

ATTACHMENT A  
**FY16Q2 STATUS UPDATE ON RIDERSHIP AND CUSTOMER SERVICE  
INITIATIVES**

**MARKET RESEARCH**

Work during FY16Q1 focused on traditional broader based market research efforts to identify opportunities for ridership within the region's 24 major employment centers as identified by high densities of employment, regional destinations, and activities. Once the centers were identified, Census journey to work information was compared to existing ridership to begin evaluating transit demand. The next level of analysis would include identifying potential pockets of new riders and gaps in service. This information would be one input in developing service adjustments through the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) to be implemented starting December 2016.

Operations also completed an initial Owl Network analysis, evaluating the productivity of each segment of the lines within the network. They also identified the locations of 24 hour services and their proximity to the Owl Network. An initial plan for improving Owl service has been developed, which includes modifying service levels on some lines and restructuring the service in the San Fernando Valley. Input from this effort is also included in the COA planning study. On board surveys and surveys of 24 hour businesses, originally proposed, are subject to available funding.

Targeted Media Research and Development of Rider Profiles

A more comprehensive understanding of rider and non-rider demographics, their opinions, travel patterns, interests, likes and dislikes will help to refine services to better meet their needs, develop targeted marketing campaigns for specific market segments, and invest in system enhancements that are important to riders.

While traditional market research efforts are well underway through on board surveys and analysis of population, employment and other Census data, staff have begun efforts to tap into the rich meta data from social media accounts of Metro customers, and to link that information with TAP activity, Metro web site visits and app usage. Communications has added a Facebook tracking pixel to the Metro web site and mobile app, which allows staff to begin creating custom audience segments of likely riders and use Facebook's audience insight tool to capture demographic, psychographic and behavioral data. Linking travel history from TAP activities with behavioral and attitudinal information from Metro's web side, apps and social media, will allow staff to identify rider and potential rider profiles that can be used to develop rider data dashboards to better understand the unique characteristics of individual lines and areas, customized surveys based on those characteristics, as well as develop more targeted and relevant outreach and promotions. Developing the data dashboards and customized surveys is anticipated for Spring/Summer 2016.

In addition, emails of registered TAP users have been compiled and a customized

survey will be developed and administered to better understand these users, particularly past users who no longer rely on Metro services. Information collected on these as well as current users will help staff to what is working and what is not, areas of concern that drive riders away from Metro services, and important aspects of the transit system to focus improvement.

Staff is also collecting data on Millennials who live and work near transit-accessible locations. This information will be used to develop outreach specifically tailored to this audience.

## **SERVICE DESIGN**

### Strategic Bus Network Plan/Frequent Bus Network

Service Development staff completed the update to the adopted Transit Service Policy documents and is proceeding with the development of a line by line analysis of each route in the system. Workshops are planned for each of the service councils in January 2016 to develop a program of service changes that would likely be implemented over the next 2-3 years assuming that the bus system RSH budget remains relatively constant over the same period.

The goal of these workshops is to implement the 15-minute peak service network based on the draft Strategic Bus Network Plan recommendations from the Peer Review Committees for gap closures to the peak 15-minute service plan.

Bus service changes on the Silver Line were inaugurated Sunday December 13, 2015 and were the subject of a Public Hearing in September 2015. This line combines the Line 450 express from San Pedro with the Silver Line to provide additional service in the I-110 corridor. Individuals can now board the bus in San Pedro and ride through to El Monte.

In March 2016, complementing the opening of the Foothill Rail Extension to Azusa, a new contracted service connecting the red and orange lines with the Foothill extension will commence service. For the first time, customers will be able to travel from the San Fernando Valley to the San Gabriel Valley without having to go downtown first to make connections.

A public hearing will be held in February 2016 for service changes to be implemented in June 2016 that will provide further service improvement opportunities including, but not limited to:

- Combination of Lines 156 and 237 in the San Fernando Valley providing a one seat ride from Hollywood, the red and Orange Lines, Van Nuys, and the Van Nuys Airport;
- Planned extensions of routes 234, 734, and 788 to connect with the EXPO line to Santa Monica;

- Provision of an increase in service on Rapid Line 704 (Santa Monica Boulevard) improving midday service;
- Provision of additional stops on Line 577 from the San Gabriel Valley to the Long Beach VA Medical Center; and
- Maintenance of service on Robertson Boulevard.

In addition, the Transit Service Policy was revised in October 2015 adjusting the load standard, proposing enhancements to the frequent bus network, and including guidance on realigning services between Metro and municipal operators. As a result, frequency on Line 704 (Santa Monica Blvd) has been improved from 20 minutes to 15 minute service, and load factor changes and bus stop consolidations have been incorporated into the schedule changes for December 2015. These scheduling policy directives were recommended by the APTA peer review committee.

Lastly, staff will be proposing changes to reinvigorate the rapid services and make revisions to the OWL service network which has not been reviewed for the last 15 years.

