

Friday, September 8, 2006 - 9:30 a.m.

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# Minutes

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

## **SOUTH BAY SERVICE SECTOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

Carson Community Center  
801 E. Carson Street  
Carson, CA 90745

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Service Sector Representatives present:

Terisa Price, Chair  
John McTaggart, Vice Chair  
Margaret Hudson  
Lou Mitchell  
Devon Deming

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Officers:

Dana M. Coffey, General Manager  
Joanne Harper, Administrative Aide



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

**Metro**

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1. **Safety 1<sup>st</sup> Contact** by Metro South Bay Volunteer.

Scott Greene suggested wearing reflective clothing when walking on the street in early morning or evening, so drivers can see you.

2. **APPROVED** Minutes of the August 11, 2006 Council Meeting.

Chair Price stated the next item on the agenda, Item 3, would be rearranged for Public Comments to be heard earlier in the meeting. There were no objections.

3. Public Comments

**Dorothea Jaster** commented about security on Metro buses and trains. She said passengers are asked to report any abandoned or suspicious packages they may see on the bus or train to law enforcement authorities or transit operators. She said that passengers ride through several jurisdictions and may not know where they are and which authorities to notify. If passengers inform operators, the response they get may be “yeah” “o.k.” or even “thank you” without any action being taken. Ms. Jaster questioned the definition of “suspicious package.”

Lunch coolers and bottles that people carry on buses are not suspicious; if a bottle breaks and releases chemicals, then it becomes suspicious. She stated a CD with bank information can be suspicious, since identity theft is one of the fastest-growing crimes. Since the definition of “suspicious package” is broad, a laptop computer could qualify; computers are being used to remotely set off explosive devices and may store many months of research or even military personnel’s information on it.

Dorothea Jaster recommended that the definition for “suspicious and unattended packages” be updated and that when a report is made, a more complete response than “yeah and ok” be provided to the individual making the report.

**Evaristo P. Ramos** stated he has been a Carson bus patron for the past 22 years and uses Lines 446 and 447 on Avalon Boulevard. He said there has been no additional service added during that time and suggested Metro add

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a bus line on Main Street in Carson to serve seniors, the regional library, and Carson High School, perhaps terminating at Harbor College south of Pacific Coast Highway.

Mr. Ramos said Metro's mission is to provide excellent service for its customers. He indicated that Line 446/447 service on Avalon Boulevard, only goes as far as the Artesia Transit Center after 8 am and when service is cut, it is less than excellent and poses a problem for the customers.

Chair Price advised Mr. Ramos to talk to the City of Carson if it is local service on Main Street that he is most concerned with.

**Arnold Sachs** asked if something could be done about bus misconnections when buses are running late in traffic and whether operators can communicate with each other to allow passengers to get on a connecting bus. While buses are stopped at the intersection, operators don't know there are passengers who need to get on their bus. If bus operators could wait at bus stops a few minutes, it would prevent passengers from missing a connecting bus and waiting 45 minutes for another bus.

Chair Price said if every bus waits, it would take too long to reach its destination. Arnold stated he made this recommendation previously when a 444 bus broke down and 20 people were waiting to make a connection. He feels some communication is necessary between operators when a bus breaks down to avoid missed connections.

Mr. Sachs attended the August 24, 2006 MTA Board Meeting. He lamented the Board of Directors' discussion about the color of the proposed Exposition light rail line. Mr. Sachs thinks Governance Council representatives should attend both sector and regular board meetings each month. Also, he suggested that passengers who have transit issues or problems should attend the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' meeting, held every Tuesday. The public is allowed to speak three minutes at this meeting.

**Ken Ruben** stated that he attended the MTA Board meeting in August and his observations were similar to Mr. Sachs' regarding the discussion of colors being proposed for the Exposition train service. He also said the Westside Central Sector changed the date and time of its governance council meeting which caused him a problem. Mr. Ruben told the Council

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that some operators are still not familiar with the EZ-Transit Pass zone fare policy as it applies to seniors and people with disabilities. Bus Operators should know that discounted monthly pass holders are not required to pay the zone fares. He suggested that General Managers write a memo to operators and clarify this issue.

Mr. Ruben also asked General Manager Coffey to review on-time performance of Line 446 especially the bus leaving from Artesia Transit Center at 8:45. He also suggested the Governance Council meetings should be tape recorded for accuracy in the minutes.

**Norm Hobson** said he rides the Harbor Transitway a lot and on-time service has improved dramatically. More buses are coming within two or three minutes of scheduled time. He commented that he uses his car for shorter trips and rides transit for longer trips. He understands the need for shorter bus routes, but asked the Governance Council to consider the importance of cross-town routes to make sure service is available for people who travel six to ten miles across town.

