

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

REGULAR MEETING

La Cienega Tennis Center
Sunset Room
325 S La Cienega Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Called to Order at 5:00 P.M.

Council Members Present:

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

Officers:

Jody Feerst Litvak, Community Relations Manager
Cheryl Brown, Division Transportation Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary



Los Angeles County
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1. RECEIVED Public Comment on Items not Included on the Agenda:

Ken Ruben - Thanked former Westside Service Sector General Manager Mark Maloney for all his help over the years and said Mr. Maloney performed an outstanding job and was someone with whom it was a pleasure to work. He suggested that more new buses be placed on Lines 20 (Downtown Los Angeles-Westwood via Wilshire BI) 33 (Downtown Los Angeles-Venice via Venice BI) and 333 (Downtown Los Angeles-Santa Monica via Venice BI Limited). He added that overcrowding is still a problem on some lines.

Representative Wright concurred with sentiments shared regarding Mr. Maloney. He said Division Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown, with many years of service with the company, will do a great job in her new role as liaison to the Governance Council.

Representative Slimmer suggested that a letter be drafted to Human Resources or the Chief Executive Officer commending Mr. Maloney for his work with the Governance Council over the years.

Representative Rosten introduced Division Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown and suggested the Council use this transition as an opportunity to consider what direction the Governance Council might take, whether it be continuing a regional focus upon the Westside and Central areas of the county or possibly becoming an advocate for existing and potential transit riders. He added that Executive Secretary Suzanne Handler would be working with all five Councils from this point onward and could be another resource as the Councils move forward.

Alexander Friedman – Suggested that well-lit, attractive bus shelters be installed wherever possible to attract more riders; he added that Metro Rapid Station canopies that exist along Wilshire and Ventura Boulevards be expanded to all Metro Rapid corridors. He also suggested Metro consider using trolley buses on some of its lines; trolley buses are pollution-free, utilized in a number of large cities (i.e. San Francisco, large cities in Russia) and are attractive to discretionary riders. He added Los Angeles has a perfect climate for trolley buses.

David Hollander – Explained to the Council how difficult it is for one to take a bus from Wilshire Boulevard at Warner (Westwood) to downtown Santa Monica. The duration of the trip in his experience is often more than an hour and fifteen minutes. He suggested reinstating Local Line 20 service

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between Westwood Boulevard and the Santa Monica Pier between 5am and 10pm. He added that providing schedules aboard buses of connecting service as well as the schedule for the actual line one is riding would be helpful, considering Santa Monica Big Blue Bus does a great job of providing schedules of connecting service. He also suggested creating a Westside DASH type community circulator service for the UCLA/Westwood/West Los Angeles/Santa Monica area.

2. APPROVED Minutes for regular meeting on January 13, 2010.
3. RECEIVED Division Transportation Manager's Report:

Ms. Brown told the Council she has worked with Metro and its predecessor agency Southern California Rapid Transit District for 20 years, managing Transportation Division 6 (Venice) for the past 2 years. She reviewed the following key performance indicators for FY 2010:

Systemwide In Service On-Time Performance is at a positive variance of 71.85 percent, more than a full percentage point above target and continually improving over the current fiscal year.

Bus Traffic Accidents are at a positive variance of 3.1 per 100,000 hub miles, just under the agencywide target of 3.28.

Workers' Compensation Indemnity Claims per 200,000 exposure hours are at a positive variance of 10.32, just below the agency target of 10.81.

Council Representatives all concurred with Ms. Brown's suggestion to bring statistics specific to Divisions 6, 7 and 10 at future meetings. Representative Rosten suggested that information regarding the highest ridership lines also be included, such as Lines 204/754 (Hollywood-Athens via Vermont Avenue Local/Rapid) and 207/757 (Hollywood-Athens/Hawthorne via Western Avenue Local/Rapid), which are not operated by Westside Central Divisions but operate through the Westside/Central area. Community Relations Manager Jody Litvak suggested that the Council consider all lines operating within the regional boundaries of the Council to a future meeting and said she would solicit the types of data desired by Council Representatives to include in future reports.

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Representative Capone-Newton suggested looking at topics not previously considered because of the geographical constraints of the Sector model, such as bunching among lines operating from Divisions other than 6, 7 and 10 and how to remedy the situation.

