

Minutes

Thursday, April 14, 2016
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 6:03 p.m.

Council Members:

Gene Daniels, Chair
Wally Shidler, Vice Chair
David Armenta
Richard Burnett
Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Samuel Peña
Lori Y. Woods

Officers:

Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.
David Hershenson, 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 Called

Councilmembers Al Austin and Thomas Martin were absent

3. APPROVED Minutes from March 10, 2016 Regular Meeting

4. APPROVED Thursday, July 14, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at Salt Lake Park Community Center for July 2016 Public Hearing, Service Council Members

5. DISCUSSED and APPROVED Submitting Letter confirming the Gateway Cities Service Council's original decision in Response to Norwalk Transit Public Hearing Proposal to assume Metro Line 270 with abstention of Councilmember Woods

At the February public hearings, staff proposed discontinuing Line 270 and allowing the service to be assumed by Foothill Transit. However, as part of the route goes into the City of Norwalk, Norwalk Transit became involved. Both the San Gabriel and Gateway Cities Service Councils voted to give the northern portion of the route from El Monte Station to Foothill Transit between and to have Metro retain the southern portion of the route.

Jim Parker, Executive Director of Norwalk Transit commented that if Metro discontinues this service, another municipal operator would assume the service, adding it as a new service to their agency. There is a historic precedent about reserved service areas. Line 270 runs through both Foothill Transit and Norwalk Transit service areas. It would be a challenge to have Foothill Transit operate in the Norwalk service area. The CEO of Foothill Transit supported the proposal for Foothill to operate the northern portion and Norwalk Transit to operate the southern portion. The original staff proposal was to split the route at Whittier, which the Gateway Cities Service Council changed to El Monte Station. The Gateway Cities Service Council voted to only approve northern portion begin taken over by Foothill Transit. Norwalk Transit is concerned. They have tried to partner with Metro. They took over Line 120 which operates from the Green Line to Orange County in 1990, and still operate that service. In 2002 they took over segment of Line 125 from the Green Line to La Mirada, which still runs today. In 2007, they took over Line 275 that originated at Whittier Historic Depot and terminated at the Mall. Due to economic downturn, they cancelled the portion but incorporated the remainder into their Route 3 which still operates today. They have been participants in the Go Rio pass program since inception. He has heard informally that cancellation of Line 275 is still a sore spot, but he doesn't believe they are the only operator that is obligated to continue service. Metro cannot be the sole solution for everything. Municipal operators play a vital role. He doesn't see a reason for the Council to submit a letter to the Norwalk Public Hearing. It would be very helpful to Norwalk Transit if the Service Council would consider rescinding their objections, but they respect the Council's decision and do not want to show disrespect to the Service Councils or the Metro Board.

Vice Chair Shidler replied that in 1995-2002, there were no Service Councils. Had there been councils at that time, there might have been a different resolution. Mr. Parker replied that

before the Councils were created, there were other committees that provided input on service changes. Norwalk Transit of the first operators to accept Metro passes. He is going to encourage the Board that concerns will be addressed. Norwalk Transit would like to be given the same consideration as Foothill Transit.

Councilmember Eros-Delgado commented that the Council was only presented with Norwalk Transit's Line 270 proposal after the public hearings. The information provided at the hearings was that Foothill Transit had approached Metro. The staff recommendation made no mention of Norwalk Transit. As there were lots of uncertainties, she could not approve the staff recommendation in the vote because there was not a solid proposal from Norwalk Transit. In the past things have happened, but every open to looking at things. She speculated that this line could come up again and conceded that partnerships are vital.

Vice Chair Shidler commented that the Service Councils were formed to enable local input. The Service Councils are responsible for convening public hearings on service changes. After hearing from customers, the Council must decide whether to approve a service change proposal. After hearing from customers, 66% opposed the change. The proposals would have had even more feedback had the public been more aware of the hearings. He thinks that since both Councils voted to retain the southern portion of Line 270, they should stand by that vote. The original proposal was to break the line at Rio Hondo College. He rode the line and realized the better transfer point is at El Monte Station. He recommended sending a letter to Norwalk City Council explaining what has occurred and opposing the change. How Norwalk's City Council will vote on the proposal is unknown, and it is unclear what bearing the Norwalk Public Hearing will have on the Council's decision. The last time the Service Councils were charged with making difficult decisions, the Board overturned all of their work. He hopes this won't happen again.

Mr. Parker commented that he saw the hearing transcripts and he didn't think that 66% of the comments were against the change. He realizes there may be written comments he did not see. Norwalk Transit has personally contacted Rio Hondo College and the local high school. He thinks the Service Council is challenging the rationale and he doesn't think it makes sense.

Vice Chair Shidler commented that the Service Councils have overturned staff recommendations before, that this decision is nothing new. Mr. Parker agreed to come back after the Norwalk public hearing on April 19th to share the outcome.

