

Wednesday, January 12, 2011

5:00-7:00 PM

Minutes

Westside/Central
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

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

Call to Order

Council Members:

Catherine Bator, Chair
Peter Capone-Newton
Art Ida
Jeffrey Jacobberger
Elliott Petty
Glenn Rosten
Jerard Wright

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director
Jody Litvak, Communications Manager
Suzanne Handler, Council Secretary



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. APPROVE Minutes for December 8, 2010 meeting - approved
2. Public Comment
 - Ken Rubin, happy new year to everyone. Service changes are coming up next month I will be presenting a statement at this forum for SOCATA which I am the continuing director and Westside representative. I've already made my comments to some of our board members regarding the changes. For those of you are interested the Pacific Electric train station which was located at 6th and Main was opened 100 years ago this month. There is a link on web. LOSSAN meeting on Monday, January 10, displays on everything that is being worked on at Caltrans including the Gold Line Extension.
 - Joan Taylor, I have left a paper for each of you on the High Speed Rail, you as a group cannot do anything officially, but you can go out individually in the community and bring this to the attention of other groups. As you can see there is a letter I addressed to my own Community Council so that the transportation committee will bring it to the attention of several of the Los Angeles City Neighborhood councils. Get some groups to write or e-mail the Governor to get a concerted action, this is why, is this a 4 billion ride to nowhere the Governor said eventually it would cost \$45 to 90 billion but the Wall Street Journal said it would cost \$218 billion to begin with and that does not even count annual operating expenses, ninety-five percent of this cost comes from this state. This high speed could cost \$400 for a ticket from here to San Francisco in 20 years when this would be operable.
 - **Representative Rosten**, was this passed by the legislature? And earmarked for High Speed Rail. Actually, I agree with Joan.
 - Wayne Wright, 5 years ago this month MTA opened up its replacement Rimpau terminal that had been in operation for 72 years and moved it west to Pico and San Vicente. The current terminal which also shares with the Big Blue Bus, to me has outlived its usefulness and you have the following:
 - Major overcrowding with MTA and Big Blue during AM and PM peak times in the terminal area
 - MTA passengers coming off the 30 or 730 have to walk around the corner to catch the Big Blue
 - In addition MTA has purchased 16 articulated buses, half are to be used on the 7 or 730 coming this June and my concerns are the bus bays are not suitable for these buses.
 - I would ask the following:
 - Ask Big Blue and MTA staff to staff on a joint report on the 7 day week boardings at Rimpau station to present at future Westside Central meetings.

- Ask Big Blue to remove two of its lesser routes 5 and 13 and reroute them elsewhere to relieve overcrowding at the terminal.
 - What to do with the 730.
 - Change the name of the terminal to either Mid-Town or Mid-City Transit Center to reflect the LA community name.
3. RECEIVE Director's Report, Jon Hillmer
- Performance Report based upon data that was collected in November. December information will be available next month.
 - On-time performance the system has gone up to 73.4% and Westside is at 72.7%, our trend is still upward.
 - Complaints per 100,000 passengers, Target is 2.52 Westside for November was 2.09
 - Miles between mechanical road calls, Metro system for November 3,434, Westside was 2,792
 - Accidents per 100,000 miles, Westside target is 3.58 November was 3.93.
 - System-wide Road Calls
 1. November data road calls by type, 811 road calls were engine, 264 were doors, 157 electrical, 147 transmission, 109 suspension, 97 brake, and it goes down from there.
 2. 338 of the engine related road calls were stalls, 130 slow bus (not responsive), 120 check engine light, 54 throttle, 50 no start, once again it goes down from there.
 - Monthly ridership, Westside target is 16,470,000, November was 16,710,000
 -
 - 720 Load Factor
 1. 720 line in the Eastbound direction from 5th/Colorado to Commerce Center. The rapid line is the predominate choice for travelers. It is peaking out in ridership at 3500 riders; local is doing 1800 riders at peak. Average seat occupancy is 70% on the 720. When you have bunching, the first bus is standing room only the second less, and third and fourth bus will have fewer on board. This is averaged so you get 70% occupancy throughout the system all day. This is from 4:00 am to 1:00 am for weekday service.
 - **Representative Perry**, can you let the passengers boarding when bus bunching occurs that there is a bus right behind with fewer passengers.
 - Yes, it is available to our supervisors, but not directly to the operators. Both downtown and BOC. The TOS have a computer in their vehicles and they can track certain

lines. Typically they are looking at running hot or bunching. They are to take specific action. Typically, the supervisor will tell the lead bus to go ahead and discharge only the next bus would make the stops and pick up the passengers. It is more difficult with rapids because they have fewer stops. The rapid bus in most cases stops far side, but since they have signal priority, if they stop nearside it triggers the light green and when they cross the light, it turns red. This is a problem along Wilshire with the buses every 4 minutes, it causes confusion to the system, and it reverts to its normal cycle. The 720 which is our busiest bus line by far we need to do more.

