

Minutes

Wednesday, January 7, 2015
6:30PM

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
SERVICE COUNCIL
Regular Meeting

Marvin Braude San Fernando Valley
Constituent Center
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys, CA 91401

All Metro meetings are held in ADA accessible facilities. Meeting location served by Metro Local Lines 154, 156, 164, 233, 237, Metro Rapid Line 761, and Metro Orange Line.

Called to Order at 6:34 p.m.

Council Members Present:
Michael Cano, Chair
Donald Weissman, Vice Chair
Gary Bric
Ernesto Hidalgo
Antonio Lopez
Yvette Lopez-Ledesma
Jesus R. Ochoa
Dennis Washburn

Officers:
Jon Hillmer, Director, Service Councils
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin. Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr
Maria Reynolds, Transportation Operations
Mgr.
Lilian De Loza, Community Relations Mgr.
Israel Marin, Transportation Planner

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Для получения информации о Metro на русском языке, пожалуйста, позвоните по указанному ниже телефонному номеру: 323-466-3876

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메트로(Metro) 정보를 [한국어]로 알아보시려면, 아래 번호로 전화하십시오: 323-466-3876

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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. APPROVED Minutes of December 3, 2014 Meeting.
3. RECEIVED Chair's Remarks

Chair Cano attended the groundbreaking for the high speed rail system in Fresno. The proposed station at Bob Hope Airport will support connections and creation of a Regional Multimodal Transportation Hub. Metro CEO Art Leahy has announced his retirement and Metrolink's CEO Mike DePallo has announced his resignation.

Mr. Hillmer added that Mr. Leahy had an All-Hands Meeting where he expressed his thanks to everyone at Metro. He began his tenure at RTD as a bus operator and moved up the ranks to Chief Operations Officer, went to Minneapolis/St. Paul as their CEO, came back to Orange County and then landed at Metro for the last 6 years as CEO. He is pleased with what Metro has accomplished and knows that there are big challenges that lie ahead.

4. RECEIVED Public Comment for items not on the agenda

Vince Garofalo caught Line 234 from Sylmar to the meeting. While on his way down his street to the bus stop, the bus went by. The next bus was not scheduled for another 40 minutes. Once he got to San Fernando Rd and Van Nuys, he had to wait an additional 40 minutes. He arrived at the meeting a little after 6:00 p.m. He does not like having to wait for extended periods of time and would like this issue examined. In addition, the operator on the bus that he took to get here tonight told him to stop handing out his pamphlets and talking about the meaning of Christmas.

Ralf Quint asked what the policy is regarding patrons that are drunk on the bus. On December 24, 2014 on Line 750, an intoxicated person boarded the bus at Van Nuys Blvd and did not pay. He was holding a bottle of malt liquor and the driver told him to get off the bus but then drove off with the patron still on the bus. The patron spilled liquor on the bus. The operator stopped at Woodman Blvd, called a supervisor, and ordered all of the other passengers to get off the bus in freezing temperatures to wait for another bus to continue their trip. The new buses have a board that looks similar to an ironing board in the front. He has caught his arm in the contraption twice and could have easily broken his arm. Mr. Hillmer responded that policy states that there is no eating or drinking allowed on the bus. If a customer boards the bus with an open container, the operator is to request the passenger to not board the bus with the container. Typically the Control Center will dispatch a supervisor or the Sheriff's Department to intercept the bus to handle the person. The boards are a safety device for wheelchair patrons so they can ride backwards.

Pat O'Connor asked for an update regarding the safety on the escalators. She requested that running on the escalators be banned because people are pushing the elderly. Mr. Hillmer replied that Metro does not have a policy that prevents patrons from walking up and down the escalators. Patrons are expected to behave in a manner that does not harm anyone else. Bikes and large devices are prohibited on the escalators. Chair Cano requested clarification

on whether the policy specifically addresses walking on the escalators. Walking is an accepted practice throughout the world. Mr. Hillmer replied that he would look into the official policy and clarified that he never said that a prohibition of walking would be included in the code.

