

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

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 Members Present:

Kymerleigh Richards, Chair
Jesus Ochoa, Vice Chair

Dr. Richard Arvizu
Gary Bric
Donald Weissman

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director Service Councils
Wilbur Babb, Community Relations
Manager
Suzanne Handler, Council Secretary
Collette Langston, Board Secretary's
Office

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance

2. APPROVED Minutes for January 3 and March 7, 2012 meetings.

3. RECEIVED **Chair's Remarks**

Martin White is with Maranatha High School and uses Metro to commute from his home in the San Fernando Valley to the school in Pasadena. He uses NexTrip for his commute. Mark Moore, an MTA operator, nominated Mr. White for recognition and said, "I admire Martin because he chooses to use public transportation everyday even for long distances." The Council presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. White and a similar certificate will be presented to Mr. Moore.

Mr. White commented that Metro is a wonderful service and knows how hard it is to get around in LA and Metro offers a solution. He uses the Orange, Red and Gold Lines.

The Chair commented on the issues plaguing Sherman Way and Line 163. Within 15 minutes she observed three 163 east bound buses during a time of day when the service is supposed to be spaced every 25 minutes. Around 1 p.m., she saw two westbound 163 buses following each other down Sherman Way. She has communicated both incidents to Conan Cheung.

4. RECEIVED **Public Comment**

- Vince Garofalo – Spoke about the new Line 233 rolling up to the station in front of the school. Line 290 goes down Foothill and should run later into the evening. On the MTA buses, the "talking heads" don't take into consideration the amount of time it takes to get to Los Angeles. After a certain time, if he isn't at Sepulveda and Ventura, he has to call a cab or make other arrangements. The deliberate pass-ups don't consider Dr. appointments, meetings, people that are counting on the bus to get them to their destination. Also commented that there is some movement in the hierarchy of the MTA to keep people from exercising their First Amendment rights on the MTA.
- Nate Zablen – Regarding the brochures for tagging, all the tagging is shown on the windows. Over the past few years, there has been less tagging on the windows but there is still a lot of tagging on the seats. Suggests that the flyer be altered and made into a sign and put on the panels at the rear of the bus. Wants the tagging in the brochure shown on the seats. The tagging really impacts some of the buses that have heavy loads because people can't sit. There are a lot of people jay-walking at the Orange Line Van Nuys station. Believes there should be ticketing for

people that violate the crosswalk signs before someone gets hurt. People think that they have to rush for a bus even though the Orange Line is frequent.

Chair Richards – Asked Jon Hillmer to forward Mr. Zablen’s remarks about the graffiti brochure to the 19th floor and see if they can incorporate that into whatever campaign that we have going.

- Faramarz Nabavi – With respect to the North Hollywood station connector from the Red Line platform to the Orange Line platform, he thinks it is great that Metro has put that out for construction. Wants to be sure that the design incorporates channels for bicycles. Regarding the gate-locking program, Fire-Life Safety Funds should be allocated for an ADA fare gate that leads to the escalators, not just one that connects to the elevators. With respect to the East San Fernando Transit Corridor Hearings that are coming up, wanted to note that he believes it is essential that Metro pick the alignment that will have the highest ridership potential and not just the most revenue. Expressed support for the No-Smoking Motion.
- Pat O’Connor – The last time she attended the meeting, she brought to attention that the escalators are becoming increasingly dangerous because people run up and down them. She was told it would be referred to whoever is in charge of that and wants to know if it was referred and what she can expect as a result.

Chair Richards – It was referred but realistically, there is very little that can be done to stop passengers from misbehaving.

- Ms. O’Connor – Was pushed down and broke her ankle. Believes that a sign would be minimum that says that the escalators are reserved for the elderly or people holding packages that if people want to run up and down steps they have a staircase. The escalators are not built to be pounded upon by people running up and down and that’s why they are constantly broken down.

Chair Richards – It bothers her that people do that but realistically people do what they do even if we put signs up.

- Ms. O’Connor – No, people will behave better up if you put signage.

