



Board Report

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Meeting_Body

**OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 21, 2019**

SUBJECT: ELECTION DAY FREE TRANSIT SERVICE MOTION 40 RESPONSE

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE the recommendation to make free transit permanent on regular federal and statewide election days in response to Motion 40 entitled Free Transit on Election Day.

ISSUE

On Thursday, October 18, 2018, Motion 40 was introduced by Directors Garcetti, Kuehl, Ridley-Thomas and Garcia (Attachment A) requesting staff to:

- A. Provide transit services free of fare on the November 6, 2018 election day;
- B. Partner with Access Services to examine providing enhanced and/or reduced-fare services on November 6, 2018 election day; and
- C. In consultation with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, report back to the Board by the February 2019 cycle on whether or not to make free transit permanent on federal and statewide election days.

BACKGROUND

In response to the October 2018 board approved motion, Metro offered free bus, rail, and bike transit service on Tuesday, November 6, 2018; from 12:00 am to 11:59 pm. Specifically, Metro operated normal weekday service and proactively informed customers regarding the free service to help encourage voter turnout and deliver greater transportation access to get to polls.

DISCUSSION

General Elections are held statewide, every two years, and are not limited to voters in a particular party or a specific locality. The last General Election was held on Tuesday, November 6, 2018. Presidential Primary Elections are held every four years and the last election was held on Tuesday,

June 7, 2016. Also, Statewide Direct Primary Elections are held every four years and the last election was held on Tuesday, June 5, 2018.

Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Registered Voter Information

The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk’s office has many functions including the registration of voters, maintenance of voter files, conduct of federal, state, local and special elections and the verification of initiative, referendum and recall petitions. Currently, there are over 5 million registered voters in Los Angeles County, as well as 5,000 voting precincts established for countywide elections.

Table 1.1 shows Los Angeles County registered voter statistics for General Elections and Presidential Primary Elections for the past 12 years. General Election voter registration in LA County increased from 4,544,455 to 5,163,858 during 2014 to 2018, a 14% increase. Presidential Primary Election voter registration in LA County increased from 4,450,035 to 4,799,548, during 2012 to 2016, an 8% increase.

Table 1.1 - Los Angeles County Registered Voter Information

General Election					
Year	2006	2010	2014	2018	Increase
Registered Voters	3,899,397	4,421,019	4,544,455	5,163,858	14%
Presidential Primary Election					
Year	2004	2008	2012	2016	Increase
Registered Voters	3,670,157	3,951,957	4,450,035	4,799,548	8%

**Percent change is calculated for the last two elections.*

In addition, the California Secretary of State produces a Report of Registration, as required by law, detailing voter registration levels throughout California at specific times prior to each statewide election. Data published by the California Secretary of State and the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk both suggest that voter registration at the local and state levels have been gradually increasing for both General and Primary Elections.

Metro Free Transit Service General Election Overview

Metro provided free service on Election Day in support of voters who opted to take public transportation to the polls. Specifically, Metro offered free bus, rail and bike service on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 during 12:00 am to 11:59 pm. Communication regarding free transit service during Election Day was continuous and staff was placed at strategic locations to share info on the free service, answer any questions, and ensure that service was safe and reliable. Staff reviewed and compared Election Day TAP numbers on the rail system with the prior week’s Tuesday numbers and determined a 5.3% customer increase for Election Day Rail service. Staff also reviewed and compared Metro bus service automatic passenger count (APC) data averages for all Tuesdays in October and November 2018 and determined a 5.1% increase for Election Day Bus service. Lastly, Metro Bike Share also experienced a daily ridership increase of 13% with the free rides on Election Day.

TAP Partner Agencies who also chose to participate in providing free service on Election Day included: Access Services, Baldwin Park Transit, Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), Long Beach Transit, Pasadena Transit, and Santa Clarita Transit.

Providing permanent free transit on regular federal and statewide election days will require proactive and timely interdepartmental and interagency planning and coordination with the necessary stakeholders. Interdepartmental coordination must include, but is not limited to, the following departments: Operations, TAP (including Revenue), Bike Share, Security and Law Enforcement, Communications, and Metro's Board of Directors. Also, interagency coordination must take place with all TAP and law enforcement partner agencies that may choose to provide and/or support permanent free service on federal and statewide election days. All stakeholders, including our customers, play a critical role in the successful delivery of Metro projects and programs, inclusive of providing safe and reliable transit service to our customers.

