

Minutes

Wednesday, April 1, 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 744, and Metro Orange Line.

Called to Order at 6:36 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
Gary Spivack, Transportation Operations Mgr.
Lilian De Loza, Community Relations Mgr.
Israel Marin, Transportation Planner
Collette Langston, Office of the Board Secretary

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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. APPROVED Minutes of March 4, 2015 Meeting, with abstention by Councilmember Lopez.
3. CHAIR'S Remarks

There will be an interim period of 4-5 weeks at Metro between Art Leahy's departure and Phillip Washington's arrival; operations will continue without a hitch.

Service Council appointments are coming up. Letters from nominating authorities should be submitted this month to prevent any lapse.

The Chair went to APTA the legislative conference in Washington D.C. Mr. Washington is the current Chair of APTA and has exhibited leadership on issues ranging from the vision of transportation to workforce development and growth. Chair Cano looks forward to what Mr. Washington can accomplish at Metro and wished Mr. Leahy a fond farewell.

4. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the agenda

Nate Zablen commented that Metro is considering major future projects that aren't funded such as a tunnel through the Sepulveda Pass and converting the Orange Line to rail. They might be completed in 20-30 years and will cost billions of dollars. Money will be spent on studies and related reports but what really concerns him is improving bus service now or in the near future in the San Fernando Valley and the surrounding regions. Better access to destinations like Griffith Park, hospitals and the VA is needed. A lot of the bus lines in the valley have been around for 50 years and the population has grown, creating a denser area. The bus service doesn't meet the needs of the people. Re-evaluate these bus routes and see if they are meeting the needs and serving schools, hospitals and parks. These changes would not cost as much as these other projects and they are just as important. There is a problem with once an hour buses that connect to the Orange Line. These bus routes can be modified to run more frequently.

Vince Garafalo had a doctor's appointment on the third Thursday of March. One of his bags had some aluminum cans and when he boarded the bus a little after 3:00 p.m., the operator told him that he cannot bring leaky things onto the bus and then left him on the sidewalk. He reported this incident to Maria Reynolds. A driver that passes up a passenger doesn't know where that passenger is trying to go or if it is an emergency. He could have remedied this problem with another plastic bag but the operator didn't give him the chance because she just didn't care.

Bart Reed, Executive Director of the Transit Coalition, called the Council's attention to the Motion that Mayor Garcetti introduced that asks for a action plan to be developed to address the decline in ridership. His group has been doing a lot of research on how the buses connect to the Orange Line and how to use public transportation to get to jobs. They are finding that there is a gap in service. For example, if you get off Metrolink at the Sylmar/San Fernando Station at 5:13 a.m. or 6:13 a.m., the first bus that goes down Balboa Blvd leaves at

6:35 a.m. There is not a bus that meets the first or second train. There here is no way to get to job shifts that begin early in the morning on time. These issues are all over the system. It is incumbent that we take care of the working people.

Jason Ackerman said that CicLAvia was awesome but catching the bus back from CicLAvia was not. There was no temporary stop signage. He watched Line 240 and 150 buses pass him on a designated detour route but there were no designated temporary stop signs. Next time CicLAvia is done in the Valley, please use signage for the temporary stops. One of his concerns as a rider on the system is the gross unavailability of bathrooms. Apparently there used to be a bathroom for public use at the Chatsworth station but once the Orange Line started going out there, they shut it down with the rationale that the Metrolink riders already have bathrooms. Having bathrooms available for the public will curtail people from using the elevators as bathrooms. This is a human issue. Line 236 service needs to be extended in span and frequency to improve connections to the Sylmar/San Fernando Station.

5. RECOGNITION of San Fernando Valley Service Council Member Gary Bric, Jon Hillmer, Executive Director and Service Council Members

Mr. Hillmer presented Mr. Bric with a proclamation from Metro in recognition of his service to public transportation through the Service Councils on the Council since 2009. He brought solidarity and provided key insight on Line 180 service.

Councilmember Bric thanked everyone and recognized former Council members Dr. Arvizu and Kymberleigh Richards for their leadership. He leaves with mixed emotions after serving as a representative for the past 6 years, and he appreciates the opportunity to work with everyone. He also thanked Mr. Kriske with the City of Burbank for his work.

