

# South Bay Cities Council of Governments

April 13, 2020

To: SBCCOG Steering Committee

From: Jacki Bacharach, Executive Director  
Steve Lantz, Transportation Director

Subject: Analysis of Proposed Metro NextGen Study South Bay Bus Service Changes

## Adherence to Strategic Plan:

*Goal A: Environment, Transportation, and Economic Development.* Facilitate, implement, and/or educate members and others about environmental, transportation, and economic development programs that benefit the South Bay. Strategy 5 – Actively pursue opportunities for infrastructure funding for member agencies.

## BACKGROUND

The Metro bus network carries 70% of all transit riders in the county and has not had a major overhaul in 25 years. Over that time, L. A. County has evolved dramatically, with over a million residents added. The transformation of many local communities with new travel patterns, expansion of the Metro Rail network, and the emergence of new transportation options like ride hailing apps and bike share have reduced bus and rail ridership in L. A. County (and throughout the nation).

In 2018, Metro began the process of reimagining its bus system to better meet the needs of current and future riders through the NextGen Bus Study. The study goal is to improve the attractiveness of Metro's bus service and improve network issues, such as: long, cross-county lines with inadequate service frequencies and unreliable schedule adherence, routes that do not serve 2020 destinations, and travel times that do not compete well with other options like driving alone and the new microtransit services.

A new Metro Regional Service Concept was approved by the Metro Board of Directors in July 2019 to provide a policy framework for the re-design of Metro bus service. The Regional Service Concept includes several aspirational phrases, but little specificity, with concepts like, "provide high-quality mobility options", "the bus system is easy to understand and use," and "customers are satisfied."

In January 2020, Metro staff released its NextGen Bus Plan Draft Service Proposals to change service on its 170 Metro bus routes. Metro Operations Planning staff presented an executive summary of the draft service proposals at the February 27, 2020 SBCCOG Board Meeting but there was not time to discuss each of the specific South Bay changes proposed in the study. SBCCOG staff has reviewed the draft service proposals for Metro bus lines that serve the South Bay in preparing this follow-up report.

Staff has prepared a detailed analysis of the NextGen Plan and the detrimental and beneficial proposals for South Bay service changes (see Exhibit 1). For those that wish to better understand the specific changes recommended for a specific Metro bus line, the analysis also includes a line-by-line summary table of the proposed changes (see Exhibit 2).

## NEXT STEPS

Following the most recent public health guidelines, Metro cancelled the remainder of the Next Gen in-person community workshops planned in March and April, and is transitioning to alternative ways of gathering public input. Instead, Metro is promoting its [NextGen Virtual Workshop](#). This includes the ability to [explore the full plan](#) using interactive maps and detailed line-by-line descriptions, as well as provide comments.

Due to the Covid 19 social isolation mandates, Metro cancelled its planned countywide Live Webcast and Q&A on March 31st at 6 p.m. and a Telephone Town Hall on April 1st at 6:30 p.m. For more information on evolving changes in the public participation process, [click here](#). Comments are still being accepted via email at [nextgen@metro.net](mailto:nextgen@metro.net)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Steering Committee recommends that the SBCCOG Board approve sending a letter to the Metro Board and CEO with the following recommendations:

1. Coordinate with affected local jurisdictions on any local planning, design and construction commitments that would be needed to implement the 6 potential South Bay High Quality Bus Corridors that would be within their jurisdiction and to expedite corridor development funding;
2. Assist Metro and South Bay to integrate Microtransit and the South Bay Local Travel Network into their service change planning;
3. Work with South Bay municipal transit operators to find alternatives that avoid eliminating or degrading current South Bay transit service and to seamlessly transition any lines or line segments that can be continued by a non-Metro operator;
4. Oppose any service change that imposes a new transfer if the transfer time increases South Bay rider travel times more than increased service frequency reduces total travel time including new transfers.
5. Oppose any Metro service changes that would eliminate Access Services availability in pockets of the South Bay where Metro service is eliminated.
6. Rather than waiting for the Metro Board to adopt a final NextGen Study Service Plan, encourage Metro to incorporate high-priority NextGen service changes that improve efficiency in its COVID 19 service recovery plans.

