

Thursday, March 3, 2005

3:00-5:00 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: 3:08 p.m.

Council Members present:

Carol Gross, Chair
Peter Capone-Newton, Vice Chair
Presley Burroughs
Carlos Collard
Gregory Fischer
Joyce Perkins
Brad Robinson
Anny Semonco

Officers

David J. Armijo, General Manager
Michele Jackson, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. APPROVED February 3, 2005 Minutes

2. RECEIVED General Manager's report

Dave Armijo gave a brief overview of the Westside/Central Scorecard:

- ✓ Miles between road calls – well above the target at 8,300.
- ✓ Division 10 is doing extremely well - New Workers' Compensation claims and complaints/100,000 boardings are both well below target.
- ✓ Division 7 has made tremendous improvement and ranked No. 2 for the first time.

Chair Gross asked if the Sector would be receiving new buses since Division 6 has the oldest buses. Mr. Armijo responded that 85% of the fleet is CNG, but there are also some older CNG buses. In June and December, this Sector will receive some of the newest buses in the fleet – the new 45-foot "Compo" buses. Seat capacity on the buses will increase, allowing us to trim the total number of buses but still provide the same passenger capacity.

Mr. Armijo also noted that there is still a shortage of bus operators resulting in higher overtime costs. Additionally, because the Westside/Central Sector has heavier traveled lines, the buses have different cleaning and maintenance challenges than other sectors. The Sector is trying to get seven more mechanics.

3. RECOMMEND that the MTA Board of Directors Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and Approve the West Los Angeles Transportation Center Facility Project and COMMUNICATE this position to the MTA Board of Directors, Jody Feerst Litvak, Community Relations Manager

Ms. Litvak reported that the exchange and development agreements for the proposed West L.A. Transportation Center were approved by the Metro Board in September 2003, at which time the environmental review process began. All of the Divisions in the Westside Sector are at or above capacity. Venice, Division 6 offers the greatest challenge. As the oldest (over 100 years) and smallest Division, it cannot accommodate CNG, has severe operating restrictions, and high cost inefficiencies.

The proposed location for the replacement facility is a 4.7-acre site on Jefferson between Rodeo and National. The heaviest in and out traffic from the division will be prior to and after rush hour; and this will be MTA's first 100% CNG facility. The project is a partnership which includes a land swap with RAD Jefferson, who will build the new facility to MTA specifications and then take the old Venice site.

Council Member Perkins voiced concerns about the turning radius at Jefferson and La Cienega. Ms. Litvak responded that the EIR recommended modifications to that intersection, but found no significant traffic impacts.

Responding to query regarding the number of buses exiting the facility at any one

time, Dave Armijo indicated that the maximum number of buses leaving would be 100-120 buses over a 3-hour period between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. Chair Gross inquired whether more routes would be operating out of the new larger division. Mr. Armijo responded affirmatively noting that Division 7 would be downsized and there might be some buses coming from South Bay and Gateway Sectors. Additionally, this should generate some cost savings to the agency which would be redeployed into Metro Connections.

Council Member Burroughs commented that the most direct route to the end of Line 102 would be via Rodeo Rd., but that is precluded by Board action.

Chair Gross noted that today's recommended action is to encourage the Board to approve the final EIR and the project but that the Final EIR had not yet been released.

On motion from Council Member Burroughs, seconded by Council Member Robinson, the Council RECOMMENDED that the MTA Board approve the West Los Angeles Transportation Center Facility Project.

Council Member Burroughs commended staff and all parties who negotiated this project.

4. CONSIDERED Approval of:

- a. Findings of the Public Hearing conducted on Wednesday, February 9, 2005 concerning Metro Westside/Central Sector's June 2005 Service Change Program; and
- b. The revised June 2005 Service Change Program

Roy Gandara reported that about 25 people attended the public hearing. Fourteen provided testimony – 7 gave oral testimony, 6 provided written comments and 1 provided both. Most of the comments addressed support for Rapid service provided there was no reduction in corresponding local service.

