

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

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

Officers:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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**Minutes – Westside Central Service Sector Governance Council Regular Meeting
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)
Wednesday, September 9, 2009**

1. RECEIVED Public Comment on items not on the Agenda:

Ken Ruben – Said he rode bus 9439 on Line 720, which departed from Wilshire and Westwood prior to this meeting. He said he observed two Line 20 buses that did not stop at Wilshire and Westwood Boulevards. He also observed a broken rear headsign on Bus 6465 which displayed Line 333 rather than Line 20.

Bertha Canty – Said she was visiting from San Francisco, California for the week, and tried to get from Wilshire and Normandie to Baldwin Hills Plaza at 12:07pm, Tuesday, September 8. She waited nearly 40 minutes for a Line 206 to arrive. Mr. Maloney asked that the Council Secretary forward the information to the South Bay Service Sector.

2. APPROVED Minutes from the July 8, 2009 and August 12, 2009 meetings. Representative Slimmer abstained on approval of the July 8, 2009 minutes.

3. RECEIVED General Manager's Report – Mark Maloney

- Announced that TransitTV has been reinstated on some Metro buses. The new contractor is working out bugs with the existing system and is interested in hearing any feedback about what information might be interesting or helpful to the rider. Mr. Maloney agreed to bring ideas on behalf of the Council forward to the vendor, including the possibility of providing wi-fi internet proxy points in tandem with the TransitTV monitors on board Metro buses.
- Key Performance Indicators for the month of July 2009
 - Mean miles between mechanical failures increased because of increased attention being paid to problems with articulated buses, which did not help with keeping the indicator on target. Resources will be split more evenly between articulated buses and standard buses for the month of August, but hot weather may keep this indicator from improving dramatically before the next reporting period.
 - In Service On-time performance increased by more than 10 percent from 60 to 70 percent, exceeding the new goal of 68.7 by 2 percent, and improving considerably over last fiscal year's performance.
 - Traffic accidents are at 3.1 per 100,000 hub miles, still below the target of 4.0.
 - Complaints are at 2.43 per 100,000 hub miles, well below the 2.75 Sector target and the systemwide average.

Minutes – Westside Central Service Sector Governance Council Regular Meeting
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)
Wednesday, September 9, 2009

- Worker's Compensation indemnity claims continue to fall below target with only 6.9 per 200,000 exposure hours.
 - Community Relations Manager Jody Feerst Litvak announced the next series of Westside Subway Extension community meetings, which will focus on where exactly to put subway portals from the street level into the subway station. These workshops will be held during the first week of November.
4. RECEIVED presentation on Bus Operators and their Training – Doug Middleton, Director, Operator Training and Improvement

Metro Operations Central Instruction is responsible for meeting the diverse training needs of over 6,000 Operations employees who operate and maintain buses, trains and non-revenue service vehicles as well as provide field supervision for a fleet of 2,500 buses. There are 27 training supervisors and instructors: 10 who supervise maintenance and 27 who supervise bus operations. There are 3 assistant managers, 37 certified instructors, a senior maintenance instructor, a systems project manager, a digital media coordinator, and clerks and analysts who support the training process.

Training functions include:

Bus Operations Training:

New Hire Bus Operator training

Retraining of operators with a chargeable incident at the Division or at the OCI

Safety training

Customer relations

Line instructor mentor

Transportation safety institute

Return to work training.

Maintenance Training:

On-the-job mechanic training

Transportation maintenance training

Engine training

Training on maintenance components, such as CNG, diesel, transmission, air breaks, heating ventilation and air conditioning, and other technical support
CNG diesel, transmission, brake, air, tech support, heating HVAC.

Mr. Middleton discussed how the bulk of operations training is centered around bringing new operators on board and ensuring that each student

undertakes 240 hours of training, 100 of which is behind the wheel. This training meets California Department of Motor Vehicles requirements and involves a mandatory drug and alcohol training, and information on Metro Ethics and Equal Employment Opportunity policies. He added that much scrutiny had occurred because of an investigative report on KABC 7 that highlighted some wheelchair securement issues and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policies not being followed by a few Metro operators. He said that OCI, in cooperation with Division Instruction staff are creating new procedures to resolve some of the complaints of Metro customers who use wheelchairs. Some of those procedures include:

- Customer relations training for Metro operators – an eleventh class was just completed. The training, developed well before the KABC investigation, ensures that veteran operators have a refresher course in providing the best customer service before an operator receives enough complaints to require either discipline or termination. The program identifies operators with the highest complaints (either very discourteous complaints, or 4 complaints in a 12-month period and involves these operators in role play scenarios and group exercises in order to find positive methods of resolving conflict and reducing the number of complaints received.
- Tether strap training has been introduced in order to develop a system to provide both more reliable and quicker securement process for all wheelchair-dependent riders aboard Metro buses. This process involves screening anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 Metro riders who use wheelchairs and finding the easiest method for an operator to provide better customer service for riders using wheelchairs. All except 100 Metro operators have received this training.
- Two hours were added to basic operator training for additional ADA sensitivity training which involves a hands-on wheelchair securement training where operators sit in a wheelchair and navigate it onto a bus, which allows for operators to empathize with passengers using wheelchairs.
- OCI staff now monitors customer service on board buses given by operators in service to passengers with disabilities by using a bus pass (rather than an employee badge), observing and then evaluating bus operator performance. Findings are then reported to division management staff for follow-up with operators.
- OCI is developing a 2-hour training module to address a variety of issues related to the ADA: service animals, guide dogs, different types of wheelchairs and their securement requirements, and other regulations, which will be added to the standard 8-hour new hire bus operator training.

RECEIVED QUESTIONS regarding presentation on Bus Operators and their Training – Doug Middleton, Director, Operator Training and Improvement

Representative Bator asked whether a customer using a wheelchair is required to use a restraint when riding. Mr. Maloney responded only agencies that have a mandatory ADA-securement policy. As long as there are seats on buses without restraints, a rider in a wheelchair cannot be required to use restraints per anti-discrimination laws.

Representative Ida asked what training was required for operators on the TAP farebox system. Mr. Middleton responded that the TAP vendor is working on a solution to the many problems the system has encountered.

Representative Wright asked how OCI quantifies whether the customer service retraining program for veteran operators is successful and how soon after the class has been completed a change is observed. Mr. Middleton responded that operators who attend the classes have given great feedback about participating in the training. Each operator is presented a certificate signed by Metro's Chief Executive Officer. The operator also signs a commitment form that says the operator will improve his or her performance. He added that he is working directly with customer service on finding out which complaints are from repeat callers versus complaints that are valid. Charging of complaints to an operator's disciplinary record takes a number of factors into account, including the aforementioned ones.

Representative Bator lauded the program and said many Metro operators yell at passengers, evade questions, and have attitudes not typically seen in other cities. She added that passengers often misbehave more often in Los Angeles as well, which wears on operators. She added that making the rules of riding more prominent for riders might help this.

Customer Relations Manager Jody Feerst Litvak added that the Metro Marketing department will roll out a number of customer communication campaigns related to helping Metro riders become more savvy Metro riders:

Customer Education Program topics include:

How to plan trip

Having exact fare ready

How to TAP

ADA related issues

Riding safely, courteously, smartly.

**Minutes – Westside Central Service Sector Governance Council Regular Meeting
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)
Wednesday, September 9, 2009**

Representative Rosten suggested adding a rider courtesy to Metro operator component to the campaign as well. Mr. Maloney added that the Metro Ethics Department is working on developing a rider rules program in conjunction with the Metro Transit Adjudication Bureau which will all be introduced toward the end of this year.

5. RECEIVED report on the Fourth Quarter Key Performance Indicators and Loading Standards – Stephen Fox, Transportation Planning Manager IV, Service Development

According to the route performance index, a traditional measure of transit line performance, most rankings mirrored rankings from the previous quarter.

Best performing Local: Line 603 (1.42)

Worst performing Local: Line 220 (0.3)

Best performing Rapid: Line 720 (1.2)

Worst performing Rapid: Line 714 (0.7)

Bus bunching was removed from the Quality section of Key Performance Indicators because executive management staff wanted to put more resources into targeting in-service on-time performance rather than bus bunching, which is a subset of how well on-time performance is doing.

Mr. Fox defined the components of key performance indicators and said that Westside Central lines for the most part were meeting all of the KPIs, except for Connectivity, which is only an issue where 3 rapid lines (720, 728, 730) do not connect in the Los Angeles Central Business District; Quality, where Lines 218 and 728 increased their number of complaints; and frequency, where Lines 2, 16, 20 and 33 experience load factors greater than 120 percent at peak load points.

Questions regarding report on the Fourth Quarter Key Performance Indicators and Loading Standards

Representative Capone Newton asked how Sector management prioritized implementing service improvements in a time where funding for short-term fixes, i.e. adding a bus to an overcrowded line, might be cost prohibitive. Mr. Maloney responded that further analysis of KPIs helps identify areas management can focus on in order to alleviate a problem area. He added that line saturations, monitoring at line terminals, observing practices at divisions all factor into what takes priority. A test run using an articulated bus on Line 33/333 was done recently to assess whether switching Line 33/333 to

articulated buses might help in overcrowding. Areas where heavy resources or high ridership are evident often are the first areas to be targeted with fixes.

