

Thursday, July 1, 2004

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 3:15 p.m.

Council Members present:

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

Officers

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

1. APPROVED May 27, 2004 Minutes

2. RECEIVED Public Comment

Ken Ruben, Southern California Transit Advocates, commented on the recent Annual Meet & Confer of all the Governance Councils.

Kevin Devlin requested improved signage at LAX to facilitate patrons finding the MTA bus center and schedules for the 220 bus; reported deterioration of asphalt and curb westbound at Santa Monica and Vermont; inquired about the effect on ridership from the recent changes to Rte. 10/11; and indicated that he hopes improvements to Division 7 get done.

3. RECEIVED report from the General Manager

Jim McElroy reported that staff has acted on the Council request to include additional residential contacts, beyond City of Los Angeles neighborhood councils, in the database of groups receiving information about Governance Council meetings and activities. Information has been received and added from Santa Monica and Culver City so far.

Consent Decree issues have impacted the program for 2004. The Special Master has required an additional 290,000 hours and 145 buses by December 2004. MTA contested the number of buses, but not the hours. We lost that appeal and will be adding the 145 buses by the December 2004 service change. Last Sunday, we added 83,000 revenue service hours agency-wide. The remedial service plan was upheld, so the Board will take action at the July 22 meeting to purchase additional buses.

Budget – Should finish the current fiscal year within budget. The fuel budget was exceeded, but is offset by lower workers' compensation costs.

Expansion – The draft EIR for the proposed new Division 6 is being developed and should be released in August for public comment.

The Board approved the taking of property through eminent domain to allow for expansion of Division 10 in Downtown Los Angeles to accommodate articulated buses for the Wilshire Corridor.

The technical report on the Wilshire Bus Lane is going to the Board in August, and LADOT is reporting to their city council in the same timeframe.

4. RECEIVED oral report on setting public hearing date for December 2004 service change recommendations, Roy Gandara, Service Development Manager

Mr. Gandara reported that except for service hours being added due to the

Consent Decree we have to provide the same level of service that existed in the February shake up. Based on the above, Line 220 and 434 are being withdrawn from the December Program. Final recommendations on changes previously proposed to Line 20/21, and 720 will be made on August 5.

Chair Gross commented that the Consent Decree mandates additional service on very specific routes, which limits the changes that can be made on other lines. Those additional resources have to be added whether or not they are needed.

Mr. Gandara responded that if recent changes have taken care of some needs or the demand is no longer there, we have the option to put the service somewhere else. However, generally the service has to go as determined by MTA's Service Development Department.

Councilmember Robinson noted that if Line 20/21 is going to be looked at without the 720 that needs to be made clear to the public, because it will now be looked at in a very different light.

Mr. Gandara requested approval to set a Public Hearing date for the December 4, 2004 service changes and authorization to publish the Hearing Notice.

The three proposals to be considered by this Sector are:

- a. Line 2/302 – extend weekday, midday shortline trips.
- b. Line 217 – frequency reduction and route modification to accommodate Rapid Line 787. Cutting route back to Hollywood and Vine.
- c. Line 787 – implementation, West L.A. Transit Center to Pasadena City College.

Following the hearing public comment will be summarized and presented along with staff recommendations.

Received Public comment from:

Francisca Porchas, Bus Riders Union
Would like to know the number of people who would be impacted by the proposed changes to Line 20/21 and if that line is included in the public hearing.

Nancy Lawrence, Bus Riders Union
Opposed to cutting back buses on Crenshaw and Wilshire 20/21.

Leona Gerichter
Opposed to service cuts on Line 720. Complained about poor service on Line 105 and the discontinuance of Line 107.

Shepard Petit, Bus Riders Union
Opposed to any change to Line 20/21. Complained about general overcrowding and being passed up (wheelchair) in his neighborhood of Vermont and Berendo.

Alex Aguilar, Bus Riders Union
Opposed to cuts on Lines 20/21 and 107.

Maria Villegas, Bus Riders Union
Opposed to cuts to Line 20/21

Norm Swerin
Opposed to cuts on Line 20/21. Requested that information be posted on the website in a more timely manner.

