

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

6:35-8:00 PM

Minutes

San Fernando Valley
Service Council

Regular Meeting

Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center
6262 Van Nuys Blvd.
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Call to Order

Council Members Present:

Gary Bric
Michael Cano
Jesus R. Ochoa
Kymberleigh Richards, Chair Pro Tem
Donald Weissman

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director
Wilbur Babb, Communications Manager
Suzanne Handler, Council Secretary



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Please turn off cell phones or put them on vibrate

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. APPROVE Minutes for March 2, 2011 meeting – approved and seconded
3. CHAIR’S Remarks, none
4. PUBLIC Comment
 - Ray Lopez: Suggestion, right now we want to make sure an Orange Line Busway is planned in the continuing stages from the North Hollywood Red Line at Lankershim Avenue up to the Burbank rail right-of-way area. Happy Easter to all.
 - Nate Zaben: Have you ever noticed at the Orange Line station on Van Nuys Blvd. there is a beautiful poster part of the art work for this station, and it tells you about Griffith Park and all of its attractions. It’s the largest municipal park in a city with 4,000 acres including the Gene Autry Museum, Los Angeles zoo and hiking trails. Unfortunately it will be very hard to access because of the changes to Line 96. Line 96 has been truncated so it ends at the Burbank Metrolink Station. Before, people in the valley were able to take that line all the way to Griffith Park. Now they will have to go all the way to Burbank Metrolink Station transfer to another bus and it will take about 2 hours, so they will be unable to take advantage of park they are paying for, which is very unfortunate. I think Line 96 needed some modification, it was a very long trip, ran all the way south of downtown Los Angeles to Sherman Oaks. But to end it in Burbank was a mistake. They could have had it go all the way to the Red Line Station in Universal City. The riders in Los Angeles can go to the Park, but not the riders in San Fernando Valley. Metro should consider a shuttle; there is a shuttle for the Observatory and Dodger Stadium. Please look into the Line 96.
 - Vince Garofalo: I’d like to make a couple of comments to the service on Foothill Blvd., and the changes on the bus going up Hubbard. I believe that line is valid and last Friday night I had to be just a stones throw on the other side of Foothill, and I was told that the last bus had left, this was at 7:00pm. I would like to see the drivers a little more cooperative with regard to their comments when people get on the bus. I’ve seen people abused verbally, I firmly believe that people in this forum have the authority and position to correct it. I have stopped taking down badge numbers, because they know who I am. If we do not address the patron’s questions, then in effect we are saying they do not matter.



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5. RECEIVE Director's Report, Jon Hillmer

- Performance Report for February
 - On-time Performance: Metro System 74.8%; San Fernando Valley 78.3%
 - Complaints per 100,000 passengers: Metro System 2.47; San Fernando Valley 3.06
 - Miles between mechanical road calls: Metro System 3,760; San Fernando Valley 5,505
 - Accidents per 100,000 miles: Metro System 2.52; San Fernando Valley 3.16
 - Monthly ridership: Metro System 27,800,000; San Fernando Valley 4,610,000
 - System-wide average weekday ridership from June 08-February '11, our ridership on an average weekday has gone up from December and January, driven by the higher fuel prices, particularly on our longer distance routes that attract more of the commuter population. Our rail ridership is above 300,000 boardings per day, our bus ridership which is up to 1.13 million average boardings per day. Back in 2008 we had a fuel price increase and ridership went up about 200,000 on the bus and 50,000 on the rail. This will be a challenge if we have the potential upsurge in riders.
 - Average weekday bus ridership by service council this is a little misleading where I am counting shared lines twice: close to 650,000 daily riders in Westside/Central; 300,000 in South Bay; 225,000 in Gateway Cities; 200,000 in San Fernando Valley; and, little over 150,000 in San Gabriel Valley.
- Report on Meet and Confer with Art Leahy
 - 22 of our service council members attended.
 - Karen Gorman of the ethics department gave an update on transportation court that is being set up, moving away from the civil courts.
 - Real Time Bus Information.
 - Status on Transit Operations, as we downsize our fleet, we will retain the mechanics, service attendants, field supervisors these will stay intact. The idea is to invest our savings into quality of service.
 - Budget balanced is set up for FY 2012.
- Metro Board Actions in March
 - Approved bylaws on consent calendar.
 - Terms for council members



