



GATEWAY CITIES GOVERNANCE COUNCIL
September 8, 2005

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED SERVICE MODIFICATIONS TO GATEWAY CITIES
BUS LINES**

**ACTION: APPROVE FINDINGS OF AUGUST 2005 PUBLIC HEARINGS AND
ADOPT REVISED SERVICE PROGRAM FOR DECEMBER 2005**

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Approve findings of Public Hearings conducted on Thursday, August 11th and Thursday, August 18th concerning service changes proposed for Metro bus lines effective December 2005 or later (Attachment C); and
- B. Adopt Revised Service Program as outlined in this report

ISSUE

The service changes under consideration are considered to be major modifications based on federal public hearing guidelines and MTA policy. The Council is required to conduct public hearings and solicit public input before these changes can be implemented. The Council is also required to consider public testimony and the possible impacts from these proposals before approving them. Staff has prepared the necessary documentation in the report to satisfy this regulatory requirement.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternatives to the staff recommendation were identified for consideration by the Governance Council. They include: 1) maintain the status quo and not adopt the Revised Service Plan; or 2) adopt a new subset of the service proposals. Neither option is recommended because the service program is cost neutral. If further modifications are made to the service program it will be out of balance. In order to rebalance the program, planned service improvements on some lines will need to be withdrawn in order to ensure a balanced budget.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Revised Service Plan can be implemented at no increase in operating cost. Resources saved from unproductive or duplicated routes and segments of routes are fully reinvested to improve service on other lines. Attachment A compares the service hours and buses operated on the existing lines with those proposed to be operated under the Revised Service Plan.

BACKGROUND

Last month the Gateway Cities Governance Council held two public hearings within the Gateway Cities Sector to receive public input on major service modifications proposed for implementation in December 2005 or later. A total of twenty-one bus lines were proposed to undergo various types of changes ranging from route and/or schedule adjustments on some lines to cancellation of all or portions of others. The affected bus lines and the proposed changes to them are shown in the attached public hearing notice (Attachment B).

Three additional hearings were held last month by other service sectors whose governance councils were seeking public input on major service changes proposed for their areas. The three service sectors holding public hearings included the South Bay, Westside-Central and the San Gabriel Valley. At all the hearings the public was invited to comment on any proposal under consideration, and informed their comments would be forwarded to the respective sector governance council for consideration.

Legal notice of these hearings was first published in the Los Angeles Times on Sunday, July 10, 2005. Additional notice was subsequently published in other local, regional and foreign language newspapers system-wide. About 200,000 rider notices were available on the buses, trains and at customer service outlets informing riders about the changes under consideration. This information was also posted on MTA's main website and service sector websites.

The following sections of this report summarize the written and verbal testimony received by the public on these matters through the close of the public record. Staff has responded to each issue, and has recommended modifications to several proposals based on public input and other considerations. Details of the public comment received on each line along with staff's response are included in Attachment C.

Attachment D summarizes the potential impact riders of these lines may experience from the service modifications recommended in the Revised Service Plan.

RESULTS OF AUGUST 2005 PUBLIC HEARINGS

Summary of Public Comment

Last month the Gateway Cities Governance Council conducted two public hearings in the Gateway Cities area. The first hearing was held August 11, at the Gas Company in the City of Downey. The second was held August 18, at the Old Timers Foundation, located in the City of Huntington Park. The purpose of these hearings was to obtain comment from the community on major service changes under consideration for December of this year.

Forty-two people attended the two public hearings in the Gateway Cities. Of this total, 23 persons presented oral testimony directly to the Council. Besides the oral testimony, the governance council also received 14 letters, nine e-mails and two petitions from the public commenting on the service proposals under consideration. Six additional people submitted their comments about the Gateway City service proposals at public hearings held in the other sectors. Collectively, the total written and oral testimony produced about 126 comments in all.

Of the two petitions submitted at the Gateway Cities hearings, one supported the extension of Line 102 to the West Los Angeles Transit Center (24 names), and the other contested the proposed truncation of Line 254 (480 names). Although the petitions are included in the public record, only the lead petitioner was included in the staff analysis, because it is difficult to verify the authenticity of the documents since addresses and phone numbers of the petitioners were either absent or incomplete in many cases.

In general, about one-third of all comments were supportive of the staff proposals with another third expressing conditional support if modifications to some proposals are approved. To illustrate this point, new Rapid Bus Line 760 is proposed to operate between downtown Los Angeles and the Artesia Metro Blue Line Station. While only two respondents supported this proposal outright, six others indicated they would do so if the line were extended southward to areas like the Long Beach Transit Mall.

The proposals to extend Lines 258 and 265 were well received by the public. About 86% of those commenting on Line 265 supported this change without conditions. Similarly, Line 258 generated a 71% favorable rating on general acceptance, which was increased to 86% by modifying the route to serve the City of Paramount Civic Center.

The operation of new express Line 577 generated the most comments overall with 13. Most of those commenting sought modifications to improve the operation. The staff proposal was modified to address these issues.

