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GATEWAY CITIES GOVERNANCE COUNCIL
March 12, 2009

SUBJECT: PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO GATEWAY CITIES BUS LINES

**ACTION: APPROVE RESULTS OF FEBRUARY 2009 PUBLIC HEARINGS AND
ADOPT REVISED SERVICE PROGRAM FOR JUNE 2009**

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Approve results of public hearings held on February 12th for service changes proposed to become effective June 2009 or later ([Attachment B](#));
- B. Approve Part 1 of the Revised Service Program ([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 Program ([Attachment C](#)); and
- D. Consider Passenger Impact Statement as outlined in this report ([Attachment D](#)).

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

Three alternative strategies were developed for the Governance Council to consider in lieu of approving staff's Revised Service Program for June 2009. They include:

- 1.) Adopt the original program without modifications; or
- 2.) Adopt a different subset of service proposals than staff is recommending.
- 3.) Maintain the status quo.

Staff does not endorse these alternatives since the Revised Service Program considers public feedback received, and is designed to improve the efficiency of our operations by removing poor productivity service and duplicated service. Resources saved will be reallocated to areas of higher passenger demand. Some of the proposed changes are also intended to improve the operation of the line to better serve the rider. The Revised Service Program also achieves the projected budget targets for Fiscal Year 2010, and tempers the impact to the community by ensuring that essential services are maintained where they are needed most.

Should the Governance Council reject all or part of the Revised Service Program, some planned service improvements could be withdrawn in order to ensure a balanced budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Revised Service Program can be implemented within the projected Fiscal Year 2010 Operating Budget. When proposed, service adjustments that remove unproductive and duplicated resources from the system, are reinvested 100% back into other bus lines to resolve schedule issues and to make other improvements needed to maintain service quality.

BACKGROUND

Last month Metro's five Service Sector Governance Councils conducted public hearings within each of their respective jurisdictions to receive input from the community on service modifications proposed for June 2009 or later. A total of 34 existing bus lines are potentially affected by having either all or portions of their routes/schedules restructured or canceled. Several lines are also proposed to be renumbered as part of the restructuring process. In addition, one new service is proposed to be established. 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 4, 2009. Additional notice was subsequently published in other local, regional and foreign language newspapers system-wide. Various local, state and federal officials,

government agencies, and other organizations and stakeholders also received written and electronic notification of these matters. An estimated 100,000 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's 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 12. The hearing was held at 5:30 pm at The Gas Company, located in the City of Downey. Altogether, 6 bus lines currently managed by the Gateway Cities Sector are proposed to undergo major changes in June of this year.

The San Gabriel Valley and South Bay Sectors are also proposing changes in June to five bus lines they manage that serve portions of the Gateway Cities area. The South Bay Sector, for example, is proposing to operate a new shortline on local Line 111 (Florence Av.) on weekdays between Figueroa St. and Pacific Av. (Huntington Park). In addition, the sector also proposes to discontinue weekend service on Rapid Bus Line 711 (Florence Av. Rapid) affecting service between Huntington Park and Bell Gardens. Similarly, the San Gabriel Valley Sector proposes to discontinue service on Line 256. A portion of that line operates in the Gateway Cities Sector.

The following sections of this report summarize the written and verbal testimony received from the public on all of these matters through the close of the public record, February 14, 2009. Staff has responded to each issue, and has recommended modifications to several proposals based on public input and other considerations.

- Attachment B provides details of the public comment along with staff's response;
- Attachment C outlines the Revised Service Program that resulted from the public review process;
- Attachment D identifies the potential impact riders may experience from the modifications recommended in the Revised Service Program; and
- Attachment E contains maps showing the routes of the affected bus lines.

RESULTS OF FEBRUARY 2009 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Summary of Public Comment

Ten individuals submitted testimony on the service changes proposed for the Gateway Cities Sector by February 14, 2009, the close of the public record. In addition, representatives from the Bus Riders Union and the Southern California Transit Advocates also submitted testimony on these matters. Collectively, public input was obtained from the following sources:

- Testimony received by the Gateway Cities Governance Council at the February 12 public hearing held in the City of Downey;
- Comments submitted at public hearings conducted by other sector governance councils last month; and
- Input submitted to Metro by way of e-mail and U.S. Mail.

Altogether the total written and verbal comments received from the community generated 29 responses. Overall, public testimony was favorable towards the staff proposals for most lines. A few respondents conditioned their support providing requested modifications were incorporated into the final plan (55%).