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- Approved service changes to Tier 1 service with minor modifications, Line 254 weekend cancellation was rescinded. Line 757 rapid line on Western Avenue was modified by Supervisor Yaroslavsky to keep the rapid line on weekdays only.
- Approved design build for Crenshaw/LAX corridor project
- Authorized CEO to negotiate and execute AA, DESIS/R & CE for Green Line to LAX project.
- Funding Marks for 2011 Call for Projects.
- Budget Parameters for July 2012. We are expecting ridership on the Expo line to grow rail service.

The council requested we report on Line 183 monthly. The planning staff is in the process of evaluating this line by looking ridership. There are 11 bus stops in the loop. Based on the January ridership, we are averaging 15 trips in both directions with about 1.8 riders boarding per trip. Ridership is light and Planning will be looking at alternatives.

Conan Cheung: It is somewhat a minor issue but it's unresolved and was tabled until this meeting. Essentially one of the proposals that we had last month was to discontinue the 794 service on weekends. As part of the mitigation for that, we are extending the 94 to the Sylmar Station providing a one-seat ride. It somewhat duplicates the 224 which goes to Sun Valley. Council proposed that the 224 extend from Sun Valley to the Sylmar station and change its route to 94. After looking at the automated passenger counting program system, we found if we changed the 224 to the 94 after Sun Valley, we would lose all passenger count on the 224 when the head sign switched to 94. With that in mind we recommend we continue with the 94 to the Sylmar Metrolink station.

Representative Richards: I was involved in a brief discussion with Conan, Dan Nguyen, and Dana Woodbury about this issue after the Meet and Confer. I do agree it is important for us to look at what the true ridership is on the 94 segment. I am very inclined to agree with Conan's recommendation simply because it allows us to get the data we are going to need to define what the real answer is in that corridor. Even though I wanted the line number to change, given the limitations of the APC software, this is the best interim solution until we can look further. I am going to drop the whole issue at this point, because I am satisfied with staff's reasoning.

Conan Cheung: We will add that as another piece of Mr. Hillmer's report as an update on the status of the extension.



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Representative Cano: The budget assumptions, were they calculated on the move to a \$5 day pass?

Jon Hillmer: No this does not have the \$5 day pass. Not quite sure what the impact will be on the budget, I am sure there will be a reduction in assumptions.

Representative Cano: Can we have a table with the raw numbers of revenue service hours so it will give these ratios some context so I can figure out if it is the transition we are looking for.

6. REPORT from Metrolink on their new Express Commuter Train, Sherita Coffelt, SCRRA

Sherita Coffelt: I am Metrolink's media and public relations officer, thank you for the opportunity to come and talk about some really exciting things going on at Metrolink including our new express service. Here is a brief introduction to our system:

- Metrolink serves a five county service area which includes Los Angeles, Ventura, San Bernardino, Orange County and Riverside.
- We have 144 weekday trains on 7 lines, 55 stations approximately 40,000 average weekday trips and operate a 512 mile system, some of that is shared with the freight rail providers and Amtrak.
- An average train weighs 400 tons, and our current operating budget is \$173 million.
- Our core values as defined by our new CEO and Board are safety, people, quality, efficiency and growth. We will be focusing more on growth, with the new programs which will add value and play a bigger role in meeting the transit needs in the counties.
- One of the major changes that will go into effect on May 9 is improving mobility and connectivity to Bob Hope Airport. The existing trains 900 and 901 will be extended to the airport. Train 901 comes from Union Station so people coming in to Union Station will now have the ability to get to Bob Hope Airport. The schedule will be moved earlier so that 901 will arrive at Bob Hope airport by 6:01 so travelers can catch the 7am plane.
- We have adjusted the schedule so trains from San Bernardino and Orange Counties can connect at Union Station to the 901.
- Our express train pilot program will be in effect on the San Bernardino and Antelope Valley lines where we will have morning and afternoon express trains. These express trains will have limited stops which equals time savings for the passengers. There will be 4 stops an each line; LA union station, Covina, Rancho Cucamonga and San



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Bernardino; LA Union Station, Downtown Burbank, Santa Clarita and Palmdale. One hour will be saved every round trip. No increase in fare for the express service.

