line 220 that now loops from Marina Del Rey around LAX and serves the LAX City Bus Center will be discontinued, as will all Sunday service.

A more viable line

Partnering with Culver City Bus will make both portions of the line more viable, says Westside/Central General Manager David Armijo.

With a shorter route, he says, Metro plans to improve headways from 60 minutes to 40 minutes and establish a timed transfer with Culver City Line 7.

And, when the Exposition Light Rail Line begins service in 2010, the station at Venice/Washington in Culver City will be a strong passenger generator for Line 220.

In the meantime, Culver City Bus expects that the proposed Line 7 will alleviate passenger loads on Washington Boulevard as patrons will have another transportation alternative with a lower fare. The

Exposition Line also is expected to encourage ridership on Line 7.

Culver City Councilwoman Carol Gross, a member of the Westside/Central Governance Council, notes that Line 220 has been “one of the least productive lines in the whole system.”

“We’ll provide better, more frequent service on Robertson at lower cost – a positive thing for Metro and its customers,” she says. “Culver City Bus customers also will get more frequent service, 40-minute headways and 75 cent fares.”

As Armijo sees it, the direct Line 220 route between the future Exposition Line station and West Hollywood is exactly what was envisioned for Metro Connections.

“Metro will carry the heavier loads between major points,” he says. “Culver City will offer more local, community service.”