

Minutes

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

SOUTH BAY SERVICE SECTOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Carson Community Center
801 East Carson Street
Carson, CA 90746

Meeting started at: 10:00 a.m.

Service Sector Representatives present
were:

John McTaggart, Vice Chair
Lou Mitchell
Devon Deming
Robert Pullen-Miles

Officers:

Dana M. Coffey, General Manager
Raynard Vincent Price, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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1. **Safety 1st Contact:** Jose Melendez reminded everyone to stop at red lights and to know the scheduled stops when riding the Rapid Express.
2. **Self Introductions:** Introductions of all those present were made.
3. **Carried Over:** Minutes of the August 10, 2007 Council Meeting, September 14, 2007 Council Meeting, and the October 12, 2007 Council Meeting.
4. **Received oral report from** Cara Rice, Carson Transportation Services Manager.

Ms. Rice introduced Ed Villarrubia, Field Representative for Carson Transportation.

Ms. Rice presented a Power Point presentation on services provided by Carson Transportation Services Division (CTSD). Ms. Rice quoted Oprah Winfrey, “Everyone wants to ride with you in the limo, but what you need is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.” As the Transportation Manager, Ms. Rice oversees five administrative staff and five in-house bus operators with a fleet of 18 vehicles: 13 diesels, 3 CNG and 2 gas. The City of Carson has a goal to replace the diesel operated buses for cleaner fuel vehicles.

The primary service is the Carson Circuit within the City of Carson. It is a fixed route service using 10 vehicles operated by Laidlaw Transit. Public member Lionel Jones announced Laidlaw Transit was recently purchased by First Transit.

CTSD has 8 routes, which all start and end at the South Bay Pavilion Mall, Monday through Friday, from 5:20 a.m. to 6:36 p.m., with limited service on Saturdays. It runs a loop every 40 minutes. It is planned to connect with Metro buses and the Carson North-South Shuttle.

The shuttle service is a one route line that serves the Artesia Transit Terminal to a new shopping area every 50 minutes. Programs include the Carson Circuit, North South Shuttle, Bus Permits (Excursions and

Non-Excursions) and Dial-a-Ride. The excursions are popular and sold out within weeks.

The South Bay Pavilion Transit Terminal is planned for the Mall. It may be named the Martin Luther King, Jr., Terminal. There will be a Town Meeting on October 25, 2007 at the Carson Community Center at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the new terminal. Ms. Rice offered to return to the Sector in the future to discuss the plan in more detail.

The City of Carson has a reward-based employee transportation rideshare program to encourage employees to use alternative transportation to commute to and from the workplace. The city is on a compressed work week schedule working Monday through Thursday.

The Transportation Division instructs the Sheriffs in operating the large Mobile Command units and Parks and Recreation staff in driving oversized vehicles.

Ms. Rice said CTSD carries 54,000 Carson Circuit riders, 1,200 North South Shuttle riders, 800 parks and recreation program participants such as after school programs, with 200 over-the-counter daily transactions.

She thanked Metro and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Burke for helping to create a senior program called SAM (Seniors Are Multimodal). The program instructs and assists senior citizens in riding the bus. Public member Sheryl McCallister recommended the Multi-Service Senior's Program (MSSP) based in Sacramento as a possible source for additional funding for SAM.

Ms. Rice stated the goal for CTSD is to re-establish Carson's reputation as being a reliable bus operator and to elevate the bus drivers (Operators) to celebrity status. She would like to "brainstorm" with local riders to discuss needs in addition to a volunteer capable of assisting with timetables on the Google network. Lionel Jones offered a contact.

Mr. Jones asked if CTSD communicated with Home Depot and Galaxy to provide shuttle service along Avalon Blvd. and to the Blue Line Station to get around the congestion, especially during evening games.

Ms. Rice thanked Mr. Jones for his suggestions. Representative McTaggart said this is also a concern of Representative Hudson.

Public member Arnold Sachs asked if CTSD considered conducting a survey of the North South Shuttle to ascertain if there is a need for ridership on Sunday and cancelling a midday run. Ms. Rice responded that CTSD worked closely with businesses along the route to increase the ridership. The ridership is not enough to continue to run “as-is.” However, there is an interest in a “shopper” service. CTSD is open to all suggestions from the public.

Jose Melendez suggested the expanding of CTSD service to the Artesia Center if the North South Shuttle is cancelled.

Ms. Rice concluded her presentation. Representative McTaggart, acting Chair, thanked her for her enthusiasm with an invitation to return.