Conversely, about 28% of the public testimony opposed any reduction/restructuring of bus service. The latter group cited multiple hardships they would endure if these changes were approved such as having no service to get to jobs, schools, doctors appointments. They also opposed the need to transfer in cases where portions of lines are proposed to be discontinued or replaced by other bus lines. They contended the transfer would add travel time and costs to their daily commute. The Bus Riders Union stated the proposed service reductions on some lines violated the gains won under the Consent Decree, stating they were illegal and would be challenged.

TABLE 1

FEBRUARY 2009 PUBLIC HEARING FOR JUNE SERVICE CHANGES
OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENT

LINE	SUPPORT PROPOSAL	OPPOSE PROPOSAL	CONDITIONAL SUPPORT	OTHER	TOTAL RESPONSES	PERCENT RESPONSES
26	1	1	3	0	5	17%
51	4	0	0	3	7	24%
53	4	3	0	0	7	24%
105	2	1	0	0	3	10%
128	0	3	0	2	5	17%
254	2	0	1	0	2	7%
TOTAL	13	8	3	5	29	100%
% TOTAL	45%	28%	10%	17%	100%	

Table 1 provides an overview of the public comment received for each bus line. As shown, about two-thirds (65%) of the public comment was focused on three bus lines. The lines in question include Lines 26, 51 and 53.

Line 26

The proposal for this line generated five responses. Of this total, four responses (80%) expressed support or conditional support for the staff proposal. The “condition” was predicated on Metro guaranteeing that the City of Los Angeles DASH would provide the same service levels, days and span of service should the Virgil Av. segment of the line be discontinued. The Bus Riders Union spoke in opposition of the proposal, stating that no alternative service would operate on Virgil Av., north of Wilshire Bl.

Line 51 & 53

The staff proposal for these lines generated a total of fourteen responses. Eight of 14 responses (57%) supported the staff proposal outright to operate two-way Owl service on Avalon Bl. and San Pedro St. between downtown Los Angeles and South L.A. Three respondents opposed the proposal because most of Central Av would no longer have Owl service. They stated riders would need to walk up to one-half mile to access service on Avalon Bl. or San Pedro St. They added that this would be unsafe at night, citing gang activity. The Bus Riders Union stated that Metro was violating the terms of the Consent Decree by eliminating Owl service on Central Av. Three respondents suggested that the 51 Owl be extended south of Manchester Bl to provide new connections with the Line 45 Owl, Avalon Green Line Station, and the Artesia Transit Center.

Line 105

The restructuring proposal for this line generated three responses. Two responses supported the staff proposal, which would discontinue the special weekday, peak hour only route currently operated east of Santa Fe Av. The lone dissenting comment opposed the proposal citing riders would need to transfer in order to continue travel along the affected corridors.

Line 128

Five responses were received for this proposal. Three of these opposed rerouting the line to the Cerritos Towne Center because riders would need to transfer to continue their travel eastbound along Alondra Bl. in order to reach the City of La Mirada. These riders now have a direct trip. They recommended Metro maintain the current route, or, as the Southern California Transit Advocates suggested, extend the line eastward into Orange County to connect with the Buena Park Metrolink Station. One respondent suggested having Norwalk Transit takeover the entire line, or the discontinued segment.

Line 254

Two responses were received on this line. Both responses supported the staff routing to serve the new Metro Gold Line’s Indiana Street Station.

REVISED SERVICE PROGRAM

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

Parts 2 and 3 of the Revised Service Program concern proposed changes to lines managed by the San Gabriel Valley and South Bay Sectors, which operate portions of their routes in the Gateway Cities Sector. The Gateway Cities Governance Council is requested to support the current staff recommendations for these lines. It is important to point out these recommendations were jointly developed by sector staff to ensure future coordination.

The recommended Revised Service Program is summarized below. Additional details can be found in Attachment C. Route maps for lines to be modified under Part 1 are illustrated in Attachment E.

PART 1: LINES MANAGED BY GATEWAY CITIES SECTOR

Proposals Recommended To Be Withdrawn

- Line 26
The proposal to discontinue the Virgil Av. segment of this line is recommended to be withdrawn from further consideration. Discussions with the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation to provide replacement service cannot be guaranteed at this time due to severe funding issues at that agency. Metro will continue to operate the Virgil Av. segment of this line.

