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APRIL 4, 2012

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ARTHUR T. LEAHY 
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SUBJECT: LINE 442 ENHANCEMENTS

ISSUE

In March 2007, the South Bay Service Council approved the discontinuation of Line 442 due to low productivity. However, in June 2007, the Board allowed the continuation of Line 442 for a period of one year to allow staff an opportunity to better market the service in an effort to achieve a 60% average maximum load target. An extensive marketing campaign was initiated, which included: 1) Ads placed in several area newspapers; 2) Direct mail postcard campaign to 17,000 area residents; 3) Advertising on 50 area bus benches; 4) Car-cards placed on area buses; 5) Channel 35 Time Warner promotion; and 6) Pamphlets distributed at local Inglewood community events.

In addition to the marketing campaign, several other improvements were implemented, including:

- Discontinue certain unproductive trips;
- Assigning newer and more reliable buses;
- Improving on time performance of the line from 56% in 2009 to 75% in 2011;
- Improving the safety and convenience of alternative services, including 10 minute peak frequencies on the Metro Silver Line operating along the Harbor Transitway, and new local bus stops under the Manchester Harbor Transitway station for a direct bus to bus connection between Manchester and Harbor Transitway services.

Despite targeted marketing and continuous improvements to the service, the line currently only averages about 40% of seats occupied at the maximum load point,

well below the standard of 60% set by the Board in 2007. The experience of Line 442 shows that despite efforts to increase ridership and productivity through marketing, service, and safety enhancements, ridership increases are unlikely on lines with a limited market need or in areas with robust alternative services available and are inherently unproductive and costly per boarding to provide.

In September 2011, the Board directed staff to suspend the cancellation of Line 442 and review it along with six of the lowest ridership lines in the Metro system (Lines 126, 177, 201, 202, 607 and 620). In January 2012, staff reported the results of this review to the Board, including recommendations from riders of these lines. As a result of rider input, no cost service adjustments for five of these lines, Line 177, 201, 202, 607, 620, have or will be implemented by June 2012. Enhancements to Line 442 were not included in this list of recommended actions. This report summarizes efforts that will be implemented to support Line 442 based on rider and staff input.

DISCUSSION

In September 2011, the Board directed staff to study items that might be affecting demand on Metro's lowest performing lines, including environmental factors along the bus routes (cleanliness, safety, and lighting), routing and service integration with other bus and rail lines, marketing efforts, on-time performance and service reliability. As part of the study, a working group consisting of riders was to be established to provide input and recommendations to staff as to how best to increase ridership on the lines. A "Public Workshop on Improving Service" was conducted on November 15 at the Metro Gateway building. The workshop was attended by about 50 riders, and 21 emails with additional comments were received.

Based on this input, the following are efforts that will be implemented within the current adopted budget to support Line 442:

Service Enhancement (starting June 2012 service change)

- Make the service more consistent by scheduling the line as a regular assignment with consistent operators;
- Improve on time performance by reviewing and adjusting running time as needed;
- Include Line 442 in Google and Trip Planner.

Marketing (starting June 2012)

- Market service to major employers (USC, Trade Tech, Federal Building, FIDM etc.) with e-blasts to employees along the route;
- Advertise service on Transit TV;

- Post bus car cards on Line 442 and connecting buses and on Green Line to promote destinations and connections from Line 442;
- Continue to include Line 442 in college route promotions for USC and Trade Tech;
- Use social media to disseminate information on Line 442.

The effects proposed for the 442 do not meet the threshold of a major service change and will not be subject to an Equity Analysis.

NEXT STEPS

An evaluation of the impacts of these changes to the line's ridership and productivity will be presented to the Board in January 2013.