

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

5:00-7:00 PM

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

La Cienega Tennis Center
325 S. La Cienega Boulevard.
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Called to Order at 5:03pm

Council Members Present:

Brad Robinson, Chair
Jerard Wright, Vice Chair
Peter Capone-Newton
Carol Gross
Joyce Perkins
Glenn Rosten
Terri Slimmer

Officers:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary
Raynard Price, Assistant Board Secretary

1. RECEIVED Public Comment for items not on the agenda

Cathy Bator - Said she contacted customer service to make a complaint at the Metro Customer Relations office in person and was informed that forms were not available. There was much discussion regarding opportunities for customers to provide both compliments and complaints. The Chair suggested putting this issue on the agenda with staff returning with a presentation on customer service and how customers can provide feedback.

Cheryl McAllister – Reiterated that the 1 (800) COMMUTE Metro Customer Service Center is troublesome and akin to Dante's Inferno. She said advertising Wilshire Boulevard Metro Local Lines 20, 21 and Metro Rapid 720 on the 12-Minute Map is inconsistent with the 20 minute headways that she experienced. She suggested that Metro Local Lines 20, 21 and Metro Rapid Line 720 be removed from the 12 Minute Map because the lines are always late.

Ken Ruben – Said he waited 15 to 20 minutes for Metro Local Lines 20 or 21 to arrive in order to attend the Sector Governance Council. On another occasion he smelled an unbearable odor from the act of a passenger performing a bodily function while riding Line 217. He got off the bus to wait for the next bus. He wanted to know if drivers were trained to handle these situations or take the bus off line when they occur. He thanked outgoing Council Members Brad Robinson, Carol Gross and Joyce Perkins for serving on the Council and looked forward to working with the new sector members.

Wayne Wright – Complained that drivers on Metro Local Lines 4/304, 20, and 33/333 often refrained from using the air conditioning in sweltering weather on over crowded buses even when working properly. The problem is with Drivers at Division 6 and Division 10 with both local and Rapid service. He said that tempers may flare if the stupidity of drivers is not corrected. He also said drivers often forget to punch Metro-to-Muni Interagency Transfers and often are not carrying them at all. He said often the transfers are expired when given out by drivers. He also suggested renumbering owl trips on Metro Local Lines 4, 20 and 33 as Lines 604, 620 and 633. Mark Maloney responded that two scenarios are at play: operators turning off the air conditioning because it happens to be their personal preference and buses that have faulty or dysfunctional air conditioning systems. Mr. Maloney said faulty equipment is either caught through a bus operator requesting a dysfunctional bus to be pulled out of service, filing a fix-it ticket, during a routine daily maintenance inspection or on a periodic inspection scheduled quarterly or semi-annually.

Wayne Combs – Said bus bunching is exacerbated by Metro policy that penalizes operators from arriving at a bus stop more than 1.5 minutes early. He suggested that buses leave the terminal on time with someone watching to ensure that they do. He also suggested that Metro Customer Service Center (1-800-COMMUTE) give customers bus arrival times that are 5 minutes early to allow customers to be at the

bus stop on time. General Manager Mark Maloney agreed to look into policy and what may be causing the bunching.

2. APPROVED corrected Minutes from April 11, 2007 and Minutes from May 9, 2007
3. RECEIVED report from council members on their line rides.

Jerard Wright – Said that Line 33 experiences overcrowding when schools are dismissed around 2:45pm. Buses endure large loads because of all of the high schools in close proximity to the Venice Boulevard corridor. He suggested improving service or deploying articulated buses. He also inquired why the Venice Boulevard corridor does not have Metro Rapid service. Mr. Maloney said Venice Boulevard is on the short list of upcoming Metro Rapids to be implemented in the near future. Representative Wright then mentioned the Metro Rapid buses that tend to be empty along Whittier Boulevard on the east end of Metro Rapid Line 720 and on the full length of Metro Rapid Line 714 (Beverly Boulevard).

Representative Rosten mentioned that he encounters empty Metro Rapid Line 720 buses west of Westwood Boulevard. He also said that construction problems on Wilshire Boulevard near the intersections of Malcolm and Selby are affecting the on-time performance of Wilshire Boulevard lines.

Representative Slimmer mentioned that the correct announcement plays when Line 4 and Line 304 buses arrive at stops along the line. She also said she has received positive comments regarding operator conduct.

