

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

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 5:00 p.m.

Council Members Present were:

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

1. RECEIVED Public Comment for items not on the Agenda

Ken Ruben:

- Said an operator on Line 439 was unaware of how to detour around a street closure related to the construction of the Exposition Light Rail Project (Expo) at Jefferson and La Cienega Boulevards
- Mentioned that he observed a Line 705 bus as a Metro Local poppy color scheme bus rather than the appropriate Metro Rapid Red color scheme bus, which can be confusing to the rider.
- Announced that Southern California Transit Advocates member Carlos Ocuna received an honorable mention and award certificate for being a Metro Volunteer at the October 12 San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council meeting.
- Suggested that Westside Central Service Sector Governance Council meetings take up the practice of doing a line profile at meetings, similar to one done on Line 76 at a recent San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Council meeting.

2. APPROVED Minutes from the September 9, 2009 meeting.

3. RECEIVED General Manager's Report.

- Systemwide Service Updates
 - Pre-revenue operations began on the Edward Roybal Gold Line Eastside Extension on October 4, 2009. The project opening is still unannounced, but may be scheduled for sometime in mid-November.
 - Articulated buses continue service testing on Line 33/333. Potentially, 15 buses have been located to begin service on Line 333 as early as the December Service Change date (December 14).
 - Silver Line Dual-Hub Bus Rapid Transit service debuts on Line 910 beginning December 14. Line 910 connects Artesia Transit Center in Gardena with El Monte Transit Center via Interstate 110 Harbor Transitway, local streets in downtown Los Angeles, and Interstate 10 El Monte Busway.
 - Line 902 Orange Line Express Supplemental Service begins December 14 from Pacoima, south on Van Nuys Boulevard, operating as a local line overlaying Line 233 service to Van Nuys Station; then east on Burbank Boulevard operating as an express service only stopping at Valley College Station (Fulton Avenue) and

North Hollywood Red Line Station (across from the North Hollywood Depot Orange Line Station).

- Year-to-Date Key Performance Indicators for FY 2010 as of August 31, 2009
 - Mean miles between chargeable mechanical failures is still below target for the month of August within the Sector and agencywide. September appears to be trending the same way, with improvement potentially within reach in October.
 - In-Service On-Time Performance, at 70 percent; complaints per 100,000 boardings; workers compensation indemnity claims per 200,000 exposure hours; and accidents per 100,000 hub miles are all at or better than target. Each indicator is performing better than systemwide averages year-to-date and better than any actual data ever recorded since the inception of the Westside/Central Service Sector.
 - Accidents per 100,000 hub miles have increased versus August 2009, due to the seasonal nature of traffic congestion which tends to increase at the end of summer and accident causes also increase in the winter (rain, slick roads).

- 4. CARRIED OVER presentation on the Metro Special Events and Bus Detour Process – Stephen Rank, Assistant Operations Control Manager

- 5. RECEIVED update on the Scoping for the Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit Project – Rex Gephart, Director of Countywide Planning and Development

Mr. Gephart gave an update to the Council on the series of Scoping Meetings recently held to begin the environmental review process for the Wilshire Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit Project

Proposed Project Description

- The project will provide exclusive peak-period bus lanes for Wilshire Boulevard, one of the busiest traveled corridors in the nation, with over 60,000 weekday boardings within the project area.
- The project area includes all of Wilshire Boulevard from Valencia Street (just west of the Harbor Freeway) to Centinela Avenue (at the Santa Monica City Line) within the City of Los Angeles. Portions of Wilshire

Boulevard within the cities of Beverly Hills & Santa Monica are not included at this time.

