

Friday, August 14, 2009

Minutes

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

SOUTH BAY SERVICE SECTOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Congresswoman Juanita Millender-
McDonald Community Center
(Carson Community Center)
801 E. Carson Street
Carson, CA 90746

Called to order at 9:30 a.m.

Service Sector Representatives Present were:
Ralph Franklin, Chair
John McTaggart, Vice Chair
John Addleman
Robert Pullen-Miles
Lou Mitchell
Kim Turner
Don Szerlip

Officers:

Dana M. Coffey, General Manager
Raynard V. Price, Assistant Board Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was held.
2. **RECEIVED** Safety 1st contact by Metro South Bay Volunteer by Marie Johnson, Bus Operator, Arthur Winston Division 5. Ms. Johnson said when passengers' board the bus to ensure to hold on to railings especially if one is elderly or disabled. She also requested riders keep the first seat available for the elderly and disabled. Ms. Johnson said "safety" is the number one goal of Metro. The Chair thanked Ms. Johnson for her well received safety tip.
3. Self introductions were held.
4. **APPROVED** minutes of July 10, 2009 Governance Council Meeting.
5. **RECEIVED** PowerPoint presentation on the Transit Needs Study Project by Roderick Goldman, President, Diversified Transportation Solutions. Mr. Goldman introduced himself and spoke of the goals and purpose of the study contracted by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and which unincorporated parts of the county are involved. The areas are: Athens, Westmont, Baldwin Hills, Ladera Heights, View Park, West Fox Hills, Dominguez, Willowbrook, Del Aire, El Camino Village, Hawthorne Island, Wiseburn, Florence, Firestone, East Rancho Dominguez, Rancho Dominguez, Rosewood, West Rancho, Lennox and West Carson.

Mr. Goldman shared the goals of the study: 1) assess how well transit needs are being met by current transit services; 2) identify unmet transit needs (i.e., distance to nearest but stop, hours of operation); 3) examine city/county partnerships (i.e., coordinated dial-a-ride services) and; 4) recommend transit service improvements. He said the study involved nine tasks including: 1) kick-off meeting; 2) assess effectiveness of current transit services; 3) review of demographic and transit travel characteristics; 4) conduct a mail survey; 5) transit demand and alternatives analysis; 6) focus groups meetings; 7) environmental justice (transportation funding equity); 8) peer review and draft of final report and; 9) a final report will be presented to LA County public works.

Mr. Goldman summarized key issue as: improved transit service frequency; closer access to transit stops; better transit connections to activity centers; alternatives to provide lower transit fares; improved access to transit information; and improved access to internet transit trip planning tools.

Further, Mr. Goldman presented a summary of preliminary recommendations that included: improved transit service frequency on regional bus routes; neighborhood shuttle services in Lennox, Florence-Firestone, and Athens; promote new bus routes that provide faster travel times; explore opportunities for city/county partnerships in the provision of transit services in Willowbrook, Rosewood, East Rancho Dominguez, and West Rancho Dominguez; improved marketing of Metro transit Pass subsidy; and

expanded marketing of transit services to Spanish speaking community. He said the next step of the study is to complete community outreach presentations.

Representative Addleman asked about the funding source which Mr. Goldman responded is from Supervisorial Districts 1 (Gloria Molina) and 2 (Mark Ridley-Thomas). Representative Turner requested the findings of the study be shared with other transit providers. In response to Representative McTaggart, Mr. Goldman said the findings will be used by Los Angeles County Public Works as a planning guide. Representative Szerlip suggested the study look into how people in the study area receive information before spending marketing dollars. He also suggested the development of solutions and the identification of possible funding sources.

In discussion of the methodology used in the study, Chair Franklin asked if the issues of safety and cleanliness were included in the survey or responses. Mr. Goldman advised that lighting at the Metro Blue Line Firestone Station was an issue in one response. Chair Franklin also asked about transit demands in the future along with potential service changes and if these possibilities were taken into account. Mr. Goldman stated the study includes transportation planning for future needs.