- Antelope Valley express train schedule: Southbound Palmdale 5:32am, Santa Clarita 6:18am, Downtown Burbank 6:45am and LA Union Station at 7am. Northbound LA Union Station 5:25pm, Downtown Burbank 5:39pm, Santa Clarita 6:06pm and Palmdale at 6:53pm.
- San Bernardino Express train schedule: Westbound San Bernardino 5:45am, Rancho Cucamonga 5:58am, Covina 6:19am and LA Union station 6:45am. Eastbound LA Union Station 5:15pm, Covina 5:44pm, Rancho Cucamonga 6:04pm and San Bernardino 6:20pm.
- On March 31 the Antelope Valley, San Bernardino and Ventura County lines launched the late night service after the Dodgers' games. They depart at 11pm. You can get a ticket to the Dodger game with a connection to the Dodger Shuttle for only \$20. Parking itself costs \$15, so this is a great value.
- Special round trip train service from LA to Laguna Niguel for Anaheim Angels' games for \$7 R/T this will launch on April 8.
- Fun trips to San Manuel Casino, free shuttle from San Bernardino plus \$25 coupon book with round trip ticket.
- Inland Empire trains from San Bernardino to San Clemente from July 2 through October, special "beach trains".
- We are also adding 2 additional trains on the Ventura County line between Chatsworth and LA Union Station. Antelope Valley line 4 midday trains will be added and the San Bernardino Line 4 midday trains will be added.
- Corporate Pass Program, responsible for over 25% of Metrolinks' annual revenue. Developing new sliding scale for large purchases. New account executives to help service the corporate partners.

Representative Weissman: Is there any consideration to adding an express line from San Fernando Valley to go downtown?

- Sherita Coffelt: Right now we are starting with the express trains first and look at the response. It will be a 6-month pilot program, after which we will consider other lines.

Representative Bric: What are the hours of operation from Palmdale to Burbank?

- Sherita Coffelt: The Express train will depart Palmdale at 5:32am it will stop at Santa Clarita at 6:18am downtown Burbank 6:45am.



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Representative Bric: It just runs one time a day?

- Sherita Coffelt: The express trains just run once a day.

Representative Cano: This is a pilot program. In the future there may be more trains i.e., the Ventura Line. This pilot program is for data information. A two hour trip from Palmdale to LA the express train is only 1.5 hours. The further out you live the more attractive the service will be.

- Sherita Coffelt: Each stop that you eliminate from the schedule saves about 3-4 minutes due to slowing down, boarding and detraining. The first train that will leave Palmdale is at 3:58am and it arrives just before 6:00am at Union Station. It arrives at Burbank at 5:30am. What I have heard our CEO say in meetings with the senior leadership team is he really does think that this is the future. We want to make sure we are able to justify our schedules with market research and demand. Looking at where our passengers are going and then designing service to fit their needs.

Representative Richards: I am curious as to what the process was for deciding which stations the express train would stop. I thought it a bit odd that Burbank was included in the stops being so close to Los Angeles. Is the presumption these are passengers coming out the Antelope Valley work in Burbank? What were the criteria?

- Sherita Coffelt: The stops were based on several things, the number of passengers that use that station and because Downtown Burbank is going to be served on the Ventura County line, it will have a higher ridership than your Sylmar area. Parking was taken into consideration, if we are going to have express trains we need parking capacity. Proximity to the next stops, high ridership, and a good distance away from the previous stop were a few of the criteria.

Representative Richards: I am guessing this is more for people who live the in the Antelope Valley or live in the Santa Clarita Valley and are we thinking of Burbank as being the most central location for those coming in from those two valleys?

- Sherita Coffelt: The overall riders that go to Burbank strongly influence the fact that as a stop. It is partially based on its central location, on both lines (Antelope and Ventura).



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Representative Richards: Simply taking the total amount of ridership there are two lines that serve Burbank, if you use that as a primary measure aren't you basing the Antelope Valley express partially on ridership that comes out of Ventura County and the West San Fernando Valley.

