

**SPECIAL - Better Buses for LA Work Group Meeting**  
**Tuesday May 12th 3:30 - 4:30pm PT via zoom**

**Via Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83374626996>

Meeting ID: 833 7462 6996

**Purpose of Better Buses for LA Work Group**

- Creating a collaborative space for partners to share ideas, information and advocacy efforts for improving bus service
- Share updates and discuss strategies around Metro's NextGen, Bus Only Lanes and COVID-19 response/recovery transportation efforts

For more information on the Better Buses for LA Work Group and previous meeting notes: <https://investinginplace.org/work/work-groups/>

**Key topics for discussion:**

- **Routes/Corridors:** (bus and rail) that have been seeing heavy ridership since Stay at Home Order were put into place
- **Data:** What is Metro using to identify these lines
- **Assessing Needs:** What tools does transit operations have to understand what is happening on the street? What tools could be added to better inform efforts? How do we assess safety on bus and rail for both operators and riders?
- **Next Steps:** What does all this mean moving forward? As the pressure to have low income workers return to work - what does this mean for Metro transit in the LA Region? How is Metro preparing for this?

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Presentation by Metro Staffers: Joe Forgiarini, Director, Service Performance and Analysis and Stephen Tu, Director, Service Planning
  - *Joe and Stephen will be sharing a short powerpoint presentation on zoom and Joe will need to leave at 4pm. So please join on time if you'd like to hear from him.*
3. Questions and Answers

**Meeting notes:**

- Covid-19 Update Metro Presentation from Joe and Stephen
  - We will cover Metro's approach to service during Covid and recovery and discuss the perception of approach. Our framework:

- Metro looks at resources we have available and how we can best use those now and in recovery. We analyze trips on a weekly basis for what's consistently overcrowded, what's otherwise crowded, also we look at what we are hearing from field officers, customers via customer care team, and operators. We use these inputs to help us make informed decisions around changes to schedule and vehicle choice.
  - Current service
    - 360k average weekday boardings now
    - Mandated use of barriers for operators
    - Back door boarding
    - Required use of face-masks 5/11
    - No free fares, but gave discretion to operators given current situation
    - Operators were also given discretion to decide how many people onboard regarding social distancing
    - April 19 - change service level
  - Ridership
    - Bus down 60%
    - Rail down 70%
    - Sunday schedule - in response to not just rider demand, but availability of operators, decrease in available workforce
    - Will build on top of Sunday enhanced schedule - did not have time to create a new schedule, had to use an existing schedule.
    - Rail service 12-15 minute weekday headways, again based on enhanced-Sunday schedule
    - Some bus lines don't operate on Sundays so needed to add new service lines. Adding trips where high loads, switching to articulated buses where possible (currently this is on six lines they aren't usually on)
    - Analysis team in constant contact with scheduling team to make changes based on need
    - Revenue service hours down 29% on Bus, 14% on Rail - mostly b/c of Sunday service
    - Tracking ridership from automatic passenger counters, operator reports and customer feedback.
    - There are 12-15 lines that have added trips as of today. Likely to be multiple formal services changes throughout 2020 - normally this is only done twice a year in June and Dec

- Next Bus is alive and well
  - CEO and Board wants to see NextGen move forward
  - Want to implement during recovery
  - In-person workshops suspended, continuing outreach on social media
  - Considering virtual events for future meetings
  - Exploring more outreach options to continue NextGen work
- Closing thoughts
  - On operator capacity, with fewer operators available 3-4 buses in a row were canceled, Sunday service was the best way to maintain an even level of service given operator resources. This schedule change - meant same level of service - but more consistent on-time service so less crowded
  - Ridership was already down 25% pre-Covid, instead of going back to regular service -- team wants to restore service during recovery aligned with NextGen framework

