

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

5:00-7:00 PM

MINUTES

Westside/Central Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

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

Call to Order

Council Members present:

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

Officers:

Mark Maloney, General Manager
Michele Jackson, Council Secretary

1. RECEIVED public comment for items not on the agenda

Ken Ruben commented that a lot of seniors use the bus stop at Wilshire and La Brea, but there are not a lot of benches; at Wilshire/Normandie the next bus arrival notice is gone. Also mentioned that he just missed a 705 bus, and noticed that the sign on the rear of bus said 720.

Chair Robinson asked if every Rapid stop gets a bench and if Metro analyzes whether bench placement is appropriate. General Manager Maloney responded that some stops are done by the Metro Planning group; others are done by a private contractor through the City of Los Angeles.

Jody Litvak reminded the Council that Central City Neighborhood Partners made a presentation at a past meeting and left a spreadsheet. Ninety-five percent of the bus stop issues they raised were under the jurisdiction of the City.

Representative Capone-Newton asked how the Call for Projects could contribute to this issue. Mr. Maloney said Cities apply and ask for furniture based on ridership numbers from Metro.

Ms. Litvak suggested that this matter be agendaized for a future meeting.

Robin Robinson, representing parents of Gardena High School students who must take Line 209 bus. The minor issue is that the bus is always late. It is used to connect to a school bus. If that connection is not made, the parents have to drive all the way to Gardena. The alternatives are Lines 614 and 620 which are consistently late. If it is only 5- 10 minutes late, the connection can still be made. But all too frequently the Line 620 bus arrives 5 minutes after all the school buses have left. There is one Line 209 bus at 5:46 a.m. The next one is not scheduled until 6:35 a.m.

2. APPROVED Minutes from November 8, 2006 and December 13, 2006

Representative Gross abstained from the vote on this item.

3. RECEIVED report from council members on their line rides

Representative Wright reported overcrowding on Line 33 at 7:30 p.m. The bus was crowded at Venice and Hughes, it continued to pick up passengers and nobody exited the bus until it reached La Cienega and Fairfax. People were passed up along the way, and the load was not substantially reduced until the bus reached Western Avenue.

Representative Rosten commented that on the Line 720 Local with voice

annunciation, the announcement was about a half mile off. Suggested that drivers be reminded to make a report when buses are not performing correctly.

Representative Capone-Newton asked why the westbound 720 stop at Normandie was moved from the west side to the east side. Roy Gandara replied that it was done at the request of the hotel on the corner.

Responding to a question from Representative Gross, staff indicated that even when a stop is moved at the request of a business owner, Metro pays all costs.

4. RECEIVED General Managers Report

General Manager Maloney reported that the November accident rate was disappointing. Mean miles between mechanical failures is heading in the right direction. On-time performance rate is steady, but not where it should be. A working group is being formed, consisting of division management, sector management, the Sheriff's Department, scheduling and bus operations control. They will be using the new data to track performance on individual lines, hoping to improve performance in the second half of the year.

Complaints and new workers' compensation claims categories are both doing well. There was a slight up tick in November, but both are coming back down in December.

Chair Robinson and Representative Gross asked why Westside performance numbers are consistently worse than the systemwide average. Mr. Maloney explained that this sector has the highest ridership, operates in the most congestion and the buses make the most stops and take the most abuse. He added that everyone in the agency knows why the numbers are what they are.

Representative Capone-Newton commented that he rode Line 439 on a Sunday. The line doesn't run very often. He waited, and when it didn't come, he took a Line 37 bus. It turns out that the trip did not run because of a mix-up regarding where the new driver was to pick up the bus. He wondered if there might be opportunities with the new ATMS system to develop a metric that might indicate what's really happening. He suggested comparing the available traffic data and the specific lapses in on-time performance to see if there is an actual correlation with traffic. If not, there might be other reasons for the problems which could be determined from all the new data.

Mark Maloney noted that the driver shortage is also a big causal factor. Drivers are working a lot of overtime, and the extra board is smaller. There is a lot of data behind on-time performance, and it is all looked at in an attempt to solve the problem. All new drivers are trained on all the lines. The ones that take an overtime request may be driving from a piece of paper; so they

will be slower than the standard driver.

5. RECEIVED report on FY07 YTD November Financials, Michael Davis, Administration and Finance Manager

Mr. Davis reported that the Sector is over budget by \$1 million due to personal liability/property damage (PL/PD) and workers' compensation (WC) claims. Reserves have been increased based on existing liability claims and the Division 10 settlement of \$1.5 million has come through. The actual number of workers' compensation claims has declined by approximately 70%, but that has not been reflected in the cost.

Last year's budget was \$15 million, and no major liability losses were experienced. Because of that favorable experience, this year's budget allotment is considerably less.

The sector is currently experiencing underruns in fuel and allocated fringes. Allocated fringes typically run about \$35 million per year. This year the budget is \$37 million. CNG prices are running 66-67 cents per therm vs. the budgeted \$1.01/therm. Those two areas may offset the PL/PD and WC overruns.

Responding to questions from Representatives about WC claims, Michael Davis explained that a PL/PD claim arises from any major damage to property or bodily injury. The claim is accepted and reviewed, and what is thought to be an appropriate amount of money is reserved for payment of the claim upon settlement. If the injury turns out to be more severe than initially thought, the reserved amount is increased.