Representative Bator suggested the Council have a Line Analysis presented by Service Development staff as is done at San Gabriel Valley Governance Council Meetings. She added that line analyses could be done at each meeting and that a focus on a particular line per meeting would give the Council and meeting attendees an opportunity to learn more about a particular line and give input on ways a line could be improved.

Representative Wright asked that a list be developed that describes some of the shuffling of lines that might occur under the reorganization effort that may move a line from one division to another. He added that bus bunching on Line 740 is very common, with up to three buses arriving at once. He added a more wholistic approach might be beneficial and that the transition allows for refining and developing a new approach that could work as well or better than what existed in the past.

Representative Rosten requested that Council Representatives send via email to Ms. Handler ideas or topics to consider for future meetings. He said that Ms. Brown and other leadership staff should feel free to continue to bring ideas as has been done in the past. He added a workshop might be helpful at the April meeting to determine what the Council wants to focus on in the future. Ms. Brown agreed to bring information and data regarding the higher ridership lines within the region (Crenshaw, Vermont, Slauson, King).

4. RECEIVED report on Blue Ribbon Committee – Council Representative Jerard Wright and Conan Cheung, Deputy Executive Officer-Operations, Service Planning and Development

Representative Wright and Mr. Cheung gave an overview of the Blue Ribbon Committee, which is composed of various public transit stakeholders: Metro, two municipal operators (Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Norwalk Transit), two local return city transit operators (Pasadena, West Hollywood), a large academic institution (Professor Gen Giuliano, University of Southern California), a school district representative,

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business organizations and community organizations. The March meeting discussed how a particular rider might make a trip based on personal parameters: frequency of nearest service, nearest high frequency service, the number of trip transfers that need to be made, and whether work needed to be done during the trip among others. Criteria considered included coordination of connecting services, available information regarding transportation services, and how reliable a service might be.

Policy discussions were held describing the existing markets Metro currently serves and comparing discretionary transit riders versus non-discretionary transit riders, how attracting discretionary riders might impact non-discretionary riders, and how providing a system that is simple, user friendly, high frequency, and reliable, will automatically attract discretionary and non-discretionary riders. Meetings utilize interactive exercises to draw conclusions about particular topics, such as an exercise that asked how a rider might travel on the first and last mile of their trip. Examples include motorized but unscheduled demand-response modes such as jitneys and taxicabs and other non-motorized modes such as bicycles or walking.

The inaugural meetings in February and March discussed transportation from a macro level, defining issues, opportunities and challenges of providing transportation to the metropolitan Los Angeles County region. Future meetings will discuss network design and service quality elements of a sustainable transit system, followed by developing policies for the system and presenting recommendations for service restructuring to the Board during Summer 2010.

RECEIVED Questions and Comments regarding Blue Ribbon Committee

Representative Rosten noted how most potential riders are not walking distance to a transit stop and that more conversations should be held regarding how to provide amenities such as a parking structure to attract discretionary riders. Ms. Litvak responded that Metro Communications has a program that works with large employers and institutions that would like to provide a group employee pass purchase program and said she would bring information on that program to a future meeting.

Representative Slimmer suggested her colleagues consider when serving on commissions that approve large scale projects encouraging or even requiring employers and developers to implement a transportation demand management program that may mandate a developer or employer

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subsidize transit costs as part of any approval process for a high density project.

Representative Capone-Newton suggested including land use planning representatives in future committees to discuss how to further build upon existing land use patterns that can sustainably support transit or transit corridors that could absorb denser development.

Representative Rosten asked if the Blue Ribbon Committee was open to the Public. Mr. Cheung responded the meetings have a public comment period but meetings are not too well attended by the public because the discussions are solely policy-based. He said once policy recommendations have been made they will be presented to the Board during Summer 2010 for approval. Once approved, staff will begin developing service change proposals based upon Blue Ribbon Committee policy and presenting recommendations at public meetings throughout the region. Ms. Litvak added that linking Governance Councils into the public input gathering process of the Blue Ribbon Committee would be beneficial.

