

Thursday, January 13, 2011

2:00-4:00 PM

Minutes

GATEWAY CITIES SERVICE COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

Salt Lake Recreation Center
3401 E. Florence
Huntington Park, CA 90255

Call to Order

Council Members:

Cynde Soto, Chair
Wally Shidler, Vice Chair
Josue Barrios
George Bass
Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Lillie Dobson
Cheri Kelley

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director
David Hershenson, Community
Relations Manager
Suzanne Handler, Council Secretary



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Please turn off cell phones or put them on vibrate

1. Pledge of Allegiance – led by Representative Bass
2. Roll Call, - All council members in attendance
3. APPROVE Minutes from December 9, 2010 meeting – approved with Representative Bass abstaining
4. Public Comment

Terrence Henderson, from Cal Life, fixed route Metro system, subway system. Pershing Square had a faulty elevator, that created a problem for one of the directors who uses a wheelchair and unable to get out of the subway station. Had to get back onto another subway down another block and leave from there and ride the bus. The problem is that it was not broken, and the next day the same thing occurred. Just have quicker turnarounds when it comes to faulty mechanics. If things like that do happen can we have a detour sign showing our disabled customers how to negotiate the subway system and get topside.

Representative Shidler, was there an announcement made on the train that the elevator was out of service?

Jon Hillmer, there is actually policy for when we have an elevator down, that there should be announcements made over the PA system at regular intervals. As well as visual displays that is printed out. Do you recall the date?

Terrence Henderson, early December of 2010. She did not know the exact date.

Jon Hillmer, at Pershing Square there are two different entrances, one on 4th and one on 5th street. Do you know which side it was on?

Terrence Henderson, no.

Jon Hillmer I will do some investigation to find the date and location and rational as to why the elevator was down.

5. RECEIVE Director's Report, Jon Hillmer
 - Performance Report
 - On time performance, Gateway Cities stayed very constant for the month of November at 72.3%; Metro Bus System was at 73.4%.
 - Complaints per 100,000 passengers, Gateway Cities for November was at 2.68; Metro Bus System was 2.47
 - Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls, Gateway Cities was 3,645 Metro's target is 3,664; Metro Bus System for November was 3,434
 - System-wide Road Calls for November 2010 Road Calls by Type

- Engines are the predominate reason for failures at 811; Stalling was 338, slow bus at 130, and check engine light at 120 ranked the highest. Doors came in at 264, followed by electrical system at 157, transmission at 147, suspension at 109, brake systems were 97, coolant at 82, tires 80, and it goes down from there with information systems trailing at 1 call.
- Continuing Performance Report
 - Accidents per 100,000, Gateway Cities for November 2.85, with Metro Bus System average at 3.43
 - Monthly ridership for Gateway Cities was 5,590,000, with a target of 6,050,000; Metro Bus System average was 28,960,000 with a target of 29,470,000
 - Highlighted routes 60 and 760, important route for Metro it goes from downtown Los Angeles and ends at the Artesia Transit Center with the 760 going to Long Beach. Our weekday ridership has been very steady. Rapid line carries people further; its average trip length is about 4.5 vs. 3.5 miles for the local 60.
- Revenue Hour Trends for Bus and Rail
 - Bus and Rail Revenue for FY 2010 our projection was \$337,642,350, our actual was \$307,906,996. The current year that began in July 2010 for FY2011 was \$335,351,412 our current revenue for FY 2011 as of November, is slightly higher than \$130,000,000 if the trend persists we should be at \$342,000,000 at fiscal year end in June 30, 2011.
- Metro Board Actions in December
 - Artesia transit center has been funded by the board 1.5 million dollars for upgrades to the center. One of the key things, is we are looking at putting a restroom at the center; initially we are going to put in upgraded port-a-pottys until we can actual build a restroom. That is a significant step for Metro; restrooms tend to create problems for us but really problems for our customers. We have a working group from the community and our south bay council.
 - Wilshire Blvd., the bus only lane was approved excluding the condo canyon area, so staff is redoing the EIR/EA.
 - Regional fare system plan (TAP) and how that is going to be implemented. This will return to the board in March.
 - Centralized public hearing on proposed service changes, Tuesday, February 1, 2011 at 5pm in the MTA Board Room. We will also have our regional hearing; there will be a total of 6 public hearings.
- Line rides on proposed service changes
 - Line 26 canceled, 254, 560, 577 proposed to be shortened, service on the 611 and 612 are to be reduced to hourly service. 760 to be shortened ending at the green line station.
 - Estimated Bus Hour savings. Total is (\$5,060,000) cost change. Revenue Hours change is (47,000).
 - Organize trips on routes being proposed for significant change or cancellation for weekdays, is the 26 lines and 460. Anyone interested in joining on weekends just give me a call.

