

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

5:00-7:00 PM

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# Minutes

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL  
SERVICE COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

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

Called to Order at 5:06 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Elliot Petty, Vice Chair  
Peter Capone-Newton  
Perri Sloane Goodman  
Glenn Rosten  
Joe Stitcher  
Jerard Wright

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Regional Councils Director  
Jody Litvak, Community Relations Mgr  
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst  
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.



**Metro**

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

**1. APPROVED Minutes of January 9, 2013 meeting**

**2. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the agenda**

Wayne Wright commented that since November last year, Divisions 3, 7, and 9 have begun to receive the first of the 150 45-ft. buses. Division 3 should focus on keeping 45 foot buses on heavily traveled routes such as Line 81, 180, 181, 251, 83, 16 and 84. He has seen 45-foot buses on low-use routes such as Lines 175, 201, and 252, particularly in the Happy Valley area between Lincoln Heights and El Sereno. Use of the 45-ft. bus in Line 201 is a major headache on residential streets in Echo Park and Atwater District. He requested that operation of 45-foot buses on narrow residential streets be restricted.

**3. RECEIVE Presentation on Transit Specific Ridership Survey, Jeff Boberg, Transportation Planning Manager**

Metro fields two on-board customer satisfaction surveys a total of 4 times a year of both bus and rail services. A quarterly bus customer survey was started in 2012 at the direction of the Board; it was most recently completed in January 2013.

Quarterly survey results for Westside lines were slightly lower than those of the previous survey, but mostly within the  $\pm 5\%$  error rate. The difference may be due to the smaller sample size or the trend of lower results overall, we won't know until the next full survey is conducted in May. TAP card use jumped from 55 to 71% system wide, and from 67% to 71% in the Westside – transit users are adapting to TAP card use. Nearly 50% of all passengers have smart phones; the percentage has been growing year after year.

Westside users are frequent and veteran passengers and tend to use 5-day or longer period passes. A high percentage of transit users have used the service for 5 years or more, which means they buy more monthly passes and fewer day passes. Demographics of Westside riders are almost identical to those of overall system ridership.

Average wait times are lower in the Westside than other sectors likely due to the frequency of service, and are more similar to rail wait times. Line 704 riders are a little happier with the service than overall ridership, and generally report that they have a seat during their ride. 50% of Westside passengers have a smart phone; Line 704 has the highest ratings of Westside lines except for smart phone usage and travel time to reach their bus stop. Line 704 riders also tend to have a car available to them as compared to other lines and expressed higher satisfaction with TAP cards.

Council Member Rosten noted that perception of cleanliness appears to have fallen across the board, though significant programs to clean up buses and stations have been implemented. While the perception did dip slightly, it may be due to the lines selected and it may go back up with the next quarterly survey. However, overall perception of cleanliness, safety, etc., has all been going up over the last two years.

Council Member Capone-Newton asked if Metro has done anything to directly measure service wait times. Would it be possible to have an application or integrate a function that would measure the actual wait time? Academic research shows that people are not great at noticing distance and time. If they're happy & busy, time goes fast and the wait seems shorter. Metro is starting to distribute more online surveys, and it would be great to use

smart phone as well, though it would require a good sampling method to ensure that not just early adapters were responding.

Council Member Sloan Goodman asked if questions regarding Nextrip application use are being incorporated into the surveys, and if perceived wait times are reduced with use of Nextrip. The most recent survey asked respondents how they planned their trip, but Nextrip related questions would be good to include.

Council Member Sloane-Goodman asked if needs assessments falls within purview of the group that conducts the survey, or if they strictly address service satisfaction. How can rider feedback be used to conduct a needs assessment and provide information regarding where there are gaps in the community. Survey results are shared with planning, who review the results to verify that they seem reflective of the lines surveyed.

Vice Chair Petty asked how varied and how often the lines that are surveyed changes. A survey of all bus lines is conducted once per year in the spring, with the exception of the 10 lines with the least average daily boardings. The lines included in the three quarterly surveys are selected randomly, with at least two local lines and one express line from each service area selected. A minimum sample of at least 68 responses or more are sought for each line included in the quarterly survey.

#### **4. RECEIVE Presentation on Proposed Names for New Expo Phase 2 Stations, Warren Morse, Deputy Executive Officer of Communications**

In 2003, Metro's Board adopted a policy for naming of property. The main purpose of station names is to provide simple quick recognition to allow customers to navigate the system. Criteria for station names includes a primarily geographic location basis, be it a nearby, street, freeway, well-known destination, landmark, community, district or city name. There is a preferred maximum of 24 characters to enhance readability.