As an example, Mr. Hobson shared a time-saving route for passengers making long trips to West Hollywood and UCLA. He said Line 550 express service from the Green Line arrives at Santa Monica and San Vicente 45 minutes earlier than Line 305, which leaves from Rosa Parks Station. Although both buses leave from the Green Line at the same time, the 550 express bus arrives 45 minutes before the local 305 bus. Mr. Hobson was applauded for his comments.

**Lionel Jones** commented that a homeless person has set up a tent at the 37th Street Harbor Transitway station and has created a climate of fear, particularly at night. He believes the Sheriff's Department should respond because the situation has become a hazard and an offensive odor exists.

Mr. Jones also said that people with low-rider vehicles are zooming over the parking lot at the Artesia Transit Center, on Friday and Saturday nights. This practice is causing a serious safety hazard and liability issues. The Council advised Mr. Jones that the parking lot at the Artesia Transit Center is owned by CalTrans.

Lionel stated he likes the articulated buses on Lines 720, 754 and 761, but had encountered a new problem. Passengers refuse to walk to the back of

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the bus past the second door although seats are available in the back of the bus. Mr. Jones suggested the voice annunciators should tell passengers, in English and Spanish, to move to the back. He suggested that General Managers investigate this problem, which is a safety issue.

**Sylvia Davis** commented on the Watts Towers' maintenance and upkeep issue. She thanked the Council for another opportunity to speak as she is very passionate about this issue. She expressed gratitude for the response she received after speaking at the last meeting, on August 11, 2006. Ms. Davis stated that she is still confused and not certain of the responsibility Metro assumes for the Watts Towers' upkeep.

Ms. Davis said a plan to upgrade and renovate the Star Theatre has existed for 25 years and the community is still waiting for results. Metro's involvement in the upkeep and maintenance of the Watt's Towers is very important to the community because what Metro does will determine what the Star Theatre does. She stated the problem will continue until the responsibility for handling it is resolved.

General Manager Dana Coffey stated someone from her office would read a copy of the e-mail letter which Ms. Davis received after the August meeting. She recommended that Rich Morallo get the information from Ms. Davis today, after the meeting, to help resolve this issue. Ms. Coffey suggested that Ms. Davis call her office anytime for South Bay Sector's staff to assist her.

**J.K. Drummond** commented that he had seen the Memorandum of Understanding, to transfer the 225/226 to Palos Verdes (PV) Transit, none of it makes sense to him. He stated the memorandum is not clear and is a big puzzle, whether the contractors are still running the line with PV Transit managing it up to a certain date. He concurred with Arnold Sachs' comments about bus misconnections. J.K. stated that Chair Price has adopted the typical Metro technique of suppressing passengers' good comments and suggestions. He thinks it's a good idea to make suggestions about misconnections that cost passengers time and money. He feels bus operators transporting connecting passengers on a late bus should notify operators of connecting buses, directly, by radio, or through dispatchers.

**John Otten** commented that Metro buses make too much noise and asked if there is a way to get rid of the excessive noise.

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General Manager Dana Coffey asked Mr. Otten to specify the lines and locations where the noise is occurring. Mr. Otten said the problem was universal. Chair Price informed Mr. Otten that the type of machinery and size of the engine are associated with the amount of noise buses make.

Representative McTaggart stated that fuel economy is a factor to consider in the reduction of noise; and the bus is likely to get only one-half of its expected mileage. Chair Price suggested that this issue may need to be handled through legislation or through the bus manufacturer. General Manager Dana Coffey asked Mr. Otten to contact her directly about this issue.

4. **APPROVED** findings of August 11, 2006 Public Hearing and **ADOPTED** Bus Service Changes for Lines 111, 120-121, 204, for implementation December 17, 2006 or later and **DEFERRED** changes on Line 214.

Scott Greene stated there are four service line changes to be presented today for approval by the Governance Council to become effective in December 2006, or later, with a recommendation to defer one service change on the Manchester corridor for implementation of Rapid service.

The South Bay Sector will wait until December 2007 to implement Rapid service for Manchester/Firestone. Therefore, the 115 and 315 lines will continue to operate as they do today.

Mr. Greene stated that Line 111, the longest route, over 30 miles, will be shortened by one-third to 20 miles between LAX City Bus Center and the Norwalk Green Line Station, via Florence Avenue. The counterpart to that proposal is to extend Line 121 to pick up the segment of Line 111 east of the Norwalk Green Line Station. This will be done in conjunction with the Gateway Cities Sector. Their Council will be hearing the same item at their meeting next week. This will require approval of both South Bay and Gateway Cities Sectors, before implementation.

