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64

**SYSTEMS SAFETY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
JUNE 21, 2012**

SUBJECT: PARK AND RIDE LOT USAGE AT TRANSIT STATIONS

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the Parking Utilization Study at Metro Transit stations. The full study can be found online at <http://libraryarchives.metro.net/DPGTL/parking/2012-parking-utilization-site-assessment-metro-rail-orange-silver.pdf> and a hard copy is available upon request.

ISSUE

At the February 23, 2012 Board meeting, a comprehensive motion was approved directing us to review security, facility maintenance, and parking utilization throughout our system. Other elements of Motion #31 are being addressed through other efforts. Specifically, this report is in response to element B, Item 3: Station Park and Rides:

Item 3: Conduct a parking space utilization study and recommend strategies to increase utilization.

DISCUSSION

During the summer of 2011, Countywide Planning undertook a utilization and assessment study of facilities providing parking to our transit riders. Parking utilization throughout our system ranges from 0% to over 100%. Lots with over 100% usage include situations where a large number of vehicles frequently park in red zones, unmarked spaces and landscape areas. A brief usage summary is contained in Attachment A. The comprehensive study lists each parking site and documents its current and historic usage. It should be noted that the study was undertaken before the opening of Expo Line and does not reflect increased demand resulting from FY12 increased ridership.

History

We became a significant builder, funder and operator of parking following the 1980s countywide renaissance of rail and the citizen approved propositions that increased regional transportation funding and improved regional mobility. Our inventory of public parking in the late 1980s consisted of approximately 2,000 spaces located at the El Monte Transit station: the terminus of the El Monte/10 freeway High Occupancy Vehicle lane (HOV). The El Monte site is owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and managed by us. Since that time, we have partnered or funded over 65,000 public and private parking spaces through the development of Metrolink, freeway “park and rides”, Metro rail and bus facilities, formula fund allocations to various cities throughout Los Angeles County, “Call for Projects” transit improvements, economic developments, congestion pricing, joint developments and other partnerships. This study focuses on approximately 20,000 parking spaces associated with the Metro Rail, Orange and Silver Line transit stations and is the core of our parking operations. The study does not include dedicated employee parking at our facilities.

Increased parking development in the region followed two distinct efforts. One is parking constructed to support the growing rail and transit center expansions. The second and larger effort is parking constructed to “intercept” Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOV) as part of Transportation Demand Management (TDM), Air Quality Management District (AQMD), Congestion Management and Air Resource Policies that advocated for programs that would reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by “collecting” SOV and converting the users to Van Pools, Carpools, buses and trains. Concurrent with this second effort was the expansion of regional HOV lanes that relied on intercept parking as part of the bus, vanpool and carpool programs. Reducing VMT along with the conversion to clean fuel buses and promoting vanpools remains an important public policy supporting cleaner air in the region.

Parking at transit stations also provides an essential support for transit patron access. A large number of potential transit users rely on parking to connect to transit. Although the existing system serves destinations throughout the county, many people do not live within walking distance of a transit station and may require augmentation of their transit trip by driving shorter distances. Park and Ride lots adjacent to transit stations and freeways have the potential to intercept what is likely a longer regional auto trip.

Future Growth

We will add/operate approximately 6,200 new parking spaces following the completion of the Expo/Gold Line Foothill 2A Extension rail improvements and the El Monte Transit Center bus improvements, all currently under construction. We should anticipate and plan for at least an additional 10,000 parking spaces coming on-line over the next few years, concurrent with the Measure R and other transportation system expansions and developments. Since many of these potential projects are in their early development phase, a more exact number of future parking facilities is difficult to estimate. We will also increase our parking responsibilities with the proposed acquisition of 41 park and

ride lots currently owned by Caltrans, of which 17 of these Caltrans-owned lots are along the Metro Green Line, Harbor Transitway and El Monte Transit Center. The remaining lots are mainly along freeways, with many serving regional express bus lines, car/van pools and intercept parking. There are 11 Caltrans/Metro Green Line and El Monte parking facilities already maintained by us. The remaining 30 park and ride lots will require additional security, management and maintenance resources.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

The Board directed the review of bicycle and pedestrian access, bicycle parking, improvements to wayfinding/access and signage when parking studies are conducted (Metro Parking Policy 2003). Bicycle and pedestrian recommendations included in this report are not exhaustive, but identify obvious and general strategies that improve access or remedy deficiencies. An additional and more comprehensive study detailing the needs of each site has been directed by the Board, and will be the subject of additional work efforts.

For purposes of this study, parking near major transit facilities has been identified according to the following classifications.

1. Free parking adjacent to a transit station owned by LACMTA. This condition exists at the majority of our transit facilities, where parking is free and open to the public.
2. Paid parking owned by LACMTA. We own several locations where patrons “pay for parking,” such as Union Station where a private contractor provides on-site staff and management. Other locations have a prepaid reserved parking system that allows our patrons to secure a limited number of parking permits on-line or through a toll free 1-800 phone number.
3. Parking owned by other public agencies, but perceived by transit riders as part of our system. The majority of parking lots along the Metro Green Line are owned by Caltrans and free to the public. However, they are perceived by the public to be part of the Metro system. The Caltrans facilities are the subject of a previous Board action requesting that the ownership and related maintenance issues be transferred to us.
4. Parking owned by others but encumbered by our rights or easements that provide for public transit use. These lots are commonly part of our Joint Development efforts.
5. Parking owned by other agencies or organizations, but made available to our riders through contract. Examples of this condition include the Mission Street Station in South Pasadena and Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena.

