

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

5:00-7:00 PM

Minutes

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL
SERVICE COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

Young Oak Kim Academy
615 S. Shatto Place
Los Angeles, CA 90005

Call to Order

Council Representatives:

Jeffrey Jacobberger, Vice Chair

Peter Capone-Newton

Peri Sloane Goodman

Elliott Petty

Glenn Rosten

Jerard Wright

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director

Jody Litvak, Community Relations Mgr.

Suzanne Handler, Council Secretary

Please turn off cell phones or put them on vibrate

1. ROLL Call – chair Joseph Stitche, absent; Catherine Bator, absent
2. APPROVED Minutes for September 14, 2011 meeting
3. PUBLIC Comment

Wayne Wright: Ask staff to consider running service west of UCLA and Westwood as a shuttle to Pacific Palisades after 7pm due to night construction on the 405. You have problems with the entire Line 2 particularly on Friday and Saturday night is a real problem due to activity on the Sunset Strip in Hollywood. I would also ask that the westbound service between Temescal Canyon and Marquez be cut since Big Blue bus Line 9 already runs the same route on Marquez. Have the Line 2 use the clockwise route to PCH and Sunset cut the excessive routing on the Line 2. Also, thank you for retaining the Line 534 to the serve the Kaiser Hospital and West LA transit center. I would also ask that line 42 maintain a two bus operation and that the line operate as far as Jefferson and Expo station after 7:30pm and continue to keep a late night service to LAX until midnight. Lastly, I have a route change for Line 200 use a clockwise route via 39th Street from Figueroa to Hill and King and eliminate the routing that is currently going to Hill and King via King/broadway/39th to Hill. Or truncate all Line 200 buses at the Jefferson/Expo Station.

4. RECEIVE Director's Report, Jon Hillmer
 - Performance Report
 - On-Time Performance: Metro Target 82%; Westside/Central 78.1%
 - Complaints per 100,000 Passengers: Metro system 2.29; Westside/Central 2.32
 - Miles Between Mechanical Road Call: Metro system 3,650; Westside/Central 2,756
 - Clean Bus: Metro System 8.0; Westside/Central 8.04
 - Accidents per 100,000 Miles: Metro System 3.10; Westside/Central 4.14
 - Monthly Ridership: Westside/Central Target 16,890,000; August 17,730,000
 - Metro rail Weekday Ridership 300,000
 - Metro Red/Purple Ridership weekday 160,000
 - Line 720 Ridership Weekday over 40,000
 - Meet and Confer, September 19, well attended. Topics were: Update on Union Station Master Plan; LOSSAN; Exposition Line Update; Late Night Rail Service; TAP Program Update and Station Name Changes
 - Planned Tours of BOC/ROC and Service Planning/Scheduling – attended by 4 council members this was an all day event on September 23. Open discussion with John Roberts, Bruce Shelburne, Conan Cheung and Dan Nguyen

- Possible tour for November/December would be the Expo Line if we are in pre-operation mode.
- Status of Metro Bus Service Monitoring Program Existing Performance Measures

Additional performance Measures will be:

- Number of ADA Complaints, Bus Station Cleanliness, Percent of Passenger Standee Miles, Percent of Bus Trips over loading standard.
- Customer Survey to Estimate average walking distance to bus stop, average customer wait time at bus stop and customer perception of metro bus service quality
- Each Service Council will have their list of stations to be monitored and volunteers from the council will be trained in procedure. Pairing up a staff person with a volunteer would be responsible for one or two stations. Same one or two stations, month after month looking at cleanliness, trended and tracked and reported to the councils as well as to the Metro board of directors. Very important element to the program. Will be sending out e-mail asking for volunteers from the service council and citizens advisory committee potentially nominating others who are not metro employees but who are familiar with our system.

Representative Wright: When will the survey come out?

Jon Hillmer: We are hoping to get the survey out in December, this is the earliest I have to report to the operations committee in February for our current quarter. We may or may not have all the elements for the first quarter.

Representative Wright: I also want to find out if you would be willing to walk further for more frequent service. Engage a level of acceptance.

Jon Hillmer: Jeff Boberg who does our transit surveys suggested we use Google transit calculate the amount of time it takes to get to those locations and how much time you waited to make your transfers or picked up the bus. That does not measure what actually happens on the street, Google transit is based on scheduled service. Overtime you can determine if you are improving access.

Representative Sloan Goodman: is the survey on-board? Or will it be at the stops?