Stations can have an official, Board-adopted name which is used in documents and legal notices, as well as a shorter operational name, used when space is limited, for example on signage and customer materials. Station names for the seven new stations have proposed for Expo Phase II. Final recommendations will be submitted to the Board for approval; submission is planned for March 2013. A list of all proposed names received to date was reviewed. Next steps are to finalize recommendations and submit to Board of Directors for approval, which will likely occur in March 2013. Of the originally proposed names, alternates have been proposed for the National/Palms, Olympic/26th Street, Colorado/17<sup>th</sup> Street, and Colorado/4<sup>th</sup> Street Stations:

- National/Palms – an alternate name of “Palms has been proposed by Motor Ave. Improvement Association and the Palms Neighborhood Council. The name would be consistent with other names and geographically.
- Olympic & 26th – The City of Santa Monica has requested that the station be named “26<sup>th</sup>/Bergamot,” which is consistent with the naming policy; while there is not a street named “Bergamot” near the station, the name is recognized internationally because of its reputation in the art community. Though the Bergamot Art Center's name is copyrighted, the copyright owner has no issues with its use in the station name.

- Colorado Blvd./17th Street - – The City of Santa Monica has requested 17<sup>th</sup> Street/Santa Monica College (17<sup>th</sup> St/SMC). The distance between the station and Santa Monica College is approximately 6/10ths of a mile, significantly farther than most of the other schools used in station names, and thus a consideration.
- Colorado/4th Street - The City of Santa Monica has requested “Downtown Santa Monica” for the station name, which is consistent with Metro’s naming policy and other station names.

Denny Zane, a representative of Santa Monica College, supports inclusion of Santa Monica College (SMC) in the naming of the station at 17th & Colorado. SMC is likely to be the primary destination of Expo Line riders who will alight at this station. SMC can be seen from the station, and to include the college name would capitalize on the college’s efforts to build a transit and bike oriented culture. Nearly half of SMC’s 34,000 students arrive via alternative transportation; SMC will open a major bike facility this month. Riverside and San Bernardino Colleges have been inspired to adopt programs similar to SMC’s “Any Line, Any Time” program, which allows college IDs to be used as fare media on local transit. He sees use of SMC in the name as a major opportunity to enhance system ridership.

Alexandro Martinez, Santa Monica College Commissioner of Sustainability of Associated Students and Eco Action Club President, shared that he grew up in East Los Angeles, and he had no vehicle. He now lives in Culver City and bikes to Santa Monica College, which has taught him how to use alternate transportation and live without owning a car. The Expo Line is complementary to SMC’s progressive movements in terms of transportation, environmental issues, and sustainability. Such naming of the station would create a win-win situation, as it will create larger market for Expo use and allow potential downtown Los Angeles students that don't generally consider SMC as an option to envision themselves attending SMC.

Steven Johnson, Santa Monica College’s Director of Sustainability, is originally from the east coast. He spent a semester at NYU in Manhattan, during which time he traveled to school on the subway Brooklyn and used the 8th Street/NYU subway stop. The stop grew to mean a lot to him. Similarly, naming of SMC can provide a connection for SMC students and alumni; including SMC in the station name can serve as an emotional connection for students and alumni who both use the stop and who view it on maps.

Eli Lipmen, Palms Neighborhood Council President. Palms is the oldest neighborhood in the Westside of Los Angeles and has a long transit history. The stakeholders in the area feel that naming of the station at National/Palms as Palms will enhance the branding and reestablish the area’s link to rail transportation. In October 2010, the Neighborhood Council passed a motion asking for station to be named Palms. Since then, they’ve consulted with Council Districts 5, 10, and 11, which support the motion, as do the Mayor and his staff, the Expo Authority’s Urban Design Committee, and Motor Ave. Improvement Association. They have done significant outreach and have not encountered any resistance to naming the station Palms. He asked that the Council consider supporting naming the station Palms.

Council Member Wright stated that naming of SMC Station would be no different than what doing Metro will potentially do for UCLA through inclusion of the UCLA name on a Purple Line extension station. SMC is located within the same distance as UCLA to will be same difference, and there are also satellite locations around the college that are closer to the station. He expressed that it good to hear Santa Monica College and other entities expressing support for transit.

Council Member Rosten stated he was pleased to the level of community participation. He agreed with the public comments and stated that the station naming suggestions received should be implemented. He submitted a motion that the Westside Council recommend names be adopted as follows: Palms, 26th/Bergamot, 17th/SMC, Downtown Santa Monica, and that "Blvd." be added to the Expo/Westwood station name. Motion seconded by Council Member Wright and passed unanimously.

**5. RECEIVE Report on Westside/Central Corridor Study Recommended Options for Lines 2/302, 4, 704 & 16/316, Jon Hillmer, Director**

Mr. Hillmer presented the various alternatives for Lines 4-704-2 and Lines 16-316.

