

Wednesday, November 12, 2008

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

325 S. La Cienega Blvd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

Called to Order at 5:00 P.M.

Council Members Present:

Glenn Rosten, Chair
Art Ida, Vice Chair
Catherine Bator
Peter Capone-Newton
Terri Slimmer
Joe Stitcher
Jerard Wright

Officers Present:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary

1. RECEIVED Public Comment from Items not on the Agenda:

Zachary Strong – Thanked Metro for its hard work over the current calendar year. He added that Metro employees deserved the thanks because they are not thanked enough. He was disappointed that he waited 30 minutes for a Rapid Line 728 bus at Union Station; but because it took so long to arrive, he chose an alternate line. He suggested deploying high capacity buses on Lines 33 and 333 since he encounters overcrowding on those lines, even as late as 10pm at night.

Wayne Coombs – Said that “bus cubes” on Fairfax Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard (west of Argyle) indicate that Line 780 service operates on weekends when in fact it does not. He suggested changing the bus cubes to reflect the correct information so passengers do not wait unnecessarily for service that is not scheduled. He also suggested merging (Lines 20/720 Westbound) local and rapid stops at Wilshire and La Brea nearside (NE corner) because there is approximately 300 feet of available space for both lines to stop. He added that overhead monitors at Red Line stations do not display times of arriving trains at night, even when maintenance is not taking place along the Red Line. He requested that the times be displayed when maintenance is not taking place.

Connie Levy – On October 18, the 9:01pm Line 233 trip did not show. At 9:40pm, 6 of the 20 people gathered waiting for the Line 233 bus shared a cab ride to Westwood rather than wait for the next bus. She is concerned that many people are stranded in this area. She also added that there are problems with schedule reliability on Line 2.

Yanet Morales – Said that safety and overcrowding are major concerns for Line 534 (West Los Angeles – Malibu). Overcrowding and the large number of passengers attempting to board at Washington and Fairfax between 5:30am and 7am has made it potentially unsafe for elderly and seniors attempting to board. Often the driver at 6:25am would arrive at the stop and then close the doors before all of the passengers have boarded because of the rush of oncoming passengers jostling and fighting each other to board first. This causes subsequent buses to be full and pass up riders. She suggested that the Metro Communications department survey the line and that Metro add more solar-powered I-Stop lighted poles to stops in remote, dark locations along Pacific Coast Highway. She also mentioned that operators need more training on accepting the TAP card, especially on lines like Line 534 with zone-based fares.

2. APPROVED Minutes from October 15, 2008 meeting. Representative Slimmer abstained.

3. RECEIVED report from Council Representatives on their line rides

Representative Slimmer – Reported that bunching and delays on Lines 4 and 704 are still common. She added that no-shows have also been more common lately, specifically two no-shows on Line 220 between 3 and 4pm on November 11.

Representative Ida – Said he rode a Line 33 bus at rush hour and it was very crowded. The operator handled the run very well. Mr. Maloney said that changes to the line discussed at previous Governance Council meetings to take effect in December will help with the overcrowding.

4. RECEIVED General Manager Report and Report Back on October Governance Council Meeting Agenda Items Topic, Mark Maloney, General Manager

- Four community meetings regarding Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit will take place throughout November. A discussion will be held at the December Governance Council meeting.
- Key Performance Indicators – September 2008
 - Complaints are at their highest number agencywide. Sectors are analyzing data to see if this is an anomaly or a trend.
 - In-service on-time performance (ISOTP) also dropped. Sector staff is preparing an aggressive ISOTP plan for the year.
 - Mean miles between mechanical failures continue to improve for the year, even as other Sectors have suffered in this area.
 - Accidents per hub mile were at target for the month.
 - Worker Compensation costs are up but the number of active claims is down.
- Agenda Items for 2009
 - Combining of Local and Rapid Stops
 - Wilshire and La Brea (Lines 20/720 Westbound) was combined farside (NW corner) effective November 23, 2008.
 - La Cienega and Wilshire (Line 105 Northbound) cannot be combined at this time because the farside stop (NE corner) is

just before a driveway that is adjacent to a non-ADA accessible area with a mound of grass and trees.

