

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

5:00-7:00 PM

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

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

Called to Order at 5:08 p.m.

Council Representatives present:

Brad Robinson Chair
Jerard Wright, Vice Chair
Peter Capone-Newton
Greg Fischer
Carol Gross
Glenn Rosten
Anny Semonco

Officers:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
Michele Jackson, Council Secretary



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. RECEIVED Public Comment for items not on the agenda

Ken Ruben – Noted that he had a brief discussion with Metro Deputy Chief Executive Officer John Catoe, in which he suggested that more security is needed on the Blue Line in the evening. Also suggested that the Westside Sector institute the “Adopt-a-Line” Program being used in the South Bay, whereby individual Council Representatives ride various lines and report back.

Chair Robinson requested a report on the increased security at the MTA.

2. APPROVED Minutes from August 9, 2006 with public comment from Ken Ruben **corrected** to read, “Culver City No. 2 7 bus is running late at the Culver Hotel”.

3. RECEIVED General Managers Report

Mark Maloney reported complaints per 100,000 boardings remain low; however, traffic accidents are up slightly for the year-to-date, especially on Wilshire Rapid Line 720, as drivers become accustomed to the new articulated buses. The increased number of accidents also negatively affected on-time performance. During late July and August more supervision has been focused on the 720 Line and two time points have been added to the line for the first time to attempt to maintain the appropriate spacing.

Representative Wright asked if the time points were only for rush hour. Mark Maloney responded that the time points apply all day and on weekends, and no increase to running time was required.

Representative Gross inquired if the time points actually slow the buses on weekends when there is no traffic, and how school being back in session affects service.

Mark Maloney said it is easy to handle the loads because the articulated buses provide greater capacity.

Chair Robinson commented that when the analysis is done in December, it would be interesting to take all those factors into consideration and determine the end result for the passenger.

Mark Maloney commented about the motion passed at last month’s Board Meeting regarding a proposed Super Rapid Line on Wilshire that would have only 4-5 stops. Staff has just started working with Director Yaroslavsky’s office and looking at the heaviest stops and other technicalities. Staff will report back to the Board in October.

Responding to questions about line identification, staff indicated that it might be better to keep the buses red and just have something in the head sign designating the different service. Representative Capone-Newton wants to be sure that the Sector is an active participant in this process. He noted that people standing at a corner would now see local, rapid and super rapid buses there. Some type of information technology demonstration project is needed to let people know what's happening. This will make the customer decision-making process more complex.

General Manager Maloney said a lot will be determined by how much time the Board is willing to give staff to put the new service into effect.

Chair Robinson questioned how the Board envisions the Sectors being involved, since technically the Sector does not have responsibility for these lines. Mark Maloney said staff will be meeting with Director Yaroslavsky's Deputy soon and will bring that up since the Sector will be involved in running the line.

Representative Gross requested that MTA Board agendas be emailed to the Council Members in the future.

4. RECEIVED report on FY07 YTD July Financials, Michael Davis, Finance Manager

UTU contract wages are over budget by \$23,850; non-contract wages under budget by \$50,329; allocated fringes under budget by \$310,000; PL/PD not looking as good as last year, but still showing an \$82,000 underrun. Based on the major incident at Division 10 this year, and another case that occurred about a year ago where the victim had to be placed in rehab for the rest of her life, we could see overruns of \$1 million in this category.

Because of setting higher reserves for both old and new claims, workers' compensation is over budget by \$109,943. Last year's workers' compensation budget of \$11 million was overrun by more than \$1 million.

CNG is under budget by \$355,000. We have budgeted \$1.01/therm for FY07 and are currently paying 75/76 cents. Divisions 7 and 10 consume about 1 million therms/mo. We are also seeing underruns in unleaded and diesel fuel. Materiel and supplies are under budget by \$52,991; parts are under by \$181,000. Overall, the Sector for July is in a positive position by \$954,000. Actuals for August are still showing an \$8 million underrun. A \$1.8 million hit is still expected as a result of the Division 10 incident.

Chair Robinson asked if there is a process for mid-year budget correction.

Michael Davis noted that if the fuel cost underrun continues for 10 months that would provide \$3.5 million to offset the other increases.

Representative Capone-Newton asked why ATMS radios are not being installed. Mark Maloney said that the articulated buses are delivered without ATMS and about one quarter of them now have ATMS. It is more of a manpower issue. The initial wiring was too short, requiring rework, which put us behind. Current installations should be completed by early November. In future contracts the ATMS will be a part of the new buses when they are delivered.

FY06 closed out under budget by \$3.4 million.

Representative Gross asked what happens to the monies not spent last year. Mr. Davis responded that they are reprogrammed into the current year's budget.

5. RECEIVED report on Metro Connections – Downtown Service Plan, Rod Goldman, Deputy Executive Officer, Operations

Mr. Goldman reported that the study area is bounded by Cesar Chavez on the north, L.A. River on the east, Harbor Freeway on the west and San Bernardino Freeway to the south. Downtown is diversifying from primarily an employment center to include more housing, entertainment and retail. About 40% of Metro routes serve downtown as well as 6 Dash routes and other local operators. Metro is collaborating closely with the LA City Department of Transportation (LADOT).

