



**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 20, 2005**

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON BUS SERVICE RESTRUCTURING EFFORT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file a report on the status of the countywide bus service restructuring effort known as Metro Connections, which includes identification of a Regional Service Plan and related Service Strategies.

ISSUE

This report is intended to provide the Board with an update on project efforts related to the Metro Connections bus service restructuring. It is anticipated that this effort will result in the implementation of an initial phase of restructured bus service during FY 06.

BACKGROUND

Last fall, Metro and the region's service providers initiated a countywide effort to develop a long-term strategy for the provision of bus service. A comprehensive restructuring of countywide bus service was last undertaken in 1980, and while incremental service changes have been implemented to upgrade service, they have not fully addressed the significant changes in the region and the resulting impact on transit needs. In addition to addressing existing transit needs, this restructuring effort provides the region with the opportunity to assess and plan for future transit needs in order to improve mobility, support economic development opportunities, maintain air quality improvements and enhance the quality of life for all residents, while effectively and efficiently deploying the County's transit resources. Metro Connections is focused on developing a transit strategy to best serve Los Angeles County in 2010.

SERVICE CONCEPT

The intent of Metro Connections bus service restructuring effort is to move the region's predominately Downtown Los Angeles-focused grid system to a hybrid grid and center-based bus service delivery, which will better reflect the region's multiple activity centers and destinations. In addition, restructuring seeks to more effectively utilize and integrate the

varied strengths of each of the region's more than 80 service providers. This service delivery concept will use a network of community transit centers as the focal points of the regional transit system that will be connected by major travel corridors with transit speed and reliability improvements. Service attributes will include:

- Faster, high-speed, point-to-point destination-based service
- Increased use of the region's high-capacity, high-speed rail and transitway system
- Improved regional service coverage and connectivity
- Upgraded inter-community and local service
- Coordinated, convenient connections between services
- Provision of physical customer improvements designed to enhance the quality and convenience of the travel experience
- Creation of a hierarchy of four community transit center types each with its own mix of transit services, level of operational complexity, customer services and amenities, and fit with community goals and plans. These community-based transit centers will be designed to serve as entry points to the region's transit system and to each community.
- We will continue our effort to gain efficiencies by improving scheduling techniques, vehicle assignments and facility locations.

Project Plan

A four-phased bus service restructuring effort was initiated in the fall of 2003, with the first phase of restructured service anticipated to be implemented during FY 2006. The restructuring effort consists of the following four major activities:

- Phase 1 – Assess Needs
- Phase 2 – Develop Alternative Strategies
- Phase 3 – Identify Detailed Implementation Plans
- Phase 4 – Implement Service

The first study phase focused on identifying current and future transit service needs through outreach to the region's many stakeholders. This effort was completed in January 2004, and an overview of those initial outreach results was presented to the Board in February and June 2004. Resulting work products included identification of a list of key stakeholders, a summary of stakeholder and community comments, formation of regional working groups and compilation of historical demand and supply information. On-going stakeholder involvement is described below.

In the second phase, Development of Alternative Strategies efforts were divided into two tasks: 1) identification of community transit centers and travel corridors based on current and future information and analysis; and 2) utilization of the resulting technical information, along with stakeholder comments, to develop proposed Service Strategies intended to guide development of the Regional Service Plan during phase three. Both efforts have been completed and the results presented for review and comment through outreach to the subregional Councils of Government, Sector Service Governance Councils and study-related stakeholder working groups. Resulting work products included a list of

proposed Regional and Subregional Centers, draft Service Strategies, a redefined list of Tier 1 Services to fit with the identified centers, and a framework of transit strategies to meet varied service needs. The list of Regional and Subregional Centers and draft Service Strategies are included as Attachments A and B.

Phase 3 efforts, focusing on the development of bus service and capital plans, have been initiated. The major focus will be to establish the basic route structure connecting the regional and subregional centers along the identified travel corridors. Service network work is based on following parameters:

- Improve travel speeds
- Utilize resources more effectively
- Use market development capabilities for new service types
- Modify service within Downtown Los Angeles
- Maintain Consent Decree compliance
- Identify needed speed and reliability improvements.