- **Chair Bator**, personal observation, the bus operator will say there is a bus in back of me, but that still does not deter people from getting on.
 - Jon Hillmer, as a regular rider sometimes you will let the bus that is overcrowded go by waiting for the next bus which may be another 10-15 minutes later. A lot of passengers have gotten into the habit of getting on the first bus, because they may not get on the bus behind that bus.
 - **Representative Ida**, in terms of real time is there plans along the Wilshire Corridor?
 - Jon Hillmer, we awarded a few months ago a contract to Next Bus which will generate their own algorithm which will show the next bus and its specific location. Initially they will be at stations, then along major bus routes.
 - Jon Hillmer, along the Orange Line we have next bus, and there have been problems with it predicting the next bus within the timeframe. Along the Orange Line this is a loop-based prediction. Similar to traffic signal indicators.
 - **Representative Wright**, what would happen if we had the rider information at the bus stops, particularly the 720? We have on-street-supervision is there a way to speed up the boardings of by using another operator to be at the rear doors for TAP only readers and get those people on.
1.
 - Jon Hillmer, I believe we have spoken on this subject before, RTD used to have a position known as loaders, these were people predominately stationed downtown or at major events, and they would in fact load people who had valid pass or transfer into the rear door allowing the bus to move along the corridor faster. I've proposed this on many of our stations where we have high boardings this is something that is overdue. In fact if this is done

in the right corridors and speeding up the bus just enough, you may even be able to save another bus off that bus line and still maintain the same frequency of service. That would entail on Wilshire, saving 4 minutes which is not unachievable, given the amount of time it takes to board for example at Vermont.

- **Chair Bator**, I know Art Leahy is interested in doing this, and the three places I've suggested are Vermont, Normandy and Western.

Revenue Bus and Rail

Our budgeted amount for FY2010 was \$337,642,350, actual was \$307,906,996. This year's budget for FY2011 is \$335,351,412, we are over our projections and if it trends, we should be over our estimated budget by \$7 million.

- **Metro Board Actions in December**
Artesia Transit Center Improvements Project. Off the Harbor below the 91, a lot of interest at the South Bay Council for improvements to that station including restrooms. The board is ready for us to place higher grade port-a-potties out at the site while we are in the process of designing and constructing permanent restrooms along with a Sheriff's substation for enhanced security.
Wilshire BRT project was approved but without the Condo Canyon segment. Staff is engaged in reanalyzing the project and refreshing the FEIR and EA. Request to bring the regional fare system plan with an implementation plan back to the Board in February. This is really the TAP program brought out for full implementation.
- **Line Rides on Proposed Service Changes**
Listing of proposed service changes for the lines in the system with a few cancellations, 209 Arlington/VanNess; Western Rapid is being proposed for cancellation augmenting the local line. Moving the artics to local lines 207, what it means is going after all the bus stops, making sure they can accommodate the articulated 60' buses.
Put together a listing of savings per line, for the Westside it is about 82,000 hours annually with a savings of slightly over \$8 million. If all of them are implemented.
Expo interface plan is proposed for the public hearing and changes would be made when the Expo comes on line. For the first phase there would be a savings \$7 million phase 2 to Culver City, there would be an additional savings of \$80,000, TBD to Santa Monica and the impact that might have. Finally, the itineraries of the bus rides I will be sending out invitations to come along.
 - **Chair Bator**, why did they choose to run the 2 to Union Station rather than the 4?

- Jon Hillmer, I am not sure, the 4 is more productive, and Line 2 is exceptionally long wanders through Sunset and along the Coast Highway.