Peter Luedtke, a member of the Bus Riders' Union, asked for clarification regarding muni transfers. He noticed that the operator on the bus he had boarded was having issues with the fare box with regards to muni transfers. Once he got to the North Hollywood Station, the turnstile gave him a red signal. He spoke with an operator about it and the issue was cleared up and he was able to use his ticket to transfer. How do patrons get onto the rail lines when the gates are locked and they are using a paper transfer ticket? He doesn't like looking like a fare evader when he is not. Mr. Hillmer replied that although it worked, what the operator did is informal and unauthorized. When the fare box isn't working, this is typically the work around. He suggested that Mr. Luedtke get a TAP card with stored value so this issue doesn't occur in the future.

Nate Zablen commented on the progress being made on the pedestrian bridge at Universal City Red Line Station. It bothers him that Metro provides easy access to Universal Studios to people who are not Metro system users and they are not cited. He doesn't understand why Metro is willing to pay for the majority of this bridge but not to upgrade service in the San Fernando Valley. Why is the bridge a priority and improving service is not?

Wayne Wright suggested that Line 234 branch out as Line 235 because it now goes over the hill to Westwood and truncates at the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station. The frequency of Line 234 is not great and truncating the line at the Metrolink Station would allow patrons to use either Line 290 or Line 232 which goes to Mission College.

5. RECEIVED Update on New Valley-Westside Express Service, Israel Marin, Transportation Planner

Metro held a media event on December 12, 2014 for this new service. Attendees included Los Angeles City Mayor Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles Councilman Paul Krekorian, Metro CEO Art Leahy, San Fernando Valley Service Council Chair Michael Cano and Service Council members Ernesto Hidalgo and Yvette Lopez-Ledesma.

The running time and ridership are being and will continue to be monitored for future adjustment to best meet patron's needs. Excluding holidays, ridership is approximately 1,640 daily boardings. Additional am/pm peak buses have been added to Line 734 to meet demand. Recognition was given to the role that past Councilmembers Kymberleigh Richards and Dr. Richard Arvizu played in initiating the new service.

Ralf Quint stated that since the Westside Express Line began, he has been able to take it 5 times in each direction, usually during off-peak hours. When he took the bus to the Westside, it was 15-20 minutes late. The bus didn't make it over the Sepulveda Pass in 45 minutes because it can't get to the carpool lane. He had a better experience with the bus on the way back. Getting to Sepulveda by catching a bus is nearly impossible. There are connection problems at the Orange Line/Sepulveda. The schedule needs to be adjusted.

Bart Reed, Executive Director Transit Coalition, has also ridden the new route. It concerns him that this route was given a name when none of the other routes have names. It creates confusion for both the operators trying to explain it and passengers that cannot understand the difference. Riders are used to boarding buses with numbers. The signs and schedules need to be updated to reflect the name. As far as the timing goes, there is an issue. Caltrans puts out a report every 3-6 months and that report deals with the capacity of the 405 along the entire HOV lane from Sylmar to West Los Angeles. The segment between Victory to Ventura Blvd has always been at roughly 110-120% of capacity, meaning there is no room in the lane for the bus. It took 20 minutes to go from Victory to Ventura Blvd. Every trip he took was 20 minutes late and as a result of that there was no time savings. It might be better for this route to continue south on Van Nuys Blvd to Ventura Blvd and get on the 405 at that point.

6. RECEIVED Update on Line 90/91 Discussion, Israel Marin, Transportation Planner

In December, Metro agreed to establish a temporary route change to Route 91 until permanent modifications to Honolulu Ave can be completed. Metro is currently coordinating with the City of Glendale and County of Los Angeles to establish two new required stops along the temporary route which could take three months to complete. The temporary route, currently being used on Sundays, utilizes Florencita Dr from Verdugo Rd to Orangedale Ave traveling northbound.

Metro, City of Glendale, and Crescenta Shopping Park Association will continue to work toward a unanimous agreement for the permanent rerouting of northbound Route 91 through Honolulu Ave. The current Beeline stop on Market St will be improved by the City of Glendale before a permanent route can be established. Improvements are expected to be completed in approximately 24 months. The permanent route is proposed to operate on Honolulu Ave from Verdugo Rd and past Orangedale Ave. Chair Cano requested an update regarding why the improvements will take 24 months to make.