### **Questions from Meeting Participants:**

- How will Metro take into account higher ridership/overcrowding as you look to rolling out the NextGen service plans? (KeAndra)
  - Combo of available resources (fiscal and operational), how quickly these come back online + how quickly ridership rebounds after relaxation of stay at home orders.
  - Team is also tracking economic activity to understand recovery
  - Also expect network structure to change along NextGen
  - Lines that are traditionally crowded are changing as those workers are now remote working and may continue to remote work.
  - Zoo, Mall, other destinations are not open now -- so shifting resources away from those based on live ridership information
  - Certain corridors have consistent ridership while others plummet, so we can redistribute resources like articulated buses on these corridors
  - Cellphone data drove a lot of NextGen, team is now also using this data to understand where/when is growth or travel.
  - Also talking to TransitApp about changes they are seeing - less peak AM/PM travel
  - Number of english speaking riders dropped more than spanish speaking riders. So metro is making sure all announcements are also in spanish

- How are essential destinations along bus routes (shopping/hospitals/etc) factored into service? (Lorenzo M)
  - See above
- What can we do to support transparency efforts, in particular more ridership data at a better granularity (currently just monthly totals are published)
  - Leaning on Metro blog the source to post where service is being added.
  - Metro has added earlier trips to supplement Sunday service where for example folks are travelling to grocery stores with early opening hours
  - It takes a lot of manual work to generate ridership data reports -- they come out about mid-month the month after.
  - April data is incomplete - b/c so much widespread operator cancellations until the 19th. 99% filled assignments after the 19th/ 75% before the 19th.
- Data sharing? Does metro publish ridership data? (Vyki)
  - (Nina - there's a ridership stats dashboard here: <http://opa.metro.net/MetroRidership/>)
- Jessica C: Are bus operators encountering any issues in having fare collection be up to their discretion? Do operators feel they have enough PPE to continue providing service in a way that they feel safe?
  - Prioritizing first staff in customer facing roles, then janitorial staff who clean vehicles. Increasing station or "fixed" asset cleaning, up to three times a day now. To realistically increase cleaning on all services are doing partial closing of station entrances. Example 7th/Metro - consolidating low use entrances to conserve PPE and cleaning supplies, and that the used services can be cleaned more frequently.
  - A board member - motion, included distributing masks to the public. Metro is exploring this right now. Comms department is looking at what might be the best way to distribute
  - Face coverings not face masks - the reason we use this language is for the unhoused -- they can't afford a face mask - but can use other clothing.
  - We are not enforcing through ejection - but through education.
- Comms around closing of station entrances esp considering disabled community
  - Yes we talked to our internal ADA lead, who helped us scale back the more aggressive original proposal and make sure that ADA access was always maintained (ie access to elevators). We also reached out to certain campuses like the braille institute to learn about their open status to make sure we were not closing an entrance they were using if the campus is open.

- Varun B: What are the types of responses and how engaged are participants for NextGen Bus study through door to door or Local Newspapers? Equitable access to information
  - Prioritizing bilingual approach for announcements. We do have the opportunity to connect individuals to translators by calling 323 Go Metro number.
  - Robert - Metro has been advertising in English and Spanish newspapers - we do this b.c recommended by community during outreach. Also Korean and Chinese, and Japanese, Armenia, and Russian publications. Started this 10 days ago. Hope to do telecon meeting in the next few months
  - Enhanced Sunday - instead of creating new custom schedules which would have been more of a learning curve for regular riders.
- Metro ridership has declined the least of any major city.
  - This supplements what we already know about Metro riders, not just heavily regular commuter riderships. We've seen sustained ridership in areas like Boyle heights on six streets, Slauson Ave, Florence E/W bus connection on Blue Line. Silver line - south gate up 110 - the El monte to Cal-State LA ridership has fallen, but the southern harbor gateway ridership has been sustained. Even different segments of the same line we are seeing ridership change differently. Beaches are open again next week, if parking lots are closed - how might people start using Metro to get to the beach.
  - In the Valley Customer feedback day-time feedback has been ok, but the enhanced-Sunday schedule has a late start so this was leading to early crowding issues and we've added back a lot of those six am buses.
  - Board will have a similar presentation as we saw today going over these trends.
- Do you screen employees before each shift for fever/symptoms?
  - Not at this time. We do have a task force that is regularly reviewing best practices. Not sure if any other agency is doing this right now. Do have quarantine procedures for anyone who may have been exposed. N95 masks need to be fitted to be effective - this training and reminders are part of the program to support staff.
- Is there consideration made towards COVID-19 testing sites in route schedule changes? Has Metro coordination with muni govts (usually in charge with bus stop maintenance) changed in response to COVID-19?
- Varun B: How many people use Customer service lines, is it something which is used commonly by many different riders?

