

Friday, May 14, 2010

9:30am

MINUTES

South Bay Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Congresswoman Juanita Millender-
McDonald Community Center
801 E. Carson Street, Room 209 A/B
Carson, CA 90745

Called to Order at: 9:35 a.m.

Council Members Present:

Ralph Franklin, Chair
Devon Deming
Rena Kambara
Lou Mitchell
Don Szerlip

Officers:

Cynthia Karpman, Transportation Manager
Richard Morallo, Community Relations Mgr.
Raynard Price, Council Secretary

1. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll Called.
3. Public comment – none.
4. APPROVED Minutes from April 9, 2010 meeting as amended.

Ms. Karpman stated that the last page of the minutes shows 11:07 p.m. as the adjournment time. It should read 11:07 a.m. In addition, in the second paragraph of the last page, where it indicates “bus arrived on time”, he operator should be changed to the operator.

5. RECEIVED Chair’s Report:
 - Fare increase is scheduled to be implemented July 1, 2010.
 - Expressed appreciation for the efforts of Supervisor Ridley-Thomas in moving forward light rail transit in the South Bay area. Hope additional funding will be obtained to extend the system to Torrance.

6. RECEIVED Manager’s Report, Cynthia Karpman, Transportation Manager.

Chair Franklin stated that Ms. Karpman has been re-assigned to another position within the agency.

Jon Hillmer, Transportation Manager, will fill in for Ms. Karpman beginning with the next Council meeting.

- KPI Report

Ms. Karpman reviewed Key Performance Indicators for March. System-wide statistics indicate that on-time performance (OTP) is at 72% year-to-date. There were 2.68 complaints/100,000 boardings. There were 1,493 miles between total road calls. There were 3.07 bus traffic accidents/100,000 miles. There were .35 passenger accidents/100,000 boardings.

Ms. Karpman presented a slide showing bus system-wide customer complaints over several fiscal years. There has been a slight increase in complaints in FY10 compared with FY09.

The South Bay area FY10 target for on-time performance (OTP) is 67%. The year-to-date OTP level is 66.42%. The target for complaints/100,000 boardings is 2.75. There were 3.07 complaints/100,000 boardings in the South Bay for March. The target for miles between total road calls is 1,556. The South Bay is currently at 1,379 miles between total road calls. The target for bus traffic accidents/100,000 miles is 4.0. There were 3.29 bus traffic accidents/100,000 miles in the South Bay for the month of March. The target for passenger accidents/100,000 boardings is .24. The number of passenger accidents/100,000 boardings in the South Bay is just below the target.

During the last meeting, the Council requested information on how the South Bay performed in key performance areas during FY09. Ms. Karpman stated that year-to-date OTP in March 2009 was 61.6%. There were 3.45 complaints/100,000 boardings in March 2009. There were 1,166 miles between total road calls in March 2009. In addition, there were 3.45 bus traffic accidents/100,000 miles during this time last year.

Ms. Karpman reviewed OTP data for AWD Division 5 and Division 18. She noted that during March 2010, problems with equipment availability increased congestion in Hollywood due to special events (i.e., Oscars, presentation of stars on the Walk of Fame), and ongoing construction along Manchester Blvd. negatively impacted OTP. There were also scheduling issues with running and recovery times in high-traffic areas. The Division is working with scheduling to adjust the times for the June 2010 shake-up.

Ms. Karpman reviewed complaint data for AWD Division 5 and Division 18. The above-mentioned special events impacted not only OTP but complaints as well. Compliant (complaint ?) mitigation efforts include relocation of a layover zone at Paseo Del Mar in San Pedro, line saturations and specialized observations. The transit operations supervisors are contacting the customers as well as the managers to directly resolve the issues. Bus operators with a history of behavioral issues have been enrolled in customer service training.

Ms. Karpman highlighted bus operator commendations in both divisions.

Representative Szerlip, referring to page 4 of the handout, asked why there is an upsurge in system-wide complaints.

