

Minutes

Monday, December 9, 2013
5:00 PM

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
SERVICE COUNCIL
Line 485 Workshop

The Alhambra
1000 South Fremont (northeast corner of Fremont and W. Mission Rd.)
Building A2, Lower Floor, Room 2051
Alhambra, CA 91803

Called to Order at 6:03 p.m.

Council Members:

Harry Baldwin, Chair
John Harabedian, Vice Chair
Alex Gonzalez
John Harrington
Bruce Heard
Steven Ly
Dave Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director, Regional Councils
David Hershenson, Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.

For Metro information in English, please call the following phone number: 213-922-1282.

Para más información de Metro en español, por favor llame al número que aparece a continuación:
213-922-1282

Մետրոյի մասին հայերեն լեզվով տեղեկություններ ստանալու համար, խնդրում ենք
զանգահարել այս հեռախոսահամարով՝ 323-466-3876

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

需要都会运输局的（语言名称）资料, 请拨打以下电话号码: 323-466-3876

Metroに関する日本語での情報は、以下の電話番号でお問い合わせください : 323-466-3876

สำหรับข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับรถโดยสารเมโทรเป็นภาษาไทย [ไทย]
กรุณาติดต่อที่หมายเลขโทรศัพท์ด้านล่าง: 323-466-3876

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

Để biết thông tin về Metro bằng tiếng Việt, vui lòng gọi số điện thoại dưới đây: 323-466-3876



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. APPROVED November 20, 2013 Minutes
3. PUBLIC COMMENT for items not on the Agenda
4. PRESENTATION on Line 485, Jon Hillmer, Director

Historically, Line 485 traveled into downtown and ended around 18th St. and the Santa Monica fwy between Main and Grand Ave. In June 2011, weekend service was cancelled and service was reduced to current 40-minute frequency during rush hours and 50-minute headways during off peak hours due to declining ridership, and the route was cut to end at Union Station. Ridership has fallen drastically since then, but has stayed fairly constant. Line 485 is in danger of being cancelled if ridership doesn't increase and Metro begins seeking cost saving measures. Council is seeking strategies to build ridership to save the service.

Options to improve Line 485 include removing from Patsaouras Plaza and extending service to 7th St., which could be partially paid for by not having the cumbersome routing to Union Station. Additional resources could be created by reducing service on the northern end of the line by stopping at the Gold Line Lake Station. Line 181 provides service on the north end of the current route and serves every stop that Line 485 serves from Colorado Blvd. to Altadena Dr. The City of Pasadena's Arts Bus runs up to Woodberry. Metro has met with the City of Pasadena to discuss alternatives and how their service would be affected if Line 485 service were trimmed.

Generally, people riding the service find it acceptable but would like it to run more frequently, to extend into downtown, and for weekend service to be added. There would also be additional costs to add weekend service. Ridership was low and it would be an expensive service to justify if Metro were facing cost-saving measures.

Councilmember Heard asked-where the line falls in terms of system ridership. Mr. Hillmer replied that it has an average of 1,752 total weekday riders, which is somewhat low in comparison to other lines in the region.

Vice Chair Harabedian asked for a clarification of changes that might be made to the Pasadena Arts Bus Line to improve area transit options. Mr. Hillmer replied that Pasadena Arts Bus currently runs every 50 minutes. While they are looking at service improvement alternatives, it would be difficult to increase frequency as it runs on a circular route.

Councilmember Vasquez asked where people exiting at Patsaouras Plaza-are travelling to. Mr. Hillmer replied that while there is no hard data, the perception is that most of them board the Red Line to travel to other parts of downtown and beyond.

5. PUBLIC Comment on Line 485 Presentation

Chair Baldwin noted that comments regarding Line 485 were received from Elda Diaz, Sergio Chavez, Onsy Yassa, and Marian Sison, and acknowledged Neil Bjornson and Sebastian Hernandez from the City of Pasadena in attendance.