- It also includes the portions of Wilshire on both sides of the 405 freeway that go through federal property containing the VA Hospital and the Veterans Cemetery. This portion of Wilshire is under the jurisdiction of the County of Los Angeles.
- The environmental study is being conducted jointly by the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles & Metro.
- Construction for the project would be done by the County of Los Angeles for the areas adjacent to the 405 freeway, and by the City of Los Angeles for the remainder.
- The project has received 75% of its funding through the Federal Transit Administration "Very Small Starts" program. The balance would be provided locally with 10% from the City of Los Angeles and 15% from Metro).
- Peak-period bus lanes would operate weekdays during morning (6am-9am) and afternoon (4pm-7pm) peak commute periods in both directions, from the curb lane.
- The project also includes funding for infrastructure improvements along Wilshire such as reconstruction and repaving of curb lanes and street widening in selected areas. Improvements to signal timing, including bus signal priority are also included intended to improve traffic flow.
- The goals of the project are to improve bus passenger travel times and service reliability, attract new riders to transit, improve air quality, and minimize any potential negative impacts to existing parking.
- A decision was made to conduct an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to allow more in-depth analysis of some of the issues than the prior Initial Study (IS) could accommodate. The Environmental Assessment is still a part of this process and meets federal requirements.
- A few variations to the components of the BRT proposal are also under review. These modifications incorporate project alternatives we were asked to review previously. In some cases, this has now resulted in garnering support from former project opponents

Community Input Process/Scoping Sessions

Public scoping meetings were held in November 2008 during the earlier IS/EA. In May of 2009, a decision was made to elevate the Initial Study to a full Environmental Impact Report, which would entail gathering further public comment and performing additional technical analyses for the project.

The expanded EIR process will examine the feasibility of Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit and its potential alternatives, evaluate the environmental, social and economic issues associated with implementing the project, and satisfy State and Federal requirements for environmental assessment, which include evaluating impacts related (but not limited) to the following:

- Traffic and parking (74 total intersections)
- Air quality
- Noise
- Cultural resources (architectural, archaeological, paleontological)
- Environmental justice and resulting community impacts
- Historic resources and parklands

Segment-by-Segment Project Description

The project, beginning at the west end of the corridor:

Centinela to Barrington (0.8 miles)

- Reinstate curbside peak period bus only lanes

Barrington to Federal (0.1 miles)

- Widen both sides of Wilshire Boulevard by removing between 2 and 6 feet of sidewalk
- Add eastbound bus lane from Barrington to Federal

Federal to Sepulveda (0.8 miles)

- Remove 5 feet of sidewalk on the southern side (eastbound direction).
- Restripe eastbound and westbound lanes.
- Extend turn pocket 700 feet for traffic turning from eastbound Wilshire onto northbound Sepulveda.

Sepulveda to Malcolm (0.4 miles)

- Existing curb lanes converted to peak period bus lanes
- Add peak period bus lane in eastbound direction only.

Malcolm to Comstock (1.2 miles)

- Remove jutouts from curb lane and realign curb lane
- Add peak period bus lanes

Comstock to Beverly Hills city limit (0.5 mile)

- Existing curb lanes converted to peak period bus lanes

Beverly Hills (2.9 miles)

Not included in the project at this time.

Beverly Hills city limit (San Vicente) to Fairfax (0.6 miles)

- Existing curb lanes converted to peak period bus lanes

Fairfax to Western (2.8 miles)

- Repaving and reconstructing curb lanes
- Existing curb lanes converted to peak period bus lanes
- Eliminate 11 parking spaces

Western to Valencia (2.5 miles)

- Existing curb lanes converted to peak period bus lanes

Potential modifications to the project that are also being evaluated include:

- No build alternative
- Eliminating bus lane from S Park View to Valencia
- Eliminate bus lane from Sepulveda to mid-block between Veteran and Gayley due to the large amount of vehicles changing lanes to enter and exit the 405 Freeway.
- Retain all curb jutouts and adjacent spaces between jutouts in the Westwood area. This would retain the 99 “de facto” parking spaces in that area. In this case, the bus lane would operate in the right hand lane adjacent to the jut-outs and parking spaces. The money that would have been used for this work would be redirected to conduct repaving and/or rebuilding greater portions of Wilshire Boulevard, and other work as necessary.