Mr. Timberlake commented that he was one of the people who made public comments in opposition to turning over the portion of Line 270 from El Monte to the Green Line. He is still opposed to it. He has had some experience riding Norwalk Transit. He recalled that Norwalk used to run a line along Artesia Blvd and another that went to Cerritos, but those services don't operate to those destinations anymore. In just the brief period that he has been riding transit, he has seen two Norwalk Transit lines on which he relied upon go away. He is not saying this would happen to Line 270 but it is a matter of concern. His experience with Norwalk Transit as compared to Metro is not favorable in terms of breakdowns and on-time performance. It is very important that the buses run on time and that they not break down.

Vice Chair Shidler commented that he has used Norwalk Transit and has no issues with the service other than that it gets stuck in traffic, just as Metro does. He doesn't hold that against them and doesn't feel it should be considered as part of the decision.

Councilmember Lori Woods stated that she would defer to the more experienced Councilmembers. She did attend the public hearing but does not recall Norwalk Transit being involved in the process at all.

Vice Chair Shidler disagrees that the route is within Norwalk Transit's territory, as it's also Metro territory.

6. DISCUSSED Service Council Bylaws Articles 2F-G, Service Council Members

Prior to the Council's new members being seated, the Council had difficulty achieving sufficient attendance for a quorum. The Vice Chair requested that the Council review attendance and transit knowledge requirements as outlined in the Service Council Bylaws Sections F and G.

Councilmember Eros-Delgado commented that participation should include riding buses, which provides a fuller perspective than just riding rail.

Vice Chair Shidler emphasized the importance that all Councilmembers ride transit and referred to his experience of riding Line 270 and how it affected his decision. It is important to observe patterns and quality of service, which is especially important when line changes are proposed.

Councilmember Burnett asked if bus line rides must occur within the region. Mr. Spivack replied that Councilmembers can ride any line, but that it would be preferred that they ride lines within the region.

7. DISCUSSED Line Ride Conceptual Plan, Michael Sieckert, Transportation Planning Manager, APPROVED Motion for Staff to Return With Line Ride Schedule For Adoption.

The Line Ride Program is designed to help the Council better understand and focus on its goals and objectives by providing direct experience in bus operations. This experience provides the necessary background on how the bus system works and the people it serves.

Vice Chair Shidler suggested that each Councilmember should be allowed to pick a Metro bus line. Mr. Sieckert agreed and replied that staff will work with them to identify a bus line for each Councilmember.

Mr. Timberlake is delighted that the Chair has chosen Line 258 because he rides that line regularly. Now the line will be extended to Pasadena by combining it with Line 485; this will provide a great service. He is glad that Mr. Sieckert pointed out that the Council's primary responsibility is to review bus service, though the Service Council bylaws indicate transit service. Though Long Beach Transit represents a large part of the GWC service region, it would probably be better for the Council to ride Metro buses. As he rides 365 days a year, he suggested that Councilmembers try sitting both in front and back of the buses at different

times as it provides a different experience. He suggested they look out for wheelchair passups as those are the most serious type of passup. Those passengers have the most limited mobility and can't really walk someplace if they're passed up. He suggested they look for etching on windows, not just Sharpie graffiti, and he urged them to take a timetable for the line they're riding so that they can review the time points as they ride as well as seeing if the bus is on time at the time that they board.

Mr. Sieckert committed to returning next month with a draft schedule listing Councilmembers, their adopted bus lines, and line ride and reporting schedule.

8. RECEIVED Look Ahead – Metro Public Outreach Efforts and Events, David Hershenson, Community Relations Manager

Due to the vast number of Metro events, and in response to public requests for information on events occurring outside of the service region, Metro's Community relations will implement a practice of distributing a one-page overview of as many of the upcoming Metro events as possible at the Monthly Service Council meetings. The events garnering the most interest this month are the Potential Ballot Measure forums being held throughout the county.

Chair Daniels commented that David Yates made a presentation on the potential ballot measure to the Gateway Cities Council of Governments last week and it didn't go well. Seventy percent of the Gateway Cities region supported the first Measure R the first time because there were regional projects earmarked. This time, the one project in the region that goes through disadvantaged cities, the West Santa Ana Branch goes, has been pushed aside for other projects on the Westside which have been placed ahead of those in the Gateway Cities Region. The region doesn't even want anything new, they just want the West Santa Ana Branch project to be completed without a 9 year gap. If changes aren't made to the proposal, it is going to be hard to pass.

Mr. Hershenson replied that at the Service Councils Quarterly Meet and Confer meeting last month, the CEO heard those concerns and understands them. They are looking for ways to address regional concerns. Mr. Hershenson encouraged everyone to get word the out about the public forums and to submit their comments on the proposal.

9. RECEIVED Presentation of Motion to Move Metrolink Station to base of Rio Hondo College, David Hershenson, Community Relations Manager

At the March 24th Board meeting, Directors Solis, Najarian, Krekorian, Antonovich and DuBois put forth a motion to direct staff to study feasibility for creating a new station on the Metrolink Riverside Line at the base of Rio Hondo College, consolidating multiple transit-related projects to establish a multimodal transit hub, and evaluate opportunities and impacts related to increasing transit ridership and reducing traffic. A working group of stakeholders in the Greater Whittier Narrows areas is being established to help advance the concept, and staff will report back to the Board during the May 2016 meeting cycle.