- Sherita Coffelt: No, this station is very popular with a lot of riders. On the Antelope Valley Line this is a popular stop, but it also has dual purposes.

Representative Cano: We have a lot of residents that go to the media area.

Representative Bric: We have a tremendous amount of employees that live in Santa Clarita Valley. My secretary comes from the Antelope Valley and takes the train. We have a few other employees coming in from Palmdale and they continue to drive because the schedule doesn't fit their work schedule. Without a doubt Burbank has to be the biggest drop off besides Los Angeles for this line.

- Sherita Coffelt: We are looking forward to this and have received tremendous response from customers calling to ask when the times are going to be announced and the stops. When we announced that the Board approved these express trains, we had 1.5 million media hits. It was all over the media. So we are expecting a very good response to this service. We are hoping to apply it to other lines.

Representative Bric: And the cost for a pass is how much like from Santa Clarita to Burbank?

- Sherita Coffelt: Sorry, I do not have the fares in front of me; I could get back to you. There are 1,800 different combinations. I'll give it to Suzanne and she will give it to you. On the express service we are doing safety blitzes so the customers know to stay behind the yellow line, do not assume every train is going to stop, don't try to beat the train because you will have express trains going through the stations above 70 miles an hour speed, so we will be trying to educate these passengers.

Representative Cano: I appreciate you coming out, I requested this item. I also want to make sure we are working with Metro on transfers. I don't want to see people waiting ½ hour for buses due to timing. If we have more of these trains in the future we must keep in mind the importance of coordinating with Metro and not miss this important component.



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7. REPORT on Nextrip, Al Martinez, Supervising Engineer, Operations

Al Martinez: I want to take this opportunity to introduce a new product we are launching in April. This has wide potential the affects all our million plus riders everyday.

- What is Nextrip? Real-time bus arrival information for Metro's bus fleet. This information can now be accessed on the web, mobile devices or telephone. Will be using ATMS fleet management system. Will be providing real time information.
- How it works. We have buses on the street, we have physically location for every vehicle in our fleet (2500+), it comes into our Bus Operations Control Center, our fleet management is called ATMS, same information will be sent to Nextbus and that information goes out in a variety of methods, phone, mobile, on-line and text.
- How do you access this information? On a smart phone with GPS enabled web, type in m.metro.net (mobile command) click on Nextrip, GPS will locate where you are calling and give you the buses and their destination, plus when they will be arriving. For non-GPS devices you will be prompted with a series of requests to get information. For all the text SMS to 41411 "what is the stop information you want" type metro (stop #). The next screen will show you the available lines at that location, and then you will hit your line #, and the last screen will let you know the arrival of your bus. If you are on the web metro.net/nextrip you can go by the prompts. If you are visual there is map capability give the stop ID.
- So what are people going to see at the stops? On our poles there will be an assigned stop number; this will take time because there are thousands of stops and corners. Below the current plate there will be a new sign telling you how to use the Nextrip. The scan code is there for the cell phone that reads the location. We are also trying to address the ADA issues so we have a smaller plate that will be in Braille.
- So what are we doing? It is available right now. We have given the information to the community we want the techies to play with our information and get bigger, better and brighter ideas. So we have a developer contest it was launched the end of March, to come up with free apps for all the app users.



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- Going Live launch. Officially launching April 18 (21) we open up for everyone. There will be a PR event at Beverly/Vermont.
- We expect questions. We have a signage plan at the transit centers, rail stations and selected bus stops. We will be coordinating with the Orange Line and rail lines, we have these displays and it will have the rail/bus connection information.
- What do people think so far? The bloggers love it, all the Source comments have been overwhelmingly positive. In the unofficial time that we have been on with Nextrip we have had roughly 13,000 page views, 46 comments on the Source and 35,644 hits on Next Bus app.

Representative Richards: Thank you for taking my suggestion last week of putting the stop numbers on the timetables, while not perfect it will give some customers information. I have been playing with this since you brought it to our attention at the Meet and Confer. There could be a glitch in that Nextrip is not necessarily tracking every bus. I've been on the run all day the Nextrip system nor the route map could find the bus that I boarded this morning. It simply was not there, I presume that is a problem coming off the bus' GPS. Are we going to be able to address that before it becomes live?