Jon Hillmer: It will be on-board, we have a firm that we use to do the survey, and it will be approximately 400 individuals who will be contacted. When we do the annual survey it is more customers contacted.

Representative Sloan Goodman: this will only be on buses not rail?

Jon Hillmer: what I am dealing with is mostly buses. When they do rail, they go on the system and ask their questions.

Representative Sloan Goodman: please explain Google origin destination.

Jon Hillmer: What we would be doing (we could use metro's web page) but to take out any consideration of bias, we would use Google transit. Randomly choose destination and origin and destination pairs, where we would say what if someone started here and had to go there.....during rush hour or mid-day how long would it take to get from A to B. We would do enough of our 5 regions so you would have a decent sample. Then you trend over time for all those trips.

Representative Rosten: has metro in the past or does it have any plans in the future to reach out to those people who are in cars who might take the bus to find out what it would take. In order to attract new riders. Most of the surveys seem to be for existing riders.

Jody Litvak: Jeff Boberg would have more detailed information on what we are doing along this avenue. But one thing I can tell you is every time we come up with new type of service whether it is the rail service when we opened the Canoga line and Orange line next year, when we started rapid bus service, that makes the biggest splash and you always get new people. Then we have our campaigns which gets people to thinking about getting out of their cars.

Representative Capone-Newton: I think the survey is a great idea I don't know if there would be any opportunity to do something maybe a population that would be ongoing you could enroll people over time and then do something specific. The second people you are talking about the estimates of travel time based on the network.

Vice Chair Jacobberger: would it be possible to ask people use Nextbus or something else, and compare what people's waiting times are. Depending if they use that service or schedules?

Jon Hillmer: I know we ask if they use Nextbus or Nextrip.

Vice Chair Jacobberger: if people are waiting less because they use Nextrip or Nextbus that would tell us people overvalue that time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve McGinty: I want to bring to your attention a concern of mine and I think it is a concern of other riders the volume setting on the transit TV may be in violation of health and safety regulations. It is so jarring in the morning when passengers are riding to work the noise level is actually shocking. One time last week the noise level was so high I had to get off one of the buses and catch another, thank goodness the next bus the transit TV was not working. My concern is for passenger safety, health

especially folks who may have hearing problems. What do you do when you read those complaints on the website about the noise? When you ask the drivers, the drivers say they do not have any control over the volume, if you happen to be sitting in a particular seat on the bus the speaker box is right over you and it is even louder.

Jon Hillmer: when a complaint comes in about a particular bus, it is important to have the bus number then the bus is identified and we have a technician responsible to take a look at the volume setting. There is a control on the bus for volume, the technician has the ability to turn it up or down. I ride our fleet and there is a variety of no sound, to very loud, it is important to get the specific bus number.

Steven McGinty: Is this information public knowledge?

Jon Hillmer: This relates not to just the volume but for any complaint. We need to identify the bus. If the line runs infrequently, then time of day and direction of bus would be helpful.

Jody Litvak: if you go to our website metro.net, under the heading contact us, there will be an online form that you can fill out.

Steven McGinty: Has anyone done a study on the noise level of the TV transit.

Jon Hillmer: Not that I know of, but we do get complaints and we do turn those TV's down.

Representative Rosten: this has come up before, what is the policy on how loud they should be and who does control these.

Jon Hillmer: I don't know the loudness levels, but there may be one, all I know is the technician that I've worked with in the past they turn it to a certain volume that is OK to them, that is usually relatively low.

Representative Rosten: Is there some reason the drivers cannot control the volume?

Jon Hillmer: It is generating revenue for Metro, and we need to have some volume so it satisfies a requirement of the commercial aspects, but it is not to be so loud that it becomes an annoyance but a danger.

Stephen Tu: The volume on the TV also controls the voice enunciator that announces the bus arrival.

Steven McGinty: besides the issue of the noise level is content that is being bombarded at people it is little more than sensationalistic news stories. It's inappropriate. I hope that Metro will reconsider the appropriateness of having this on.

Ken Rubin: as some of you know I was in the hospital last week, I want to thank Art Ida for the present he sent to me while I was in the hospital. I was overwhelmed by the people who visited, I want to say thank you to Henry Gonzalez who visited me and brought me some Metro items. Thank you all very much for your good wishes.

