

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

Minutes

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

LACMTA Headquarters
325 S. La Cienega Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Called to Order at 5:00 P.M.

Council Members Present:

Jerard Wright, Chair
Glenn Rosten, Vice Chair
Peter Capone-Newton
Shelby Jordan
Terri Slimmer
Joe Stitcher

Officers:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary



Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. RECEIVED Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda.

Ken Ruben – Said he waited 45 minutes for a southbound Metro Rapid Line 705 at the corner of La Cienega and Wilshire Boulevards. During that time he missed a Line 105 bus going southbound because the buses do not share a stop. He said he should have gone eastbound on Wilshire to a Fairfax Avenue bus rather than wait for the Line 705. He also said the delays give people a poor perception of Metro, especially among the fellow passengers he waited with at the stop. This particular delay he discovered was caused by a train stalled on the Southern Pacific Tracks at La Cienega Boulevard. He also said that at the recent San Gabriel Valley Sector meeting, he was told by a driver that he could not enter the building and the driver said that he would call the cops if he proceeded to enter.

2. APPROVED Minutes from September 20, 2007.

3. RECEIVED report from Council Members on their line rides.

Representative Rosten said he rode Line 720 and observed a driver who was not wearing his seat belt. He saw a passenger in a wheelchair boarding the 720. When he realized he was on the wrong bus he attempted to back out of the bus and the chair flipped over and the passenger fell onto the ground. The driver wrote an incident report. Passenger tried to hail another bus, but was not at the stop when the bus approached and the bus continued on its route.

4. RECEIVED report on Governance Council Motion to Separate Line 761 into three services, Rogelio Gandara, Service Development Manager

Mr. Gandara gave a presentation on a motion by Representative Wright and San Fernando Valley Service Sector Council Representative Kymberleigh Richards to split Metro Rapid Line 761 into three different services. Mr. Gandara explained that the line operates between Pacoima and Westwood via Van Nuys, Ventura and Sepulveda Boulevards, then down to UCLA, terminating at Veteran/Wilshire layover. He provided the average frequencies for Line 761 service and then reported the following findings from research the San Fernando Valley Sector performed as a result of the motion by Representatives Richards (San Fernando Valley Sector) and Wright:

Metro Rapid Line 761 - Headways						
Monday – Friday			Saturday		Sunday	
Peak	Off-Peak	Eve	Day	Eve	Day	Eve
7-10	20	20	20	30	20	40

Three new services replacing Metro Rapid Line 761 in its current configuration would impact over 1800 customers requiring them to transfer at least once to an

alternate service. Mr. Gandara said that after presentation of the proposal in the SFV sector, staff was informed that the research did not treat the branch of Line 761 between Van Nuys and Westwood as a point-to-point express line. Thus, further analysis may be requested.

Representative Stitcher asked how many passengers would be affected that ride to and from The Getty Center. Mr. Gandara said about 400 passengers.

Representative Stitcher asked how Line 761 travels between UCLA and Westwood. Mr. Gandara said the bus uses Sunset Boulevard and Hilgard Avenue. Representative Stitcher asked if Line 761 stopped along Hilgard. Mr. Gandara said yes, but not at the Hilgard Terminal.

Representative Wright asked Mr. Gandara to provide a total of boardings for Line 761 at a future date.

Representative Slimmer asked for background on the original proposal. Representative Wright responded that he and Representative Kymberleigh Richards proposed changes to Line 761 to alleviate some of the problems along Sepulveda Pass that contribute to less than satisfactory on-time performance and efficiency.

Representative Rosten asked how the original motion fared when considering cost benefits. Mr. Gandara explained that splitting one route into three different routes adds deadhead hours, layover hours, additional route miles, additional revenue service hours, and extra buses.

Representative Stitcher asked whether the study took into consideration how the proposal would affect on-time performance. Mr. Gandara responded that the proposal requires 25 to 33 percent more route miles, increases “out-of-bus wait times,” requires customers to transfer, and will probably improve on-time performance.

RECEIVED PUBLIC COMMENT on Governance Council Motion to Separate Line 761 into three services.

