

Minutes

Thursday, December 10, 2015
6:00PM

GATEWAY CITIES
SERVICE COUNCIL
Regular Meeting

Salt Lake Park Community Center
Lounge
3401 E. Florence Ave.
Huntington Park, CA 90255

All Metro meetings are held in ADA accessible facilities. Meeting location served by Metro Lines 111, 311, and 612.

Called to Order at 6:01 p.m.

Council Members:

Gene Daniels, Chair
Wally Shidler, Vice Chair
Al Austin
Richard Burnett
Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Ana Maria Quintana
Cynde Soto

Officers:

Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer
David Hershenson, Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Michael Sieckert, Transportation Planning Mgr.

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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance

2. ROLL Call

Councilmember Thomas Martin was absent.

3. APPROVED Minutes from November 12, 2015 Meeting

4. RECOGNIZED Ana Maria Quintana for her service as a Gateway Cities Service Council Member, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer, and Councilmembers

Councilmember Quintana was recognized for her service on the Council. She thanked everyone for their kind wishes and expressed that she had enjoyed serving, getting to know her fellow Councilmembers and transit patrons, and learning about public transit.

5. RECEIVED Presentation on Proposed June 2016 Service Changes, Michael Sieckert, Transportation Planning Manager

Changes are proposed for a number of lines in the San Fernando Valley:

- Line 51/52/351/352 - Discontinue Limited Stop Line 352 and replace with new Limited Stop Line 351. All existing limited stops on Line 352 will be served by the new Line 351. Line 51 operates more frequently than Line 52; therefore a new Line 351 will benefit more riders with a faster service.
- Line 111/311 - Discontinue Line 311 limited stop service and operate as local service.
- Line 258 – Join line with Line 485 at Cal State LA, providing a continuous line from Paramount to Pasadena.
- Line 270 - Discontinue service, possibly to be operated by another provider.
- Line 460 - Discontinue route segment from Downtown LA to Norwalk Green Line Station (replacement service provided by Metro Silver Line, Silver Express, Blue Line, and Green Line).
- Line 577 - Add three stops between El Monte Station and Rio Hondo College. Exclude Line 577 from the express premium fare policy (requires Board of Directors approval).

Vice Chair Shidler asked where the stops on Line 577 will be established. Mr. Sieckert replied that they would be installed around Valley Blvd. at major transfer point locations. Metro is seeking public input on the stop locations.

Councilmember Austin asked what goes into the process of a line takeover by another operator. Mr. Sieckert replied that every operator has an exclusive operating right within their particular service area. Whenever one operator wants to operate service in another's jurisdiction, there has to be a discussion and mutual agreement before doing so. For example, if Metro feels that a service is not productive and that it could be operated more efficiently by another operator, discussions can be opened to determine that operator's interest in assuming the operation. In either case, some formula funds will be transferred from the first operator to the new operator of the service.

Vice Chair Shidler asked if the funding from a line being discontinued to be operated by another transit provider would be transferred from the Formula Allocation Procedure (FAP). Mr. Sieckert replied that it does, and the amount of formula funding is tied to the number of route miles and fare units impacted by the change.

Councilmember Delgado asked if Line 270 was discontinued and another transit operator wanted to assume its operation if they would be obligated to run the line for a certain period of time. Mr. Sieckert replied that they are obligated to run it at the same level of service for a period of two years at a minimum but that they can also opt to provide more frequent service. After the two years, the operator can run the service as they best see fit. It is in their best interest to continue to operate the service.

Vice Chair Shidler asked why Metro would want to discontinue Line 270. Mr. Sieckert replied that it is a long line with marginal performance, and the majority of the route is not within Metro's service area.

Councilmember Delgado asked if there is another Metro service that would still provide lifeline service in the southeast area of the county. Mr. Sieckert replied that there is little service in the area. Lines 111 and 120 might take over a portion; Lines 62, 577, and the Green Line also serve portions of the area.

Councilmember Delgado requested that Metro provide information on what type of lifeline service is available in the area of Line 270 for the public hearing.

