

DATE: MARCH 11, 2005

SUBJECT: FY 2006 SERVICE CHANGES

ACTION: APPROVE FINDINGS OF FEBRUARY 22, 2005 PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPT BUS SERVICE CHANGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN FISCAL YEAR 2006

RECOMMENDATION

A. Approve the findings of the February 22, 2005 Public Hearing as shown in Attachment A;

B. Adopt the following specific Metro South Bay bus service changes for implementation in Fiscal Year 2006 effective June 26, 2005 or later:

- Line 107 – defer reaffirmation of cancellation until the MTA Board considers a motion later this month regarding this line
- Line 115 (Manchester Av. - Firestone Bl.) – in Westchester, straighten the route on Manchester Av. between Loyola Bl. and Emerson Av. with exception of school trippers
- Line 202 (Willowbrook - Compton - Wilmington) – cancel midday service but continue to provide 30 minute peak period service between Rosa Parks Station and the Del Amo Blue Line Station
- Line 205 (Willowbrook – Harbor City – San Pedro) – no change, keep existing route in San Pedro with south terminal at 13th/Gaffey
- Lines 207/357 (Western Av. – 120th St.) – two recommendations: (1) interline some Line 207/357 trips with local Line 204 (Vermont Av.) to reduce service on Garfield Place; and (2) eliminate all service between Imperial/Western and the Harbor Green Line Station
- Line 211/215 (Prairie Av./Inglewood Av.) – cancel midday service, add service in the peak periods to provide 30 minute frequency
- Line 225/226 (Palos Verdes Peninsula) – transfer service operations to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority (PVPTA)
- Line 305 (Crosstown Bus) – continue to provide service 7 days a week but reduce service levels to 30-minute peak frequency and 40 to 60 minutes at other times.

- Line 357 (Western Av. Limited) – continue to operate service until December 2005 or later, then cancel with implementation of Western Metro Rapid (staff to return with an update prior to cancellation)
- Line 439 (L.A. – LAX – Redondo Beach Express) – no changes recommended until identification of adequate replacement service
- Line 442 (L.A. – Manchester Av. - Hawthorne Bl. Express) – continue to operate existing schedule and conduct marketing campaign to promote the service
- Line 711 (Florence Metro Rapid) -- extend service in December 2005 to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Transit Center via La Brea Av. and Century Bl. (staff to return with an update prior to implementation)
- Line 757 (Western Av. Rapid Bus) – implement December 2005 or later (staff to return with an update prior to implementation)

Attachment B includes estimated impacts to riders, revenue hours, and peak buses for those changes expected to be effective June 26, 2005.

ISSUE

In an effort to improve service and increase the number of riders using our services, Metro South Bay will continue to deploy buses to the areas where the greatest number of people travel. For the most part our service carries many riders, exhibiting an average productivity of 60 boardings per revenue service hour. Some of our most heavily used lines carry over 25,000 passengers per day, with productivity as high as 80 to 90 boardings per hour and excellent service frequencies of 3 to 5 minutes in peak hours (for example on Vermont and Western Avenues). From this perspective of productivity, we are one of the most successful providers of public transportation in the country.

On the other hand we do operate some low-performing lines. These lines generally carry fewer than 1,500 riders per day and attract 15 to 30 boardings per hour. Some of them are addressed in this report; others will need to be addressed in the future. At the February 22 public hearing many people spoke about their needs for public transportation and some cited the convenience of the existing route structure. We believe the staff recommendation draws a balance between reallocation of service to the heaviest bus lines and continuing to offer convenient transportation for existing customers.

OPTIONS

As options to the staff recommendation, the Governance Council may approve the bus service changes as originally proposed, or it may approve a subset of the staff recommendation. In addition staff offers the following alternatives for consideration:

