

**Metro**Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation AuthorityOne Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952213.922.
metro.n**REVISED****SYSTEM SAFETY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 19, 2012****SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR IMPROVING SERVICE ON SIX LOW PERFORMING LINES****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE SERVICE PLANS FOR LOW RIDERSHIP LINES****RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and file report on implementation plans to increase productivity and cost efficiency of the following lines with low ridership: Lines 126, 177, 201, 202, 442, 607 and 620.

ISSUE

In March 2007, the South Bay Service Council approved the discontinuation of Line 442 due to low productivity. However, in June 2007, the Board allowed the continuation of Line 442 for a period of one year to allow staff an opportunity to better market the service in an effort to achieve a 60% average maximum load target. An extensive marketing campaign was initiated, which included: 1) Ads placed in several area newspapers; 2) Direct mail postcard campaign to 17,000 area residents; 3) Advertising on 50 area bus benches; 4) Car-cards placed on area buses; 5) Channel 35 Time Warner promotion; and 6) Pamphlets distributed at local Inglewood community events.

In addition to the marketing campaign, several other improvements were implemented, including:

- Discontinue certain unproductive trips;
- Assigning newer and more reliable buses;
- Improving on time performance of the line from 56% in 2009 to 75% in 2011;
- Improving the safety and convenience of alternative services, including 10 minute peak frequencies on the Metro Silver Line operating along the Harbor Transitway, and new local bus stops under the Manchester Harbor Transitway

station for a direct bus to bus connection between Manchester and Harbor Transitway services.

Despite targeted marketing and continuous improvements to the service, the line currently only averages about ~~36~~40% of seats occupied at the maximum load point, well below the standard of 60% set by the Board in 2007. The experience of Line 442 shows that despite efforts to increase ridership and productivity through marketing, service, and safety enhancements, ridership increases are unlikely on lines with a limited market need or in areas with robust alternative services available and are inherently unproductive and costly per boarding to provide. Prudent use of scarce resources would dictate that these low ridership lines should be eliminated if alternative services are available, or maintained at lifeline levels to provide basic mobility in areas where no alternatives exist.

In September 2011, the Board directed staff to suspend the cancellation of Line 442 and review it along with six of the lowest ridership lines in the Metro system (Lines 126, 177, 201, 202, 607 and 620). Table 1 provides information on the lines identified in the motion.

**Table 1
Lowest Ridership Bus Lines**

	Daily Boardings	Annual Operating Cost	Subsidy per Boarding	Boarding Per Rev Hr.	Max Load
Line 126 (Manhattan Beach - Hawthorne Station via Manhattan Beach Bl)	240	\$404,430	\$6.85	17	0.45
Line 177 (JPL – Sierra Madre Villa Station via California & Foothill)	174	\$190,740	\$4.57	16	0.43
Line 201 (Glendale – Koreatown via Silver Lake Bl)	979	\$1,814,735	\$5.25	22	0.48
Line 202 (Willowbrook - Compton - Wilmington via Alameda St)	198	\$669,630	\$9.67	11	0.42
Line 442 (Downtown LA - Hawthorne Station via Manchester Bl.)	263	\$367,965	\$5.47	21	0.51 <u>0.40</u>
Line 607 (Windsor Hills - Inglewood Shuttle)	73	\$192,908	\$9.07	9	0.23
Line 620 (Boyle Heights via Cesar Chavez Ave & State St.)	302	\$490,620	\$5.60	20	0.23
System Average			\$1.76	53	1.08

Staff was asked to examine these low performing lines and create case studies to develop strategies to ensure bus service is meeting the needs of the riders. This report documents the information received from existing riders, and suggests adjustments to service based on public comment.

DISCUSSION

In September 2011, the Board directed staff to study items that might be affecting demand on Metro's lowest performing lines, including environmental factors along the bus routes (cleanliness, safety, and lighting), routing and service integration with other bus and rail lines, marketing efforts, on-time performance and service reliability. As part of the study, a working group consisting of riders was to be established to provide input and recommendations to staff as to how best to increase ridership on the lines. Based on rider input, implementation plans were to be developed for each of the unproductive lines to improve their ridership and productivity.

A major component of the Board directive was to conduct a community outreach effort and establish a working group of riders on the unproductive routes. To begin this process, a "Public Workshop on Improving Service" was conducted on November 15 at the Metro Gateway building. The workshop was attended by about 50 riders, and 21 emails with additional comments were received. Attachment A summarizes the input from riders received from the public workshop and email.