Representative Bass, these projected savings and hours would that take into consideration any future cost in labor?

Jon Hillmer, these are based on the revised schedule and route changes that would impact us in terms of labor. The cost is based upon the current labor rates. We are in process of negotiating our union contracts with our unions and so far it looks like it will be a continuation of the current contract.

6. REVIEW Bylaws for Service Councils, Jon Hillmer, Director of Service Councils
 - Thank the council for sending in numerous suggestions. I have taken all of these changes and put them in an outline format for these new bylaws. I've highlighted the suggestions. I would like to take a final draft to the board in the upcoming month. Finalizing this report next week so it is available for the board review. Some of the significant changes were we expect all members to ride the bus at least monthly, 50% would be regular transit riders and that is carryover from the previous bylaws. We've defined regular as someone who rides the bus multiple times in the month. We are assigning each of our regions with the bus lines in their regions as opposed to Divisions, that was a significant change. Also put in the bylaws a public hearing downtown when there are changes that affect all regions. Modifying the terms of our council members years. I am suggesting they all begin on July 1 and that since all our councils have 9 members they should be staggered with 3 ending every year. I'll be working with the chairs to decide who will extend their terms.
7. RECEIVE Customer Satisfaction Survey input, Jeff Boberg, Transportation Planning Manager IV

I am in the Research and Development Department of Communications. We have two main surveys that we do once every two years, telephone survey of the general public and riders, this is done every year. This year we did both of them at the same time, as well as a focus group on riders and potential riders. The focus of the group is why people choose metro and why they don't. Transit attitudes, on-board customer satisfaction survey, we get between 15,000 – 17,000 completed surveys per annum. We do 98% of our ridership. We do a general public tracking survey, every two years on awareness and perception of the program for generally non-metro riders.

For those who have a choice, bus vs. automobile and why they made the switch to Metro, convenience, money, parking, etc. For the people who do not take Metro they talk about how long it takes. Eighty percent of the people, who took the telephone survey, said they were within a mile of a bus stop. Access is not necessarily a problem, it is convenient access. Others felt it was a complicated trip or it took a long time and they could get to their destination faster by driving. Plus of course there is the stigma, but when they travel they use transit in other cities.

Asked the non-riders to rate our system vs. the riders of our system. The riders of our system rated us above the non-riders under rapid, safe, efficient, competent, trustworthy and friendly. Customer satisfaction was 85%, bus on time 75%; schedule meets needs 89%; courteous 83%; metro has improved service 78%, seat available 83%, bus broken down 78%; and, easy to buy passes 78%. There are fewer people taking Metro due to the recession and less commuters during an 8 year survey, Spring of 2002 was at 26%; Spring of 2006 was 34%; and, Spring of 2010 was 25%. Nearly half of our riders have a smart phone, and 70% have a cell phone. The awareness level of Metro is at 98% and only 2% are unaware of Metro's services.

The public perspective (non-riders) of the service is: Satisfied with service 50%; Stops and stations are safe 57%; Buses and trains are safe 75%; cleanliness 58%; considerate of residents 57%; Cares about service 58%; and uses tax dollars wisely 33%, this is probably a fallout from the National and Statewide dissatisfaction with government.

Seventy-seven percent of the residents use internet for transit information. On the heavily used corridors it was fairly even on car vs. transit during the competitive analysis only one corridor North Hollywood to Downtown showed more car usage than transit rider. This was Google transit where the information was used to make the comparisons of riding transit vs. driving a car.