Revenue Impact

Metro estimates a *daily* bus and rail fare revenue impact in the amount of \$630,749 for providing free transit on federal and statewide election days. This includes any single day fares paid with cash or stored value for Metro Bus and Rail service. It does not include the revenue impact to any other municipalities or transit agencies.

Considerations and Recommendation

After this careful review of this past election's ridership along with revenue impact analysis, staff has determined that making free transit permanent on regular federal and statewide election days will positively affect voters in Los Angeles County. Metro's mission is to provide a world-class transportation system that enhances the quality of life for all who live, work and play within LA County, which includes increasing prosperity for all by removing voting mobility barriers. Therefore, Metro supports the recommendation of making free transit permanent on regular federal and statewide election days.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approval of this item will have no impact on the safety of our customers and employees. Metro is committed to delivering service that is safe and reliable for our customers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

All costs relative to making free transit permanent on regular federal and statewide election days will be reviewed and approved during the regular budget process. Since this is a multi-departmental effort, the respective Departmental project managers will be responsible for budgeting all internal and external expenses related to making free transit permanent on federal and statewide election days.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Approval of this recommendation supports the following Metro Strategic Plan Goal: 3) Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. Metro will continue work towards

making Los Angeles County's transportation system more accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the diverse communities it serves.

NEXT STEPS

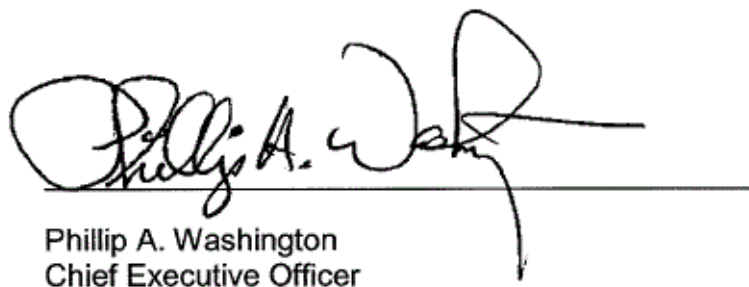
Staff will continue internal and external planning and coordination efforts in support of making free transit permanent on federal and statewide election days. This includes partnering with Access Services and any partner agencies who wish to participate in providing enhanced and/or reduced-fare services on regular federal and statewide election days in an effort to reduce mobility barriers to voting individuals throughout Los Angeles County.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Item 40: Free Transit Service Election Day Motion

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Board Report

File #: 2018-0687, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

Agenda Number: 40.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 18, 2018**

Motion by:

GARCETTI, KUEHL, RIDLEY-THOMAS, AND GARCIA

Item 40: Free Transit Service on Election Day

MTA should help reduce the barriers to voting for the individuals that rely on MTA for mobility. In the June 2018 primary election, Los Angeles County saw a voter turnout of just 28%, which is the second lowest of the 47 California counties that reported. Additionally, studies have shown that minority, low-income, persons with disabilities, and youth voters in particular have consistently lower turnout than average. These populations are also the ones most reliant on MTA for mobility.

Voters cannot reach polls without adequate means of transportation. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's 2016 Survey of the Performance of American Elections (SPAЕ) found that approximately 30% of nonvoters across the country claimed that the lack of transportation to the polls was a factor for not voting. In California, that number rose to 51%.

Additionally, SPAЕ and similar studies showed that lack of access to transportation to get to polls disproportionately affects minority, low-income, persons with disabilities, and youth voters. For example, over 50% of non-voters said that a disability or illness was a factor in deciding not to vote and turnout for persons with disabilities has been declining.

To encourage voter turnout, transit operators across the country provide free public transportation on Election Day. Larger cities include Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Tampa, Kansas City, and Durham. In Minnesota, public transportation agencies are required by law to provide free rides on Election Day. The number of transit operators taking this approach continues to grow, and MTA should ensure that it does not fall behind.

SUBJECT: FREE TRANSIT SERVICE ON ELECTION DAY

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE MOTION by Garcetti, Kuehl, Ridley-Thomas and Garcia that the Board direct the CEO to:

- A. provide transit services free of fare on the November 6, 2018 election day;
- B. partner with Access Services to examine providing enhanced and/or reduced-fare services on the November 6, 2018 election day; and
- C. in consultation with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, report back to the Board by the February 2019 cycle on whether or not to make free transit permanent on federal and statewide election days.