Metro is focusing on taking people to downtown and through downtown where there is high demand, and working with LADOT regarding taking people around downtown focusing on major activity centers, e.g., Gateway Plaza area, 7th & Flower area, and the Staples Center area. Metro is also looking to LADOT to provide peak-hour bus lanes and signal priority. Development of a transit mall is also under consideration, perhaps on Broadway between 2nd and 9th Streets, to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

Initial impact analysis is underway to determine required changes in service coverage, ridership and resource impacts and impacts to layover operations.

Next steps:

- Issue a Board Box report in September to summarize overall project status.
- Review and refine initial proposals during September and October.

- Develop additional information on the transit mall concept and start outreach with businesses in November.
- Provide Board and Governance Councils status reports at their November meetings.

6. Council Discussion on Metro Connections Preliminary Routing Proposals

Chair Robinson complimented Rod Goldman on the way the information was presented in the report.

Mr. Goldman noted that more information would be available in November explaining the impacts of this plan; for example, if a route were shortened in downtown, how many passengers would be impacted. By November Metro will have a more refined plan based on one more review and including ideas from LADOT and required mitigations.

Representative Wright thanked Mr. Goldman for all the hard work. He suggested that staff discuss with LADOT the fact that many lines end at 7th and Grand.

Chair Robinson asked what changes would be made to Beverly Local Route 14 if the Beverly Rapid 714 were eliminated. Roy Gandara responded that resources from the 714 Line would be retained within the 14 route. As discussed when staff went forward with the last plan for the Consent Decree, seats will be maintained as opposed to service hours. For example on Wilshire capacity was increased on the 720 Line by going from 45 to 60 ft. buses.

Responding to a question from Chair Robinson, Mr. Goldman stated that staff is now going into the resource management plan which should be completed by next February. Actual implementation will go through the regular service change process with changes being made between June 2007 and June 2009.

Representative Capone-Newton asked if any thought had been given to integrating a transit mall concept with stops clustered around the rail stations.

Staff is seeking ways to use the huge amount of service that already runs through downtown as part of the circulation system. One problem is that a lot of that service runs fairly empty. So a lot of lines terminate downtown. That has a big impact from a cost standpoint because downtown is slow and congested. A dedicated circulation system is more cost effective and better for the patrons. Broadway was selected because it has a lot of activity and is in the heart of downtown, and close to Hill Street where the Red Line stations are.

Chair Robinson asked if staff was recommending moving a transit center.

Mr. Goldman said staff was just identifying where there might be a center or a lot; perhaps the Convention Center, near Bunker Hill, or the Trade Tech area could be secondary locations for interface centers.

Representative Gross questioned why Line 714 is proposed for elimination. Mr. Goldman responded that compared to local service, it's not getting the ridership you might expect. Representative Gross sought clarification of the circulator concept. She asked if staff is considering running lines to the perimeter of downtown and then having a circulator take people around; and would that net an improvement of having fewer buses in downtown and less congestion. Mr. Goldman responded affirmatively.

Representative Rosten questioned whether Metro Connections has given thought to having a transit center in the USC area. Mr. Goldman responded that it is already designated as a sub-regional hub. No routings have been modified from there to downtown on Figueroa. Staff would just need to determine how frequently to operate service, etc.

Chair Robinson asked if the circulator would be on more than one street. Mr. Goldman said conceptually it should be on at least two streets, using the Broadway corridor and operating in a circular manner.

Representative Capone-Newton asked the status of the proposed bus lanes. Mr. Goldman said that 5th and 6th Streets were suggested by LADOT. Having those lanes could increase the speed of operation.

Chair Robinson asked the status of the bus lane on Wilshire. Jody Litvak replied that staff continues to work with the Cities of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills regarding a bus lane on Wilshire between Doheny and Fairfax, but a lot of technical issues remain. Work also continues on extending the current bus lane in West Los Angeles eastward through the VA property. Chair Robinson requested an update on this issue. He also asked everyone to take a good look at the Metro Connections proposal so that a good discussion can take place next month.

Public Comment

Lionel Jones – commented regarding circulation in downtown. Mentioned that Gold Line Eastside Extension will be coming into Union Station and Expo Line into 7th and Metro. There is a need to look at how to get people from 7th and Metro to Union Station using buses. Suggested bus-only lane on the Flower/Figueroa corridor. Noted changes to 2 Foothill Lines going through downtown -- Silver Line and 481 on Wilshire. A lot of people will come from corridors that Foothill used to serve to get to Union Station.

7. Chair's Remarks

Chair Robinson presented Metro Umbrella to Peter Capone-Newton to commemorate his past service as Chair of the Westside Council Governance Council.

Adjourned at 6:43 p.m.



