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GATEWAY CITIES GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

March 8, 2007

SUBJECT: PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO GATEWAY CITIES BUS LINES

**ACTION: APPROVE FINDINGS OF FEBRUARY 8, 2007 PUBLIC HEARING AND
ADOPT REVISED SERVICE PROGRAM FOR JUNE 2007**

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Approve results of Public Hearing held on Thursday, February 8, 2007 for service changes proposed to become effective June 2007 or later (Attachment B);
- B. Approve Part 1 of the Revised Service Program and the Estimated Passenger Impact Statement as outlined in this report (Attachment C);
- C. Support current staff proposals affecting bus lines managed by the South Bay and San Gabriel Valley Sector Governance Councils, as outlined in Part 2 and 3 of the Revised Service Plan (Attachment C).

ISSUE

The service changes under consideration are considered to be major modifications based on federal public hearing guidelines and MTA policy. As such, the Governance Council is required to conduct a public hearing, and to solicit and consider public input before these changes can be implemented.

The Governance Council is also required to consider the possible impacts from these proposals before approving them. Staff has prepared the necessary documentation in the report to satisfy this regulatory requirement.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Two alternative strategies were developed for the Governance Council to consider in lieu of approving staff's Revised Service Program. They include:

- 1) Maintain the status quo and do nothing; or
- 2) Adopt a different subset of the service proposals.

Staff does not recommend either alternative since the recommended service program is designed to improve efficiency, remove poor productivity service, and achieve the projected operating budget for Fiscal Year 2008. Therefore, should the Governance Council reject all or part of the staff recommendation, some planned improvements may need to be deferred or withdrawn altogether in order to ensure a balanced budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Should that happen, staff will return to the Governance Council in April with a full report on the impacts to service required to achieve a balanced budget.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Revised Service Program can be implemented without increasing Metro's operating budget.

BACKGROUND

Last month Metro's Service Sector Governance Councils conducted separate public hearings within each of their respective jurisdictions to receive input from the community on proposed major changes to bus service system wide effective June 2007 or later. A total of 31 existing bus lines are potentially affected by having their routes, schedules and/or stops modified to make them more effective. In addition, six new services are proposed to be established, and 15 lines cancelled. Collectively, the specific lines, and the proposed changes to them, are outlined in the attached Public Hearing Notice (Attachment A).

Legal notice of these hearings was first published in the Los Angeles Times on Sunday, January 7, 2007. Additional notice was subsequently published in other local, regional and foreign language newspapers system-wide. About 130,000 rider notices were distributed on the buses, trains and at customer service outlets informing riders of the changes under consideration. This information was also posted on MTA's main website and each sector website.

At the hearings the public was invited to comment on any proposal under consideration regardless of the service sector that proposed the change. It was noted that all testimony received at these hearings would be forwarded to the respective sector Governance Council that manages the line, and that the comments would be taken into consideration by them as part of their final deliberations.

The Gateway Cities Governance Council conducted its public hearing on Thursday, February 8, at 5 pm. The hearing was held at, The Gas Company, located in the City of Downey. Altogether, seven bus lines currently managed by the Gateway Cities Sector are proposed to undergo major route and/or schedule changes in June of this year. Of this total, four lines (Lines 60, 254, 265 and 577X) are proposed to be restructured to make them more effective. Three additional services (Lines 65, 275 and 360) are proposed to be cancelled due to excessive service duplication and/or low performance. One new service, Rapid Bus Line 760, is also proposed to be established.

In addition to the Gateway Cities proposals, both the San Gabriel Valley and South Bay Sectors are proposing changes to four bus lines they operate in the Gateway Cities area. The South Bay Sector, for example, proposes to make permanent the extension of Line 121 and the transfer of that line to the Gateway Cities Sector. This change, as the Council will recall, was implemented last December in the Whittier area on an experimental basis. This sector also proposes to cancel Line 622, which operates between the Norwalk and the El Segundo areas during the late evening hours when the Metro Green Line is not running.

The San Gabriel Valley Sector proposes to shorten the route of Line 260 in the Long Beach area to avoid duplication with other bus lines serving the Artesia Metro Blue Line Station. They also propose to shorten the route of Rapid Bus Line 751 to reduce potential duplication with Line 760, the new rapid service proposed by the Gateway Sector.

The following sections of this report summarize the written and verbal testimony received by the public on these matters through the close of the public record, February 14, 2007. Staff has responded to each issue, and has recommended modifications to several proposals based on public input and other considerations. Details of the public comment along with staff's response are included in Attachment B.

- Attachment C outlines the Revised Service Plan that resulted from the public review process. It also includes potential impact riders may experience from the service modifications recommended in the Revised Service Plan.
- Attachment D contains maps of the affected bus lines.