No Cost Service Adjustments

Based on public input, the following no cost service adjustments are planned for implementation:

Line 177 - Line 177 provides service between Sierra Madre Villa Gold Line Station and JPL via Caltech and Pasadena City College (PCC). As the majority of ridership is between PCC and JPL, riders requested that the segment from Sierra Madre Villa and PCC be discontinued, and the savings reinvested in more frequent service between PCC and JPL. The line will still serve the Metro Gold Line at the Del Mar Station. This adjustment is proposed as part of the June 2012 service change program.

Line 201 – Line 201 provides service between Koreatown and Glendale via Silver Lake Bl. The City of Glendale recently requested that certain trips on Line 201 be extended into the Glen Oaks Canyon area as Glendale Bee Line service was to be discontinued in the area. A review of the Line 201 schedule indicates that this extension can be accommodated for the trip times previously operated by Glendale Bee Line through scheduling efficiencies without additional operating cost. The extension also replaces a non-revenue service on a portion of the existing turnaround loop with revenue service to the canyon area. This extension was implemented on January 9, 2012.

Line 607 – Line 607 provides shuttle service in the Windsor Hills and Inglewood area. Riders of this line suggested that the line be extended from Beach Ave to serve Ladera Shopping Center at La Tijera and Centinela. This extension can be accommodated at no additional operating cost through scheduling efficiencies and a minor adjustment in headway. This adjustment is proposed as part of the June 2012 service change program.

Line 620 – Line 620 provides shuttle service in Boyle Heights. As part of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension bus/rail interface plan, Line 620 was rerouted to the Indiana Gold Line station, bypassing Food 4 Less on 1st Street. Riders requested that this stop be restored. As a result, the route will be modified to restore service to Food 4 Less at no additional operating cost through scheduling efficiencies. This adjustment is proposed as part of the June 2012 service change program.

Additionally Requested Service Enhancements and Marketing Campaigns

In addition to the no cost service adjustments, riders asked for additional service (more frequencies) and better marketing of the lines. However, given the low level of ridership as indicated in Table 1, policy implications, and cost studies of other lines, these enhancements are neither warranted nor recommended as they would likely further deteriorate the productivity of the low ridership lines. In addition, implementation of these initiatives would require \$8.4 million of annual operating funds that are currently not included in the FY12 budget.

Metro's Transit Service Policy establishes the regional transit vision and service design guidelines that set the standard for planning and scheduling bus and rail services. Boardings per revenue hour and subsidy per boarding are two critical metrics used in identifying services for adjustment. As shown in Table 1, the lines identified fall well below the systemwide average of these two criteria. Therefore, adding service to these lines would contradict the Transit Service Policy, making the system less efficient and more expensive per rider to provide service.

Using Lines 620 and 607 as recent case studies shows that rightsizing service levels to current ridership is the most prudent use of scarce resources by providing appropriate levels of service to the limited markets these lines serve. For example, Line 620 previously provided service in Boyle Heights every 20-25 minutes. At that time, the line carried 17 boardings per hour. Since the December 2010 service changes, the line provides hourly service, which increased productivity to 19 boardings per hour. Likewise, Line 607 changed from a bi-directional loop every 20-25 minutes to a clockwise loop every hour during more productive time periods. As a result of consolidating riders onto fewer trips, productivity on this line improved from 9 boardings per hour to 11. Despite the improvement in productivity of these two lines, they are still well below the systemwide average of 53 boarding per hour and do not warrant additional service.

In response to Board direction, Table 2 summarizes a marketing plan developed by Communications for the six targeted lines. The plan calls for a community day, increased outreach through Employee Transportation Coordinators to businesses located near the lines, area-specific newspaper and direct mail outreach on each line, as well as information on Transit TV about key route destinations. Estimated cost of implementing the plan is \$15,000 to \$20,000 per line, or \$90,000 to \$120,000 total with very little ridership growth anticipated based on experience from Line 442.

**Table 2
Summary of Marketing Plan**

	Community Day	ETC Outreach/ Social Media	Print/ Direct Mail	Onboard Materials	Bus Benches/ Mall Posters
Line 126	√	√	√	√	
Line 177	√	√	√	√	
Line 201	√	√	√	√	
Line 202	√	√	√	√	√
Line 442	√	√	√	√	√
Line 607	√	√	√	√	√
Line 620	√	√	√	√	√

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

If approved by the Board, the details outlined in this report are expected to have no impact on safety with very minor adjustments to low performing lines.

