



**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 18, 2003**

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

SUBJECT: TRANSIT SERVICE POLICY

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA
90012

ACTION: ADOPT PROPOSED MTA TRANSIT SERVICE POLICY

213.922.6000

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the MTA Transit Service Policy which will supersede all previous MTA Board adopted service policies.

ISSUE

The existing transit service policy is outdated. The original policy was adopted in 1986 for the opening of rail service. Since then, there have been significant changes in the operating environment, including the expansion of rail service, the establishment of Service Sectors, and greater emphasis on MTA's regional role.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed policy focuses MTA resources on providing high quality service to major travel markets within Los Angeles County and will improve the overall efficiency of service. The policy directs decision-making during the service development process and communicates service priorities and initiatives to the public. It is consistent with the MTA FY 2003-2007 Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

Key changes with the new policy include: a greater emphasis on serving major transit markets; deploying resources based on demand rather than population; the use of shopper surveys to monitor service quality; restructure service to a hub and spoke network; reductions in the minimum service frequency from 60 to 30 minutes (as resources permit), and a policy to cancel poorly performing bus lines that have been in operation for more than 18 months.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The primary alternative is to not implement the updated transit service policy. This alternative is not recommended. The existing policy is a collection of service

standards. It does not provide a service philosophy or reflect new financial realities, or the service development strategies outlined in the Los Angeles County Long Range Transportation Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed MTA Transit Service policy does not have a direct financial impact. The policy charts a course of action to increase ridership and improve overall agency efficiency.

BACKGROUND

A new policy was developed to address the changes in MTA's operating environment and to reflect the agency direction. A summary statement of the proposed MTA Transit Service Policy is presented in Attachment A and the key changes of the policy are presented in Attachment B.

The transit service policy envisions establishing a world-class transportation system in Los Angeles County that is safe, customer driven, regionally oriented, and efficient. The policy supports the goals of the MTA FY 2003-2007 Strategic Plan. These are:

- Goal 2 - Improve Transit Systems
- Goal 4 - Create a Positive Image of the MTA
- Goal 6 – Provide Leadership for the Region's Mobility Agenda Through Responsive Planning and Resource Allocation

The policy also implements key strategies from the MTA Strategic Plan, including: developing programs and services that best implement the agency's vision and goals countywide with community support; focusing on customer needs and measuring customer satisfaction; increasing service frequency and on-time performance; and increasing system capacity.

The transit service policy calls for putting MTA resources where they will provide the greatest mobility. It makes speed and capacity improvements on high ridership services a top priority and recommends working with the other local operators to reduce service duplication. The policy establishes a practice of regularly reviewing the performance of MTA bus lines to ensure a reasonable return on investment. As part of this review, bus lines that are identified as poor performers will be modified. Lines that fail to meet minimum performance standards after 18 months of operation will be cancelled.

The policy has been reviewed by, and includes input from, the Governance Councils of each Transit Sector and from community transportation advocate groups. Attachment 3 is the complete policy document. It provides a more detailed discussion of each of these issues and is organized into six main sections: 1) purpose and background; 2) bus route and design guidelines; 3) bus performance measures; 4) rail service policies 5) service change process 6) conclusion.

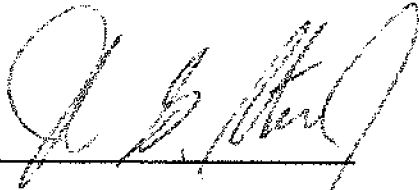
NEXT STEPS

The policy will provide the foundation from which Sector Governing Councils and staff can make decisions and recommendations about service. It also will help guide the future implementation of the Hub and Spoke network. Once adopted by the MTA Board of Directors, the new transit policy will be effective immediately and reviewed annually.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Summary Statement: MTA Transit Service Policy
- B. MTA Transit Service Policy: Key Changes From The Existing To Proposed
- C. MTA Transit Service Policy

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ATTACHMENT A

SUMMARY STATEMENT: PROPOSED MTA TRANSIT SERVICE POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to direct decision-making during the service change process and ensure a fair and consistent evaluation of service. It calls for service adjustments that best meet customer needs and expectations within the constraints of the budget and equipment availability. For the public, the policy communicates agency priorities and initiatives.