Attachment:

Exhibit 1- SBCCOG Analysis of Metro's NextGen Study

Exhibit 2 – Metro NextGen South Bay Bus Service Changes

## Exhibit 1

### Analysis Of NextBus Plan Issues

The NextBus Plan provides a detailed proposal of line, route and schedule changes being considered for implementation. The changes are grouped in five sections corresponding to Metro's five Service Councils (Gateway, South Bay, San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, and Westside/Central). A fact sheet for each route documents the proposed service changes. The major NextGen goals are to: increase service frequency to 10 minutes or less on key lines, assure 30-minute service frequencies on all lines, and assure service is no more than 2.5 times slower than driving.

The Regional Service Concept strategies include: "shorter route lengths"; "coordination" with municipal bus service (i.e.: elimination of low-ridership Metro route segments with Municipal Operators potentially replacing service on some routes; "standardized frequencies" (i.e.: consolidation of local and express bus lines on common routes; "subarea transit hubs"; (i.e.: shorter routes more daily round trips, but with more transfers and better integration with connection to Municipal bus services); improved "stop spacing" (i.e.: fewer stops, longer access times); "transit supportive infrastructure" (i.e.: improved real-time arrival electronic displays, replacement of fabric seat inserts with durable vinyl inserts, incentives for local jurisdictions to build bus shelters, all-door boarding with off-bus TAP fare payment, and bus-only lanes).

The report projects the ridership growth that could occur from restructuring its services, growing its revenue service hours, and improving service frequency on "high frequency corridors" (buses arriving every 10 minutes or better). Metro staff projected the benefits of its plan (and projected percentage of riders that would be lost) under four scenarios, as follows:

Scenario	Revenue Hours	High frequency Corridors (weekdays)	Ridership Change	Riders Lost
Existing Conditions	7 million	16	not applicable	0
Reconnect	7 million	28	+5%	0.3%
Transit First	7.5 million	29	+15-20%	0.3%
Future Funding	9.4 million	46	+25-30%	0.3%

The Reconnect scenario would re-distribute current service hours to expand the number of corridors with 5 to 7.5-minute frequencies on the top 20 lines all day on weekdays. The Transit First scenario would improve service on 40 lines. The Future Funding scenario would require significant additional funding to complete the network and operate 9.4 million service hours. Metro staff projects that implementing the future funding scenario changes could generate a systemwide ridership increase of 15-20%.

Metro staff estimates that nearly \$1 billion in capital projects would be needed to deliver the future funding scenario. However, the NextGen study does not specifically list the long-term capital project priorities or costs associated with each scenario.

### SOUTH BAY ANALYSIS

The NextGen plan proposes changes to 39 South Bay Metro lines. Exhibit 1 includes a summary of Metro's South Bay routes, the line-specific changes, and the intended purposes of the change. Some of the changes are beneficial to the South Bay while others are detrimental to local service. Some changes reallocate bus lines on the same

route by consolidating local lines, limited-stop lines or Rapid Lines into a single line to increase service frequency and increase bus speeds by serving fewer stops. The categorical changes and affected Line numbers are as follows:

<u>Proposed changes</u>	<u>Affected Metro Lines</u>
<i>Detrimental Service Changes</i>	
Eliminating the Line in its entirety	52, 126, 130, 209, 212, 312, 346, 352, 442, 550, 607, 625, 710, 745, 757
Eliminating a segment of the Line	202, 210, 344, 710, 950
Eliminating Owl Service, Off-Peak Service	40, 246, 754
Eliminating stops / lengthening stop spacing	45, 51, 204, 207, 754
Shortening route, adding transfer	510, 950
Replacing Metro line with Muni Line(s)	130 - (We don't know whether the munis are willing and able to replace line 130.)
 <i>Beneficial Service Changes</i>	
Combining local, limited stop lines, and Rapid Lines	211, 212, 215, 410, 710, 754, 757
Adding New Line	211, 510
Extending line segment	51, 127
Increase service frequency	48, 81, 204, 206, 207, 212, 232, 246, 344
Re-routing / Simplifying route	40, 53, 205, 246
Adding Owl Service	111, 125, 212

Rapid Lines have been merged with local service on common routes to increase service frequency and reliability. Metro lines have been re-routed, shortened or eliminated which may significantly affect a small percentage of current riders. South Bay riders will have more frequent service, but more riders may be forced to transfer between bus lines on routes that currently have a one-seat ride. In addition, the Local/Rapid stops have been consolidated or eliminated and the distance between bus stops on some routes has been increased.