- Other stop locations mentioned at previous meetings will be reviewed and presented in General Manager Reports at future meetings.
- Meeting format – Executive Secretary Suzanne Handler sent a link via electronic mail of all Metro Service Sector Governance Council Agendas. Chair Rosten asked that Council Representatives review other meeting agendas and have suggestions ready for possible changes to the meeting structure at the December meeting.
- Joint Line Rides versus Line Ride Reports – Council Representatives opted out of Joint Line Rides and selected a Line Ride Report item in its place in earlier years because of difficulty with scheduling an optimal time for full participation, and issues with potentially violating the Brown Act. Sector management in conjunction with operations staff and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department perform periodic Line Saturations where various department heads collect data at several timepoints on a route and use the information to improve scheduling and customer service. Mr. Maloney will inform Council Representatives when line saturations take place which will allow for their participation.
- TAP Update – The TAP working group completed its implementation and outreach plan and shared it at the November Operations Committee meeting. Mr. Maloney will invite the team to provide a status report at the December meeting.
- Metro.net Interface for Internet-enabled Mobile Phones – A new team is working on the metro.net website to make it more ADA accessible. Mr. Maloney will forward concerns to this group regarding the inability of many mobile phones to process portable digital file (PDF) file formats. He mentioned that many portions of the website are supported by internet-enabled phones including the trip planner.
- Next Bus/Next Train monitors – Next Train software was installed on all Red Line platforms in August. Times that appear on the monitors are scheduled arrival times. The Red Line control center can change the times if something urgent happens that dramatically affects the train schedule (i.e. maintenance). Overall, riders find the monitors useful and have given positive feedback. Some rapid lines have displays that give next bus arrival estimates. The mobile metro.net site also has a rapid NextBus arrival time page that estimates the arrival of the next rapid based upon loop sensor data which is pretty reliable if the

scheduled bus is within 5 minutes of the scheduled arrival time. Other methods using RITS data or ATMS data have been unreliable because of data cleaning issues or poor estimation because of less than desirable polling frequencies.

- Comparison of key performance indicators between Metro and larger municipal operators (Culver City, Santa Monica) – a letter was sent to Culver CityBus and Santa Monica Big Blue Bus requesting periodic reports on their key performance indicators.
- More public participation at Council meetings – participation at the Westside Central Sector meetings is comparable to other sectors. San Fernando Valley is at a slightly higher rate than Westside. Three of five sectors meet weekday evenings, one meets Friday morning, and one meets Thursday afternoon. Westside has held meetings in West Hollywood, Beverly Hills and at the Gateway building (Union Station) Timing and location has not impacted participation levels. Beverly Hills meetings have been well attended considering the location is most central of all three in relationship to the rest of the Sector. Meetings are advertised on buses using interior cards and take-one brochures; in newspapers; public hearings are advertised similarly and notices are mailed to a mass mailing list.
- Other meeting topics can be added to the agenda by consulting with Chair Rosten.

RECEIVED Questions and Comments regarding General Manager report:

Representative Slimmer suggested that line saturations take place at shakeup times to gather data on operators acclimating to new routes and operating environments and potentially catching new problems in service delivery at the very beginning.

Representative Slimmer said that after meeting with a disabled transportation users group, she learned that many are worried about not knowing how to use the TAP card before its rollout, whether disabled riders are being trained on using the TAP, whether all disabled passengers will feel comfortable physically tapping their TAP card, and how vulnerable disabled riders might be wearing a TAP card that may also be used as a VISA card. She also asked if Access, Inc. identification cards would become TAP cards. Mr. Maloney said Access will convert their identification cards into TAP cards in the long run. Ms. Jody Feerst Litvak (Community Relations Manager, Operations) agreed to bring these concerns to the TAP working group.