Councilmember Quintana asked about the elimination of Line 311. Mr. Sieckert explained that it is not really being eliminated because 100% of the service hours used to operate it are being reinvested in Line 111, the underlying local service. All stops will continue to be served, and many of the long-standing schedule problems will be alleviated by not having the service overlay, which was very difficult to manage. Line 270 may be transferred to another operator, but that has yet to be determined.

Councilmember Austin asked if the line number remains the same when it is transferred to another operator. Mr. Sieckert replied that the new operator renames the line according to their own naming conventions. The current headways must be maintained at a minimum or better for at least two years. After that, they can evaluate the service and adjust if they see fit.

Councilmember Delgado commented that Lines 270 and 120 already run only once per hour. Mr. Sieckert replied that if the Council approves the assumption of the 270 line by another operator, Metro can enter into discussions for assumption of service and request that operator consider increase service rather than maintaining current service frequency.

Vice Chair Shidler expressed that one of the concerns is that when a line is transferred, municipal operators don't coordinate their schedules with Metro and it messes up transfers. Transfer coordination should be put into the planning of the line takeover so that the operator has to maintain transfers.

Mr. Spivack replied that Metro is looking for ways to save money for reinvestment into service in the region. The great concern is that revenue service hours are flat and there are additional resources needed. The analysis will be completed to begin that process.

Mr. Timberlake pointed out that municipal operators come in at least 2 categories – there are large ones like Santa Monica’s Big Blue Bus, Torrance Transit, and Long Beach Transit, then there are small ones like Norwalk Transit. He used to try to go to Cerritos but he doesn't anymore because Norwalk Transit slashed their service. He used to be able to take their Line 3 which was cut. His only options now are to take a once per hour contract Metro line by taking Norwalk Transit or Long Beach Transit to Cerritos College. When he does have to take the Norwalk service that remains in the area, it is completely unreliable with differences of 20-30 minutes in arrival times from the timetables. Some municipal operators are really good, but some are really not reliable and this should be taken into account when considering the transition of Metro lines to municipal operators. Line 270 is important because it goes through Whittier; he would hate for the replacement service to be as unreliable as that provided by Norwalk Transit.

6. APPROVED Public Hearing to be held on Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 6 p.m. at the Norwalk Arts & Sport Complex, Councilmembers
7. RECEIVED Presentation on the 2016 Transit Service Policy, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer

The Transit Service Policy is a key policy document that establishes a formal process for evaluating existing services. It includes a methodology and process for developing and implementing service changes and service design guidelines to provide high quality services to our customers and encourages ridership. This update from the previous 2012 version include adoption of a revised stop spacing standard, a change of the load factor to 1.3 x seated load, and incorporation of the APTA Peer Review recommendations.

The basic policy changes will be to increase load factor on the most frequent lines and consolidation of bus stops to increase speed. Metro will consider the development of a network of frequent services with a focus on supporting core bus and rail lines. Reinvestment of resources from poorer performing lines to higher productivity lines and improvement in coordination with Municipal Operators will also occur. Stop consolidation will help ease the system of unused stops and stops that are within ¼ mile of one another. As the system slows, more resources are needed to operate the same headways. Consolidating stops will decrease running time, improve service efficiency, and provide for smoother operation and improve safety.

The policy proposes to move towards operation of a 15-minute peak service network. The focus for this headway would be on Rail, BRT, Rapid and other top performing lines to provide a better quality and more reliable service on high-performing lines.

Transit corridors considered for future operation by other operators should add value to the customer through integration into an already established network by improving connections to a municipal operator’s established network. It should also generate net cost savings, of which Metro should reinvest at least half to improve service on Metro’s core network of regionally significant bus lines.

Implementation will begin with a Comprehensive Operations Analysis review of each line in the system. Then staff will make recommendations for service changes with the goal of moving towards the peak 15-minute Frequent Service Network, placing more resources on core network services and updating the owl service network. Much of the analysis was completed by November 2015 and it will be used to establish a phasing plan for service changes. Metro will generate service changes for June 2016 by December 2015 and hold public hearings in February 2016. A service change program will be adopted by April 2016 for implementation in July 2016 and evaluation by October 2016. Mr. Spivack noted that the January Service Council meeting would serve as a workshop for the Council to identify service changes or improvements.

