

Minutes

Monday, March 14, 2016
5:00 PM

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
SERVICE COUNCIL
Regular Meeting

Metro El Monte Division 9 Building
Third Floor Service Council Conference Room
3449 Santa Anita Ave. (Santa Anita Ave. & Ramona Blvd.)
El Monte, CA 91731

All Metro meetings are held in ADA accessible facilities. Meeting location served by all Metro, Foothill Transit and El Monte Shuttle lines serving the El Monte Station.

Called to Order at

Council Members:

John Harrington, Chair
Dave Spence, Vice Chair
Harry Baldwin
Roger Chandler
Alex Gonzalez
John Harabedian
Bruce Heard
Steven Ly
Ben Wong

Officers:

Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Mgr.
Lilian De Loza, Community Relations Mgr.

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զանգահարել այս հեռախոսահամարով՝ 323-466-3876

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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. APPROVED Minutes of February 11, 2016 Meeting and Received Transcript from February 11, 2016 Public Hearing
3. RECEIVED Presentation on FY17 Budget Development, Conan Cheung, Executive Officer, Office of Management and Budget, Irene Fine, DEO, Finance

Metro's FY17 budget is being developed through a zero based budget process. The process is being used to determine agency priorities and critical program funding. A Risk Allocation matrix (RAM) and an internal savings account have been developed as strategies to secure Metro's financial stability by mitigating the projected deficit to begin in FY18.

An interactive online application is being used to engage the public in the budgeting process. The online budget tool allows the public to prioritize agency goals, reallocate funding among modes, and propose specific programs and services to be funding. The tool will be available in April 2016 with FY 17 proposed budget data.

Councilmember Wong asked why sales tax growth is projected as flattening out when it seems to be on a declining curve over the past four years. Ms. Fine replied that it was based on economic forecasts.

Councilmember Gonzalez asked if the Board will consider changing fares this year. Mr. Cheung replied that changes are expected in the institutional TAP program which has programs for businesses and students. Institutional pass pricing is being evaluated and changes may be implemented that would generate higher revenue and increase the number of people who obtain those types of passes.

Chair Spence asked how the plan will generate additional revenue and what Board actions are expected. Ms. Fine replied that the primary method of generating additional revenue is by reducing the reserve amount which will increase cash flow.

Councilmember Chandler asked what Metro's reserves are used for. Ms. Fine replied that reserves are required to ensure the organization remains financially sound and can cover revenue shortfalls.

4. RECEIVED Report on Proposed Service Changes for June 2016 or Later, and APPROVE Changes to San Gabriel Valley Service for June 2016 or Later, Council Members

Councilmember Chandler commented that Norwalk Transit wouldn't make any money off of assuming that portion of Line 270. Mr. Page replied that they felt it was within their service area. Originally they felt they could only operate as far as Rio Hondo as it is within their reserve service area, but they obtained permission from their City Council to run service up to El Monte. The Gateway Cities Service Council opposed transferring southern portion to Norwalk. Mr. Hillmer clarified that the San Gabriel Valley Service Council can opt to accept the Gateway Cities proposal, modify the existing proposal, or deny changes to the

service. If the Council is not in agreement with the Gateway Cities decision, the Councils will have to negotiate a compromise.

Councilmember Baldwin asked if Metro's pass is honored on Norwalk Transit and Foothill Transit services. Mr. Hillmer replied that Metro has had discussions with Norwalk Transit and Foothill Transit and they have agreed to honor all of Metro fare media on these three lines, Lines 190, 194, and 270. Norwalk Transit has also agreed to honor them for at least one year. The decision to honor Metro fare media does have to be approved by their governing bodies.

Councilmember Chandler asked whether Foothill Transit and Norwalk Transit accept TAP. Mr. Hillmer replied that they do accept stored value and interagency transfers, but neither accepts Metro day, 7-day, or 30-day passes are not interchangeable. Foothill Transit has agreed to honor them for one year. After a year, that will no longer be a requirement and they have not committed to honoring past that first year. Foothill Transit thinks most people using those lines would save money.

Councilmember Wong asked about the impact on Line 190/194 riders that use a pass more than 20 times in a week. Mr. Hillmer replied that if someone had a 7-day pass, they would experience a slight increase in their fares because Foothill Transit does not have a 7-day pass.

Mr. Page shared the following information in response to questions previously submitted by Councilmember Gonzalez:

- *How many lines does Metro contract out? Is this allowed in the MOU?* Metro contracts out 19 lines. Thirteen were determined to be poor performing lines and after discussions with the United Transportation Union (now SMART) approximately 20+ years ago, the agency was able to contract for their services. These routes were the first and last that could be contracted out. Based on the SMART Contract, Metro cannot transfer lines to other operators. However, the procedure to cancel a Metro line and have it assumed by another operator has been historically implemented and accepted by SMART. Metro can implement new lines, like Metro Lines 501 and 577 to be operated by a contractor that does not duplicate or replicate a previously operated line. Six lines have been implemented since the original contract agreement: Lines 501, 577, 603, 605, 607, and 625. There were more but some were cancelled.
- *How many bus Operators does this affect?* By dividing the total service hours of Lines 190/194 by 8 hours, total operators are approximately 31 Daily Operators, 22 Saturday Operators, and 17 Sunday Operators. Many of the operators operate more than one bus line per day. There is no specific number of operators that would operate on the line. The number of existing work runs on Line 190/194 are weekday: 18 regular runs, 7 part-time runs, 9 extra board runs and 9 AM/PM trippers; Saturdays: 17 regular runs, 7 extra board runs and 3 AM/PM trippers; Sundays: 17 regular runs, 6 extra board runs and 2 AM/PM trippers.
- *Are there jobs at risk?* No jobs are at risk. The goal is to improve service on other lines operating in the San Gabriel Valley. Hence, a portion of the service hours allocated to these lines would be reinvested to improve other operations, e.g. Silver Line, Line 770, etc. SMART would like to retain Lines 190-194. No union positions will be eliminated if these lines are cancelled. Metro has previously realigned service six different times and worked with other operators, both directly or contract operated. Those lines were cancelled and service began the next day operated by another carrier. Operators routinely

bid their assignments and work locations. Metro service hours as a whole are declining so some of the newer operators may have to bid to another division.

- *How many lines have been picked up by a municipal or local operator in the last 5 years?* Metro has cancelled service previously for assumption by other operators but not in the last 5 years. A list of services previously assumed by other operators since the original 13 lines were contracted out as follows:

- Line 104 from Washington/Grand by Montebello Bus
- Line 220 segment from Marina to Expo Culver City Station is now operated by Culver City Bus
- Line 225 from Griffin/Main to Rowan/Whittier is operated by LADOT DASH.
- Line 262 from Huntington Drive to Montebello is operated by Montebello Bus;
- Line 470 from Whittier/Garfield to Brea Mall is operated by Montebello
- Line 471 Puente Hills Mall to Whittier by Foothill Transit
- Line 490 or from Cal Poly to Fullerton by Foothill Transit

In all cases, for both directly operated or contract, Metro cancelled these lines and did not transfer them.

- *How service has been affected on these lines?* All lines that have previously been transferred to Foothill Transit continue in operation, as do all lines listed that were transferred to other operators.

Councilmember Gonzalez expressed concern regarding setting the precedent of cancelling a well-performing line for another transit operator to take over. He is also concerned regarding the elimination of Metro service east of El Monte. Mr. Hillmer replied that Lines 262 and 490 were not considered a poor performing bus lines. Good performing lines can have segments that perform poorly and it is incumbent on staff to find ways to better performance and make the lines more attractive. If a line is somewhat poor performing, it can be cancelled and up to 50% of the savings can be reinvested in other lines to build up their performance.