Representative Bator asked whether increasing the number of buses on weekends was possible for next service change. Mr. Maloney responded that wise choices, such as using articulated buses on Line 33/333, might allow for solving a problem of overcrowding by providing more capacity and making the service better for all passengers.

Representative Capone Newton asked how the bus bunching metric was derived. Mr. Fox responded that the coefficient of variance between scheduled arrival times and actual arrival times based upon the Automated Transit Management System (ATMS). Mr. Maloney said time points were added to all Rapid lines because the bus bunching metric was removed from Key Performance Indicators once Metro CEO Art Leahy reinstated use of the route performance index as a key performance indicator.

Representative Wright asked about previous discussions where Metro planned to increase field supervision in order to ensure operators would keep to their schedules and prevent bus bunching. Mr. Fox said an overall agency push to improve in-service on-time performance is under way. Service Development and Analysis staff are working on amendments to the Transit Service Policy that will create Metro Rapid timepoints and further information on how to design and run a rapid transit system and improve the on-time performance of the Rapid program which is currently below 60 percent.

6. CARRIED OVER presentation on Special Events and the bus detour process
7. RECEIVED report on Council Representatives' Line Rides

Representative Slimmer – Said that buses are not arriving per schedule during the 2pm hour. She said a 4 usually arrives around 2pm followed by a 704 at 2:23pm. The Rapid 704 was a 40-foot bus rather than a 20-foot bus. Although the annunciator did not work, and the bus was at capacity with displeased passengers aboard, the operator handled the situation well and did call out stops. She added that the TAP card day pass purchases often hold up the bus for up to 5 minutes while the operator loads the fare onto each TAP, further exacerbating the delayed bus. She suggested installing TAP validation machines at high volume trip generators, not just rail and Orange Line stations. Ms. Feerst Litvak said TAP cards can be loaded on the <http://www.taptogo.net> website as well.

**Minutes – Westside Central Service Sector Governance Council Regular Meeting
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)
Wednesday, September 9, 2009**

Representative Bator said she waited for a Line 534 bus on Sunday, September 6 at Pacific Coast Highway near Getty Villa traveling east toward Washington Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue. The first bus did not arrive as scheduled, and the following bus that did arrive was ridiculously crowded and uncomfortable. She then transferred to the Line 720, one of which she missed because of a poppy-colored articulated running in place of the red articulated Rapid series buses.

Representative Ida suggested lobbying the Federal Transit Administration to change the spare bus ratio from the current 20 percent to 35 percent, which would give transit properties more flexibility with assigning their bus fleet considering how alternative fuels, emergency situations such as the 2009 Southern California wildfires, and other factors cause transit agencies grief when assigning vehicles on a daily basis.

Representative Rosten suggested placing a placard in the front window or a flag outside the bus that indicates to passengers when a bus is operating an unintended service, i.e. a poppy-colored articulated bus operating on a Line 720 Rapid instead of a Rapid Red color-scheme bus.

Representative Rosten did not take line rides in the Sector service area, but noticed that buses and trains in Europe, where he recently visited, had fewer permanent seats and more seats that could be folded up in order to accommodate riders in wheelchairs and larger loads of passengers. Mr. Maloney commented that many resisted such a practice in the past, even though the practice makes sense for more crowded lines.

8. RECEIVED Chair's Remarks and General Announcements

Representative Rosten announced a Line Ride form that can be completed by Governance Council representatives and submitted to Sector Executive Secretary Suzanne Handler. Mr. Maloney agreed to email the form to representatives.

Representative Rosten suggested the Council hold another town hall forum for the November Council meeting at a location other than the Beverly Hills Tennis Center.

Representative Slimmer announced that a number of detours would take place around Sunset Boulevard, which will be closed between Doheny Drive and San Vicente Boulevard, the weekend of September 10 and 11 for the Sunset Strip Music Festival.

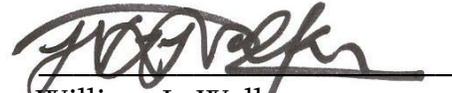
Minutes – Westside Central Service Sector Governance Council Regular Meeting
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)
Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Representative Bator suggested using the form for other Sector lines as well.
Mr. Maloney agreed to forward the forms to the appropriate Sector manager.

Representative Stitcher requested a presentation from the Bus Speed
Improvement Task Force at a future meeting.

ADJOURNED at 6:28 P.M.

Prepared by:



William L. Walker
Council Secretary