



## Board Report

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File #: 2024-0153, File Type: Informational Report

Agenda Number: 32.

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### OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE JUNE 20, 2024

**SUBJECT: MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT UPDATE REPORT**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on the MicroTransit Pilot (MTP) Project in response to Board Motion 42 Microtransit Pilot Project.

#### **ISSUE**

In September 2023, the Board authorized operational changes as soon as possible to improve performance in low-performing zones, and increase marketing efforts to bolster community awareness of the program - all of which have resulted in an increase in ridership and a reduction in the cost per revenue hour. This update includes the effectiveness of the fare increase, public outreach, program optimization, performance enhancements, cost reductions, and solicitation status.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2017, the MTP Program was designed as a three-year project to test the delivery of a new on-demand ridesharing service model for public transit throughout Los Angeles County. This program aimed to provide complimentary service to Metro's fixed-route bus and rail network. Metro is now fine-tuning the operating model to achieve financial sustainability so that the MTP can be considered for permanent service.

In January 2024, MTP staff addressed the September 2023 Board Motion 42 Microtransit Pilot Project (see Attachment A) - Part B by Directors Najarian, Butts, Dutra, Hahn, Barger, and Horvath:

- Before raising the fare to \$2.50, report back on the feasibility of incorporating Micro Transit services into the existing discount programs, including, but not limited to, Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE), GoPass, Senior, etc.
- Report back on the feasibility of establishing a \$1.75 rate for riders connecting to other fixed-route Metro services.

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## **DISCUSSION**

Since October 2023, MTP has continuously improved by implementing various internal operational changes to enhance operator availability and reduce overtime costs. This includes improving vehicle availability and utilizing new enhanced software features to monitor and coach operator performance in real-time. As a result, MTP has experienced an increase in ridership, higher Passenger per Vehicle Hour (PVH), and an overall cost reduction.

### **Promoting UCLA/Westwood/Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC):**

MTP tested a low or no-cost approach to improving service in the UCLA/Westwood/Veterans Affairs Medical Center zone, which experiences low ridership. In November 2023, MTP worked with Veterans Affairs (VA) administrators to analyze and establish nine additional pickup/drop-off locations around the VA campus to improve accessibility. MTP also provided VA administrators with Microtransit stop signs to be posted at new locations and promoted Microtransit service in West LA VA Medical Center flyers (see Attachment B).

To further increase the program's community outreach efforts, MTP participated in two on-site promotional events at the Veterans Affairs Stand Down Pop-up and UCLA's Sustainable Transportation Fair in October 2023.

There was a minor increase in the PVH, however, other service zones also increased. Therefore, the results of the service promotion directly were not directly related to the increase in ridership for the UCLA/Westwood/Veterans Affairs Medical Center zone.

### **Fare Change Impact:**

As a result of the January Board Meeting, the fare change from \$1.00 to \$2.50 was implemented on March 24, 2024, with discounted fares (e.g. LIFE, GoPass, Reduced Fare) being incorporated through TAP. The first thirty (30) days after the fare change, the overall fare per boarding increased by 120%, from \$0.53 to \$1.53. The TAP Average fare increased by 91%, from \$0.89 to \$1.70 compared to a 152% increase in average credit card fares, from \$0.91 to \$2.29 in average credit card fares, since TAP fares include the discount programs that were incorporated into the fare change. Watts-Compton and El Monte are two zones with the highest usage of TAP program discounts. Additionally, UCLA experienced the highest change in revenue for both TAP and credit card payments partly due to quarterly revenue reimbursements on TAP-UPass and EPass programs not being included in these figures, resulting in UCLA showing the lowest TAP revenue per boarding (See Attachment C - Table 1 - Average Fare Changes by Zone).

### **Fine-tuning Service Levels and Workforce Schedules:**

On January 7, 2024, a new schedule was implemented to adjust and reallocate service within zones. This allows operators to work in different zones during their weekly schedule with standby shifts in place to cover unplanned absences that impact customers. The new schedule also provided more flexibility and efficiency to MTP when deploying Microtransit Operators. Not only did this change

improve operational cost efficiencies, it also contributed to a 22% ridership increase between Q3 FY23 and Q2 FY24.

