



**SUBJECT: FY 2001 SERVICE CHANGE**

**ACTION: CANCEL LINE 497**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Cancel Line 497 (LA-Pomona-Montclair Park-n-Ride Express), effective ~~June 11,~~ July 30, 2001 with the extension of Foothill Transit Line 699 to Montclair Transcenter.

**ISSUE**

At the February 22, 2001 meeting, the MTA Board of Directors considered the implementation of the FY 2001 service change program. Line 497 was recommended for cancellation as part of this program, because the service is duplicated by both Foothill Transit Line 699 and Metrolink San Bernardino Line service. Additionally, Line 497 is one of the poorest performing bus lines in the MTA system.

Line 497 is an express line that operates from San Bernardino County to downtown Los Angeles, weekday peak periods and peak direction only. During the meeting, members of the public and MTA employees gave testimony opposing the cancellation of MTA Line 497, stating that alternative services were not convenient, largely because Foothill Transit Line 699 did not operate to the Montclair Transcenter. After hearing the public comment, the Board approved the service change program, with the exception of the cancellation of Line 497 and directed staff to bring the proposal for Line 497 back to the Board for further review.

Since the February MTA Board meeting, staff has met with Foothill Transit to discuss the possible extension of Foothill Transit Line 699 to the Montclair Transcenter. The Foothill Transit Board approved this extension with operation to begin Monday, ~~June 11,~~ July 30, 2001, contingent on the MTA canceling Line 497 service. The extension of Foothill Line 699 will mitigate most passenger impacts associated with discontinuing service on Line 497. The current level of service on Line 497 is well matched by Foothill Line 699. Foothill Line 699 operates 32 trips between 4:30 AM and 6:43 PM; Line 497 operates 35 trips between 4:20 AM and 7:41 PM. **The new proposed schedule on Line 699 will operate 34 trips. Earlier morning and afternoon service has been scheduled as a result of Line 497 rider feedback. The proposed Line 699 will also serve the Park-Ride Lots at Via Verde and Pomona.** Service leaving downtown Los Angeles to Montclair Transcenter after 6:43 PM is provided by Foothill Transit Line 480 and Metrolink.

Metropolitan  
 Transportation  
 Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
 Los Angeles, CA  
 90012-2952

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Approving the recommended discontinuation of MTA Line 497 will reduce service duplication and improve the efficiency of the regional bus network. The changes are consistent with the Three Tier Service Concept outlined in the Long Range Transportation Plan. This strategy calls for refocusing MTA resources on improvements to core regional transit corridors and withdrawing MTA bus lines from corridors that are currently served by the Municipal Operators.

**OPTIONS**

Options to canceling Line 497 include restructuring the line to operate between the Montclair Trancenter and El Monte Station only, or to shorten the line in downtown Los Angeles to end at the Patsaouras Transit Plaza. Service frequency would also be reduced.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The cancellation of Line 497 will allow for the reinvestment of 16,000 annual revenue hours, and a cost savings of \$804,000. This action will maintain the proposed budget for the FY2001 Service Change Program.

**BACKGROUND**

The proposal to cancel Line 497 was included in the FY2001 Service Change Program based on the line's poor performance, availability of alternative services, and the need to maximize the utilization of MTA service hours.

MTA Line 497 Performance - Line 497 has the second highest subsidy rate and the second lowest productivity rate in the MTA bus system. Line 497 operates between the Montclair Park-n-Ride Lot just inside San Bernardino County and downtown Los Angeles, peak directions, weekdays only. It operates 35 one way bus trips per day, requires 10 peak buses, carries approximately 750 passengers per day and costs approximately \$804,000 a year (marginal rate) to operate. As shown below, the subsidy per passenger on this line is three times greater than the system average and the productivity is one fifth that of the average MTA bus line.

<b>Operating Characteristic</b>	<b>Line 497</b>	<b>System Average</b>
Subsidy Per Passenger	\$3.47	\$1.31
Passengers Per Service Hour	14.4	52.8
Daily Ridership	750	8,733

Availability of Alternative Service - A total of 18 Line 497 bus trips operate into downtown Los Angeles between 4:20 AM and 8:56 AM and 17 return trips are operated between 1:50 PM and 7:41 PM. One way running time varies between 50 and 70 minutes depending on traffic and time of day. There are intermediate stops at several locations including: the Claremont, Pomona,

Fairplex, and Via Verde Park-n-Ride Lots, freeway stops at Azusa and Puente Avenues, and Cal State LA and LA County/USC Hospital Busway Stations. The route leaves the freeway to serve Patsaouras Transit Plaza and then operates through downtown Los Angeles and along Wilshire Boulevard to the Westlake/MacArthur Park Red Line Station.