Councilmember Wong asked how a good performing line is defined. Mr. Hillmer replied that the criteria of boardings per bus hour, subsidy per passenger, and passenger miles per seat mile are compiled and put together and compared to system average. If they are less than 60% of system average for a particular line, it is considered to be poor performing and subject to consideration for cancellation or modification to improve.

Councilmember Baldwin asked if ridership is higher on one side of Line 270. Mr. Page replied that ridership is lighter on the north side of El Monte Station.

Councilmember Wong commented that the public expressed concerns that Foothill Transit doesn't operate service as late or as early as Metro. Mr. Hillmer replied that Foothill Transit has committed to keeping the same schedule as the current Metro service and operating an additional late night trip that Metro does not currently operate.

Andrew Gonzalez, SMART Transportation, believes that elimination of 190/194 violates the core tenet of the MOU which is that Foothill should only be brought in to provide service that Metro is unable to provide. This is a transfer of service in violation of the contract and it will be challenged in arbitration. Line 190/194 is a well-performing line above the minimum standard. An unsolicited bid does not satisfy the need to eliminate lines and pulls service

away from other areas where Foothill Transit could provide service in other areas. At best, it provides status quo service for the San Gabriel Valley public by pulling resources from other areas. Foothill Transit is a subcontractor; they subcontract to the lowest bidder. Their operators make about 50% of what Metro operators do. Transfer of this line is a transferring of quality jobs to low quality jobs. If there is no elimination of jobs today, they are concerned that it will occur a year down the line.

William Autney commented that the ridership projections on the deletions of Line 190/194 and 270 will affect 2.9 million people who will no longer be riding Metro. The TAP card system from one system to the other is not interchangeable. He asked if anyone has taken into consideration that the line is operated out of the highest seniority division. The average driver has been working at the Division for 28 years or more. It costs more to run the service. He asked that Metro not throw that cost onto riders.

Mr. Hillmer replied that the stored value on a TAP card can be used on other operators. What is not interchangeable are the day, week, or month passes. The EZ pass is available at an additional cost and allows patrons to ride on all of the transit operators. The pass is more expensive depending on the type of the pass, but less costly than purchasing separate passes on two providers.

John Schaefer commented that a portion of Line 485 goes down small residential street in San Marino. It has a poor performance rate. The proposal to move it to Line 258 would increase service and have a negative impact on the neighborhood. He doesn't understand why Metro would want to invest more resources on a poor performing line. Mr. Hillmer clarified that Line 258 runs every 30 minutes. The proposal is to combine the two lines, which would only result in a very slight increase in frequency of service.

Gus Romani is an Oak Knoll resident. The street is 28 feet wide. Two buses take up the width of the street. His wife is disabled. Every time the bus moves, it shakes the house, the neighborhood. It is very unsafe. He had worked with Scott Page to eliminate weekends and reduce service. He doesn't want service to be increased.

Andie Reid commented that she is in favor of keeping Line 485 the way it is. It allows passengers to go to LA-USC Medical Center and Union Station without having to transfer. She would recommend increasing service and reintroducing weekend service because the line performed better when the line went into the heart of downtown. Shortening the route a few years ago had a deleterious effect on the line's performance. Transferring of lines to other carriers minimizes Metro presence in the Eastern San Gabriel Valley, undermining Metro's goal to be a regional transit provider. She urged the Council to encourage Metro to continue to think regionally.

Kathleen Atoci is a resident on South Oak Knoll. Residents fought for a long time to reduce buses because such a narrow street. A neighbor's car was hit by a bus. It is very noisy. Residents are concerned that Metro wants to add service. She doesn't understand why service can't be moved to a wider street such as Santa Anita.