5. RECEIVE report on Line 212 late night service levels, Stephen Tu, Service Development and Planning Department

- Line 212 this line runs on LaBrea we took a look at the last two months at the ridership and we did notice that there were overcrowding at two small periods. First at around 6:20pm going southbound then again at 11pm. What we were seeing were heavy “ons’ beginning at sunset and getting more at Santa Monica and continuing to build and by 3rd street we had overload from 3rd to Washington, on average 59 people and 52 is our threshold. We looked at the next bus that leaves 11 minutes later and that bus only carried 35 people. In terms of seats being provided we do have enough seats out there but we need to figure out why the first trip is overloaded. The first trip begins at Hollywood and vine where the second trip begins at Hollywood and highland. It could be the trips are being delayed on Hollywood blvd. I will need to check the on-time performance to see whether that is the case. During the daytime we were only carrying half a dozen people, it was not until La Brea and Sunset that we started carrying more people. The second period was 11pm we were having 55 people from 3rd street to Washington, we are seeing southbound in the pm. That one hour gap from 10 to 11pm trip. What we are going to do in December is add an additional trip at 10:30pm. This should alleviate the crowding.
- Line 720 Service Reliability we are aware of crowding and on-time performance especially on the west. The area focused on is around LaBrea where the Purple Line ends and all the way to Santa Monica. Very aggressive schedule 2 to 3 minutes during the peaks. Bus bunching is created by passengers needing assistance in some way which leads to uneven loads. What we did look at is the traffic and other factors. There are enough seats to handle the load. The 405 construction will be a major factor in impacting the traffic. One turnaround will be impacted because it uses Sepulveda to get back on Wilshire at the federal building. On street supervision monitor a group of lines in the area, but perhaps some of the resources could focus on the 720 line exclusively. Turn back buses if needed if they see more than enough buses on one segment have it go out of service and go to another portion of the line where it is needed. Right now there is no funding secured for these enhancements.

Representative Capone-Newton: It would be interesting to contact Nextbus about this, and see if we might be able to provide some ridership data for them as a pilot program. Pass on to the customers the loads that are on the buses. As you pointed out, at 8am in the morning you will see buses that are a ¼ full, then you will see buses overloaded, due to bus bunching. I wonder if Nextbus as you pointed out a bus that is overloaded is running at a different speed. Improve their data’s algorithm.

Encourage people to wait 2 more minutes it would be interesting to get the results of the survey.

Stephen Tu: I think that is a good suggestion and we may have to look into with our ATMS folks, to see if that is possible. I do know our agency communicates with the bus every 2 to 3 minutes because there is so much data now, adding more data may overwhelm the system.

Jon Hillmer: When the rapid bus service was first proposed and began implementation, part of that program the major stations were to have displays to show when the next bus and following bus would be there.

Stephen Tu: One improvement we are working on now, and it's an ongoing process we will be consolidating more of our stops that are local and rapid. Giving the rider more choice at the bus stop.

Representative Wright: Is that funding for this fiscal year or next for adding the additional supervisor in the field?

Jon Hillmer: We are constrained this year and more likely even more constrained next year. One of the issues is our economy at federal and state levels. We will probably have a dire budget in a few years. That being said however, does not preclude Metro from reallocating its resources.

Representative Wright: I can see not this year but the next fiscal year, arrange our priorities according to our core line. This may be a budget expenditure that has a lot of merit.

Vice Chair Jacobberger: The Wilshire bus lanes, has that been decided?

Jody Litvak: Yes, it has. City of Los Angeles is working through the contracting issues.

Representative Wright: We have line 42 which has been presented to us along with the 102. Clarify and reflect in the minutes.

Jon Hillmer: What is the sense of the council? As to their opinion of this proposal, we can then bring it back for ratification.

Representative Wright: it is reflected in the minutes that we already did this last month, we have line 42 as the item and this is a combination of 42/102, making the adjustment to the schedule. Essentially this is a modification of line 42 which we have on the agenda.

Stephen Tu: this will be the same proposal that I presented on last month.

Vice Chair Jacobberger: Let's take a vote and if we need to redo it, we shall.

- Proposed new route of Line 102 and what it does it takes the eastern half of 102 and combines it with the western half of the 42. The service council approved months ago was to tie the 102 in with the 200 and the 200 starts in the southern portion at USC/Exposition Park and would turn into the 102 and continue along towards Palm and Seville on the eastside. What we wanted to look at was , the 42 end we had initial proposal approved was to anchor the 42 at the expo western station and have it go to the Jefferson layover and turnaround there. What that would have done would leave a local service gap along exposition between western and Vermont so there would have been no local service however we were able to come up with a solution to that by tying in the 42 and the 102 by having the 42 not end at western and expo it will continue along east and tie in with the 102 at USC and resume its regular route. During the rush hour the lines have different headways so the 42 runs every ½ hour and the 102 approx every hour. Select trips would end at USC and then turn back towards LAX city bus center. So that is the proposal you will be voting on tonight.

