

Tuesday, March 7, 2006

6:30-8:30 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 6:35 p.m.

Council Members present:

Peter Capone-Newton, Chair
Brad Robinson, Vice Chair
Greg Fischer
Carol Gross
Glenn Rosten
Anny Semonco
Jerard Wright

Officers:

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



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. RECEIVED Public Comment for items not on the agenda

Ken Ruben of Southern California Transit Advocates, reported that Council Members Anny Semonco and Peter Capone-Newton attended their last meeting. Requested that more attention be paid to detours. Closure between Highland and La Brea, 717 down Sunset and up Highland – tonight the 717 went straight to Highland. Twenty people were waiting for the 717 and not one stopped.

2. APPROVED Minutes from February 7, 2006 **as corrected.**

Page 3, fourth paragraph: Approximately 175 passengers will be impacted by the discontinuation of service. Approximately 175 passengers on weekdays and 117 on Saturday will need to transfer between Metro and Culver City Service, **as Culver City will be providing the service discontinued by Metro.**

3. RECEIVED General Managers Report

David Armijo reported being in discussions with the City of Los Angeles regarding the impact of special events on Metro service. Staff would like to set some parameters regarding which streets must remain open.

On-time performance continues to suffer system wide. A task force has been formed, which will be headed by Jon Hillmer, to formulate an improvement plan.

Council Member Robinson noted that in-service, on-time performance is just a little below the target; pullouts are really the problem.

Mr. Armijo agreed, noting that measurements are currently made taken from random samples on a group of lines. He wants to target the Venice Division in an attempt to identify what can be controlled to get the people back on track using a reward system. Ninety percent of the trips are being counted by Traffic Checkers for the Consent Decree. If certain heavy lines are out of sync, it is possible to end up with a 30% performance number.

Council Member Robinson asked if improving pull-out performance would improve on-time performance. Mr. Armijo said it would certainly help. Five supervisors have recently been added to the Wilshire line to make sure buses go out on time. Special attention will be paid to operators with poor on-time performance records.

Complaints received during January - 2.13 per 100,000 boardings, well below the target. The number one complaint is pass-bys or on-time problems.

Council Member Gross noted that the number one complaint used to be driver attitude, so perhaps that segment of the complaints has been reduced.

Council Member Fischer commented that the new 45 passenger coaches have no identifying numbers under the headsign, so if you wanted to complain you couldn't.

Workers' Compensation continues to be well below the target. Council Member Gross acknowledged the decrease over the past several months.

4. APPROVED changes to Line 220 for June 2006 (Option C)

David Armijo reported that ridership north of Venice Boulevard accounted for 70% of the total ridership on the line. Staff also found that there might be a need for a connector into the West Hollywood/Beverly Hills area. The three options being recommended are:

- A. Original recommendation to eliminate the entire line
- B. Do nothing
- C. Last month's recommendation to reduce trip length to the north portion only, and have Culver City operate the balance of the line

Steve Cunningham of Culver City Transit said Culver City will take over the southern portion of the line from the intersection of Venice and Culver Boulevards to Marina del Rey with a minor route modification from Mindanao to Maxella. The service headways will be improved slightly and a lower base fare than Metro's will apply to this portion. Culver City is ready to begin service on what will be their new "Line 7" in coordination with the changes to Metro's Line 220. LADOT has approved a bus stop on the southeast corner of Venice and Culver where the two lines will meet.

Council Member Robinson asked how much of the original 220 Line is being eliminated. Mr. Cunningham responded that the new Culver City Line 7 will go to Fisherman's Village. While it will not continue to the airport, it will connect to the Santa Monica Rapid Line 3 that goes to LAX.

RECEIVED Public Comment:

Wayne Coombs commented that drivers on this line will have 48 minutes to sit around at the end of each trip. He has also seen drivers pull out late so they don't have to wait at time points.

Ken Ruben would prefer to keep the 220 service without changes and market it. If the change has to be made, Metro should assure that the connection is seamless.

Responding to a question from Council Member Robinson regarding staff utilization, Roy Gandara said the current service costs about \$1.5 million per year and uses 3 buses. When the service is reduced, the running time will be about 20-24 minutes with 40-minute headways and a 20-minute recovery time. Headways could be reduced to 35 minutes, but that would not meet up with the Culver City bus service.

Council Member Gross commented that anyone who has traveled on Robertson knows the problem of on-time performance. With the idea of reducing cost and providing better service, this seems like a win win.

Council Member Robinson requested a report back from staff on utilization of the money saved from restructuring the line.

5. NO REPORT was presented on Metro Connections, Roderick Goldman, Deputy Executive Officer Operations
6. RECEIVED update on Budget FY07, Michael Davis, Administrative and Finance Manager

Michael Davis presented FY07 budget projections for the sector. Reductions will be: approximately 110,000 revenue service hours in the Sector and 44 operators (24 part-time and 19 full-time) and 7 service attendants. Five supervisors will be added. Last year there were 1.713 million revenue service hours; this year 1.603 million. System-wide revenue service hours are going up by about the same amount.

