

DATE: MARCH 27, 2004

SUBJECT: FY 2005 SERVICE CHANGES

**ACTION: APPROVE FINDINGS OF MARCH 10, 2004 PUBLIC HEARING
AND ADOPT BUS SERVICE CHANGES FOR
IMPLEMENTATION IN FY 05**

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Approve the findings of the March 10, 2004 Public Hearing as shown in Attachment A;
- B. Adopt the following specific Metro South Bay bus service changes for implementation in FY 05:
 - Line 107 (54th St.-Fairview Blvd.) – cancel all service.
 - Line 202 (Willowbrook-Compton-Wilmington) – retain weekday service on the full route, cancel Saturday, Sunday, and Holiday service.
 - Line 209 (Van Ness Ave. – Arlington Ave.) – retain peak period weekday service on the full route, cancel midday service on weekdays and all Saturday service.
 - Line 215 (Inglewood Ave. – Redondo Beach) – retain service on the full route, weekdays only.
 - Line 439 (LA – LAX – Redondo Beach) – retain full route in all time periods.
 - Line 442 (LA – Manchester Ave. – Hawthorne Blvd. Express) – cancel service effective December 2004 when Metro Rapid Line 740 (Hawthorne Blvd.) begins service.
 - Line 444 (LA – Torrance – Palos Verdes Peninsula Express) – retain full route in all time periods.
 - Line 446/447 (LA – Carson – Wilmington – San Pedro Express) – reroute to Artesia Transit Center via Albertoni Street, and retain full route in all time periods.
 - Line 550 (San Pedro – West Hollywood Express) – retain service on the full route and establish new short-line terminal at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center for selected trips.
 - Line 607 (N. Inglewood Community Shuttle) – establish new route for weekday peak period operation.
 - Line 681 (Huntington Park – Watts Shuttle) – extend route to serve the Metro Blue Line Slauson Station.

Attachment B includes more specific information about these changes, including ridership impacts.

ISSUE

Metro South Bay operates very productive service providing mobility for multiple communities. However, underperforming routes do exist and staff proposed modifications in January 2004 to reduce duplication, improve service quality and boost service productivity. As part of the public review process of the proposed modifications, Metro South Bay held a public hearing on March 10, 2004 to receive input on proposed service changes.

After considering all public input, we revised many of our original proposals that called for complete cancellation. For Harbor Transitway service, we will keep existing service intact but we do recommend rerouting Line 446/447 to Artesia Transit Center. For Local Bus, instead of eliminating all service as originally proposed, the staff recommendation will retain weekday service on Lines 124, 202, 209, and 215 and cancel weekend/Holiday service on these lines. Line 107 is proposed for complete cancellation seven days a week, as Community DASH and other Metro routes combined serve 90% of the Line 107 route. Line 209 is proposed to operate weekday peak periods only (6 – 9 AM and 3-6 PM) with cancellation of service in the midday (9 AM – 3 PM) and on Saturdays.

We will monitor the results of these proposed modifications to measure the desired results, including improved service productivity, lower subsidy per passenger, and more effective use of capacity. The expected results, if obtained, will justify continued operation of service that otherwise would be cancelled under Metro's Transit Service Policy adopted September 2003. After monitoring the results and if further changes are necessary, we will return to the Governance Council seeking approval for modifications to be effective December 2004.

OPTIONS

As options to the staff recommendation, the Sector Governance Council may approve the bus service changes as originally proposed, or it may approve a subset of the staff recommendation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Adoption of the recommended bus service changes will result in a net savings of approximately 30,000 annual revenue service hours. At a marginal cost of \$70 per revenue service hour, the service changes result in annual savings of \$2.1 million, which can be used to provide additional service in the corridors with heaviest demand.