Key Policies

Increasing Ridership

- 1) The network structure shall maximize regional mobility
- 2) The MTA will focus its service investment on providing high quality service to major travel markets within Los Angeles County
- 3) Corridors served by bus routes that offer service frequencies of 5 minutes or less will be candidates for Metro Rapid, the deployment of high capacity vehicles and bus preferential treatment (e.g. signal programs, bus lanes, etc.)
- 4) Resources will be allocated in a manner that balances customer expectations with the fiscal responsibilities of the agency.

Improving Service Quality

- 5) Sufficient seating capacity will be offered on Metro Bus and Metro Rail lines to meet the need of MTA's current and future riders, and ensure that patronage is not discouraged by overcrowded vehicles.
- 6) All bus routes shall provide at least a 30-minute service during weekday rush hours, as resources permit. Routes that cannot support this level of service should be modified or operated by other means.
- 7) Annual reviews of the operations will be conducted to assess customer satisfaction and service delivery

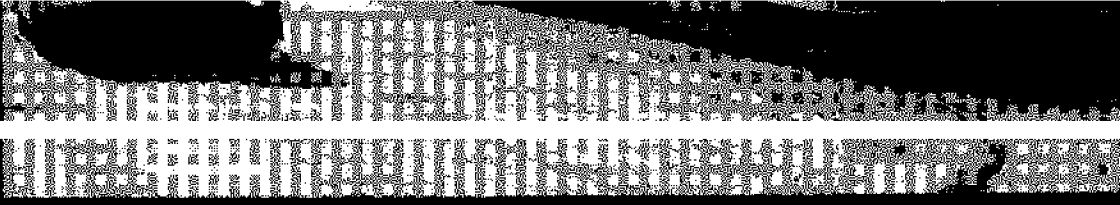
Using Resources Wisely

- 8) The performance of each bus route in the system will be evaluated annually and bus lines not meeting the performance standards will be modified. Bus lines that do not meet the minimum performance standard after 18 months will be cancelled.
- 9) The MTA will assist in funding and operating shuttles, circulators and neighborhood-oriented services only when there is a demonstrated need and no other entity available to provide the service.
- 10) New services will be considered for implementation when there are available resources and if ridership projections indicate the potential support 30-minute service and to meet the minimum performance standard.
- 11) The MTA will review its service and work with the local bus operators to reduce service duplication that results in a sub-optimal use of resources.
- 12) Decisions regarding the provision of service will consider the cost effectiveness, appropriateness and operating roles of other operators, as well as alternative service delivery options.

**ATTACHMENT B
MTA TRANSIT SERVICE POLICY: KEY CHANGES FROM THE EXISTING TO PROPOSED**

POLICY AREA	CHANGES FROM EXISTING TO PROPOSED POLICY
/Rail Interface Guidelines	<i>New provision</i> - annual review of service quality and delivery
h Capacity Bus Deployment	New provision to help guide the restructuring of bus service whenever there is expansion of the rail system.
ro Rapid Design Guidelines	<i>New provision</i> - supports on-going bus procurement and fleet planning activities.
essenger Loading Standards	<i>New provision</i> - guides the design and implementation of new Metro Rapid service.
imum Productivity Standard	Adjusted standards for bus service to reduce overcrowding.
Service Planning Guidelines	Went from a single measure to an index that uses three measures and specified an 18-month period for services to achieve necessary improvement or be programmed for cancellation.
vice Duplication	Expanded to include guidelines for frequency and span of service.
vice Design Criteria	<i>New provision</i> - improves operational efficiency and supports regional coordination efforts.
vice Frequency	New provision – expanded guidelines to include Metro Rapid.
vice Sector Governance Councils	Reduced maximum policy headway from 60 to 30 minutes, as resources permit.
	<i>New provision</i> - incorporates the role of the Service Sectors in the Metro Bus service change process.

TRANSIT SERVICE POLICY



Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority