

# Minutes

Wednesday, October 5, 2016  
6:30PM

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY  
SERVICE COUNCIL  
Regular Meeting

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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, 164, 233, 236/237, Metro Rapid Lines 744, 788, and Metro Orange Line.

Called to Order at 6:36 p.m.

Council Members Present:  
Donald Weissman, Chair  
Vahid Khorsand  
Antonio Lopez  
David Perry  
Max Reyes  
Dennis Washburn

Officers:  
Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer  
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin. Analyst  
Kelly Blanton, Metro Trainee  
Pamela del Valle, Administrative Intern  
Israel Marin, Transportation Planner  
Karen Swift, Community Relations Manager  
Collette Langston, Board Specialist

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Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

**Metro**

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. APPROVED Minutes of September 7, 2016 Meeting
3. RECEIVED Chair's Remarks
4. RECEIVED Update on LADOT's Transit Service Analysis Draft Recommendations, Susan Bok, Supervising Transportation Planners, Corinne Ralph, Chief of Transit Programs

LADOT's transit service objectives are to improve overall efficiency of existing DASH, Commuter Express and Cityride services. To do this, focus is on ridership, fare box recovery, subsidy per passenger and on-time performance. Upgrades to DASH service by increasing frequency, hours of service, weekend service and service to major destinations are being considered.

LADOT has completed line-by-line analyses of existing DASH and Commuter Express routes with all routes evaluated and ranked by performance. In the Needs Assessment Study, 167 suggestions from the public for new or modified DASH services were evaluated. The evaluation model is based on neighborhood characteristics where the most successful DASH routes run.

Evaluation of the Cityride program realized that the 2010 budget cuts resulted in a loss of service and ridership. The Citywide DASH recommendations are as follows: increase frequency of service for 22 DASH services, extend hours of service for 23 DASH services, add new Sunday service to 14 DASH services and improve routes for 28 DASH services incorporating public suggestions for route modifications and new routes.

Phase 1 will consist of adding five new DASH routes at Boyle Heights West, Canoga Park, Mission Hills, Pacoima and Sylmar. Phase 2 will consist of adding five new DASH routes (contingent on future funding) in Elysian Valley/Cypress Park, Glassell Park/Highland Park, North Hollywood, Sun Valley and Van Nuys/North Hills. These new routes will run every 15 minutes, 7 days a week.

Additional San Fernando DASH modifications include extension of the DASH Northridge route into the CSUN Transit Center in bi-directional operation, addition of Sunday service and increasing service frequency to every 15 minutes, 7 days a week. DASH Panorama City/Van Nuys would be modified to serve Van Nuys Blvd., connect to Van Nuys Orange Line Station, reduce turns, and improve on-time performance. Service frequency increases from 30 minutes to 15 minutes on weekdays and from 30 minutes to 20 minutes on weekends are also recommended. The DASH Van Nuys/Studio City modifications would change the route to serve Van Nuys Blvd. and Ventura Blvd., trim unproductive segments, add Sunday service, and increase frequency from 30 minutes to 15 minutes on weekdays and from 30 minutes to 20 minutes on weekends.

The Commuter Express recommendations are to maintain productivity of existing services while adjusting routes by removing low-demand deviations and extending

service into major new developments. LADOT will promote greater use of park-and-ride lots. There are no recommended changes to the routes in the Valley.

Cityride recommendations are to restore the 2010 level of stored value from \$42 per quarter to \$84 per quarter. Trips up to 10 miles scheduled in advance will remain the same cost in fare media value, and trips between 10-20 miles will no longer be available. Clients can call taxis for immediate trips and pay up to \$20, up from \$12, per trip in Cityride fare value. Amounts over \$20 will be paid by the client.

The last day for public comment was September 30, 2016. Recommendations will be finalized based on the public input received. LADOT will report to City Council in fall 2016 and Council approval is required to move forward. If approved, transit improvements can be implemented starting January 2017. The new DASH routes and increased service frequencies require additional buses and would be implemented once additional buses arrive from the manufacturer. New DASH routes recommended in Phase 2 would require additional funding.

Councilmember Reyes noted that the proposed Van Nuys DASH modifications duplicate service already provided by Metro. Ms. Bok replied that the public comments are being reviewed.

Chair Weissman asked if LADOT developed the recommendations independently or if they consulted with Metro. Mr. Marin replied that the recommendations were developed without Metro input. Metro did meet with LADOT recently to review the recommendations and submitted a response to the proposals. Staff will share that response with the Council.

Nate Zablén commented that the Van Nuys DASH serves parks, libraries, fashion plazas and elementary schools. The current route is absolutely essential and has been in place for 25 years. There are already 5 Metro lines and a Rapid that serve Ventura Blvd. which is very congested. He suggested that LADOT work with Metro to make sure that people don't lose the service that they rely on.

Wayne Wright likes some of the proposed changes but not all of them. The Panorama and Van Nuys proposed routes still don't get people to the Target on Raymer. The Sylmar, Van Nuys, and Panorama City proposals duplicate the service that is already offered with Metro and cause even more traffic. There will be streets that lose service that are not serviced by Metro. The proposed Canoga Park route does not operate south in to Warner Center. LADOT planners did not address focus on other areas of the Valley like Woodland Hills, Porter Ranch, Fallbrook, and east of Rinaldi. There is also no service on Reseda/Devonshire or in Granada Hills.

Jason Akerman has major issues with the Van Nuys/Studio City routes. The easiest fix would be to fix the signage because the printed material states that routes run clockwise/counter-clockwise but the physical signs don't clarify and it can be confusing. He suggested keeping the Van Nuys DASH route; when he maps the trip with Waze, it gives him the exact route, which means it is the fastest possible route. He suggested adding Hansen Dam and the Discovery Science Center as destinations to routes, and that the Sylmar route serve Olive View Medical Center and Mission College, and that weekend service be added. He also pointed out that the Canoga Park route doesn't go to

Warner Center. He would like the Sepulveda basin DASH to travel to Ventura, not at the expense of underserved corridors; he wants service to remain on Hazeltine, as there are no other service options on that street.

5. RECEIVE Presentation on Bus Operator Training Process, Maria Reynolds, Transportation Operations Director

To prepare potential applicants, Operator Central Instruction has an outreach program, the Metro Bridge Program that guarantees potential candidates that complete the 4-week program an interview with Metro for an operator position. The bus operator testing process includes a multiple choice test, appraisal interview and a background investigation. Candidates must be 21 years of age, hold a valid California driver's license for at least 2 years with a satisfactory driving record, have 6 months of public contact or customer service experience, a good employment history, and once training is completed, be able to obtain a Class B driver's license designation. When new operators begin driving, they must complete a 150-day probationary period. In accordance with the SMART contract, they receive no union representation during that time.

As of October 17, training requirements will be increased to include 3 weeks with a line mentor. Operators are also required to take a new annual Transit Ambassador class to help them to deal with unruly customers and other issues. Operators also take an annual ADA enhancement course which has exercises to increase understanding and empathy.

Operator responsibilities are safe driving, in service on-time performance and good customer service skills. Good customer service skills are being courteous, empathizing with passengers and patience. When patrons attempt to board with animals, an Operator can only ask whether or not the animal is a service animal. All pets must be in a carrier. Wheeled devices such as luggage and carts (other than mobility aid devices such as wheelchairs) must be stowed to prevent blocking aisles, boarding, seating and exiting. Disorderly conduct, eating, drinking, smoking and excessive noise are all prohibited in the Customer Code of Conduct. Safety systems include SmartDrive, monitors, digital video downloads and silent alarms. In addition, customers are encouraged to use the LA Metro Transit Watch app to anonymously report crime.

Causes for customer pass-ups are overcrowding, wheelchair securement locations full and bike rack full. Operators are instructed on the proper procedures to follow when patrons pay short fare, evade paying the fare, and when a patron says they paid but the display says otherwise. They also are taught procedures for dealing with malfunctioning fare boxes as well as passengers that miss the 2 hour transfer window and blame a late bus. TAP Card data allows for more efficient service planning including all door boarding pilot projects.

Councilmember Washburn asked if the operators permit any electric powered devices on board. Ms. Reynolds replied that any battery powered devices are not permitted, such as hover boards, as they are a safety hazard. Operators are instructed to use their best judgment and can call Bus Operations Control if there are any issues or concerns.

Wayne Wright commented that even though there is a Customer Code of Conduct, enforcement is spotty. Patrons are forced to listen to loud, vulgar music blaring from

iPhones. The operators do not use the public address systems when they make announcements or call out connection information, and patrons in the rear of the bus cannot hear, especially on the 60 ft. buses or when the air conditioning is running.

Ms. Reynolds replied that she would use the operator rap sessions to emphasize the importance of using the public address system to make announcements and share the information with other divisions.