- Line 107 – reaffirm cancellation of the line in June 2004 (not recommended due to MTA Board motion expected later this month)
- Line 115 – create a new branch Line 115A that would continue to operate the out-of-direction travel in Westchester (not recommended due to light ridership and the need to increase travel speeds)
- Line 202 – continue to operate midday service (not recommended due to light ridership, the availability of alternatives, and the need for corrective action to meet the transit performance index criteria)
- Line 205 – reroute to Harbor/Beacon Park-Ride lot (not recommended due to reduction in access to medical facilities)
- Line 207/357 – continue to provide service south of Imperial Highway to the Harbor Green Line Station until the City of L.A. implements the DASH West Watts (not recommended due to light ridership on this segment and the lack of assurance from the City to implement DASH)
- Line 207 – do not interline some trips with Line 204 and continue to turn around via Garfield Place (not recommended due to community concerns)
- Line 211/215 – continue to operate midday service (not recommended due to light ridership and the need for corrective action to meet the criteria of the transit performance index)
- Line 225/226 – continue to operate as a Metro service (not recommended as community-based operation by PVPTA will likely lead to better service and more riders on this line)
- Line 305 – continue to operate existing service levels (not recommended due to light ridership and the need for corrective action to meet the transit performance index criteria)
- Line 439 – eliminate service south of LAX and create new shuttle Line 639 to operate between Palos Verdes Drive/Via Valencia and the Aviation Green Line Station (not recommended due to increase in costs and the potential future expansion by Beach Cities Transit into this corridor south of LAX)
- Line 442 – cancel service (not recommended as we intend to market the line to increase ridership, then re-evaluate)
- Line 711 – extend route in June 2005 rather than December 2005 (not recommended due to reconstruction of La Brea Av. within the City of Inglewood)

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Metro South Bay has a fiduciary responsibility to provide cost-effective public transportation services. The bus lines recommended for rerouting or schedule changes, if approved by the Council, will result in a reallocation of resources to areas with more riders and lower subsidies. The areas with the most number of riders typically exhibit a subsidy per boarding of 50 cents to \$1 compared to the average \$1.22 subsidy per boarding on all Metro local bus lines.

For example, Line 202 has on average only 5 to 6 passengers on-board the bus at any given time, Line 211/215 has just 7 passengers on-board and Line 305 has 11. These light passenger loads lead to high subsidies on these lines, respectively \$4.20 per boarding on Line 202, \$3.63 on Line 211/215, and \$4.08 on Line 305. These subsidies are all three to four times higher than the \$1.22 Metro local bus average. By reallocating some of the service hours on these lightly used lines to areas with higher demand, Metro South Bay will potentially decrease the average subsidy per boarding and carry more riders for the same operating cost.

DISCUSSION

We carefully considered the public's input on proposed service changes. There were some excellent suggestions, and we will consider them now and in the future as we continue to look for opportunities to improve service.

There was some opposition to the original service change proposals. As a result, our recommendation withdraws some of the original proposals for cancellation. The withdrawn proposals include: Line 205 reroute in San Pedro, Line 305 cancel weekend service, Line 439 cancel service south of LAX, and Line 442 cancel all service. Instead of implementing the original proposals, staff now recommends these services continue to operate.

The MTA Board adopted revised Transit Service Policies in January 2005. As a result, we recommend additional peak period service on Lines 211/215 (Prairie Av./Inglewood Av.) to comply with the requirement for 30-minute peak headways on the trunk portion of the route. Line 202 (Willowbrook-Compton-Wilmington) and Line 305 (Crosstown) will also provide 30-minute peak service. However, the staff recommendation if adopted will lead to the cancellation of midday service on Line 202 and Lines 211/215. We recommend these reductions because these services do not meet the criteria of the transit performance index. Under the Transit Service Policies, we have 18 months to implement corrective actions to a line that does not meet the criteria. One of the main corrective action tools available to improve the performance is to cancel periods of service with light ridership, such as midday from 9 AM to 3 PM. As riders previously on the bus in the midday will now ride in the peak, performance of the line should improve.

Public Outreach Process

Our primary channels of communication to the public were print ads and “take-one” brochures aboard the buses. Metro placed the public hearing notice in the Daily Breeze on Sunday, January 23, 2005. The notice also ran in the Long Beach Press Telegram, Los Angeles WAVE, L.A. Independent, Carson Courier, Chinese Daily News, Korea Times, La Opinion, Rafu Shimpo, L.A. Sentinel, and L.A. Watts Times. In addition the public hearing was advertised in the ongoing print campaign -- Metro Briefs -- seen in the Daily Breeze and other South Bay newspapers such as the Beach Reporter. In mid-February about one week prior to the hearing, all South Bay buses and First Transit buses had “take one” brochures on-board to inform riders of the proposed changes and to encourage public comment.