In a parallel effort, development of inter-community and local service plans has been initiated through the sector-based Service Provider Working Groups, which have been formed to closely coordinate current and future service provision among the region's service providers. Phase 3 efforts are scheduled to be completed by December 2005. Products will include a Regional Service Plan, Downtown Los Angeles Service Concept, detailed recommendations to restructure Tier I Services, along with a detailed identification of resource requirements, and a capital plan with funding strategies.

Phase 4 implementation efforts have been initiated with demonstration projects to test the Metro Connections point-to-point service concept. Two of the efforts include the successful Express Line 450x now operated by the South Bay Sector and the new 577 service to be operated between El Monte and Norwalk by the Gateway Cities Sector starting in December 2005.

Outreach Efforts

All efforts undertaken by this restructuring process have been and will continue to be based on extensive, on-going stakeholder involvement. To date more than 180 outreach efforts have been conducted with elected officials, legislative briefings, Subregional groups (Councils of Governments), City Council commissions and staffs, City of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Groups as well as individual Neighborhood Councils or Council Committees, Metro Service Sector Governance Councils, Metro Advisory Committees, business organizations, employee transportation coordinators, unions, service provider groups and stakeholder organizations.

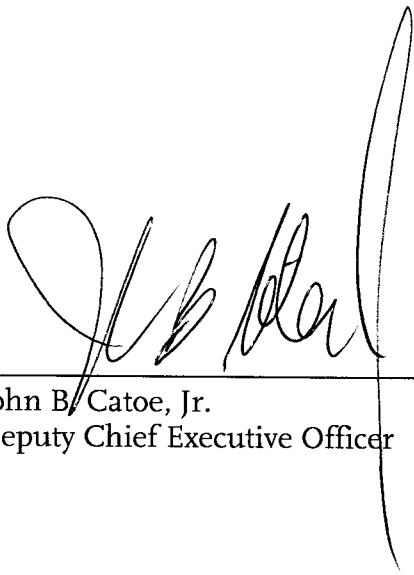
NEXT STEPS

Phase three efforts will be completed by December 2005 and staff will return to the Board in early 2006 with a proposed Regional Service Plan along with related Capital, Funding and Management strategies for review and comment.

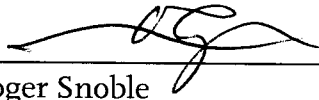
ATTACHMENTS

- A. List of Regional and Subregional Centers
- B. Draft Service Strategies

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LIST OF REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL CENTERS

Regional

Burbank
 East Los Angeles – Atlantic/Pomona
 El Monte
 Glendale
 Hollywood
 Huntington Park/Vernon
 LAX/Aviation
 Long Beach (Downtown)
 Mid-Wilshire – Wilshire/Vermont
 Norwalk – Green Line/I-605
 North Hollywood
 Pasadena (Downtown)
 Santa Monica
 South Bay
 Union Station
 Warner Center
 West LA/La Cienega
 Westwood/UCLA

Subregional

7th/Metro Center
 Alhambra
 Artesia (Blue Line)
 Bell Gardens/Downey
 Beverly Hills/Century City
 Carson/Artesia Transit Center
 Cerritos
 Claremont
 Covina/Glendora
 Crenshaw District
 Culver City (interim)
 East Pasadena – Sierra Madre Villa
 Fox Hills Mall
 Imperial/Wilmington
 Industry or Puente Hills Mall
 Inglewood
 Koreatown – Wilshire/Western (interim)
 Lakewood
 Manchester – Florence/Vermont
 Mid-Cities – Pico/Rimpau
 Monrovia
 Northeast Valley (Sylmar/San Fernando)
 Pomona (Downtown)
 San Pedro/Harbor
 USC/Exposition/Harbor Transitway
 Van Nuys
 Whittier

