

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

325 S La Cienega Boulevard
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:

Officers Present:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary

1. RECEIVED Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

Eric Kramer:

- Suggested that short line Wilshire Rapid trips on Lines 720 and 920 originating from or terminating at Westwood Boulevard be renumbered Line 721 or 921 and that trips originating from or terminating in Santa Monica retain their existing line numbers (720, 920).
- He noted that many Line 720 trips were very overcrowded.
- He also noted that bike racks frequently were broken on Westside buses and suggested that bike racks be included as a part on a checklist/routine maintenance schedule.
- Suggested that Metro quickly partner with Google Transit to reach the many users of Google Transit who live in Los Angeles but are unfamiliar with using the existing Metro Trip Planner.
- Dislikes TransitTV citing that the noise from the TV is very distracting for riders attempting to read or study. He suggested lowering the volume and potentially ending the contract altogether.
- Observed drug transactions on board a Metro vehicle on more than one occasion: Lines 212/312 (La Brea Ave) near the intersection of La Brea and Adams.

Representative Bator suggested that TransitTV use closed captioning rather than broadcasting audio on the buses.

Joan Taylor

- Opposes the cuts to the Metro Immediate Needs Program made at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2009.
- Said that operators are misusing electronic devices when operating their vehicles and asked that Mr. Maloney act by disciplining operators who misuse electronic devices.

Wayne Coombs

- Said that complaints from Joan Taylor were invalid and that cellular phones and other electronic devices are not disruptive to a person with a pacemaker unless placed within six inches of that person's chest.

Howard Cohen

- Said that Santa Monica Big Blue Bus (BBB) riders do not have a direct connection between the Pico Rimpau-Terminal and Wilshire/Western Station. He added that he attended a BBB public hearing where he learned that BBB proposed connecting their Rapid 7 to Wilshire/Western Metro Station but Metro objected. He suggested allowing BBB Rapid 7 to serve Wilshire/Western Station or extending either Metro Rapid Line 710 or Line 218 to serve both Pico-Rimpau Terminal and Wilshire/Western Station.

2. APPROVED Minutes from November 12, 2008 regular meeting.
3. RECEIVED General Manager’s Report, Mark Maloney, General Manager

Key Performance Indicators – November 2008

- Complaints, workers compensation claims and accidents all continue to decrease; the Sector achieved 3.64 accidents per 100,000 hub miles, an all-time low for the past three years when high-capacity articulated coaches were first introduced.
 - In-service on-time performance decreased in November; a task force has been created to identify problem areas and devise strategies to improve that (i.e. Lunch on Mark On-Time Performance Improvement Program) will be implemented in February or March 2009.
 - Mean miles between mechanical failures remained roughly the same from month-to-month. December looks to be trending better than November because of a decrease of mechanical problems with Division 10 articulated buses.
4. RECEIVED Updates on Joint Development Projects, TAP Implementation Program, and the HOT Lanes Congestion Pricing Program, Roger Moliere, Chief, Real Property Management and Development

Joint Development Projects

Mr. Moliere reported that over 30 different projects were in various stages of development throughout the region – from large to small; planning to completed; - with a multitude of different uses: retail, housing, child care, schools, and open space. He added that the projects are jointly developed with plans drafted for how the land will be utilized and linked into Metro bus and rail stations before the project is finalized. The project is then built by the developer and Metro receives a lease payment once the project is constructed. That payment is then used by Metro to pay for additional transit services throughout the County.

Some of the projects include:

Planned
NBC Universal (Universal City Station)
El Monte Bus Station Expansion and Redesign (El Monte Station)
Under Construction
Wilshire/Western Station Joint Development (retail, housing)
1 st St/Boyle Station Joint Development (housing, grocer, community)

room)

Completed

Hollywood/Highland Station (Kodak, Grumann Theaters, retail)

Wilshire/Vermont Station (housing, retail, vertical school)

TAP (Transit Access Pass)

Mr. Moliere reported that the vast majority of Metro paper fare media (monthly pass, weekly pass, senior/disabled/student pass, day pass) would convert from paper to contactless plastic card fare media beginning in mid-March, citing the rampant counterfeiting of paper fare media and passenger purchase and use of the fraudulent media as a major justification for the change. He said that the fare media can be purchased online and at some point in the future used on other municipal transit services in the county as a seamless method of fare payment. He also announced that several schools in the county are part of the I-TAP (institutional TAP program) including the nine-campus Los Angeles Community College District, UCLA, and Rio Hondo College. A partnership between Metro and Visa will make the implementation of the TAP program almost cost-neutral and allow for customers to use the TAP card as both a (weekly, monthly or annual) transit pass with the capabilities of a bank card without needing to apply or qualify for an actual bank account. Other card partnerships are planned with LA Live and American Express.