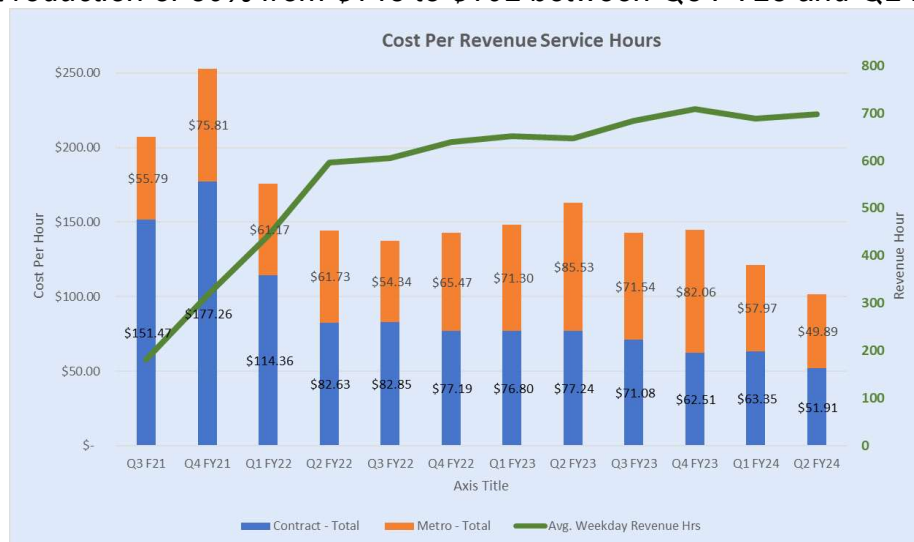
Cost Efficiency:

Given the temporary nature of the MTP Project, revenue hour costs include traditional capital costs, such as vehicle and operating leases. With the recent Contract Modification No. 11 extension in October 2023 and internal operations improvements described above, the cost per revenue hour for Q2 FY24 is \$101.80 versus the \$142.67 reported in Q3 FY23. This includes \$51.90 of contract cost and \$49.90 of Metro direct operations cost, as shown in Chart 1 (Metro and Contractor Cost per Revenue Hour). Overall, this reflects a 30% reduction in costs compared to Q3 FY23 due to cost reductions in Contract Modification No. 11 as well as reductions to unplanned absences and overtime usage.

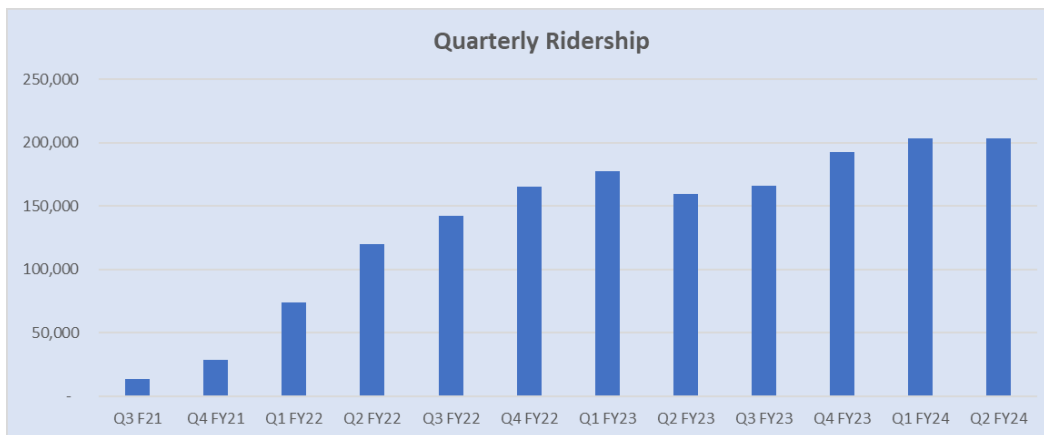
While costs per hour decreased, ridership increased by 22% compared to Q3 FY23. As a result, the cost per trip decreased by 39%, from \$47.74 in Q3 FY24 to \$29.06 per trip in Q2 FY24, as shown in Chart 2 (Quarterly Ridership).

Costs per trip in the LAX/Inglewood, UCLA/Westwood/VAMC, North Hollywood/Burbank, and El Monte zones were above the system average of \$29.10, while Altadena/Pasadena/Sierra Madre, Watts/Compton, Northwest SFV, and Highland Park/Eagle Rock/Glendale were below, as shown in Chart 3 (Cost per trip by zone).