Ms. Karpman responded that there was an increase in complaints in the "other" category, which includes miscellaneous complaints that do not fall into the typical complaint categories. The total number of complaints shown in the slide does not take into consideration complaints that a later investigation may reveal to be illegitimate.

Representative Szerlip wondered why there isn't an adjustment being made to the data after a sufficient amount of time has passed to determine which complaints are legitimate and which complaints are not.

Ms. Karpman stated that staff has considered this but it has not been incorporated into the process at this time. Staff is refining the customer complaint process.

RECEIVED public comment – Scott Greene stated that he had the pleasure of riding with LaRon Arnold a few times on bus lines 715 and 710. He said Ms. Arnold is an incredible bus operator. She greets customers as they board the bus and has a cheerful demeanor.

Dorothea Jaster asked if some complaints may be due to equipment not being available as stated in the Manager's report. She asked if extra buses will be placed on Line 232 during the day. She cannot use this line with her walker because it is almost always standing room only. She provided the safety tip of the day: Patrons who board the bus should not keep their passes in their wallets. She noticed patrons frequently flash their wallets while they enter the bus. If paying cash, it is best to have it ready so that it is not necessary to flash a wallet in front of many strangers.

- MTA Board items from April 2010
Ms. Karpman stated that at the April 2010 MTA Regular Board meeting, the following major items were approved:

Item 7 pertaining to Tri-Cities/LADOT acting as Tier 2 operators, Item 21 pertaining to the partnership agreement with the High Desert Corridor JPA, Item 33 pertaining to adoption of a support position on the 30/10 initiative, Item 42 pertaining to installation of the Universal Fare System on the Metro Orange Line extension, Item 48 pertaining to service changes to tier 1 bus lines, and Item 49 pertaining to the Villaraigosa/Ridley-Thomas/Robinson/Huizar substitute motion to schedule a Special Board meeting on the scheduled July fare increase. Item 55 pertaining to the Fasana/Molina motion on the 710 extension project was carried over.

Chair Franklin stated that Mayor Villaraigosa wanted to place various projects on an accelerated schedule, but questioned whether funding was available.

Staff stated that a loan from the federal government that is equivalent to the amount that Measure R would provide over the next thirty years would be provided up-front to help accelerate the projects. The County of Los Angeles would repay the federal government as it receives the Measure R funding.

Representative Szerlip stated that other councils have expressed concerns about the 30/10 initiative. In proposing the initiative, the Mayor is pushing his key projects. If only partial money comes in, his projects may receive priority over projects that may benefit the South Bay. In addition, there is concern that with the current economic climate, Measure R may not generate the anticipated revenue to fund long-term projects. It is important to be diligent in monitoring the proposal to be certain that South Bay projects, including extension of the Metro Green Line, are not placed on a back burner.

7. RECEIVED report on Blue Ribbon Committee Meeting, Rena Kambara, Council Member.

Representative Kambara stated that the fourth Blue Ribbon Committee meeting was held May 4. The topic of discussion was service enhancements. The objectives of the meeting were to define service quality elements and coming up with benefits of each element in terms of customer needs and service provisions.

When considering service quality elements, some of the factors examined include cleanliness, passenger loading, operator courtesy, customer information, service reliability, speed, safety and security, service coordination, transferability, fare integration amongst other lines, and network simplicity. Several charts were given to committee members showing performance data. The members engaged in exercises to determine their public transit preferences and trade-offs. Members were given various choices and weighed factors they were willing to give up to obtain preferred choices. Staff will draft recommendations based on members' input. The final recommendations will be presented to the Metro Board. There are two Blue Ribbon Committee meetings remaining. Members will discuss specific guidelines and policy choices at the June meeting and draft recommendations at the final July meeting.

Chair Franklin asked about the consensus of the Blue Ribbon Committee as a whole regarding trade-offs.

Representative Kambara responded that during the exercises a variety of opinions were voiced. During one of the exercises, nine parameters were provided and members were to prioritize the parameters. Those that received the most favorable ratings included reliability, safety, travel time and network simplicity. Customer information also ranked high. The results of the exercise indicate that as a whole, the members value reliability over operator courtesy.