The Council expressed their well wishes gratitude for Councilmember Bric's service, emphasizing the insight he provided on issues related to service through Burbank and for his even handed approach to Metro service in the Valley rather than one geographical area.

6. DISCUSS Metro Parking Ordinance, Frank Ching, Parking Management Director

Metro is in the process of overhauling the parking program to capitalize on the opportunity of using parking as an asset. There is a lot of progress that needs to be made and the parking ordinance is the first step in this journey. Currently, Metro is managing parking on an inventory basis and is looking into integrating the TAP system and the lots. This will help identify if a person that enters the lot is actually using the transit system.

After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Ching said that there will be an open dialog with all the cities within the system. Some of the conversations revolve around a parking guidance system and using technology to count cars in real time and push that information to the 511 app. This would allow people to find the nearest available parking spot in the instance that their preferred lot is full.

Chair Cano requested that an overview of the parking lots in the San Fernando Valley be provided at a later date when parking is brought to the Council again.

Councilmember Washburn suggested a systems approach to helping with disabled passengers. He also said that electric charging stations would be a good incentive for patrons. Mr. Ching replied that the parking study will reassess all parking and review to ensure that facilities are 100% in compliance including pathways, signage, bike infrastructure, and other elements. The team is also looking into installation of solar panels and EV chargers at new facilities. An EV charger is scheduled to be installed at the North Hollywood at Chandler. The study is tentatively scheduled to kick off in June, and he will report back to the Service Councils as the study progresses.

7. RECEIVE Presentation on Proposed Minor Route Modification to Line 154, Israel Marin, Transportation Planner

Line 154 was rerouted one year ago to serve the Hayvenhurst Av Park and Ride Lot. Time was added to the schedule but 4 more minutes are needed in each direction to maintain the schedule in addition to one bus to maintain the current headway. Residents on Magnolia Blvd have complained about bus noise by their single family homes and operators are having difficulty merging from northbound Balboa Blvd to westbound Burbank Blvd during heavy traffic. Few patrons use the Park and Ride connection. Staff recommends returning the route to Burbank Blvd because adding an additional bus to this Line will cost approximately \$517,650/year and widening the headway to 60+ minutes all day isn't recommended.

Jason Akerman, representing the Encino Neighborhood Council, said that the Neighborhood Council was not notified of this project until they saw it on the agenda. That holds true for the original change that occurred a year ago. There was not enough time to roundup stakeholders for discussion. He asked for a decision to be postponed for a month to discuss with stakeholders. People don't know that there is service on Balboa because it doesn't run frequently enough. Encino is trying to break the car culture and service options are desperately needed in the area. The Burbank stop is terrible because there is no lighting; it is uninviting and is unsafe. He suggested moving the stop in front of the Sepulveda Garden Center.

Bart Reed is concerned about this proposal because he doesn't believe enough research was done. Just because one resident on a street that is a freeway entrance made a complaint, doesn't constitute enough reason to change the route. His biggest concern is that staff works in a vacuum and there needs to be an analysis that includes the connections with LADOT. He suggested another 6 months of study before a change is made to this route.

Nate Zablen, Southern California Transit Advocates, is not in favor of the route modification. Four 4 LADOT buses serve this station and the local lines are important. It is important to have connectivity. He suggested that perhaps the stop be moved further south to make the turn easier for operators. p with those issues. This is important service.

Councilmember Lopez-Ledesma asked for a report to clarify where the connections are between LADOT and Metro.

Mr. Hillmer commented that the proposed change could go into effect in June, as it is considered a minor change that would not require a public hearing. The decision would need to be made by May in order to implement in June. The line only operates once per hour

and has very low ridership, only 1,050 boardings per day across a very long line; ridership at the stops proposed for change is among the lowest in the system. Mr. Marin added that the line does connect with some of the commuter buses at Balboa; the change would leave only one Commuter Express bus not connected to the line.

Councilmember Washburn suggested reaching out to the nearby farmers market to see if many of their customers use the stop to access the site. Councilmember Weissman added that the distance between other two stops is maybe 50 yards – removal of the stop would not add an excessively long walk.

