Council Meeting of
October 16, 2007

Honorable Mayor and Members
of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California
Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Approval of a Tentative Agreement with TME-AFSCME for the creation of a Bus Operator Training Program.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager recommends approval of a Tentative Agreement with TME-AFSCME to create a Bus Operator Training Program.

Funding

Funding is not required for this program due to efficiencies achieved from reduction in the overtime budget.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

With the approval of the City Council, the Transit Department created the Relief Bus Operator (RBO) position in 1997 to address manpower shortages and to avoid contracting bus operator duties. The RBO position provided individuals with prior bus driving experience an opportunity to work part-time and eventually apply to become full-time Bus Operators at Torrance Transit. Since the RBO position was at-will and not part of the Torrance Civil Service System, RBO's had to apply for the full-time Bus Operator positions and compete with a larger, typically experienced, pool of applicants. In certain instances, internal RBOs did not place high enough on the eligibility list to be considered for hire as full-time Bus Operators. Over the years, Torrance Transit has had mixed success with the transition of RBO to Bus Operator. Several individuals were successful in becoming full-time Bus Operators; however others left Torrance Transit accepting full-time employment with other Transit agencies.

In recent years, the Transit industry has had difficulty in recruiting and retaining quality Bus Operators. In Southern California, it has been especially difficult since there are sixteen (16) municipal transit agencies. Torrance Transit is in direct recruiting competition with agencies such as the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), Long Beach Transit, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus and several other cities for quality Bus Operators. Another challenge for Torrance Transit is the requirement that all Bus Operator applicants must have prior bus driving experience. Other agencies provide training opportunities for individuals without bus driving experience who are seeking a stable career in a Transit agency to transition to full-time employment.

To address the challenges of recruiting and retaining quality Bus Operators, staff recommends the creation of a Bus Operator Training & Recruitment Program. This new program will target

individuals with prior customer service experience looking for a new career. Torrance Transit will create a new training program that will afford these individuals with the opportunity to learn how to operate a bus and eventually work their way up to a full-time Bus Operator. As part of the training program, the new position of Apprentice Relief Bus Operator (ARBO) will be created as an at-will position within TME-AFSCME. RBO positions will be reclassified as a Civil Service position and movement to the full-time Bus Operator position will become a promotional opportunity for these Torrance Transit employees. This new system will create upward mobility and reward individuals with excellent driving records, good customer service skills and the willingness to work their way up to a rewarding career.

Staff has met with TME-AFSME to develop a Tentative Agreement contingent upon approval of the Bus Operator Training Position by the Civil Service Commission and your Honorable Body. As part of the Tentative Agreement, two current Relief Bus Operators will be reclassified as full-time Bus Operators. After the current recruitment and testing, and expiration of the eligibility list for Bus Operator, future full-time Bus Operators will be promoted from the RBO position. Individuals interested in becoming full-time bus operators at Torrance Transit, can apply for either ARBO's or RBO's. Once a vacancy becomes available for full-time Bus Operators, RBO's with at least one year of driving experience at Torrance Transit will qualify for the promotional exam. Torrance Transit Management will work with the Human Resources Department to closely monitor the impact of the new Bus Operator Training Program on recruitment and retention.

Respectfully submitted,

LeROY J. JACKSON
CITY MANAGER

By Aram Chaparyan
Aram Chaparyan
Assistant to the City Manager

CONCUR:

LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

Attachments: A) Tentative Agreement with TME-AFSCME

ATTACHMENT A

TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

Based on discussions between Management of the City of Torrance and representatives of TME-AFSCME, the undersigned agree to the following:

1) The creation of a bus operator training and recruitment program to expand the recruitment pool of bus operator candidates and to reward Relief Bus Operators for their driving skills and consistent quality performance.

2) The new bus operator recruitment and training program will become effective immediately. However, appointments to full-time bus operator will be made from the upcoming eligibility list.

3) Two at-will classifications will be created as part of the bus operator recruitment and training program. These two positions will be entitled "Apprentice Relief Bus Operator Trainee" ("ARBO Trainee") and "Apprentice Relief Bus Operator" ("ARBO") respectively.

4) Apprentice Relief Bus Operator (ARBO) Trainee position description:
   a) ARBO Trainee will be required to have at least 6 months of customer service or work requiring contact with the public, be at least 21 years of age, and have a valid Class C license for at least 2 years.
   b) ARBO Trainee will be paid $11.00 per hour and work a maximum of 40 hours per week.
   c) ARBO Trainee will be considered part-time employees and will not be entitled to any benefits.
   d) An ARBO Trainee program will be implemented by Transit Management. Upon successful completion of the ARBO Trainee Program an employee may become an ARBO.
   e) Employees shall not be employed in this classification longer than three months and shall not be eligible for re-hire into this position more than once every two years.

5) Apprentice Relief Bus Operator (ARBO) position description:
   a) ARBO will be paid $13.00 per hour.
   b) ARBO will be guaranteed a minimum of 20 hours of work per week with a maximum of 35 hours of work per week.
   c) ARBO will be considered part-time employees and will not be entitled to any benefits.
   d) ARBO will work 990 hours prior to testing for the RBO position.
   e) Employees in this classification shall not be employed longer than 990 hours and shall not be eligible for re-hire into this position more than once every two years.

6) The position of Relief Bus Operator shall become a civil service position. New employees in the Relief Bus Operator position shall be guaranteed a minimum of 20 hours per week but shall work no more than 35 hours per week. In all other respects the position of Relief Bus Operator I, II, and III including the minimum job requirements, compensation and benefits shall remain the same.

7) The Full-Time Bus Operator position shall remain the same except that appointment to full-time bus operator shall only be via the promotional examination process.

8) Upon approval by the Civil Service Commission and ratification by City Council, the two incumbent RBO's shall become full-time bus operator classified service employees and shall thereafter be subject in all respects to the benefits of civil service employees. The incumbents will assume the duties of full-time bus operator on the first day of the first pay period following approval by City Council.

9) TME-AFSCME expressly understands and acknowledges that implementation of this bus operator recruitment and training program is contingent upon approval from the Civil Service Commission and the City Council.

10) City will make a good faith recommendation that both the Civil Service Commission and the City Council approve the bus operator recruitment and training program.

11) Upon approval by the Civil Service Commission and the City Council TME-AFSCME and City will amend the existing MOU as necessary to bring it into conformity with the new bus operator recruitment and training program.

12) Apprentice Relief Bus Operators (ARBO) and Apprentice Relief Bus Operator Trainees (ARBO-Trainee) will be represented by TME-AFSCME.

Signed this 15th day of October, 2007.

Management	TME-AFSCME
Aram Chepary	[signature]
	Jason Schwartz