**Chart 1: Metro and Contractor Cost per Revenue Hour**  
*Cost reduction of 30% from \$143 to \$102 between Q3 FY23 and Q2 FY24.*

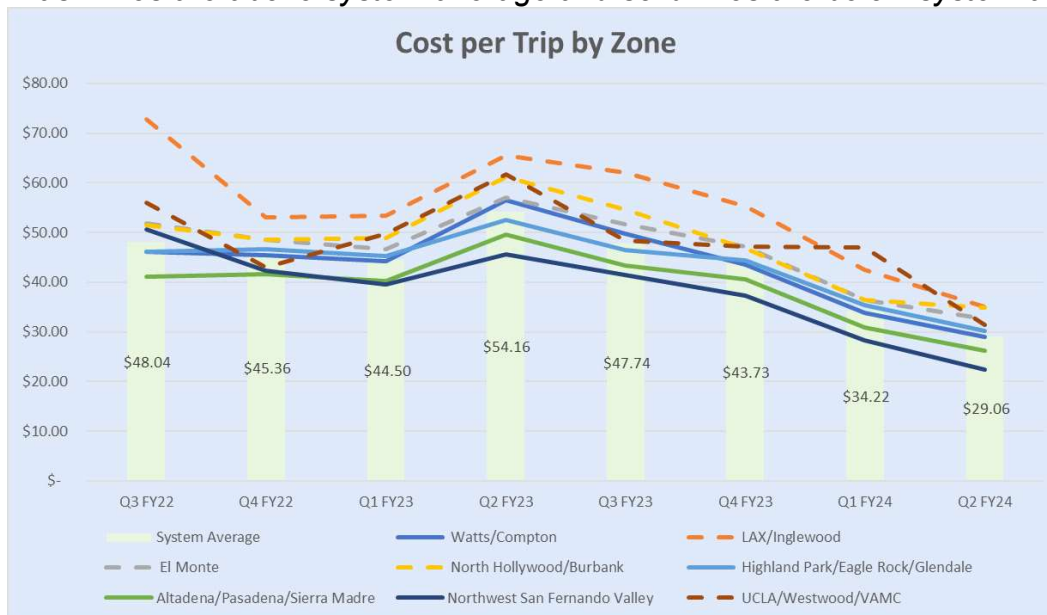


**Chart 2: Quarterly Ridership**  
*Ridership increased by 22% between Q3 FY23 and Q2 FY24.*



**Chart 3: Cost per Trip by Zone**

*Dash lines are above system average and solid lines are below system average.*



**Productivity**

As of February 2024, passengers per vehicle hour (PVH) are 20% higher than in January 2023. Though PVH has increased to 3.55, it is lower than the record high of 3.67 set in September 2023. (Note that August and September are traditionally the highest ridership months of the year due to increased travel patterns during the start of the school season.)

All zones have a higher PVH than in January 2023, with Watts, LAX, SFV, and UCLA increasing by more than 25%.

- Record-setting PVH in LAX, SFV, and UCLA
- PVH trending slightly lower in February, possibly due to severe rainstorm weather

	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2023	Jan. 2024	% Growth Since 2023		Feb. 2024
LAMTA 1 - Watts-Compton	2.76	3.41	3.56	29%		3.35
LAMTA 2 - LAX-Inglewood	2.50	2.84	3.14	25%	Record	3.08
LAMTA 4 - El Monte	2.78	3.05	3.07	11%		3.01
LAMTA 5 - NoHo-Burbank	2.51	2.67	2.87	14%		2.97
LAMTA 6 - HP-Eagle Rk-Glendale	3.07	3.20	3.35	9%		3.37
LAMTA 7 - Pasadena-Altadena-SM	3.31	3.60	3.89	17%		3.86
LAMTA 8 - San Fernando Vly	3.36	4.55	5.01	49%	Record	4.72
LAMTA 9 - UCLA-Westwood-VA	2.64	2.68	3.48	32%		3.88
All Zones	2.95	3.31	3.55	20%		3.51

Note: SFV weekday PVH set a single-day record of 5.81 in January and 6.66 in February.

Zone Comparison Analysis:

North Hollywood, El Monte, and LAX have consistently shown lower productivity and average ridership compared to other zones throughout the project duration. These three zones are being considered for service design changes aimed at improving productivity and with equity in mind. The MTP team will collaborate with Service Development to ensure that any changes maintain the integrity of the Metro NextGen bus system. While UCLA had previously underperformed, recent increases in productivity have brought it above the system average and achieving the highest revenue increase since the fare change in March 2024. Therefore, staff currently do not recommend eliminating this zone until Metro transitions to the new Metro Micro operating model, which is expected to result in lower overall costs per hour and additional analysis conducted.