Vice Chair Shidler commented that if the transit hub is established at that location, it would provide a direct connection with Line 270 and would be a good connection for Metro.

10. RECEIVED Quarterly Station Cleanliness Report, Henry Gonzalez, Community Relations Manager

Twenty-seven stations throughout the system were evaluated using 33 measures of performance. Performance ratings are based on a scale from 0 to 10 and assigned ratings of good to very good, marginal, or unsatisfactory. Scoring of station conditions is performed by a small group of Metro staff to maintain consistency. Twenty-five out of 27 stations rated “Good to Very Good” and the evaluation scores of 7 stations improved. Fifteen stations showed no change, and two stations were rated “Marginal.” Four stations experienced a minor decrease but remain in the same rating categories.

Staff will continue to perform station evaluations and report findings to Facilities Maintenance Management for action and Council Members will continue to be notified each time staff conducts station evaluations.

Vice Chair Shidler asked who is responsible for maintenance of the Long Beach Green Line Station. Mr. Gonzalez replied that both Metro and Caltrans are responsible for the location. Metro maintains the station, but a portion of the parking lot is owned by Caltrans. Staff is working with Caltrans to address those issues affecting the appearance of the station.

Councilmember Woods asked if each location is reviewed quarterly and if there are certain times of year or seasons that present additional challenges. Mr. Gonzalez replied that conditions vary, but Metro’s maintenance crews service the stations constantly. The stations are serviced by Metro employees except for those portions that are on Caltrans property.

11. RECEIVED Report on Regional Service Performance, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer

Vice Chair Shidler noted that along the Blue Line, Metro contracts to have trash picked up along the line, but the Union Pacific side is trash strewn. He questioned whether Uber is affecting ridership as 80% of Metro customers are low income. Mr. Spivack replied that he thinks ride sourcing services such as Uber or Lyft are skimming choice riders who may not want to wait and can afford to use ride hailing services. Metro is trying to work with them to be able to integrate fare structures in order to start pilot projects at various stations, from end points to 1-2 miles away. Such a project may be helpful late at night if carpool sharing can be integrated with Metro services. The main issue would be to integrate the service with TAP and figure out how that would work.

Vice Chair Shidler commented that he thinks that quality of life issues are also affecting ridership as people don’t want to bother using the service if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Mr. Spivack replied that there is currently a security proposal out in an effort to address those issues.

Councilmember Burnett asked Mr. Spivack to define on time performance and fare evasion for the benefit of the newer Councilmembers. Mr. Spivack explained that a bus is considered on time if it is no more than 60 seconds early and no more 5 minutes late. Fare evasion occurs when a passenger pays a short fare or no fare. Councilmember Burnett asked what is considered a legitimate passup. Mr. Spivack replied if bus is too packed, if people refuse to move from the wheelchair areas, or if there are already two wheelchairs on board, that is

considered a legitimate passup. The bus operator still has to go through actions of pulling up, explaining that the bus is full to the patron, and calling Bus Operations Control to notify them.

Wayne Wright commented that ridership is also falling due to service cuts. There are only 2-car trains instead of 3 car trains being run on the Expo and Blue lines. Issues with homeless people have become a major problem over the last 5-10 years as they take over buses and train stations. Metro has been reluctant to put out more night service until 1-2 am or 24 hours. He has looked at CTA, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco transit systems and they all run service at 10-15 minute frequencies at night. On Metro Rail, the wait is 30 minutes to an hour, and the buses stop running so you can't make rail to bus connections. Hopefully Metro can correct this in the future.

12. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the Agenda

Mr. Timberlake welcomed the new Councilmembers and congratulated staff on the Performance Report. It has improved over time. He would suggest that rail line ridership be included one in a while. The report used to include that metric and it would be appreciated. He agrees with Chair Daniels regarding the problems of the West Santa Ana Branch. He rides the Gold Line and has noted that the Gold Line to Union Station is not used very much. Any service that would come down to the area via the railroad right of way would be jammed with customers. It should be a much higher priority. He saw a bunch of new bus shelters along Atlantic that apparently Metro paid for. He asked if there was any input sought on the design. The roofs are transparent; in the summer the sun will beat down through them and they will not provide shade. He would like to know why those shelters were put up and how the design was decided.

Wayne Wright welcomed the new Councilmembers. Over the last couple months, staff has proposed some service changes. Hopefully in the future, they can hold a workshop on Line 460; it would be helpful to review the night service connections, as the local bus connections shut down early.

13. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Vice Chair Shidler requested that a simplified explanation of the FAP process be placed on a future agenda.

Chair Daniels apologized to colleagues if he sounds negative. He is a very positive person, but when something not right, he speaks up. He is adamant on Measure R and will continue to speak up if changes are not made to benefit the region.

ADJOURNED at 8:04 p.m.