



January 27, 1998

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: SCOTT MUGFORD *Scott Mugford*
**SUBJECT: EFFECT OF SERVICE CHANGES TO 1-800-COMMUTE
INFORMATION SERVICE**

ISSUE

This report is a follow-up to the Board Box reports on December 3, 1997 and January 7, 1998 concerning the closure of Metro Information on Sundays. Metro Information provides schedule, itinerary planning and general information to the public Monday through Friday 6am - 9pm, and Saturday 8am to 6pm.

BACKGROUND

1. Justification of Recommendation to Discontinue Sunday Service

Approximately 2,500 to 3,000 customers were served on an average Sunday, compared to approximately 8,000 on weekdays. Before recommending discontinuation of Sunday service, the Customer Services staff surveyed Sunday callers and determined that many of the calls were for advance trip planning. Staff concluded that these customers could be served as well during the week.

Sunday service was eliminated on December 14, 1997. No agents were terminated as a result of the closure; instead, agents were shifted to peak weekday hours.

2. Mitigation Efforts and Customer Response

Beginning in early December (and continuing) our message to customers on hold notifies them of the new hours. Customer Services staff reports that there have only been nine actual customer complaints. No specific objections have been made by the Bus Riders Union or our citizen advisory groups.

3. Benefits of the Sunday Closure

As shown on the attached schedule, increased staffing during peak hours has reduced average wait time during peak service hours. Customer Service staff also reports that there are now very few instances of 20+ minute holds whereas before there were frequent complaints of holds of 30+ minutes. However, the service change has only been in effect for about a month, including the year end holidays, so continued monitoring will be required to see if customer problems remain minimal.

4. Cost of Restoring Sunday Service

The cost of adding five to ten Sunday operators while retaining the existing staffing on the other six days would range from \$220,000 to \$440,000 annually. These are union positions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Customer Service's Sunday closure appears to have been a good strategy since customers have almost all shifted to the remaining six days (current average weekly calls are 9,590 compared to 10,120 with seven day service) with minimal complaints. At the same time, overall customer service has greatly improved. Based on these results, continued Sunday closure is recommended.

Attachment

**METRO INFORMATION
800 COMMUTE SERVICE**

	<u>PRE SUNDAY CLOSURE</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>OPEN SUNDAY MAINTAINING SERVICE LEVEL *</u>
<i>Number of Agents</i>	95	95	105
 Weekdays			
<i>Number of Calls Answered</i>	5,050	6,100	6,400
<i>Number of Calls Abandoned</i>	2,751	2,032	1,700
<i>Average Wait Time (In Seconds)</i>	540	320	320
 Saturdays			
<i>Number of Calls Answered</i>	2,437	3,490	3,000
<i>Number of Calls Abandoned</i>	1,974	1,092	1,300
<i>Average Wait Time (In Seconds)</i>	667	300	300
 Sundays			
<i>Number of Calls Answered</i>	2,633		2,600
<i>Number of Calls Abandoned</i>	971		900
<i>Average Wait Time (In Seconds)</i>	353		353

*** Estimate**