2024 Ridership and Passenger Per Vehicle Hour Comparison

Program Name	Avg. Weekday Passengers	Avg. Weekday Hours	Weekday PVH
LAMTA 1 - Watts-Compton	456	133	3.44
LAMTA 2 - LAX-Inglewood	144	47	3.09
LAMTA 4 - El Monte	161	52	3.08
LAMTA 5 - NoHo-Burbank	153	52	2.95
LAMTA 6 - HP-Eagle Rk-Glendale	520	154	3.38
LAMTA 7 - Pasadena-Altadena-SM	540	137	3.94
LAMTA 8 - San Fernando Vly	213	45	4.79
LAMTA 9 - UCLA-Westwood-VA	118	33	3.58
Metro Micro Average	288	82	3.54

Status of the MTP New Solicitation Package

In December 2023, Metro negotiated a Side Letter of Agreement with SMART-TD to allow for contracted operations of the MTP service. As such, Metro is considering the most optimal service delivery model to further reduce cost per hour and trip while improving the availability and reliability of service for customers who need Metro Micro (renamed for new service) service the most. The Request for Proposal (RFP) OP122943 for Metro Micro Contract Services was issued on April 23,

2024. The RFP No. OP124278 for Metro Micro Software/Technology Services was issued on May 30, 2024. These RFPs incorporate all lessons learned from MTP to further reduce overall program costs.

**EQUITY PLATFORM**

MTP’s daily operations and software improvements aim to increase overall ridership while ensuring efficiency and optimization efforts do not negatively impact EFCs or accessibility to overall service. For example, MTP’s strategy to deploy operators during unplanned absences in all zones also helps reduce service cancellations in EFCs.

MTP operates in eight zones across LA County. While all MTP zones contain EFCs, there is a range of EFC coverage between zones. MTP’s ridership increased by a total of 22 percent when comparing January 2024 to January 2023, and the highly concentrated EFC zones (Table 2; Column B) also share a positive distribution of ridership growth (Table 2; Column C). The top three ridership growth zones are Northwest San Fernando Valley, LAX/Inglewood, and Watts/Compton. This is a direct result of MTP’s effort to manage unplanned absences to increase service for customers. In the future, MTP will continue monitoring lessons learned to further optimize service in EFCs.

Table 2

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Column A % of Land Area in EFC</b>	<b>Column B % of Population in EFC</b>	<b>Column C % of Ridership change between January 2023 and January 2024</b>
Watts/Compton	68.00%	69.80%	32%
LAX/Inglewood	33.20%	40.30%	49%
El Monte	50.60%	73.30%	8%
North Hollywood / Burbank	19.20%	29.50%	7%
Highland Park / Eagle Rock / Glendale	19.30%	31.70%	19%
Altadena / Pasadena / Sierra Madre	9.90%	23.70%	13%
Northwest San Fernando Valley	3.90%	7.2%	55%
UCLA / Westwood / VA Medical Center	5.50%	10.60%	6%
<b>MTP System (Total)</b>	<b>26.2%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>22%</b>

Between March 21, 2023 - April 28, 2023, the agency conducted a survey in English and Spanish through three methods: (1) an online survey; (2) an on-board survey conducted by outreach personnel; and (3) a telephone survey of people booking through the Metro Call Center. A total of 2,875 Microtransit customers completed surveys. Of the 2,875 surveys, 2,733 (95%) of the surveys

were completed in English, and 142 (5%) were completed in Spanish. Initial findings show:

- More than half of respondents identified as female (53%), 40% identified as male, 3% as non-binary, and 0.3% as other genders.
- Compared to Metro customers overall, fewer Metro Micro users identified as Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (18% versus 7%) and White/Caucasian (28% versus 12%), and more users identified as Black/African American (10% versus 14%) or Hispanic/Latinx (40% versus 58%).
- Compared to Metro Micro users, fewer residents living in MTP zones identified as Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (7% versus 15%), White/Caucasian (12% versus 27%), and more residents in MTP zones identified as Black/African American (14% versus 9%) or Hispanic/Latinx (58% versus 46%).