Chair Richards – You’re being hopelessly optimistic, Ms. O’Connor.

- Ms. O’Connor – They will. There is a sign in the buses that certain seats are reserved for the elderly and I am able to claim my seat because of that.



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Chair Richards – I feel that you are a little more optimistic than I but you are entitled to your feelings. I don't know that anything can be done.

Mr. Hillmer – We will bring this to Vance Gillis' attention. We currently ban bike riding and skateboards within the station. We could ask them to include running within the station. Enforcing that is much more difficult than a skateboard, roller skates, or a bicycle. As to reserving the escalators for the elderly or disabled, that would not be practical.

- Ms. O'Connor – Or prohibiting running up and down. That's what I'm asking. There is a staircase right next to them for people to run up and down. They don't need to run down and push people in front of them aside. I'm asking for a sign to be placed there that says, at minimum, "No running up and down the escalators" that way people that are there can remain stationary.

Chair Richards – Could we forward this concern to Commander Jordan of the Transit Services Bureau and maybe sheriff's personnel can be a little more diligent in discouraging that behavior?

Mr. Hillmer – The sheriffs do have the authority if they observe unsafe activity. In addition, I'll pass this along to our Safety Department with a recommendation that they ban running within the station and escalators.

Chair Richards – I'm not sure signage alone is going to do it so we should bring it to Commander Jordan's attention as well.

- Ms. O'Connor – I think that if there is a sign, I can remind the person behind me trying to push me aside that they're not allowed to do that and the sign strictly prohibits them from running up and down the escalator.

Chair Richards – Many times our passengers are the best enforcers when there is something for them to point at. I hope that you don't pick the wrong person and they decide to pull a knife on you.

- Ms. O'Connor – That's the chance I'll have to take. With a broken ankle, I've already suffered so if I suffer a stabbing next, then it will be brought to MTA's attention, the sign that is necessary and you're opening the doors, not only for me but other people that I have seen pushed down, mostly the elderly.

Chair Richards – I do sympathize with you. I personally had an incident where someone took their bicycle on an escalator, lost their grip and tumbled into a senior citizen and I was right behind the senior and was able to prevent it from becoming a major incident. I just feel a little more hopeless than you do.

- Ms. O'Connor – We can't say that signs don't work; otherwise nobody would stop at a stop sign while they drive. No one would stop for a red light while they're walking. Signs do work so please don't brush me off that it won't work.

Chair Richards – I have no intention of brushing you off. I share your concerns, I just think you're a little more optimistic than I that a sign will work which is why I'm asking for additional attention to be brought beyond what you've suggested.

- Ms. O'Connor – I would like it if this gentleman would write on a scrap piece of paper who I would contact with the date and time of what happened to me. Calling the sheriffs doesn't help because they are too busy downstairs in the main body of the subway giving tickets; they are not concerned with my safety.

Chair Richards – Jon, perhaps you could have a private conversation with Ms. O'Connor while we move forward on the remaining concerns.

- Ms. O'Connor – The second thing is, I've read the choices here, and I understand that there is still some implementation regarding the Van Nuys Blvd, whether they are going to choose a trolley, bus...or?

Chair Richards – We're still having Public Hearings and that's an agenda item later in the meeting. We're going to get an update on this project and it is a situation where public outreach is still on going.

- Ms. O'Connor – I read in the newspaper that they are considering building an underground tunnel from the Red Line subway to the Orange Line, which I think is very dangerous and very cost prohibitive. I think an overpass might be in order. I think that would be much more cost effective and more helpful and safer. If you make an underground tunnel, you'll have all the transients urinating and camping out there at 2 in the morning. It would be dangerous for a female to walk through there. An overpass would be so highly visible that people would be safer.

Chair Richards – I would presume that just as we lock our station during the hours that the subway is not operating, this tunnel would also be secured so there wouldn't be transient activity overnight.

- Ms. O'Connor – I would still like an overpass instead.



Chair Richards – We can certainly send that comment down to the department in charge. My only thought is that with ADA requirements it may be more expensive because we'd have to put elevators at both ends.