Proposals Recommended To Be Approved As Originally Proposed

- Line 51
Implement two-way Owl Service on Avalon Bl. by reallocating resources from Central Av., a low demand corridor served in one direction only to Avalon Bl, a higher demand corridor.
- Line 53
Discontinue one-way Owl service on Central Av. and consolidate trips on Avalon Bl.-San Pedro St. to provide two-way Owl service on those corridors now served by Line 51.
- Line 105
Discontinue route segment east of Santa Fe Av. Line 611 to provide Alternative service along the affected corridors.

- Line 128
Reroute to Cerritos Towne Center. Alternative service along Alondra Bl. between Carmenita Rd. and La Mirada Bl. provided by Line 460.
- Line 254
Reroute line to serve the Metro Gold Line Indiana Street Station via 4th St. and Indiana St.

PART 2: LINES MANAGED BY SAN GABRIEL VALLEY SECTOR

Proposals Recommended To Be Conditionally Approved (Support Only)

- Line 256
Staff is recommending the cancellation of Line 256 should a municipal operator agree to operate the service. Should no operator be found, Metro will continue to provide the service.

PART 3: LINES MANAGED BY SOUTH BAY SECTOR

Proposals Recommended Withdrawn (Support Only)

- Line 111
Withdraw original proposal to operate a new shortline on weekdays between Figueroa St. and Pacific Av.

Proposals Recommended To Be Modified (Support Only)

- Line 125
Discontinue service west of Sepulveda Bl. Beach Cities Transit to provide alternative service.

Proposals To Be Approved As Originally Proposed (Support Only)

- Line 124
Discontinue entire line with alternative service provided by Beach Cities Transit on the westside and Gardena Transit on the eastside.
- Line 711
Discontinue Saturday and Sunday service. Line 111 to provide alternative service.

IMPACT STATEMENT

The following impact statement is based on the Revised Service Program (RSP), which was developed from public comment and other considerations. The lines included in Part 1 of the Revised Service Program are directly managed by the Gateway Cities Sector. Analysis of the operating data for these lines indicate that about 14,600 riders utilize these services on weekdays, 600 on Saturdays, and 100 on Sundays.

The number of riders potentially affected in some way (i.e. negative/positive) by the Revised Service Program is estimated at 392 weekday riders, 100 riders on Saturday, and 92 riders on Sunday. This equates to about 3 percent of the total weekday ridership, 17 percent of the Saturday ridership and 100 percent of the Sunday ridership, respectively.

Of the total riders impacted, about 280 weekday riders will need to transfer as a result of these bus line modifications. Transfer wait times would be minimal, estimated to range 0-15 minutes. This could be reduced further for some riders if they plan their trips more carefully. No transfer impact was observed for weekend riders since Line 128 does not operate on weekends, and the change on Line 105 only affects the special peak service operated on weekdays.

Of the remaining impacted riders a few may need to walk further to access bus service than they do today. It is estimated about 35 riders on weekdays, 31 on Saturday and 23 on Sunday fall into this category. The required walk ranges from about one tenth to one-quarter mile. Most, however, fall within .25 mile walk distance.

As an offset to this impact, it should be noted that riders of the Line 51 Owl service will benefit by not having to walk from Central Av. to Avalon Bl. It is estimated that approximately 35 riders each weekday, Saturday and Sunday will no longer have to walk upwards of one-quarter mile to access bus service once two-way service is instituted along the Avalon-San Pedro corridors.

In considering the possible impacts associated with the Revised Service Program it is important to note that the overall impacts described here are minimal. The additional fee to ride a second bus (transfer), for example, can be eliminated by using a monthly pass in lieu of paying cash. Wait times, though estimated to add only a few minutes to commuter trips, can be reduced further by more careful trip planning. Finally, the estimated walk distances for the few impacted riders are within the one-quarter mile walk standard for Metro.

Attachment D provides additional details on the estimated impacts of the Revised Service Program.

NEXT STEPS

With approval from the Governance Council, staff will begin preparations to implement the recommended service changes on Sunday, June 28, 2009. Tier 1 changes must also be approved by the Metro Board of Directors. Tier 1 lines proposed for changes under the Revised Service Program are Lines 51, 53 and 105.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Public Hearing Notice

Attachment B: Summary Public Comment & Staff Response

Attachment C: Revised Service Program

Attachment D: Estimated Passenger Impacts

Attachment E: Line Maps

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