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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: JAMES L. de la LOZA
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SUBJECT: SERVICE PLANNING MARKET RESEARCH PROGRAM

ISSUE

At the February 24, 2000 meeting, the MTA Board adopted a motion by Director Legaspi requesting a program of market assessments related to MTA actions. At the April 24, 2000 meeting of the Executive Management Committee, Director Burke requested information about the nature, extent and products of market research undertaken by the agency. This report describes the current market research program and currently planned activities.

BACKGROUND

The Service Planning Market Research Program (SPMRP) is a multi-year, customer-focussed research program that was initiated in FY 1996 as a joint project between Countywide Planning & Development and Marketing/Customer Relations. It's purpose is to: (1) address the agency's and the region's need for statistically reliable information about the Los Angeles County travel market; (2) monitor changes in transit travel patterns, customer satisfaction, demographics and service priorities over time; and, (3) identify barriers to using public transit in LA County. Findings from the research have been incorporated into long range planning, service planning, marketing activities and analytical tools at the MTA.

Published reports include the following attachments to this report: Phase I Summary Report, FY 97 Survey of Los Angeles County Residents; FY 97 MTA Bus Passenger Survey; 1998 Blue, Green and Red Line Passenger surveys (3 separate reports); Focus Group Report on Bus Usage and Customer Communications; and, Timetable Focus Group Report.

Two reports are forthcoming based upon recently completed efforts: Report on the Year 2000 General Public survey, Report on Customer Satisfaction on ten selected Bus Lines.

NEXT STEPS

In FY 01, SPMRP will conduct an on-board survey of the countywide bus system, including Municipal and other operators. It will also conduct a similar survey of Metro Rail riders. These surveys will be mutually complementary with major efforts by SCAG (such as the 24,000 household Regional Travel Survey), Caltrans and MetroLink to survey all aspects of the Los Angeles County transportation system. The initiation of these major research efforts at this time is no coincidence since all agencies want to correlate this data with the information collected in 2000 by the U.S. Census Bureau. Additionally, SPMRP will conduct a series of focus groups to support its on-board survey effort and conduct in-depth telephone interviews with a sample of its on-board survey respondents.

SPMRP is entirely funded through a 1999 Call-for-Projects grant as a "regionally significant" program. Its orientation is countywide ("macro") as a result. Staff is also developing a research program that is more "micro" oriented. This would establish research on the neighborhood impacts of proposed and implemented service changes with focused market segmentation. Pending resolution of funding issues, a program of small-scale research projects to investigate these topics will be implemented. At this time, the only micro market research efforts planned are before-and-after studies of service changes associated with the Metro Red Line opening to North Hollywood and the initial Metro Rapid Bus service.

Additionally, in response to Director Burke's request, staff is developing an assessment of Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) concerns by a non-organizational focus group of Los Angeles County residents. This market survey will be completed prior to Board consideration of the LRTP.

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ATTACHMENTS

- A. Phase I Summary Report
- B. FY 96-97 Survey of Los Angeles County Residents
- C. FY 96-97 MTA Bus On-Board Passenger Survey
- D. 1998 Metro Blue Line Passenger Survey
- E. 1998 Metro Green Line Passenger Survey
- F. 1998 Metro Red Line Passenger Survey
- G. Focus Group Report on Issues Affecting Metro Bus Usage & Customer Communications
- H. Timetable Focus Groups