➤ Ms. O'Connor – No, you could have a ramp.

Chair Richards – In order to go high enough to go over Lankershim, a ramp's not going to do it.

➤ Ms. O'Connor – Are you saying that there has already been a feasibility study done?

Chair Richards – I believe there has been.

➤ Ms. O'Connor – I'd like it to be presented.

Chair Richards – I can certainly ask the appropriate people downtown to give us a presentation on that.

➤ Ms. O'Connor – Please do, I'd like to see that at the next meeting. Thank you very much for your time.

Chair Richards – Suzanne, would you ask Murthy to give us a presentation at a future meeting? We can ask him about elevators and ADA at that time.

5. APPROVED Motion from Jesus Ochoa and Kymberleigh Richards, "No Smoking Policy at Bus Stops" as amended to 20 feet.

Representative Bric – I went back to the City to find out their feelings on this and basically the current Motion talks about 10 feet and the City of Burbank is 20 feet from windows, buildings and doors. We are hoping that you can incorporate that into this ordinance. If you can't, we're still going to support it.

Representative Arvizo – As I recall, the State law says you have to be 20 feet away from an operable door or window.

Representative Bric – Correct, that's what the City of Burbank is.

Representative Arvizo – There is no operable door or window at a bus stop.

Chair Richards – Because of that, technically we have a little more leeway because we're not dealing with doors and windows; we're talking about physical bus stop facilities.

Representative Bric – We’re well aware of that and my other concern was about the enforcement of it and I was told that unless we wish to include this Metro prohibition in our own local code, we would not enforce it. The sheriff’s department would have to enforce something like this. The City was hoping you could make it 20 feet instead of 10 feet so it would coincide with everything we’re doing in Burbank.

Chair Richards – Mr. Ochoa, this is primarily your Motion and I would take that as a suggested friendly amendment.

Vice Chair Ochoa – I would like to hear the public comment and then vote.

- Marsha Ramos - I'm the chair elect of the state Board of Directors of the American Lung Association in California. As a former member of this Governance Council and of the Burbank City Council, I am very pleased to be back in this room and before you on this important public health issue. First, let me commend Mr. Ochoa and Chairwoman Richards on bringing forth the motion to prohibit smoking at nearly 16,000 bus stops. You have demonstrated true concern for 1000's of people in our region and beyond and you have a remarkable vision for the future.

The American Lung Association is working across the State and nation to strengthen laws and policies that protect everyone from second-hand smoke. Why? Because every year over 443,000 people nation wide, and 9,000 in LA County die from tobacco related disease, and another 50,000 die from exposure to second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke is a serious issue because it has very serious consequences to others and most especially to children, pregnant women, and those that suffer from asthma and other respiratory illnesses. As you know, everyday there are nearly a million bus riders on the LA Metro bus system. But what you may not know is that under 12% of Californians smoke. Therefore, this effort to prohibit smoking at bus stops system wide will improve the ridership experience of the great majority of bus transit users. I believe initiating a system wide no smoking policy at bus stops is a giant step in an effort to protect the public health from the ill effects of secondhand smoke.

Although 5 cities within the system have independently prohibited smoking at bus stops, I believe all cities would be supportive if there were truly a concerted effort and formal support from LA Metro to initiate a consistent policy system wide. I understand there may be jurisdictional issues that may be perceived as obstacles, and there may also be anticipated financial impacts regarding signage, which is typically viewed as detrimental. I ask you to keep in mind that very often large and small agencies, such as LA county and local cities work together to improve



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public communication systems and implement environmental initiatives so this policy initiative before you, is not beyond the norm. Smoking and second-hand smoke cost us all millions of dollars in healthcare costs every year. Please do not let perceptions, obstacles and short term thinking stand in your way of supporting the very spirit of this motion before you. Instead, I strongly encourage you to work together along with other governance councils, contract cities, and local and Metro staff to move this groundbreaking initiative forward. I recommend that a resolution addressing or incorporating jurisdictional issues be included and presented to the LA Metro Board of Directors. Should you move forward with this effort to end smoking at all bus stops, know that I stand strongly behind you in support, as does the American Lung Association in CA. Our staff has successfully worked with Contra Costa and Alameda County multi jurisdictional transit systems to implement similar smoke free bus stop policies, please do not hesitate to use ALAC as a resource.