Recent Point Checks conducted in March and April to count passenger loads indicates 160 individuals are utilizing the Montclair Park-n-Ride Lot, the rest of the ridership boarding at other stops served by Metrolink and Foothill Transit services. Ridership on Line 497 has declined each year since the implementation of Metrolink service to San Bernardino and Foothill Transit Line 699 from Pomona. These service alternatives have made Line 497 less attractive for many riders.

A monthly pass to ride this service end-to-end costs \$117; however, MTA employees can ride the service for free by showing their MTA employee identification card.

Metrolink's San Bernardino Line and Foothill Line 699 are comparable service alternatives for persons currently using Line 497. These services are discussed below:

- Metrolink - The San Bernardino Line provides service all day between Montclair and downtown Los Angeles seven days a week. On weekdays, nine inbound trips are operated between the hours of 4:16 AM and 11:00 AM. Eleven return trips are provided between about 1:50 PM and 8:50 PM. Metrolink serves stops west of Montclair including Claremont, Pomona, Covina, Baldwin Park, El Monte, and Cal State LA before the line terminates at Union Station. The one way running time for this service is about 52 minutes. The cost of a monthly pass for service between Montclair and downtown Los Angeles is \$156. The out of pocket cost to MTA employees is \$54 dollars above the subsidy provided through the employee transportation benefit program.
- Foothill Line 699- If MTA Line 497 is cancelled, Foothill Line 699 would be extended to provide weekday peak direction express service between the Montclair Park-n-Ride Lot and Downtown Los Angeles. It currently serves stops at the Fairplex Park-n-Ride Lot, the Lakes Park-n-Ride Lot in West Covina, Cal State LA and LA County/USC Hospital Busway Stations. **It is proposed to also serve the CalTrans Pomona and Via Verde Park-Ride Lots.** Exiting the Busway, Line 699 stops at Alameda, adjacent to Union Station. In the morning 16 inbound trips operate between the hours of 4:30 AM and 8:43 AM. In the afternoon, 16 return trips are operated between the hours of 2:30 PM and 6:43 PM. **The revised schedule provides 17 inbound trips between 4:10 AM and 8:18 AM and 17 trips between 2:00 PM and 6:43 PM.** A monthly pass to ride this service end-to-end costs \$99 and a joint agency pass that is also valid on connecting MTA services costs \$135. MTA employees can buy a Foothill monthly pass at no out of pocket cost through the employee transportation benefit program. The travel time of Line 699 is comparable to Line 497.
- Patrons utilizing Foothill bus service to travel to Patsaouras Transit Plaza or the Gateway building can make a convenient transfer at the end of the Busway to any of the six lines that directly serve the Transit Plaza from that location. Combined peak service operates every

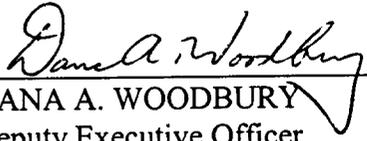
3½-5 minutes. Line 58 (Alameda Street) operates every 10 minutes into the Transit Plaza all day. This transfer will add 5-10 minutes of travel time. To walk from the end of the Busway to the Transit Plaza or the Gateway building takes about five minutes.

MTA's Need to Maximize Utilization of Service Hours - At the February Board meeting, the Board asked how canceling Line 497 and reallocating the resources would benefit overall mobility. If the service hours from Line 497 are reinvested in another service performing as well as the system average, over 600,000 additional passengers could be served each year. The FY 2001 Service Change Program is part of a larger effort directed at refocusing MTA service investments on projects that benefit major transit corridors, such as improving capacity on the top 20 bus lines, implementing the corridor studies and expanding Rapid Bus service. A key strategy in funding future investments in the MTA bus system is service reallocation. In order to have the operating funds necessary to upgrade capacity and convenience in the major regional transit corridors, the MTA must revisit investments in marginally performing services and MTA bus lines that duplicate services operated by other operators. Line 497 is a marginally performing service and is duplicating service provided by Foothill Transit and Metrolink.

#### NEXT STEPS

If approved, the final day of service on Line 497 will be Friday, ~~June 8~~, July 27, 2001. **This effective date should allow ample time for Line 497 riders to purchase monthly passes for the month of August.** To ensure proper notification of passengers and MTA employees, brochures will be distributed on board the buses two weeks prior to the change. Information on the service change program will also be placed on the MTA website. Additionally, to help patrons adjust to using Foothill Transit service, ~~MTA will honor Foothill monthly transit passes on Line 497 from June 1 through June 8, 2001.~~ Foothill Transit will also accept MTA monthly passes ~~for the month of June~~ **the last two days in the month of July** on Line 699.