5. RECEIVED Report on Safety Strap Securement Program – Chip Hazen, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Administrator

Mr. Hazen handles concerns regarding Metro and its compliance with the Federal ADA and State of California Title 24 with regard to construction of facilities that are accessible to all. Two programs that are performed by the Office of ADA Compliance include a Mystery Rider Program where a contractor rides a Metro bus and makes observations on how Metro can improve upon serving riders with disabilities and a Safety Strap Securement Program that trains operators on the best location to secure safety straps to a wheelchair as well as apply either a yellow strip of tape near the location an operator is to secure a wheelchair or a safety strap that allows a wheelchair to be secured to the bus. The program is necessary to ensure that passengers are transported in the safest, most courteous manner possible and to decrease the number of claims made against the agency for injury resulting from improper securement.

The Safety Strap Securement Program has provided more than 170 sets of straps to Metro passengers that use wheelchairs. The straps are rated at 150 pounds and can restrain up to 1,100 pounds. No riders who have allowed the straps to be installed on their mobility device have complained. One now satisfied rider complained on average 16 times per week prior to

having the straps installed. Operators also approve of the program. The program has been in existence for 15 years in Phoenix (Valley Transit), 10 years in Sacramento (Regional Transit), 8 years in Oakland (AC Transit) and the past year in San Jose (Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority). The program was designed by Doug Cross in the state of California. Once Metro has evaluated 1,000 wheelchairs, the program will be transferred to Access Services, Incorporated, the ADA Paratransit provider for Los Angeles County with over 27,000 wheelchair users, Metro transports over 50,000 wheelchairs per month with approximately 1,500 regular riders.

RECEIVED Questions and Comments regarding Safety Strap Securement Program:

Representative Rosten asked how long it takes to secure a wheelchair. Mr. Hazen responded less than a minute.

Representative Wright asked if any issues have been raised with the transport of wheelchairs on rail vehicles. Mr. Hazen responded that rail vehicles are not federally mandated to provide restraints for any riders. He added that trains are typically moving upon the same trajectory without much deviation. Buses on the other hand often have other vehicles or objects that enter their path, thereby causing operators to swerve or stop suddenly. Wheelchairs also continue to keep moving if for some reason a bus makes a sudden stop, thereby creating even more of a potential hazard, hence the need for a proactive Safety Strap Securement Program.

Representative Bator asked how a person without the safety strap securement is secured when boarding a bus. Mr. Hazen responded that an operator makes the best determination on where to place the securement hook or securement stop. Each operator has been trained at all Metro operating divisions to find the appropriate securement location. Another round of instruction on wheelchair securement (a third round for many operators) will take place during the latter half of April 2010.

Representative Rosten asked whether a passenger ever opts to deboard a wheelchair to sit in a seat aboard the bus. Mr. Hazen responded that most riders do not choose that option considering it could take up to 20 minutes for an individual to transfer in or out of his or her wheelchair. It is also difficult for a person to leverage their body once the bus is in motion.

Representative Slimmer asked if brochures advertising the Safety Strap Securement Program are available for passengers. Mr. Hazen responded

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yes and added that operators are instructed to hand a brochure to all passengers utilizing wheelchairs or mobility devices. Mrs. Brown added that operators are to notify Bus Operations Control if a passenger refuses to be secured. Mr. Hazen concurred, stating that a recorded announcement will now be played by an operator when a passenger refuses to be secured to lessen the liability LACMTA might incur as a result of an accident.

Representative Ida suggested that updates on the Safety Strap Securement Program and other issues regarding ADA be provided to sister transportation agencies at future Regional General Manager, Local Transit Systems Subcommittee and Bus Operations Subcommittee meetings.

Representative Wright asked how often operators receive training on ADA-related issues. Mr. Hazen responded that 2 hours of training is provided right now and a new program is being developed that will require an additional 2 hours of sensitivity training are required for each operator. There are also some additional hours spent on hardware and software training and customer relations. He said it takes 7 months to train all 4,500 Metro operators. How often the ADA training will be required (annually, bi-annually) is to be determined.

