

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: PROPOSED REROUTE OF MTA LINE 256

January 22, 2001

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Reaffirm support for the reroute of MTA Line 256 as recommended in the 1996 Southwest Traffic Study.
2. Authorize the City Manager to send a letter to the appropriate authorities at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority stating Pasadena's position.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION REVIEW

On December 13, 2000, the Transportation Advisory Commission heard this item and supported staff's recommendation to reaffirm support for the reroute of MTA Line 256 as recommended in the 1996 Southwest Traffic Study. Eleven speakers addressed the issue both for (7) and against (4) the rerouting. Residents from the Avenue 64 area expressed concern that insufficient notice was provided to them regarding the meeting dates and expressed concern that the TAC meeting was held at 7:30 in the morning. Approximately one week prior to the meeting, a notice was sent to all the people who attended two previous meetings and provided name and address information. In total over 70 notices were sent.

BACKGROUND

The Southwest Traffic Study approved by City Council in October 1996, included the recommendation to reroute buses off of La Loma Road to Colorado Boulevard as part of the transportation improvement measures for the study area. Over the past two years, the residents of the La Loma Road area have discussed the implementation of the Southwest Traffic Study with the Transportation Division and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

The residents' continued concern regarding bus operations on La Loma Road is related to a number of issues. The size and grade of La Loma Road as well as the condition of the La Loma Bridge have been the primary issues. La Loma Road is a relatively narrow residential street, averaging 36 ft. through this area, with many curves and grade changes. Sections of the street do not have sidewalks and in some areas do not have curbs. These characteristics present a negative impact for the operation of buses. The buses operated along this route are generally 40-foot in length and 8 ½ feet in width. MTA proposes using 30-foot buses starting in January 2001; however, the width of the buses will not change. This is a larger vehicle profile than vehicles generally operated through the area. The grade changes along the route require the buses to frequently shift gears, which has a two-fold impact, increased noise levels and exhaust.

Residents have also discussed the safety of operating buses across the La Loma Bridge. Their concerns have centered on the size and condition of the bridge. The bridge is 30 feet in width, which poses operating problems. The buses are not able to enter the bridge westbound from Arroyo Boulevard without crossing the centerline, requiring on-coming traffic to backup. The Engineering Division on a number of occasions has examined the concern regarding the safety of the bridge. Engineering has determined that the weight of the buses does not have a negative impact on the structural integrity of the bridge.

In July 2000, staff met with two residents of the La Loma Road area to discuss this situation. The residents requested that staff help to communicate their concerns to MTA. Based on this request, staff worked with MTA staff to hold a meeting on September 13, 2000. The intent of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for residents to present their concerns/issues to MTA and receive feedback/information on the matter.

MTA staff was responsive to the issues raised by residents. MTA concurred with the residents that boardings and alightings on the line segment through this area was extremely low. They agreed that the operation of the buses on the bridge including the turning radius is problematic, though not atypical of operation on other lines. MTA expressed a willingness to reroute the bus with conditions: the City submit a written request to have the line rerouted and that the City work with MTA to inform residents about the new route. The proposed route would have the bus continue operating on Avenue 64 north of La Loma Road to Melrose Avenue, to Colorado Boulevard, across the Colorado Bridge to Orange Grove Boulevard, south on Orange Grove Boulevard to California Boulevard and east on California Boulevard. This would put the line back on route.

Transportation staff determined that from a transit planning perspective the proposed reroute of Line 256 is technically sound. This decision is based primarily on the operating profile of the two streets, i.e., width of the street, sidewalks, grade etc. Avenue 64 is a wider street with a 50-foot width compared to a 36-foot width on La Loma Road. The grade on Avenue 64 is better and more consistent than on La Loma Road. The proposed reroute will also provide passengers with more direct transfers with MTA Line 180/181, Line 177 and the ARTS Downtown route. Based on these findings, the proposal to reroute MTA Line 256 was moved forward. As part of this process, staff looked for an opportunity to present the proposal to residents of the area.

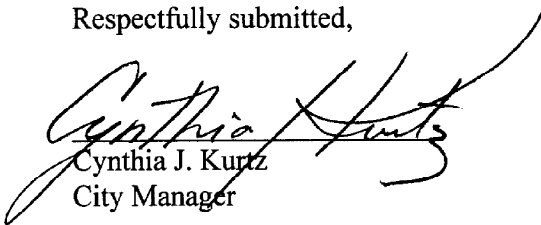
On October 26, 2000 a presentation on the proposed rerouting of MTA Line 256 was made at the District 6 Quarterly Town Hall meeting. Notice of the meeting was hand delivered to residences along Avenue 64 from La Loma Road north, Melrose Avenue, and adjacent streets. Notice was also sent by mail to participants of the September 13, 2000 meeting. Following a brief overview of the proposed change, participants were invited to provide comments.

Staff reviewed comments raised at the September 13 and October 26 meetings. The comments raised by residents along Avenue 64 relate to the impact of increased traffic caused by the buses. It was determined that the number of buses operated, no more than 2 buses an hour in each direction, will not have an impact on traffic. To further minimize impacts, MTA has agreed to use established bus stops at La Loma Road and Colorado Boulevard and not install any new stops. To address concerns of residents that bus traffic may increase safety issues, a review of this area was made by the City's Traffic Engineering staff. It was determined that there are no pre-existing safety conditions that would be aggravated by the addition of bus service along Avenue 64.

FISCAL IMPACT


The recommendation will not have a fiscal impact on the City of Pasadena.

Respectfully submitted,



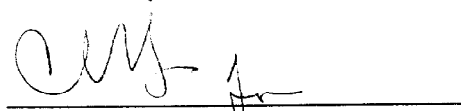
Cynthia J. Kurtz
City Manager

Prepared by:



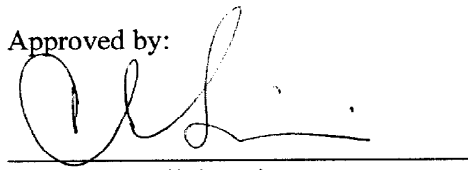
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