

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

▶ [Safety](#)

▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)

▶ [Ask the CEO](#)

▶ [CEO Forum](#)

▶ [Employee Recognition](#)

▶ [Employee Activities](#)

▶ [Metro Projects](#)

▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

▶ [Archives](#)

▶ [Events Calendar](#)

▶ [Research Center/Library](#)

▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)

▶ [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)

▶ [Policies](#)

▶ [Training](#)

▶ [Help Desk](#)

▶ [Intranet Policy](#)

Need e-Help?

Call the Help Desk
at 2-4357

[Contact myMetro.net](#)

Mark Maloney Sees a Real Challenge in Westside/Central Sector

- General manager wants to improve service and bus fleet appearance and reduce accidents by focusing resources on operators and maintenance staff

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 25, 2007) Later this month, General Manager Mark Maloney will board as many buses as he can ride and take a hard look at on-street operations in his Westside/Central Service Sector.

The "line saturation" – which also will involve sector staff, Bus Operations Control personnel and Sheriff's deputies – will touch every one of the 16 Westside bus lines. It will take about six months, Maloney estimates, to review every line.

The team will determine whether buses are pulling out of the sector's three operating divisions on time, look at whether road conditions are causing delays, talk to operators about service issues and informally survey customers about the service being provided. The information can be used to refine bus schedules and improve service.

Maloney, 42, became a general manager last June following three years as deputy executive officer in charge of Metro's contract bus lines, Access Services ADA paratransit operation, the Freeway Service Patrol and freeway call box programs. He retains responsibility for those programs, which are now overseen by Deputy Executive Officer Mike Greenwood.

Maloney, who succeeded former General Manager David Armijo, soon discovered that the Westside is perhaps Metro's most challenging sector.

Heaviest traveled lines

Its bus lines are some of the heaviest traveled – Metro Rapid Line 720, alone,



Westside/Central General Manager Mark Maloney oversees bus operations in some of Metro's heaviest-traveled transit corridors. His three divisions are among the agency's busiest.

Meet Mark Maloney: General Manager of Westside/Central Service Sector

Mark Maloney joined Metro in June 2003 as deputy executive officer, Transportation Contract Services. During the seven previous years, he managed contract transit services for the City of Glendale.

Maloney began his transportation career in 1988 as a planning technician at the Orange County Transportation Authority. During his eight years at OCTA, he also served as superintendent of service planning and manager of the new service department.

As manager of new service, Maloney was responsible for planning, development and implement of local bus service, rail feeder service, commuter express service and rideshare services. Most recently, he was project manager for computer automated scheduling and service

carries some 50,000 passengers a day. It has some of the longest lines in the system; operates in some of the area's worst traffic; and serves a number of politically sensitive communities.

planning.

Maloney is a 1987 graduate of USC where he earned a bachelor's degree in public administration, urban and regional planning. He and his wife, Vanja, a paralegal in an Orange County law firm, live in Lemon Heights with their 13-year-old son Patrick.

All this, he says, "just makes it that much more difficult to manage and provide quality service, to have good schedules that reflect the traffic patterns."

But, Maloney is proud of the way his staff and employees at Divisions 6, 7 and 10 are stepping up to the challenge. In addition to the Westside/Central staff, the sector operates more than 570 buses and counts some 950 bus operators and 250 maintenance employees, along with 72 division transportation and maintenance managers and supervisor.

'Everyone who drives by one of our buses is a customer. They're all taxpayers and they're the ones providing the service. They expect to see their tax dollars looking as good as possible and know that we're using them wisely and that we have a good product.' — Mark Maloney, general manager, Westside/Central

Since taking over the sector, Maloney has concentrated on improving safety and reducing accidents, improving service quality and on-time performance and the return-to-work program for operators on sick leave.

Reducing the number of on-the-road accidents has been particularly vexing, he says, because about 40 percent involve articulated bus driver's side mirrors that are damaged by passing vehicles. A minor accident, but one that takes a bus out of service to properly report the incident.

Solutions to this problem, Maloney says, may include finding ways to increase visibility of the mirrors to oncoming vehicles, making modifications to the mirrors, or modifying the spring-like curb feelers on buses so operators can maneuver closer to the curb at bus stops and stay farther out of the line of traffic.

'Slows down operation'

The mirror problem "definitely slows down our operation and affects our accident numbers," Maloney says. "The severity of accidents has declined over time, but the accident numbers stay up because of these incidents."

Fixing things also applies to the three Westside/Central operating divisions. Facilities at Division 10 and Division 7 have seen recent upgrades. Plans also are underway to increase the height of the wall surrounding the West Hollywood division to reduce noise in the adjacent neighborhood.

At Division 6, heavy repairs have been made to the transportation and maintenance buildings and to the bus washer. Metro had planned to close the Venice property and move the division to a new location, but that plan fell through. Maloney now expects to operate from the current location for a few more years.

Metro Connections, the plan for a major restructuring of bus service, will begin implementation this year.

“Because we’re so corridor-driven, our Metro Connections changes won’t be that great,” Maloney believes, although he notes that downtown service may change dramatically if a transit hub is located there for incoming Metro Bus lines. That would reduce the number of bus lines running through downtown.

Introducing Rapid Express

The sector also will add more Metro Rapid service and, in June, will introduce the new Rapid Express. That service will make only four stops between Wilshire/Western and Santa Monica.

Whatever the future holds for the Westside/Central sector, Maloney wants bus operators to be the eyes and ears of the sector as “frontline customer service representatives.” And he expects to provide the resources they need to do their jobs.

“It’s not easy being an operator on the Westside,” he says. “We run full loads; we have riders from all different backgrounds to serve. We want to make it as easy as possible for the operators, but we know it’s a very hard job.”

The key to service reliability is the mechanical condition of the sector’s buses, Maloney believes. To maintenance employees he says, “If we have a recurring mechanical problem, we want to make sure that the problem is fixed” and he promises the resources to make sure the problem won’t cause service delays.

In addition to the mechanical condition of the buses, the appearance also is important – and not just to Metro’s patrons.

“Everyone who drives by one of our buses is a customer,” says Maloney. “They’re all taxpayers and they’re the ones providing the service. They expect to see their tax dollars looking as good as possible and know that we’re using them wisely and that we have a good product.”