- I think so. Metro rebranded the service department to customer care. Phone is just one way, we also get email, and physical letters. There's also a social media team that not just responds to metro on twitter but will look for/ scour for other information about service.
- Question: what are the numbers of social media comments and calls to customer service lines?
- Will Metro change fare collection after this is over?
  - Metro has been automated in Tap Vending Machines - other transit station agents you buy fares or passes form.
  - Per Metro - Fares are key to paying for service. Federal funds require a farebox recovery ratio. Fares must pay for a min portion of operating expenses.
  - Looking at new tech maybe to reduce interactions, focusing also on customers that aren't banked. Ie: Clipper card pre-loaded given to students in San Francisco
  - Also see CalTrans project: <https://dot.ca.gov/cal-itp>
- Metro comments? What's the data look like from comments or social media? Are there board reports on this data?
  - This committee was folded into - we could ask in that venue?
  - Robert - will make some calls internally. All comments and calls are logged and categorized. It would be interesting to see the more recent ones.

### **Intro to new Metro staffer**

- KeAndra Cylear Dodds - recently joined Metro as Equity lead. Hoping we can have her present in a future Better Buses workgroup.

### **Next Steps:**

- Tuesday May 19th from 3:30 - 5:00pm we will have our regular Better Buses for LA Work Group meeting. This is a discussion and collaboration oriented meeting. We will be building on our discussions from last month, what we learned from Joe and Stephen, hearing from partners and talking about upcoming issues at the Metro Policy committees. [RSVP here.](#)
- Friday the 15th Metro board agendas will be posted - these meetings are scheduled on third-thursdays so we can review the agendas and make comment at Metro board meetings

### **RSVPs/ Attendees**

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Alyssa	Ross	
Bart	Reed	The Transit Coalition
Carolyn	Angius	Kounkuey Design Initiative
Carolynn	Johnson	ITDP
Carter	Rubin	NRDC
Cassie	Halls	
Clara	Karger	
doreen	Morrissey	LA Metro
Edgar	Mejia	ITDP
Flor	Anaya	LA Metro
francois	nion	JCDecaux
gloria	ohland	Move LA
Jennifer A.	Gill	LABAC
Jessica	Meaney	Investing in Place
Joe	Linton	Streetsblog L.A.
Joe	Eyen	FlixBus
Joe	Forgiarini	
Jonathan	Matz	Atwater Village Neighborhood Council
KeAndra	Cylear Dodds	LA Metro
Keenan	Sheedy	SEIU Local 721
Lili	Salmon	

Lorenzo	Mutia	
Luke	Klipp	Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia
Malcolm	McVay	
Marcia	Cohenzakai	
Mark	Yamarone	LA Metro
Melissa	Hernandez	JCDecaux
Natalie	Sparrow	
Nikki	Diaz	
Nina	Kin	LA Metro
Pam	O'Connor	
Priscilla	Freduah-Agyemang	SCAG
Stephen	Tu	LA Metro
Taylor	Thomas	East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
Thomas	Bassett	
Tulsi	Patel	Estolano Advisors
Varun	Bather	
Vyki	Englert	Compiler LA
Jessica	Cruz	TransitCenter



# COVID-19 Update

May 2020



**Metro**

# Transit Service Delivery Plan

## Operational Changes

Metro's workers are considered essential workers. Metro now has about 360,000 average boardings on weekdays, providing a transportation lifeline for people who depend on transit.

