

Wednesday, August 3, 2011

6:30-8:00PM

Minutes

San Fernando Valley
Service Council

Regular Meeting

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

Called to Order at: 6:30 p.m.

Council Representatives Present:

KyMBERLEIGH Richards, Chair
Jesus Ochoa, Vice Chair
Dr. Richard Arvizu
Gary Bric
Michael Cano
Donald Weissman

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director Service Councils
Wilbur Babb, Community Relations
Manager
Collette Langston, Council Secretary

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. APPROVED **Minutes of the meeting held July 6, 2011.** Representative Gary Bric abstained from approving the Minutes due to his absence from the July 6, 2011 meeting.

3. RECEIVED **Chair's Remarks**

The Chair attended the California State University, Northridge Valley of the Stars to represent Metro. David Flemming was honored by the Valley Economic Alliance for his philanthropic work. Ms. Richards will be representing Metro at the Mobility 21 Conference on September 6, 2011. In addition, she was asked to sit on a committee for the marketing department regarding the bus stop signage.

4. RECEIVED **Public Comment** –
 - Patricia Marshall is a handicapped rider and her daughter and granddaughter are also handicapped. She expressed a complaint regarding bus drivers not waiting for riders to sit down before pulling into traffic. She stated that it has occurred on more than one occasion. She also complained about bus drivers pulling past the bus stop. Ms. Marshall also witnessed drivers allowing able-bodied passengers to sit in the seats designated for handicapped riders. The students of Sylmar High School do not get up for senior citizens and some of the bus operators do not make them vacate the handicapped seats. She is angry about the way she and her family are treated by the bus operators and the students of Sylmar High School.

Madam Chair's recollection is that Lines 233 and 234 are out of Division 15 and asked Jon Hillmer to route those complaints to Maria Reynolds at Division 15.

5. CARRIED OVER: **Swearing in of new Council Member**, Maribel De La Torre from the City of San Fernando, Suzanne Handler Council Secretary

6. RECEIVE Director's Report, Jon Hillmer
 - Performance Report
 - On-time Performance
 - San Fernando Valley: 78.7%
 - Target: 80.0%
 - Metro Bus System: 76.6%
 - Complaints per 100,000 passengers
 - San Fernando Valley: 2.53

- Target: 2.94
 - Metro Bus System: 2.64
- Miles between mechanical road calls
 - San Fernando Valley: 5,038
 - Target: 3,635
 - Metro Bus System: 3,757
- Accidents per 100,000 miles
 - San Fernando Valley: 2.85
 - Target: 2.73
 - Metro Bus System: 2.58
- Monthly ridership
 - San Fernando: 5,270,000
 - Target: 4,900,000
 - Metro Bus System: 31,190,000
- Orange Line ridership
 - Weekday: 22,500
 - Saturday: 15,000
 - Sunday: 11,600

A small factor helping improve the numbers for road calls could be attributed to the fact that we have a higher percentage of new equipment out in the field. Another factor is that the San Fernando Valley has better and smoother roadways as well as a one of the best maintenance teams within the system.

- I-405 Closing wrap up
 - The region experienced the “Best Case Scenario” with the 405 closure. This was due to people staying home or staying away from the affected areas. The 405 was able to open earlier than originally anticipated and there were no significant problems experienced by transit. Bus ridership was at an average level and there was a slight increase in Metro Rail ridership. The costs and lost revenue estimates are still being developed. Phase II of the project is slated to take place in the spring or summer of 2012 with the possibility of it occurring on a different weekend so different merchants and different patron groups are affected.

Representative Cano updated the Council regarding the costs that were associated with this closure. There was an expectation that the report was going to be included on the agenda for the Board Meeting held August 4th but was pushed back to September. Once the item is on the agenda, there is a motion that will be attached to it relating to mitigating and allocating those costs to the project.

- Signal prioritization along Orange Line Route
 - There are 30 signalized intersections on the 14.4 mile long BRT line. The Orange Line buses communicate with traffic signals and a

signal priority system is designed to give buses more green time. There are two significant issues with the system: 1) buses in both directions do not always get priority and 2) some traffic signal equipment is occasionally not operating correctly. In addition, there is a pedestrian path at NoHo between the Red and Orange Lines and the plan is to work with LADOT regarding the walk cycle and the existing knock-out panel at the Red Line station for a pedestrian tunnel.

The Chair pointed out that people are still running across the bus lanes. In addition, she said that Metro was told that the go-slow order was supposed to be temporary but is still in effect after 5.5 years.

Representative Cano questioned whether there was an accident matrix that would allow the go-slow order to be lifted.

Gary Spivack answered that the issue with the go-slow order lies with the City of Los Angeles and the Police Department. Every time it is brought up to the City Council, there is a major push back from the Police Department because there are a lot of traffic accidents for this region as a whole.

Cano played Devil's Advocate and suggested billing the City of Los Angeles for gates. He argued that if the gates were supposed to be unnecessary because we could operate the buses safely and quickly through the intersections then we now have a major rapid transit line that is not performing up to par. Will this be a permanent go-slow order?

Mr. Spivack stated that the issue with gates is that they have to have a signal to activate them and typically with trains there is an additional 12 seconds where the intersection is cleared. The same activity would be necessary here and would further impact traffic in the Valley. The City is reluctant to move in that direction. We are still working on a contract with the City to improve that signal system and looking into different scheduling opportunities to get more green time.

Cano wanted clarification on the go-slow order and what intersections are affected and whether an evaluation of the impacted intersections was possible. It is a one-size policy that does not fit all and exploration should be done regarding the smaller intersections where there is no traffic but the buses are still required to slow their speed.