Stephanie Johnson lives in San Marino off Los Robles and appreciates the excellent service that Metro provides. She works downtown near Pershing Square. During morning rush hour, I-110 is backed up from the Ave. 43 or Ave. 60 onramps all the way to downtown. She spends \$200 a month on parking. A lot of people at her workplace take Lines 78 and 79 to get downtown. When comparing costs, there's a real incentive to use transit. She thinks extending service to downtown is a good idea and would be convenient enough to compel people to use the service. She suggested that some limited stop or express service during commute hours would provide an additional incentive as the drive between San Marino and downtown during rush hour is a 45 minute commute each way. On behalf of her neighbors, she appreciates effort to keep service on commercial streets whenever possible, but realizes that it is not always an option and that bus service has traveled down Oak Knoll for a long time.

Hank Fung mentioned that the Council originally discussed combining Lines 258 and 485 but that probably wouldn't work. The next best option is to have Line 485 go to Metro center and having a layover there. On the north end of the route, he thinks ending at Pasadena City College is a better option, as it would serve as an anchor and would provide a great service for students going from Cal State LA to Pasadena City College and people from Alhambra traveling to the college. Another issue is the Line 485 premium fare. The fare differential needs to be eliminated. The service is not that much faster as the line travels through significant traffic. Frequency should be increased to every 20 minutes during peak hours, and 30 or 40-minutes headways during off peak hours. In late evenings, addition of a trip leaving Cal State LA at around 10:00 p.m. could help encourage student ridership.

Neil Bjornsen believes a flat 30-minute headway would improve ridership, and that service could be cut back to once per hour during the last hour. It would be better to run 60 minute rather than 50 minute headways. Line 485 could make a short turn at Lake Station and connect with Line 180, but finding a turnaround loop to get back to Los Angeles would be an issue. It could go from Lake to Maple, left on Los Robles. 7th and Metro would be a good layover spot. Trips could run through during peaks to Altadena if it was shortlined at the Lake Gold Line Station. A Pasadena City College terminal would be worth studying.

John Schaefer, City San Marino City Manager, stated that when scheduling was changed, was partially because bus was running through a residential street. He asked that the Council consider balancing rider needs with the impact on community where the bus travels.

Emmanuel Najera, former Cal State LA student and Pasadena resident observed that a lot of people board and alight at Washington Blvd. to connect to Line 268; to truncate the line at Lake Station would not serve them. He agrees Line 485 is underperforming, but

people do take it. During peak hours, the Pasadena Arts Bus serves high schools and middle schools and is crowded with students. A lot of people won't take that bus with students because they're rowdy. Line 485 should run the full route during daytime hours, then after 6 or 7 p.m., it should end at the Gold Line at Fair Oaks & Colorado which would still allow people to transfer to get to Altadena.

Nabil Sejaan expressed confidence in Mr. Hillmer's knowledge and suggested trying the recommended changes to Line 485 service to see if ridership improves, and reevaluating in 6 months. If ridership doesn't improve, then consider rerouting the line or cancellation.

Wayne Wright recommended phasing out Line 485. He feels the service has been undermined by cutting of the route to Union Station, cancellation of weekend service, and the complaints of South Park and San Marino residents. He thinks the resources should be dedicated to Line 258 to run it 7 days a week to the Gold Line Lake Station and to maybe restructure Line 489 peak hour service. Even if improved, Line 485 will still have problems with the residents along Oak Knoll Ave.

Sebastian Hernandez is a City of Pasadena Planner who works with the Arts Bus program. The City of Pasadena is interested working with Metro to evaluate different options to improve area transit service.

6. DISCUSSION of Options to Improve Service on Line 485, Council Members and Public

Chair Baldwin noted that ridership dropped significantly when service into downtown was cut back to Union Station. Mr. Hillmer added that frequency was also impacted, but that the ridership drop was likely due to cutting of the segment into downtown.