Mr. Gephart concluded by reiterating the Project Description and its overall goals and reviewed a revised timeline that shifts project approval from Metro, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and the Federal Transit Administration by the end of June 2010, with construction commencing in July 2010.

RECEIVED Questions and Comments regarding update on the Scoping for the Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit Project:

Representative Rosten asked what the anticipated mode shift will be for the Wilshire BRT Project. Mr. Gephart responded that a 10 percent shift is anticipated. He added that implementation of the Wilshire Rapid alone increased ridership by 30,000 on the corridor; and that one-third of this increase was former automobile drivers, one-third was riders from Line 20

or other parallel local Wilshire Boulevard service, and one-third was from parallel corridor local service that switched to Wilshire Rapid because of travel-time improvements.

Representative Wright asked whether there are projections of how much run time savings might result from operating in exclusive bus lanes and whether any plans for reallocating that service in the future have been discussed. Mr. Maloney said that reallocation of service had not been discussed at this time. Mr. Gephart added that the average speed improvement along Wilshire Boulevard when Metro Rapid was first implemented was 26 percent. Although there has been a reduction in travel time, buses still haven't been removed.

Representative Capone-Newton asked whether streetside improvements will be made to accommodate the peak period exclusive bus lanes, such as off-vehicle payment, multiple door boardings, or distinctive canopies. Mr. Gephart responded that a study is underway to see whether the implementation of multiple door boarding will bring down dwell times enough to factor in the amount of money needed to pay fare inspectors to inspect fares at a stop location. If the cost of inspectors outweighs any savings incurred by reducing dwell times and the number of buses per hour, then multiple door boarding might not be viable for this particular project. He added that Metro is working with the City of Los Angeles and other municipalities to build even more streetside stations on several rapid corridors throughout the county, including the addition of more canopies along Wilshire Boulevard.

Representative Capone-Newton asked how operating three tiers of service (Metro Express Rapid, Metro Rapid and Metro Local/Municipal Operator/other buses) is being addressed in the environmental process. Mr. Gephart responded that the Sector is responsible for creating an operations plan for the line. Mr. Maloney added that Sector Service Development Staff will review the bus lane project plan and address issues such as but not limited to: whether stops will serve all three tiers of service and simply be extended, and how tiers of service might pass each other with the bus lane operation, which will be allowed per an agreement with LADOT.

Representative Capone-Newton expressed dismay at the compromise that eliminates the exclusive peak hour bus lanes on Wilshire Boulevard adjacent to Interstate 405 and regarding the removal of portions of

sidewalk on Wilshire Boulevard between Federal and Gayley to add the left turn lane pocket to eastbound Wilshire Boulevard for traffic turning west onto Sepulveda Boulevard.

6. RECEIVED update on In Service On-Time Performance – Michael Greenwood

Mr. Greenwood reaffirmed the FY 2010 commitment to improving Sector In Service On-Time Performance (ISOTP) to 80 percent by year's end. Since new Chief Executive Officer Art Leahy joined the agency in April, on-time performance has improved by 8 percent; year-to-date ISOTP for the Sector is at 72 percent as of August 31, 2009, which is up from 57 percent in September 2008. Much of the reduction can be attributed to a major reduction in operators leaving timepoints ahead of schedule.

- Division 6 (Venice) improved the most with an increase from 54 percent last September to 72 percent in August, 2009.
- Division 7 (West Hollywood) improved from 58 percent in September, 2008 to 70 percent in August, 2009.
- Division 10 (Central Los Angeles) improved from 57 percent in September, 2008, to 70 percent in August, 2009
- Improvements in performance have helped the Westside/Central Sector to surpass South Bay Sector, now ranking fourth agencywide in Sector ISOTP

Mr. Greenwood also presented to the Council some of what was implemented in order for Division Management to improve upon previous years' performance.