METRO CONNECTIONS SERVICE STRATEGIES

Service Concept

The intent of the bus service restructuring effort is to move the region's predominantly Downtown Los Angeles-focused grid system to a center and corridor bus service delivery, which will better reflect the region's multiple activity centers and destinations. In addition, restructuring seeks to more effectively utilize and integrate the varied strengths of each of the region's more than 80 service providers. This service delivery concept will use a network of community transit centers as the focal points of the regional transit system that will be connected by major travel corridors with transit speed and reliability improvements. Service attributes will include:

- Faster, high-speed, point-to-point destination-based service
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Plan Goals

The following goals have been identified through customer, stakeholder, Sector Governance Council and Board member input, along with a review of current system performance. The four goals represent desired outcomes of the restructuring efforts and are intended to guide development and implementation of future bus service strategies.

1. Improve Service Quality

Better serve current customers, while creating opportunities to attract new riders, through improved service convenience and desirability. Service quality improvement strategies include: enhanced regional and service connectivity, increased frequency (i.e., reduced travel times), improved reliability and service experience.

2. Increase Regional Mobility

Provide improved and new services to better address the county's growing travel needs and changing travel patterns. Broaden travel choices to meet future mobility needs of residents and businesses, including a forecast increasingly younger and older population. Provide faster and easier access to a broader range of regional travel destinations using public transportation.

3. Expand Market Share

Provide service and capital improvements to ensure transit is seen as an increasingly attractive alternative in meeting the region's growing travel needs. Increasing public transportation's market share assists in improving mobility, supporting economic development opportunities, improving air quality, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

4. Identify more effective deployment of resources

Improve service efficiency to enhance productivity, best deploy constrained resources and provide resources for new services to better serve the region's travel needs. Resource deployment strategies include eliminating service duplication, identifying the most appropriate operator to provide service, matching service capacity with demand, and maximizing the use of capacity available in the Metro Rail and transitway system.

Overview of Service Strategies

The following strategies have been identified to achieve the goals identified for the regional bus service restructuring effort. These strategies will be used to guide development and implementation of the resulting service and capital plans, ensuring that the plans meet the needs of customers and the communities that they are intended to serve, and providing standards against which the plan's success will be measured. The strategies fall into six major areas: Service, Customers and Community, Capital, Implementation, Funding and Management.

Service Strategies

Overall System

Develop a comprehensive and coordinated regional transit system that reflects and best serves the region's multi-community structure.

Integrate Rail and Bus Services

Integrate the region's rail and bus services to provide customers with a seamless travel experience by providing convenient connections with coordinated service schedules and real-time travel information along with improved pedestrian linkages and wayfinding signage between services.

Discontinue bus service that duplicates rail service, and use the resources to deploy feeder service that supports higher use of the region's high-speed, high-capacity Metro Rail and Rapid systems.

Provide Complete Family of Services

Develop a countywide bus network incorporating and coordinating Regional, Intercommunity and Local services operated by the region's service providers. This network will provide new types of services to broaden choices for travelers.

- Provide improved regional service coverage and connectivity through operation of an interconnected network of high-speed, point-to-point Regional Service.
- Develop an integrated system of Intercommunity and Local bus services, connecting to the Regional Service network, to best serve the full range of community travel needs.
- Provide improved community circulator, pedestrian and bicycle access to the system to support transit ridership and enhance the quality of life in the county's communities.

Partner with Other Service Partners

Ensure the participation of all of the region's service providers in developing a coordinated, convenient network addressing the full range of service needs, and to the extent possible eliminating duplication of service between operators.

- Partner with the county's other transit operators to ensure that the most appropriate and effective service provider operates each type of service to match capacity and demand.
- Partner with the county's cities who provide community-based local and demand responsive service to ensure coordinated, convenient connections between the regional and community-based service system.
- Partner with adjacent county transit operators and Metrolink to ensure county-to-county connections are made to best serve Los Angeles County residents, employees and visitors.