Metro has been coordinating with South Bay Municipal Operators about the Municipal Operators' interest or financial ability to replace Metro's discontinued services. Discussions have centered around the municipal operators' capital and operating costs that would need to be subsidized during the initial two-year period before the "new" municipal lines would qualify for state and federal transit operating subsidies under the existing Formula Allocation Procedure. Some operators may have the ability and interest to operate replacement services while other operators will not be able to expand service. The SBCCOG has included transit capital projects in its annual Metro Budget Request for Measure R South Bay Highway Program capital grants with the understanding that these revenues could only be made available for the recommended transit project applications if the Metro Board approves a Measure R Transfer Policy later this year.

Riders eligible for federally-mandated Access Services paratransit services may be adversely affected when Metro eliminates service and no other operator provides replacement service on the route. The federal Americans With Disabilities Act requires complementary paratransit services be provided for riders that cannot use the fixed route transit service within a 3/4-mile radius of an active route. Metro has offered to grandfather in current ASI

riders, but has made no commitment to offer ASI services for new riders in areas that no longer have a fixed route bus line in the service corridor.

Although the service changes would make Metro’s network more efficient and reliable, service frequency, service restructuring, and re-routing alone will not accomplish the NextGen goal to become more competitive with driving. Metro staff has identified the need for a \$1 billion capital program to improve bus speeds and reliability on streets throughout L. A. County by implementing new High-Quality transit corridors.

The Regional Service Concept anticipates development of New High Quality Corridors in the following Service Sectors:

<u>Service Sector</u>	<u>Current High Quality Corridors</u>	<u>New High Quality Corridors</u>
Gateway	1	6
South Bay	4	10
San Fernando Valley	3	6
San Gabriel Valley	2	6
Westside/Central	14	27

However, the bus capital program budget is not included in the NextGen Plan. Although Metro has identified an opportunity to implement six additional High Quality Corridors in the South Bay (from 4 to 10), the agency has yet to identify a source of capital funding or an implementation sequence / schedule for its High Quality corridors. It is also unclear what policy commitments, such as converting mixed flow lanes on city streets to bus-only lanes or providing signal priority or buses at local intersections, would be needed from the local jurisdictions through which a High Quality Corridor is implemented. It is clear that Metro intends to focus nearly half of its future High Quality corridors on the Westside and in Central L. A. City by expanding from 14 current corridors to 27.

In simultaneous studies, Metro’s Operations Department and the City of Inglewood/LAWA are developing separate Microtransit pilot programs that could provide an attractive public-transit option to fixed-route bus service. SBCCOG is also developing a local transit network for slow speed vehicles and is implementing a South Bay Fiberoptic Network to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government services and to enable travel-demand applications that reduce vehicle miles travelled. It is not yet known how these new service and demand management models will affect Metro ridership. It is also unclear which of the new transportation models will prove sustainable.

