



Board Report

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AD HOC CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE JULY 20, 2017

**SUBJECT: METRO SERVICE STUDY AND REGIONAL
RIDERSHIP IMPROVEMENT TASK FORCE**

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on Metro's systemwide bus network restructuring study and the regional efforts to grow ridership.

ISSUE

In May 2017, staff briefed the Board of Directors on the Metro Service Study (systemwide bus network restructuring effort). In addition, Metro staff has been working with the County's municipal transit operators over the past year to identify opportunities to grow ridership in the region. This report provides a status of both efforts.

DISCUSSION

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) provides over 1.3 million customer trips per weekday with a fleet of 2,200 buses, 219 light rail, and 104 heavy rail cars. Service is distributed along an extensive network of 136 bus lines and 102 one way track miles of rail service that span 1,433 square miles of Los Angeles County. In addition, Metro funds local bus services operated by sixteen (16) municipal bus operators and several other community services. Together, the municipal operators account for roughly 30% of transit service within the County while Metro provides the remaining 70%. Therefore, coordination of services, fare payment, signage and information is critical to providing seamless services throughout the region.

The Metro bus and rail system will continue to expand with the passage of the County's Measure R in 2008 and Measure M in 2016, both one-half cent sales taxes for transportation improvements. Currently, three mega transit projects are being constructed, including Crenshaw/LAX, Regional Connector, and the Purple Line Extension. Several others, including the Gold Line Foothill Extension to Claremont, East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor, West Santa Ana Transit Corridor, Sepulveda Pass, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) between North Hollywood and Pasadena, and along Vermont Avenue, are planned to be in construction within the next 10 years.

Despite being the second most heavily used bus and seventh most heavily used rail systems in the

Country, and voter endorsement for continued growth, Metro's systemwide ridership has declined by 15% since April 2014, consistent with national trends. A recent survey of past riders found that 19% of respondents stopped using Metro services primarily because their travel patterns changed, and another 12% stated that it is too hard to get to and from transit. Eighteen percent and 11%, respectively, mentioned slow speeds and service reliability were their main reasons for leaving transit. Ridership declines can also be attributed to shifts in customer demographics and lifestyles, changing workforce travel patterns, safety and security concerns, new technology and opportunities for other travel options such as shared mobility on-demand.

Staff is currently working on two efforts to directly address the ridership declines: 1) Metro Service Study (systemwide bus network restructuring project), and 2) The Ridership Growth Action Plan in collaboration with the region's municipal transit providers.

Metro Service Study

Given the transforming landscape of transportation and travel demand within Los Angeles County, Metro is embarking on an effort to restructure the entire bus network into a comprehensive and intuitive system of high quality and integrated transit services that are relevant, reflective of, and attractive to the diverse customer needs within Los Angeles County. More specifically, the service restructuring aims to increase transit use within the County over the next decade by attracting customers to Ride More by Retaining current customers, Reclaiming past customers, and Recruiting new customers. In addition, the re-baselined bus network will set the foundation for future growth from transportation investments provided through Measures R and M.

With the diversity and complexity of Metro's governing boards, key stakeholders, customers, and operating environment, the following principles are critical to the success of this project:

- Extensive public input and outreach throughout the project (early buy-in and understanding of tradeoffs from Board and key stakeholders, and inclusive of LA County's diverse communities).
- Integration/coordination with Metro's Strategic Plan and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update, as well as municipal operator system restructure plans.
- Collaborative process with local jurisdictions and other key stakeholders (implement service improvements in conjunction with transit supportive infrastructure and programs).
- Openness to creativity and innovation.

On Friday, June 23, 2017, a task order Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to the Countywide Planning Bench contractors to assist in this effort. Proposals will be due July 25, 2017 with an anticipated project kick off in the Fall 2017. In general, the contractor shall be expected to assist in the following tasks leading up to the implementation of a systemwide bus network restructure.

- **Market Research, Market Segmentation Analysis and Travel Demand** - A comprehensive understanding of who our past, current and potential customers are. For what trip purposes are they willing to use transit? When do they want to travel? What are the service attributes most

important to them? Where are they coming from and going to?

- **Existing Service Evaluation** - What are the strengths, deficiencies, gaps and opportunities of the existing Metro bus network? How are customers using the system, and how well do we meet their needs? Where are the gaps and deficiencies in service and service attributes? Where are the opportunities for ridership growth, and how much can ridership grow if we address our gaps and deficiencies?
- **Establish Service Concepts** - Develop a series of preferred service concepts to consider that best match with the travel demand and service attributes most important to each customer group. How do these service concepts address the gaps and deficiencies identified in the Existing Service Evaluation? How will these service concepts create opportunities for ridership growth? What are the tradeoffs between service concepts and how will the benefits outweigh the negatives?
- **Service Design Guidelines** - The service concepts will be translated into a set of service design guidelines and criteria to ensure that any future adjustments to service are consistent with the preferred service concept.
- **Capital Infrastructure Needs** - Transit preferential infrastructure will be identified that will enhance speed and reliability of bus service along key regional corridors, as well as infrastructure to support new service delivery methods, and customer service infrastructure for major transfer points and activity centers.
- **Service Restructuring Plan** - The Contractor and Metro service planning and scheduling staff will work hand in hand to develop a transit network based on the preferred Service Concept and design guidelines that are anticipated to maximize ridership and improve customer experience within: 1) existing resources, 2) 10% fewer resources, and 3) 10% greater resources.

Ridership Growth Action Plan

Given the regional nature of travel in the County and the interdependency between agencies in providing service, Metro is also working with the Los Angeles County Municipal Operators Association (LACMOA) to take a collaborative approach to growing ridership. This Regional Ridership Improvement Task Force (RRITF) has hired a contractor to assist in developing a Ridership Growth Action Plan (RGAP) aimed at increasing transit use in the LA region over the next decade. The RGAP will identify innovative solutions to attract customers that are developed based on a comprehensive understanding of bus and rail markets within the LA region and nationally, and the travel attributes that are important to various transit markets, including Commuters, Occasional, and Multi-Purpose Riders.

While the Metro Service Study will take an in-depth look into Metro bus services and recommend specific route and schedule changes throughout the network, the RGAP will provide a higher level view of service as well as other factors that impact a customer's end to end trip, including perceptions of safety, fares, fare payment, technology, information, trip planning and wayfinding, etc. The Task Force is one of the first of its kind in the nation to evaluate regional service holistically, and develop a

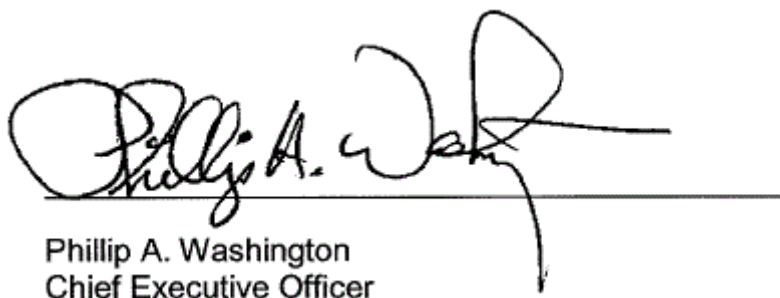
collaborative path for regional partners to implement the plan's recommendations. The RGAP is anticipated to be completed by late 2018. It is anticipated that components of the plan will be implemented on an individual transit operator basis, while other solutions will be regional and contingent on countywide consensus.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternative to staff recommendation is to not conduct the Metro Service Study and RGAP, impacting Metro and the region's ability to grow ridership and improve the customer experience.

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