




DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING Executive Office

City Hall, 200 N. Spring Street, Room 525, Los Angeles, CA 90012

DATE: August 19, 2020

TO: Interested Parties
Department of City Planning Staff

FROM: Vincent P. Bertoni, AICP 
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SUBJECT: TRANSIT SERVICE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Certain definitions used by Los Angeles City Planning originate in state law. This includes terms that describe areas that are proximate to certain transit including Major Transit Stops (MTS), Transit Priority Areas (TPAs), High-Quality Transit Corridor and High-Quality Transit Corridor Area (HQTAs). The definitions of all these terms reference bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.

Given the unprecedented impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had upon public transit ridership and budgets, transit agencies such as Metro have been making temporary adjustments to bus service schedules since its onset in March 2020. Metro has published two service updates since this time and anticipates a series of additional future updates designed to align with the stages of the California COVID-19 reopening plan. Similarly, the Santa Monica Big Blue Bus and Culver CityBus, which run through the City of Los Angeles, have adopted temporarily reduced service due to the pandemic.

The terms identified above are used to make long-range planning decisions and in the development review process. This is supported by state definitions that identify a TPA as including both already existing transit stops, as well as transit stops shown in plans to be completed by the plan horizon year. (See, e.g. Gov't Code 65915(d)(2)(D); PRC 21099(a)(7) and 21155(b).) Because current transit schedules are temporary in nature and not expected to remain in place once the public health emergency subsides, service intervals established after the onset of the COVID-19 emergency declaration will not be used by City Planning to make determinations regarding MTSs, TPAs, HQTAs and HQTAs. Therefore, City Planning will reference the transit schedules in place as of March 17, 2020, the day before transit service changes began to be made, in its review of environmental and entitlement applications until further notice.

City Planning will consult with transit agencies as well as the Southern California Association of Governments to determine when transit schedules are no longer considered temporary related to the public health crisis.