BACKGROUND

The Metro South Bay Sector Governance Council approved the public hearing at its meeting on January 9, 2004. At that meeting, Council members received a draft Notice of Public Hearing and maps of the subject bus routes. Staff presented the proposals, and indicated that lines proposed for cancellation or modification generally carry fewer passengers, duplicate other bus services, or parallel rail service. We held the public hearing March 10, 2004 from 6 to 8 pm at the Carson Community Center.

Public Outreach Process

Metro placed the public hearing notice in the Daily Breeze on February 7, 2004. The notice also ran in the Daily News, Long Beach Telegram, La Opinion, Rafu Shimpo, and L.A. Watts Times. Staff distributed packets of information including maps to South Bay community centers, cities, and partner transit operators. In the last week of February, Metro South Bay placed over 60,000 “take one” brochures on-board our buses to inform riders of the proposed changes and to encourage public comment. In addition, the metro.net website showed the proposed service changes and described the public input process.

An estimated 100 people attended the March 10 public hearing. Thirty-four persons provided testimony, and since some speakers mentioned multiple bus lines, we received 53 specific comments. In addition, we received 169 email comments, two petitions (one each for Line 439 and Line 442), and 39 comments by FAX or post.

Summary of Public Comment

Of the proposed bus service changes, the cancellation of Line 215 elicited the most responses from the community. We also received a large number of comments regarding the proposals for Line 439 and Line 550. Some comments acknowledged light ridership especially in the midday and on weekends. These comments usually came with the suggestion that we retain AM and PM peak period service in lieu of canceling all service on a particular line.

Many comments addressed the proposed alternatives as inconvenient either because of additional transfers or longer walks to get to/from the bus. Some comments also raised the issue of security for our passengers. A number of comments demonstrated support for public transportation as a superior mode to provide community mobility and to relieve congestion while making a positive impact on the environment. Attachment A provides more details of public comments and includes the staff responses.

Summary of Recommended Service Changes

Harbor Transitway Services: (1) reroute Lines 446/447 to the Artesia Transit Center via Albertoni Street to provide more connections (Lines 52/352 provide frequent service on Avalon Boulevard north of Victoria Street). (2) retain off-peak service on Lines 444 and 446/447 north of Artesia Transit Center, and provide more consistent service frequency through better scheduling. (3) short-line approximately one-half of southbound Line 550 trips to terminate at UCLA/Harbor Medical Center instead of 8th-Averill in San Pedro. Combined, these changes impact just over 800 boardings on weekdays and about 500 on weekends.

Express Bus Services: (1) retain peak and off-peak service on Line 439 for the full length of the route and continue to work with the City of Redondo Beach and Culver City Municipal Bus Lines regarding future service; (2) cancel all Line 442 service in conjunction with implementation of Metro Rapid Line 740 (Hawthorne Blvd.) in December 2004. The cancellation of Line 442 impacts 320 weekday boardings.

Local Bus Services: (1) cancel all Line 107 service due to low ridership and duplication with Community DASH and Line 108/358; (2) retain Line 124 service on weekdays, cancel weekend and Holiday service due to low ridership; (3) retain Line 202 on weekdays including route segment south of Metro Blue Line Del Amo Station, cancel weekend and Holiday service due to low ridership; (4) retain weekday peak period service on Line 209 for the full route, cancel weekday midday service and all Saturday service; (5) retain full weekday service on Line 215 including the route segment south of the Metro Green Line Marine/Redondo Station. Combined, these changes to local bus services impact 2,210 boardings on Saturdays, 1,460 boardings on Sundays, and 1,790 weekday boardings.

New Services: (1) establish Line 607 as the North Inglewood Community Shuttle; (2) extend Line 681 to the Metro Blue Line Slauson Station. (3) do not implement Line 609 (Athens-Hawthorne Shuttle) because Line 209 continues to operate; and (4) do not implement Line 332 on Pacific Coast Highway because Line 439 continues to operate.

NEXT STEPS

With approval from the Sector Governance Council, staff will implement all changes effective June 27, 2004 or later.