5. RECEIVED Quarterly Budget Data and Measure R Update, Michael Davis, Administration and Finance Manager
- The Westside Central Service Sector is operating with year-to-date spending of \$42.7 million, a negative variance of \$2.2 million.
 - Non-controllables and chargebacks are both at a combined negative variance of \$3.3 million.
 - Public Liability/Property Damage (PL/PD) reserves were increased this year because of a settlement upwards of \$2 million. Two accidents each with a fatality increased PL/PD by \$1 million in October.
 - Workers' Compensation increased because of an increase in accidents in the Sector. Older claims that are being settled this fiscal year have also increased this particular line item.
 - Parts spending is at a negative variance of \$218,000 because of problems with articulated bus crank shafts. Division 7 operates an older diesel fleet with buses that have accumulated more than 500,000 miles, also causing an increase in parts spending. New buses will arrive this fiscal year which will bring down parts costs but may increase labor costs at Division 6 because mechanics will need to learn how to repair newer buses. Many Division 7 buses (Neoplans, NABIs) have in excess of 300,000 miles and need mid-life overhauls.
 - Contract wages are at a positive variance of \$781,000. Costs for mechanics and service attendants (ATU) continue to run a negative variance of \$200,000, which is offset by a positive operator wage (UTU) variance of \$800,000, making contract wages below target overall.
 - Non-contract wages are at a positive variance of \$54,000. Two vacancies remain unfilled (assistant transportation manager, senior administrative analyst), although one (assistant transportation manager) may be filled shortly.
 - Fuel and lubricant costs are at a negative variance of \$148,000. Hedged CNG fuel costs are at \$1.02 per therm. Actual CNG fuel costs are \$0.57 per therm. Gasoline and diesel fuel costs have decreased since the beginning of the fiscal year and additional diesel fuel from other divisions was transferred to Division 6, the only Division in the system operating a diesel-only fleet, causing further cost savings.

RECEIVED Questions regarding Quarterly Budget Update

Representative Rosten asked if cost overruns within Westside Central Service Sector were consistent with other Sectors in the agency. Mr. Davis said that workers' compensation overruns are typical and that PL/PD costs have been high for the past three to five years within the Westside Central Sector. Requests have been made to offset the large settlements that have been paid from the PL/PD category but were subsequently denied.

Representative Bator asked if Sectors were individually responsible for payment of claims for accidents that occur with buses operated by the Sector. Mr. Davis said that Metro allocates a budget for each Sector and expects each Sector to allocate expenses associated with each accident. Sector staff identifies problem intersections and training methods that can decrease the number of accidents each year.

Representative Wright asked if there were any vacancies in contract positions within the Sector. Mr. Davis responded that the Sector is short seven operators and the agency overall is short 52 operators.

Chair Rosten suggested that the Council write a joint letter requesting that PL/PD expenses be centralized rather than allocated and expenses at the Sector level.

➤ Measure R Update

Votes for County Sales Tax Measure R on the November 2008 general ballot are still being counted but the passage of Measure R looks very favorable and Metro CEO Roger Snoble sent a letter to Metro staff announcing the passage of Measure R and its proposed expenditure plan which will include funding for operating improvements; highway improvements; rail construction projects; local return funding for city transportation, highway and local roads; municipal operator funding; Metrolink capital improvements and administrative costs.

Rail projects within the Westside Central Sector to be funded include the Regional Connector, Exposition Light Rail Project Phase II, Crenshaw Corridor Project, the Westside Subway (Purple Line) Extension to Westwood and a San Fernando Valley-I-405 Westside Connector project.. Measure R also implements a one-year fare freeze for all fare categories and a five-year fare freeze for children, students, seniors and the disabled.

Measure R goes into effect January 1, 2009. After 180 days, merchants are required to assess and collect the half-cent sales tax (July 1). After taxes have been assessed and collected for six months, revenue will begin to flow into the agency and the Sectors (January 1, 2010).

RECEIVED Questions Regarding Measure R Update

Representative Ida asked how the revision to the State Budget would impact Metro funding for Fiscal Year 2009. Mr. Davis said that the agency is anticipating a \$132 million operating deficit this year because of the revision to the State Budget. The deficit will continue to grow considering initial Measure R revenues will not be received until January 2010.