- Mandated use of bus operator barriers
- Implemented use of rear-door boarding
- Required use of face masks (as at 5/11)

Instructed operators to use discretion when picking up passengers to allow for adequate social distancing  
Public encouraged to continue limiting travel to only essential trips, maintain physical distance from others, wash hands frequently and use other good hygiene practices

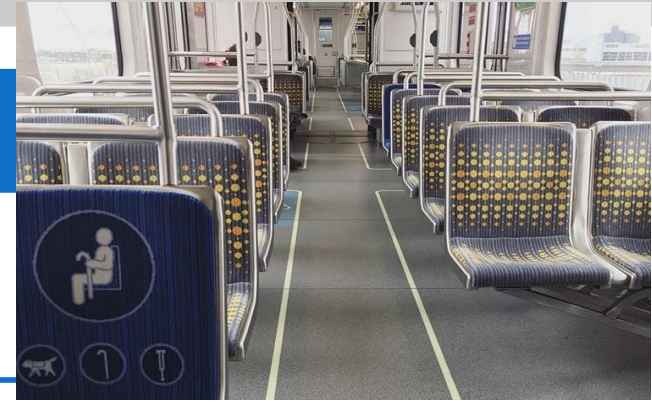
- *Enhanced Sunday Plan* began Sunday, April 19, 2020 to better align with essential travel



# Ridership & Enhanced Sunday Schedule Plan

## Ridership Levels

- Bus is down 60%
- Rail is down 70%



## Enhanced Sunday Schedule/Plan Goals

3.25.20

- Provide for orderly rebuild-up of service levels
- Protect principles established by NextGen planning

## Additional Considerations

- Respond to availability of Operations & Maintenance workforces
- Reduce cleaning loads
- Reduce costs when possible
- Continue to conserve Operations workforce, resources and manage public funds responsibly

# COVID-19 Rail Service Plan

## Light Rail

- Enhanced Sunday headways and spans
- A, E, and L (Blue, Expo and Gold) – 12 min during 6am-6pm; 20-min during other periods; last train departure from terminals at midnight
- C (Green) – 12 min during 4am-9am & 3pm-6pm; 15-min during 9am-3pm; last train departure from terminal at midnight

## Heavy Rail

- Enhanced Sunday headways and spans
- B and D (Red and Purple) – 12-min (6 minutes at the trunk) during 6am-6 pm; last train departure from terminals at midnight

## Weekends

- Current weekend frequencies – 12-min starting at 10 am; last departure from terminals at midnight

# COVID-19 Bus Service Plan

## Bus

- **Weekday: Enhanced Sunday headways and spans**
- **Sunday base + weekday only lines + Rapid service not typically operated on Sundays**
- **Weekends: Current Sunday service for Sat & Sun**
- **Metro closely monitoring trip loads to keep loads more consistent for social distancing purposes:**
  - **Altering bus type to articulated buses where practical**
  - **Adding trips where high loads observed**



3.24.20

# Revenue Service Hours (RSH) Comparison/Next Steps

## Bus (Directly Operation & Contract Services)

- Annual Bus RSH Reduction: 29%

## Rail

- Annual Rail RSH Reduction: 14%

Metro is closely tracking ridership from Automatic Passenger Counters, Operator Reporting, and Customer Feedback  
At least 12 lines have added trips and more are in preparation.  
Likely there will be multiple formal service changes through 2020

# Service Planning & Development

## NextGen Bus Plan

- **CEO Phil Washington: NextGen Bus Plan should be adopted so that as service is restored, it can be implemented in alignment with the NextGen principles**
  - **Post-COVID: NextGen principle of investment in midday, evening, and weekend frequencies priority, even if peak frequencies are less than originally planned because demand has dropped (“new normal”)/fiscal limits**
- **Project team continues outreach via multiple social media channels to encourage feedback on the draft plan.**
  - **Additional outreach conducted to partner community organizations**
  - **Meetings with Service Council representatives to discuss feedback received and options to adjust the plan**
- **Briefings on an updated version of the plan at July Council meetings (tentative), prior to August public hearings.**
  - **Considering virtual events depending on stay-at-home orders**
- **Timing of Service Councils vote and Plan going to Metro Board dependent on level of changes required following public hearings**