4. RECEIVED General Manager's Report

Mr. Maloney presented gifts and extended his appreciation for the work of Brad Robinson, Carol Gross and Joyce Perkins, outgoing members of the Westside Central Governance Council. In his presentation of the April Financial Statement, he stated that because of an upgrade to the ATMS system some data was not available. He said mean miles between mechanical failures has fallen for the first time in recent memory due to a series of incidents in Division 10 primarily related to heavy reliance upon new high capacity articulated buses. Mean mechanical miles for Division 10 are 2,009; Division 7 was up over 3,505 and Division 6 was at 5,000. Divisions 6 and 7 did not get new buses. Mr. Maloney said this is a short-lived problem and he expects the trend to reverse. Due to a malfunction, there is no data on on-time performance. Collisions and accidents continue to be a challenge primarily because of sideswipes and the placement of left-side rearview mirrors on the new articulated coaches. Mr. Maloney said after the production of new fare decals for buses that Metro would focus on creating decals to alert drivers to drive carefully around high capacity articulated buses. He also said collisions are climbing in the sector mostly due to poor driving on the general public's part. Mr. Maloney reported that Metro has created a number of materials to help inform riders of the July 1 fare increase:

take one notices, interior cards, outlet posters and tri-fold brochures, all in English and Spanish. Chair Robinson asked about a grace period.

Representative Slimmer asked Mr. Maloney to clarify the fare changes for seniors. Mr. Maloney said the senior fare changed from 45 cents to 55 cents, the senior age for base fare remains the same at age 62, and that seniors 65 and older would be eligible for the new off-peak senior fare.

Representative Rosten asked if it was assumed that seniors have less money. Mr. Maloney responded by saying that most seniors are on a fixed income and Metro has more capacity for additional riders during the midday and evening. Mr. Rosten suggested in the future “Baby Boomers” who will make up the vast majority of new seniors may be a wealthier group. He also suggested that it might be wise to give discounts to everyone during the middle of the day to encourage ridership.

5. RECEIVED report on FY07 YTD April 2007 Financials, Michael Davis, Administration and Finance Manager

Mr. Davis echoed the comments of Sector General Manager Mark Maloney and wished the outgoing members well and said it has been a pleasure working with the Council. Mr. Davis reported current spending for the sector is at \$126.7 million, about \$3.4 million over the \$122.8 million Sector budget. Contract wages are over budget by almost \$1 million due to a shortage of operators and mechanics. Mr. Davis announced Metro has only 35 operators, considerably lower than the number of vacancies at the same time last fiscal year. Mr. Davis informed the Council that an increase in contract wages is related to the new technology and learning how to maintain the new articulated buses and the cost of extra labor needed to support parts and preventive maintenance and problems associated with turntables on the buses. In response to questioning, Mr. Davis said the negative variance in wages result from overtime paid to operators who volunteer to work on their off days. He said the contract services line is down by \$226,000 due to the less than anticipated usage of the transitional duty program. An agency wide allocation of \$28 million in Allocated Fringe Benefits resulted in the Westside Sector receiving a significant portion of that allocation. The Public Liability Chargeback line is over by \$3.6 million because of accidents from prior years being settled this fiscal year. Reserves were not adequate to cover costs. He said worker’s compensation is under budget by \$1 million, fuel costs are down, materiel and supplies are up due to special tool costs, and miscellaneous costs are up due to settlement of cases for terminated operators and payouts to litigants who sued Metro for damages. Parts and tires costs are up \$573,000 due to adding ATMS to 100 new articulated coaches that did not include it. Currently all buses are installed with the ATMS.

Mr. Davis reported that according to Metro CEO Roger Snoble, the FY 2008 budget is very close to the FY 2007 budget. He said the FY 2008 budget increased only \$150 million, which includes a 3.5% wage increase, and about a 1.5% increase associated with materials and supplies, parts and miscellaneous.

Mr. Davis reported that a motion was put forward by the Board to find \$4.5 million for 22 mechanics, 11 electronic technicians (ECTs); Westside Central would have received 6 mechanics and 3 ECTs.

Representative Gross asked what really happens when a Sector goes over budget. Mr. Maloney responded by saying if the problem were on the service side, it would be a problem. But because the overage was agency wide, that the Sector need not be worried about it. Chair Robinson suggests there be a comparison to other Sectors. Representative Gross suggested that the General Manager provide the Sector with copies of an overall budget presentation she saw at a budget workshop.

Representative Rosten asked if it was possible to review key performance indicators from other sectors as was done at the Annual Service Sectors Meet and Confer Meeting in May 2007 and also look at the bottom line for all Sectors as compared to Westside Central. Mr. Maloney and Mr. Davis both agreed to provide this information on a periodic basis. Chair Robinson thanked Mr. Davis for the excellent quality of the presentations he makes every month.