4. REVIEW Bylaws for Service Councils, Jon Hillmer, Director of Service Councils

- I did e-mail out the suggested modifications from the council members and staff. Very pleased with the level and quality of comments from the council. The major changes are that councils would have full responsibility for all the bus routes within their region. The councils would be responsible for bus lines in their area as opposed to bus lines coming out of an operating division in their area. Other major changes would be the council member terms, in many cases they vary significantly. We are proposing to regularize all the councils begin on July 1 and we try to endeavor to have 3 terms end every year from each council. So you would have a three-year terms staggered. Leave it up to the chair to decide how that should best be done in consultation with the council members if approved. Whose term would be extended and how long? Increasing the responsibility of the councils, you will now be responsible for all bus routes in their region. Decisions will go to the metro board for major service changes as information item as opposed to requesting approval for those changes. In addition, we need to have the councils more involved in the rail service, in terms of frequency of service and station design. This will not be an approval process, mainly a review and comment process. Finally, the name of our councils. San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys have decided they would like the name of the councils to be “Metro” (name of council) Service Council.
 - **Representative Rosten**, “service” being defined as?
 - Jon Hillmer, your primary role is in transportation service, the routes as well as major schedule changes would be reviewed by each of the councils for approval. With more involvement in the rail and facilities side the service term makes a lot of sense.
- Also whether we are calling the “members” members or “representatives”. The San Fernando Valley likes “members”, San Gabriel Valley was ambivalent about the name reference.
 - **Representative Rosten**, council has members, not necessarily representative has a council.
 - **Chair Bator**, the neighbor council has representatives.
 - Representative Wright, because we are appointed we are representing a certain area, representatives almost makes sense in this particular case, because we are representing a particular director or COG.
 - Jon Hillmer, not all council members are appointed by directors or COGs, other councils are appointed by “cluster” of cities that appoint.
 - **Representative Rosten**, they are not appointed to represent the person who appoints but the community in which they serve.
 - Jon Hillmer, my intent is to take this to the board in February after I have completed this round of discussion with all the councils,

incorporate them into a final draft which I will e-mail to each of the members and take it to the Board.

- **Representative Wright**, thank you Jon for keeping us in the loop on all the changes and progress.
- **Representative Rosten**, “council should review “draft” budget”. The Sectors had budgets and now they don’t. So we really do not have anything to say about the budget process and how the money was spent.
- Jon Hillmer, yes, you are correct, the council had no approval process of the draft budget for the year. The attempt here is to try and provide a look ahead at what the budget is going to look like. In February there is still an opportunity for some adjustments.

5. RECEIVE Customer Satisfaction Survey input, Irving Pham, Intern in the Metro Research and Development Program

- Giving you information on the entire system, in the past few months we been working with focus groups, riders and non-riders. Discussing transit attitudes and commute choice factors and barriers plus advertising concepts.
- On-board customer satisfaction surveys. 17,795 completed surveys on buses and trains representing 98% of Metro’s average weekday ridership.
- General public tracking surveys. There was a telephone survey of LA County residents gauging awareness and perception of Metro services.
- Competitive analysis of transit vs. driving. We examined heavily-used corridors during AM peak period and used a time analysis by Google maps directions algorithm.

The key thing we found from our focus groups was there are certain motivators for using public transit or switching to our system, was because there was a problem, i.e., paying a parking meter, parking lot fees and gas. The barriers we found were the convenience of a car which allowed more trips in between their work days plus there is still a social stigma to using public transit.

We asked quick questions about how they feel about public transit we found our riders have a higher opinion of our system rather than the non-riders. Customer satisfaction has been increasing over the past few years. Choice riders (someone who has a car but chooses to ride transit) peaked in 2006 was when gas prices were high, the number of choice riders has been dropping ever since then that might be because of the recession. Most of our riders use our system for work and when unemployment rises that becomes a problem for choice ridership.

There is a huge increase in smart phone usage on our systems. This will help our audience in the future for tracking buses and trains. The awareness level of Metro services was 98%, only 2% of the people contacted did not know Metro and were unaware of our services.

Public perspective of our survey: 50% were satisfied with our service; 71% thought buses and trains were safe; 58% said our stops and stations were clean; 50% stated our fares were reasonable; 57% thought Metro considered the needs of the residents; and 58% said Metro cares about their service.

How the residents find their transit information, 77% of the residents use the internet. Metro has integrated with Google for their transit information and there is still the traditional way of getting information via the phone.

Competitive analysis riding transit vs. a car along heavily used corridors. In some areas Metro is competitive time-wise, but in other areas using transit was unfavorable and the ride would be too long. This information also included walking and transferring time during peak hours.

General observations: awareness was near 100%; familiarity breeds support; perceptual barriers to using system remain; customer satisfaction remains high; rapid migration to technology; discretionary riders are in decline; transit is competitive to cars in certain corridors during peak periods.