- Al Martinez: As a practical matter, we always have vehicles under maintenance, we always have vehicles that breakdown, and we always have operators who may forget to log on. We also have the dreaded "pinks".

Representative Richards: This was not a "pink" it was a normal run line 237. It is a branch of the 236, at any given time there is usually one to three buses along that route, this morning I could only find one.

- Al Martinez: We will not be perfect, but we have been validating all the data and stops on all the functions. It is a work in progress and will be making changes accordingly. The timetables do not represent all the stops, do we do something that is not complete and cause further confusion or not. I did take your comments. I cannot make you a promise every timetable will have bus stop number information.

Representative Richards: I do follow that, but it just seems to me since we already provide customer timetables with our scheduled times, and our customers are already used to that, it seems to me if we give them only that partial information it's more than they had and it may get them to use the system when they might



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not otherwise. They will still do the same amount of estimation as they do with the timetables, but now they will be able to estimate on a more precise number.

- Al Martinez: I still want to get our riders off paper and on to electronics. And what we have found during our last survey in November is roughly 75% of the riding public use cell phones, and 50% of that 75% are using smart phones.

Representative Richards: I still spend a day restocking timetable racks at Van Nuys Library and other places on Friday and come back and find them gone the next week.

- Al Martinez: I don't know if it is the timetables or maps or just want to check out the stop, I agree with you. But I still want to get you off paper and on to electronics.

Representative Cano: There are different modes of getting this information. I am looking at this and found there is no place for comments. I am seeing e-mail, call 511, if this will be a text basis system, it would be good to have the feedback in text mode. The issue with the changes on a day-to-day basis you cannot integrate into this system, will that be something like a Twitter/text feed, or something where you can have a separate information source that could provide the up to date real time information?

- Al Martinez: that is something we are working on for future enhancement which is the capability to add plan detours and any off the cuff changes, not necessarily every single "pink" that might be for one day one stop. Not necessarily scrolled at the top, but maybe another click for detour information. But we will be incorporating the planned closures.

8. REPORT on LA City Bikeways, Steve Gaur, Transportation Engineering Associate, Bikeways Section

Steve Gaur: What I brought today was a map of the bike plan for the Valley with a PDF presentation:

- If you look at the map there is a legend which indicates existing bike lanes and routes plus future paths, lanes and routes. It also shows Metro and Metrolink rail stations. Streets that are comfortable for bike riding, moderately comfortable and uncomfortable. This map is continually changing because of the bike plan. A new map should be



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coming out soon, if anyone is interested, leave your e-mail address and I'll get copies to you as soon as we get that done.

- From Chatsworth to Warner Center is a new bike route that will be finished in 2012.
- If you go south the map will show the LA River bike path, beginning at the headwater section going from Owensmouth this is a joint venture between the City of Los Angeles and the County of Los Angeles, scheduled to have the path completed in 2016. We applied for Metro's Call for Projects to assist in completing this project. From Mason to Van Alden, we broke ground and it will continue along the LA River. There is an existing path along San Fernando and Phase 2 is in construction.
- In the valley we are working on putting more lanes and routes. Not shown on the map is the bike lane in Reseda closing the gap between Roscoe and Parthenia with a dedicated bike lane. There will be a continuous lane from North to South in the Valley. Another bike lane on Woodley from Saticoy to Sherman Way. Woodman from Oxnard to Vanowen, Foothill Blvd./Osborne to Wentworth, these are in progress or already complete.
- Our website is LADOT.bikeblog.com we have staff working on this everyday keeping the public informed. Another website is LABikeplan.org and that shows the bike plan maps, if you need the whole cities maps.

Representative Weissman: You had mentioned construction started on Woodman, is that an extension of the existing bike path or is this an isolated bike path?

- Steve Gaur: if you look on the map it shows they are existing bike lanes and these are extensions.

Representative Bric: On Verdugo between Hollywood Way and Olive, we've put in bike lanes. We have the Chandler Bike Way, which is marked on this map, but it is not showing the Verdugo/Hollywood Way and Olive Bike Lanes.