6. SET PUBLIC HEARING DATE AND AUTHORIZED Publication of Notice of Public Hearing for Proposed December 2007 Service Changes, Rogelio (Roy) Gandara, Service Development Manager

Mr. Gandara reviewed the official Public Hearing Notice and highlighted four routes (28/328, 38/71, 68/368) that would be significantly modified in December 2007 if the Service Changes are approved by the Sector Council and the Metro Board of Directors:

Line 38-71 (West Los Angeles Transit Terminal - CSULA via Jefferson Boulevard - City Terrace): Restructure Line 38 to operate from Downtown Los Angeles (Grand Station) to West Los Angeles Transit Terminal. Incorporate Line 71 service into Line 70. San Gabriel Valley Sector will be responsible for scheduling and planning Line 71.

Line 68-368 (West Los Angeles Transit Terminal - Montebello via Washington Boulevard. - Chavez Avenue.): Restructure route due to implementation of new Cesar Chavez/Garvey Rapid Line 770. Line 770 will operate from Downtown Los Angeles to El Monte Station via Cesar Chavez Avenue and Garvey Avenue.

Cancel Line 368. Proposed new line 35-335 operating from Downtown Los Angeles (Broadway/Washington) to West Los Angeles Transit Terminal. Discontinue service from Broadway/Washington to Broadway/1st Street. Retain Line 68 service from Broadway/1st Street to Montebello Town Center. Line 68 segment would be tied into Line 84 and San Gabriel Valley Sector would be responsible for this service.

Line 728 (Downtown LA - Century City via West Olympic Boulevard.)
Implement new Rapid service on West Olympic Boulevard. At present, San Gabriel Valley is responsible for Line 28-328-83-84. Westside/Central will plan and schedule Line 28 and new Rapid Line 728.

Mr. Gandara said the Public Hearing notice would be posted July 1. He said next steps include setting a date, time and location for the hearing, receiving feedback from the public regarding changes, holding a public hearing, Sector Council members reviewing the final staff report regarding recommended service changes, and implementing service changes in mid-December 2007.

APPROVED Motion by Glenn Rosten that the Council accept the Proposed Service Changes Timeline as presented by Rogelio Gandara.

7. CARRIED OVER report on TAP, Roger Moliere, Executive Officer New Business
8. RECEIVED update on Wilshire Boulevard Bus Only Lane, Jody Litvak, Regional Community Relations Manager

Ms. Litvak reported on the status of creating new bus lanes on Wilshire Boulevard from Santa Monica eastward through West Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, Beverly Hills and the City of Los Angeles to Downtown Los Angeles. Ms. Litvak said Metro was working with the City of Los Angeles to keep the test lane in place on Wilshire Boulevard between Centinela and Federal and add a new test segment on Wilshire Boulevard between Doheny and Fairfax. In Fall of 2006, there was a large meeting between Metro, area stakeholders, and Jaime de la Vega from the Los Angeles Mayor's Office. Ms. Litvak said Mr. de la Vega asked that groups stop looking segment by segment and look at the whole corridor. An extensive speed study was conducted which analyzed areas where buses traveled less than 10 miles per hour in order to target those areas for improvements. Location specific changes ranged in the dollar area of \$20 million.

Ms. Litvak reported that the City of Beverly Hills said Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards is ground zero for what they deem their most troublesome point on the Wilshire corridor. She also said the City of Beverly Hills plans to study the impact of Wilshire Boulevard bus lanes as part of an environmental impact review for two other projects on the Wilshire Corridor already in progress. April 2007 was the date set for a cooperative agreement for preliminary engineering and design to extend the bus lane. The lane should be up and running by 2008.

Los Angeles is in the process of implementing a Bus Speed Improvement Program. In May 2007, Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) went back to the Los Angeles City Council with a mini bus lane proposal. The peak-period bus lane would cost \$16.5 million. Los Angeles agreed to look at bus lanes for the full stretch of Wilshire but temporarily removed the West Los Angeles segment (Centinela-Federal) until a full plan is proposed.

Other developments since the initial meeting:

- Bus lanes initial capital cost of \$16.5 million has increased.
- Metro is working with the City of Los Angeles to ensure the cost of the bus lanes is shared.
- City of Beverly Hills has gone back to the original proposal of bus lanes and will be meeting with Metro in the near future.
- City of Santa Monica has moved to put signal priority in place for Wilshire and other streets where Metro Rapids are planned.

Ms. Litvak reported that Santa Monica remains very focused on improvements to Lincoln Boulevard (State Highway 1) before committing to any other upgrades to facilitate increased bus speeds or Metro Rapid expansion. Most Metro Rapid 720 buses are not losing speed along Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica.

Representative Rosten asked what areas were the most congestion-prone along Wilshire Boulevard. Ms. Litvak said the map created from the study, highlights each of those areas in detail. Without that reference, she identified eastbound Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood Boulevard. He then asked whether or not a lane of traffic could be removed on Wilshire Boulevard. Ms. Litvak said it really depends.