Congestion Pricing/High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lanes

Mr. Moliere presented details about the HOT Lanes program, which will take two high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on Interstates 10 (between downtown Los Angeles and El Monte) and 110 (between downtown Los Angeles and Gardena). The HOT Lanes program will levy a fee (from \$2 to \$9) to access lanes when there is excess capacity which will prevent the lanes from dropping below the optimal speed of 45 miles per hour. The program will increase the number of people passing through each corridor and funds generated by the fee will be spent on improving auxiliary services within the HOT Lanes corridors (vanpools, express bus services, park/ride lots, street and lot lighting, traffic signal timing) . Existing HOV limits on each freeway will be retained. Tolls will be collected using FasTrak transponders already in use on HOT Lanes in Orange County and will be integrated with the Metro TAP program.

RECEIVED Questions regarding Updates on Joint Development Projects, TAP Implementation Program, and the HOT Lanes Congestion Pricing Program:

Representative Bator asked that Mr. Moliere work with joint developers to ensure that ample community meeting room spaces are made available in new projects to ensure that community groups can plan meetings adjacent to transit and potentially cause new

ridership. Mr. Moliere mentioned that several projects include community meeting rooms when the developer deems them compatible with their proposed project and cited several stations along the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension as examples where community meeting rooms were included.

Representative Rosten suggested that parking also be included with joint development projects to ensure that potential riders have a space to park their vehicle. Mr. Moliere agreed and said that the North Hollywood joint development project did include additional parking that was funded completely by the developer freeing up funds that Metro could earmark toward other operational costs rather than parking.

Representative Slimmer asked that Mr. Moliere work more closely with local governments, and specifically the Metro Local Transit Systems Subcommittee, to ensure that the conversion to TAP does not leave their discount pass program participants and Access paratransit program participants without working fare media when the conversion is completed, considering the deadline is March 2009 and as of January 2009, none of the West Hollywood pass program participants possess a TAP card, nor are they aware of how to reload it with fare value. She also mentioned a lack of multilingual materials (i.e. Russian). Mr. Moliere said that the TAP program is working very closely with senior citizen centers and programs that serve the disabled to provide a Mobile TAP Outlet that will visit community centers during the initial months of the conversion. He added that the program should include municipal discount pass programs and agreed to work closely with cities that needed further assistance.

Representative Ida commented on the inter-operator incompatibilities of the TAP card including a cash purse on the Culver CityBus TAP card that currently cannot be used as valid fare payment on Metro buses.

Representative Wright mentioned that he had not noticed any marketing efforts informing patrons of where to pick up a TAP card once paper fare media is discontinued in March 2009. Mr. Moliere said a major marketing effort was in progress including a month-long introductory program where current day pass riders will receive a free TAP card upon purchasing a day pass aboard Metro vehicles between March 15 and April 11, 2009. Other distribution methods include existing Metro pass vendor outlets and automated ticket vending machines at bus and rail stations, TAP Visa Kiosks which operate similar to an ATM machine and will be placed at major trip generators (i.e. Union Station), gift card racks at grocery stores, and online through the Metro taptogo.net website.

Representative Capone Newton suggested creating a TAP-out system that rewards Metro customers for tapping out (i.e. fare discounts) and thereby allowing for the collection of origin and destination data that can be useful when planning service

changes and implementing new services. Mr. Moliere agreed to take feedback from the Council to the TAP Working Group.

Representative Capone Newton suggested that Metro collect data on existing travel patterns on the proposed HOT Lanes corridors by polling existing commuters that use the corridors (i.e. vanpoolers, bus riders, Metrolink riders, Busway riders) and monitor changes in behavior once the fee is instituted.

Representative Slimmer asked if the HOT Lanes program will be operated as a public-private partnership or by Metro. Mr. Moliere responded that the program would be operated by Metro but could be a candidate for public-private partnership in the future.

RECEIVED Public Comment regarding Updates on Joint Development Projects, TAP Implementation Program, and the HOT Lanes Congestion Pricing Program

Ken Ruben – Said that he too believed there would be conversion issues with the implementation of the TAP program and was particularly concerned about the conversion of the Senior Metro EZ Monthly Pass.

5. DISCUSSED Bus Service Improvement Plan

Mr. Maloney reported that 20 percent of sales tax revenue to be received from Measure R receipts was earmarked for bus operations, upwards of \$150 million over the initial 18 months. Conversely, the State Transit Assistance funds already programmed each year for bus operations will decline by \$440 million over the next 18 months. Although Metro is taking recommendations from all five Service Sectors regarding how each Sector would like to see funds spent, ability to implement any expansion to revenue service may not be possible until the State Legislature resolves the State Budget.

Representative Slimmer suggested placing NextBus monitors outside subway stations to allow passengers to determine, based on actual trip data, whether a transfer to the subway would make sense or continuing on surface transit instead.