Representative Kelley, I am looking at your slide of the public perspectives, there are things that stand out for me that I would think we would want to look at, our customers think that the stops are safe only 50% but the buses and trains are safe 71%, what is the difference between the stops and stations and the buses and trains themselves, what are we hearing from them, what is the difference?

Jeff Boberg, these are residents and 80% of them don't ride metro. I think what it is they are passing by bus stops and they don't look safe to them. Either they are dark, have litter, or maybe graffiti. A lot of those people have ridden metro at some point and know that it is relatively safe, that may be the disparity.

Representative Kelley, so we ask residents that do not ride, whether they are satisfied with the service?

Jeff Boberg, we ask all of LA County these questions. The stops and stations were perception questions, whether or not you have ridden Metro.

Representative Kelley, and we think these numbers are up from the last survey?

Jeff Boberg, as far as stops and stations are safe.

Jeff Boberg, our ridership has been holding steady or up. The general public I cannot say on each question.

Representative Kelley, when I see 50% I don't think that is a very good number. People being satisfied at 50% is not good, for me. How can people who do not ride the bus answer questions on service?

Representative Shidler, long beach to downtown, you are showing automobile 50 minutes and train 74 minutes. The blue line is 54 minutes terminal to terminal. How can it take 74 minutes?

Jeff Boberg, I am assuming it is going past 7th and metro into Union Station on the red line. I disagree with those numbers too, because I take the blue line every day and it is faster than a car for me. It all depends on where you start.

Representative Kelley, I think that is the issue, some people will find it difficult. It depends on where they work and where they live on how far they have to walk. This makes a difference in some of these numbers.

Jeff Boberg, I totally agree with you. That is why it is so nice to have these tools coming on board, because it used to be you had to call 1-800 commute. Now with Google and metro.net you can actually plug in your cross street and ending cross street and get an idea of how long it will take. Then you can decide on what would be best for you. These were just generalized corridors, we are hoping people will plug in their own cross streets.

Representative Shidler, taking all this information what would you say would be the reason why people will not use Metro. Generally overall what is the one main reason?

Jeff Boberg, perceived convenience. If I know I have to pick up kids or go grocery shopping, or have to be home at a certain time, and I am concerned that I will not do all those things if I don't have my car. Part of it is going from awareness to trying out the system and finding out the convenience.

Representative Kelley, how are we going to get past the safety issue? Getting someone to try something if they think it is not safe, why would they?

Jeff Boberg, I guess it is just degrees, if they are in fear of their lives they are not going to try it, but if their a little wary, perhaps throughone thing we find we really try to keep our stations clean and we do find that there is a correlation between not clean and not safe. We've tried to get rid of the graffiti our stations clean, and we spend a lot of money doing that. That is one of the things we can do it give the perception that it is safe.

Representative Kelley, this leads me back to the Artesia Station with the restrooms. I know it is a convenience for our riders but it's a huge issue in perception. It will be vandalized, become a hangout, these are not positive. Ask any city that has a park with a bathroom.

Jon Hillmer, I agree, that is one reason there will be a substation for the sheriffs that will be on the property along with CCTV.

Representative Shidler, let me address this restroom issue, in long beach transit put in a restroom facility stainless steel, they have not had any problems. They put one in at the Hollywood/Vine red line station, it did not even last a week. The line up in the morning with the homeless the customers could not even use. So they closed it. What type are we going to use?

Jon Hillmer, that would be my question. Right now it is not planned to be staffed, there will be a custodian for 16 hours a day. There are issues about having access by using the TAP card designed for transit users. I invite you to attend the working group that occurs next month, if you have the time.

Representative Bass, I noticed that Union Station by the Amtrak section the restroom is extremely busy and the key to safety in restrooms is the number of users. I noticed in many office buildings in the downtown area, medical as well as professional, there are all types of damage and loitering in the restrooms.

Representative Shidler, what is the agency doing to attract riders and letting them know the system is safe and clean?

Jeff Boberg, one of the things we are doing is promoting activities/destination brochures, each of our heavily used lines will have a brochure that talks about the different things along the right of way. Trying to get non-commuters to use it to get to other destinations. We send out free weekly passes to our new residents or people who have changed addresses. This is a good time when they are changing their commute habits.