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

MTP supports strategic plan goals #1.2 and 2.3: Metro Micro is an investment in a world-class transportation system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more customers for more trips. Metro Micro continues to improve customer satisfaction at customer touchpoints by offering an accessible, flexible service that better adapts to customer demand and needs.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Metro staff will return to seek Board approval for the contract awards of operations contracted services in October and the software technology contract in November 2024. The transition from the current contractor to the newly awarded contractor(s) will begin as soon as November 2024 to ensure a seamless transition for Metro Micro customers effective April 1, 2025.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

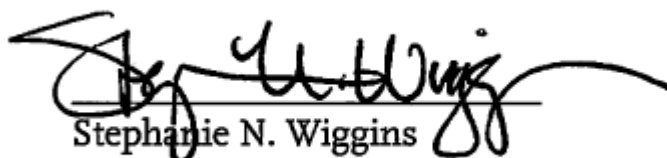
Attachment A - Board Motion 42

Attachment B - West LA VA Medical Center Flyer

Attachment C - Table 1 - Average Fare Changes by Zone

Prepared by: Dan Nguyen, Executive Officer, (213) 418-3233

Reviewed by: Conan Cheung, Chief Operations Officer, (213) 418-3034



Stephanie N. Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer



**Board Report**

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**File #:** 2023-0638, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response

**Agenda Number:**

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**REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**

**Motion by:**

**DIRECTORS NAJARIAN, BUTTS, DUTRA, HAHN, AND BARGER**

Related to Item 42: MicroTransit Pilot Project - Part B

Launched in 2020, the Micro Transit Pilot Program provides flexible, on-demand transit service in 8 Micro Transit Zones throughout Los Angeles County. The goal of the program includes focusing on the customer experience and ease of use, improving connections to the larger Metro system and local and regional operators by providing improved 1<sup>st</sup> mile/last mile connections, providing better service where fixed routes performed poorly, as well as addressing inequities in the availability and affordability of on-demand ride-hailing services in communities of color and areas with lower median incomes. The program is a quality option that is safe, clean, and comfortable in areas with more limited transit options, especially in Equity Focused Communities (EFCs).

When initially proposed, the goal for the cost per ride was \$20.00-25.00. The current cost is an average of \$42.00 per ride - more than 4 times the cost per rider on our fixed-route bus lines. At \$42.00 per ride, the program's sustainability becomes a challenge. Ridership performance by zone ranges from a high of just over 500 per day to a low of 115 per day. If the goal is to continue this service, the program must be sustainable and operational changes are necessary.

A driving factor in the cost per ride is Passengers per Vehicle per Hour (PVH). The PVH is based on demand which impacts performance and cost. The PVH program goal is 5-7 riders per vehicle per hour to meet the cost goals of \$20.00-\$25.00 per ride. The current average PVH for the program is 2.5-3.9.

The current request is for a one-year contract extension with an additional 6-month extension, if necessary. Staff is recommending making several operational changes to improve performance and address costs including streamlining operating hours, raising fares to \$2.50, (currently at \$1.00 - lower than Metro's base fare) shifting operating costs to capital costs and discontinuing or curtailing service in low performing zones in June 2024. Factors that need to be considered when discontinuing or curtailing a line should be based on data driven metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) such as: PVH, average daily trips per week, maximum wait time, on-time performance, first/last mile connection rates, vehicle no-shows/excess demand, length of trips, percentage of stand-alone trips, and trips transferring to/from fixed-route services. Additionally, between now and June, information is needed on the characteristics of those zones which perform well and those that do not.



**File #:** 2023-0638, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response**Agenda Number:**

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**SUBJECT: MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT MOTION****RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE Motion by Directors Najarian, Butts, Dutra, Hahn, and Barger that the Board direct the CEO to:

- A. Return to the Board by June 2024 with the recommendation of which zones are proposed to be discontinued or curtailed and to request the additional 6-month extension. The recommendation should include a thorough analysis of all zones with data driven metrics and KPIs outlined above, including data on demographics, as well as a plan of action that would address how service would be provided in discontinued zones where fixed bus routes were discontinued, and how the cost savings would be reinvested in operations including improving Micro Transit service in the remaining zones. Additionally, a review of the program should be presented which includes key characteristics of high performing and poorly performing zones, and how to increase the number of passengers linking Micro Transit and fixed route service.
- B. Implement those operational changes that could improve performance in low performing zones as soon as possible and increase marketing efforts to bolster community awareness of the program.
- C. Prior to raising fare to \$2.50, report back on the feasibility of incorporating Micro Transit services into the existing discount programs, including but not limited to Low Income Fare is Easy (LIFE), GoPass, Seniors, etc.