Travel behavior changes, and parking demand is dynamic. What starts as too much parking with the opening of a transit line may become too little parking as the transit line matures. A station that is a temporary terminus in the first phase of a project may become a mid-line station over time. The opening of new transit systems offer new travel options and often impacts parking demands throughout our system.

Paid Parking

The study discusses the issue of charging a fee for parking. To remain at least revenue neutral, charging a parking fee is largely dependent on the willingness of the public to pay a fee that is higher than the labor and other costs associated with operating a paid lot. Secondary to this are the possible impacts of "overflow" into surrounding communities by users seeking avoidance of a parking fee. On-site pay-for-parking operations can be labor intensive; require strong cash controls, supervision and ongoing system maintenance/support. We have operated/contracted Reserved Paid Parking at some lots and on-site paid operations at Union Station. Cost neutral on-site staffed operations are possible where the fee paid by the public is high enough to cover the cost of parking staff and operations. To be financially successful usually requires a high demand location, a larger number of parking spaces, fees similar to parking operations in the area (or enforcement in situations where parking rates are set below prevailing rates) and fees low enough to avoid being a deterrent to transit usage. Some of our parking locations have the potential to meet these conditions, others do not.

Parking Study Conclusions

The study effort highlights the very different conditions that exist in our parking environments. Several key findings include the following:

1. The State of California's budget challenges have resulted in reductions of maintenance and security support for the Caltrans owned parking lots serving the Metro Green Line. We have begun the maintenance and security efforts to offset the Caltrans reductions. We continue to work with Caltrans to transfer these and other park and ride lots. The security and maintenance efforts will need to be increased to bring the lots to an acceptable level of maintenance.
2. Several lots have minimal or limited use. Increased marketing, improved security, signage and maintenance may reverse this trend. Pending improvements in the general conditions of some of our lots, seeking alternative uses, shared use or focused marketing should be considered for these locations.
3. We should continue and expand coordination with the surrounding cities and communities to better organize connections to the stations.
4. We should consider an off-site signage program that better directs patrons to parking and station entrances in addition to improving (on-site) station access signage.

Other Related Actions

In September 2011 the Board authorized us to work with Caltrans to transfer 41 state-owned park and ride lots. We were able to gain access to the 41 park and ride lots with particular attention to those adjacent to and identified with our bus and rail stations. Encroachment permits were obtained from Caltrans in February that are effective through the end of the calendar year. Contract modifications have been executed for graffiti removal, power sweeping, and landscape clean-up for all 41 lots. The contracted services started March 1, 2012. Our efforts are intended to supplement Caltrans' efforts rather than replace them during this transition period.

NEXT STEPS

We will return as appropriate to update the Board on continuing activities.

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Arthur T. Leahy

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ATTACHMENT A

Utilization of Park and Ride Lots at Metro Stations (2011 Count)

Line	Station	# of Stalls	Stalls Occupied	% Utilized
Blue	Florence	115	109	95%
	103rd Street/Kenneth Hahn	63	0	0%
	Imperial/ Wilmington/ Rosa Parks	335	147	44%
	Artesia	272	225	83%
	Del Amo	366	345	94%
	Wardlow	115	105	91%
	Willow	899	832	93%
	Blue Line Total	2,165	1,763	81%
Green	Norwalk	1,502	1,605	107%
	Lakewood	414	447	108%
	Long Beach	646	147	23%
	Imperial/ Wilmington/ Rosa Parks	(see Blue Line)		
	Avalon	158	11	7%
	Harbor Freeway	253	111	44%
	Vermont	155	1	1%
	Crenshaw	513	125	24%
	Hawthorne	623	116	19%
	Aviation/ LAX	390	398	102%
	El Segundo	91	69	76%
	Douglas	30	26	87%
	Redondo Beach	403	88	22%
Green Line Total	5,178	3,144	61%	
Red/Purple	Union	1,860	1,181	63%
	Westlake/MacArthur Park	18	17	94%
	Universal City	899	842	94%
	North Hollywood	951	884	93%
	Red Line Total	3,728	2,924	78%
Gold	Atlantic	262	140	53%
	Indiana	42	19	45%
	Union	(see Red Line)		
	Lincoln Heights/ Cypress Park	94	78	83%
	Heritage Square/ Arroyo	129	122	95%
	Mission	142	142	100%
	Fillmore	160	135	84%
	Del Mar	290	132	46%
	Lake	50	10	20%
	Sierra Madre	958	862	90%
Gold Line Total	2,127	1,640	77%	
Orange	North Hollywood	(see Red Line)		
	Van Nuys	776	214	28%
	Sepulveda	1,205	142	12%
	Balboa	270	216	80%
	Reseda	522	229	44%
	Pierce College	373	250	67%
	Canoga (333 spaces temp construction staging)	288	189	66%
	Orange Line Total	3,434	1,240	36%
Silver Line	Slauson	151	12	8%
	Manchester	247	19	8%
	Harbor Freeway	(see Green Line)		
	Rosecrans	338	17	5%
	Artesia	980	433	44%
	El Monte	1,153	1,153	100%
Harbor Transitway	Carson	143	49	34%
	Pacific Coast Highway	234	53	23%
	Silver Line/Harbor Transitway Total	3,246	1,736	53%
TOTAL		19,878	12,447	63%

*Note: Utilization percentages treat vacant but reserved spaces as vacant. Therefore utilization of free-unreserved spaces may in some cases meet or exceed 100%.