Vice Chair Shidler asked if all of this will be accomplished without any increase or decrease in revenue service hours. Mr. Spivack replied that is correct, unless there are additional appropriations from the Board.

Vice Chair Shidler asked what will happen to lines that provide special trips such as Line 442 that only have a few trips per day. Mr. Spivack replied that those lines will be evaluated in relation to the overall goal of improving service towards the peak 15 minute network. If they are found to lack ridership, they could be discontinued and reinvested into the network.

Vice Chair Shidler observed that Metro attempts to avoid encroaching on other transit providers' territory, but they don't always have the same courtesy. As an example, he cited LADOT which operates a Chesterfield Square Service, and the County operates the Link which overlaps Metro line routes and offer service at a lower fare. Mr. Spivack replied that those services were approved, but Metro does work with them to reduce duplication.

Mr. Timberlake commented that he attempted to get a copy of the new Transit Service Policy but was unsuccessful. He tried to copy it off the website but it is not set up for easy copying. He would like a complete copy and a complete calculation of how the load standard is calculated. Metro needs to be more transparent and more accountable.

Mr. Spivack replied that the staff is working to have printed and to put it on the website. Once it is printed, copies will be distributed to the Council and be made available to the public.

Wayne Wright commented that there is overcrowding several lines between the hours of 5-9 p.m., because buses do not operate frequently enough. For example, Line 115 operates on Firestone and passes the shopping center at Atlantic and others. There are usually 30-60 minute waits at night for a bus; service should run every 20-30 minutes. Metro's evening service is poor; in New York City and Chicago, transit runs much more frequently between 5-9 p.m. Owl service which only runs every 60 minutes needs to be made more frequent.

8. RECEIVED Report on Gateway Cities Service Performance, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer

- Metro Bus Cleanliness Ratings: 8.64, Goal: 8.0
- Complaints Per 100,000 Boardings: 4.79, Goal: 3.59, System 4.04
- Bus Traffic Accidents per 100,000 Miles: 3.39, Goal: 3.69
- Mean Miles Bet. Mechanical Road Calls: 7,374; Goal: 4,529

- Average Weekday Bus Ridership: 212,271, System: 1,079,42

Councilmember Delgado asked if only the five County library locations would receive TVMs. Mr. Spivack replied yes but only as part of a pilot program. Depending on the success of the program, other locations may be added after additional TVMs are purchased. Metro applied for grant funding to purchase and install additional TVMs but was not awarded; the TAP Department now plans to request funding from the Board. Metro has also entered into an agreement with Superior Markets to expand the number of locations where TAP cards can be purchased and reloaded.

Mr. Timberlake commented that the Gateway Cities region is the most transit dependent area and probably has the lowest median income. He asked why no library in the area was on the list to receive a TVM machine when this region is where they are really needed. He rides the bus every day and sees many people paying cash because there's no convenient place to buy a TAP card and they don't know where to get one. Metro needs to make it easier for ridership to buy cards at convenient locations.

Vice Chair Shidler asked if operators sell TAP cards. Mr. Spivack replied that they do, but they can only load them with a day pass.

Councilmember Quintana asked if it would be possible for cities to sign up and facilitate the work of Metro. Mr. Spivack replied that the machines have to be purchased. Metro is going to buy some additional machines and install around the county.

Vice Chair Shidler noted the difficulty of finding a location to purchase or load a TAP card in unincorporated parts of Los Angeles County.

9. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the Agenda

Mr. Timberlake commented that the County provides library service in nearly every city. He thinks that when bus service priorities are discussed, service to medical facilities needs to be priority. He noted how difficult it is to get to Kaiser on Imperial from the meeting location. It would be faster to take Blue to Red Line than to arrive by bus. There also needs to be service to major entertainment venues, and late night service to those venues and universities. Metro makes it really difficult to get back home after seeing a performance at night. Attending an evening event at Cal State Northridge is impossible. Those things need to be taken into account.

10. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmembers expressed their sadness at Councilmember Quintana's departure from the Council and wished everyone a safe, joyous, and happy holiday season.

ADJOURNED at 7:24 p.m.