Ms. Feerst Litvak added that the Board chose to pursue Measure R because the agency has been unable to rely on State Transportation Assistance funds and other structural problems with the state budget that prevent the agency from receiving state transportation funding.

6. RECEIVED Customer Satisfaction Survey Results, Cosette Stark, Director, Transportation Program Development

Ms. Stark gave an overview of the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey that is performed every spring.

- The survey samples all directly-operated Metro bus and rail lines between 5am and 8pm. Fifteen thousand surveys are distributed on-board Metro-operated vehicles and a 60 percent response rate is achieved. Lines with problematic data are resurveyed in June.
- A trend report is created comparing the current survey to years past. Since 2002, there has been a slight increase in satisfaction with Metro service, service improvements, on-time performance, operator courtesy, ability to find a seat, reducing pass-ups of waiting passengers at bus stops and increasing overall discretionary ridership.
- Data cleaning and analysis is performed.
- A line-by-line analysis is created which evaluates each question by line and how a line performs. This information is provided to Sector staff and Governance Council members to help Sectors identify areas to improve within the Sector.
- Overall frequencies of survey questions are reviewed to identify areas to improve upon agencywide.

- Topical questions are added to the survey that might be relevant to newly launched campaigns, initiatives or transit corridor research (i.e. TAP rollout, Line 177 JPL-CalTech Connections Survey).
- Line level studies are also performed using surveys (i.e. Wilshire Bus Lanes Pilot Project study)

RECEIVED Questions regarding Customer Satisfaction Survey Results:

Chair Rosten asked if potential bus rider surveys were performed. Ms. Stark responded that an annual general public survey is performed each year over the telephone. The survey is extensive and the sample population is representative of the entire county. Chair Rosten said that it would be interesting to see the results of that survey to see how Metro serves its service area as a whole and how it could serve even more people. Ms. Stark added that most general survey respondents are most satisfied with Metro lines that offer frequent service. Mr. Maloney said the general public survey can be placed on a future Council agenda.

Representative Capone-Newton requested a question regarding mobile phone access on a future survey. The question should ascertain whether a passenger carries their cellular phone while riding Metro, if the phone is capable of sending and receiving text messages and/or accessing the internet.

Representative Slimmer asked if survey data can be sorted by time period in order to determine whether problem areas occurred at specific times of the day on a particular route (i.e. discourteous operator). Ms. Stark said that parsing the data in such a manner may make it statistically invalid.

Representative Bator asked why surveys were not performed after 8pm. Ms. Stark said she would look into this matter.

7. RECEIVED Performance Standards for Owl Service Parameters, Stephen Fox, Transportation Planner IV, Service Planning and Development, Operations

Mr. Fox announced that Owl Service Parameters will become a new service type category in the newly drafted Metro Service Performance Index, previously presented to the Governance Council and to be implemented during the first quarter of 2009. The service level to be achieved by Owl service under the new parameters will be a target of

25.44 passengers per service hour. Other Metro service types (Local, Rapid, Express) will be evaluated under the standard service performance index criteria which include complaints, productivity, boardings per revenue service hour, passenger miles per seat mile, cost of operation per passenger mile, and areas within a quarter-mile of census tracts that contain 3 households or 4 jobs per acre.

Much of the Metro service area that is within a quarter-mile of census tracts that contain 3 households or 4 jobs per acre does not have Owl service. Much of the Metro service provided currently is legacy based – lines that historically carry the most boardings into the night rather than lines that necessitate late night service.

A Board mandate from FY 2008 prevented cuts to owl service for the June 2008 Service Changes Program. An additional influx of operating revenue from Measure R may also determine whether or not additional Owl service will be added or if current owl service will be made more efficient.

RECEIVED Questions regarding Performance Standards for Owl Service Parameters:

Representative Capone-Newton asked whether performance below the owl service index parameter would necessitate removing service. Mr. Maloney responded that owl lines that fall below the performance indicator might require a reroute or other improvements rather than ceasing operation.

8. Chair's Remarks – NONE

ADJOURNED AT 6:30 P.M.

Prepared by: 
William L. Walker
Council Secretary