In extending Line 121 all the way to Whittwood Mall, Metro would be creating a longer route for Lines 120/121 if they continued to operate as they do now. Therefore, the proposal would separate Line 120 from 121. The buses would not be through-routed at Rosa Parks Station. Instead,

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Lines 120 and 121 would share adjacent bus bays at Rosa Parks Station. For passengers who do not want to transfer, there would be other options, including Metro Green Line, which could be used for longer trips.

Mr. Greene stated the Imperial Highway service change to separate Line 120 from Line 121 will be on a demonstration basis as that proposal was not presented at the Public Hearing. The Sector will proceed to implement the approved proposals today and present the Imperial Highway service change as part of the Public Hearing in the spring of 2007 for public review. Then it would be up to the Council to approve a permanent service change in June, 2007.

The 121 Line will be transferred to Gateway Cities Sector for their scheduling and planning to operate it from Rosa Parks to Whittier, Whittwood Mall, which is in the Gateway Cities Sector. This recommendation for Line 121 seems appropriate. Line 120 would remain in the South Bay Sector and continue to operate from the Aviation Green Line to Rosa Parks Station, Imperial and Wilmington, where the Blue and Green Lines cross.

On Line 204, Vermont Avenue's local bus, the proposal is to put articulated buses in service, the 60-foot long buses that Mr. Jones mentioned in Public Comments. Those buses would go into service in December 2006, on Line 204. No changes will be made to the route, although the schedule would change slightly. The headway would widen from six minutes to approximately eight minutes. The final schedule has not been determined.

Line 214 known as the Broadway-Main loop service has smaller buses and operates as a rail feeder, similar to a community shuttle. The proposal is to cancel the service on Broadway and extend the route west on 120<sup>th</sup> St. to LA Southwest College. The buses today loop between Artesia Transit Center on the south and Harbor Green Line Station on the north, via Broadway and Main, which are only ¼ mile apart. Canceling the service on Broadway, which has 80 boardings a day, will impact customers less than on the Main Street side. Line 214 will continue service on Main Street, and the proposed extension could be accommodated with resources available from the cancellation of the Broadway service. A new Department of Public Social Services' facility would also be served by the extension. This proposal is being recommended for approval today and will become

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effective in December 2006. The line will continue to operate with the smaller buses and focus on the Harbor Green Line Station.

Metro received helpful public input at the Public Hearing on either re-routing to the Avalon Green Line Station or to Harbor College, as Mr. Ramos stated, down Main Street from the Artesia Transit Center. Metro has decided not to pursue these recommendations although both have merit. More time is necessary to study and acquire additional resources to put these services in place.

Mr. Greene also gave a summary review of the Public Hearing comments and indicated there were six speakers. In addition, Metro South Bay received over two dozen e-mails or letters which are summarized in Attachment A. The staff's response is in the far-right column.

Mr. Greene stated that all comments and recommendations will be kept on file and be reviewed during service improvements at Metro South Bay Sector. He stated that comments revealed customers like articulated buses but feel that the issue of overcrowded buses on Vermont Avenue needs to be addressed.

Mr. Greene said Vermont Avenue is the best bus corridor in terms of productivity. He said Metro wants to put articulated buses in place but also wants to keep its service strong where it is needed, especially on the Vermont corridor. On Line 204, there are 100 passengers boarding per hour and a similar number on the Vermont Rapid bus for a total of close to 50,000 passengers boarding a day. He recommends approval for the line changes on December 17, 2006, or later.

Mr. Sachs asked about mechanical reliability of articulated buses. He commented that it is great to move people but more people are affected when these large buses break down.

General Manager Coffey stated South Bay has a low incidence of bus breakdowns. The articulated buses operate from one division, the Arthur Winston Division, located on 54th Street and Van Ness Avenue. This is the only facility to house these vehicles. Breakdowns must be hauled on flatbed trucks. The sector may eventually place these buses in service on the Harbor Transitway.



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Representative Devon Deming stated that she thought it was a good suggestion to extend Line 214 to Avalon Boulevard, to make six transit connections. It is not being recommended at this time because it would increase passengers' travel time to the Harbor Green Line. Ms. Deming asked Scott Greene if he knows how much travel time would be increased and would it be enough to offset a connection to six other transit services.

Mr. Greene said it would be a deviation of ten minutes, out of direction, for the Avalon Green Line Station. Customers taking the Green Line East would benefit, but other Line 214 passengers going west to Harbor Green Line and beyond would experience an increase in travel time.