- Management staff stresses the importance of in service on-time performance.
- Schedules were reviewed by field supervisors, division management staff and service development managers to ensure that they are realistic.
- Communication between operators, field supervisors, bus operations control (dispatch) and transit operations supervisors has increased.
- Operators who run ahead of schedule, fail to adhere to scheduled timepoints, or create unnecessary schedule delays are disciplined.

- A four-phase discipline process has been strictly followed; under the current ISOTP campaign, four operators have already received 30-day unpaid suspensions and are one penalty away from being terminated.
- Accountability is spread over all shifts of field supervisors: morning, swing, and overnight. Supervisors are encouraged to be proactive when operators fail to adhere to their scheduled timepoints.
- Supervisors and managers are working to ensure disciplinary actions are reviewed and operators are counseled in order to ensure positive results and ISOTP gains.
- Operators who achieve high rates of ISOTP are also rewarded; reports that list operators with the highest and lowest ISOTP are posted at all operating divisions, ensuring the best performers are spotlighted for their achievements and those with lackluster ISOTP are encouraged to improve their ranking.
- Sectors are cooperating in areas where their operating divisions share corridors to provide enough management and division staff to hold line saturations that observe any problems with a line maintaining its ISOTP; operators tend to also perform better when management staff are highly visible in the field.

Mr. Greenwood concluded by discussing potential ideas for implementation in the future:

- Creating video footage in the field of how operators who achieve high ISOTP do it so well; highlight their “tricks of the trade” and recognize their efforts.
- Work with maintenance teams to ensure they know when their performance is at its peak, it impacts ISOTP in a positive way.
- Developing teams at each division to further examine why operators are running early or late and how to better reign in ISOTP.

RECEIVED questions regarding update on In Service On-Time Performance

Representative Rosten said how moved he was by the fact that management set out to establish accountability with operators and their ISOTP and then achieved it, using positive and negative enforcement to motivate operators to be on-time. He added that it

would be great if data regarding both controllable and non-controllable causes of ISOTP could be separated.

Mr. Greenwood added that the scheduling department has also been engaged in the improvement of ISOTP. The December 2009 Service Changes are an example of that: fifteen articulated buses will be introduced on Line 33/333 with running time changes, which will add capacity and, hopefully, improve ISOTP.

Representative Slimmer said Lines 4 and 704 should be coordinated to connect via timed transfer with Red Line arrivals and departures. She added that she does not see the 7 to 12 percent improvement in ISOTP reflected at all when observing ISOTP of Lines 4 and 704, especially considering often the bus arrives at its first timepoint (Union Station) late. Mr. Greenwood responded that the ISOTP improvement is based upon thousands of observations per month from automated passenger counters which are installed on board all Metro vehicles. This data is then compared with Automated Transit Management System data, anomalies and outliers are removed (i.e. bus breakdowns, trips that leave revenue service and deadhead to the division), and the remaining good data is broken down by day of week, time of day, line, and route (line branch). Line 33/333 had 27,300 observations in August, 2009, of which 16,000 were on time, 10,000 were late, and 1,000 were early. Line 33 is on-time 73 percent of the time; Line 333 is on-time only 50 percent of the time. Mr. Greenwood also added that Representative Slimmer's experience of late running buses might be attributed to the fact that a bus that is five minutes late is still considered to be on time according to the performance indicator. He added that changes to the existing standard may be considered in the near future: a bus that is five minutes late on a line with three minute headways may not be considered on-time in the future. Mr. Maloney added that a bus might be five minutes late to its initial timepoint if the maintenance team had not gotten the bus to roll out on time.

Representative Wright said in future presentations that he would like to see trends of ISOTP on a per line basis rather than overall, which would help with zeroing in on what the root causes of poor ISOTP are.

Representative Bator said she notices that Line 2 (Downtown Los Angeles-Pacific Palisades via Sunset Bl) often lingers at stops when

it runs ahead of schedule, often angering customers. She asked if schedules are ever checked to see whether too much time is built into a scheduled run. Mr. Greenwood responded affirmatively and noted that Line 2 will have a new schedule beginning December 14, 2009.