5. **Received oral report on Metro Connections** by Ed Clifford, Director of Countywide Planning & Development, Service Planning & Development Department.

The goals of Metro Connections is to increase ridership and improve operating efficiency, provide faster service, increase use of seating capacity and to better serve major activity centers (19 major activity centers throughout the county have been identified .) These changes will be occurring over a two-year period between June 2007 and June 2009. A slide presentation presented highlighted key themes which include: Building out Rapid System; using high capacity buses; developing more efficient schedules; more emphasis on high speed services.

The first phase of the program was implemented in June, 2007 achieving the efficiency and ridership objectives with a key objective of saving 100,000 hours. This was accomplished by focusing on low productivity and duplicated services. The Tier 1 changes will be going before the Metro Board of Directors for approval. Currently, Metro is in the initial planning for the June, 2008 service changes. These Service changes are designed to achieve efficiencies of 215,000 hours annually which is a significant cost savings. Key changes implemented this past June are: Rapid service on both Long Beach and Santa Monica Boulevards; Rapid Express on Hawthorne and Wilshire Boulevards with early results showing the Wilshire Boulevard Rapid Express is successful (8,000

boardings per day); restructuring of four major lines (Wilshire Local, Crenshaw Rapid, Wilshire Rapid and Soto Rapid).

Sheryl McCallister commented that poor performing lines are a result of some buses being too big for the streets or routes and that a smaller buses or shuttles would be beneficial. She cited Line 215 as an example on the streets of Inglewood and Eucalyptus. Mr. Ed Clifford responded that buses travel a variety of routes. Using the same bus along the entire line maintains the same capacity and reduces labor costs. Under the Consent Decree there is a mandate to increase the peak seats.

Mr. Ed Clifford reiterated that Metro is focusing on the major travel corridors with vehicles that are interchangeable. Representative Deming expressed a concern that some of the bus connections are scheduled too closely resulting in riders missing buses.

Mr. Ed Clifford responded to several questions regarding Metro Connections and concluded his report. General Manager Dana Coffey informed participants that monthly meetings are held at the South Bay Sector office with other municipal operators (Culver City, Torrance, Santa Monica, and Carson Circuit) to discuss the issues of merger, partnering and eliminating service.

6. **Received oral report on Line 940 Rapid Express Project** from Steve Fox, Transportation Planning Manager IV, Service Planning & Development Department.

Mr. Fox discussed the Hawthorne Rapid Express and the Wilshire Rapid Express which are coupled together as a pilot program. A decision will be made on the permanency of the routes in June, 2008 based on performance. The program is designed to attract riders by providing faster service in major corridors that have longer than average trip distances. Success measures used are: 1) increases in ridership; 2) improved travel time and; 3) customer satisfaction.

The Wilshire Rapid Express (920) operates during the peak hours in both directions every 5-10 minutes. There are 28 articulated buses operating with 140 daily bus trips running on a route length of 15 miles. Productivity (key measure used to gage success of a transit project. Formula: number of passengers boarding / number of daily service

hours) is 30 passengers per hour. Currently, there are no recommended changes to the 920 routing and stops. There will be a switch in December from articulated buses to 40 foot buses and reduction of service in off-peak direction travel to better reflect the loads and demand.

The Hawthorne Rapid Express (940) operates only during the peak direction of travel with service every 30 minutes which is 4 trips in each direction on a route length of 19.6 miles. Hawthorne's productivity is 15 passengers per hour. Hawthorne does better in the southbound direction in the evening. Line 940 will continue to be monitored and evaluated to improve ridership by possibly adjusting the schedule.

After two months of service, the Rapid Express market is limited to existing Metro Rapid riders. Within the coming month there will be an on-board bus survey to see if there are riders new to Metro services. The travel time is due to the elimination of stops (both lines have a signal priority).

Both lines are marketed on buses and bench ads along the Rapid Express Corridor, with 72,000 take-ones, bus cube inserts, bus interior ads and radio and print ads. The lines will be marketed to major employment centers along the alignments and Metro will continue to monitor performance and conduct the surveys. Mr. Fox offered to return in 4 to 5 months with updates.

Public member, Ms. Betty Brown inquired about the possibility of a Rapid, on Line 130 because it is packed to capacity and only running once an hour. Mr. Fox discussed the expense of creating a Rapid line such as the installation of signal priority for the corridor and the building of Rapid Stations. There are no current plans for additional corridors above the 28 previously approved. There was further discussion. Mr. Fox concluded his presentation.