Attachment A: Findings of March 10, 2004 Public Hearing

Attachment B: Proposed Service Changes

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ATTACHMENT A: FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC COMMENT & STAFF RESPONSE

HARBOR TRANSITWAY PROPOSALS

Line 444	Cancel off-peak service north of Artesia Transit Center
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Public Comment:

Seven people commented on this proposal. Six expressed opposition citing the inconvenience of transferring to/from Line 445 at the Artesia Transit Center. One comment proposed an alternative to route the line further north to the Harbor Green Line Station to give passengers the opportunity to transfer to the Metro Rail system and Metro Rapid Line 745 (Broadway).

Staff Response:

Based on public input, staff recommends no changes to Line 444. All trips will continue to operate north of Artesia Transit Center to/from downtown LA. One of the objectives of the proposed changes, to establish a more consistent frequency between buses on the Harbor Transitway, can be accomplished through coordinated scheduling of Lines 444, 445, and 446/447. We will continue to monitor ridership levels and may return to the Governance Council in the future to seek approval for further modifications.

Line 445	Establish trunk service on the Harbor Transitway by adding service north of the Artesia Transit Center in the off-peak periods.
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Public Comment:

Only two people commented on this proposal, one for and one against. One person suggested that we market the Harbor Transitway service as an alternative to driving to Staples Center and encourage park and ride from Artesia Transit Center. Nobody opposed adding service, but some expressed concern about the route of the line in downtown Los Angeles, especially on weekends, saying that most riders would be destined for the Broadway shopping corridor while Line 445 serves the Figueroa/Flower St. corridor. Another comment proposed that Line 446 should become the trunk service on the Harbor Transitway since it carries more riders than Line 445.

Staff Response:

Staff recommends no changes to the operation of Line 445. We will work with Metro Communication Department to enhance marketing of Line 445 and other Harbor Transitway services to Staples Center and other points of interest.

Lines 446/447	Reroute to the Artesia Transit Center and cancel off-peak service north of the Artesia Transit Center.
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Public Comment:

Fourteen respondents commented on these proposals. Four comments supported the reroute and two opposed it. Six opposed cancellation of off-peak service, two supported it.

Staff Response:

Staff recommends rerouting Lines 446/447 given the public support and the transfer opportunities offered at Artesia Transit Center. The original proposed reroute between Victoria-Avalon and the Artesia Transit Center, however, is slightly revised to retain Line 446/447 service on Avalon Boulevard between Albertoni St. and Victoria St. The reroute will use Albertoni St. and 182nd St. instead of 190th St. and Vermont Ave. to reach the Artesia Transit Center. We will monitor ridership levels and may return to the Governance Council in the future seeking approval for further modifications.

Line 550	Cancel all service or cancel segment south of Artesia Transit Center.
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Public Comment:

Twenty-four people responded to these proposals. All but one opposed cancellation, and all but two opposed canceling the segment south of Artesia Transit Center. Many cited the direct access to hospitals and colleges along the route. One comment suggested we market Artesia Transit Center and Line 550 as a park-and-ride alternative to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center near the northern end of the route.

We also received 63 signatures regarding bus layover impacts on the community in San Pedro near 8th-Averill. Although not specifically supporting the proposal to cancel Line 550, remarks by community leaders suggested that some of the bus layovers could be removed by finding another layover terminal for Line 550.

Staff Response:

In light of the public comment supporting Line 550, staff modified the original proposal and recommends continued operation of the line. In order to achieve improved performance and to alleviate some of the community impacts, staff recommends establishing a new short-line terminal at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center (Carson Street at Vermont Avenue) for approximately one-half of the weekday southbound trips. This short-line terminal will help address the community issues at the turnaround loop in San Pedro, with minimal impacts to existing ridership. We will monitor ridership levels and may return to the Governance Council in the future to seek approval for further modifications.