RESULTS OF FEBRUARY 2007 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Summary of Public Comment

About 40 members of the public attended the February 8, public hearing in the Gateway Cities Sector. Of this total, 19 persons provided oral testimony directly to the Governance Council on matters of concern to them. In addition to the oral testimony received at the hearing, 42 additional persons submitted written statements commenting on the proposed service changes. Included with the written material were three petitions representing the viewpoints of 552 customers. Collectively, the total written and verbal testimony received from the public generated 117 comments on the service changes under consideration for this June.

Line 275

Thirty-nine comments, including one petition with 152 signatures, were received from the public concerning Line 275, which is proposed to be cancelled. Almost all of these respondents opposed the cancellation of this line and wanted MTA to keep it. Their primary concern was the lack of alternative service, without which many could not access their schools, jobs, shopping areas, etc. A representative from Norwalk Transit System (NTS) testified that NTS is interested in assuming service on this line should MTA cancel it. Norwalk Line 8 was mentioned as a candidate line to be modified to operate over the discontinued route of Line 275. The line would also serve the Metrolink Station in Norwalk. NTS currently operates some shuttle service over a portion of the existing Line 275 route

Line 577X

Seventeen customers commented on the proposed changes to Line 577X. About half of these supported the proposed route extension to the Long Beach Mall. In addition, roughly an equal number requested that the schedule change under consideration for this line be modified to keep night service until 10 pm, and to not reduce base and peak service.

Line 65

Thirteen respondents commented on Line 65. Four respondents supported the staff proposal including Montebello Bus Lines (MBL), which currently operates in the same corridor, and stated its written intention to continue operating the western segment of the route on weekdays and Saturday should MTA cancel the line. Six other respondents opposed the change stating concerns about having to transfer to another line, pay additional fares, and face added travel time.

Line 265

Twelve responses were received on Line 265. Two of these comments were petitions representing the views of about 400 persons. Virtually all of the comment was opposed to the staff proposal to shorten the route. They expressed concern about lack of direct replacement service from Montebello, and the added buses and transfers that would be needed to complete their travel.

Lines 60/360/760

Collectively, the staff proposal to create new Rapid Bus Line 760 by restructuring local/limited-stop Lines 60-360 generated 32 comments. Six of these comments supported the staff proposal including Long Beach Transit (LBT), which indicated its intention to assume the discontinued segment of Line 60/360 south of Artesia Blvd. LBT already provides service in this corridor and is planning to ramp-up service on LBT Line 51 in June 2007. Most of the remaining testimony received on this proposal opposed the operation of the rapid bus either because the stops are too far apart, or the operation of the new line would require the cancellation of limited-stop Line 360, and the reduction of service on local Line 60. Several customers also thought the rapid bus should go all the way to downtown Long Beach.

Patrons commenting on these changes were concerned about transfer, fare and security issues since affected riders would be forced to transfer to Long Beach Transit at the intersection of Long Beach Bl and Artesia Bl, or at Artesia Station in order to continue travel south of Artesia Bl. They were especially concerned about safety at night and whether Owl Service would be continued to downtown Long Beach. Most thought the new Line 760 and the local service should continue south to serve the Long Beach Transit Mall as the Line 60/360 does today.

Additional details of the public comment along with staff's response are included in Attachment B.

REVISED SERVICE PLAN

Staff proposes to modify elements of the original service change program based on concerns raised during the public review process. The Revised Service Plan, outlined in Attachment C, is divided into three parts. Part 1 lists the current staff recommendation for those lines directly managed by the Gateway Cities Sector. The Gateway Cities Governance Council is requested to **approve** Part 1 of the Revised Service Plan, as proposed.

In addition, the Gateway Cities Governance Council is requested to **support** the current staff recommendations in Parts 2 and 3 of the Revised Service Plan, which concern changes to four lines managed by the South Bay and San Gabriel Valley Sector Councils. It is important to point out that the current staff recommendations in Part 2 and Part 3 were jointly developed by staff from Gateway, South Bay and San Gabriel Valley to ensure future coordination.

The Revised Service Plan is summarized below. Route maps for lines to be modified under Part 1 are illustrated in Attachment D.

PART 1: LINES MANAGED BY GATEWAY CITIES SECTOR

Line 60/360

Original Proposal:

Restructure local service in conjunction with implementation of new Rapid Bus Line 760. South terminal to be established at Artesia Blue Line Station. Current service south of Artesia Blvd replaced by LBT except for Owl Service, which MTA will continue to provide. Cancel limited-stop Line 360.

Staff Proposal:

Approve as originally proposed.

Line 65

Original Proposal:

Cancel line due to excessive duplication. Western segment to be replaced by Montebello Transit. Eastern segment replaced by extension of Line 254 to California State University, Los Angeles.

Revised Staff Proposal:

Modify proposal as follows: Cancel line as originally proposed. Montebello Transit to provide alternative service between Soto St and downtown Los Angeles on weekdays and Saturdays. Sunday service along this segment to be cancelled due to low ridership. New shuttle Line 665 to provide alternative service east of Soto St to California State University, Los Angeles on weekdays during the rush hours. Service will operate from Indiana Ave to the university seven days a week.

