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Strategic Partnerships Key to Gateway Cities Service Planning

- Sector planners work with planners for three municipal operators
- [< MORE](#): Highlights of the service changes.

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(April 5, 2007) The Gateway Cities Governance Council recently approved one of the largest and most far reaching service changes since the inception of the service sector.

The service change, which goes into effect June 24 or later could not have been accomplished without the partnerships the Gateway Cities sector established with the three major municipal operators in the region, without the creative coordination with other sectors, and without being responsive to comments received from the public.

General Manager Alex Clifford has made it a high priority to establish strategic alliances with the municipal and local bus operators providing service in the Gateway Cities region, including holding quarterly meetings with all of them.

"We work with the municipal operators serving our area to better coordinate our service changes to meet the needs of our customers," said Clifford. "This is the closest we've worked with three different municipal operators for one shakeup."

The effort resulted in Long Beach Transit, Montebello Bus Lines and Norwalk Transit picking up service in areas where Metro was considering eliminating service due to low ridership and service duplication."

Some of the service changes originally proposed by the Gateway Cities staff were pulled or modified based on comments received during a public hearing held February 8.

'Changes based on feedback'

"That resulted in a modified package of proposals that was submitted to the Governance Council for approval," said Clifford. "Our Council was pleased that we not only listened to the customer feedback, but made a number of changes based on that feedback."

An example of the coordination between the Gateway Cities Sector and a municipal operator is what happened with Line 275, serving Whittier, Santa Fe Springs, Norwalk, La Mirada and Cerritos. Norwalk Transit proposed extending one of its lines to take over the line, which has been one of the least productive lines in the Metro system.

In another instance, Long Beach Transit picked up service that was proposed for cancellation along a segment of Metro Line 60

between Artesia Blvd and downtown Long Beach.

Over a two-year period, the Gateway Cities and Long Beach Transit worked out scheduling and operational issues. Montebello Bus Lines also worked with the Gateway Cities staff, and agreed to assume bus service on segments proposed for cancellation due to service duplication.

“It has taken a long time to develop close working relationships with other bus operators in our sector,” said Clifford, “and this last service change is a great example of how that partnership works, and all of our customers benefit from our close relationship and hard work at coordinating service changes together.”

The Gateway Cities scheduling staff also met with their counterparts at both the San Gabriel Valley and South Bay sectors to modify plans and better coordinate service changes on bus lines that run in multiple sectors with an overall goal of providing more seamless service to the customers.

“The sector general managers and Governance Councils want to ensure that management and coordination of service that may run in multiple sectors does not stop at the sector boundaries” said Clifford.