8. RECEIVE Presentation on APTA Peer Review, Jon Hillmer, Director

The APTA Peer Review group examined the re-structured fare policies, proposals to increase the efficiency and productivity of service and operations and alternative revenue source options. Deficit projections and future funding shortfalls will require Metro to reduce expenditures, increase revenues or some combination of the two. Future funding shortfalls will be compounded by the waxing costs of: State of Good repair of an aging infrastructure; Long-term and growing debt service burden; and Capital expansion program that will demand ongoing maintenance funding. The Panel found that the proposed fare restructuring is comprehensive addressing the three principal aspects of fare policy: (1) fare levels, (2) fare structure, and (3) the process by which future fare changes will occur, and supports and encourages Metro to achieve 33% farebox recovery goal.

The panel noted that Metro has developed a very rigorous in-house program for the management and technical support of the TAP program that is enhancing fare equipment and media without relying heavily on higher cost support from the vendor. Electrification of bus components to reduce parasitic load can save as much as 15% on fuel. Free energy audits can help identify ways to reduce utility bills, including the establishment of rate interruptible programs that can provide significant reduction in utility rates charged to the agency in exchange for using generators during peak hours. Consider installing solar panel canopy systems to park buses under for shade, saving on future energy costs and reducing carbon footprint.

Jason Akerman commented on the continued use of “fare evasion” in the presentation. He said that this is not an accurate use of the term because the TAP card can be problematic. For instance, the fare is \$1.75 and the TAP card has a remaining balance of \$1.25. Instead of tapping and then paying the difference with another card or cash, it rejects the transaction and you cannot pay the fare. There needs to be a better way of moving fare from one card to another that doesn’t involve having the TAP Operator do the transaction. There is a lack of flexibility with the TAP program. Spacing out the stops for the system will work in certain areas but not in the San Fernando Valley.

9. RECEIVE Report on San Fernando Valley Director’s Report, Jon Hillmer, Director

- On-time Performance: San Fernando Valley: 79.2%, Goal: 80.0%
- Complaints Per 100,000 Passengers: San Fernando Valley: 3.97, Goal: 3.46
- Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls:: 6,240, Goal: 4,169, System: 4,944

- Accidents per 100,000 miles: San Fernando Valley: 2.53, Goal: 3.38
- Bus Cleanliness Rating: San Fernando Valley: 8.75, Goal: 8.5
- Average Weekday Ridership: San Fernando: 203,587
- The second meeting of the Blue Ribbon Committee was held on March 26. The next meeting will be held at the Gateway Headquarters on April 23 from 4:30 - 6:30pm. The committee will review potential plans for a “frequent service bus network,” the Metro & municipal operator draft policy on service realignment, and have a discussion regarding the Metro bus loading standard
- Metro is examining ways to improve Orange Line performance, such as increasing speeds thru intersections through collaboration with LADOT, review of possible “short line” operation , and investigating real time communications with each bus for optimal bus speeds
- The Board has requested that establishment of service between NoHo to Pasadena Gold Line be studied. Staff is working with Burbank to implement new frequent shuttle between NoHo and RITC, identify optimal location of HOV entrance/exits, and Metro is considering state legislation to allow for bus on freeway shoulder running
- Gary Spivack is the new Deputy Executive Officer to Metro’s Regional Service Councils.

10. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmember Hidalgo had a great time at CicLAVia and looks forward to doing it again. Vice Chair Weissman added that CicLAVia was an extraordinary event and thanked Metro for donating use of the Universal City parking lot. The bus bike rack demonstration was very successful in helping people get comfortable with putting their bikes on the racks and removing them. Mr. Weissman wished everyone a Happy Easter and Passover.

Councilmember Bric thanked everyone again for their well wishes and their input and dedication to improving San Fernando Valley transit service.

Chair Cano wished everyone a Happy Easter and Passover. He mentioned that there are different standards throughout the system regarding the red arrows and cars crossing the paths of buses or rail lines. He suggested that we change the signs to be more like the signs on the Gold Line which are more literal with a crossed out arrow whereas the Orange Line has different signs.

Mr. Hillmer said that Metro is currently in the process of getting a consultant to evaluate all of the crossings along the Orange Line and he will request that they also look at the signage.

ADJOURNED at 8:24 p.m.