Chair Franklin invited representatives and the public to provide suggestions for the Blue Ribbon Committee.

RECEIVED public comment – J.K. Drummond asked who came up with the parameters and exercises, as they seem out-of-line with reality. He asked if Representative Kambara is the only bus rider on the committee and if the remaining members are municipal operators.

Representative Kambara responded that the committee consists of a representative from each of the governance councils, El Segundo Employers Association, Northrup Grumman, community colleges, and other individuals.

Mr. Drummond stated that it appears that the committee consists primarily of constituent groups and rideshare personnel rather than bus riders.

Representative Kambara clarified that most of her fellow Blue Ribbon Committee members ride the bus regularly. She does not know who devised the exercises. Service parameters included in the exercises provide an opportunity to think outside the box.

Mr. Drummond asked if there are any handicapped or elderly individuals on the committee.

Representative Kambara stated that she does not know of any handicapped or elderly members on the committee but she may wrong.

Dorothea Jaster asked if there is a way to define bus riders. Metro Board members regularly report on having taken the bus once a month, but should not be considered bus riders due to the infrequent nature of the trips. She noted that a bus rider should be defined as an individual who rides public transit a minimum of four round trips a week.

8. RECEIVED report on Fare Increase, Cynthia Karpman.

Ms. Karpman stated that the Metro Board held a Special Board meeting on Saturday, May 8, 2010 to discuss the proposed fare increase scheduled to be implemented July 1, 2010. Cash fares and passes will increase for full-fare riders. There will be no change for elderly, disabled and student riders. Measure R allowed for deferral of fare changes by providing \$56 million in fare relief. Fare increases for the reduced fare categories (elderly, disabled and student) has been deferred until FY14. The fare increase for full-fare riders had already been deferred for one year from the previously approved date. Silver Line fares will remain the same. Seven regional fare forums were held throughout the County in May 2007. The proposed fare increase was widely publicized through take-ones, website notices and newspaper ads. Handouts were provided in eleven languages, and Spanish interpretation services were available at each forum. About 120 individuals provided public testimony and over 600 letters and emails were

received. In preparation for the May 2007 proposed fare public hearing, staff placed notices in multiple newspapers, take-ones and websites. About 206 individuals provided public testimony during the hearing. Title VI analysis found no significant differences in impacts on whites/non-whites and dependent/non-dependent riders.

Ms. Karpman stated that the cash fare will increase from \$1.25 to \$1.50. Day Passes will increase from \$5 to \$6. The weekly pass will increase from \$17 to \$20. The monthly pass will increase from \$62 to \$75. The EZ Pass will increase from \$70 to \$84. The cash per zone will increase from \$.60 to \$.70. The monthly zone premium will increase from \$18 to \$22. Metro to muni transfers will increase from \$.30 to \$.35. There is no change for elderly, disabled and student riders, who constitute 50% of Metro's ridership.

Ms. Karpman reviewed cash fare history. This is only the third fare increase in the last 15 years. The \$.85 cash fare in 1982 is equivalent to \$1.90 today. Metro continues to maintain low fares by pursuing other recurring revenue and protects riders with greatest needs through programs such as the Rider Relief Transportation Program. She presented a chart showing a comparison of Metro's fares with other operators in the nation. Metro's fares are well below those of other operators in the nation. She provided a financial outlook with regard to fare revenues. Farebox recovery continues to decline.

Next steps include notifying riders through on-board materials and other means.

Representative Szerlip, referring to page 2 of the handout, stated that Measure R allowed for deferral of fare changes by providing \$56 million in fare relief. He asked about the period of time the deferral will take place.

Mr. Karpman responded that there was a proposed fare increase in July 2009 which was deferred for one year. The fare increase for reduced fare categories was to take place at the same time as the fare increase for full-fare categories but has been deferred to FY14.

Representative Szerlip asked if the fare increase for reduced fare categories will automatically take place in FY14 without further action from the Metro Board.