About eighty people attended the February 22 public hearing at the Carson Community Center. We listened to 50 individuals who provided public comment. Over 100 people also provided written comments regarding the proposals. The proposal to cancel a segment of Line 439 drew the most public input, followed by Line 107 and Line 442.

NEXT STEPS

With approval from the Sector Governance Council, staff will implement changes to our directly operated service on Lines 115, 202, 207/357, 211/215, and 305. Additionally we will move forward with the transfer of Lines 225/226 for operation by PVPTA. Staff will report back regarding Lines 107, 357, 711 and 757.

Attachment A: Findings of February 22, 2005 Public Hearing

Attachment B: Estimated Impacts from Recommended Changes

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ATTACHMENT A: FINDINGS FROM FEBRUARY 22, 2005 PUBLIC HEARING

Line 115	Straightline Route in Westchester via Manchester Ave.
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Public Comment:

Four people commented on this proposal, all expressing opposition to the proposal. One suggested a Community DASH or privately operated shuttle should operate from Sepulveda Bl. to retain service to Loyola Marymount University (LMU). Another suggested we create a branch for some trips called Line 115A to serve the existing route while Line 115 would be through-routed.

Staff Response:

Staff recommends elimination of the out-of-direction segment, which causes a 5-minute delay in each direction for through passengers. We can attract more riders with faster service.

Most passengers riding Line 115 in Westchester do not board or alight the bus in this segment, and those who do are primarily students at Wright Junior High School, a destination we will continue to serve. The bus stop closest to the LMU campus at 80th/Loyola serves 15 boardings and 23 alightings per day. These individuals will still have access to Line 115 within 0.4 miles. Additionally, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus #3 serves the main entrance to LMU on Lincoln Bl.

Line 202	Cancel midday service, continue to provide 30" peak frequency on trunk
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Public Comment:

We received nine comments, one in support of the staff proposal and 8 against. Most of the opposition cited issues of access to the Metro Blue Line, Compton College, Compton Courthouse, and Department of Public and Social Services (DPSS) facilities.

Staff Response:

Line 202 is a lightly used line that parallels the Metro Blue Line. The trunk of the line operates every 30 minutes between Rosa Parks Station and Del Amo Station, while the segment south of Del Amo to Wilmington operates every 60 minutes. Both segments will continue to operate in the peak periods only. In the midday when Line 202 would not operate under the staff proposal, there are various alternatives available that will continue to provide access including service provided by the Compton Renaissance transit system. In addition, Lines 130, 260/361, and Long Beach Transit serve Compton College. Some individuals may have longer walks and additional transfers; however, the fiduciary responsibility to reduce the subsidy per boarding on Line 202 overrides convenience for the few riders impacted.

Lines 205 In San Pedro, reroute from 7th/Pacific to Harbor-Beacon Park-Ride lot.

Public Comment:

Four persons expressed support for the staff proposal while 8 opposed. Those in support cited empty buses, noise, and community impacts. Those opposed thought that Line 205, subject to a previous route change in October 2004, should not be changed again so soon after the previous change. Also we received a letter from the Little Company of Mary San Pedro Hospital Administrator concerned about a reduction in access to health and medical facilities.

Staff Response:

Access to health care is a very legitimate issue. Staff withdraws the original proposal to reroute until such time as a suitable replacement service can be identified to retain service to the Hospital on 7th St. We will keep in mind the concerns of the non-riding residents on 13th St. and on Weymouth Av., and we will continue to work with LADOT and others to identify replacement service.

Line 207/357 Eliminate route segment from Imperial/Western to Harbor Green Line Station

Public Comment:

We received one comment in favor of the proposal on the condition that a shuttle be implemented to serve 120th St. Three comments opposed the proposal, citing reductions in access to the Green Line, the Harbor Transitway, and L.A. Southwest College.

Staff Response:

Service on this segment of Line 207/357 operates once an hour. The proposed DASH West Watts if implemented by LADOT would provide improved service levels – typically DASH operates every 20 minutes. Until DASH implements this new route, the riders of Line 207/357 will still have east-west service provided by Line 120 (Imperial Hwy.) and by Line 124 (El Segundo Bl.). Both routes parallel 120th St. just 0.5 miles to the north and south respectively. Line 120 also provides service to the Green Line and to L.A. Southwest College.