Basic options for the Sunset routes is that they would not go into downtown, but would stop near or at near Vermont. They would interface with one another and also at the Red Line Station. A new local would be created that would be "inner Sunset" service that would operate from Vermont and Sunset into downtown Los Angeles. It would isolate the problem area and all the intermediate stops would still be serviced, they would have transfer options or they could take the Red Line. Service could be increased on 704 on the remaining portion from Vermont westward, and evaluate service on the local line. Another option is maintaining service as is, but ending Line 4 near Vermont.

For Line 16/316 3<sup>rd</sup> Street service, the ridership to Century City very light. Option to take some of the routes down Robertson and continue down to Culver City. On the downtown end, some trips could be extended to Little Tokyo Gold Line station.

Wayne Coombs commented that shortening Line 704 to Vermont there would still be 25 people having to alight at Vermont. The line should continue all the way to where it does now. 1,000 people a day get off at Vermont. If you really want to confuse people, renumber the 2 and 4, those numbers have been there for decades. They all go from West Los Angeles into downtown. He asked that at least stop one of them at Sanborn, so that people can at least transfer. Line 220 should not be cancelled if it is going to inconvenience people.

Wayne Wright commented that overall shortlining of Line 2 would be okay for some trips, but that Line 4 should keep all trips and maintain the 1-seat, 1-ride, as it runs 24 hours. Line 704 does provide alternate service between downtown to Santa Monica. Line 16 expansion to Robertson would not be a problem, but cancelling Line 220 service north of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to West Hollywood would leave a gap. He is in favor of the extended service to Little Tokyo Gold Line station, because the current end at 6<sup>th</sup> and Main is overloaded.

Tina Pelligrino, a member of the Center City Neighborhood Council and an employee of American Apparel stated that American Apparel has 8,200 employees on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Alameda. They are planning to hire an additional 500 in the next 30 days. She requested service to help transport employees from their location to Union Station.

Council Member Rosten commented that because of the nature of that business and the desire to improve the local economy, it would make a lot of sense to adopt changes that can be made in response to companies that employ a significant number of people who are going to use public transportation. Mr. Hillmer stated that it might be possible to run Line 16 on Alameda. It would make the trip a little bit longer as Alameda angles to the east, but it would be able to get to the Little Tokyo station. Line 58 used to run down Alameda, but it didn't have much ridership so it was eventually eliminated. However, with the revitalization of downtown and the Little Tokyo Arts District, there may be a need for some service down Alameda to be restored. The cost to run the service could potentially be offset by use of funding dedicated towards increasing east Gold Line ridership or through savings achieved by corridor workshop recommended changes. The City's DASH service does not currently serve that portion of Alameda and has been reducing service over the last few years. Council Member Sloan-Goodman suggested that the possibility of applying for JARC funding (Job Access and Reverse Commute - federal monies earmarked for transporting low-income riders into employment areas) should be explored, as it would be a great fit.

Council Member Stitcher asked if Line 16 was to be extended down to Venice/Robertson Station and Line 220 was cancelled, how does Line 16 service compare to 220? Line 220 only has 1 bus once an hour. It doesn't have enough recovery time and in practice, turns into 60-70 minute frequency. Line 16 would be a shorter route, which would cycle better than the existing 220. The northern portion by Cedar Sinai would not be serviced, but 220 ridership continues to shrink. It may be a way to invigorate the Robertson corridor and has a great deal of potential. If it was run from 3rd Street down on Robertson to the Culver City Station, it has the potential to attract more riders. Once per hour bus service is lifeline service for people who have no other alternative. If service is run every 1/2 hour, it works much better for people.

Council Member Stitcher asked if Line 704 was to go up to the UCLA area – where would that be? The location at UCLA is yet to be determined.

Council Member Capone-Newton asked how the interface would work near Vermont. The line wouldn't be able to end right at Vermont, some would have to be extended a short way and end closer to Alvarado. If Line 4 was ended at or near Vermont, it would probably have to go a little farther and end where the Line 2 shortline is. It really needs to go all the way over to Sunset, then down Alvarado. Then going north, there's potential for layovers to the north and east of the hospital.

Council Member Wright suggested adding service to line 704 to Santa Monica.

Council Member Capone Newton expressed that it would be much easier to understand the options with maps. As there are still 15 months to make recommendations, could the

types of fares that people are using in the vicinity also be assessed? Can TAP data for these lines be obtained and linked to times, location of bus? TAP generates a huge volume of data that would be easier to view more generally. The transfer issue is a real one, and understanding fare issues is important. On-time performance of these lines is not good, partly because of construction, but also because they have long, complicated routes & schedules.

Mr. Hillmer shared that he had been contacted by Ken Ruben, who was unable to attend but that Mr. Ruben wanted Mr. Hillmer to share that SCTA had a meeting downtown with Dave Sutton, and the group was very impressed with his openness to changes and modifications to TAP.