David Armijo clarified that there will be no actual reductions. Approximately 87,000 hours will be added due to the Consent Decree; but because the larger-capacity articulated buses will be used, fewer buses will be required and the staffing level will go down.

Chair Capone-Newton noted that the metric being used doesn't incorporate the size of the vehicle. He asked if there is a metric that includes seat capacity. Mr. Armijo responded that a 1:3 operator/mechanic ratio is still being used. He added that running articulated buses on Vermont or Wilshire is not like a bus operating on the orange Line, which is very flat and controlled. A lot of issues are anticipated as the "artics" get broken-in over rougher terrain. Staff is fighting to hold the line on the current model. Mr. Armijo stated that more definitive numbers will be available next month, broken down by sector and bus fleet.

Council Member Gross requested information showing positions vs. service produced, number of passengers per mile and/or service hours not changing.

Mr. Davis reported that Division 6 has gone 378 days with no lost-time injuries or OSHA recordable accidents. Council Member Gross requested that a congratulatory note be sent to Division 6 to recognize their achievement.

FY06 January Financials

Year-to-date actuals are \$82.1 million against a budget of \$88.1 million due to a \$3 million underrun in public liability/property damage and workers' compensation. Fuel costs continue to increase and could result in a \$3.5 million overrun. Starting to see some mis-charges from the M3 system that allocates parts. The current variance should disappear when charges are accurately reflected.

7. RECEIVED update report on Metro Rapid, Rex Gephart, Director Regional Transportation P&D

Rex Gephart reported that the program started in the late 1990's when speed of service was identified as the most important issue by Metro patrons. Service speeds had declined by 15% over 20 years. The original idea was to improve the service by

20% without adding any operators or buses. The only increase would be maintenance and tires. The service was implemented on Wilshire and Ventura in June 2000 where it worked very well. The Board directed staff to expand the system based on the Curitiba, Brazil concept. Eight of their 12 attributes were implemented:

- Frequent service
- Signal priority
- Headway based schedules
- Simple route layouts
- Less frequent stops
- Integration with local bus service
- Level boarding and alighting
- Color-coded buses and stations

The attributes originally missing were:

- High-capacity buses
- Exclusive lanes
- Off-vehicle fare payment
- Bus feeder network

Chair Capone-Newton asked how the ridership increase numbers were derived that show improvement in passenger travel times and if there have been any new studies or evaluations. Mr. Gephart responded that staff is in the midst of doing that now. Mr. Gephart added that ridership numbers reflect total number riding in the corridor before and total number riding after Metro Rapid. Reduced travel times refer to buses and to their travel time from one end of the line to the other. Additionally, signal priority will be completed in Beverly Hills in the next 30 days. Santa Monica, Pasadena, Glendale and West Hollywood want to do the same. There have been no negative impacts on cross traffic.

Chair Capone-Newton expressed the opinion that Rapids are wonderful, but there are limitations to the system and the numbers can be misleading. He would prefer to see actual time-savings from point A to point B for a real passenger.

Council Member Semonco asked how the two demonstration corridors were selected for Rapid Bus. Mr. Gephart indicated that the corridors were selected because they were all very different.

RECEIVED Public Comment

Lionel Jones commented on the danger of split stops, especially at night. Some streets are too small and congested for Rapid Bus, e.g. Lines 711, 705, 717. Part-time routes such as the 714 (peak hours only) go against the Rapid concept. Signal timing change on Wilshire and Fairfax allows both cars and buses to move faster.

Ken Ruben commented that he rides Line 717 seven days a week.

Chair Capone-Newton commented on next bus information signage. The problem is bunching and interaction with the local service. It would be great to give the customer the proper information. A sign that tells you when the next 20 is coming, along with the 720 would be helpful.

Mr. Gephart concluded by encouraging as much evaluation of the system as possible. He said that a lot of people are looking at L.A. and saying this is a good system. It needs to move forward. There are still limitations in the system; it is not an improvement for everyone.

Council Member Rosten asked if there have been any studies on the impacts of articulated buses on regular traffic. Rex Gephart responded that Rapids don't stop as often as locals. Metro has not done any recent studies, but many cities have artics. Metro stations were laid out for 60 ft. buses so that they will not obstruct traffic when stopped to pick-up passengers. Council Member Gross suggested that the next time the Municipal Operators have a Bus Roadeo, it might be interesting to check out the maneuverability of the artics.

8. Chair's Remarks

Chair Capone-Newton reminded everyone of the Annual Meet and Confer and tour of the Bus Operations Control Center on March 29, 2006.

Noted that former Council Member Elda Martinez resigned, and Mayor Villaraigosa will need to make another nomination.

Asked Council Members to consider the information regarding possible meeting times submitted by Jody Litvak.

Adjourned at 8:53 p.m.



Michele Jackson, Council Secretary