Regarding Imperial Highway service changes, Chair Price asked who would be operating those lines. She stated she is concerned about needing a coordinated decision regarding operation of Lines 120 and 121, because the two sectors do not control each other's budgets.

She stated that the coordination topic will be discussed next month when the Council meets. If one sector has more responsibility, that sector should take over the responsibility.

Gateway Cities is where Line 121 would operate. South Bay Sector would transfer funds to Gateway Cities to operate a portion of the line. Monies above operating requirements would be kept in South Bay.

Chair Price said she is in favor of the idea of advance discussion for lines that cross Sectors; the decision needs to be coordinated and unanimous between the two Sectors.

Representative Devon Deming stated that there was a lot of discussion about schedules. She said this would be a demonstration service change and wondered if a note could be added into the recommendation so it would be a significant portion of the discussion. The schedule and communication between operators of Lines 120 and 121 are important to avoid additional travel time.

Representative McTaggart asked for the definition of demonstration and Chair Price asked what are we demonstrating?

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Scott Greene said the demonstration involves Lines 120/121 service, to demonstrate that these lines could work if scheduled separately to reliably transfer passengers at Rosa Parks Station. The demonstration process will be observed during an approximate six-month timeframe. After a successful demonstration, there would be a proposal to make it a permanent service change in June, 2007.

Representative Margaret Hudson asked what happens if Gateway refuses to put money into it and balks. Scott Greene stated that he didn't think Gateway Cities Sector will balk. He recommends operating for six months. Gateway Cities is expected to take ownership of the service. If Gateway doesn't take ownership of the service, then it would likely be cancelled.

Chair Price suggested that in the future, the General Manager from the adjacent Sector should be present at the decision-making meeting.

Norm Hobson stated he had a comment about the separation of Lines 120 and 121. He stated that he understands that the 121 Line, east of Rosa Parks, serves the portion of Imperial Highway next to the Green Line, a seven mile stretch with only three stops. He asked how many people will be impacted. He stated that this will involve transferring 20 – 30 people from one bus to another to complete their trip. When services changes are being made, riders need to benefit. Changes are not just for cost saving purposes.

He stated passengers traveling east on Imperial Highway are taking Line 120 and getting off where the Green Line does not stop. The reason they are using Line 120 is because the Green Line service is unacceptable. So, consider this before splitting Lines 120 and 121.

Norm stated that Line 214 should extend just to Avalon Boulevard, not the Avalon Green Line Station. The bus traveling west on 120th Street would not connect with the eastbound 120th Street bus. A ½ mile gap prevents the connection because the service only operates from Main. The idea is to move it over ½ mile to Avalon to connect with the Watts Dash, traveling east on 120th Street. It will also make connections with four other buses at 120th and Avalon. It will not increase service time by 10 minutes and the connection will increase Line 214's ridership.

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Lionel Jones commented on the Line 120/121 split, and that both schedules will have to be rebuilt. He also suggested splitting Line 111 or operating it as a contracted shuttle line.

Representative Margaret Hudson asked Scott Greene the cost and time if the line was extended just to Avalon Boulevard rather than Avalon Green Line Station. Scott stated it would probably be five minutes, because travel to Avalon involves two blocks. Chair Price stated if the bus has to turn around, it goes around the block which adds ten minutes.

General Manager Dana Coffey suggested that South Bay should not do anything with this line for December, 2006. The sector should take a better look at the changes and perhaps revisit for June, 2007. The service would continue as it is until the line could be thoroughly reviewed.

Chair Price stated she is opposed to making a change to Line 214 now and making another one in June because of the scheduling involved. It would have an adverse impact on the education of the riders if too many changes occur, and we would lose ridership. She suggested leaving it alone until June and to allow the Council to exhaust any recommendations and potential solutions.

MOTION APPROVED to make changes on Lines 111, 120/121 and 204. Proposed changes on **Lines 214, 115 and 315 were deferred.**

5. **UPDATE** on Line Rides by Metro South Bay Service Sector

Representative Margaret Hudson said that overall the service is good. She said the windows could be cleaner, as sometimes they are dirty or cloudy with graffiti.

General Manager Dana Coffey said students are lifting up window guards and spraying graffiti. It is a challenge to keep replacing windows. There are not enough in stock to change windows everyday. Representative Hudson asked Ms. Coffey what can be done. Ms. Coffey stated the same graffitied bus is sent out on the line and these same buses are operated on those lines to avoid graffiti damage to the entire fleet.