## **SERVICE MANAGEMENT**

### Improve Bus Bridge Operations

The rail network is designed to serve customer travel needs along key corridors with consistent, frequent, and simple to use service. Unfortunately, the rail system cannot operate perfectly all the time due to planned maintenance and enhancement work, and unplanned accidents or other incidents that disrupt service between stations. During these interruptions, it is critical to continue providing consistent, frequent, and simple to use service to our customers through well planned bus bridges and alternative services,

Bus bridges are a service mitigation tool employed to minimize the effects of rail service interruptions. To help reduce the amount of confusion and frustration by customers during a service disruption, the support of TAP “Blue Shirt” ambassadors have been added to the formal Bus Bridge procedures to allow Vehicle Operations Supervisors to focus on the logistics of the bus bridge, while the Blue Shirts, who have been well received by customers as friendly and knowledgeable ambassadors of the TAP program, provide customer support during bus bridges by “hand holding” passengers through the bus bridge operations. This enhancement is particularly timely and important in helping to retain customers as planned rail service interruptions will increase throughout the construction of the Regional Connector.

## **TRANSIT PRIORITIES**

### Identification of Bus Service Bottlenecks

Most of Metro's bus service operates in mixed flow conditions, sharing the road with other vehicles such as cars, trucks, and bikes. As a result, bus service becomes slow and unreliable when moving through congestion bottlenecks, degrading service quality and decreasing ridership.

As reported in the last update on ridership initiatives, Operations' Service Planning and Scheduling Staff have identified a list of congestion hotspots as well as lines impacted. Since then, 10 hot spots were identified as the first priority to work with the City of Los Angeles to address. Metro and City staff are currently refining solutions and identifying funding options.

Countywide Planning has initiated detailed technical studies to improve transit operations along two critical corridors identified through the LA County Bus Rapid Transit Study completed in December 2013. Consultant task orders were awarded in July 2015 to analyze the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridors and develop BRT operating plans, alignments and potential stations for each, with the objectives of improving travel times, service reliability, passenger comfort and convenience and traffic flows. The majority of technical work is anticipated to be completed within 12 months, and three meetings of the Technical Advisory Committee for each project have been convened.

#### All Door Boarding and Off Board Fare Payment

All Door Boarding (ADB) was piloted during the summer of 2015 on Line 720. The objectives of the pilot were to study the benefits of ADB on stop dwell time and variability, customer and employee perception, and potential impacts to fare evasion. OMB staff is currently working with TAP, Operations, Safety and Security and Countywide Planning to identify how ADB will impact these departments, both positively and negatively, including changes to current procedures, consistency with other programs, required level of support by departments, and financial impact. Evaluation results as well as recommendations for path forward are expected to be presented to the Board for consideration in February 2016.

### **SAFETY/SECURITY**

#### Security Technology Improvements

Several safety and security related technology improvements have and are currently being implemented, including installation of security kiosks at nine locations to help Sheriff's deputies and other security personnel access enforcement tools, such as closed circuit television (CCTV) displays, landline telephones, two-way radios and computer workstations. The kiosks will be installed at the Willow, Crenshaw, Aviation, La Cienega, North Hollywood, Expo Power Sub Station, Wilshire/Western, 7th/Flower and Hollywood/Highland. In addition, there has been a greater emphasis on riding trains, buses and patrolling Metro's above and underground train stations. Staff members are also engaging Metro's regional law enforcement partners to bolster security system-wide.

## **CUSTOMER AMMENITIES**

### Improvements to Real-Time Arrival Countdown Clocks

Since the last update of ridership initiatives, several improvements have been made to the real-time arrival information, as follows:

- Through ongoing partnership with Google, Metro real-time arrival information is now integrated within the Google Maps transit trip planning feature. Google Maps users now will see the scheduled as well as real time arrival information of their selected bus or rail line. After quality checking the real-time data feeds, Metro was able to share the information with Google Maps to launch the new feature in early December 2015.
- With the reprogramming of Homeland Security Grant funding, procurement of the newly ordered Transit Passenger Information System (TPIS) monitors is in process, and are anticipated to be delivered by December 31, 2015. Once delivered, installation will begin on the Red, Blue and Green Lines. Some monitors that were already in stock have been installed at the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station.
- Rail Communications is currently assigning a dedicated inspector to verify the operation of the TPIS and providing a daily status report to all parties concerned. They are also labeling the TPIS equipment for easier reporting of failed monitors by Metro customers.
- The prediction software is being monitored daily to ensure accuracy. When accuracy of the information is compromised due to incidents on rail, the TPIS predication connection will be temporarily disconnected and replaced with a delay message to eliminate confusion to customers.

### Cellular Service on the Red/Purple Line

Staff are continuing to work on providing continuous wireless phone coverage and Internet access to customers on the Red/Purple Line from above ground, down onto the subway station platforms and finally onto the subway trains when travelling within the underground tunnels. InSite Wireless Group has completed construction work for Phase One\* portions (Union Station to 7th / Metro Station) of the Red and Purple Line stations and tunnels. The Distributed Antenna System (DAS), required for maintaining signal strength within the tunnels, has also been completed.