Line 211/215 Cancel midday service, improve peak frequencies to 30 minutes

Public Comment:

Only three comments referenced this proposal, all opposed to a reduction in service. Some offered ideas to restructure the line, including an extension to Florence Av. or 54th/Crenshaw. One comment also pointed out that Line 211 on Prairie Av. serves the Hollywood Park complex.

Staff Response

The staff recommendation would eliminate midday service but enhance service levels in the peak periods such that 30 minute service could be provided consistent with the MTA Board adopted Transit Service Policies. We believe that these changes will improve cost-effectiveness and decrease the high subsidy per boarding on Line 211/215. The improved headways in peak hours should attract new riders. During the midday, riders will still have frequent service on Hawthorne Bl. approximately 0.5 miles from the routes of Line 211/215. Hollywood Park will continue to be served by additional racetrack service from Line 40 (Hawthorne Bl.) and from the regular service of Line 117 (Century Bl.).

Line 225/226 Transfer Service Operations to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority

Public Comment:

Five supported the proposal and five opposed the transfer of operations to a community-based operator, the Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority (PVPTA). The opposing comments focused on the potentially higher cash fare (\$2) charged by PVPTA and also on the lack of fare integration (PVPTA does not accept Metro passes). Another concern is continued access to San Pedro and the medical facilities near the terminal at 8th/Averill.

Staff Response:

A representative from PVPTA spoke at the public hearing and referenced the need to attract new riders to these lines, which only carry about 120 riders per day. The representative stated that PVPTA would consider a fare structure to promote greater use. We believe this indicates a willingness of the PVPTA to consider charging a lower cash fare (lower than \$2) and perhaps also accepting the EZ Pass. In addition, an interagency transfer agreement exists between Metro and PVPTA and this will minimize the impact on cash-paying customers.

We will continue to work with PVPTA to improve regional coordination, and we will be involved in negotiating the final terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PVPTA and MTA. Presently the draft MOU calls for PVPTA to consult with South Bay on route changes or whenever service levels would change by 10% or more.

Line 305	Cancel weekend service and reduce weekday frequencies
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Public Comment:

Three comments opposed the original proposal; none supported it. One comment suggested we could attract more riders by rerouting Line 305 to streets with Metro Rapid bus stops, such as Crenshaw, Vernon, or Florence.

Staff Response:

The original proposal had a large ridership impact, over 500,000 annual passengers. As a result of our review in which we noted higher weekend ridership than anticipated, staff withdraws the original proposal to cancel weekend service. The recommendation now calls for service 7 days a week, albeit with reduced headways. Instead of every 20 minutes in the peaks and 30 minutes at other times, we propose Line 305 now operate with 30 minute peak period frequencies and 40 to 60 minutes at other times. Line 305 is not a Metro Rapid bus and therefore it could not serve Metro Rapid stops. We will continue to monitor this line and look for opportunities for improvement.

Line 439	Cancel route segment south of LAX Transit Center
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Public Comment:

Public input overwhelmingly opposed the elimination of Line 439 south of LAX. Ninety-five comments opposed the original proposal to cancel while only two comments supported it. Many El Segundo residents, including the Mayor, attended the public hearing and/or submitted written comments. Many were concerned about isolation of seniors and persons with disabilities and wanted regional connections maintained. Some suggested that operation of smaller buses on this line would be an improvement.

Staff Response

Staff now proposes to leave the service intact. We are not recommending any changes at this time. However, this is a long line and service reliability will continue to be an issue. We believe that a community-based operator with smaller buses could provide better service on the segment south of LAX, and grow the ridership. We will continue to work with other providers to identify replacement service for Line 439.

Line 442	Cancel service
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Public Comment:

One person supported cancellation while 13 comments opposed the original staff proposal to cancel service. The convenience of a one-seat ride between the South Bay and downtown Los Angeles makes this a popular service among its regular riders. We also received anecdotal information that more riders now use this line since the cancellation of Line 340 in December 2004.

Staff Response:

We withdraw our proposal to cancel all service. We will operate the existing schedule of Line 442, and will work with the Communications Department to initiate a targeted marketing campaign to gain new riders. This line will then be evaluated to see if the ridership continues to grow.