7. Received oral report on Adopt-A-Line Program from Service Sector Representatives.

Representative Mitchell stated she continues to monitor Line 117 and Line 55 for ridership improvement since the fare hikes. After a four trip observation it was noted September improved and October was down.

Representative Devon Deming stated Line 625 seemed to have mechanical issues and suggested Sector staff follow up.

Sheryl McCallister asked if the public can make line reports much like the Service Sector Representatives.

8. Received oral report on South Bay Service Improvements by Madeline Van Leuvan, Service Development Manager. Ms. Van Leuvan provided highlights of December 16, 2007 service changes. The changes were not significant enough to require a public hearing. 95 new articulated buses will be delivered in December, 2007 with some coming to South Bay for deployment on Line 740 (Hawthorne Metro Rapid). There will be minor route changes on Line 740. At South Bay Galleria the buses are too large for the Transit Center. Service will start outside the Transit Center on Artesia at Kingsdale Avenue onto Hawthorne continuing its regular route. At downtown Los Angeles, the bus will enter Cesar Chavez on the north side as opposed to Patsouras Transit Plaza on the south.

Ms. Van Leuvan identified other changes including Line 312 (La Brea Limited) to operate all day to Hollywood/Highland Station and a new weekend shuttle on Line 111 (Florence Av.) to zero in on the crowds near the Metro Blue Line. She also explained the assignment of the new buses and received questions from participants. Lionel Jones praised the changes and the creation of a Metro operated shuttle on Line 111. Ms. Van Leuvan concluded her report.

9. Received oral report on Line 442 performance by Dana M. Coffey, General Manager, Metro South Bay. Ms. Coffey reiterated the objective of Line 442 – increase ridership by promoting the direct connection between Inglewood and Downtown Los Angeles. She stated this line is a good test of whether this is a low performing line with heavy advertising to increase ridership or if the line is simply beneficial to a

small number of people. There has been advertisement on bus benches, with 17,000 direct mailers to residents near the traveling corridor and information on Metro Briefs. It has also been marketed in 93 publications, in 10 languages. Public relations releases have been made to over 200 media outlets and on line postings. In June 2007, there was an average of 21 passengers per trip with 250 daily boardings. July saw an increase of 23 average passengers per trip with a daily total of 272. The numbers dropped in August to 18 with a daily total of 215 riders. Representative Robert Pullen-Miles asked if Metro is providing alternative transportation for the upcoming “Taste of Soul” event. General Manager Coffey offered to follow-up despite the short turnaround.

10. Chair’s Comments: None.

11. General Manager’s Comments: General Manager Dana Coffey shared an experience riding buses in a Southeastern city. She said she learned, similar to Metro service, one needs to get the correct information; don’t plan your trip too close to your connections and know the time and distance of the trip; don’t ride when school is out and don’t blame the driver when one is late or if the bus does not show up – it is not in his/her control.

She said riding the bus is a partnership between the customer and driver. Ms. Coffey thanked the participants for coming to the meetings and sharing ideas, suggestions and even complaints. The comments are appreciated and are taken seriously. She encouraged the continuation of open feedback and participation in the Sector meeting.

Ms. Coffey announced that Metro retired and celebrated 40 honored operators with a combined total of 527 years of service.

There will be a grand opening October 16, of a 7-story, mixed-used building above the Wilshire station, which is one of many developments in which Metro will be participating in. There are 449 residential units with studios and one and two bedroom apartments, with 36,000 square feet of retail space. The apartments rent from \$1,440 to \$2,900 monthly.

Carson Division 18 received the award of “Most Improved Division

Award” resulting in a \$2,000 stipend.

Line 442 riders presented Operator Charles Jackson with a certificate of appreciation for his dedication.

Division 5 received a “Certificate of Achievement” from the California Highway Patrol for six consecutive satisfactory ratings and two administrative reviews since June 18, 1991. (Award is regarding Motor coach safety and compliance safety inspection program).

12. Public Comments:

Arnold Sachs – Discussed the issue of credibility of information from Metro and also discussed a complaint with Beach Cities Transit.

Rafi Katzir – Proposed changes on several bus lines.

Sheryl McCallister – Spoke on the Crenshaw Prairie Corridor and provided a report on her Line ride on the way to the Sector Meeting.

Lionel Jones – Discussed Harbor Transit Safety issues and suggested Operators know how to transverse detours.

Evaristo Ramos – Recommended the extension of Line 214 be included in December, 2007 changes or in June, 2008.

13. Adjournment: 11:56 a.m.