

Wednesday, August 9, 2006

5:30-7:00 PM

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Sheriff's Station
West Hollywood
720 N. San Vicente Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90069

Called to order at 5:55 p.m.

Council Members present:

Brad Robinson Chair
Jerard Wright, Vice Chair
Peter Capone-Newton
Greg Fischer
Carol Gross
Joyce Perkins
Glenn Rosten
Anny Semonco

Officers:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
Michele Jackson, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Public Comment for items not on the agenda

Cheryl McAllister - Lines 20/21 have had dismal performance since the last shake-up in June. The schedules are inaccurate; there needs to be a bus at 5:50 p.m. Three buses show up at about 6:10 p.m. Eighty people pack the first bus. The second bus is half empty and picks up only one or two people. The third bus is often completely empty. She takes the 20/21 bus between La Brea and San Vicente, and sometimes she can walk faster than the bus. Buses are supposed to be scheduled every eight minutes, but don't show up for 15-25 minutes.

Joseph Dunn feels Line 212 is neglected; after 7 p.m. the service dies. It is not unusual to wait two hours. There is no 24 hr. service between Fairfax and Western. Expressed the need for one La Cienega route that goes to the South Bay.

Entered into the record the August 7, 2006 letter from the Bus Riders' Union.

2. APPROVED Minutes from July 12, 2006

3. RECEIVED General Managers Report

The Sector ended the year \$7.3 million under budget. Overall, the Sector did well in meeting the goals for the month. A mean mile between mechanical failures was better than systemwide. Complaints and new workers' compensation claims numbers hit new lows. Goal for accidents has been achieved for the last two months. Line-by-line on-time performance will be available in November when the system moves over to ATMS.

Bus Roadeo will be held September 23, 2006 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Santa Anita Racetrack.

Representative Perkins asked why the Sector's workers' compensation claims target is higher than the overall target. And what was the answer?

Representative Capone-Newton asked the mechanism for members of the public to file complaints and the hours available for doing so.

Jody Litvak responded that she would email that information to the Governance Council.

Representative Gross thanked Mark Maloney and staff for the tour of Division 7, calling it very helpful and interesting. Jody Litvak will send out some history on the division.

4. RECEIVED report on On-Time Performance Task Force, Jon Hillmer, Service Development Manager, San Gabriel Sector

Mr. Hillmer reported that the Task Force was formed in March with 18 members from all Sectors and the Operations Department. They have been tasked with developing a plan to improve on street, on-time performance. Sector General Managers will review their recommendations and an implementation plan developed with a goal of improving on-time performance to 75% by the end of 2007.

To be on time, a bus at a time point must be: No more than 5 minutes late or 1 minute early. A "headway regularity" standard will also be considered on lines operating 10 min. or better service levels and Rapid Lines.

Currently Metro relies on street corner "point checks". Forty-six schedule checkers monitor heavy lines at "peak-load" locations as required by the Consent Decree. Effective November 2006 Metro will switch to an automated process using GPS.

Schedule needs to be appropriate; operators have to operate to conditions; traffic congestion has to be about the same; spacing of the buses is very important. On-time performance has been trending downward; 68% on time in 2003 vs. 65% this year. Buses running late have gone up from 20% to 30%. There is a great deal of variation in the amount of time it takes a bus to make a trip on any given day.

Is it hopeless? No, but it will be difficult, lengthy and costly. Recommendations are: to improve bus schedules; enhance service reliability; increase service monitoring and management; and develop increased data reliability and usability.

Need to improve location of the bus stops by using a GPS tool as well as increase running and recovery times; add yard supervisors; call BOC when a bus will be late or canceled; add an ATMS monitor in each sector VO office.

The agency is still short 325 bus operators. New union contracts, which have changed the promotion progression, should help. Lines running every 10-12 minutes should be on a headway basis rather than a time-point basis. ATMS cannot be updated to accommodate temporary changes.

Representative Gross asked about buses running early that sit at a stop for a few minutes to get back on time. Jon Hillmer responded that they are not supposed to do that.

Representative Capone-Newton commented that focusing on headway-based scheduling on lines with headways of 10 minutes or less seems to make sense. There should be a technological answer to it. Jon Hillmer agreed, adding that it may take a more active role from the BOC to keep the spacing.

Representative Capone-Newton suggested thinking about how the demand side of the equation can be managed. Drivers should be able to tell people to wait 30 seconds to get onto an empty bus. How can we help the users manage their time?

Mr. Hillmer responded that Rapid buses were supposed to have displays to show passengers when the next bus is expected. If you let a full bus go by, you may be rewarded. Other times you let it go by and there is nothing left.

Representative Capone-Newton asked, “How do we get that information to the rider”? If we can’t put an LED sign on every bus stop, how about on 100 buses?

Chair Robinson inquired if cuts would have to be made to add these additional expenses?

Mr. Hillmer responded, “That’s very likely. Do we cut service to make sure that the remaining service meets our standards or do we keep all the service and just try to improve it?”

Chair Robinson requested a report on that before the final decisions are made. Would like to see what trade offs might be considered.

In 1995 on-street supervision was cut and the undercover rider program ended. After that program was removed and the supervision reduced, there developed a culture that “nobody is watching”. More attention is now being paid to working with the operators, especially those with the worst habits.

Representative Wright asked if the new “next bus” signs and TV monitors inside the buses could be connected so they could show where the buses are and then show their advertising in between. J. Hillmer will check.