Public member Dorthea Jaster advocated for community meetings to be held at locations and during times accessible by public transit. Mr. Goldman said that an effort was made to conduct focus group and public meetings at locations and times when public transit was available. Lionel Jones inquired about internet access and the ability for riders to obtain information through smart phones. He suggested that Los Angeles Public works consider using this technology. Mr. Goldman in agreement recognized the real issue for the study participants is not the inability to access information but how to find it. The Chair thanked Mr. Goldman for his presentation.

6. **PRESENTED** commendation to Carson Division 18 Operator Kenya Allison for her heroism and professionalism displayed while operating a bus and preventing a major traffic accident on July 14, 2009, by Dana M. Coffey, General Manager Metro South Bay Sector. Ms. Coffey spoke highly of Ms. Allison in acknowledging her defensive driving technique in preventing what could have been a serious accident and injury of her passengers. Operator Allison had a front wheel blow out while driving on the freeway. She used her training and manager's suggestion to maintain control of the bus to bring it to a full and safe stop. There were no injuries or further damages. The Sector Governance Council took a group picture with Operator Kenya Allison. The Chair and Sector Council congratulated Ms. Allison who has been driving a bus for 12 years. She began her career at First Transit.
7. **RECEIVED** presentation on the New Graffiti Program by Arthur Winston Division Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Verl Philliber. Mr. Philliber said there are 218

buses in the Division Yard with three shifts responsible for taking care of them. He discussed with the Sector Council the problems and efforts in dealing with graffiti.

Mr. Phillber displayed pictures of vandalized buses. He said the pictures in his presentation are recent and that they are not from an archive. He said MTA spent \$12M on graffiti and vandalism which is cyclical in nature. Mr. Phillber associated the problem of graffiti and vandalism with school age children, gang members and tagging crews. He continued to inform the Sector Council that tagging crews can destroy a bus in just a few minutes and that their actions and results can be hazardous to passengers. He added when buses are pulled from service as a result of the vandalism people are standing waiting for a bus that may never show up. Acid and gel paints are popular with vandals. Gang members will tag a bus as it rolls through a different community to tag over other gang taggings. Mr. Phillber noted that removing tagging also involves removing seats and windows. He related the cost and time to repair a bus and said a few minutes of tagging can result in hours of work.

He advised that Metro is aggressively going after individual taggers working with TAGRS (Tracking and Automated Graffiti Reporting system). This database allows the police to charge for more than one incident by following and collecting the tagger's work. He said he would like to see Sherriff's riding on "high graffiti" bus runs; increase the use of the Graffiti Habitual Offender Suppression Team (GHOST); and enforce a zero tolerance policy on graffiti and vandalism that is advertised so the public is aware of the problem and solutions. A pilot project is using bus cameras to identify offenders.

Mr. Philliber identified a tagger named "Beast" as one of the worst. A picture was displayed of Beast tagging the back of bus seats in addition to his taggings along the 110 Freeway. Mr. Philliber emphasized that catching this tagger will not only help Metro but also the community-at-large. A fight involving Beast in the back of a bus was also displayed. Both got off at the next stop before the police arrived.

Mr. Verl Philliber said passengers should feel comfortable riding a clean and safe bus that is not being pulled out of service for repairs because of vandalism. Metro has developed a "sacrificial back" for the rear of the bus interior, an area popular with graffiti vandals. The sacrificial back can be removed and replaced in 10 minutes, much more economical than the \$700 cost of painting the vandalized area. The goal is to have a graffiti free clean bus.

Representative McTaggart spoke of how graffiti is affecting bus service and the community and suggested that it become a crime with a more serious consequence. Representative Szerlip spoke against graffiti and questioned why Beast has not been caught given his known identity and proclivities. Chair Franklin suggested that there be an award program for the public to turn in taggers. He suggested that local lawmakers

reach out to state legislators to increase punishment for vandals and to hold parents accountable including liens on property. General Manager Coffey added that the Vermont Line is a high tagging line. She further elaborated on the removable back panels and that the Divisions are being as proactive as possible. Public Member Lionel Jones said that New York turned the crime of graffiti into a felony which lowered vandalism and graffiti. He said real deterrents need to be in place in Los Angeles. He said coffee table books on “Graffiti Art” are flying off the shelves in bookstores. Jokingly, he said that by selling these kinds of books, Barnes and Noble is promoting Metro’s problem. Mr. Philliber concluded his report.

