

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 10/26/09		Item Number: PH-1	
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM: PUBLIC HEARING – Approval of Proposed Service Changes to Culver CityBus Line Six, including Implementation of Rapid Service.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Samantha M. Blackshire/Transportation		Phone Number: (310) 253-6535	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☒		Action Item: ☐	Attachments: ☒
Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒		Date: _____	
Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas – City Council (10/21/09); (E-Mail) Ongoing Topics – Culver CityBus (10/21/09); (Published) Culver City News (9/17/2009); (Published) Culver City Observer (9/17/09); (USPS) Stakeholders (9/3/09); Two (2) Public Meetings (9/30/09); Culver CityBus website; City of Culver City website.			
Department Approval: Art Ida (10/15/09)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (10/21/09)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by M. Noller) (10/21/09)		City Manager Approval: Mark Scott (10/21/09)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends that the City Council approve the service changes to Line 6 effective January 4, 2010. <u>PROCEDURE:</u> 1. Mayor seeks motion from Council to receive and file the affidavits of publication and posting of notices, and correspondence received in response to the public hearing notices; and, 2. Mayor calls for a staff report and the City Council Members may pose questions to staff as desired; and, 3. Mayor seeks motion to open the public hearing; and, 4. Mayor seeks motion to close the public hearing after all public testimony has been presented; and, 5. City Council discusses the item and arrives at its decision.			

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

BACKGROUND:

Culver CityBus operates seven routes, serving approximately 6 million riders annually with a service area encompassing 25.5 square miles. Line 6 is Culver CityBus's longest route covering over 13 miles and carrying over 2.8 million passengers annually. It provides service between UCLA and the LA Metro Green Line Station at Aviation/Imperial. The route serves the City of Culver City and the following communities: Westwood, West Los Angeles, Sawtelle, Palms, Mar Vista, and Westchester, with transfer locations to many other service providers, including: Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, Metro, Torrance Transit, LADOT and LAX Shuttle Buses.

There has been a steady 2% year-over-year increase in ridership on Line 6 over the past several years and staff foresees ridership continuing to rise due to increasing gasoline prices and uncertain economic times. Staff had estimated that ridership would drop by at least 3% as a result of the August 2009 fare increase. Somewhat surprisingly, the decrease was not realized. In fact, the steady increase in ridership has continued.

Currently, Line 6 service commences at 5:25 AM and ends at 12:39 AM during the weekdays with a slightly shorter running time during the weekends. Based on the 2008 Line-by-Line Analysis, the stops with the heaviest ridership are as follows: the Metro Green Line Station; UCLA (Westwood Plaza/Strathmore Place); Westfield Culver City Transit Center; and both the north and southbound Sepulveda Blvd. / Pico Blvd. bus stops. Ridership is heaviest during the peak hours 6:00 AM – 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM – 7:30 PM, as is general vehicular traffic. There are currently more buses on Line 6 than any other Culver CityBus line. However, operators are continuously calling in to report having full loads (both standing and seated), which leads to customers being passed by. Over the years staff has been repeatedly asked by passengers to increase the service on Line 6 and provide a faster way of traveling along Sepulveda Blvd. Staff believes the recommended service changes to Line 6 is the best way to meet both the customers' and operating needs.

DISCUSSION:

Public Notification

In compliance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements, the City published a public notice in the Culver City News and the Culver City Observer on September 17, 2009. Furthermore, to comply with Metro's notification policy, staff sent letters describing the proposed Line 6 service changes to stakeholders, i.e. Culver City Unified School District, UCLA, Metro and other transit agencies, etc. on September 3, 2009.

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

Staff posted English and Spanish language versions of notices via placards and take-one flyers inside all Culver City buses and at businesses where Culver CityBus schedule holders are located. Customer responses to the proposed service changes were accepted via US Mail, E-mail and voicemail. Staff also posted notification about the proposed changes on the Culver CityBus website and the main City of Culver City website. In addition, two (2) community meetings were held on September 30, 2009.

Staff received a total of twenty-seven (27) comments regarding the proposed changes to Line 6 service. Nineteen (19) fully supported implementation of the service changes; six (6) supported the changes; however, they asked that additional bus stops be considered; and the remaining two (2) requested additional information without providing any further comments.

BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) Service on Line 6

Due to the overwhelming need to increase and expedite service along the Sepulveda Blvd. corridor, staff is recommending the introduction of Line 6 rapid service and modifications to the existing Line 6 service. Staff is proposing the rapid service run every 15 minutes utilizing nine buses between the peak hours of 5:50 AM and 9:57 AM as well as between 2:20 PM and 7:35 PM. Rapid service would not run between the hours of 9:57 AM and 2:20 PM or after 7:35 PM.

In order to expedite service, staff recommends the utilization of fifteen major existing bus stops as outlined in the table below.

Northbound	Southbound
Metro Green Line Station	UCLA (Westwood Plz/Strathmore PI)
LAX Transit Center	Westwood Blvd/Weyburn Ave
Sepulveda Blvd/Manchester Blvd	Westwood Blvd/Lindbrook Dr
Sepulveda Blvd/Centinela Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/Santa Monica Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd/Playa St	Sepulveda Blvd/Pico Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd/Sawtelle Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/National Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd/Washington Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/Palms Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd/Venice Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/Venice Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd/Palms Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/Washington Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd/National Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/Sawtelle Blvd
Sepulveda Blvd/Pico Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/Slauson Ave
Sepulveda Blvd/Santa Monica Blvd	Sepulveda Blvd/Centinela Blvd
Westwood Blvd/Lindbrook Dr	Sepulveda Blvd/Manchester Blvd
Westwood Blvd/Weyburn Ave	LAX Transit Center
UCLA (Westwood Plz/Strathmore PI)	Metro Green Line Station

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

Culver CityBus would be able to best service a majority of Culver CityBus customers in an efficient manner by stopping at these high-volume stops and bypassing stops with fewer boardings as determined by the Line-by-Line Analysis. All Culver CityBus stops not on the rapid stop list would continue to be serviced by Line 6 regular service, which will be outlined in the next section.

The Rapid Line 6 route will follow the current Line 6 route except staff is proposing to detour the rapid southbound route on Westwood Blvd. to Santa Monica Blvd. as opposed to the current out and back route along Veteran due to high levels of traffic and delays. For a detailed map of the proposed Rapid Line 6 service, please see attachment A.

In order to distinguish the Rapid Line 6 service from Regular Line 6 service, the rapid buses will be painted with a different paint scheme with the front being primarily gray as opposed to green with coordinating signage at the bus stops. Additionally, the Transportation Department has been working with Metro and LADOT in order to also implement bus signal prioritization for rapid service in the Los Angeles area. The rapid buses would be equipped with transponders fostering communication with the traffic signals at busy intersections. Upon reaching an intersection equipped with a sensor, the transponder would signal the traffic light to change to green further expediting bus service. This type of signal prioritization may be available within the City limits in the near future.

Regular Line 6 Service

Due to the addition of rapid buses along the Line 6 route, staff proposes a slight decrease to the frequency of the *regular* Line 6 service. The new regular Line 6 service is proposed to run approximately every 17-20 minutes. Even though the frequency of regular Line 6 bus service will be decreased, the addition of the rapid buses will increase overall route frequency and number of buses serving the route will increase from 14 to 18 during peak service hours.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The implementation of the proposed Line 6 service changes enhances the City's bus service and accommodates the increasing ridership demand levels. Should these proposed changes not be implemented, Culver CityBus will inevitably incur lost revenue as a result of not being able to accommodate increasing ridership levels.

The expenditures for the rapid service were incorporated into the Adopted Fiscal Year 08-09 Budget. However, due to unforeseen delays, none of the budgeted funds were expended during Fiscal Year 08-09. Funds have again been appropriated in the Transportation Department's budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10 to accommodate the requested service changes. Therefore, funding for Rapid Line 6 service will be derived from transit grants and funds, not City General Funds. As a result, there will be no fiscal impact to the City's General Fund.

City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Proposed rapid 6 Service Route Map

MOTION:

That the City Council:

Approve service changes to Culver CityBus Line 6 as proposed effective at 2:00 AM on January 4, 2010.