Jason Akerman agreed that the lack of PA use by the operators is a problem and added that the speakers also need to be fixed so that when they are utilized, the announcements are clear. There should be special instructions during CicLAvia like allowing families of 4 to use the aisle for their bikes because the bike rack only holds 3 bikes. He asked whether TAP data on boardings and alightings is available to the public.

Mr. Spivack replied that the information is not generally available as it is recorded in proprietary programs, but over a terabyte of data is collected every day; that data is used for scheduling and route planning purposes.

#### 6. RECEIVE Line Ride Report, Council Member David Perry

On October 7, 2016, at 8:46 a.m., Councilmember Perry took Line 155 easterly direction from Universal/Studio City Red Line Station. Although the bus was clean, there were some etchings on the windows and window frames. The operator was friendly with the riders. He observed her wait for two wheelchair-bound passengers with caregivers and helped them with boarding the bus. She also helped an elderly woman with the fare box and asked at which stop the woman would be alighting. She then made sure to call out that stop so the woman knew to disembark. Councilmember Perry alighted at the Burbank Station at 9:28 a.m.

At 10:26 a.m., he boarded Line 96 at Olive and Glenoaks. He did not observe any passenger pass-ups or fare evasion. The automated system was in working order and therefore the operator did not need to call out the stops or connection information. There were some window etchings but the bus was clean. The ride was pleasant and the operator was very professional. Councilmember Perry alighted at 1<sup>st</sup> and Hill Streets at 11:23 a.m.

#### 7. RECEIVE Report on Regional Service Performance, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer

- Patsaouras Bus Plaza refurbishment has been completed and the Plaza was reopened on October 10<sup>th</sup>. The Plaza will no longer be open to private vehicles.
- Informational Telephone Town Hall Meetings on Measure M will be held on Wednesday, October 12 6:30 – 8 p.m. and Wednesday, October 19 6:30 – 8 p.m.. A live webcast will also be provided. Info to call in or access webcast at [theplan.metro.net/](http://theplan.metro.net/).
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Village Family Services Run/Walk will be held on Sunday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. The event benefits San Fernando Valley human service agencies. The route follows the Orange Line to Burbank and Fulton, where there will be a family festival.

- A new Service Council member will be sworn in at the November meeting
- Chair Weissman asked if the NoHo-Orange Line underpass is being used. Mr. Spivack replied that the project has been a great success. Though there are two elevators, they were only able to fit in one up escalator. People entering the station via that entrance can walk using the stairway or one of the elevators.

#### 8. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the agenda

Nate Zablén praised Metro for improving service to CSUN. He would like to see the Council take a more active role in getting service to our parks. These destinations are important for the people of the Valley. They deserve access to Griffith Park by way of public transit. The shuttle through the park will be an improvement but the public still has an issue getting to the park. Metro is doing billion dollar projects and all that is needed is an extension of Line 96 into the park. Other cities have museum express buses; planners need to be open to increasing accessibility to the wonderful parks and museums throughout the Valley.

Wayne Wright suggested exploring the expansion of Line 603 from Glendale Galleria to connect to Line 501 at the 134 Fwy. It would then provide an additional connection to Line 92 and the Glendale Bee Line.

#### 9. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmember Perry mentioned that at Metro's September's Board meeting, the Directors asked staff to study additional means of promoting Line 501. Immediate action to improve wayfinding and signage was approved. He's hopeful that the improvements will be noticed at the NoHo Station.

Councilmember Reyes asked whether the Council can take a position on the LADOT proposals. He wanted to submit a letter to City Council before they take their vote. Chair Weissman asked if Metro's response to the LADOT proposals had had an impact. Mr. Marin replied that the response was that they are considering all comments and that there was significant pressure from their own hearing supporting recommendations similar to those that Metro made in their response.

Councilmember Reyes asked if there is data available on major activity centers in the San Fernando Valley. Mr. Spivack replied that Census data and data available through alltransit.com can provide information on the number of jobs, bus routes, and more.

Councilmember Washburn promoted the Calabasas Pumpkin Festival the weekend of October 15-16. He asked if there was a way for Metro Line 161 to collaborating by placing promotional flyers on the buses. Mr. Spivack and Ms. Swift replied that they can work with Marketing to promote through social media.

Chair Weissman reminded everyone of the upcoming VICA (Valley Industry Commerce Association) Forecast, and the October 9<sup>th</sup> CicLAVia.

ADJOURNED at 7:59 p.m.