Define Metro's Service Niche

Redefine Metro's bus service niche to focus on what we do well and effectively, while allowing the region's other service providers to do what they do best. Metro's service niche is best described as providing high capacity regional and subregional connections on heavily traveled corridors.

Improve Service Efficiency

Improve service efficiency to enhance productivity, best deploy constrained resources and provide additional resources for new services to better serve the region's growing and changing travel needs.

Improve Customer Service Implement service strategies to provide enhanced customer service and experience through actions including, but not limited to, the following:

- Improve service reliability.
- Improve travel speeds and reduce travel times.
- Improve service frequencies to create and serve demand on a core network of Regional and Intercommunity routes.
- Improve system utilization through service increases and predictable service headways.
- Mitigate transfers between services.
- Use the vehicle type and size most appropriate to service and community needs.
- Deploy commensurate field supervision to ensure delivery of recommended service improvements.

Customer and Community Strategies

**Communicate with/
involve our customers**

Understand and meet customer and community service needs. Communicate with and involve our customers and the public throughout the planning and implementation of a new regional bus system.

- Facilitate customer and public understanding of the new system through timely, clear and effective communication methods.
- Phase in plans to reduce confusion and disruption to customers.
- Develop strategies to market new services and related capital improvements.
- Monitor and respond to customer comments as new services are implemented. Identify and implement changes to meet concerns and continually improve service.
- Broaden methods for the public to obtain service information including: providing 24/7 availability of service information through voice-activated service information; encouraging information access through the use of cell phones, PDAs and future technological tools; and installation of service kiosks at major transit centers.

Provide Customer Improvements

Provide customers with operational improvements to facilitate and enhance service delivery:

- Develop a regional plan for coordinating fare pricing, media and collection to provide customers with seamless travel.
- Expedite passenger loading/unloading through off-bus fare collection.
- Use new vehicle types for customer comfort and ease of access.
- Provide customers with service information, including real-time bus arrival information, at Regional and Subregional centers, and at major on-street transfer points.
- Develop a systemwide operator training program to provide friendly, customer-focused service.
- Identify and implement bus speed and reliability improvements.

Provide customers with an improved, enhanced travel environment in recognition that every bus and bus stop represents the importance placed on transit by the region and each service provider:

- Implement projects designed to enhance the travel experience of customers.
- Provide a high level of safety, security and cleanliness on vehicles and at customer facilities.
- Upgrade transit stations and stops with customer-related improvements and amenities.
- Provide clear, consistent signage with needed travel information.
- Provide real time bus arrival information at major travel points.

Ensure Community Fit

Ensure the fit of physical improvements with local plans.

Develop strategies to encourage transit-oriented development at the community transit centers and along major travel corridors, while ensuring the fit of the development with each community's vision and land use plans.

Facilitate transit access

Improve transit system access by enhancing all aspects of the customer transit experience:

- Facilitate ease of community access via walking, bicycling and shuttle service.

- Provide transit-related parking facilities at Regional and key Subregional centers to encourage system utilization.
- Ensure Metro’s joint development and other capital projects are designed to maintain and facilitate customer circulation and access.
- Develop a strategy that encourages increasing utilization of transit system by the region’s growing senior citizen population.

Capital Strategies

Develop Capital Plan

Develop and implement a capital improvement program that is integrated with the planned service improvements and reflects the program investments listed below. Ensure compatibility of capital improvement program plans with other Metro plans and programs as well as local general and land use plans.

Ten-Year Capital Improvement Plan	
Program Category	Proposed Investment (Millions)
Transit Centers and Customer Service Improvements	\$175.7
Transit Speed, Safety and Reliability Improvements	
Transit Fleet Procurement/Upgrades	
Other Infrastructure and System Support Programs	
TOTAL 2006-2015 Capital Investment	

Create transit centers

Develop a series of community-supportive transit centers at key locations throughout the system designed to enhance customer comfort and convenience. A general description of each of the four types of community centers is presented in Appendix xx. Center improvements will vary by location depending on service and community needs. Off-street transit center development will be focused at the Regional and Subregional Center locations.