Mr. Hillmer responded that part of Measure R legislation included a provision to freeze fares for seniors, disabled and students until 2014. The Metro Board will have to decide at some point whether the reduced fares will remain the same or increase after 2014.

Representative Szerlip stated that it is great that the agency's fares are among the lowest in the nation. However, this is detrimental to farebox recovery.

This means that the agency is more dependent on subsidies than other transit agencies in the nation.

Chair Franklin asked what time the May 8 Special Board meeting took place.

Ms. Karpman responded that it occurred at 10 a.m.

Chair Franklin asked how staff attempted to notify riders about the meeting.

Suzanne Handler, Governance Council Coordinator, responded that the Board Secretary's office and Communications Department assisted in informing the public through handouts and advertising.

Chair Franklin asked if the fare information brochure will include the actual fare changes.

Ms. Karpman responded affirmatively.

Chair Franklin highlighted the importance of ensuring that patrons are paying the fare when fareboxes are not functioning. He noted that some operators allow patrons who have only paid part of the fare to continue riding.

Representative Szerlip stated that the increase in the weekly pass is \$3 and the increase in the monthly pass is \$13. During shorter months such as February, it may not be in the best interest of riders to buy the monthly pass.

Chair Franklin stated that easy access for riders is critical. The fare increase may make it difficult to encourage motorists to ride public transit.

RECEIVED public comment - J.K. Drummond noted that when Long Beach Transit operators encounter a non-paying passenger, they may stop the vehicle and summon the police. This inconveniences other passengers. Operators may occasionally allow riders who cannot afford the fare to ride for free. However, they feel disrespected if a passenger walks past them and disregards the farebox. He mentioned that Metro operators may use a police report form to report habitual fare evasion by passengers. He does not know what happens after the form is submitted.

Lt. Keith Obenberger indicated that the information may be given to undercover operations personnel and that Sheriffs may ride lines that appear to be the most problematic.

Chair Franklin stated that increased fare enforcement on buses is essential.

Lt. Obenberger stated that train fare enforcement and bus fare enforcement are completely different. Passenger onboard trains hold tickets or TAP cards which can be scanned by a reader. Staff does not know if bus riders have paid

once they have been seated. Bus operators do not want to point out the non-payers as they may fear the passenger may attempt to retaliate on future trips. Sheriffs that encounter problems with a particular bus stop or line may conduct an undercover operation to protect the bus operator. One patron physically attacked a Sheriff's deputy and was jailed.

A transit user (unidentified – note this is the same person who spoke earlier) stated that she would be irate if her schedule was delayed due to a non-paying passenger. She indicated that she reads the Daily Breeze regularly and did not see an announcement about the May 8 Special Board meeting.

9. RECEIVED Council Member Comments.

Representative Deming stated that last week there was an issue with the 625 line that was not directly related to the bus. There was police activity at Dockweiler Beach and the road was closed. She commended Rich Morallo for being responsive when she called with concerns. She had called First Transit, Metro Customer Relations and Metro employee services department and did not receive an adequate response. Line 625 buses were unable to travel north on Pershing to World Way West. The only response she received was from Rich Morallo, who not only responded within a few minutes but provided the right information. After 45 minutes the buses were able to proceed normally.

Mr. Morallo stated that when he received Representative Deming's email he did not have the answer. He sent the email to Rudy Cruz, Scheduling Supervisor, who forwarded it to another individual who knew the answer.

Representative Deming was surprised that First Transit was not responsive at all. A representative did not answer the phone. Metro Customer Relations could not supply an answer. She stated that while she was fortunate she knew who to contact, a member of the general public would have experienced frustration. Staff needs to find a more efficient way to inform Metro Customer Relations about scheduling updates.

Representative Kambara stated that on April 13, a Silver Line bus traveled northbound from the Artesia Transit Center at 6:36 a.m. The annunciator did not work. The following is information pertaining to the bus: Operator #18379, Bus Number 8211, run number 52. The bus was clean and not crowded.