NEXT STEPS

Recommended no cost service adjustments will be considered as part future service changes. An evaluation of the impacts of these changes to the line’s ridership and productivity will be presented to the Board in January 2013.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Summary of Service Change Suggestions

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Attachment A
Summary of Service Change Suggestions from Riders

COMMENTS CONCERNING LINE 126

- Convenient for trips from El Camino College to Manhattan Beach.
- Instead of 60" service and no midday, provide 30" all day.
- Operate weekend service (two people suggested this).
- Start PM buses earlier ~ around 3 p.m.
- Fix bus stop sign at 120th & Crenshaw (reported to Stops & Zones).
- Options not easy – Gardena Muni, Line 210 on Crenshaw.
- Reroute towards Rosa Parks Station from 120th & Crenshaw.
- Consider Line 126 shortline to Crenshaw Green Line Station.
- El Camino College needs midday service.
- Restaurant workers need night service.
- Improve reliability, eliminate missed trips.
- Split route into two and run all day:
 - El Camino College to Hawthorne could be LINK shuttle route.
 - Manhattan Beach to El Camino College could be muni route.

COMMENTS CONCERNING LINE 177

- Shorten route to PCC, discontinue segment between Sierra Madre Villa Station and PCC.
- If line is shortened, increase the number of trips. This would give the line a better chance to increase ridership.
- Add earlier trip in PM, around 3 p.m.
- Add 1 more trip in AM.
- Shift 2nd AM trip to meet the Gold Line at Memorial Park Station.
- Ridership might fall on Fridays due to 9/10 work schedules and 4-day work weeks.
- Talk to Marketing Dept. about TAP card promotion.
- Add bus stop at Oak Grove/Berkshire after left turn.
- Shorten line to Memorial Park Station. Run from JPL to Memorial Park Station only, have Pasadena ARTS run a modified version of the route between Memorial Park Station and Sierra Madre Villa Station.

COMMENTS CONCERNING LINE 202

- Provide 60" service all day (Compton # 5 no longer running?).
- Start PM service earlier.

- Operate night, weekend, and base service.
- Assess safety and lighting at bus stops.
- Use Elm Street route to add stop northbound at Rosecrans (suggested by rider on the bus on November 10).
- Convenient route from Wilmington to Compton (options not easy – heard from rider on the bus on November 7).

COMMENTS CONCERNING LINE 442

- Put back 6:30 PM bus into the schedule.
- Restore full route to South Bay Galleria.
- Market the service to USC, Trade Tech, FIDM, and others.
- Reroute away from Hawthorne Station to Manchester & Lincoln.
- Shortline from Crenshaw to Downtown.
- Service needs consistency (primarily regarding Operator assignments).
- Midday service from Inglewood to Downtown LA could be useful.
- Advertise on Transit TV.
- Limited stops on local streets or express.
- Move northbound stops to nearside at Normandie and Western (safety and lighting is an issue, heard from rider on the bus November 4).
- Ensure trip planner recognizes Line 442 with accurate times.

COMMENTS CONCERNING LINE 607

- Need more marketing (target schools, churches, others on line).
- Add stops on Fairview (passed up).
- Reroute to Ladera shopping center (Centinela & La Tijera).
- Operate all day until 7 p.m..
- Reroute via Fairview west of Wexham.
- Provide 30" service when Crenshaw/LAX light rail opens.
- Need more frequency ~15" service.
- Needs more night service.
- On-time performance is good, needs to be maintained.
- Need bi-directional service (restore CCW loop).
- Wants weekend service.
- Keep service to 54th Street (from Junior Blind employee on the bus November 4)

COMMENTS CONCERNING LINE 620

- 7 days a week.
- Every 20-25 minutes.

- Every 15 minutes.
- Put back to in front of Food For Less grocery store on First/Mott.
- Add 2 stops on State St. between freeway and hospital.
- Add stop at 4th /Boyle (425 Boyle).
- Add more buses – too many seniors.
- Bus breaks down, only 1 bus on line, this is a big problem.
- Students have to wait at Hollenbeck & Roosevelt Schools one hour.
- Operate later.
- Run in both directions.
- Every 30 minutes DX, SAT & SUN every 60 min. “AM driver very good.”
- Ad more stops on Evergreen between Chavez & Wabash.
- ELA Community Corp. – 30 min service base / 10-20 peak.
- 20-minute headway, more stops.
- Give Line 620 to DASH.
- More frequent service will be used more by the students.
- Reduce fare to 25 cents.