A wise man once said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step", take this first and important step in a monumental public health initiative. Thank you for your work!

- Ray Rose II with the Coalition for a Tobacco Free LA County – The Surgeon General stated that there is no safe exposure to second-hand smoke. The Environmental Protection Agency labeled second-hand smoke as a carcinogen. One of the most dangerous classes of cancer-causing agents. Tobacco related illnesses kill more Americans each year than alcohol, crack, cocaine, heroin, accidents, fires, AIDS, homicides and suicides combined. There are over 4,000 chemicals in this stick of which 60 of them are known to cause cancer:
 - ✓ Benzene, a powerful cleaning product and a gasoline.
 - ✓ Arsenic, a poison used in insecticides.
 - ✓ Acetone, a paint stripper.
 - ✓ Carbon Monoxide, a toxic gas containing vehicle exhaust.
 - ✓ Cyanide, a poison. In Vietnam, we were given a little capsule to be used if we needed to commit suicide.
 - ✓ DDT, an insecticide.
 - ✓ Formaldehyde, a fertilizer that is also used for embalming bodies.
 - ✓ Vinyl Chloride, a flammable gas.

All of those are found in second-hand smoke. If you had walked into this room tonight and the air was filled with pesticides and poisonous chemicals, would you have closed the door behind you and taken a deep breath? I don't think you would have done that but that is exactly what we are doing every time someone puffs on a cigarette and exposes you to second-hand smoke. There are over 50,000 bus stop shelters, 1 million riders a day, 30 million riders a month, I have personally seen a smoker walking under a shelter and the rest of the people spread away from the smoker. Please continue encouraging cities to adopt smoke-free bus shelter policies. You have a chance now to make history and your wisdom

and leadership will always be remembered. The triumph of evil is for mankind to do nothing and you're doing something about it. Thank you for your time.

- Spencer Lyons of the American Cancer Society – Wanted to applaud you for your leadership on this issue and in terms of reducing exposure to second-hand smoke at bus stops. The American Cancer Society is committed to eliminating cancer as a major health problem and as such we support strong policies that reduce exposure to second-hand smoke. As Roy so eloquently put it, the long list of chemicals in second-hand smoke, many we know or are suspected to cause cancer. Every year 3,400 non-smoking adults in the United States die as the result of lung cancer by breathing others' cigarette smoke. Thank you for your efforts to work towards protecting residents of Los Angeles County and improving the health of Angelinos.
- Jackie Hernandez of the American Heart Association – We are ecstatic about this ordinance and we commend you for your leadership on taking the MTA and the bus stops smoke-free. Everyday 2,500 people die of heart disease, that can be a heart attack, blood pressure or stroke related and second-hand smoke is one of the leading causes of heart disease. We really applaud your efforts, you are making history. If LA MTA decides to do this, other bus industries across the nation will begin to do it.
- Steven Gallegos, the smoke-free program manager for Glendale Adventist Medical Center, former Chair of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free LA County – This Motion says that the County of Los Angeles and municipalities have undertaken efforts to improve and protect the health of the public. We've got many cities in Los Angeles County that are passing ordinances that will protect the public and some of those include Glendale, Long Beach and Pasadena. They all have ordinances that ban smoking at their bus stops and bus shelters. It says that Metro has the largest clean emissions bus fleet in North America. It says that the Code of Conduct expands prohibiting smoking inside Metro rail and bus vehicles. This ordinance is an actual extension of this indoor law. State law says that there has to be a 20 foot smoke free entry way around government buildings. These bus stops are all government owned and are considered shelters and must comply with building codes. Arguably, these are government buildings and subject to the 20 foot smoke free barrier. More than 70 cities in California have passed ordinances to protect their citizens from second-hand smoke. This is up from 53 a year ago. This is a trend, its coming. More and more cities are passing these ordinances and this Motion and a vote to support this will actually continue to move California forward in leading protections against second-hand smoke.