**HORVATH AMENDMENT:**

- A. Report back at six-month intervals with an update on the MicroTransit program, including but not limited to the effectiveness of the proposed cost and performance enhancements and the status of the new solicitation package.
- B. Report back on the feasibility of establishing a \$1.75 rate for riders connecting to other fixed-route Metro services.

# Metro Micro


Rides On Demand

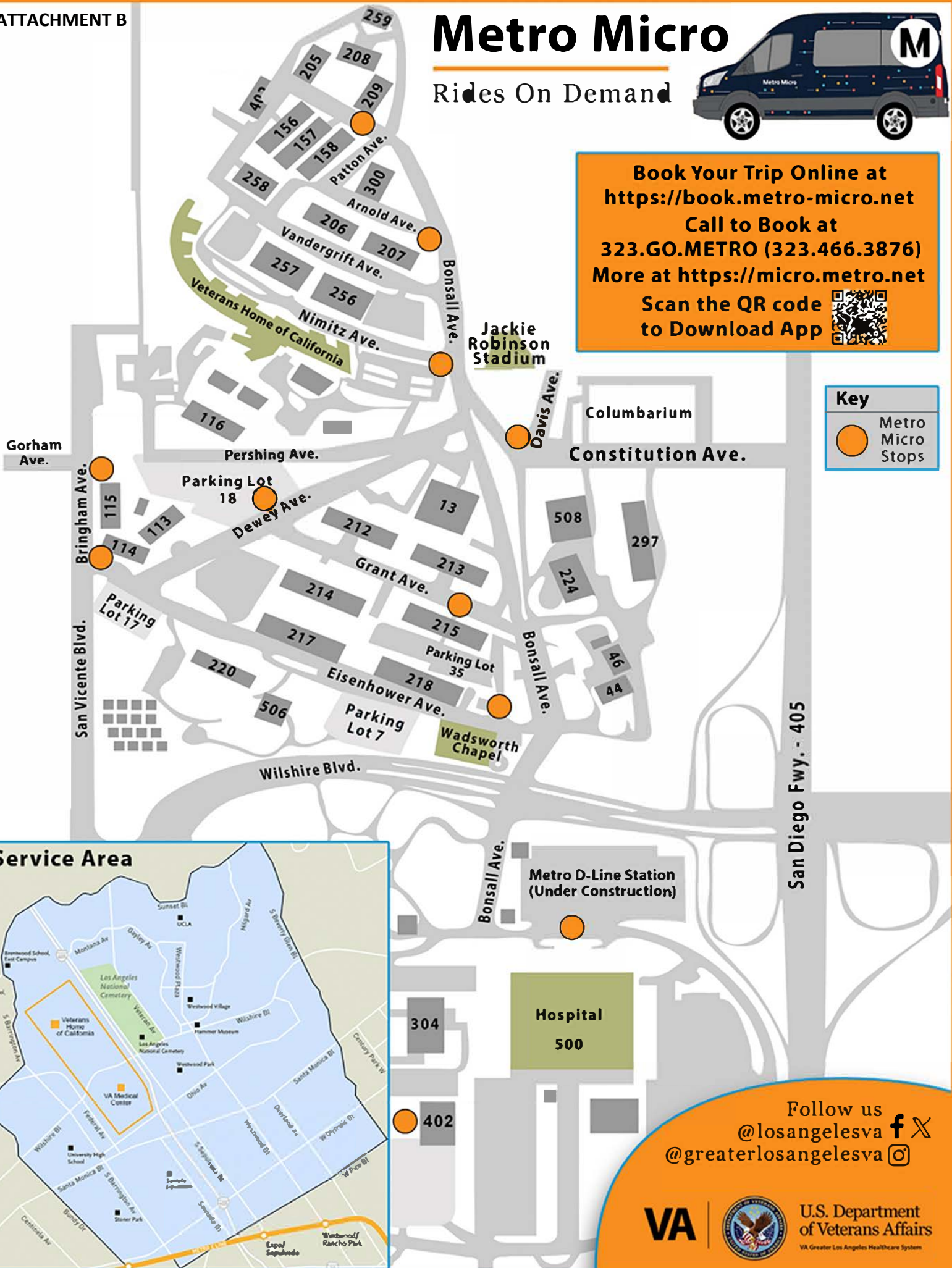


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Attachment C – Table 1 – Average Fare Changes by Zone