EXPRESS BUS PROPOSALS

Line 439	Cancel all service or cancel segment south of Aviation Station
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Public Comment:

We received 53 comments and one petition with 160 signatures regarding Line 439. All but two comments opposed the proposed cancellation. Many comments pointed out that this bus route operates along the coast and therefore provides direct access to the beach and the piers. The City of El Segundo opposed both options, while Los Angeles World Airports and the Howard Hughes Center stated opposition to full cancellation.

Staff Response

In light of overwhelming public comment opposed to any change, staff recommends that Line 439 continue to operate its full route, seven days a week. We will continue to monitor ridership levels and may return to the Governance Council in the future to seek approval for further modifications.

Line 442	Cancel all service
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Public Comment:

We received 15 responses to this proposal and one petition with 83 signatures. Five comments supported cancellation, and ten opposed citing the inconvenience of transferring to the alternative services. One comment in support of cancellation suggested we wait until Metro Rapid Line 740 commences service.

Staff Response:

Staff recommends implementation of the original proposal, to cancel the service, but not until December 2004 when the new Metro Rapid Line 740 will be available to provide a fast, one-seat ride from the Hawthorne Blvd. Corridor to/from downtown Los Angeles.

LOCAL BUS PROPOSALS

Line 107	Cancel all service
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Public Comment:

We received eleven comments for this proposal, nine opposed and two in favor of cancellation. Some opponents cited security concerns walking to Line 108 on Slauson Avenue, others referred to the inconvenience.

Staff Response:

Staff recommends approval of the original proposal. The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation will move DASH Chesterfield Square from Slauson to 54th between Denker and Vermont, and other DASH services already serve portions of 54th Street. Additionally, we will extend Line 681 to the Metro Blue Line Slauson

Station to serve passengers on the east end, and implement Line 607 (North Inglewood Community Shuttle) to retain passenger connections on the west end.

Line 124	Cancel all service
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Public Comment:

This proposal generated fourteen comments. All but one opposed the cancellation, and the one in support recommended we retain peak hour service.

Staff Response

Staff recommends that we retain weekday service but cancel Line 124 weekend and Holiday service. This cancellation will impact 400 riders on Saturday and 350 on Sunday. Weekend service is unproductive at 19 boardings per hour (Saturday) and 16 boardings per hour (Sunday and Holidays) compared to 27 boardings per hour on weekdays.

Line 202	Cancel all service, or cancel weekday route segment south of Metro Blue Line Del Amo Station.
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Public Comment:

These proposals generated seven comments, six opposed to any cancellation and one in support of canceling the segment south of Del Amo Station. One comment suggested that Line 202 provides an essential link between Wilmington and the Department of Public and Social Services (DPSS) facility on Santa Fe Avenue.

Staff Response

Staff recommends retaining weekday service for the full route but canceling Line 202 weekend and Holiday service. This cancellation will impact 590 riders on Saturday and 540 riders on Sundays and Holidays. The weekend service has low productivity of 17.5 boardings per hour (Saturday) and 16 boardings per hour (Sunday), compared to 24.4 boardings per hour on weekdays.

Line 209	Cancel weekday and Saturday service, or cancel segment south of Metro Green Line and reroute to new terminal at Crenshaw Station.
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Public Comment:

Nine respondents commented on these proposals. Only one supported the proposed cancellation of the route segment south of the Metro Green Line and the associated reroute to Crenshaw Station. The comments opposed to the recommendation cited difficulties walking to the alternatives, either because of security issues or hilly terrain.

Staff Response

Staff recommends retaining weekday service in the peak periods, but canceling midday service on weekdays and all Saturday service. The cancellation of Saturday service impacts 460 riders. Line 209 does not operate on Sundays or Holidays. Weekday service generates 1,400 riders at 28.4 boardings per hour while Saturday productivity declines to 15.6 boardings per hour.

Line 215 Cancel route segment south of Metro Green Line Marine/Redondo Station to Redondo Beach.