Line 254

Original Proposal:

Modify route to take over segment of Line 65 from 1st St to California State University, Los Angeles. Consider adding Sunday service. Discontinue service on Lorena St and Cesar Chavez.

Revised Staff Proposal:

Withdraw proposal from further consideration. North terminal to remain at Dozier and Rowen Transit Center.

Line 265

Original Proposal:

Discontinue route between Montebello Mall and Pico Rivera due to low productivity. Northern route to end in Pico Rivera at Whittier Blvd and Durfee Rd. Improve peak hour headways on weekdays.

Revised Staff Proposal:

Modify original proposal as follows: Discontinue route segment operated between Montebello Mall and Pico Rivera, but withdraw from further consideration staff's original proposal to improve peak hour headways on weekdays. This change is recommended based upon further analysis of current passenger data which does not support the need for more peak service.

Line 275

Original Proposal:

Cancel route due to low productivity.

Revised Staff Proposal A (Recommended)

Approve proposal as originally proposed. NTS has indicated its written intention to provide service in this corridor on the same route, days and frequency of service as currently provided by Line 275.

Alternative Proposal B (Not Recommended)

Do-nothing option. The line would continue to operate as it does today

Alternative Proposal C (Not Recommended)

Improve headways from 60 to 30 minutes by doubling service hours in hope of attracting more riders. Doing so would create an added cost that would have to be offset by cutting service elsewhere in the sector. If this alternative were chosen, staff would return to the Governance Council in April with other service cuts to offset the costs that would result from increasing service on this line.

Line 577X

Original Proposal:

Extend route to serve the Long Beach Transit Mall. Service to operate in limited-stop mode via 7th St, Atlantic Ave and 1st St. Eliminate night service after 8 pm; consider midday reductions.

Revised Staff Proposal:

Modify original proposal to reflect public comment, including input from Long Beach Transit. Service to operate via 7th St, Alamitos Ave and 1st St. Night service to operate until 9:30 pm. Peak service to operate every 30 minutes; midday to operate every 45 minutes. New stops to be served on an experimental basis include 7th & Cherry Sts and 7th & Ximeno Ave.

Line 760

Original Proposal:

Establish new Rapid Bus Line 760 between downtown Los Angeles and the Metro Artesia Blue Line Station.

Current Proposal:

Approve as originally proposed

PART 2: LINES MANAGED BY SOUTH BAY SECTOR

Line 120/121

Original Proposal:

Make permanent current demonstration project that restructured service into two separate routes, and transferred operating responsibility of Line 121 to the Gateway Service Sector.

Current Staff Proposal:

Support original service proposal.

Line 622

Original Proposal:

Cancel late night trips due to poor performance.

Current Staff Proposal:

Support original service proposal.

PART 3: LINES MANAGED BY SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SECTOR

Line 260

Original Proposal:

Restructure route to end at Atlantic Ave and Alondra Bl.

Revised Staff Proposal:

Support modified proposal, which will maintain service to the Artesia Station coupled with additional shorting opportunities at or near Firestone Bl in South Gate.

Line 751

Original Proposal:

Shorten route in conjunction with implementation of new Rapid Line 760.

Current Staff Proposal:

Implement original proposal.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Part 1 of the Impact Statement applies to those lines directly managed by the Gateway Cities Sector. Overall, the Revised Service Plan will negatively impact very few customers in the Gateway Cities Sector since, for the most part, alternative service will be provided by Metro, Montebello Bus Lines, Norwalk Transit or Long Beach Transit in most cases. Where municipal operators are planning to assume canceled segments of lines or entire lines, these operators all charge lower fares than Metro. Customers riding Metro and at least one municipal operator might find a benefit in purchasing the EZ Pass. Interagency transfers are also available to continue travel from one line to another.

In considering the possible impacts associated with the Revised Service Program, new Rapid Bus Line 760 will provide a faster trip between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach than is possible today. Hence, riders using this line will reduce their travel time overall. Similarly, the extension of existing Line 577X to the Long Beach Transit Mall will expand regional travel opportunities that are not possible today by establishing an express line that directly links the El Monte and Norwalk areas with downtown Long Beach. Collectively, these speed and access improvements will benefit most existing riders, and create incentives to attract new riders to use public transit.

The Revised Service Plan, outlined in Attachment C, provides additional details on the estimated impacts of the revised program.

NEXT STEPS

With approval from the Governance Council, staff will begin preparations to implement the recommended service changes on Sunday, June 24, 2007. Tier 1 changes must also be approved by the Metro Board of Directors. Tier 1 lines under control of the Gateway Cities Sector are Lines 60, 360 and 760.

ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment A: Public Hearing Notice](#)

[Attachment B: Summary Public Comment & Staff Response](#)

[Attachment C: Revised Service Plan & Estimated Passenger Impacts](#)

Attachment D: Line Maps (there is no link for this attachment)

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