Representative Shidler, how are you getting these destination brochures to the public? I see them on the bus and train, but what other methods are being used?

Jeff Boberg, I think we put at the destination points, hotels, customer centers, website, etc. It is still difficult to get people to try it out for the first time.

Representative Kelley, almost every one of these destinations should have a website and Metro just adds their link.

Jeff Boberg, I know we do something like that already and when there is an event there is one of marketing personnel tries to coordinate with the event organizer to include our link on flyers and web pages.

Public Comment:

Roberto Hernandez, I would like to see the hours change for this meeting, a lot of people are working and cannot attend at 2pm in the afternoon. Maybe at 5pm. – (Cannot hear, he was not speaking into a microphone)

9. Safety Tip, Lieutenant Obenberger

- Just to give you an update, one of our deputies was shot in East Los Angeles, he was training, stopped an individual who was doing suspicious activities, when the deputy approached him he came out of the car and shot the deputy in the face. He survived; the suspect was shot by the partner and died at the scene. The deputy has a long recovery to look forward to after all the surgeries, but he is doing well. One of the reasons the deputy is doing so well, is the citizens of East LA came to his rescue and got the paramedics there very rapidly.
- Tips for this month, make sure that you are aware of what is around you. Over and over again, specifically in terms of bus stopping short as a result of car or other obstacle. We do not have seat belts, it is important for you to secure your parcels and children. A lot of the injuries that occur on buses and trains are passengers not aware of what is going on around them. Beware of what you are stepping into we do have requirements no beverages aboard buses and trains with the exception of Metrolink, but people still do and spills occur creating hazards on the buses and trains.

Representative Shidler, how are we doing with the vendors on the trains?

Lt. Obenberger we cite them, and we take away their wares, significant amounts of materials have been taken from these vendors, but they come right back again. Due to the economy, people are going to continue to sell things, just like the vendors on the streets, that is illegal as well if they do not have a license.

Graffiti costs Metro millions of dollars each year; they are placing more emphasis on this due to the cost of removal.

Representative Shidler, are we using those that are caught to clean up the graffiti?

Lt. Obenberger, the supervision required for cleanup is not available due to budget cuts, plus it is a much more complicated system than just painting over a wall.

Jon Hillmer, there is less paint graffiti, but more etched on graffiti. When we did have a program where the offenders did restitution we had problems with the taggers. It was not as effective as we had hoped.

Chair Soto, earlier we were talking about the restroom at the Artesia Transit Center, we were talking about safety concerns. Do you have any thoughts about that?

Lt. Obenberger, I agree with everything you mentioned today on restrooms. It is not a good idea. They are just another place where someone can be assaulted. Obviously, we cannot have cameras inside. There was mention that we have a substation there, unfortunately we have no personnel to put man it. It was designed without any thought of who would be housed there. The cameras are a good program and will assist in thwarting burglaries or other crimes in the area, if we have the manpower to watch the CCTV. It has proven to be a very positive tool.

Representative Shidler, can you come back and give us an update on what types of crime are being reported in this area with the transit. What bus lines, what locations, what type of crime?

10. Chair and Council Member Comments

Representative Barrios, it looks like our change of location worked, we have already attracted other individuals who hopefully continue to attend. To our new member, in the audience, welcome aboard.

Representative Delgado, I am looking forward to this new location and more of local area where people can come and join us at this community meeting. We need the community to provide input.

Representative Kelley, some of you may remember my story when my dad had a trip and fall accident and had to go to a hospital in downtown. On his return trip to his car, he had to take 3 buses and the operators assisted him and showed him where he needed to go, in fact they did not want to take his money. My Dad passed away just recently and I wanted to thank everyone again for all the help he received that day. Very comforting to me and my family that someone was out there looking out for him.

Jon Hillmer, I would like to close off the meetings with action items:

- Pershing Square elevator
- E-mail final draft bylaws
- E-mail out Artesia Transit Center meeting notice
- E-mail out data information on our bus routes being considered for proposed service changes

- E-mail trip itineraries for those lines being planned for cancellation
- Public Hearing next month, February 10, 2011 at 2pm

Adjourned: 3:30pm