8. **RECEIVED** PowerPoint presentation on the EXPO Phase 1 Project by Adrienne Gardner, Community Relations Manager. Ms. Gardner defined light rail as a system that usually runs at street level in mixed-traffic. She said the Exposition Line runs along Exposition Boulevard, electrically powered, providing up to three cars that can carry more than 600 passengers. She said the reason for building Expo is that Los Angeles is anticipating 1 million more jobs and 2-3 more million people with a need for more transportation.

The community will benefit from Expo since it will provide an alternative to the I-10 freeway and provide affordable access to jobs, health care and entertainment. She said it is 8.6 miles long from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City, a trip estimated to take 30 minutes. There will be eleven stations (two shared with the existing Metro Blue Line), 1,500 parking spaces at 3 park-ride lots, with Phase 1 expected to cost \$862M. Completion to Crenshaw is expected in 2010.

Ms. Gardner reviewed the Line including elevated sections, underpasses, and at-grade stations. Three stations will be elevated: La Brea, La Cienega, and Venice/Robertson. She said the line will run through highly congested areas. She said the Exposition Board ensured that the community was represented by stakeholders along the alignment. These stakeholders make up “design committees” to provide input to the design of landscape, artwork, and station areas. Ms. Gardner said the stations have the same design but the artwork and landscaping at each will be different with draught tolerant plants native to California. She advised that most cactus plants are too delicate to withstand some of the hardships associated with the expected traffic at the stations – walking over them or biking over them. Water for landscaping will only be provided when needed. She noted that the top panels of the soundwalls are in the process of being installed. The textured panels are designed to prevent graffiti from going through the material of the soundwalls. She displayed a picture of an environmentally friendly station, including trees and a bike path. She said it was critical that the stations be designed to be environmentally friendly and use recycled building materials.

The project is currently 47% complete. The alignment serves 33 schools. Because of this, there is a safety education program to make sure teachers, students and parents are aware of construction activities. For more information a 24 hour hotline was established to provide construction updates and emergencies at 213.922.EXPO (3976). Expo is also on Twitter to keep concerned citizens up-to-date for changes that may be taking place.

Representative Szerlip said Expo is an exciting project with great outreach. He looks forward to Phase II that will provide transit to the Westside. The Phase II Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is expected to be certified Chair Franklin requested a copy of the PowerPoint be sent to all of the Sector Representatives.

9. **RECEIVED** update on Adopt a Line Program by Service Sector Representatives.

Representative Pullen-Miles said he rode the Green Line from Redondo Beach Station to the Blue Line at Rosa Parks Station. Car 210 was clean and every seat was full and the platforms at both stations were clean. He noticed at Rosa Parks Station the fence that separates the freight tracks and it held a lot of trash and debris. He said the people who live in this area deserved to have this area clean. Both rides back and forth were pleasant and uneventful.

Representative Lou Mitchell announced she attended a meeting of interest on August 1, at Martin Luther King hospital sponsored by Mark Ridley-Thomas to develop a new hospital. A speaker spoke of a Transit Oriented Strategy for the Rosa Parks Station on the Blue Line and said that it is the busiest of all the stations. The challenges will be the underperforming shopping center and public improvement of the Willowbrook area. Representative Mitchell said this meeting gave an insight into some of the things Metro is doing in the Willowbrook area. She shared handouts from the meeting with the Chair and General Manager. Representative Mitchell said she will be attending all of the future meetings and will be reporting back to the Sector on what is going on in the Watts-Willowbrook area. She said she has been talking about the need for these improvements for some time.