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Representative Hudson asked how Metro may address the problem of graffiti. The Sheriff Officer present, Jesse Villanueva, stated the Sheriff's Department has arrested several vandals including six in the South Bay. The Department goes after the prolific vandals. After the arrests, vandals must perform community service and pay restitution. Representative McTaggart suggested fingerprinting the area where windows are lifted up.

Representative Margaret Hudson reported she rode Line 446, bus number 6553, and was greatly impressed with the customer service. The operator (badge 28943) was extremely helpful and used the electronic equipment to announce stops. She liked the service.

Representative McTaggart stated that he rode Lines 444, 232, and 550 recently from Rancho Palos Verdes to San Pedro. The first bus he rode had relevant schedules and plenty of other information. The operator helped the passengers transfer to Line 232 (Pacific Coast Highway), which had standing room only at Western Av. Also he could not hear the stop announcements on Line 232 because the radio was too loud.

He also rode on the 550 line, Bus #7302, Operator (Badge 28369), and noted the service was excellent except there were no schedules on board. The driver made up for any deficiencies and gets an "A." Representative McTaggart also commented on his recent European trip, where he used public transportation including trolleys. In Poland, all public transit vehicles are articulated.

Representative Lou Mitchell stated that she rode the Line 55 bus, with nine passengers at 8:30 a.m. from Compton Avenue and 103<sup>rd</sup> Street. When the bus arrived at Adams and Broadway, she transferred to Line 40 and rode up to 1<sup>st</sup> and Main. On this bus, the bus operator did not call stops until he reached Union Station. The Line 55 operator had called all stops, very clearly, and it was very helpful. The buses were clean during the one-hour trip. On the return trip, the operator (#25940) on Line 40 (bus #4791) called all stops. Then on Line 55, bus #5417, operator 29424, drove very fast. She almost fell twice. Passengers were courteous and polite. She enjoyed the trip.

Representative Deming commented on the topic of speeding. She stated on Line 625, a contract line, all drivers consistently speed. They are driving

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so fast, passengers are literally holding on to their seats, with the expression of fear on their faces, including herself.

The 625 bus repeatedly runs late about five to ten minutes which may be good because the last bus in the morning gets to Aviation Station around 9 o'clock when people are expecting it. The schedule has the last eastbound bus to the courthouse leaving about 8:50 a.m. Everyday, when she boards the westbound bus, someone who has been waiting asks the westbound bus driver when the next eastbound 625 bus is due. Passengers, trying to get to their court appointments are told by the westbound drivers to walk. This problem needs to be explored because people trying to get to a 9 a.m. court appointment usually miss the last eastbound bus.

Ms. Deming stated there is still a need for Line 220 mid-day service in the LAX area. Although the service to World Way West has been canceled, people are consistently observed waiting for it. She has offered to drive them over to Main Street to catch Beach Cities Transit Line 109. Ms. Deming also mentioned an electrical problem in Long Beach affecting signals on the Metro Blue Line. Ms. Coffey suggested Gerald Francis, Rail General Manager, could respond to operational issues regarding the Blue Line signals.

Ms. Coffey stated she will ask Mr. Francis or a representative from Rail Operations to be present at the next Council meeting. Ms. Coffey was informed that Executive Officer Carolyn Flowers is expected to attend the November meeting.

6. Chair's Comments

Chair Price reiterated the importance of security. She stated that during her trip, when she boarded the airplane in Memphis, an airline stewardess took her bottle of soda and another passenger's inhalant.

7. General Manager's Comments

Ms. Coffey stated she had ridden the bus on some of the lines in her area, and the operators were surprised to see her. Because of her background as an operator, she is able to observe problems and address them firsthand. She observed that printed schedules were missing on some of the buses. This is a huge problem that needs to be corrected. She wants operators to

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get the schedules onto all buses. Many schedules that are not needed are in full supply and those that are needed are either not available or in short supply.

Ms. Coffey also stated she checked the buses for cleanliness and, overall, found the buses to be clean. The windows needed improvement. She noticed that etching is a problem with the Harbor Transit and Artesia Stations. Complaints of connections are being addressed and transfers will be coordinated by supervisors. The Sector will also work on plans to provide on-time, reliable service and to better educate the public how to use the transit service.

Ms. Coffey is working with school staff, principals and officers on the graffiti issue and is informing them about students who destroy Metro property, remove seats and are involved in other inappropriate activity.

Ms. Coffey invited everyone to attend the bus Roadeo on Saturday, September 23, 2006, at 8:00 a.m., at Santa Anita Race Track, in Arcadia, California. She noted that Metro South Bay mechanics have won the title for five consecutive years.

8. The meeting **ADJOURNED** at 11:35 a.m.



Prepared by:

Joanne Harper  
Administrative Aide