Prepared by Susan Chapman, Transportation Planner II - Countywide Planning & Development



---

DANA A. WOODBURY  
Deputy Executive Officer  
Service Planning and Monitoring



---

JAMES L. de la LOZA  
Executive Officer  
Countywide Planning & Development



---

ALLAN G. LIPSKY  
Office of the Chief Executive Officer

June 19, 2001

MTA Board Members  
Operations Committee  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear MTA Board Members:

**Subject: Line 497 Cancellation**

On Wednesday, June 20, 2001, the Operations Committee Meeting is being held at 1:00 p.m. The MTA's assigned department's, Scheduling and Planning have recommended the cancellation of Line 497 (LA-Pomona-Montclair). According to MTA, "the service is duplicated" by Foothill Transit Line 699 and Metrolink San Bernardino Line. We the riders of Line 497 will tell you that it is wrong and unfair. How can it be duplication of service if important issues are being overlooked?

- First - travel time on the 699 is up to 10 to 15 minutes longer than the 497 considering it is an Express Bus.
- Second – With the 499, 699 & Metrolink being full to capacity especially in the am, what happens to the 750 people from the 497 that will have to go to Metrolink or to the buses? If taking the bus, they will have to stand the 1-hour trip into L.A. from Montclair, Fairplex and Via Verde Park N Ride.
- Third – Foothills first pm trip leaves L.A. 40 minutes later than the 497 Line.
- Forth - Foothill will not run late like the 497. The last bus (497) leaves L.A. at 7:41 pm. vs. Foothill leaves L.A. at 6:43 pm. With Foothill leaving L.A. much earlier, this forces people who have to work late to take the train. Not everyone gets a subsidy from his or her employer. Due to the Metrolink being expensive, not everyone can afford the train, that is why the 497 option is better for commuters with limited resources and families to support.

Effective June 4, 2001, Line 497 has changed their schedule due to the shake-up. They took out about nine (9) buses total (both morning and afternoon shifts). The new schedule for the 497 Line is working, accommodates our needs perfectly and the buses are at full capacity. We are requesting that the Operations Committee please reconsider the cancellation of this very important and valuable service not only to the riding public but also to its loyal employees.

Please consider our request.

Respectfully yours,

---

Line 497 Bus Riders

## From the Riders of Line 497

Following are our response on the letter for FY2001 SERVICE CHANGE, CANCEL LINE 497 to the Operations Committee May 16, 2001 ( which was cancelled). Statements in italics are from the recommendation letter.

- *"Line 497 was recommended for cancellation..., because the service is duplicated by both Foothill Transit Line 699 and Metrolink...The extension of Foothill Line 699[to Montclair Transcenter] will mitigate most passenger impacts associated with discontinuing service on Line 497"*

Extension of Foothill Line 699 service to Montclair does not mean there will be additional buses. It only means that the current Line Foothill 699 buses will have a longer run. That means **passenger loads and headways will increase. Service levels on Metrolink are restricted.** They cannot add more trains because of track and schedule limitations. If gas prices and automobile traffic increase, travelers will not be able to avail themselves of additional Metrolink services as an alternative.

- *"Service leaving downtown Los Angeles to Montclair Transcenter after 6:43 PM is provided by Foothill Transit Line 480 and Metrolink."*

This is **not a comparable service.** Line 497 takes about 1 hour on this run. Line 480 takes over 1-1/2 hours. Line 480 is a local bus.

- *"Options to canceling Line 497 include restructuring the line..., or to shorten the line... Service frequency would also be reduced."*

There was **no study shown** concerning these proposed viable options.

- *"The cancellation of Line 497 will allow for reinvestment of 16,000 annual revenue hours, and a cost savings of \$804,000."*

The intimation of **cost savings is not true.** It is not a cost savings but rather a transfer of money from one pot to another.

- *"Line 497 has the second highest subsidy rate and the second lowest productivity rate in the MTA bus system."*

It should not be surprising that Line 497's "Subsidy Per Passenger" is higher than average – it **has the oldest buses in the fleet.** On the other hand, it is among the **best in terms of having low levels of security, crime and graffiti problems.** As to productivity, **Line 497 is an express line.** Riders get on and stay on. It is unfair to compare it to system averages that are skewed by local runs which are a stop by stop, get-off get-on type transportation. **A fairer measure of productivity** is to compare it to other express lines.

- *"MTA employees can buy a Foothill monthly pass at no out of pocket cost through the employee transportation benefit program."*

This is not true because **the employee must report part of the MTA subsidy as income.**

- *"If the service hours from Line 497 are reinvested in another service performing as well as the system average, over 600,000 additional passengers could be served each year."*

The statement about serving 600,000 additional passengers is absolutely ludicrous. Transfer of service will only increase capacity on existing bus systems -- it won't conjure up new passengers. **What it boils down to is that LACMTA is tossing away 750 loyal passengers to Foothill, Metrolink and the automobile so that current riders of existing LACMTA systems can have some more room on the buses.**