

Thursday, February 5, 2004

3:00 - 5:00 PM

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## MINUTES

### Westside/Central Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

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

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Called to Order at 3:05 p.m.

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Council Members present:

Carol Gross, Chair  
Peter Capone-Newton, Vice Chair  
Presley Burroughs  
Helen Johnson  
Stephanie Negriff  
Joyce Perkins  
Brad Robinson  
Anny Semonco

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Officers

Jim McElroy, General Manager  
Jody Litvak, Community Relations Manager  
Michele Jackson, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

**Metro**

APPROVED January 9, 2004 Minutes.

1. RECEIVED Public Comment

Joseph Dunn, Miracle Mile resident, requested more and better Owl service, elimination of mid-block bus stops and a direct route from Hollywood to LAX.

Marvin Martin requested that the San Fernando Valley schedules show a map of the Sector with the relevant lines.

Keith Smith requested that schedules for Santa Monica Transit be made available on MTA buses running in the Santa Monica area.

Kevin Devlin questioned why a "Safe-7" submitted to management regarding the fueling pad area at Division 7 received no response. Westbound bus stop at Santa Monica Blvd. and Vermont not long enough, well lit or well paved. Asphalt is buckling due to lack of concrete pad. Newsstands in front of stop at Sunset and Grand.

2. Safety Contact – Michael Davis reminded everyone not to tailgate, especially at intersections, so that there is sufficient time to stop even if the driver ahead of you stops on the yellow light.

3. RECEIVED report of the General Manager – Jim McElroy reported that February service changes went into effect last Sunday. Some schedule and layover times were adjusted. A portion of the 720 Rapid Bus route that was not being highly utilized was shortened.

Most of the impact of the State budget crisis seems to be on the capital side. The MTA Board Chair has asked staff to submit several budget scenarios. The Governor has introduced his budget and hearings are being held. Similar debates are going on in Washington. MTA is working closely with its sister transportation agencies across the States.

TDA funds are trust funds, so unless there is a local decision to shift that money, it is unlikely that those monies will be affected. Similarly, local sales tax revenues would not be affected by any state decision.

TPD, State transit assistance funds, may get hit. Most jurisdictions have already taken that into account.

Westside Sector budget performance is just about on target and tracking well. Will be sending out a document that shows the performance of Westside Divisions relative to the others.

Moving ahead to set up one community meeting prior to the next service change. The meeting will be held Wednesday, March 3, between 6 and 7 p.m., at the Westwood United Methodist Church, 10497 Wilshire Blvd. (at the corner of Warner). More community input will be obtained in the future.

Mr. McElroy reported that he is involved in the CTA with Councilmember Negriff and has been appointed to their Finance and Management Committee.

4. RECEIVED an oral report on the Metro Connection by Nancy Michali, Director Service Performance and Analysis

Ms. Michali explained that "Metro Connections" is the new name for the hub and spoke system scheduled to be implemented in 2005. Currently, only 35% of bus service put on the street is actually being used. Comments received thus far include support, concerns and recommendations, but most people agree there is a need to look at the system. Some concern has been expressed regarding how partnerships are built with the Municipal Operators and how the new system is phased in. Transit centers and corridors need to fit in with local plans, and the focus needs to be on serving current riders first. Some want the process to be slowed down to assure that all stakeholders can be involved. Regional funding strategies need to be rethought. Ms. Michali would like to return in March or April to strategize on what some of the improvements should be.

5. RECEIVED an oral report on Sector Budget Overview by Michael Davis, Administration and Financial Manager

Mr. Davis reported that the MTA budget kick-off is February 11. In March, financial summaries will be prepared for review by General Manager, Governance Council members and Deputy CEO. Some of the general assumptions are a 2.5% wage increase, an increase in fringe benefits due to medical cost growth, and new systems (ATMS/UFS) with support staff.

6. RECEIVED an oral report on the Consent Decree by Rod Goldman, DEO for Service Development

Mr. Goldman reported that MTA entered into a 10-year Consent Decree in 1996 based on allegations that the civil rights of bus riders were being infringed. There is a Special Master who oversees the Decree on behalf of the Federal Court. The basic components of the Decree are a) limits on fares; b) new service; c) reduction of overcrowding.

During the last 8 years an off-peak fare of 85 cents was added, as was a weekly pass 5 years ago. Basic fares did not change from 1996 until 2004,

even though the Decree allowed for increases to keep up with inflation. All restrictions with regard to fares ended in November 2003. With regard to new service, a pilot program consisting of 100 buses on new routes was added over the last 8 years to medical, educational and employment areas. That service is still being operated and the new Metro Rapid Program has been added. Regarding overcrowding, the Decree required progressive reductions in levels of passenger loading. Prior to the Decree there could be 19 standees. Today, there can be no more than eight standees. Four hundred new buses have been added through an accelerated procurement program which has increased operating costs by \$100 million per year. There remains an ongoing dispute with the Bus Riders' Union over the standard of measurement of overcrowding. The Decree will expire in October 2006.

The latest rulings calls for the purchase of 145 additional buses no later than December 2005, and 370,000 hours of additional service by December 2004. Credit was granted for some service added last June, leaving an additional 290,00 hours of service (midday, nights and weekends) at an estimated cost of \$400 million over ten years. An additional operating division could be required to accommodate the additional buses.

The MTA Board voted to comply with the majority of the order, but to appeal a limited portion. The agency is willing to add the additional hours of service but believes that staff should have the flexibility to determine how many buses would be required to do so.

7. APPROVED June Service Change Recommendations – Roy Gandara, Service Development Manager, Westside/Central

Mr. Gandara noted that the service changes are being made to improve travel speeds, eliminate duplication, and improve productivity and operational safety.

- A. Set Public Hearing for Tuesday, March 9, 2004 at 7 p.m.  
La Cienega Tennis Center  
325 S. La Cienega Blvd.  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

8. Chair's Remarks

Chair Gross thanked staff for their efforts and noted letter submitted by San Fernando Governance Councilmember, Bart Reed.

9. Items not on the Posted Agenda - None

ISSUES

Joyce Perkins requested the procedure for handling Safe 7 reports.

Pressley Burroughs asked about the interface between the MTA and the City Department of Street Maintenance regarding placement of cement bus pads. Mr. McElroy indicated he would ask the MTA Stops and Zones Department to coordinate with the City.

Stephanie Negriff would like to develop a way to track input received from public comment, perhaps a suggestion card for the public; as well as a way to receive employee input regarding service changes. In response to her inquiry regarding performance standards, Mr. McElroy said he would mail out a monthly report and allow Councilmembers time to review it before actually placing an item on the agenda.

Anny Semonco requested assurance that operators are made aware of written commendations from patrons and asked to be notified of community meetings. Ms. Semonco also requested a report on accommodations for the blind at bus stops and all other accommodations for the handicapped.

Peter Capone Newton asked for latest rider survey data.

Carol Gross asked how a driver assigned to a new route is trained.

Next Meeting scheduled for Thursday February 26, 2004 at 7 p.m.

Adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

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Michele Jackson, Council Secretary