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Outreach Efforts on Proposed Service Changes

(Aug. 31, 2010) Metro staff distributes public hearing brochures, new schedules and more at agency’s recent public outreach tours. [MORE>](#)

Wednesday, August 18

[Intriguing](#): Engineer Hussein Farah retires from Metro to join cabinet of newly elected president of the East African country of Somaliland

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Somaliland, which Hussein vigorously distinguishes from the country of Somalia, was a British Protectorate until 1960, when it gained its independence and entered into a hopeful union with neighboring Somalia, then recently liberated from Italian control. That union dissolved into a ten-year civil war that lasted until 1991, when Somaliland emerged as an independent

Facilities Maintenance Manager Hussein Farah departs Metro to join the cabinet of the newly elected President of Somaliland.

Located on the east horn of Africa, Somaliland is a republic the size of Greece, bordering Somali and Ethiopia with a coastline that stretches some 456 miles along the Red Sea.

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More on Somaliland:

- [Ballots and Bullets: The Tale of the Two Somalia](#)  
: A report from the International Republican Institute on the elections in Somaliland.
  - [www.somalilandgov.com](http://www.somalilandgov.com)
- 

country. "With a free electorate who have built a stronghold of domestic policy, Somaliland has effectively sidestepped the land mines of warring factions, extremism and the infestation of piracy tactics used by neighboring Somalia," said Hussein.



In the service of his country, Hussein will be managing oil and gas exploration concessions sought by an increasing number of global concerns. He also will be responsible for energy and ground water development.

Hussein describes transportation systems in the fledging democracy as underdeveloped. "The roads are not paved, for the most part. You see everywhere donkeys, mules, SUVs, many buses but the problem is the lack of infrastructure. That is the challenge I face: to develop resources that will finance public works."

He comes prepared. Hussein graduated with a degree in petroleum engineering from the University of Oklahoma in 1983, followed by five years in operations with Chevron. He joined Metro in July 1989 and today manages nearly 100 million dollars worth of maintenance contracts, including CNG fueling systems, required by Metro's bus fleet.

Hussein counts his memories along with blessings from his 21 years at Metro. "Metro gave me experience in my profession and also an experience in life. I met a lot of good people here, both personally and professionally. It was a good tour," he said.

Hussein Farah, 53, resides in the North Los Angeles County community of Stevenson Ranch with his family: Wife Faryad, and their three sons, Sahal, 16; Robleh, 15, and Leeban, 12.

His appointment will take him to Somaliland for up to five years, but traveling and new media will keep him in near-constant communication with his family, who will remain at home in California while the young sons continue their education.

"I am going with the blessing of my wife and sons, who are very supportive. My wife has said this is a bigger calling – a worthwhile accomplishment that our kids will be proud of and one that will make a difference in the quality of life for our country of birth."

Hussein will travel to Washington D.C. to meet with officials before taking up his post in his homeland in September.

--from Gayle Anderson


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Metro staff distributes public hearing brochures, new schedules, maps and information on fares and more at one of the agency's recent public outreach tours.

## Outreach Efforts on Proposed Service Changes

(Aug. 31, 2010) When Metro Service Planning Manager Scott Page and his staff set out to inform Metro customers and operators about proposed bus service changes for December, they didn't know what kind of response they would receive.

But they were certain they would get useful information first-hand from the people actually using the service.

"We wanted to reach out to people who were too busy to go to the public hearings," said Page, who led the public outreach effort. He selected locations along bus lines in the proposal with the highest concentration of customers getting on and off the buses. "Most people were going to and from their work, school, shopping or home."

Reaching an estimated 1,000 patrons at 12 different locations including major transit hubs, stations, divisions and on-board buses, the two-week public outreach blitz in July led up to the five public hearings in August on proposed service changes for December 12.

"People really appreciated that we were out there. They were glad to have their questions answered on the spot," said transportation planner Stephen Tu.

At each of the 12 locations on the public outreach tour, staff distributed public hearing brochures, new schedules, maps and information on fares and TAP. Special displays showed patrons how specific service proposals might impact their commute.

Metro staff also rode lines such as the 220, 607 and 608 to get first-hand experience of how customers may be affected by the upcoming changes.

In addition, surveys were conducted for Line 220 and for the Orange Line Van Nuys Station. The survey results helped identify travel patterns to determine impacts, especially for patrons of Lines 233, 761 and 902 at the Orange Line transfer location.

Public comment cards were available at each location for patrons who were unable to attend a public hearing. Comments also are being accepted at [servicechanges@metro.net](mailto:servicechanges@metro.net) until midnight on August 31.

"I thought we were going to get a lot of negative reactions, but they understood why we needed to make certain changes and they were glad to hear they still had a lot of transit access when we explained all the alternative options available to them," said Tu.

In the past, direct interaction with Metro staff has been available only to those attending the public hearings. Given the significant changes being proposed, Service Development DEO Conan Cheung wanted a more grassroots and proactive approach to ensure that the opinions of Metro customers who ride the buses were heard.

"A lot of times the people who are the most impacted aren't able to make it to the public hearings, so taking the show on the road gives them the opportunity to voice their opinions and to be part of the public process," Cheung said. "It's an important step in evaluating service changes that I'd like to see continue as we move forward in restructuring the bus system."

— *Service Planning & Development Staff*