Vice Chair Spence asked if there are a lot of domestic workers that access their jobs on Oak Knoll and if there is a need for increased service frequency. Mr. Hillmer replied that there is limited demand for the service on Oak Knoll itself; the primary purpose of the service is to

provide a public transit connection between Alhambra and Paramount area to the Pasadena area. It also serves as route to Cal State LA. Line 485 has around 1,385 daily boardings, of which around 100 riders travel all the way to downtown LA. Most patrons are traveling between Pasadena, Altadena, and Alhambra.

Councilmember Wong asked how many buses run on a typical weekday. Mr. Page replied that Line 258 runs every 35 minutes in the peaks, and every 50 minutes in the base. Line 485 runs every 40 minutes in the peaks and every 50 minutes in the base. Daytime service is exactly the same, so there won't be any increase in the buses on Oak Knoll during the midday. In the morning and afternoon, there may be 1 extra trip in the peak; service is only going from every 40 minutes to every 35 minutes. The proposal is to join the two lines, not run both of them together. If you're on the east side of Pasadena, it's the only way you can get down to Huntington Drive. Between Fair Oaks and Rosemead Blvd, there's no other suitable street for public transit to be on.

Wally Shidler is the Vice Chair of the Gateway Cities Service Council. The reason the Council voted to keep the southern portion of Line 270 is that Norwalk Transit took over a line in their region several years ago, kept it for one year as required then discontinued it. As far as the fares, he doesn't know how they'd have a different fare for that line; it would be very confusing to their patrons to have a separate fare just for that line. He also feels that cities that run bus lines such as Norwalk, originally they were supposed to stay with their city boundaries. If he was at their city council meetings, he would raise that issue of why they're paying for services for people who don't live in Norwalk. He hopes the San Gabriel Service Council will vote as the Gateway Cities Service Council did to keep the Line 270 portion that operates south of El Monte.

B. Timberlake agrees with Mr. Shidler. He has ridden Norwalk Transit lines and their service doesn't compare to Metro. It would be tragic to abandon one of our lines for Norwalk. He has heard on a couple of different occasions that people don't board Lines 190/194 in El Monte. He's ridden the lines and people flood on within 1 mile of leaving El Monte Station. He rode from Cal Poly to Diamond Bar, which is very hard to get to. Foothill connector from Cal Poly to Diamond Bar is terrible. It does not even approach the schedules that are reflected on their timetables. One of their operators even got lost. He is really concerned about process of abandoning well-performing lines to transit providers whose services doesn't approach Metro standards.

Vice Chair Spence asked how the Norwalk City Council voted on the request to provide the service. Mr. Hillmer replied that the item brought to them was to conduct a public hearing to see whether should conduct service outside their service area.

Wayne Wright commented that he's not happy about Foothill Transit taking over Lines 190/194. He's a weekly passholder and Foothill doesn't offer weekly or day passes. He would have to use EZ pass or pay their fare, and Metro doesn't offer weekly EZ passes. He just found out that Norwalk is interested in taking over Line 270 south of Rio Hondo. Several years ago they had financial difficulties, cut service and raised fares several times; allowing them to take over Line 270 not a good idea. He recommended keeping it or having Foothill Transit run it.

Stephanie Johnson was asked by San Marino Councilmember Steve Talt to request that Metro consider using Sierra Madre Blvd as an alternative to Oak Knoll/Lake for the Line 485 route. They think it may prove to have better ridership. She asked when the change would occur if Lines 258 and 485 are merged and how long it will take to determine whether the change has improved the service. Mr. Hillmer replied that if the proposal is approved, service could begin as soon as June 26 of this year. Service is evaluated every 6 months. When a line is modified service planning typically allows around a year before suggesting modifications.

Vice Chair Spence asked how far Oak Knoll is from Sierra Madre. Mr. Page replied that it is approximately a 1.5 miles. For service to be routed on Sierra Madre, it would have to operate east on Huntington Dr, north on Sierra Madre, then west on Colorado to get to Lake. The businesses on Lake from where Oak Knoll ends on the southern end up to Colorado wouldn't have any Metro bus service. The business portion of Lake Av to California is the same width as Oak Knoll.