Representative Capone-Newton: are you concerned at all about the increase in the length of the line?

Stephen Tu: We looked at it and currently the 42 does go all the way into downtown some of the trips go as far as Union Station. This would be a little similar in terms of the distance making its way over to Palm and Seville. Since it does not deal with the downtown congestion, we feel that it is an appropriate length for those trips that do make it.

Representative Wright: I would like to make a motion on this particular item. I move that we approve the modifications on Line 42 and to amend that the line be renumbered as line 102. Glenn Rosten seconded the motion. Motion passed

Vice Chair Jacobberger: Line 42/102 line change and renumbered to 102. Line 200 no changes to this line.

Representative Wright: on Line 200 make a turnaround loop instead of making a left turn onto Figueroa to King, another left turn into the layover loop, make a left on 39th then Hill to King and go back up Figueroa northbound. Those two left turns make a big difference because they are stuck there. And it affects line 40 and 42. Requesting staff take a look at that.

6. UPDATE on Exposition Rail, Tom Jasmin, Rail Division Transportation Manager

I've been testing day and night to give the council an update on the Expo Line. We finished all required testing last Friday. This week and next we are doing some retesting and the week of the 24th we will start operator/supervisor familiarization. This should take about one month. Then in November we will start pre-revenue. Pre-revenue is actually same as revenue but not picking

up passengers. The opening of the line is yet to be determined but it will be after the first of the year. I will work with Jon and Suzanne to schedule a tour on the line once we can take passengers. Right now one of the tests we are doing is the ventilation test, it failed the first time, and now we are retesting. Once that has been completed and approved, then we take the public through the tunnel. We had quite a bit of software changes on a few of the areas I want to retest them again to make sure version 8 does not impact version 1 and cause some anomaly. By the end of next week all testing and retesting then we start the familiarization.

Representative Rosten: When was the Expo line supposed to open?

Tom Jasmin: Sometime last summer. We had problems with some subcontractors who quit and others were let go, and it is primarily in the train control which is a safety aspect on the line. The new people came on board in March of this year and they said it would take 6 months to test and we are right on target.

Representative Capone-Newton: Culver City?

Tom Jasmin; This will be for LaCienega only. One additional station, Robertson will be in March or April.

Representative Petty: Can you describe the pre-revenue phase, is this an everyday type of test?

Tom Jasmin: Yes, it is the same hours you would run in revenue service. It is getting the communities aware of the trains schedule and to finalize the actual schedules. We start at 12 hours per day and eventually running 21 hours. Right now we know we can make it to Pico a little under 30 minutes. You can get on at LaCienega station and be downtown in less than a half-hour. The parking structure was completed this last week. The CCTV cameras will be installed prior to opening.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Wayne Coombs: On the 212 I am consistently at Hollywood/Highland and people are waiting for the 212. There needs to be signage stating they have to board at Hollywood and Sycamore after 7pm at night. Can't you start the extra trip on the 212 now instead of waiting until December? The 720 bus bunching could be solved by allowing buses to pass each other.

Wayne Wright: My complaint on the 212 was primarily after 11pm when the buses are running every hour. You have problems on the southbound buses coming out of Hollywood, 11, 12, 1 and 2am. The Northbound is normal, whereas the southbound is crowded. The Sunday bus service you have

passengers coming from Hollywood Park which makes the buses later going northbound. This needs to be looked at when Hollywood Park is in session.

7. RECEIVE report on Metro's Accessibility Compliance Program, Chip Hazen, ADA Compliance Administrator, Civil Rights Programs Compliance

Overall, we have approximately 2,500 daily wheelchair boardings or 75,000 monthly. By comparison in 1997 we were doing 175 wheelchair boardings per month. In 2003, 10,000 wheelchair boardings per month. The program has progressed. Line 720 has over 4,000 wheelchair boardings per month. As you know all of our buses are ADA compliant and have been since 1996, we have a requirement that the bus routes with headways greater than 30 minutes must have an alternative transportation service if accessibility features fail or not enough room for another wheelchair.

Metro created a Civil Rights Compliance Unit to review the Title VI requirements, set up an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), a new ADA complaint form, and implemented a Mystery Rider program. The AAC noted "must haves" i.e., Braille /tactile numbers at each bus stop, phone number for complaints and information and access for persons unable to use their hands or arms at gated rail stations.