A Line 720 service change which has already been implemented was shared by Service Planning staff member Carol Silver as an informational item. Routing of Expo Phase 2 has impacted the Line 720 route, so a minor reroute has been made beginning February 18th. Colorado Ave. is going to be permanently closed eastbound between 4th and 5th Streets. As a result, Line 720 has been rerouted to use the Transit Mall, and beginning Monday will use Santa Monica Blvd. In the other direction, it will use Broadway from 5th. There will be a new Rapid Bus stop at Ocean & Wilshire for transfers to Line 733. Patrons will no longer be able to board Line 720 at the stop at Ocean and Colorado. The layover zone is at the same terminal on 5th near the side of Colorado, but instead of making turn, will be made on Broadway.

Wayne Wright commented that the presenter was mistakenly referring to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in the discussion of the rerouting of Line 720, as buses cannot be placed on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. He asked what effect the Colorado Blvd. closure will have on Big Blue Bus operations and Line 5. Council Member Stitcher responded that in August, Line 5 was rerouted to come off of Colorado permanently. Now, outbound buses go south on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, left on Broadway, right on 6th, left on Colorado. Buses coming in and out of the yard use 6th Street.

Council Member Stitcher asked for clarification of the problem with making a right turn from Santa Monica onto 7<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Silver responded that it was recently restriped with a left turn pocket, which narrowed the turn radius space.

Council Member Wright noted that both Lines 704 and 733 go into downtown and asked if there any chance to interline both lines some time in the future. Interlining of those two lines is highly unlikely would be interlined to avoid layover there.

#### **6. RECEIVE Director's Report on December Service, Jon Hillmer, Director**

- On-time performance trends: 75.6% compared to 80% FY13 goal.
- Customer Complaint per 100,000 passengers: 2.03 compared to FY13 goal of 2.20.
- Percentage of Wheelchair Passups – 3 of 93
- Proper Wheelchair Securement and Procedures followed: 96% and 84% respectively
- Automated Voice Enunciator Bus Stop Calling: 98% Interior, 96% Exterior
- Operator Was Courteous and Respectful – 204 of 207 operators

- Miles between Mechanical Road Calls: 3,128 compared to FY13 goal of 3,900. Articulated buses that operate on Wilshire Blvd. take a lot wear and tear, they average 2,000 miles between road calls.
- Age of Buses at Divisions: There is a correlation between the age of the buses and the number of miles between road calls. The condition of the road and the passenger loads also affect.
- Accidents per 100,000 miles: 4.49 compared to FY13 goal of 3.10.
- Clean Bus Ratings: 8.02 compared to goal of 8.0.
- Average Bus Weekday Ridership: 601,716 of 1,044,886 system total.
- Line 720 Ridership: 37,983 weekdays, 27,328 Saturdays, 19,200 Sundays.
- Weekday Line Ridership: Line 4 20,405; Line 704; 10,585. Both down slightly from the holidays.
- Bus Station Cleanliness Ratings by Quarter: Westside: 8.02; System average 8.19.
- Rail Average Weekly Ridership: Red Line: 158,830; Blue Line: 91,709; Green Line: 46,029; Gold Line: 42,295; Expo Line: 23,193.

Council Member Wright asked if there any relationship between the number of mechanics assigned to a division and the number of breakdowns. Division mechanic assignments are optimally assigned according to the number and type of buses based out of each Division.

Council Member Rosten asked if the Mystery Rider program evaluating only ADA issues or if they also look at compliance with other service measures. The Mystery Rider program is focused on wheelchair passengers but also evaluates operator compliance with various policies and procedures: politeness, excessive talking, if the operator runs any red lights, and so forth. Council Member Rosten asked if additional information regarding Mystery Rider findings can be shared with the Council to see what types of issues they're identifying. Mr. Hillmer responded that the inspectors write up general comments; he will attempt to gather and sort for sharing with the Council.

## 7. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Council Member Wright asked that an update on the Nextrip application be provided at the April meeting, as he will be unable to attend the March meeting. He particularly wants an update on placement of Nextrip placards at the cross streets. He also asked that the meeting be adjourned in the honor of Congresswoman Cardiss Collins who passed away last week, who was his great cousin.

Council Member Rosten asked for more information regarding a recent accident involving a Metro bus and a pedestrian. Mr. Hiller shared that, to the best of his knowledge, the incident in which one person was killed and another was critically injured occurred on Santa Monica Blvd. As a mechanic was driving a bus back to from Division 7 to Division 2, a pedestrian jaywalked to cross the street from in between parked cars and was struck by the bus. It was dark and the mechanic was not driving at an excessive speed; investigation of the incident continues.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:46 p.m. in memory of Congresswoman Cardiss Collins.