Council APPROVED receipt of staff recommendations and the Title VI report. The following service changes were approved by the Council:

- APPROVED Proposal for Line 68/620 modifications and operation of new Line 106.
- APPROVED Proposal to discontinue Lines 190/194 with replacements service to be provided by Foothill Transit with Councilmember Gonzalez voting in opposition.
- APPROVED Proposal to connect Lines 258 & 485 and discontinue Line 258 from Fremont Ave/Commonwealth to Bay State/Garfield.
- APPROVED Gateway Cities Service Council's alternate proposal to turn north portion of Line 270 over to Foothill Transit from El Monte Station to Monrovia, and for Metro to retain existing service (contract line) from Norwalk Green Line Station to El Monte Station.
- APPROVED Proposal to make Line 501 permanent
- APPROVED staff withdrawal of proposal to add 2 stops to Line 577 and remove Express charge withdrawn by staff.

Vice Chair Spence commented that he appreciates the public comments regarding the proposals but that he also trusts the high level, professional quality work completed by staff in formulating the recommendations. If the changes are made and there are major problems, adjustments can always be made.

5. RECEIVED Report on Regional Service Performance, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer

Bus Cleanliness: SGV 8.65, System 8.75, Goal: 8.0

Bus On-time Performance: SGV 75%, System: 76.3%, Goal 80%

Customer Complaints per 100,000 boardings: SGV 6.13, System 4.37, Goal 3.59

Bus Traffic Accidents per 100,000 miles: SGV 3.08, System 3.76, Goal 3.69

Mean Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls: SGV 5,190; System 5,149; Goal 4,169

Average Weekday Boardings: SGV 182,038 of System Total 941,984

Councilmember Ly asked about the Silver to Silver program and the Silver Streak performance. Mr. Torres replied that Metro receives data twice per year from Foothill Transit. He will request an update and provide more information next month.

B. Timberlake commented that some Metro staff ride Metro buses and rail on a daily basis and really do know what's working and what's not. It doesn't mean that they're always right, but they do have personal experience of getting on the bus and seeing fare evasion occur, overhearing people on the Blue Line or other lines and hear them talk about how they manage to ride without paying their fare. He has witnessed Sheriffs telling people to get off the train and they don't. He's not sure that warnings help at all. It is really a matter of concern when Metro keeps slashing service on the Blue Line, the second heaviest used line in the country, and cutting back the number of cars used on the line from 3 to 2. If Metro is in financially bad status, he recommends addressing fare evasion.

Vice Chair Spence commented that fare evasion is been important issue. A business cannot be operated when collecting only 25% of the money it is owed. The former Executive Director was very unhappy when he raised the issue of needing gates and other measures to encourage payment of fares. To him, that's one of the biggest issues that Metro has to worry about. He hopes the CEO takes it on and considers ways to address the issue. Metro should not be cutting service because they're not collecting the fares. He would hope that this would continue to be a major issue at the Board level and he agrees that not going to get any action if the Sheriffs department doesn't take care of the issue.

Councilmember Chandler understands that a lot of the fare evasion citations are unpaid and go to warrant. He requested that the performance report be transitioned to be received on a quarterly basis. Chair Harrington requested that the item be discussed at the April meeting.

Councilmember Wong wants the public to understand that the Council takes public comment seriously. They are tasked with balancing the greater good which may mean changes in the patron day-to-day experience. Staff provides data and metrics to help them make decisions. He thinks many of the concerns raised have been addressed. He served for a number of year on the Foothill Transit Board and is skeptical about how horrible their service is; he is sure the truth is somewhere in between. He thinks the ultimate goal is to provide more service in the region.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT for items not on the Agenda - None
7. CLOSING Remarks, Council Members and Staff - None

ADJOURNED at 6:51 p.m.