SET PUBLIC HEARING for August 12, 2004 at 7 p.m. at the LaCienega Tennis Center.

Referencing comments from the annual Meet & Confer, Councilmember Capone-Newton stressed the need for a regular meeting date and time, preferably in the evening, to get maximum public comment. He added that although the Tennis Center is centrally located for the sector, meetings could be held in a location closer to the ridership base.

Councilmember Robinson suggested maintaining the day meetings but always holding public hearings in the evening.

Councilmember Negriff noted that having both day and evening meetings allows the Sector to attract a greater diversity of people; and suggested that a 6-month schedule of meeting dates be published.

Chair Gross requested that this issue be agendaized for the next meeting when more Councilmembers are present.

Jim McElroy commented that meetings are underway with Big Blue Bus to discuss the upcoming changes and the transfer environment and to put the information in local publications. All Sectors have also started working with Marketing to get the word out.

5. DISCUSSED Governance Council Work Plan, Jim McElroy, General Manager

Mr. McElroy indicated that he has been working with the Chair on a process to focus in on a short-term work plan, and a long-term plan. More specific input from the Council is needed.

Draft/Interim Plan includes:

- a. Changes in routes and schedules
- b. Opportunities for cost savings through better scheduling and elimination of duplication.
- c. Improve stops, stations and customer communications.

Focal points – receive and act on suggestions from the public, hold public hearings, become more knowledgeable about metro bus operations, visit divisions, receive briefings.

Next steps – propose goals and objectives, potential tasks for the Council in 2005.

Councilmember Robinson said this is a good outline. He would like to focus on how to get information out to the public about what is being done and what meeting dates are.

Received Public Comment from Norm Swerin asking the Council to be more proactive in seeing to it that the local and express bus stops are combined.

6. RECEIVED oral report on ADA compliance, Chip Hazen, Director

Mr. Hazen commented that operators need more supervision. He is in the process of developing a bus-monitoring program using volunteers who will report on their experiences. Access Advisory Committee members will be in the monitoring group. This will tell us the best operators and those who need more training. We will then assign an undercover TOS, either with a cane or in a wheelchair, to ride the bus. That person will have authority to issue additional training or demerits to drivers.

The practice of calling stops, although required, is currently down to 15% nationwide. The new ATMS will have an annunciator program and will be operational by the end of December.

The new system will also allow drivers to push a button and enter a code to report a wheelchair pick up; and will track where the wheelchair bound are getting on and off the bus and how many.

Accessibility Advisory Committee consisting of seniors, the disabled and social service organizations providing service to the disabled meets on the 2nd Thursday of every month in the Gateway Conference Room.

Chair Gross commented that each of the cities has some form of advisory committee and Mr. Hazen should make presentations to and/or draw from them.

Councilmember Semonco noted that many drivers need sensitivity training more so than technical training.

Councilmember Johnson commented that there should be some type of incentive program. Good drivers need to be told how they are doing as well as bad drivers.

7. Chair's Remarks

- a. July 22 presentation to MTA Board of Directors

Chairs of all Governance Councils will meet next week to determine what message they want conveyed to the Board on the 22nd.

- b. Governance Council Meeting Schedule – will be agendaized for a future meeting.
- c. Opportunities to Improve Customer Communication using Technology – Deferred until Councilmember Burroughs is present.

Final Comments:

Councilmember Johnson commented on the street work in progress near Vernon and Vermont which affects Line 105. People in the area should have been notified ahead of time about the street work required in preparation for the new Rapid Line.

Councilmember Robinson wants to be sure there is a commitment to do more public communication with additional costs and staff.

Councilmember Capone-Newton would like to see a formalized bi-directional communication process between the Board and the Councils at least quarterly, and a greater presence on the MTA website.

Councilmember Semonco questioned the lead-time on announcing schedule and line changes to the public.

Councilmember Negriff explained that it is always a problem to give advance notice to the public, but not so early that they get confused as to when it is going into effect. A week is pretty consistent within the industry.

Adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Michele Jackson, Council Secretary