Public Comment:

Wayne Coombs – The rule allowing no more than one minute ahead of schedule is what’s causing the problem. A bus will wait at the prior stop. Going northbound on Fairfax at Santa Monica, the bus sits there for 2 minutes; it can leave 4-5 minutes late. The rule should be changed so that 3-4 minutes early is okay. This practice also keeps people from making their transfers while the bus is sitting 2 or 3 blocks away. Mr. Coombs commended staff on maintenance. He can’t remember the last time a bus broke down. Questioned why anyone would suggest slowing the rapids down? That would be counter-productive.

Chair Robinson explained that the only time the rapids would be slowed would be to avoid bunching and keep the appropriate spacing.

Ken Ruben – Was at the San Gabriel Valley Sector meeting when this task force was announced. Looks like staff is trying to address the issues. Culver City No. 2 bus is running late at the Culver Hotel. Second driver went ahead of the first bus. Was on 445 Rapid Bus yesterday. Can the 720, 750 control system still be used without the technology in the street on the regular routes? Metro needs to get feedback from people who ride the system everyday.

Mr. Hillmer noted that there are two different rapid bus systems. The one used most is in the City of L.A. The agency has too many red buses because of the deferral of some Rapid Lines. Those buses are now being used on express runs. If their system is still active that bus will in fact trigger the ATSAC system. The City of Los Angeles is concerned that the system may get over saturated. It is not a problem at this point.

Alhambra, South Gate and other cities are going to a different system that doesn't rely on the Los Angeles City ATSAC system. Metro is getting more equipment that will work on both systems.

Chair Robinson asked if that system could simply be turned off. Mr. Hillmer responded affirmatively, noting that it would have to be done by a mechanic.

Representative Wright commented that the more Rapid routes there are the fewer streets available for out of service buses.

5. RECEIVED report on December Service Changes from other Sector Staff Members

Distributed Public Hearing Notices showing service changes in all the other sectors.

Jon Hillmer reported that the San Gabriel Valley Sector had a public hearing regarding proposed changes on five routes. The proposal to shorten Line 201 Wilshire/Vermont and reduce headway slightly received 25 comments from people who don't want that bus to go away.

Made changes to the 85 Line, a branch of the 28 Line on Olympic, which goes out Broadway to Cypress, Eagle Rock to Verdugo to Glendale City College. Proposing to make that a shuttle so that the 28 can run a little more regularly.

Public Comment

Joseph Dunn – Suggested having Line 175 near Vermont/Santa Monica Station do its regular route on Fountain; take it to Hyperion and Rowena. That is a very trendy area that is not being served. Hyperion changes to Glendale Blvd. Need timed transfers there with Beeline Service. Regarding No. 2 Line - Take Big Blue Bus No. 9 brings it up to Topanga and ends it over by Ackerman Loop in L.A. Have timed transfer with the No. 2. May have to wait on the No. 2 until the TAP system is available.

Chair Robinson noted that the Council has no control over other bus companies.

Mr. Hillmer briefly noted proposed changes in the following Sectors:

Gateway Cities 53, 55, 60/360, 760

San Fernando Valley 91, 94, 394, 156

South Bay 204 widening headways because of artics

6. INTRODUCED Metro Connections Map, Roy Gandara, Service Development Manager

Preliminary recommendations were brought to the Council in June. A third meeting has been held with the consultant, and we now have a draft map.

Representative Capone-Newton reiterated his request for a report on the mid-program evaluation of Rapid Service and asked about the grey boxes on the map showing downtown. He expressed a desire to be able to understand what's going on in downtown.

Mark Maloney responded that Metro, the consultant, LADOT, the Muni's and the Mayor's Office are working together to determine what streets are best. As soon as something is decided, staff will bring back a report.

Representative Capone-Newton said it is the Council's role to be an ear and to understand what is going on for our riders going into downtown.

Representative Gross asked about Lines going to La Cienega and Jefferson. Staff confirmed that the transit center would move there with the opening of the Expo Line.

Representative Wright asked why there isn't a downtown map. He expressed the opinion that at least Metro's thinking should be shown.

Chair Robinson stated that there will be more meetings between now and implementation of the first phase in June 2007. He requested a timetable at the next meeting showing how we get from here to there. He also suggested that all Council Representatives look very closely at what is in the package and prepare questions or comments for the next meeting.

Public Comment

Cheryl McAllister – Discontinuation of 20/21. That service is already bad in terms of on-time performance. If you cancel the 21, please replace the service. The Wilshire portion cannot do without the number of 21's that are running on Wilshire. Roy Gandara explained that if the 21 line is discontinued, those buses would be replaced with line 20 buses.

Line 217 – Moving the southern end is a good idea. Should take the 217 into the South Bay. That gives you your point to point from Hollywood, West Hollywood, LAX – that should be the 217. Should connect with the Green Line.

Wes Joe – A lot of new people are moving into the Silver Lake area. He has taken the 304 to Union Station. There are no bays left at the transit plaza so it stops at the NE corner of Vignes & Cesar Chavez. Would like 304 to end at the Transit Plaza. Hoping that Line 4 will still go to Venice and Hill.

7. Chair's Remarks – Thanked staff again for the tour.

Representative Gross reminded everyone that the next meeting will be held at the usual location, the La Cienega Tennis Center.

Jody Litvak announced that Metro has prepared some information on the infrastructure bond package.

Mobility 21 Countywide Coalition is having its annual conference at the end of October. There will be a sub-regional Coalition meeting September 12, 2006, at the Kirk Douglas Theater in Culver City.

Adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele Jackson".

Council Secretary