Wheelchair marking and safety strap program. Access Services is now evaluating all wheelchairs of individuals requesting ADA Paratransit eligibility. Wheelchair securement training, not all wheelchairs have securing devices, or securement areas noted on their chairs. Training operators on service animals, and strap program.

Passenger information signs have been installed at the Red and Purple Line Stations, installation is in progress at the Gold Line stations. All new bus operators receive ADA training and certification training. We also have a voluntary bus operator training for Ambassador to ADA customers and fellow operators. Sensitivity training given to all operators, managers, assistant managers and executive officers.

Performance measures for accessibility will be posted on the Metro website. Civil Rights office to review all projects affecting accessibility and the authority to sign off on construction projects.

Installing an element called a Q-pod on three buses it's a modular device that fits on one side of the bus in the secure area. Has three seats that fold up when the wheelchair goes into that area, there are two hooks at the front of the wheelchair then a third hook on aisle side of the chair, then push a lever down and it will push the chair up against the padded wall. Three wheeled scooters are considered wheelchairs, so they will be up against the wall and will be stuck. Right now with a three wheel scooter they can fall over. We are going to try this device on 3 buses; 40', 45' and 60'.

April 2010 started a program where all the fleet is checked monthly for compliance for ADA. Operator must report to maintenance any ADA feature that is inoperable.

We have put barriers between all rail cars for the visually impaired. Demonstration project at Del Mar Gold Line for announcing audible information by pushing a button.

In El Monte at the temporary bus terminal we installed a tactile map with Braille numbers showing where the bus bays are located. Redesigning platform phone face plates to be ADA compliant. We have 6 different types of systems on our light rail platforms now and trying to consolidate into one system. Later this year we will start a study of all 26,000 bus stops throughout the whole county. JARC funds will pay for 50% of this study along with a local match from another agency. If a bus schedule is needed in Braille it can be done upon request.

We are now requiring operators to rise from their seats to prepare the wheelchair securement area, lower the ramp/lift and with the permission of the rider secure their wheelchair.

Representative Capone-Newton: In terms of ADA a requirement knowing that the AVA is on and at the proper volume is there a system for maintaining that?

Chip Hazen: There is no ADA requirement for maintaining that, when the regulations were written the AVA did not exist. We take what an average level would be in a bus then we go 10 decibels above that, the Transit TV is supposed to be set a little lower. It is also supposed to go off when the announcements go on. So if it is not going off, please let us know. It is a computer that is inside with a laser disk.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Wayne Wright: what have you done about the elevators being out of service? Along the El Monte and Harbor Freeways?

Chip Hazen: We have replaced the elevators at the El Monte Bus Way. The Harbor Transitway they have been replacing connections and transistors. The floors have been replaced due to transits using them as restrooms, creating a major problem. The new elevators, will have a drain for hazardous material.

Wayne Wright: Can you do anything about the oversized scooters? They take a lot of room and time.

Chip Hazen: The FTA said we have to transport them.

8. Council Members and Chair comments

Representative Wright: At the bus terminals there is a display case showing the route information at each stop, but they are not showing the last bus leaving the station.

Stephen Tu: We actually looked into the cube inserts attached to the poles. We did think about putting first and last trip, but it would require a different time at each stop, some of stops do not have time points.

Representative Wright: I was speaking of the major bus terminals rather than each individual stop.

Stephen Tu: We are working on a demonstration project at 3 different locations that states every departure for every line. Artesia transit center, El Monte transit and Green Line station in Norwalk. They do include the municipal operators. If it is successful, we will expand to other bus terminals/center.

Representative Wright: Of the 5 BRT lines going to Committee next week which lines have the planners considered? And is the 733 is on that list.

Representative Sloan Goodman: Again this month there was a failure with TAP service vendor. It had a very significant impact on our constituents. Apparently the fares were not downloaded on to the cards in timely manner and Metro was not informed and the first few days of the month we were inundated with phone calls from riders. The technical issue was on the vendor's side, but there is a communications issue on the Metro side that needs to be addressed.

I am hearing that the layover point at Cedars Sinai for the 218 keeps moving, and people are having problems figuring out where they are supposed to get on. Are the 305 and 550 being discontinued when Expo starts?

Stephen Tu: The construction along San Vicente adjacent to Cedars Center created a temporary layover location, but it should be back at Beverly and Gracie Allen. The 550 northern terminal will be relocated to USC Exposition Park. The 305 will be discontinued due to duplication, but we will be replacing the missing segment along San Vicente towards West Hollywood with an extension of line 30 and 330.

ADJOURNMENT