



Metro

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE 
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: JIM DE LA LOZA 
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SUBJECT: VANPOOL/CARPOOL PARKING AT MTA PARKING FACILITIES

ISSUE

At a recent Board meeting, a Board member asked staff why Metro did not have reserved spaces for carpools at Metro rail facilities.

BACKGROUND OR DISCUSSION

The MTA Board previously approved a Parking Policy that included support of carpooling and vanpooling as methods to maximize the usage of Metro parking facilities. Though Metro has the ability to designate "Carpool" only parking areas, we have not yet identified a practical and cost effective method of regulating who uses those spaces. Regulation of private auto carpools requires a verification of the number of persons within the vehicle, or is subject to obvious abuse. Metro staff continues to review methods and technologies that would allow a reasonable verification of informal carpool use.

Metro's recently implemented "Pay for Parking" program issues a permit that identifies the automobile as a "paid" user of Metro's parking facilities. Verification of payment and enforcement takes place anytime of the day by checking for a special decal on the parked car. This allows Metro to have a minimum number of enforcement personnel patrolling numerous parking locations. The cost of this enforcement is covered by the monthly parking reservation payment.

By contrast enforcement of carpool use would require that Metro physically verify that two or more persons are in a vehicle when it enters the parking lot. Setting aside an area similar to the paid parking spaces for carpooling would require parking operators to be stationed at each site. The associated costs of enforcement would likely exceed the advantage of setting aside carpool specific spaces.

Metro hosted a "Parking Forum" on June 10th, 2004 that brought parking professionals from the parking industry and from several California cities including the parking manager of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) to discuss parking issues. One of the topics discussed was control and usage of carpool parking spaces, especially in a cost effective way. BART's previous history of providing carpool decals and designating carpool-parking areas has resulted in widespread abuse. They are currently re-evaluating how to dismantle their current carpool parking practices and to identify what new method may be appropriate to insure appropriate support of carpooling.

In addition, Metro staff has initiated discussions with various agencies operating "vanpools" to provide preferential parking areas for vanpools. Vanpool operations are more formal, usually requiring contractual relationships between users, or require the usage of coordinating Transportation Management Agencies. Over 3,500 vanpools operate in the county each day. Staff actions include working with vanpool coordinators to identify user groups that can benefit from guaranteed access to Metro transit services such as Metro Rail or Rapid Bus. Vanpool operations that can be "intercepted" at Metro transit facilities, or that can begin their daily trips from Metro facilities are being explored. Because of the need of vanpool operators to insure the availability of a space, our current ability to designate parking areas for vanpools may be attractive to some vanpool users. We are working with the City of Los Angeles vanpool program as well as the Metro Commuter Services group within the MTA in order to develop this program.

NEXT STEPS

Over the next quarter MTA staff will work with vanpool providers to identify potential user groups that may benefit from locating their vans or collecting of vanpoolers at various MTA locations. Once users are identified staff will designate spaces for their use. Staff is also continuing the review of methods, programs and technologies that will support carpooling, while minimizing abuse of any carpool designation.