Pat O'Connor commented that both presentations were lacking a header. Patrons need to know the header name as well as the line number. It would be helpful to include the start and the end of routes being discussed in presentations.

7. RECEIVED Update on Blue Ribbon Committee Formation and Cancellation of February 2015 Public Hearings, Jon Hillmer, Director

Metro convened a Blue Ribbon Committee 5 years ago which included Service Council members, Citizens' Advisory Council members, members of academia, industry and employment to develop service plans for the future. The Committee is being reconvened to look at how policy, procedures, and what types of service should be emphasized to improve bus service and address the significant financial problems that lurk in the future. The recommendations are intended to impact planning in the short term.

After meeting with the CEO and the budget department, it was determined that there is not a pressing need to push forward with service changes. Thus the February 2015 public hearings have been cancelled.

Vice Chair Weissman and Councilmembers Lopez and Ledesma-Lopez volunteered to represent the Council on the Committee.

8. RECEIVE Director's Report on San Fernando Valley Service, Jon Hillmer, Director

- On-time Performance: San Fernando Valley: 80.4%, Goal: 80.0%
- Bus Trips Running Ahead of Schedule: Division 8: 4.0%, Division 15: 4.0%, System: 4.9%, Goal: 0.5%
- Complaints Per 100,000 Passengers: San Fernando Valley: 4.57, Goal: 3.57
- Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls: 4,480, Goal: 4,150, System: 4,305
- Accidents per 100,000 miles: San Fernando Valley: 2.54, Goal: 3.48
- Bus Cleanliness Rating: San Fernando Valley: 8.79, Goal: 9.0
- Average Weekday Ridership: San Fernando: 197,884

Vice Chair Weissman noted that the top three routes with on-time performance issues are contract routes. He asked if Metro has any ways to incentivize their operators to improve. Mr. Hillmer replied that Metro is implementing programs to identify and train and/or discipline operators, and that Bus Operations Control is monitoring early bus arrivals.

Chair Cano commented that Metro is currently testing an articulated electric bus on the Orange Line. The buses do have a limited range and are expensive at a cost of approximately \$1 million as compared to CNG buses which cost around \$700,000 each. An additional 5 40-foot buses are electric buses are to be put into service at Division 8 for testing. The recharge time on those buses is 5-8 hours.

Nate Zaben noticed that Lines 150 and 240 had a greater number of complaints than other lines. They are very long lines and the schedules that are produced are missing information with regards to what is affecting their performance. There is a lot of traffic along the route and some of the stops are very close together, particularly around Ventura Pl and Laurel Canyon. In addition, those lines tend to see higher numbers of passengers with large luggage and personal belongings. Sometimes the operator is forced to lower the ramp for patrons who are not disabled to help them load their items. He'd like to see more frequency on these lines because it is one of the major thoroughfares of the Valley. It would also be nice to have signs that indicate when the next bus is coming.

9. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmember Hidalgo wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilmember Washburn asked when Mr. Leahy was retiring and whether Metro had analyzed how the new licensing laws will affect ridership on the system. Mr. Hillmer replied that April 5, 2015 will be Mr. Leahy's retirement date. While many more people will be able to get driver's licenses, it doesn't necessarily mean that there are new people driving. Bus ridership does tend to go down when gas prices are lower but Metro is competitive with the service that is offered whether people have a license or not.

Councilmember Lopez-Ledesma asked that pedestrian and bicycle accidents be included in the Director's Report. She also inquired when the buses are evaluated for cleanliness. She would like to see the customer survey prior to it being distributed to passengers. Mr. Hillmer said that the buses are rated prior to entering service and that the passenger survey includes items regarding perceptions of bus and bus stop cleanliness.

Chair Cano joked that résumés for Metro's CEO can be submitted to Mr. Hillmer. He thanked Mr. Leahy for his 6 years of service and his previous years of service at Metro.

ADJOURNED at 8:15 p.m.