Representative Capone Newton suggested more advanced streetside information (rather than existing web-based technology) capable of helping riders determine the best option for travel rather than the often-chosen “first available” method. He also suggested better visual aids that could help riders decipher and distinguish the options available within the Metro system.

Representative Rosten also suggested placing more displays that inform riders at major trip generators along major corridors.

Representative Bator said neighborhood stops where buses operate more infrequently

are just as deserving of streetside information in order for neighborhood dwellers to connect with larger corridors and further expand potential ridership.

Representative Wright suggested more streetside information at major transfer points: Pico and San Vicente Boulevards, Wilshire Boulevard and Vermont Avenue. He also suggested further strengthening and restructuring of Venice Boulevard service (Lines 33/333) to coordinate a potential start of new Rapid service on Venice Boulevard in conjunction with the start of Expo Light Rail Service in 2010. He added improving express service on the Interstate 405 corridor between Van Nuys and Westwood and referenced the expedited express service proposal presented to both the Westside Central and San Fernando Valley Service Sector Councils in 2008.

Representative Slimmer suggested Metro require that future joint development projects have ample wayfinding signage that ensures riders are aware of Metro stations and connecting transit services.

Representative Rosten suggested exploring ways to alleviate the overcrowding of Wilshire Boulevard buses (20/720/920).

6. RECEIVED report on proposed service changes for June 2009, Rogelio Gandara, Service Development Manager

June 2009 Service Changes Objectives

- Adjusting bus service to optimize connections between the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and Metro and municipal operator feeder services.
- Improving capacity utilization Sector-wide
- Discontinuing low performing bus service
- Reducing 16,000 revenue service hours within the Sector; 58,000 service hours systemwide.

June 2009 Service Changes Recommendations

- Line 14 Downtown Los Angeles-Beverly Hills via Beverly Bl: Improve service with resources from Line 714.
- Lines 30/31 Pico/Rimpau Terminal-East Los Angeles College via Pico Bl/E 1st St: Restructure lines to interface with Gold Line Eastside Extension – Terminate Line 30 at Rowan/Dozier Terminal and retain Line 31 service along 1st Street to East Los Angeles College; replace eastern leg of Line 30 (Hammel, Floral Dr) with extension of Line 287 from Montebello Town Center to Indiana Station via Floral Drive. Reduce frequency of both lines on First Street between Alameda Street and Atlantic Boulevard. Retain existing Owl service.
- Line 220: Discontinue service due to low productivity.
- Line 704: adjust service levels and establish short turn terminal at Santa Monica

and Sepulveda Boulevards.

- Line 714 Beverly Bl Rapid: adjust service levels and reallocate resources to Line 14.
- Line 730 Pico Bl Rapid: Restructure line to interface with Gold Line Eastside Extension – eliminate service north of Temple Street to Union Station; reroute from First and Broadway north on Broadway and east on Temple to Little Tokyo/Arts District Station and west on First Street from Little Tokyo/Arts District Station to Broadway and then via regular route to Pico/Rimpau Terminal.
- Line 920 Wilshire Express Rapid: adjust service levels and establish short line terminal at Wilshire and Westwood Boulevards.

Next Steps

2/11/2009 – Public hearing

3/11/2009 – Return with staff recommendation

4/23/2009 – Recommendations considered by Metro Board of Directors

6/28/2009 – Implement Service Changes (possible 6/21 implementation date to coordinate with opening of Gold Line Eastside Extension)

RECEIVED Questions and Comments from Council regarding proposed service changes for June 2009

Representative Ida announced that Culver CityBus, because of the recent reallocation of State Transit Assistance funds to end the State budget deficit, would not be able to assume replacement service once Line 220 is canceled.

RECEIVED Public Comment regarding proposed service changes for June 2009:

Zachary Strom – expressed dismay at the potential elimination of Line 220 service and the lack of replacement service from an alternate operator.

7. RECEIVED update on Marketing Projects, Jody Feerst Litvak, Regional Communications Manager

Reported on projects that the Sector will focus on for Fiscal Year 2009:

- Distributed 14,700 direct mail cards promoting low-performing Line 534 Malibu/Trancas Canyon-West Los Angeles Transit Center via Pacific Coast Highway to households within a quarter-mile of the route. Also printed black and white advertisements in seven newspapers.
- A Night Owl Direct Mail campaign is planned to promote low-performing Owl services within the Sector (Lines 10, 14, 37, 38).
- Update *How are We Doing?* Campaign with easier to read “car cards” that display the number more widely.

Ms. Litvak agreed to bring a copy of the How Are We Doing? Car Card once redesigned.

8. RECEIVED report from Council Representatives on their line rides

Representative Wright requested additional funding of supervisor positions to ensure better on-time performance specifically on corridors with high levels of service and Rapid buses.

9. Chair's Remarks – None

ADJOURNED at 6:59 P.M.

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

Prepared by: William L. Walker
Council Secretary