General Manager Maloney noted that most of the current payouts are for claims filed in 2004.

Chair Robinson commented that this should be budgeted to Risk Management rather than the sector so that they can see how well they are making their forecast. Agency-wide, the overall number is pretty accurate, but the task becomes more difficult when an attempt is made to divide it amongst the Sectors. The category fluctuates so much that it almost has to be disregarded in terms of the bottom line.

There was also a suggestion that the maximum amount allocated to each Sector be limited to \$10 million.

Representative Rosten suggested treating the overall MTA as the insurer and the Sector as the insured and creating a premium.

Representative Gross requested a breakout of the types of injuries claimed by

Division 10 operators and mechanics.

6. RECEIVED presentation on marketing materials for new ridership, Matt Raymond, Executive Officer of Communications

Matt Raymond reported on new goals to optimize service, implement Metro Connections, adhere to service standards, feed major bus and rail lines, improve on-street supervision, leverage park and rides, enhance graffiti maintenance, and maximize capital expenditures. Metro will also provide more customer-driven services by expanding into new areas, offering more “true” express service and better serving economic centers.

Media expenditures will be increased to enhance the Metro “brand”, expand target marketing efforts to seniors and students, grow the business segment and leverage market conditions.

Staff is already moving in the plan direction. Additional resources will be needed as well as evaluation of reallocations.

Representative Gross inquired about surveying people who choose not to ride the system. Mr. Raymond responded that staff is waiting to get back the results of just such a survey.

Representative Capone-Newton thanked Mr. Raymond for the comprehensive report. He expressed an interest in seeing a prioritized list of what staff believes improves the riding experience. Representative Capone-Newton also noted that public transportation is considered an after thought. He wondered what might be done to make it something that is thought about first. He offered some suggestions such as a 12-minute map for going out at night targeting restaurants or other nighttime destinations, or the ability to make your own 12-minute map.

Matt Raymond responded that staff is working on something like that with the New Resident Program, through which new residents are given a weekly pass.

Representative Semonco asked about the TAP program. Matt Raymond said the entire fleet has been outfitted with the equipment. Still working with the contracted lines, and they should be up and running in the next two months. UCLA has just signed up for it. The goal is to try to have monthly passes working this summer. The program is still a couple of years away from full implementation.

Chair Robinson noted that one way to attract discretionary riders would be to provide improved north/south service.

7. RECEIVED Accident Plan report, Michael Greenwood, Deputy Executive Officer of Transportation Contract Services

Mr. Greenwood reported on Metro's accident reduction plan. This year \$9.5 million has been budgeted to pay for property damage, lost wages and other costs associated with bus accidents.

Accidents are divided into two main categories – vehicle collisions and passenger incidents. When an accident occurs, the operator is required to report it immediately to the Bus Operations Control Center whether or not there is damage or injury and submit a written accident report at the end of their assignment. Operating division staff is required to investigate each accident and determine avoidability. The collective bargaining agreement specifies the discipline policy for avoidable accidents. If staff determines that an accident was avoidable, they must take the evidence to an Accident Review Board (ARB) for a final determination. Evidence to be considered may include: accident scene photos, video, operator/witness statements and police reports. ARB decisions can be appealed to a second level hearing officer.

Discipline for an avoidable accident escalates from a written warning and 8 hours of one-on-one training for the first incident, to a 3-day unpaid suspension and 16 hours of core skills training for the second, and the third requires a formal hearing that could result in discharge, fitness for duty evaluation and 24 hours of driving skills training. Approximately 15% of accidents are deemed avoidable.

The focus of the new plan is expanding the retraining policy and focusing on bus operators' experiencing multiple accidents. One cause of increased accidents is the additional overtime required due to the operator shortage. Another is the design of the left-side mirror on the artic. These mirrors are being hit at an alarming rate. Reflective striping is being added to the mirror and left-side rear bumper. Additionally, some consideration is being given to adding heavier duty curb feelers to allow operators to get as close to the curb as possible without hanging up the door on the curb.

Representative Gross asked if Metro receives timely information regarding construction. Mr. Greenwood responded negatively, adding that sometimes the notification comes from an operator calling in that he can't get through.

Chair Robinson asked how Metro's accident rate per hub mile relates to other agencies.

General Manager Maloney indicated that some agencies use dollar thresholds, in others anything under \$2,000 is not recorded, while Metro records every accident.

Chair Robinson asked staff to look around to see if there are studies that show some industry standard or marker in terms of accidents.

8. RECEIVED report on proposed service changes for June 2007, Rogelio Gandara, Service Development Manager

Mr. Gandara noted that recommendations for June 2007 changes are consistent with Metro Connections and the ridership plan.

Chair Robinson asked what percentage of 720's will turn around at Westwood instead of going all the way to Santa Monica, and what the recommendation is for Line 20 from Westwood to Santa Monica.

Mr. Gandara responded that the recommendation for Line 20 is to shorten the service to the Westwood area. For Line 720 staff will need to return with the percentage of service to short-turned in Westwood.

Representative Wright noted that there was already a lack of space at the Westwood turnaround, and now 720's are being added.

Mr. Gandara said that is still the case. The challenge facing staff is moving forward on these recommendations and finding layover space.

9. Chair's Remarks - None

Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.