Jane Gould, UCLA – Said that Line 761 was the second most important route serving UCLA with over 1000 commuters using it each weekday. She said the proposed changes make the line less convenient, extends wait times for customers, and will likely create more single occupancy vehicle drivers between UCLA and the San Fernando Valley. She said Metro should look at creating more opportunities for customers to utilize the service by creating more park/ride lots.

Ken Ruben – Said that the proposal is not convenient for riders traveling between Ventura and Sepulveda Boulevards and the UCLA campus.

5. RECEIVED update on 511, SAFE and Freeway Service Patrol (FSP), Ken Coleman, Motorist Services Program Manager

Ken Coleman briefed the council on the Los Angeles County Motor Services Program Unit (MSPU), a portion of Metro responsible for call boxes on freeways, the Mobile Call Box unit (#399), Big Rig Freeway Service Patrol (FSP), and 511, the future Traveler Information telephone service. He said the MSPU is a staff of 5 professionals who operate a county-wide program focused on providing efficient services to motorists, reducing congestion and enhancing public safety throughout Los Angeles County. The team administers a budget of \$41 million, comprised of Proposition C 25% funds (Streets and Freeways), state gas tax funds, HOV Lane Violation Revenue and the DMV Registration Surcharge Fee. Mr. Coleman highlighted facts and figures on the five MSPU programs, indicated that the programs provided are administered in conjunction with Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol. He said that some of the current developments include removing a good number of call boxes to save on maintenance and provide more resources to #399, a service that connects cellular phone callers to the same call center as call boxes. He said #399 averages about 5,000 calls a month which alleviates the 911 system from taking the brunt of these types of calls. The most popular of the five programs is the Metro FSP, that provides 140 tow trucks, serving 27,000 motorists monthly along almost all of the freeways in Los Angeles County to move disabled vehicles to designated drop-off locations where motorists can obtain additional assistance. In September 2005, a new program was implemented providing tow service to stalled big rigs along Interstate 710. MSPU is looking to expand this program to State Routes 60, 91 and Interstate 605. 511, a regional service providing freeway, transit, ridesharing, airport, general emergency and other traveler-related services, will premiere in mid-2008 as a collaboration among the 5 SCAG counties. It is currently deployed in the San Francisco Bay Area, San Jose, Seattle, Arizona and Nevada.

Representative Rosten asked why #399 was a secret. Mr. Coleman said Metro is in the process of getting a sustained marketing program for the service and partnering with Caltrans to advertise the service on informational signs alongside freeways.

Representative Rosten asked if FSP was a free service. Mr. Coleman said the service was free to get motorists off the freeway into a safe space. FSP Drivers are not allowed to accept tips from motorists.

6. RECEIVED update on Wilshire Corridor Bus Only Lanes, Jody Litvak, Regional Communications Manager

Ms. Litvak provided reports from the May 3, 2007 meeting of the Los Angeles City Council approving a peak period lane on Wilshire Boulevard. She said that Metro has applied for Federal Very Small Starts funding to pay for the bus only lane in the City of Los Angeles. The Very Small Starts program is intended specifically

for projects like bus lanes that do not require large amounts of funding. In the City of Los Angeles, the Wilshire peak period bus lane would extend from just west of downtown to the Santa Monica City Line. Separately, Metro is working with the County of Los Angeles on extending the bus lane onto their portion of Wilshire Boulevard near the VA. The City of Beverly Hills has always expressed interest in participating in some way with this project but didn't want to act on its own. Metro staff is following up with the City of Beverly Hills now that there is a commitment from the City of Los Angeles.

Representative Rosten suggested making the bus only lane a carpool lane. Ms. Litvak said that by far the vast majority of motorist do not use the far right lane.

Representative Capone-Newton asked if the Wilshire Bus Lane project was viable given the conditions of the roadway. Ms. Litvak said that improving the conditions of the roadway surface was a part of putting the project together for the City of Los Angeles.

