



Board Report

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Agenda Number: 27.

OPERATIONS, SAFETY, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE MAY 16, 2024

SUBJECT: OPERATIONS CENTRAL INSTRUCTION (OCI) CENTRALIZED CAMPUS

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE the report of the Operations Central Instruction (OCI) Centralized Campus, which will create a consolidated training and onboarding location for Bus Operators and essential front-line Bus Operations support staff.

ISSUE

OCI is currently decentralized, and training takes place at multiple locations throughout Metro's service area. This presents challenges for new Bus Operator trainers and trainees, who must travel to three or more locations during the extensive onboarding and training process. This practice negatively impacts effectiveness and productivity. Establishing the OCI Campus would result in efficiency improvements such as reduction of travel time during training, more seamless transfer of knowledge from the classroom setting to a vehicle, and the creation of a dedicated training fleet that is customized for instructor and trainee safety.

BACKGROUND

In FY24, Metro's adopted budget approved 10,883 positions. Of these positions, Bus Operators account for 33% (3,572) of the total and represent the largest group of employees within the agency. In FY25, Metro anticipates an estimated 1,560 Bus Operator candidates will be onboarded and trained by OCI to account for promotions into other positions, transfer to rail operations, and attrition.

In addition to Bus Operator onboarding and training, OCI provides a vital function in training several other Metro Operations departments. For example, Metro's maintenance employees complete vehicle familiarization training and Metro supervisors receive required DOT certifications. Other positions, such as Bus Mechanics, Maintenance of Way personnel, and Vault Truck Drivers, receive basic CDL training and familiarization with the license class. OCI also supports the security function, as it provides vehicular post-accident training for SSLE and Transit Security Officers on an as-needed basis.

DISCUSSION

Currently, operator classroom training facilities have been decentralized in various buildings and rotated on an as-needed basis among available conference and computer training rooms within the USG Building and several other Metro locations. In any given recruitment cycle, recruits must travel to three or more locations throughout LA County due to limited classroom availability and a decentralized campus for the full suite of Bus Operator training requirements. Once recruits have passed their classroom training and obtained the necessary permits, they are currently taken to Division 10 in downtown Los Angeles for behind-the-wheel practice in a controlled environment. After the class proficiency levels meet trainer standards, the control area is converted to an obstacle course for DMV testing and licensing purposes.

Without a dedicated location for OCI, there is no yard space to maintain a dedicated training fleet. Therefore, instructors must drive to various divisions daily to borrow buses for training purposes which is both inefficient and does not allow for the establishment of a consistent dedicated training fleet. Without a dedicated fleet, the buses are not ideally configured for instruction as the operator barriers provide an obstacle for the instructor to quickly take control of the vehicle when needed. In addition, the buses cannot be customized to support the instructors, such as the installation of a jump seat so they are not standing on a moving bus for eight hours per day.

Establishing a centralized OCI Campus seeks to advance training efficiencies by consolidating training locations and improving the functionality of existing resources. The El Monte Transit Center represents one of the newest facilities for Metro's bus transit services and provides more bus boardings than any other transit hub west of the Mississippi. In addition, this location is adjacent to Division 9 and has opportunities to expand to meet the space needs of an OCI campus. Current OCI training locations will be repurposed for other bus and rail operations functions, such as developing a new Bus and Rail Operations Control facilities at Division 10. The space freed up by OCI at this site would also be used to optimize operations for Non-Revenue Vehicles, Maintenance of Way, and Rail Communications, which will remain at Division 10.

As an initial step toward developing an OCI campus, Operations has completed the design of facilities within the El Monte Transit Center to centralize classroom training. As part of the FY25 Proposed Budget, staff is requesting approval of a new capital project for the OCI Campus to complete the following component: the acquisition and development of open space to allow for controlled practice driving skills within close proximity of the new classroom training center, and to support a dedicated training fleet. The approval for a LOP budget of \$24.5 million will establish and develop a centralized OCI campus. Anticipated activities include the immediate acquisition/development of property that will serve as an open space for behind-the-wheel training by FY25 Q1, the construction of improved classroom facilities by FY25 Q3, and the required DMV approval of test facilities by FY26 Q3.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The establishment of a centralized campus will positively impact safety as the project scope moves forward to improve and consolidate training facilities for frontline, public-facing, and safety-critical positions such as Bus Operators, Mechanics, and Maintenance of Way personnel.

EQUITY PLATFORM

Establishing an OCI Campus will directly benefit all Metro Bus Operations staff, especially new hires who enter the training program. In FY23, based on demographic information collected during onboarding, Bus Operator hires/rehires were 92% people of color.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Approval of this recommendation supports the following Metro Strategic Plan Goals:

- Goal # 1: Provide high-quality mobility options that enable people to spend less time traveling.
- Goal # 2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system.
- Goal # 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

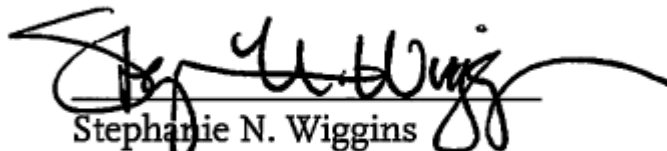
The Board may choose not to establish the Campus. Staff does not recommend this due to limited classroom availability, impacting operator recruitment, training, and retention.

NEXT STEPS

Upon board approval of the FY25 budget, real estate activity will commence. Thereafter, staff will commence procurement processes to improve the planned OCI campus. Infrastructure Maintenance and Engineering will lead the contract(s) for campus improvements to proceed with the project scope.

Prepared by: Quintin Sumabat, Executive Officer, Operations Administration (213) 922-4922
Daniel Dzyacky, Executive Officer (Interim), Ops Central Instruction (213) 922-6752
Edna Stanley, Deputy Chief Operations Officer, Transit Service Delivery, (213) 922-4084

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


Stephanie N. Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer



Operations Central Instruction (OCI) Campus



Metro

Operations, Safety, & Customer Experience Committee

May 16, 2024

Improve and Centralize Operations Central Instruction (OCI)

- **OCI onboarding and training is a constant & significant ongoing effort at the agency, with up to 1,560 Bus Operator candidates expected to be trained in FY25**
 - OCI also provides a vital function in cross-training several other Metro Operations departments, including maintenance, supervisory, security, and Maintenance of Way (MOW) staff
 - Rail Operators are generally hired from the existing Bus Operator pool → ongoing rail expansion increases demand for Bus Operator recruitment
- **Operations Central Instruction is currently decentralized**
 - Trainers & trainees must travel to 3 or more locations during onboarding and training
 - Negatively impacts effectiveness and productivity
- **Establishing OCI Campus results in efficiency improvements**
 - Consolidate training locations near El Monte Station
 - Reduction of travel time during training
 - More seamless transfer of knowledge from the classroom setting to a vehicle
 - Creation of a dedicated training fleet that is customized for instructor and trainee safety
 - Add dedicated seat for instructors to minimize falls/fatigue

Next Steps

- **As an initial step toward developing an OCI Campus, Operations has completed design of facilities within El Monte Transit Center to centralize classroom training**
 - Requesting approval of new capital project with a \$24.5M LOP as part of FY25 Proposed Budget
 - Acquisition and development of open space near El Monte for controlled practice driving skills
 - Support dedicated training fleet
- **Upon Board approval of the FY25 budget**
 - CEO may approve the commencement of Real Estate Acquisitions
 - Staff will commence procurement processes to improve the planned OCI Campus / proceed with the project scope
 - Current OCI training locations will be repurposed for other bus and rail operations functions, such as development of new Bus and Rail Operations Control facilities at Division 10