Zone	2/25/2024 to 3/23/2024			3/24/2024 to 4/20/2024			Change		
	TAP/Boarding	CC/Boarding	\$/Transaction	TAP/Boarding	CC/Boarding	\$/Transaction	TAP/Boarding	CC/Boarding	\$/Transaction
WATTC	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.91	\$0.39	\$ 1.67	\$ 2.37	\$0.83	67%	160%	114%
LAXIN	\$ 0.89	\$ 0.81	\$0.54	\$ 1.69	\$ 2.15	\$1.23	90%	164%	128%
ELMON	\$ 0.98	\$ 0.95	\$0.64	\$ 1.68	\$ 2.29	\$1.17	72%	140%	82%
NHBUR	\$ 0.94	\$ 0.91	\$0.59	\$ 1.69	\$ 2.13	\$1.48	80%	133%	152%
HPERG	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.95	\$0.62	\$ 1.98	\$ 2.37	\$1.38	98%	150%	123%
ALPAS	\$ 0.96	\$ 0.89	\$0.55	\$ 1.85	\$ 2.28	\$1.19	92%	157%	114%
NWSFV	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.88	\$0.49	\$ 1.87	\$ 2.22	\$1.20	87%	151%	143%
UCLAV	\$ 0.28	\$ 0.87	\$0.30	\$ 0.62	\$ 2.36	\$0.59	120%	171%	97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 0.89</b>	<b>\$ 0.91</b>	<b>\$0.53</b>	<b>\$ 1.70</b>	<b>\$ 2.29</b>	<b>\$1.16</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>152%</b>	<b>120%</b>

# Metro Micro™

OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

June 20, 2024





## Status report on the MicroTransit Pilot (MTP) Project in response to Board Motion 42 includes the following updates:

- Operations Optimization
- Fare Change Impact
- Cost Efficiency
- Productivity
- Zone Comparison
- Solicitation Package



# Operations Optimization

**Various internal operational changes have improved operator availability and reduced overtime costs, such as:**

- Improving vehicle availability
- Utilizing enhanced software features to monitor and coach operator performance
- Promoting UCLA/Westwood/Veteran's Affairs Medical Center (VAMC)
- Fine-tuning Service Levels and Workforce Schedules



# Fare Change Impact



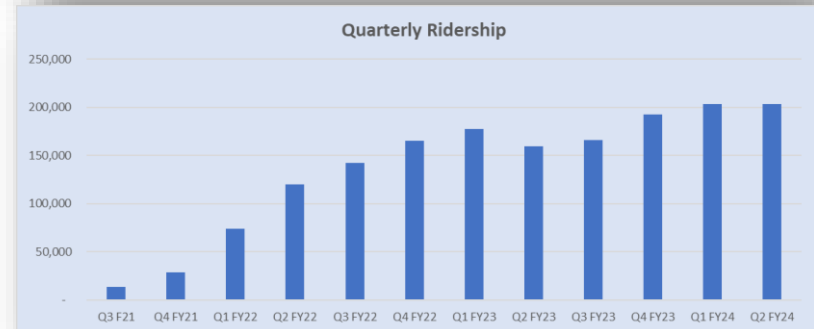
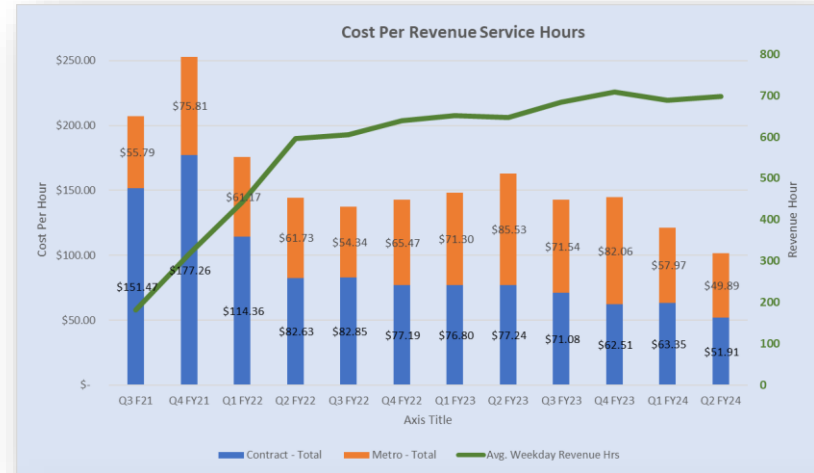
## Comparing the first thirty (30) days after the fare change:

