



### INFORMATION ITEM

**Long Beach Transit's bus service.**

### STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

**Jessica Cignarella, Manager, Transit Service Planning**

### BACKGROUND

The Long Beach Transit (LBT) Transit Service Delivery & Planning (TSD&P) division holds numerous roles and responsibilities that are critical to the successful planning, design, and delivery of service. Within TSD&P is the Service Planning department which oversees:

- Planning – guides short and long-term planning endeavors (including grant-funded planning studies), bus stop and route design, Title VI analysis, management of the service change process, etc.
- Scheduling – manages the development of planned service hours and miles for each fiscal year, ridership data collection management and processing, scheduling and run cutting for each service change, etc.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)/Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Technical Support – conducts ridership analyses, maintains LBT's General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) feed, supports all internal and external reporting efforts, maintains GIS databases and servers, conducts special projects related to internal and external requests, system updates and file management for each service change, etc.

The Service Planning Department applies the practice of using spatial analysis and urban planning to develop and maintain an efficient and effective transit system for customers within a given service area. This includes regularly considering land use patterns, development plans, future growth projections, and major efforts underway with external stakeholders. Of focus for this update is Service Planning's specific role in overseeing the development and implementation of each service change. Once the Service Planning department designs and schedules the service for a service change it is handed over to our counterparts in Service Delivery to implement the service and handle day-to-day operations.

The Service Planning department also provides support to LBT's Capital Grants and Government Relations departments in pursuit of grant funding opportunities. The department maintains collaborative relationships with sister agencies, specifically Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Orange County Transportation Authority, Torrance Transit, and the City of Carson (Carson Circuit), as well as planning organizations such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), American Public Transportation Planning Association (APTA), National Association of City Transit Officials (NACTO), and the American Planning Association (APA). Service Planning also oversees compliance reporting in response to federal, state, and local regulations. This includes bi-weekly, monthly, and annual



reporting to the National Transit Database to stay in compliance with the Federal Transportation Administration regulations.

### **Service Change Process**

Each service change is an opportunity for LBT to make incremental improvements while looking ahead to long-term goals and priorities. LBT holds three service changes over the course of each year, occurring in February, June, and August. This allows LBT to exercise flexibility in how to plan for and deliver service and affords us with opportunities to make changes while meeting LBT's strategic priorities:

- Improve safety and service quality
- Exercise financial accountability
- Foster employee engagement
- Enhance customer experience
- Promote community and industry focus

When preparing for LBT's most recent service change which went into effect on Sunday, August 27, 2023, the following efforts occurred:

- Examination of how bus service was meeting key performance indicators around ridership, passengers per revenue hour, and on-time performance. This included feedback received from internal and external customers.
- Assessment of where current service levels are concentrated, whether service types best matched the needs of riders, and if recent service expansion into select areas is encouraging the need for more regional service or continued local bus service.
- Analysis of the current service area to determine if service expansion is warranted by examining geographic ridership demand and confirming that where LBT operates meets the needs of customers.
- Review of the days of the week, duration of time, and how often service is being provided. This assessment occurred at a system-wide and line-by-line basis, with different levels of service warranted on different corridors or lines.

The success of each service change is a direct result of the cross-department collaboration and coordination with external agencies that takes place in advance of, during, and following each service change. The positive effects of collaboration and coordination are present in the August 2023 service change which prioritized restoration of service hours, adjustment to route alignments and schedules to reflect most current ridership patterns, and how to best position LBT for future growth. The STAR Initiative, which is LBT's comprehensive operational analysis of service, remains a roadmap or guiding light for LBT to continue to design, schedule, and grow service.



## Current Service Status

Although LBT has not yet returned to pre-pandemic ridership or service levels, there have been incremental changes instituted as LBT continues the road to recovery.

There are presently 38 routes in operation and an additional four routes that remain paused, Routes 52, 81, 96, 176, until LBT returns to 100% of pre-pandemic service levels. Four new routes have been implemented since the pandemic: Routes 2, 4, and 8 in Carson, and Route 141 on Artesia Boulevard.

With the August 2023 service change, LBT weekday service hours were partially restored for service to operate from 5:00 a.m. to 11:45 p.m., bringing LBT closer to its pre-pandemic 4:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. service hours.

Prior to the pandemic, LBT's ridership totals for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 reached 23.2 million customers and for FY 2023 LBT is at 16.8 million customers.

## Road to Recovery

During the COVID-19 pandemic ridership and service performance for FY 2020 were significantly affected. To continue to provide transportation services to the community, LBT modified service hours, adjusted operator work schedules, and adjusted route alignments as needed. These changes were made to deliver service in a safe and financially accountable way while keeping the customer first in service change decisions. LBT reduced service levels in FY 2020 to 73% of pre-pandemic levels and continues to incrementally restore service levels during each service change, as shown in Figure 1.

<b>Service Level Scenarios</b>	<b>Weekday Hours</b>	<b>Saturday Hours</b>	<b>Sunday Hours</b>	<b>Weekly Hours</b>
100% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Feb20)	2,504	1,411	1,367	15,296
73% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Jun21)	1,761	1,172	1,161	11,153
79.5% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Sep21) <i>(Carson Service Expansion – 451 weekly hours)</i>	1,950	1,244	1,177	12,118
79.7% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Feb22)	1,955	1,245	1,177	12,170
81.1% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Jun22) <i>(Rt 141 Artesia Bl Addition – 282 weekly hours)</i>	1,984	1,274	1,208	12,424
85.8% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Aug22)	2,118	1,300	1,233	13,124
89.2% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Feb23 - Current)	2,200	1,368	1,287	13,655
<b>92.4% of Pre-COVID Service Level (Aug23)</b>	<b>2,264</b>	<b>1,442</b>	<b>1,372</b>	<b>14,136</b>

**Figure 1. Service Restoration Effort**



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In 2023, LBT conducted a review of revenue hours and revenue miles for all bus services, analyzed the service span and frequency of each route, and reassessed those routes still on pause since the pandemic. This effort was enacted to ensure that resources were optimized to best meet the needs of LBT's current and future customers. In applying this approach, we implemented the August service change on Sunday, August 27, 2023, and were able to return to 92.4% of pre-pandemic service levels.

LBT has been able to successfully increase weekly revenue service hours while streamlining select routes, improving frequency, introducing new evening services, and restoring service hours. As LBT looks to FY 2025, we will collectively reexamine service and identify an action plan for those routes still paused. The STAR Initiative continues to guide LBT's long-term outlook of building a frequent transit network, enhancing local circulation, improving regional connectivity, and right-sizing bus fleet. Service Planning is actively pursuing grant funding opportunities that will allow for transit priority, growth of LBT's battery electric bus (BEB) fleet to meet LBT's pledge of a fully zero-emission fleet no later than 2035 and strengthen the overall service quality for customers as the needs of LBT's customers, both internally and externally, remain at the forefront of what Service Planning does.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Not applicable. Information item only.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "K. McDonald".

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Kenneth A. McDonald  
President and Chief Executive Officer