- Steve Gaur: Some of the bike plans are controversial with the cities but we do an extensive community outreach. To close the gap on Reseda we are losing parking, so there are plans that have been signed off, but get held up by the communities. That could be the case on Verdugo.



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We don't want to show it on the map if it is in controversy. The 5-year plan has several more facilities but we don't want to show all the lanes. The master plan shows everything that is going on.

Representative Cano: Looking into the La Crescenta area we just put some new bike lanes on Foothill Blvd.

- Steve Gaur: I just named a few, Osbourne to Wentworth.

Representative Cano: East of Lowell Avenue. In general if we are going to promote bicycle use, we also should be indexing our ability to transport. If we are going to make a commitment to biking we also should have the ability on our buses and trains to carry bikes and to encourage people to be multi-modal in their use of transportation. Even in the maps I would love to see partnerships with LA City and the adjacent jurisdictions to make sure there is more integration. It reminds me of when Orange County did the I-5 and I-405 widening and LA did not follow suit. Make sure we are ahead of the curve on how do we address these issues of more bikes on our buses and rail systems.

Representative Richards: Representative Ochoa and I were just talking about bike racks on our buses, to my knowledge the entire fleet has bike racks but I am told there is some limitation in the law which keeps us from having higher capacity bike racks than we currently have. This is probably a question the board needs to answer to.

Jon Hillmer: I don't know if there is a legal issue I know there is concern about safety, because the three bus bike rack requires someone to move to the left side of the bus where the traffic lane is located. Long Beach has the three bus bike racks.

Representative Richards: the only one we have are on the Orange Line. In just the last week, we had a customer on one of the local lines, the bike rack was full and they were lamenting we could not allow them to come on to the bus with their bike, but there was no safe place to put it, so we had to tell him he must wait for another bus.

Representative Cano: when we were looking at the issue of disability with wheelchairs maybe we should look at the way we design buses they should be more amenable to larger wheelchairs, motorized wheelchairs, etc. Maybe take a look at improving our specs for bikes. If you look at buses in other systems there is more standing and open space which could be used for bikes or wheelchairs.



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Representative Ochoa: I am assuming that in the parts that belong to the city of Los Angeles, LADOT takes care of all these pathways, but in the unincorporated cities do the local cities take care of it?

- Steve Gaur: I believe it is the cities who take care of maintenance.

Representative Ochoa: Is there an agreement on how often they need to do maintenance?

- Steve Gaur: I would have to take a look at that.

9. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

- Line Rides

Jon Hillmer: We are in the process of trying to put together a way for us to use our smart phones to complete a bus ride. We have it in the prototype phase. It is in a form that will allow us to text, fill in the blanks and save it. It should be ready by next month. When it is ready we will e-mail it to all of council members.

Representative Bric: Is the bus operator in control of the situations on the bus, i.e., intoxication, who do they call?

Jon Hillmer: The bus operator if there is an incident, are required to report it, they are not required however, to get involved. Operators are directed to contact BOC who would then have a sheriff officer respond as quickly as possible. If a person is intoxicated, but not bothering anyone, the operator will leave him alone. If there is a confrontation and he is monitoring it but looks like it will get out of control, BOC is called. Ninety-percent of the time the situation has already resolved itself. If it escalates to a situation where there are specific threats being said, the operator is to stop the bus and open the doors and wait for the police.

Representative Bric: If someone is intoxicated and they were not causing a scene do you allow them on the bus?

Jon Hillmer: If someone is causing a problem, the operator is supposed to take care of it, if someone gets on the bus and there are no problems the operator will take the passenger to their destination.



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Representative Cano: We advertise that we are an alternative to late night driving.

Representative Weissman: Thank you to our audience and our speakers it was very informative. Jon can you come with a primer of what Operators do under certain circumstances in other words a scenario. What protocol is or maybe what the operators come across more often or one of the more recurring problems. How do they handle it?

Representative Cano: I really do want to focus on Metrolink for the next few months and Metro's scheduling to meet the trains. Push on transfers and ridership plus the connections between the different modes.

Representative Richards called the meeting adjourned and it was seconded.
8pm

ADJOURNMENT



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