Mr. Spivack answered that it affects every intersection and he will explore those concerns with the City directly. In addition, some of the transponders have been changed out because they were showing a weak signal. It is an ongoing working relationship with the City to get these issues corrected.

Cano pointed out that it may be time to start a Board level discussion or at minimum a CEO level discussion with Jaime at LADOT to bring up the level of importance for this issue.

Mr. Hillmer followed up that there are times when the signaling system is not performing up to par. Mr. Spivack is part of the team that reports on the problems which are then directed to LADOT. In addition, we have passed on word to LADOT to extend the pedestrian cycle so they have more time to walk across Lankershim Blvd. There is also encouragement from Paul Taylor to look at the knock-out panel that was placed at the Red Line station for a pedestrian tunnel and do an assessment on costs of following through with this option.

Cano suggested that Mr. Hillmer bundle the pedestrian tunnel with other projects that are similar so that the Board can see it as a package.

The Chair recollected that there was supposed to be a development deal at the North Hollywood station with the tunnel costs being folded into that with the developer being responsible for those costs. She suggested that Mr. Hillmer speak to Roger Moliere about what happened to this project.

- Standard Operating Procedure for Standing Room Only
 - All bus routes are planned for 1.3 passengers to seat ratio. This means that there is a possibility of 12 standees on a 40 seat bus, 14 standees on a 46 seat bus, and 17 standees on a 57 seat bus. If an operator passes up waiting able-bodied passengers, the Standard Operating Procedure is to contact BOC with the location and approximate number of passengers being passed up. If an operator passes up waiting passengers in wheelchairs, they are to contact BOC and the passenger, stating the location, customer destination and reason for passing up the passenger.

The Chair has seen circumstances where the bus already had two wheelchair passengers and there are only two positions per coach and wonders how often pass-up occurs for this reason. It may give us a better indication of what the system usage is by wheelchair passengers.

Mr. Hillmer stated that since we've transitioned mostly to low floor buses with ramps service it has been far more reliable with the lift working 99% of the time and allowing the wheelchair passengers to board quicker.

Cano wanted to know if the buses that run along the lines that have a higher number of wheelchair bound passengers are modified to carry more than two at a time.

The buses have not been modified for these lines but the lines have been assigned low floor buses. The next round of buses that are on order have slight modifications for easier wheelchair access including the space for a third wheelchair but no tie-downs.

Dr. Arvizo suggested having a demonstration with some of the buses that go to hospitals to provide additional area to help accommodate the individuals that are in wheelchairs.

It seems that it could be possible but the way the seating arrangement is done, it makes the available area minimal. Mr. Hillmer will ask the fleet people whether they know of an agency that has done modifications similar to the kinds necessary for Metro buses.

- Update on Mel Wilson's Observations on the Orange Line
 - After concern was raised by Director Wilson at the June 1, 2011 meeting regarding overcrowding on the Orange Line on the evening of July 3rd, it was determined that the 9:33 p.m. trip bus went out of service due to a mechanical issue and this caused the 9:53 p.m. trip bus to carry 84 passengers. The average peak load for this line is 36 passengers with 8% of these trips having standees and 1% exceeding the 1.30 load standard.
- Planned Tours
 - The following list is of proposed Service Council Tours:
 - ROC/BOC – September 2011
 - Metro Art Tour – November 2011
 - Rail and Bus Division Tour – January 2012
 - Orange Line Extension – March 2012
 - Gold Line Foothill Extension – May 2012
 - CMF Bus Mid-Life Rebuild – July 2012
 - Green Line Extension – September 2012

The Chair highly recommends to her fellow Representatives that they visit ROC if they can spare the time.

Cano suggested that when the tours for the Orange, Gold and Green Lines occur, someone from the MTA is there to present what the plans are to integrate bus/rail with these extensions. He wants to make sure that the MTA has already coordinated with the schedules and stations and any other agency in the region so we can hit the ground running.

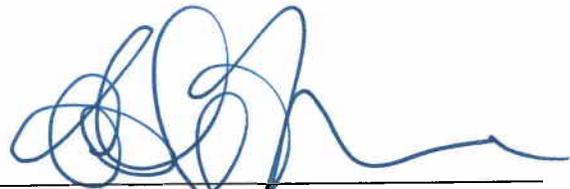
- August Public Hearing Cancellations
 - The Public Hearing was to include service reductions in the form of routes being shortened, certain stops no longer being served and reductions in weekend service. Metro's budget did not require more service reductions and a determination was made to pull back

proposals. Staff is to reevaluate service with the increase in ridership and service data.

- The Council was briefed on the Motions that will be introduced at the July Board meeting to be held August 4, 2011.
7. RECEIVED report on **Quarterly Transit Providers meeting** by Jon Hillmer, Director Service Councils. Mr. Hillmer said that the meeting was held late last month. There was a Metrolink representative present and they spoke about scheduling and coordinating with other transit providers. The topic of Formula Allocation Program funding, how it works and whether it is available to tier 3 operators was also explored. He felt that it was a very productive meeting.
 8. APPROVED staff **proposals for 163 and 363 Lines**. Chair Richards summarized the changes for Representative Bric because he was absent for the discussion held at the July 6, 2011 meeting.
 9. RECEIVED **Chair and Council Member Comments**
Representative Bric had a comment regarding the overcrowding issue on buses and requested clarification about whether there becomes a safety hazard if there are too many people on the bus.

Mr. Hillmer confirmed that it does happen but many times it relates to where the passengers are actually standing more than the issue of too many people on the bus. When this occurs, the operator is to stop the bus and move the people back from the front of the bus. If they are actually overloaded then that is the point where they are to call control and inform them that they are passing up stops.

Adjourned at 7:26 p.m.



Collette Langston, Council Secretary