Representative Wright asked the length of the bus line segment(s). Ms. Litvak said the current plan is to advocate for 2 bus lanes that extend from Good Samaritan Hospital (near Valencia Street) to Santa Monica.

Representative Wright asked whether parking structures have been proposed in order to replace parking spaces removed for the bus lane. Ms. Litvak said most of Wilshire Boulevard does not have parking and that there has not been a need thus far to create additional off-street parking spaces. She said that the curb lane is not even near capacity because of its horrible condition.

Representative Wright asked who would be responsible for maintenance of the lane. Ms. Litvak responded that city governments receive Prop A and Prop C funding, which sets aside funds for street maintenance. Metro does not receive these funds.

9. RECEIVED update on Wellness Program, Michael Greenwood, Deputy Executive Director, Westside Service Sector

Mike Greenwood returned to present information based on questions asked by the Council regarding ways to ensure Metro employees are more physically fit, which could potentially affect productivity and worker's compensation claims. Mr. Greenwood said employers institute Wellness programs primarily due to increased health care costs. Healthier employees tend to be less stressed, miss work less often, are more productive, and sustain fewer injuries.

Mr. Greenwood's presentation highlighted the different components of a Wellness Program (physical fitness classes and equipment, smoking cessation programs,

nutrition programs, stress management classes), motivational perks (intramural sports leagues, yoga and tai chi classes, prizes and merchandise, vacation days, recognition) and better health. He mentioned some of the cost savings and increased productivity yielded from wellness programs at other private firms. He then gave an overview of the selected wellness program vendor, Aquila Health and Fitness Solutions, which began its program at San Gabriel Valley Sector in May of 2007. Some of the components of the Aquila program include monthly bulletin board health discussion topics, a number of seminars (called clinics) where employees can learn more about staying healthy, as well as a number of personal self-help and incentive programs. Mr. Greenwood said Corporate Safety and Human Resources will monitor the success of the pilot program and research ways to further fund initiatives like this throughout the system.

Representative Perkins asked whether there were employee baseline requirements that needed to be met for admission to the Wellness program and whether there was any motivating factor for employees to commit to the program. Mr. Greenwood responded that there were no requirements but all employees must be initially screened before participating. Aquila actively follows up post-screening.

Representative Rosten asked whether results were collected to measure whether the employees participating are healthier. Mr. Greenwood said Metro would do its best to see whether the program is making an impact but mentioned it would be difficult to quantify the effect of the program in a year's time.

Representative Gross said measuring the amount of sick time used amongst both the Wellness participants and the non-Wellness participants would be a quantifiable means of measuring whether the program makes an impact. She also said an effort to improve Wellness at the City of Culver City began where employees were offered 1-2 hours of on-duty time to participate in Wellness activities. A group of employees began an intramural softball league that created a competitive, congenial team environment, encouraged inactive people to become more active, and boosted morale overall.

Representative Wright asked how labor might respond to a Wellness program. Mr. Greenwood responded that Labor has participated in a number of meetings to plan the rollout of Wellness services throughout Metro.

10. Chair's Remarks

Representative Perkins thanked staff for their gifts and said she learned a great deal about routing, customer service and the internal workings of Metro. She said she hopes to continue contributing in the future and that she had a great experience over 3 ½ years and three general managers. She said she would miss everyone.

Representative Gross said she remembered when Westside/Central Sector was created and she mentioned it was the last to actually form. She acknowledged Brad Robinson

and Joyce Perkins for serving with her from the start and introduced Art Ida as the new representative for the Westside Council of Governments.

Chair Robinson said he enjoyed his experience a lot, was privileged to have seen the creation of the Westside/Central Sector from the start, and acknowledged the work of staff over the three-and-a-half years stating they had done a great job, especially with providing vital information needed to make good decisions.

Representative Rosten said he benefited from the “Charter Members” who he said refined the work of the Council substantially. He said it is easier to get things done.

Representative Gross challenged new members to look at how other sectors blazed the trail on issues (i.e. San Gabriel Valley and the Wellness Program) and said Westside Central could find more ways to look outside of the box.

Chair Robinson countered by saying Westside Central did innovative projects such as merging Metro Rapid Lines 717 (Hollywood Fairfax) and 780 (Hollywood-Glendale-Pasadena)

Representative Wright said the Westside/Central Sector Council is in a great situation to make moves and work cohesively with staff. He also said he looked forward to doing some serious good for the sector and letting the Metro Board know why Sectors are so important.

ADJOURNED at 6:53pm

Prepared by:


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