



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING Executive Office

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TO: Interested Parties
Department of City Planning Staff

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SUBJECT: METRO NEXTGEN; RAPID BUS DEFINITIONS

This memo explains how Metro's recent initial implementation of its "NextGen" Bus Plan will impact determinations regarding what constitutes a Metro Rapid Bus pursuant to City Planning policies and programs, including the Density Bonus and Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Affordable Housing Incentive programs. Background information from Metro on NextGen including the latest service changes is available on their website (<https://www.metro.net/projects/nextgen>).

Background

NextGen is described by Metro as "a reimagined bus system that focuses on providing fast, frequent, reliable and accessible service to meet the needs of today's riders." The initial Phase 1 roll-out began in December 2020 and will continue through two additional phases in June and December of 2021. Service on nearly all lines will be affected.

Under the NextGen Bus Plan, most Metro Rapid Bus lines will be replaced with a new type of bus line that will have more frequent service and new stop intervals. These new replacement lines combine elements of a Rapid Bus and Local Bus. This change introduces a need for clarity on how the term Rapid Bus will be understood as it currently exists in the LAMC and other City Planning documents. Certain important incentives to provide affordable housing near transit exist in the Density Bonus Ordinance (see LAMC 12.22 A.25(f)(4)(ii)(b) and 12.22 A.25(c)(10)) as well as the TOC Guidelines (see Chart 1 of the TOC Guidelines and LAMC 12.22 A.25(c)(10) and 12.22 A.25(f)(4)(ii)(b)).

The NextGen system includes a new bus classification system with different Tier levels. Tier 1 is the highest quality bus NextGen line and will replace current Rapid Bus lines as they are discontinued. Tier 1 routes are planned to achieve service interval levels of at least ten minutes throughout the weekday daytime. However, because of the ridership and funding impacts of the current COVID-19 emergency, service levels may lag behind these levels in the short-term.

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Definition of Rapid Bus

Rapid Bus is not a defined term in the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), nor is there any one agreed-upon set of criteria that must exist to be called a Rapid Bus line. The TOC Guidelines define Rapid Bus in a broad, flexible way to encompass a number of different types of higher quality bus services provided by different operators, as follows:

Rapid Bus is a higher quality bus service that may include several key attributes, including dedicated bus lanes, branded vehicles and stations, high frequency, limited stops at major intersections, intelligent transportation systems, and possible off-board fare collection and/or all door boarding. It includes, but is not limited to, Metro Bus Rapid Transit lines, Metro Rapid 700 lines, Metro Orange and Silver Lines, Big Blue Rapid lines and the Rapid 6 Culver City bus.

The Tier 1 NextGen is the highest level of bus service that Metro now offers (not to be confused with TOC Tier 1). While Metro is discontinuing most but not all Rapid Bus lines, Tier 1 lines will replace Rapid Lines and include most of the attributes in the above definition. Most importantly, Tier 1 lines are defined by their high level of service frequency. The number of stops for NextGen Tier 1 lines will be less than for existing local bus lines, but not as few as the current Rapid lines. Metro also advises that Tier 1 corridors would be the priorities for all-door boarding roll out and maintaining or adding transit signal priority plus dedicated bus lanes and other speed improvements for some Tier 1 corridors is being developed in partnership with the City.

A total of 28 corridors in Los Angeles County are being replaced with Tier 1 lines, not all of which align with current Rapid lines. In an effort to promote consistency, only those Tier 1 NextGen lines that replace a Metro Rapid line will be deemed a Rapid line by the Department of City Planning. Figure 1 below lists the discontinued Rapid lines and their Tier 1 replacement lines that will function as Rapid lines, along with the anticipated phase-in dates.

Implementation

This memo will guide updates to City Planning's determinations of which Metro bus routes and stops are considered to be a Rapid Bus, when those terms are referenced in the LAMC and TOC Guidelines. Discontinued Metro Rapid Bus lines will be replaced with their NextGen Tier 1 replacement lines when each phase is rolled out. This includes the NextGen Phase 1 changes already in effect, as described above, as well as subsequent Phase 2 and 3 of the NextGen roll-out (anticipated in June and December 2021). There may be some minor shifts in TOC Tier eligibility as a result of the NextGen changes to Rapid Bus lines. This memo amends the prior August 19, 2020 TOC memorandum issued by City Planning, solely for the Rapid Lines and their

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replacement lines, described above. For lines not affected by these NextGen Rapid bus changes, the TOC program will continue to use a pre-COVID-19 bus schedule to determine program eligibility as described in the August 2020 memorandum. This policy will remain in place until superseded by future memo or updates to the TOC Guidelines. If project applicants have questions about how these changes might impact a pending project application or CEQA analysis, please contact your assigned case planner.

Figure 1. Discontinued and Replacement NextGen Tier 1 Rapid Lines

	Discontinued Rapid Lines	Replacement Next Gen Tier 1 Rapid Line
Phase One December 2020 (already in effect)	705 Vernon Ave./ La Cienega Bl. 710 Crenshaw Bl. 728 Olympic Bl. 740 Hawthorne Bl./ Crenshaw Bl. 745 Broadway St. 751 Soto St. 760 Long Beach Bl. 762 Atlantic Bl./ Fair Oaks Ave.	105 210 28 40 / 210 45 251 60 260
Phase Two June 2021 (anticipated)	720 Whittier Bl. 734 Sepulveda-Westside 744: Reseda/Ventura/Van Nuys 750 Ventura Bl. 770 Garvey, Atlantic, Cesar Chavez 780 Pasadena, Hollywood/Fairfax 788 Van Nuys – Westside 794 San Fernando Rd.	18 234 / 761 240 and 233/761 150 / 240 70 180 / 217 261 94 / 294
Phase Three June 2021 (anticipated)	704 Santa Monica Bl. 733 Venice Bl. 757 Western Av.	4 33 207