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Long Beach Transit Board Approves FY10/11 Operating Budget That Includes Service Reductions

LONG BEACH, CALIF. (June 1, 2010) – Long Beach Transit’s Board of Directors has approved a Fiscal Year 2010/11 operating budget that will include service reductions beginning with the fall school semester.

The reductions, which will amount to approximately three percent of total Long Beach Transit service hours, will consist of slightly longer wait times between buses on certain routes and fewer buses to accommodate Long Beach Unified School District students.

Larry Jackson, President and CEO of Long Beach Transit, said the service reductions were made necessary by drops in transit operating subsidies caused by the economy and reductions in state transit assistance.

Jackson said that transit subsidies have dropped by 20% during the last two years. He noted that during the same time, two fare increases were implemented and Long Beach Transit adopted a wide variety of cost reduction strategies. These measures did not, however, completely make up for the shortfall in state transit subsidies.

“The economy and the state’s decision to cut transit funding have had a huge impact on transit systems throughout California,” Jackson said. “While these LBT service reductions will definitely inconvenience our customers, they are nowhere near what is being experienced in other parts of the state.”

While none of the reductions involve the elimination of a route or changing the start and stop times of route, there will be longer intervals between buses on various routes. “We have worked to minimize the impact these reductions will have on the community,” Jackson said. “However, everyone should be prepared to wait a little longer for the next bus.”

Jackson said the impact of the service reductions will be especially felt by students of the Long Beach Unified School District, which recently announced further reductions in yellow school bus services as a result of LBUSD budget challenges. In past years, Long Beach Transit has added service to local schools to make up for LBUSD cutbacks, but will be unable to do so this fall. He said there will likely be overcrowding on routes serving junior high and high schools and urged parents and students to contact their respective schools to learn more about the transportation changes for the upcoming school year and make alternate arrangements.

While Long Beach Transit has not yet issued any layoff notices, through attrition and unfilled positions it has reduced the number of employees by about 30.

“What we are seeing here first-hand is the impact of not only the economy but the state’s decision to implement major cuts in transit funding as it struggles to keep its own budget balanced,” Jackson said.

SUMMARY OF LONG BEACH TRANSIT SERVICE REDUCTIONS EFFECTIVE AUGUST 28, 2010

- Route 1/Easy Avenue—Change weekday service frequency from every 20 to every 30 minutes.

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- Route 66/Atlantic Ave.—Delete ZAP buses from Atlantic Ave. service. Regular Atlantic Ave. buses will continue to operate as often as every 12 minutes.
- Route 71-72/Orange Ave.—Change weekday service frequency from every 20 to every 30 minutes.
- Route 96/Seventh St.—Delete ZAP buses during non-school periods and the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. Regular 7th St. buses will continue to operate as often as every 7 minutes.
- Route 101-102-103/Carson St-Spring St.-Lakewood—Peak hour service on Route 103 will operate on school days only.
- Route 172-173/PCH-PaloVerde-Studebaker—Service on 172/PCH-Palo Verde will stop at Los Cerritos Mall on weekdays. Customers wishing to travel to the Norwalk Green Line Station will be able to transfer to Route 173.
- Route 181-182/Magnolia-Pacific—Evening service will be reduced from every 20 to every 30 minutes.
- Passport B/4th St.—Evening service will be reduced from every 20 to every 30 minutes.
- Passport C/Pine Ave.-Queen Mary—Evening service will be reduced from every 15 to every 20 minutes.
- Holiday Service—Schedules will be reduced by approximately 25% on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years.
- Minor reductions in frequency of certain early morning and evening service on various routes.

About Long Beach Transit

Long Beach Transit serves over 29 million boarding customers in Long Beach, Lakewood and Signal Hill—as well as portions of Artesia, Bellflower, Carson, Cerritos, Compton, Hawaiian Gardens, Norwalk, Paramount and Seal Beach—with regular bus and shuttle services including the Passport, AquaBus, and AquaLink. For more information visit www.lbtransit.com.