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- Monty Messex Deputy Director of the Los Angeles County Tobacco Control and Prevention Program – I want to share a report and fact sheet with the Council. The report is called “Cigarette Smoking, Los Angeles County Local Data to Inform Tobacco Policy” written by Dr. Fielding, Director of Public Health for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The countywide smoking prevalence is 14%. A method called “Small-Area Estimation” calculated the smoking prevalence. The smoking prevalence in the San Fernando Valley broken down by city is: Burbank 14.8%, Calabasas 7.3%, Glendale 15.4%, Los Angeles 14.8%, Council District 6 is 14%, La Canada/Flintridge 16.4% and San Fernando 12.5%. Dr. Fielding asked for recommendations to be added to the policy. For your consideration, we suggested including “reduce exposure to second-hand smoke” and “restricting smoking in outdoor public places” which also includes bus stops. I want to say again that this body is going in the right direction in terms of what we consider to be improving the public’s health.
- Nate Zablen – I would like for the perimeters at the Orange Line Station/bus stops be expanded. The parking lot at the Orange Line Station is separated by a fence. People gather around the fence who smoke and sometimes drink. It affects people that are walking from their cars and those waiting for the bus. The no-smoking area should be expanded to protect those who utilize Metro as well as the walkway and bikeway.

Chair Richards – If he’s talking about the fencing that delineates the platform area, technically those people would still be on Metro property. I would imagine that our Code of Conduct would cover that.

Vice Chair Ochoa – Mr. Bric, would you like to put forth a friendly amendment to the Motion, changing it from 10 feet to 20 feet?

Representative Bric – We’ll support you at 10 feet but would prefer 20 feet to match our City ordinance.

Vice Chair Ochoa – As maker of the Motion, I accept your amendment to the Motion that we’ve presented.

Chair Richards – I’ve already said that I will support the Motion in whatever form Mr. Ochoa feels that it should appear. So the Second still stands. Are there any other suggested changes or other discussion?

Representative Weissman – I’ve been on the Board of Directors of the Stroke Association of California for 15 years and one of the biggest topics that we have when dealing with issues of education and the prevention of stroke, is looking at the statistics of the number of stroke survivors each year who suffer stroke and how many smoke. Over the years, the number has gotten smaller

but the number of strokes has not. It focuses on second-hand smoke. My personal preference would be to ban smoking or to allow smokers to stand only on the double-yellow line down the middle of Sepulveda Blvd. Since that is not the Motion, I think that it would behoove this Council to be on the leading edge to support protecting our riders and general pedestrians from second-hand smoke with the idea that perhaps people that smoke would take a second look at their habit and forgo the habit altogether.

Representative Arvizu – I agree with all of the comments that were made regarding second-hand smoke. My uncle was a heavy smoker for 20 years. He passed away from lung cancer even after not smoking for 20 years. I think the 20 foot rule is a statewide ordinance for buildings that have entryways and windows that are operable. I think the Motion as it stands referencing the California penal code 640 is sufficient.

Chair Richards – Second-hand smoke bothers me for a purely personal reason. There is a chemical that is used in the treatment of tobacco for cigarettes that I happen to be horrendously allergic to. I get deathly ill when I inhale the smoke. I applaud Mr. Ochoa's tenacity in making sure that Council never lost sight of this issue.

6. RECEIVED update on **East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor**, Walt Davis, Project Manager. In November 2008 Measure R was approved and included \$68.5 million for the East San Fernando Valley project. In October 2009, Metro Board approved the Long Range Transportation Plan. This Plan identified \$170.1 million for the project. During October 2011, community meetings were held regarding the Van Nuys Corridor.

The original study area was from Ventura Blvd to I-210 freeway and included Metro Orange Line, Local and Rapid service, LADOT DASH, Metrolink and Amtrak.

