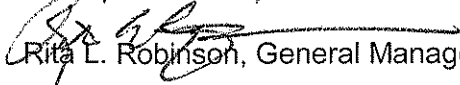


**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Date: August 27, 2008

To: The Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Honorable Wendy Greuel, Chair
Transportation Committee

From:  Rita L. Robinson, General Manager

Subject: **STATUS REPORT ON THE FEASIBILITY OF EXTENDING THE
HOURS OF DASH DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES ON FRIDAY NIGHTS
(CF 08-1858)**

SUMMARY

At its August 13, 2008 meeting, the City Council adopted a Transportation Committee recommendation, pursuant to a Motion introduced by Councilmembers Greuel, Perry and Garcetti, directing the Department to report in 30 days on the feasibility of extending the hours of DASH Downtown routes on Friday nights, including options to partner with businesses to raise the necessary funds (CF 08-1858).

At about the same time the Motion was introduced, the Department met with representatives from LA Live, the entertainment complex in the southwest portion of Downtown, and LA Inc. (Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau), to discuss potential public/private partnership options to expand DASH service in Downtown Los Angeles. The Department was asked to evaluate the feasibility of operating a shuttle route developed by LA Live that would connect a variety of Downtown venues, including the Music Center and LA Live, with the 7th St./Metro Center Station. The Department has refined the proposed route developed in coordination with LA Live and is developing cost estimates for operating the service on Friday and Saturday nights.

The Department made it clear in these meetings that, given the projected deficit in Proposition A funding used to operate City transit services, LADOT's participation in operating this route would focus primarily on supplying DASH vehicles and managing the operation of the service. Therefore, the feasibility of launching and sustaining such a shuttle would rely on the willingness of the hotels, restaurants, bars and other Downtown entertainment attractions to fund its operational costs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council RECEIVE AND FILE this report as it is for informational purposes and no Council action is required.

TRANSPORTATION

AUG 28 2008

BACKGROUND

The Department last addressed the issue of extending the hours of operation for DASH Downtown Los Angeles as part of its "DASH Downtown Los Angeles Study and Recommendations", which was submitted to the Mayor and City Council in September 2007 and adopted by the Council on February 26, 2008 (CF 07-3772). That Study was undertaken by the Department in part because new residential units were being added in Downtown at a rapid pace, and the developers as well as the new residents of those units were interested in having the local circulation service of DASH Downtown Los Angeles available in the evenings.

The Department's Study recommended against any expansion of DASH service into the evening hours or on weekends by the City for the following two primary reasons: 1) the looming \$118 million projected deficit in Proposition A funding, which is the major source of funding for the Department's transit services, made the addition of new service financially infeasible, and 2) the results of the Study showed that Downtown Los Angeles, even with its increasing residential population, still lacked the population density to support DASH service running on top of the extensive evening transit service already provided by Metro within Downtown. The Study concluded that the most effective response to the growing demand for travel within Downtown in the evening would be privately funded event-based shuttles.

The Department implemented a number of new and/or expanded DASH services in recent years, including the Holly Trolley, the Downtown Art Walk, and the Larchmont Shuttle, using funding provided exclusively with private (non-Proposition A) funding. During discussions of the Study with the Transportation Committee, the Department indicated that it continues to be open to potential initiatives from Downtown stakeholders that would extend DASH hours if the private sector could supply the funds to operate the City-owned DASH vehicles. The Study also concluded that the establishment of a flat-fare taxi zone within Downtown should also be considered.

DISCUSSION

In June 2008, the Department was contacted by LA Live to discuss the potential of adding evening DASH service in anticipation of the scheduled opening of several restaurants at LA Live in November 2008. A more formal meeting in July followed those informal discussions between LA Live and the Department organized by LA Inc., the LA Convention and Visitor's Bureau. The focus of this discussion was to encourage residents living throughout the Los Angeles region to utilize the existing regional public transit system (bus and rail) to travel to Downtown in the evening and then to use special evening DASH service to access restaurants, bars, cultural venues, sporting events and other entertainment attractions located Downtown. This service was proposed, in part, as an alternative to driving to Downtown, given the sharp increase in gasoline prices.

As a result of these discussions, LA Live suggested a preliminary route using Temple Street, Grand Avenue, Pico Boulevard and Figueroa Street to be operated from early evening until midnight on Friday and Saturday nights, with the possible addition of Thursday nights, if feasible. The Department agreed to refine the route, locate

preliminary stops, and estimate the cost of operating the service using City-owned DASH vehicles.

The Department has refined the proposed route, as shown in Attachment A, and is in the process of estimating operating costs. Once that work is completed, LA Inc. has agreed to approach various stakeholders within Downtown such as hotels, bars, restaurants and various entertainment attractions to determine if there is interest in funding the operation of a night-time DASH service.

As part of this potential public/private partnership, the Department has made it clear that it recommends that the City's involvement in extending the hours of DASH operation be limited to supplying DASH vehicles and managing the operation of the service. The Department expects that the private sector would be responsible for providing all of the operating costs for the project to be viable.

CONCLUSION

The Department and two important Downtown stakeholders, LA Live and LA Inc., have begun to explore the feasibility of providing a limited route DASH service in Downtown on Friday and Saturday nights. The next step will be for LA Inc. to help determine whether existing Downtown stakeholders, some of whom currently operate private shuttles of their own, are interested in establishing an evening DASH route that combines some route segments from the existing DASH Route A and DASH Route B into a new route that links the 7th Street/Metro Central Station with the Music Center to the north and LA Live to the south along with many of Downtown's hotels, restaurants and bars. The Department will keep the Transportation Committee informed as the project is designed and funded.

IMPACT ON THE BUDGET

This report is for informational purposes only. There is no impact on the budget.

Attachment

DRAFT PROPOSED PM DASH DOWNTOWN SHUTTLE ROUTE

Attachment A