Representative Capone-Newton asked whether any changes in customer feedback data have correlated with the increase in ISOTP for the Sector. Mr. Maloney responded that the spring 2009 Metro Customer Service Survey, albeit unscientific, may have data regarding this question and said he would share that survey with the Council at a future meeting.

Representative Capone-Newton asked whether multivariate analyses with multiple factors are performed on Metro ATMS and APC data favoring one indicator over another. Mr. Maloney responded affirmatively and added that as more and more information is mined from collected data, that Metro will continue to pinpoint more problem areas and address them. This work is done by the Metro Service Performance and Analysis group.

Representative Ida asked whether a program to help operators with training regarding schedule variance exists. Mr. Greenwood responded that a schedule variance training program does not exist for operators, but a transit operations supervisor does observe operators in the field ensure that an operator is following Standard Operating Procedures, which includes adhering to scheduled timepoints.

7. RECEIVED oral report on Council Member Line Rides:

Representative Rosten

- Said he waited at Wilshire Boulevard and 14th Street for a local Line 20 (Downtown Los Angeles-UCLA via Wilshire Boulevard, late nights to Santa Monica and Ocean, Santa Monica) and said the bus stop sign there did not indicate that Line 20 only stopped at that location between 11pm and 5am. Mr. Maloney indicated that this stop “bus cube” information was not only updated, but was part of the many customer communication campaigns initiated by the Westside Central Sector Governance Council and he assured the Council that the “bus cube”

information along Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevards would be updated with clearer information that is easier for the public to understand.

- Said he witnessed a woman with a baby struggling to board Rapid Line 704 going westbound. The operator told the woman to sit down. After sitting her baby down, the woman paid her fare. Representative Rosten forwarded a commendation to customer service to let Metro know how he appreciated the operator for his courtesy. He said the operator commented on his act as part of working in a “people business. I’m just nice to everybody,” the operator said. Representative Rosten said the operator also allowed a customer who was late to her appointment to deboard the bus near her destination, albeit it was a safe location per rulebook guidelines.

Representative Wright said a situation frustrating to unfamiliar passengers is that often a bus stop sign will display a route and its destination, but does not explain that often a line destination is not served for the full span of service. He cited Line 40 (Union Station-South Bay Galleria via Hawthorne Bl), which only operates to 7th St and Broadway during Owl service; and Line 33/333 (Union Station/Downtown Los Angeles-Venice/Santa Monica via Venice Bl Local/Limited), which operates limited stop service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as examples of lines that have differing service patterns that cannot be discerned from information displayed on the bus stop signs.

Representative Bator requested that San Gabriel Valley Service Sector look into extending service on the west end of Line 780 (West Los Angeles-Pasadena via Hollywood and Colorado Boulevards) to either West Los Angeles Transit Center or at least the Farmer’s Market at West Third and South Fairfax Avenues. She suggested curtailing service on the eastern end that serves Pasadena City College as a tradeoff.

Community Relations Manager Jody Feerst Litvak announced the next round of Westside Subway Extension scoping meetings during early November that will focus on where subway station entrances will be located along the corridor alignment. One of those meetings will be held immediately following the November 4 Westside Service Sector Council Special Meeting and Open Forum.

Upcoming Meetings

Westside Central Service Sector Open Forum Meeting

Minutes – Westside Central Sector Governance Council Regular Meeting
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Wednesday, October 14, 2009

November 4, 2009, 4:30 P.M.
Beverly Hills Public Library, 2nd Floor Metro South Conference Room
444 N Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills

Westside Subway Extension Station Focus Meeting
November 4, 2009, 6 P.M.
Beverly Hills City Hall, Municipal Gallery, 455 N Rexford Drive, Beverly
Hills

ADJOURNED at 6:45pm.

Prepared by:

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

William Walker
Council Secretary