Provide customer Improvements and Amenities

Provide customer improvements throughout the system and at major on-street stops, including enhanced transit information and passenger amenities, along with improved lighting, cleanliness and security.

Provide speed and Reliability Improvements

Develop a regional system of bus speed and reliability improvements including freeway high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, dedicated arterial lanes (all-day or peak period only), signal priority and signal synchronization.

Develop strategies to serve high demand corridors including the use of speed and reliability improvements, articulated buses and expedited boarding through off-vehicle fare collection.

Implementation Strategies

Prepare I Implementation

Develop a phased, flexible implementation program integrating the identified service and capital improvements.

- Identify phased plans to reflect service priorities and funding availability, and to reduce customer disruption. Implement new service investments and associated changes over the next three years starting with the December 2005 service change.
- Reflect and ensure the fit of the bus capital implementation program with other Metro plans and programs.
- Work closely with the region's other operators, local jurisdictions, subregional groups and private developers to ensure the program's fit with local plans and needs.

Develop support

Involve our customers, other operators, sector councils, local jurisdictions, subregional groups and the public in a community-based planning process in developing and securing support for service and capital project implementation plans.

Coordinate service and capital project implementation plans with the region's other service operators.

Monitor the Implementation plan

Provide the Board with annual plan updates identifying the service and capital improvements that have been completed, the plan's progress in meeting adopted performance goals, and the improvements that will be completed during the next fiscal year along with identified funding sources. The annual update will include an identification of improvements that could be made should additional funding become available, including definition of strategies to secure required project funding.

Funding Strategies

Prepare Funding strategies:

Develop a phased, flexible funding plan reflecting the following Plan

- Be smart and effective with existing resources
- Build partnerships to leverage other sources of funding
- Be proactive in securing new funding

Provide the Board with a phased plan identifying what service and capital improvements can be completed with available funding, and what improvements could be made should additional funding become available. Identify opportunities and strategies to secure additional resources.

- Reflect local and regional funding plans. Identify opportunities to develop partnerships and leverage funding and/or investment from other sources.
- Work with communities, employers, the region's transit agencies and private sector to expand resources and support for transit services and capital facilities, including passenger amenities and incentive programs.
- Pursue financial or in-kind partnerships and economic development opportunities with communities, local jurisdictions, subregional groups, private developers in the design and implementation of the Service and Capital Plans.
- Pursue a combination of farebox, service fare restructuring and other sources of revenue to maintain a systemwide operating revenue to operating expense ratio of at least 30 percent.
- Pursue grants to fund service and capital projects that are identified in the Service and Capital Plans. Give highest emphasis to those projects for which partnership opportunities are available.
- Reevaluate current regional funding programs and develop recommendations to secure project funding.

Management Strategies

Develop performance measures

Define clear measures, targets and timeframes for measuring success in meeting the objectives of the Restructuring Plan. Evaluate the plan's progress and report to the Board with an

annual update. Performance measures will relate to the project goals and may include the following measures:

1. Improve Service Quality
 - Customer satisfaction
 - On-time performance
2. Increase Regional Mobility
 - System ridership
 - Reduced travel times on key trips
 - Transit centers implemented
3. Expand Market Share
 - Transit home-to-work trip mode share
 - Transit center area transit mode share
4. Identify more effective deployment of resources
 - Seat utilization
 - Boardings per revenue hour
 - Farebox recovery
 - Annual operating cost per passenger
 - Route productivity index

Identify how the performance information will be collected, including the documentation and distribution process. Identify process for discontinuing and reinvesting services that are not successful.

Revise Metro Policies

Revise Metro service guidelines as necessary to reflect adopted performance measures and targets.

Monitor Service Performance

As part of the annual plan update provided to the Board, identify how the new service and capital implementation efforts are meeting the identified performance measures and targets. Identify recommended strategies to improve performance as necessary.