- Passengers took advantage of the Metro discount program
- TAP revenue increased by 91% from \$0.89 to \$1.70 compared to the overall system increase of 120% from \$0.53 to \$1.16
- Watts-Compton and El Monte are two zones with the highest usage of TAP program discounts
- UCLA experienced the highest change in revenue for both TAP and credit card payments

Zone	2/25/2024 to 3/23/2024			3/24/2024 to 4/20/2024			Change		
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# Cost Efficiency

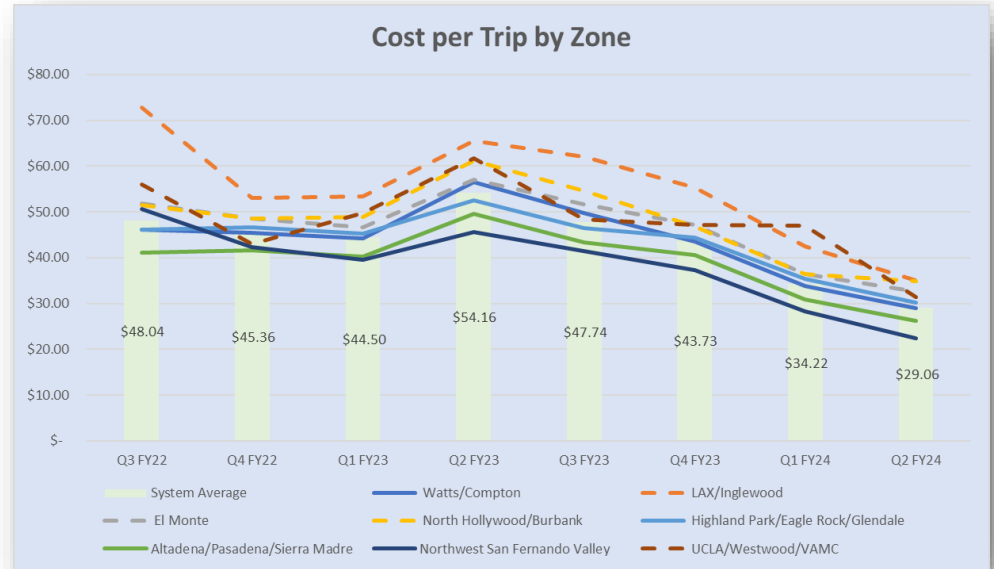
- The cost per revenue hour has decreased by 30% from \$142.67 in Q3FY23 to \$101.80 in Q2FY24.
- Ridership also increased by 22% in Q2FY24, compared to Q3FY23.





# Cost Efficiency – Cont.

- As a result, the cost per trip decreased by 39% from \$47.74 in Q3FY23 compared to \$29.06 per trip in Q2FY24.
- Costs per trip in the LAX/Inglewood, UCLA/Westwood/VAMC, North Hollywood/Burbank, and El Monte zones were above the system average of \$29.06.
- Altadena/Pasadena/Sierra Madre, Watts/Compton, Northwest SFV, and Highland Park/Eagle Rock/Glendale were below the system average.



# Productivity



- As of February 2024, passengers per vehicle hour (PVH) are 20% higher than in January 2023.
- All zones have a higher PVH compared to January 2023, with Watts, LAX, SFV, and UCLA increasing by 25% higher PVH.

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All Zones	2.95	3.31	3.55	20%		3.51

Note: SFV weekday PVH set a single-day record of 5.81 in January and 6.66 in February

# Zone Comparison



- North Hollywood, El Monte, and LAX show lower productivity and average ridership.
- MTP staff will work with Service Development to maintain the integrity of NextGen’s efforts.
- UCLA’s recent increases in productivity brought it above the system average and achieved the highest revenue increase since the fare change in March 2024.
- Additional analysis will be conducted using the new model’s cost and performance.

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Metro Micro Average	288	82	3.54

# Status of the Solicitation package



- In December 2023, Metro negotiated a Side Letter of Agreement with SMART-TD to allow for contracted operations of the MTP service.
- Metro is considering the most optimal service delivery model to further reduce cost per hour and trip while improving the availability and reliability of service for customers.
- As a result of incorporating all lessons learned, two separate RFPs were published:
  - ❑ The Request for Proposal (RFP) OP122943 for Metro Micro Contract Services was issued on April 23, 2024.
  - ❑ The RFP No. OP124278 for Metro Micro Software/Technology Services- was issued on May 30, 2024.



- Metro staff will return to seek Board approval for the contract awards of operations contracted services in October and software technology contract in November 2024.

**THANK  
YOU!**