Chair Franklin stated that Chip Hazen, ADA Compliance Administrator, provided a detailed presentation at the last meeting on wheelchair markings and safety strap policies. The minutes indicate there is no federal requirement to secure the wheelchair and there is no requirement to have the secured equipment onboard the bus. The minutes also indicate that Metro has the equipment as required and is upgrading the equipment on older buses and

training operators as part of the safety strap program. Chair Franklin stated that on May 7, he rode Line 210, bus run 61, bus number 6447. The operator badge was 22639. He boarded the northbound bus at Thoreau St. and Crenshaw Blvd. at 1:30 p.m. There was a lot of litter in the bus, including crushed peanut shells and paper on the floor. He was alarmed when he saw that a wheelchair patron facing forward in the handicapped section of the bus was not secured. The wheelchair was not motorized. The patron experienced difficulty trying to remain stationary as the bus moved. The operator was not cordial. Chair Franklin assumed the operator was having a bad day. He expressed concern that equipment available on the bus to secure wheelchairs is not being used. He stated that later that day he rode Line 210, bus number 6397 (bus run unknown). The operator badge number was 16934. He boarded the southbound bus at Manchester Blvd. and Crenshaw Blvd. at 1:48 p.m. The bus was clean, and there was an adequate supply of timetables. The ride was pleasant, and the operator greeted the patrons. A patron in a motorized wheelchair was seated in the handicapped area. However, as in the previous case, the patron was not secured. The wheelchair included a braking device which reduced the rolling of the chair. Chair Franklin stated that staff needs to ensure operators are properly trained in the use of the straps to prevent accidents from happening. Regarding the fare increase, Metro should place brochures listing the new bus rates in various locations prior to July 1. He specifically requested that bus schedules and fare notices be placed at Inglewood City Hall, among other locations.

RECEIVED public comment – J.K. Drummond, transit user, stated that Representative Kambara had mentioned earlier that the annunciator onboard the bus was not functioning. Recently, he was returning to San Pedro from Helen Keller Park and was going to make a difficult transfer near El Segundo Blvd. He was planning to walk to the 445 bus stop and the annunciator was not working. He asked the driver and was told that it was turned off. He noted that it is possible that functioning annunciators are turned off by the operator.

Representative Kambara stated that in her notes, she wrote that there was no annunciator at Rosecrans.

Ms. Karpman stated that it is possible to lower the volume on the annunciator. Operators typically cannot turn off the annunciator.

J.K. Drummond read a statement by the Southern California Transit Advocates, of which he serves as a director. A similar statement was given at the San Gabriel Valley Governance Council. He expressed concerns about Silver Line 910, specifically poor on-time performance (OTP) causing missed transfers from the Silver Line to local service. He stated that OTP during some parts of the day has fallen below 30%. Mr. Drummond indicated that some of the decline in OTP may be due to the Caltrans I-10 pavement rehabilitation project, which has resulted in the intermittent closure of the El

Monte Busway during evenings and weekends. Some weekend and evening customers have to wait for close to one hour due to missed connections. Mr. Drummond stated that success of the Silver Line is crucial to the success of the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Program. Southern California Transit Advocates requests that MTA examine ATMS data to determine the severity of the OTP problem and report back to the San Gabriel Valley and South Bay Governance Councils.

Ms. Karpman stated that in regard to the yellow wheelchair straps, it is the responsibility of the patron to have the straps on the wheelchair. There are some situations in which the patron refuses to be secured. The operator is required to call Bus Operations Control Center in this situation.

10. RECEIVED Chair's Comments:

Chair Franklin stated that Ms. Karpman will be missed by the council. He commended her for her due diligence and patience. He welcomed Jon Hillmer and stated that the council looks forward to working with him. Mr. Hillmer stated that he intends to contact the chair and vice chair two weeks before the regular meeting to discuss the possibility of meeting in person to consider any issues that should be agendized. Mr. Hillmer met with Art Leahy last week. Mr. Leahy values the councils and their input. He provided the council with his contact information.

ADJOURNED at 10:45am



Michele Chau, Council Secretary
for Raynard Price, Council Secretary