## Exhibit 2

### Summary of Significant Proposed Metro NextGen Service Changes In The South Bay

<u>Line #s</u>	<u>Current Line Description</u>	<u>Proposed Changes</u>
40, 740	L. A. Union Station to Inglewood Via Crenshaw Bl. & Florence Av. to S. B. Galleria	Increase frequency; eliminate owl service; simplify route
45, 745	LAUS to Crenshaw/LAX La Brea Station via Crenshaw Bl., Florence Ave.	Merge Line 40, 745; Eliminate Line 40 Owl Service LAX and downtown LA; consolidate stops
48	DTLA to Green Line Avalon Stn. Via San Pedro St., Avalon St.	No route change, increase service frequency on weekdays in midday and evening
51	DTLA to CSUDH via San Pedro St. & Avalon St	Merge 51, 52, 352; extend to CSUDH; consolidate stops; an extension of Line 127 would replace Line 52 on Victoria St.
52	DTLA to CSUDH via Avalon Bl	Merge line into new Line 51.
53	DTLA to Rosa Parks Station via Central Ave.	Re-route line to connect A (Blue) Line Rosa Parks Station to CSUDH instead of Green Line Avalon Station.
81	DTLA to Harbor Freeway Silver / Green Line Station via Figueroa	No route change in S. Bay; increased weekday frequency in midday and evening hours
111	Norwalk to LAX Bus Center via Figueroa, Florence, La Brea	No route change. Owl service added.
125	Norwalk Green Line Station to El Segundo via Rosecrans Av.	No route change. Owl service added.
126	Local Route between Manhattan Beach & Crenshaw Bl. on Manhattan Beach Bl. then north via local streets to Green Line Hawthorne/Lennox Stn.	Eliminate line
130	Artesia Bl. From Cerritos to S. B. Galleria	Replace Metro service with L. B. Transit east of A (Blue) Line and Torrance Transit from A Line to S. B. Galleria, New transfer at A Line.
202	Green Line to Wilmington via Alameda Bl., Anaheim St.	Discontinue route south of A (Blue) Line Artesia Station to Wilmington

204, 754	Vermont Av. from Hollywood Bl. to I-105	Add service on line 204; run Rapid (754) service only in peak hours on weekdays; consolidate underutilized line 204 bus stops
205	Silver Line Carson station to Wilmington Bl. / Main St. via Del Amo Bl.	Simplify route, serve new development, reduce duplication with Torrance Transit
206	Red Line Vermont Stn. to Green Line Vermont/Athens Stn. via Normandie Av.	No route change; more frequent weekday midday & evening service
207	Hollywood to Green Line Crenshaw Stn. via Western Ave.	Merge Lines 207, 757 for more frequent service; consolidate underutilized stops
209	Franklin to 130 <sup>th</sup> on Van Ness Ave.	Eliminate line
210, 710	Crenshaw Bl to Redondo Bch.	Merge 210, 710 to double frequency, add owl service, discontinue north segment between Wilshire Bl and Sunset and segment south of El Camino College
211	2 directional loop route north of Green Line Hawthorne / Lennox Stn.	211 to replace Lines 212, 312 on Prairie Av.; and 215 on Manchester Av. & Inglewood Av.; provide new weekday, night and weekend service
212, 312 40, 710	La Brea Av. / Hawthorne Bl. from Hollywood to S. B. Galleria	Merge line 212, 312; eliminate 40, 710; increase frequency; add owl service
215	2 directional loop route south of Green Line Hawthorne/Lennox Stn.	215 to replace Lines 211, 215 on Prairie Av., Marine Av., & Inglewood Ave.
232	LAX to Long Beach via Sepulveda Bl., PCH, Anaheim St., L. B. Bl.	No route change, increase evening service frequency
246	Avalon Bl. From S. B. Galleria to San Pedro	Increase frequency, eliminate owl service, minor re-routing
344	Artesia Bl. / Hawthorne Bl. From Harbor Gateway T. C. to PV Penn.	Discontinue route south of Silver Spur Rd. through Rancho Palos Verdes; increase mid-day service
442	La Brea/Manchester/Figueroa from Green Line to DTLA	Eliminate line which is peak weekday express service
510, 950	Silver Line service on I-110 frwy.	Shorten 950 to serve El Monte to Harbor Gateway; add new 510 between San Pedro and I-105 with reduced service frequency; introduce a 510/950 transfer

- 550 Express Bus from San Pedro to Exposition Park / USC Eliminate line that currently runs 7-days a week
- 607 Circular route serving South Central, Windsor Hills, Inglewood, Crenshaw Eliminate line that provides peak weekday service
- 625 Green Line Shuttle on Imperial Bl. between LAX and La Cienega Bl. Eliminate line that provides peak weekday service