

**GATEWAY CITES GOVERNANCE COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2004****SUBJECT: TRAIN DELAYS ALONG METRO BLUE LINE CORRIDOR****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****OVERVIEW**

Earlier this year the governance council directed staff to investigate the impact of the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) "switching" operations on MTA bus service. Specifically, staff was to identify the number and duration of train delays along the Metro Blue Line Corridor and to assess the impact those delays had on MTA bus service. Staff was also requested to investigate the legal basis for the UP operation. The following sections of this report address these issues.

**BACKGROUND**

The Union Pacific's main yard is located near the junction of Washington Blvd and Santa Fe Ave. The UP tracks south of the yard to the port of Los Angeles parallels the Metro Blue Line from about Washington Blvd to 103 rd St, a distance of about 5 miles. UP also operates another north-south track from the yard to the Port of Long Beach via Alameda St, located just east of the Metro Blue Line. The UP transports goods throughout the entire region by way of these two main freight corridors.

As part of its normal operation the UP regularly attaches numerous freight cars to an engine to form a train. Inherent in this process is the need to move freight cars from one area to another in order to assemble the train. The freight cars are routinely staged along side tracks and are moved to and from the main line as part of the assembly process. It is not uncommon for the fully assembled train to reach mile or more in length. During this process traffic on the affected east-west streets intersecting the Metro Blue Line and Alameda Corridors can grind to a standstill.

**NUMBER/DURATION OF TRAIN DELAYS**

The attached table shows the number of train delays that were documented between May and July of this year and its impact on affected MTA bus lines. A total of 27 train delays were recorded affecting eight bus lines during this three-month period. Line 105 was the most frequently impacted line with 11 incidents, followed by Line 611 with six incidents. Both lines operate along Vernon Ave. Line 108, operating along Slauson Ave, with three incidents. Similarly, Line 111 operating along Florence also had three incidents. The remaining bus lines impacted by the train delays all had one incident apiece. They included Lines 102 operating along Vernon Ave, Line 110 serving Gage Ave, Line 305 operating along 103rd St, and Line 612 serving Florence Ave. It is important to point out that all of these bus lines cross the railroad tracks at grade. The train delays recorded during the study period ranged from about 10 minutes in some cases to almost

four hours in one case. Detours were implemented for the longer delays in an attempt to restore service to the line. The median train delay for the study period was 39 minutes. Bus traffic along Vernon Ave was most affected primarily because of its close proximity to the railroad yard just north of there. The Gateway Cities Sector currently operates lines 102, 105, 611, and 612. The Westside-Central Sector operates line 305. The South Bay Sector operates both Lines 108 and 111.

### **FRIBERG V KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY**

Staff met with MTA's Chief Legal Council to determine whether MTA could seek judicial relief from these train delays through local, state or federal law. The findings are contained in the Federal Railway Safety Act of 1970 [49 U.S.C. 201001 et seq] and the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995 [49 U.S.C.10101]. In a case very similar to our situation, the United States Court of Appeals ruled that a Texas statute, which made it unlawful for a railroad train to block an intersection for longer than a prescribed, time period was invalid, since the Federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over railroad operations. The Court stated: "The language of the statute could not be more precise, and it is peradventure that regulation of (railroad) train operations, as well as the construction and operation of the (railroad) side tracks, is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the (Surface Transportation Board) unless some other provision in the ICCTA provides otherwise." [Friberg v. Kansas City Southern Railway Company 267 F.3d 439, 443 (5th Cir. 2001)]

### **ATTACHMENT**

#### A. Train Delays Along Metro Blue Line Corridor

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**ATTACHMENT A**

**TRAIN DELAYS ALONG METRO BLUE LINE CORRIDOR  
MAY THRU JULY 2004**

| <b>LINE</b> | <b>LINE NAME</b>  | <b>STREET IMPACTED</b> | <b>NUMBER OF TRAIN DELAYS</b> | <b>RANGE OF DELAY (minutes)</b> | <b>AVERAGE DELAY (median)</b> | <b>COMMENT</b>        |
|-------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 102         | East Jefferson Blvd - Coliseum                              | 38 <sup>th</sup> St    | 1                             | 0-10"                           | 10"                           | Gateway Cities Line   |
| 105         | Vernon Ave - La Cienega Blvd                                | Vernon Ave             | 11                            | 20-126"                         | 58"                           | Gateway Cities Line   |
| 108         | Slauson Ave   | Slauson Ave            | 3                             | 10-66"                          | 50"                           | South Bay Line        |
| 110         | Gage Ave - Centinela Ave - Fox Hills Mall                   | Gage Ave               | 1                             | 0-15"                           | 15"                           | South Bay Line        |
| 111         | LAX-Florence Ave - Leffingwell Road                         | Florence Ave           | 3                             | 12-48"                          | 31"                           | South Bay Line        |
| 305         | Crosstown Bus   | 103 <sup>rd</sup> St   | 1                             | 0-217"                          | 217"                          | Westside/Central Line |
| 611         | Huntington Park – Maywood – Bell - South Gate - Walnut Park | Vernon Ave             | 6                             | 32-71"                          | 43"                           | Gateway Cities Line   |
| 612         | Huntington Park - South Gate – Lynwood - Watts              | Florence Ave           | 1                             | 0-35"                           | 35"                           | Gateway Cities Line   |
|             |   | <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>27</b>                     | <b>0-217"</b>                   | <b>39"</b>                    |                       |