6. APPROVED:

public hearing findings;

adoption of revised June 2010 service change program

Twenty-two individuals provided comment on the proposed service changes (12 written, 10 oral):

Proposed Service Change	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Eliminate Line 31 (Pico/Rimpau-East Los Angeles College via Pico Bl/E 1st St) east of Indiana Station. Reroute all Line 30 (Pico/Rimpau-Rowan/Dozier) Rowan/Dozier trips to Indiana Station	3	2	0

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Extend Line 287 (Indiana Station-Montebello Town Center) west along Line 31 from East Los Angeles College to Indiana Station			
Short-line eastbound Line 217 (Vermont/Sunset-West Los Angeles via Hollywood Bl, Fairfax Ave) trips at Hollywood/Vine Station between 7am-8pm Sunday-Friday. *short-line already exists Saturdays 7am-8pm	3	4	0
Convert 24-hour Local Limited Stop Line 333 (Downtown Los Angeles/Union Station-Santa Monica via Venice Bl) to Rapid Line 733 operating daily from 5am-11pm. Extend Local Line 33 (Downtown Los Angeles-Venice via Venice Bl) from Venice to Santa Monica and S Main St/W Sixth St to Union Station/Patsaouras Transit Plaza	12	2	0

Mr. Gandara presented graphic representations of each line and also noted that Representative Wright's concern regarding a stop at Motor to connect with Culver City Bus Line 3 was addressed; a stop will be added at Motor in addition to the nearby stops of Overland and Bagley, in order to provide as many connecting trips as possible. The change in revenue service hours is just under 8,700 annual revenue service hours: 27 less weekdays, 10 less Saturdays, and 22 less on Sundays. All revenue service hours reduced on Line 30/31 will be transferred to Line 287 service, thereby improving its headway to 30 minutes rather than 35 to 45 minutes as exists currently.

Timeline

April 2010	Board considers adoption of Council Service Change Proposals
June 2010	Implementation of Board-approved service changes on June 27, 2010 or later.

Representative Rosten congratulated Service Development staff on a job well done considering the lack of controversy with the proposed set of service changes.

Representative Stitcher asked the current and proposed frequency of Line 217. Mr. Gandara responded the line operates between 12 and 40 minutes per hour depending on time of day and peak direction. During the day, the longest wait time during peak period for a through trip on Line 217 to Vermont/Sunset Station is 26 minutes.

Representative Wright asked whether 60-foot buses would continue to be deployed on Rapid Line 733 and whether Local Line 33 might also see 60 foot buses deployed. Mr. Gandara responded that the agency will do its best to provide 60 foot buses for as many rapid trips as possible.

Representative Capone-Newton expressed appreciation for the visual diagrams that provided a graphic representation of the upcoming service changes. He also asked what speed improvement would result from upgrading Line 333 to rapid service. Mr. Gandara responded that a ten percent improvement would likely occur.

7. RECEIVED report on Council Representatives' Line Rides:

Representative Slimmer mentioned that she waited more than 20 minutes one afternoon for an eastbound Line 4 or 704 (Santa Monica Boulevard Local/Rapid) at Santa Monica Boulevard and Sweetzer that never arrived. She reported it to customer relations and was told that the bus in fact did arrive and that she just missed it.

Representatives Rosten and Wright requested updates on bus bunching and vehicle operations supervision at a future meeting and a copy of the most current LACMTA organizational chart and staff telephone directory.

Representative Bator noted that the voice annunciator system on many of the buses announce stops slightly ahead of time, often causing customers to alight before their intended stop. She said operators should correct the annunciator should the announcement be given before the intended stop. Representative Litvak responded that she would forward that information to the appropriate party.

Representative Bator requested that more seating be provided for waiting passengers at Universal City Station. She observed waiting passengers sitting upon items other than benches which were completely full on her last trip on the Ventura Boulevard Rapid (Line 750).

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8. RECEIVED Chair and Council Representatives' Closing Remarks:

Representative Rosten requested a presentation on how locations are selected to place a new bus shelter and criteria that are considered before installing a shelter.

Representative Slimmer commended Deputy Executive Officer Michael Greenwood for working to curb the incidence of red light violations along Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood.

Representative Rosten reminded Council Representatives to email any future items for council meetings to Community Relations Manager Jody Litvak or Executive Secretary Suzanne Handler.

ADJOURNED at 6:35 P.M.



Prepared by:

William Walker
Council Secretary