- **Representative Rosten**, thank you I think it is a great report, surveys that broad a group of people and I think it is important to have that knowledge to begin to attract new riders and keep the existing riders. I would like to see it even be more broad and done in more detail.
- **Representative Capone-Newton**, is there a more detail report on focus groups, like on line?

Irving Pham, you can send a request to either me or my boss, Jeff Boberg, the focus groups are a little different it's more qualitative.

- **Chair Bator**, what I would like to see on the customer survey on the buses, do we still limit that to daytime during the week or have we added weekends and owl service.

Irving Pham, it's just daytime surveying, it would be too expensive to survey on the weekend and owl service. We get 98% of the total number of our riders based on line ridership estimation.

- **Chair Bator**, my point is that I feel service is not as good on weekends or at night so to not include those in the survey does not give us a real reading.
- **Representative Rosten**, what percentage ride in those times? I think what they are saying it is not productive to that so much as it is a very small percentage of the total riders.
- **Chair Bator**, I think a lot of the non-choice riders ride on the weekends and at night and their opinions are valuable.

6. UPDATE venue change of Westside/Central Service Council, Chair Catherine Bator

This is a process, Jody Litvak provided me with some contacts and some of the places I thought were feasible were not. Heard from the Wilshire Christian Church they have problems with being ADA compliant. The RFK learning Center is a possibility for the future but for the first year they are not set up to have any kind of meetings. Jeff spoke to his contact, Kim Yung Oak, at the middle school by the purple line, Wilshire and Vermont.

- **Representative Jacobberger**, they indicated they do not have anything scheduled on a on-going basis except on Thursdays. The only issue with LAUSD facilities you have to reapply every 3 months and then they let you know if they have anything scheduled. School events would precede our meetings.

Chair Bator, Beyond the Bell is the organization that administers after school hours. They did send me forms and paperwork plus proof of insurance. I'll keep talking with them. Security is very tight at the Wilshire Temple. We will continue to look and make another report in March.

(unknown) Has anyone looked along the Pico or Olympic Corridor?

7. Council Members and Chair comments

- Line Rides
 - **Representative Rosten**, I was going to my home on Wilshire to Beverly Hills thought about walking to the 720, Westholm to Roxbury and so I waited for a 20 local. While I was at the stop two 720's drove by then a third 720 stopped, and picked us up. She explained she was running ahead of schedule so decided to pick up those waiting for a local 20. Maybe this should become a policy. I thought it was really nice.
 - **Representative Jacobberger**, when I've ridden the 728 in one issue, for the buses that do not go in to Patsaouras Transit Plaza it is not very clear if you have not done it before, where you are supposed to go to get on other buses, out on Alameda. You have to know that is where you have to go.
 - **Representative Rosten**, I think that is true on a lot of lines, the signs are made for people who ride the bus not necessarily for those occasional bus riders.
 - **Chair Bator**, on the other side of Union Station, the Silver Streak and Silver Line are together, and it's easy to get them mixed up. And why they are both called Silver...

- Jody Litvak, we have tried to brand the dedicated bus ways with colors.
- **Chair Bator**, when discussing line rides, we would like to have the reports on any of the transit systems that you ride during the month, especially if you see something Metro is not doing. Fresh ideas.
- **Chair Bator**, my lines rides for the month, I rode the 704, 4, 2, 20, 27, 54, 94, 201, the red line and purple line. I had very few problems all month, things worked very well, with the exception of the day after Christmas. The red line the information displays were down all day. Has anyone tried 511?
 - Ken Rubin, I have, I was coming back from a meeting I was at Big Blue Bus trying to get the last #1 to Washington and Lincoln, it just gave you the last trip. Culver City it gave me the last three trips. From a land line prefix 626 unable to connect to 511 there appeared to be a problem.
 - **Chair Bator**, the 511 works for me very well, and I've called from various prefixes.
- - **Chair Bator**, on the 2 and 704 the transit TV is still too loud. The drivers claim they do not know how to turn it down. One discourteous operator did not open the door for a passenger to board, even though there was plenty of time. Last, I did write a letter to Art Leahy about consolidating bus stops for the rapid and local lines.
- Action Items
 - Information on signage
 - Speak with Mr. Leahy on traffic loaders
 - Rational on the 2 vs. 4 line at Union Station
 - 720 trip level seat capacity
 - Budget review and comment
 - Public hearings next month

Adjourned: 6:30pm

ADJOURNMENT