On December 1, 2015, InSite Wireless Group and Verizon Wireless executed a Communications Master Sub-License Agreement which will allow Verizon customers to access cellular voice and data services by the end of the 1st quarter of 2016. At that time, construction work for Phase Two (7th / Flower to Vermont / Sunset and to Wilshire / Western) will also begin. Negotiations with Sprint, AT&T and T-Mobile are ongoing.

*\*Phase One stations include Union Station, Civic Center, Pershing Square and 7th Metro.*

## **FARE STRUCTURE**

### Institutional Transit Access Pass (ITAP) Restructuring

In November 2015, staff presented an evaluation of the current ITAP program in response to Board Motion 49.1 – Community College Student Transit Pass Pilot Program. The report recommended that the ITAP program be restructured based on the already discounted college/vocational pass pricing. With increased marketing and outreach campaigns, additional subsidies from colleges and universities, installing TAP Customer Point of Sales (CPOS) devices on site for convenient card distribution and loading of value, a revamped ITAP program can result in a sustainable program that increases ridership and benefits colleges and universities by relieving pressure on traffic congestion and parking. Next steps and timeline are currently being finalized with the goal of implementing the revamped ITAP program in the Fall of 2016.

## **Marketing/Outreach/Promotions**

### Encourage Discretionary/Late Night/Recreational Ridership

Since the last update of ridership initiatives, Communications has continued to work on several fronts to encourage discretionary transit trips, as follows:

- Building on annual efforts to promote the Dodger Stadium Express, which offers round trip service to Dodger Stadium for ticketholders, Communications launched a social media advertising campaign to promote the service as the Dodgers entered the playoffs. With a total budget of \$3,892.05, these ads drove more than 10,500 clicks to the Dodger Stadium Express webpage on *metro.net* and garnered 789,133 impressions. The campaign also featured a video of the Dodger Stadium Express bus running in the dedicated lanes on Sunset Boulevard, which racked up 43,951 views. Ridership on the Dodger Stadium Express for the two playoff games at Dodger Stadium increased 34% from last year.
- Metro has also entered into promotional agreements with the LA Kings hockey team and LA Clippers basketball team to encourage fans to take Metro to these sporting events. These paid partnerships include radio advertising, in-arena signage, in-game features/promotions, as well as inclusion in the teams' web and social media content. Supporting these agreements, Communications will also develop a long-term discretionary ridership campaign further targeting Kings and Clippers fans with social media advertising. These ads will reinforce messaging about the ease and convenience of the teams' transit-accessible venue, aiming to increase ridership to home games. These are expected to rollout in the later part of the current season.

- For the annual FYF music festival in August, Communications worked closely with Operations to promote ridership to the event at the LA Sports Arena at USC. This promotion included social media posts with a map showing Metro access to the event and a video highlighting several concertgoers plans to ride Metro to the event. Temporary signage and support staff on the ground at the event also supported ridership to the event. Metro and concert organizers estimate that 27 percent of the 35,000 daily attendees accessed the two-day event via the Metro Expo Line.
- Building excitement for the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension opening next spring, Communications ran a short social media promotion on the announcement of the opening date. Paid social media posts with a total budget of \$3,402.84 generated about 16,000 clicks to the news post on The Source; through sharing of these promoted posts and media coverage of the announcement, The Source experienced a record 42,400 page views on a single story in one day.
- Communications recently released two ridership-focused promotional videos. Featuring local musicians and original multi-cultural songs, each of the videos outlined instructions for riding the bus and train and directed viewers to download the Go Metro mobile app. The videos were released on Facebook in November and December and have been viewed 118,269 times and shared 1,322 times so far, without any paid promotion. Metro Communications will add paid advertising to these videos to further extend their reach in coming weeks.

## **Partnerships**

### Collaboration with Transportation Network Companies

Metro staff continues to investigate opportunities to partner with Transportation Network Companies (TNC). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been outlined identifying terms of agreement for coordinating with TNCs and is currently being reviewed by one TNC. This MOU includes identifying pilot programs for first/last mile, late night venues, mobility and equity for low income and special needs customers, and data sharing on customer usage and travel demand. Agreement on terms is expected by January 2016.

In addition, Metro's Guaranteed Ride Home program (GRH) has expanded to incorporate carsharing and TNCs. Finally, staff is investigating options for integrating TNCs with TAP and the Metro Trip Planner.

### Regional Ridership Review

The majority of municipal bus operators in the region continue to experience ridership decline similar to Metro. As a result, Metro is facilitating a working group consisting of

all operators within the TAP program to further analyze ridership trends as a region and share information on the actions each agency is taking to reverse this negative trend. Additional information will be provided in future status updates.