Unlike the proposals mentioned above, the plan to restructure 254 received considerable opposition. Of the comments received, about 72% opposed the change because of added travel time and transfers necessary to complete their trip. Some cited possible safety issues if service is eliminated south of Firestone Station. This particular proposal also generated a

petition with 480 names. Staff is recommending modifications to this proposal to address some of the issues raised.

Staff has summarized the public comment received for each service proposal and responded to it in Attachment C. The staff response also includes the current recommendation for each line.

REVISED SERVICE PLAN

Based upon community feedback, staff proposes to modify elements of the original service change program to address issues raised during the public review process as well as other considerations. Overall, staff is recommending changes that will modify about 52% of the original service plan.

The Revised Service Plan is summarized below. Route maps for each line are illustrated in Attachment E.

Proposals Recommended To Be Withdrawn:

- Line 127 Maintain existing route and schedule ;
- Line 460 Maintain existing off-peak schedule for all days of service ;
- Line 605 Maintain existing route and schedule ; and
- Line 711 Maintain existing route and schedule

Proposals Recommended To Be Deferred For Further Consideration:

- Line 60 Proposal to shorten route to be reconsidered by Council in Spring 2006;
- Line 65 Proposal to discontinue Washington Blvd-Soto St segment to be reconsidered by Council in the Spring 2006
- Line 760 Proposed new Rapid Bus Line to be reconsidered by Council in Spring 2006

Proposals Recommended To Be Modified:

- Line 102 Implement reroute to Huntington Park only. Schedule additional peak hour service on weekdays as originally proposed;
- Line 254 Discontinue route segment north of Dozier/Rowan Loop as originally proposed, and modify south leg by establishing new terminal at the 103rd St Metro Blue Line Station;
- Line 258 * Extend line further south and east to serve City of Paramount Civic Center; and
- Line 577 Modify route to serve El Monte Station, Norwalk I-605 Station and California State University and the Veterans Hospital in Long Beach. Eliminate proposed express stop at Whittier Blvd. Operate service all day instead of weekday peaks only.

Note* San Gabriel Valley Governance Council will decide the proposed change to Line 258 since the line is controlled by that sector.

Proposals Recommended To Be Approved As Originally Proposed:

- Line 26 Discontinue Franklin-Hillhurst route segment;
- Line 110 + Extend line to Pico Rivera Towne Center;
- Line 125 Reroute via Woodruff Ave, Imperial Hwy to 605 Station;
- Line 265 Extend to Montebello Towne Center via Rosemead Blvd;
- Line 266 Add additional peak hour service;
- Line 275 Shorten route in Whittier area;
- Line 362 Add additional peak hour service and change line number;
- Line 612 Reroute in Huntington Park-Walnut Park;
- Line 622 Make experimental line permanent; and
- Line 681 Discontinue line due to excessive duplication

Note+ South Bay Governance Council will decide the proposed change to Line 110 since the line is controlled by that sector.

IMPACT STATEMENT

The Revised Service Plan will not adversely impact the community or most riders of these lines. In fact, most riders are not affected by the changes and will continue their travel patterns like they do today. For a minority of riders, a transfer and/or added wait may be required. Some may need to plan their trips more carefully than they do today.

Where segments of routes or an entire line are proposed to be discontinued, replacement service for affected riders will be provided in most cases. For example, the Dash service operated by the City of Los Angeles will provide replacement service for Line 26 riders along Franklin Ave in Hollywood. The Dash will also provide replacement service for Line 254 riders in the City Terrace-Boyle Heights area and Watts. MTA services also operate in and around these areas and may also serve as additional travel alternatives.

Similarly, riders of Line 681, which is recommended to be cancelled, will have access to ample replacement service since virtually all of this route is duplicated today by one or more bus lines. All of these lines operate frequently, seven days a week.

Little or no economic impact is expected to result from these changes since the affected local carriers all charge a lower base fare compared to MTA's base fare of \$1.25. The base fare to ride Dash, for example, is 25 cents. Montebello's base fare is 90 cents and an interagency transfer is available for an additional 25 cents.

Potential transfer impacts from these service changes are estimated to be minimal since many replacement lines operate more frequently than the bus line or route segment being replaced.

In considering the possible impacts associated with the Revised Service Program, it is important to note that access to public transit is being expanded in the Gateway Cities. Several bus routes (Line 102, 265, 266 and 362) are all proposed to operate more peak hour service on weekdays than they do today. In addition, Lines 102, 110, 258 and 265 are all proposed to have their routes extended to serve new communities. One new express service, Line 577, is also proposed to be established. Collectively, these improvements will expand the bus network, increase travel opportunities for existing riders, and create incentives to attract new riders to use public transit.

NEXT STEPS

With approval from the Governance Council, staff will begin preparations to implement the recommended service changes on Sunday, December 18, 2005 or later. Staff also plans to return to the Council early next year with final recommendations for Lines 60, 65 and 760.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A Financial Statement
- Attachment B: Official Public Hearing Notice
- Attachment C: Summary Public Comment/Staff Response
- Attachment D: Passenger Impact Statement
- Attachment E: Line Maps

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