Representative Szerlip spoke about riding the bus on a Saturday from the South Bay Galleria. He said that the maps posted at the transit center are inaccurate and misleading regarding where to board Line 710. The maps show the northbound stop at the transit center, when it is really on Artesia Bl. However, he used his phone to find a schedule and he boarded bus #9524 at 2:15 PM. He said his Tap card worked. The Operator (badge 35503) helped a wheelchair passenger. He said the front of the bus was clean but the back of the bus had a completely different environment – it was hot, with graffiti and etchings. The bus arrived at Wilshire/Western Station at 3:22 PM. He caught the same bus southbound and the return trip was full. He expressed surprise that the last southbound stop is on Hawthorne Bl., some distance from the South Bay

Galleria Transit Center. Representative Szerlip also announced that Beach Cities Transit is creating a new Request For Proposals for the operation of their system and have scheduled a public meeting for late August. This information may be found at www.Redondo.org

Chair Franklin was not able to get on Line 215 because it was full. He attributed the full bus to Remote Area Medical (RAM), a group providing free health services at the Forum for 8 days. He noted that public transportation is being used heavily. RAM issues 1500 passes each day and is full before opening. He noted this shows the need for health care. He said there are many volunteers helping including members from MTA (Metro). Regarding a recent City of Inglewood budget workshop, Chair Franklin added bus stop maintenance as an issue that needs to be addressed. He thanked South Bay Executive Secretary Lynda Reed for her assistance ensuring a quorum for the Sector meeting and for her modification of the adopt-a-ride online forms.

Representative McTaggart spoke of a dinner party at a restaurant near Palos Verdes Drive South and Hawthorne Bl. He said the Line 444 layover nearby the restaurant gives off fumes and blocks views to the ocean. He said the waiter asked if the bus could be moved from this layover site because the bus fumes are coming into the restaurant. General Manager Coffey said the bus engine should not be running at the layover and signs are posted that instruct the operator to shut the engine off. Also, our buses use compressed natural gas that should not be giving off fumes even if running. Representative McTaggart asked why the bus no longer lays over at the fire station. Service Development Manager Madeline Van Leuvan responded that the layover was moved a few years ago due to safety issues at the Sea Cove fire station. Mr. McTaggart suggested Metro find another location for the layover.

10. **RECEIVED** Chair's comments. Chair requested next month's agenda include update on Artesia Transit Center clocks and potential for public restroom facilities.
11. **RECEIVED** Service Sector Representative Comments. Szerlip noted that Metro's assignment of additional responsibilities given to Dana Coffey demonstrates Metro's confidence in the South Bay General Manager.
12. **RECEIVED** General Manager's report. South Bay General Manager Coffey announced that Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford has been re-assigned within Metro as Liaison and spokesperson for High-speed Rail. She has been given the additional responsibilities of Division 1 and 2 within Gateway Cities. She advised there are similarities between the two Sectors and noted that both had concerns regarding font size for local schedules; a number for graffiti reporting, and the 800-commute number. She also noted that Gateway Cities lists commendations for the outstanding operators and will do so at South Bay. She re-introduced Lt. Odenberger of LA County Sheriff who

is beginning a new assignment to provide security for Metro. Ms. Coffey also gave notice of upcoming construction near Compton Station affecting bus lines that will be on detour for approximately one year. She informed the Sector Council that Metro increased service on Line 115 to accommodate the public in getting to the free health care services held at the Forum with buses running every 30 minutes in the late night and early morning hours.

13. RECEIVED Public Comment.

J.K. Drummond. Mr. Drummond said he requested that the issue of restrooms on the Silver Line project be agendized for the next Sector Council meeting. He also shared that on Sunday, July 12 the southbound Line 447, bus #6383 had no inter-agency transfers. He reported that on Line 550, bus #5307 had a broken fare box, but did have inter-agency transfers. He showed several TAP cards (5) demonstrating that Metro has not spelled his name correctly.

Lionel Jones. Mr. Jones announced that Metro will hold a public hearing on the Silver Line fare in September at the Board meeting. The proposed cash fare is \$2.45 and he indicated opposition to the proposal. He encouraged the public to attend the public hearing to express concerns.

John Ziegler. Mr. Ziegler, Project Administrator for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works let it be known that the Transit Needs study has identified new community shuttle routes for unincorporated areas of LA county. He encouraged all to look at the routes after the meeting and provide comments. In response to a question about the funding sources for the study, he said that both Supervisorial Districts 1 and 2 provided Prop A funds. Representative McTaggart suggested the value of the study is diminished if there are no funds to implement the recommendations.

Adjourned 12:20 p.m.

Prepared by



Raynard V. Price

Council Secretary