Representative Capone-Newton asked if a dedicated lane would force the three different services (Local, Rapid, Rapid Express) to bunch and diminish time savings and if a marketing campaign would be launched to ensure the public that dedicated bus lanes will not make traffic worse. Ms. Litvak responded that other lanes will still allow buses meaning it would be expected that buses would naturally pass one another. Government leaders are interested in developing an effective public outreach campaign in support of the project.

Representative Stitcher asked what year the project would be implemented. Ms. Litvak said that the project would commence in FY 2008-2009 and that she would invite Rex Gephardt to address the Council in further detail about the bus lane project. She added that operators experienced time savings when using the bus lanes during the trial period in West Los Angeles. Representative Stitcher said marketing would be a key component for the bus lane project. Ms. Litvak said that Mr. Stitcher would be one of the marketing partners (in conjunction with Santa Monica Big Blue Bus). Representative Capone-Newton recommended that Matt Raymond of Metro Communications work on this project.

Representative Rosten asked if the money for the project included removing areas in the right lane that interrupt traffic flow, such as curb "jut-outs" in portions of Westwood. Ms. Litvak indicated that some previous funding was geared toward this and the federal funding being sought would fund other portions of work needed in this area.

7. RECEIVED report on Westside Corridor Transit Extension Study, Jody Litvak, Regional Communications Manager

Ms. Litvak gave an overview of the scoping meetings being held to gather public input on the type of transit improvements (heavy rail, light rail, bus rapid transit) they would like to see within the Westside Corridor. The 38-square mile study

area is bounded by the Santa Monica Mountains to the north, Western Avenue to the east, Pico Boulevard to the South and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Extension alternatives could begin at either the Wilshire/Western or Hollywood/Highland Purple/Red Line Stations and proceed westward along Wilshire or Santa Monica Boulevards. Ms. Litvak informed the audience that any Westside Corridor project would be in addition to the Exposition Light Rail project which is already underway. Five public scoping meetings are scheduled and public comment will be accepted until November 1 for this stage of the study. In early 2008, staff will report on the alternatives that will be subject to further evaluation. In summer 2008, staff will recommend a locally preferred alternative to Metro Board and ask for authorization to take that alternative into further environmental review.

Ms. Litvak said the corridor is historically significant and has been reviewed in the past for improvements. She said tunneling technology has made remarkable advances since a subway was last proposed in the corridor. The corridor has also seen rapid growth, increasing traffic congestion, a built-out roadway network and a higher than average demand for public transit compared to other areas in the region. The area also has almost an even split between residents and jobs. There are many centers in the study area including Miracle Mile, Beverly Hills and Century City, all potential station locations.

Ms. Litvak gave an overview of the various modes Metro may consider for a Westside Extension: heavy rail transit, light rail transit, bus rapid transit, and rapid bus/rapid express bus. She said construction costs, ridership, cost-effectiveness, land use, travel time savings and reliability will be among the factors that help Metro decide the best mode for service expansion. Environmental effects, sustainability factors, security, safety, financial capability and community acceptability will also be considered.

Outreach methods for the Westside Corridor Extension project include soliciting email, telephone feedback and even digital video and audio submissions for input. Questions can be directed to the Westside Corridor Extension project study at (213) 922.6932 or by logging on to the website: <http://metro.net/westside>.

Representative Rosten asked what feedback had been given at meetings thus far. Ms. Litvak said that the public seems to want a project both on Wilshire and Santa Monica, north-south connectors, monorail, and better bus service along the corridor today.

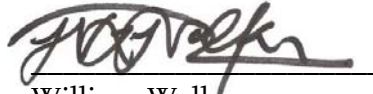
Representative Rosten asked whether putting in more synchronized signals as Austin, Texas did, would decrease traffic. Ms. Litvak said that Los Angeles has one of the most advanced signal networks in the country.

8. RECEIVED Chair's Remarks

Chair Wright said that it would be great for audience and Council Members to get involved in efforts to help shape the future of transportation in Southern California.

ADJOURNED at 6:31 P.M.

Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Walker', written over a horizontal line.

William Walker
Council Secretary