Councilmember Gonzalez asked the Council to think about treating all bus lines equally and with respect. When the Council first began to examine Line 485 service, they were told needed to cut hours and save money. However if the Council is now discussing improving service, then the service should be improved. Line 485 is highly valued by its users. He doesn't like the idea of truncating service due to the ridership numbers and regrets voting to approve previous changes to reduce the service. As a result, the Line has had increased headways and cut service, which have all but killed the line.

Councilmember Heard concurred with Councilmember Gonzalez, and added that the Line has been cut to the point where it needs to be fixed or cancelled, but it has been cut back to the point where it cannot stand on its own.

Vice Chair Harabedian agreed and asked if it would be possible to extend the line to downtown without truncating the north end of the route. Mr. Hillmer replied that it could not be done without additional resources, and that the Council can propose to reallocate service from other lines, but the agency is not in a position where additional hours can be added due to the tight financial situation. Council asked that Mr. Hillmer provide additional information regarding the financial costs.

Mr. Hillmer clarified that any changes to Line 485 would not be included in the February 2014 public hearing, but would be heard during the December 2014 public hearing cycle. He can bring additional information regarding the estimated cost of enhancing Line 485 service to the February 2014 meeting, then Council could begin to look for potential areas of savings. Councilmember Vasquez clarified that the item would be on the agenda of the regular February meeting, not the public hearing.

Councilmember Gonzalez stated that while it is true that there are financial constraints, those constraints should be addressed systemically.

Councilmember Spence asked if the City of San Marino wants to eliminate Line 485 from travelling through their city. Mr. Schaefer replied not necessarily. If the service stays the same, it shouldn't be an issue with area residents. But if there were going to be significant increases in service, San Marino residents would prefer it be routed via a street other than Oak Knoll. Councilmember Spence asked which other street residents would prefer the line use to travel through the city. Mr. Schaefer replied that Sierra Madre would be great, but is not be a reasonable option, and he wouldn't be comfortable saying it should travel through another residential neighborhood. Mr. Sejaan added that he and other San Marino residents trust the judgment of Mr. Hillmer and Mr. Torres in the planning of the service.

Councilmember Harrington asked for the time impact on Pasadena riders if the route was truncated and they had to change buses Mr. Hillmer replied that it would depend on where they started their trip. Councilmember Harrington said that when considering the inconvenience the transfer would cause, it makes clear that the line must either be improved or eliminated.

Chair Baldwin asked if the suggested changes to Line 485 would improve ridership. Mr. Hillmer replied that there are no guarantees, but the changes would be likely to improve ridership.

Councilmember Gonzalez asked what time the last bus travels down on Oak Knoll and how many lines in the service area have lower ridership. Mr. Hillmer replied that the latest bus travels through at around 9:00 p.m. and the first bus of the day is at 5:58 a.m. A number of lines including Lines 177, 286/287, 254 and 264, have lower ridership than Line 485. Ridership of Lines 258 and 256 and express lines 487/489 is slightly higher.

Councilmember Heard added that Council needs to be proactive or the line will face the undue threat of cancellation.

7. APPROVED February 2014 Public Hearing Date and Time for Proposed June 2014 Service Changes, Council Members

Mr. Hillmer explained that a public hearing could be held on the time and date of the regular Service Council meeting. The Council could hold a brief regular meeting then adjourn to the public hearing. The hearing date and time would be publicized beginning

in late December or early January. There will also be a hearing held downtown on Saturday, February 8th.

Council approved holding a public hearing after the regular meeting to be held at 5 pm on Monday, February 10, 2014 concludes.

8. RECEIVED Presentation on Proposed June 2014 Service Changes, Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Manager

On December 15, the route of Line 577 will be modified so to serve Rio Hondo College on a demonstration basis. Based on feedback and results of the modification, the change may be made permanent. The change is being made in hopes of helping students, as they as they can ride with valid student ID without having to pay an extra charge. Service planning is also hoping that the change will help relieve overcrowding on Line 270 during peak hours.

9. CLOSING Remarks, Council Members and Staff

Mr. Hillmer distributed a lapel pin in commemoration of the 10 year anniversary of the Metro's Service Councils.

ADJOURNED at 6:03 p.m.