Approximately 160 people attended the community meetings and more than 400 comments were received. The comments supported enhanced transit service, better accommodations for bicyclists and requests to consider Sepulveda Blvd Corridor and the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station northern terminus and origination point. Taking into consideration the comments and suggestions that were made, the study area has been expanded and is now the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor.



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The purpose and need for this study is as follows:

1. Improve mobility in the eastern San Fernando Valley by introducing an improved north-south transit connection between key transit hubs/routes.
2. Enhance transit accessibility/connectivity for residents within the study area to local and regional destinations.
3. Provide more reliable transit services within the eastern San Fernando Valley.
4. Provide additional transit options in a largely transit dependent area where bus overcrowding is a frequent occurrence.
5. Encourage modal shift to transit in the eastern San Fernando Valley, thereby reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The alternatives that are under consideration are:

1. No build
2. Transportation System Management – implements lower cost capital improvements to increase transportation system efficiencies, i.e., intersection widenings, signal timing and increased bus service
3. Build
 - a. Alignments:
 - i. Van Nuys Corridor
 - ii. Sepulveda Corridor
 - iii. Hybrid of both Corridors
 - b. Modes:
 - i. Bus Rapid Transit – exclusive lane but can operate in mixed-flow traffic, clean fuel power, up to 100 passengers per bus, can share existing maintenance facilities, similar to Metro Orange and Silver Lines
 - ii. Light Rail Transit – exclusive right of way, overhead electrical power, up to 335 passengers per two car train set, typically one mile station spacing, would require a new maintenance facility, similar to Metro Blue, Green and Gold Lines
 - iii. Streetcar – typically operates in mixed-flow lane, overhead electrical power, up to 140 passengers per car, station stops generally more frequent, would require a new maintenance facility, similar to Portland, Oregon

More community outreach is scheduled for April 2012 and Summer 2012.

- Faramarz Nabavi – It's important to make sure that we also consider the Sepulveda Pass issues and the linkage between the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor and the Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor. In terms of the presentations that are coming up later this month, I'm personally aware of a very significant number of comments that were made. We want to make sure that we have a contiguous transit line from the Valley to the Westside. The Transit

Coalition is advocating for a Light Rail Line that would be at-grade in the Valley and then via tunnel to the Westside to maximize the speed and minimize the time that it would take to connect.

7. DISCUSSED **July 4, 2012 Regular Meeting Date Change**, All Members.

Chair Richards – Let's shoot for Thursday the 5th with Thursday the 12th as the fall back.

8. RECEIVED **Director's Report**, Jon Hillmer, Director

- Performance Report
 - On-time Performance
 - San Fernando Valley: 77.2%
 - Target: 85.0%
 - Metro Bus System: 75.7%
 - Complaints per 100,000 passengers
 - San Fernando Valley: 3.94
 - Target: 2.88
 - Metro Bus System: 3.40
 - Miles between mechanical road calls
 - San Fernando Valley: 5,724
 - Target: 3,650
 - Metro Bus System: 3,909
 - Clean Bus
 - San Fernando Valley: 9.19
 - Target: 8.0
 - Metro Bus System: 8.43
 - Accidents per 100,000 miles
 - San Fernando Valley: 2.75
 - Target: 2.88
 - Metro Bus System: 3.74
 - Monthly ridership
 - San Fernando: 5,350,000
 - Target: 4,920,000
 - Metro Bus System: 30,600,000



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9. RECEIVED **Chair and Council Member Comments**

Representative Arvizu – No comment.

Vice Chair Ochoa – Just wanted to thank the Chair for helping give our riders the choice whether to be inhaling something they don't want to.

Chair Richards – The “No Smoking at Bus Stops” Motion will be submitted to Karen Gorman because it is a Code of Conduct issue. Once she has reviewed it will probably go before the Board in the next 90 days.

Mr. Hillmer – We will keep you posted on the progress of it. Once it goes to the Board for their consideration, there would also have to be an implementation date included.

Adjourned at 8:04 p.m.



Collette Langston, Council Secretary