After considering public input and reviewing the proposals presented at the hearing, staff recommended the following modified proposals:

- Route 14 – (Beverly Boulevard)
Reduce frequency of local daily service and reallocate service to Rapid Line 714
- Route 58 (Alameda Boulevard)
Cancel all service due to low ridership.
- Route 317 – (Fairfax Avenue-Hollywood Blvd. Limited)
Replace Limited Stop 317 service with Rapid Line 717.
- Route 714 – (Beverly Boulevard)
Implement Rapid Service during peak hours with 15-minute headways as

approved by MTA Board in fall of 2002.

- Route 717 – (Fairfax Ave.-Hollywood Blvd. Metro Rapid)
Establish new daily Rapid service along Fairfax Ave. and Hollywood Blvd. (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) with proposed 10-12 minute headways during peak and 20-minute headways during off-peak hours, as approved by MTA Board in December 2004-fall of 2002.

Council Member Robinson said he could not support the recommendation for Line 714 because the location of the layover was changed to the north side of Santa Monica going westbound.

Council Member Burroughs questioned layover capacity at Olive and Washington. Staff expressed the opinion that it would be adequate.

Council Member Capone Newton asked if the change would be ridership neutral. Staff responded affirmatively -- a ridership shift from the 217 to the 717 is anticipated. *

Received Public Comment

Allison - Would like the 717 to connect to the 780; waits longer for the 217; feels rapid on Beverly should run all day rather than just during peak.

Wayne Coombs – Feels changes make service less convenient and trips take longer; wants shared rapid and local stops; 217 service used to be every 10 minutes, now it's every 20 minutes to save 3 minutes overall; 14/714 timing – rapid goes much faster than the regular bus; line 717 is too short.

Ken Ruben – opposes changes to 717 and 714; rapid on Fairfax and Beverly not needed, should leave status quo; only approves of change to Line 58.

Council Member Capone Newton commented that he would like to see a more up-to-date study, all stops combined and next bus information provided and then with greater understanding, move ahead in 6 months.

He then introduced the following MOTION, seconded by Council Member Fischer: that this Council accept the staff recommendation to cancel service for Line 58, but to postpone the implementation of Metro Rapid Bus service along Beverly and Fairfax Blvd. and corresponding changes to local service until the December 2005 service change or by which time as the below outlined report can be completed for the Westside/Central Sector. The Report will determine for existing Metro Rapid Bus lines entering this sector:

- The impact of design characteristics such as stop location and line length on passenger safety and operating performance

* Council Member Burroughs left the meeting.

- The status of and value of amenities such as shelters, “next bus” notification, and signal priority
- Determine the feasibility of providing “next bus” data to off-corridor devices including personal computers and mobile phones
- Conduct an origin and destination study to better understand the trips our customers make and to determine such things as the optimal trip distance for Metro Rapid Bus trips
- With the origin and destination survey data, determine the impact of reduction of local service on transit time for trips of 2, 5, 10 and 15 miles in length

In addition, this Council recommends to the Metro Board of Directors that a similar study, encompassing all Rapid Bus lines within Los Angeles County, be conducted.

Council Member Fischer added that especially on Fairfax, the underlaps in service are tremendous. Council Member Robinson agreed with the comment about Fairfax. He feels that the proposal for Line 714 is good because it is a long enough route that is not too congested, but still has concerns about Line 717. Council Member Semonco also expressed concern about Line 717 on Fairfax and elimination of the La Brea stop on Hollywood.

Council Member Capone Newton commented that, even on the proposed 714 Line, he would like to see a more up-to-date study before moving forward in six months. He agreed that rapid buses move faster with signal priority, but feels that total transit time for passengers has not been looked at. He rode the 217 last night and was appalled at the 20-minute wait and the fact that when it arrived, it was so packed, people had to be passed up.