Public Comment:

This proposal received 116 responses. Only two supported the original recommendation to cancel service, citing safety concerns of the large buses operating within a residential community. Parents, teachers, and students of Redondo Union High School accounted for most of the opposing responses and cited the essential service provided by Line 215 in transporting students to/from the high school.

Staff Response:

Staff recommends retaining weekday service the full route of Line 215 due to the overwhelming public comments received in opposition to the original proposal. For now, both peak and off-peak service will be retained. We will monitor ridership on this service to see if off-peak service should be eliminated in the future.

NEW SERVICE PROPOSALS

Line 332 Implement Limited Stop Service on PCH Between Hawthorne Blvd. and LAX, northbound in the AM peak and southbound in the PM peak.

Public Comment:

We received two responses, both in favor of the proposal.

Staff Response:

The original proposal identified Line 332 to be implemented only if Line 439 were cancelled. Accordingly, staff does not recommend implementation of this new service at this time because Line 439 will continue to operate its full route.

Line 607 North Inglewood Community Shuttle to operate weekday peak periods.

Public Comment:

We received one comment in favor of the proposal and none opposed.

Staff Response:

Staff recommends implementation of the original proposal for peak period service on weekdays. We will also investigate the availability of resources to add midday service on weekdays.

Line 609	Athens-Hawthorne Community Shuttle to operate weekday peak periods.
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Public Comment:

This proposal did not generate any public comments.

Staff Response:

Staff does not recommend implementation of Line 609 because Line 209 will continue to operate its full route.

Line 681	Extend existing route from Pacific Blvd. to serve the Metro Blue Line Slauson Station.
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Public Comment:

This proposal generated one comment in support of the proposal and one comment against.

Staff Response:

If the proposal to cancel Line 107 is approved, we recommend the extension of Line 681 to provide additional capacity between Slauson Station and Huntington Park.

Not Line Specific	General Service Cancellations
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Public Comment:

We received eleven comments opposed to service cancellations in general. These comments did not mention specific line numbers.

Staff Response:

Lines proposed for cancellation generally carry fewer riders and require a higher public subsidy to operate. We will continue to review individual line performance, and where necessary, take steps to improve the performance either through service modifications, marketing campaigns, or other focused efforts.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS FOR FOLLOW UP

Funding Policies

Public Comment:

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority suggested MTA should develop specific guidelines for transfer of services to community-based operators, including provision of temporary bridge funding to implement new services.

Staff Response:

Metro South Bay will provide the comments to the Countywide Planning and Development Department, the Metro department responsible for funding policy.

Restructuring Ideas**Public Comment:**

A few persons submitted restructuring ideas for future consideration. Some of the ideas submitted included a new bus line from Marina del Rey to Manhattan Beach. Another proposed a new Metro Rapid Line to replace Line 550, while another suggested Metro Rapid service from West Hollywood to LAX.

Staff Response:

We will share these ideas with Metro Westside/Central Service Sector for further consideration.

Metro Green Line Station Spacing**Public Comment:**

One commenter noted the spacing between rail stations increases on the east end, and that the Green Line does not serve LAX, forcing passengers to make transfers to connecting service. This commenter also suggested a station at Western Avenue to serve Los Angeles Southwest College.

Staff Response:

At this time Metro does not intend to add or delete stations on the Metro Green Line.

Harbor Transitway Fares and Access**Public Comment:**

One comment suggested that Harbor Transitway ridership would increase if Metro did not charge distance-based fares on top of the \$1.25 base fare. The same commenter also questioned why Line 108 (Slauson Ave.) and Line 115 (Manchester/Firestone Blvd.) do not stop at the Harbor Transitway.

Staff Response:

Metro South Bay as operator of the Harbor Transitway would like to see increased ridership. We will analyze the impacts of fare policy on the Harbor Transitway, and will contact Metro Stops and Zones regarding the lack of surface street stops beneath the Slauson and Manchester Stations.