Council Member Perkins asked how rapid lines are determined. She would like to see some clear criteria. Dave Armijo responded that the criterion has basically been ridership based on 1998 numbers. Regarding on-time performance, Fairfax is perhaps the worst-case scenario. San Fernando Valley, Gateway and San Gabriel, where they have the fewest number of Rapids, have the highest on-time performance. Because of the congestion, Westside’s numbers are much lower with more rapid lines.

Chair Gross agreed that rapid and local stops should be combined and that it would be wonderful to have next bus information, but reminded the Council of the current budget deficit which is causing people to be laid off.

Council Member Robinson would still like to get additional information in order to make good decisions, but stated that it did not necessarily have to be tied into these service changes. Council Member Perkins agreed, and reiterated her concern with the elimination of the La Brea stop on Line 717. Staff replied that Line 217 local service would continue to service the La Brea stop.

Chair Gross suggested agendaizing this discussion for the next meeting; find out what information staff already has in house, what new lines are proposed, etc.

Chair Gross offered a SUBSTITUTE MOTION, seconded by Council Member

Robinson to agendaize for the next meeting the topic of what information is needed and what kind of study is needed to look at the entire subject of the way the system operates, particularly the Rapid Bus system. Ask staff to bring what information they reasonably can on the issues that have been discussed today, particularly the 5 issues raised in the Capone Newton motion.

The motion was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (7/0) and Council Member Capone Newton withdrew his original motion.

Council Member Robinson offered a MOTION, seconded by Council Member Perkins, to support the staff recommendations regarding the service changes and that the 717 Line be reviewed in 6 months and that the Council be provided information that shows the difference in the on-time performance of Lines 717 and 317 so that information can be used to evaluate whether to retain that service.

The motion FAILED on a 4-3 vote with Council Members Fischer, Collard and Capone Newton voting no.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED (7-0) Collard/Robinson MOTION to approve proposed change to Line 58.

APPROVED Robinson/Gross MOTION to support proposed service change for Lines 714/14 and 37 on a 5/2 vote with Council Members Capone Newton and Fischer voting no.

Council Member Robinson asked if there is a way to evaluate the difference between signal prioritization and not having it, without painting the bus red and without making the decision public. Roy Gandara indicated that had been discussed and there was not an inclination to do so.

Capone Newton/Robinson MOTION not to accept the proposed change on the 17/217, but add a signal-prioritized white bus and reassess the proposal at the next service change with the new data.

Council Member Perkins suggested implementing all the changes subject to the study.

Council Member Capone Newton said if a white bus cannot be retrofitted with signal priority, then perhaps we could have a couple of days of using red buses labeled 317 that already have the hardware and see what happens.

Robinson/Perkins SUBSTITUTE MOTION to accept staff recommendation for the 717 Line with the provision that within 6 months the Council receives information regarding the effects of signal prioritization on Rapid Bus; and that this decision be reviewed again at that time to determine whether it should be continued; and also to reinstate the bus stop at La Brea if there is sufficient demand. FAILED on a 4-3 vote with Council Members Capone Newton, Collard and Fischer voting no.

Perkins/Robinson MOTION to adopt the findings of the Public Hearing was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

5. RECEIVED update on DASH Needs Assessment Study, by LADOT Representatives

Michael Davies and Mary Sue O'Melia gave a very brief overview of the Study, which evaluated over 50 routes. Major policy issues are funding constraints, formula subsidies and MTA fare integration. Preliminary findings and detailed route maps are available on the web. The report will go to the Transportation Committee and City Council this month.

Council Member Robinson complained that receiving this report at this time does not allow the Council to digest the information and make input. Chair Gross echoed his sentiment, noting that the Council cannot go on record in any meaningful way. MTA staff explained that LADOT staff was unable to make this presentation in February due to the Council's workshop on Metro Connections and in January due to a conflict for LADOT staff and consultants.

6. Chair Remarks - None

7. Public Comment – No additional comments received

Adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Michele Jackson, Council Secretary