

## **Meeting Minutes – Draft**

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Tuesday, June 5, 2018; 1:30PM-3:30PM

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### **PAC Business and Minutes**

The PAC meeting started with roll-call. Jessica Meaney, Marianne Kim, David Feinberg Robert So, Stephanie Ramirez, Bridget Smith, Delilah Sotelo, John Bwarie, Jackie Bacharach, Bryn Lindblad, Terry Dipple, Juan Lopez Rios, Kerry Cartwright, Angela Driscoll, Nancy Pfeffer, Roderick Diaz, and Hilary Norton attended, and Marisa Creter called in via phone. The PAC asked that a few changes be made to the previous minutes, including changing the Long Range Plan to Regional Transportation Plan. The PAC then approved the minutes.

### **NextGen Bus Study**

Conan Cheung, Senior Executive Officer of Service Development, Scheduling, and Analysis, gave an introduction and update to the NextGen Bus Study. The NextGen Bus Study aims to design a new bus network that is more relevant, reflective of, and attractive to the residents of LA County. Buses carry over 70 percent of Metro's customers but the network has not been updated in 25 years. The team outreached to communities to learn when, where and *why* passengers travel when and where they do. Ultimately, they found passengers value frequency and reliability most when they use the bus.

The team received nearly 5,000 questionnaire responses from their outreach. Their outreach included 5 Service Councils and multiple interactions with current passengers. They also included two external working group meetings, or as they described, workshops to gather data and deliver on the polls assessed. Similarly, perspectives from bus operators, customer care agents, Da Vinci High Schools students, cellphone town halls, internal working groups, and technical advisory committees were incorporated during the feedback process. Because many of them are on the frontline of bus operations, service, and consumption, their input was valuable to the study. For instance, Da Vinci High School students noted that the Metro's current bus application does not have a welcoming user platform nor is the application easy to navigate. Outreach is expected to continue with anyone who wants to discuss the study accordingly.

According to the study, 7 percent of users are frequent riders, or use the system three or more times per week, 22 percent use the system a couple of times per month, 55 percent used the system once or twice per year, and 16 percent do not use the system at all. The 55 percent is significant—half of the people tried using the system but opted not to continue to use it. Although frequent riders comprise only 7 percent of LA County, they represent 80 percent of all boardings. If Metro loses one frequent rider, they do not lose just one trip they lose two or three trips per rider including transfers and returns. The study, hence, explores whether to increase services to maintain frequent or to attract the 55 percent that used the system but decided not to.

Thus far the study also found that 31 percent bus riders like the system for its convenience. 30 percent noted they use the system because they do not have a car. 15 percent do not ride the system out of choice. And 45 percent of riders said they use the system because they have no other option. As mentioned, frequency and reliable services are the most important factors when using the system. Other issues addressed included security concerns, low fares, and more; but, the main issues included frequency and reliability.

When discussing frequency, riders ideally want buses to arrive every 5- 10 minutes, more frequent than the current system. Even during off-peak hours, riders noted they want service to arrive in 10 minute headways. But buses are currently competing with more immediate options, like transportation network companies (i.e. Lyft, Uber), that provide service more instantaneously. Users of that system can see where and when their car will arrive. Buses then need to incorporate ways to make the immediacy more responsive, such as demonstrating when and where buses will arrive even if stuck in traffic. With limited resources, the question then arises: does Metro expand coverage or ridership?

Similarly, reliable service does not just about service. Reliable service includes service and information. For example, if a bus is caught or anticipated to be caught in traffic, there needs to be a system that notifies passengers so they can plan accordingly. Often times, passengers' frustrations develop from not having control over the system—they are at the mercy of the system and losing control of mobility makes some individuals indefinitely leave the system. Thus, there needs to be a system that gives control over the trip back to passengers.

Another finding from the study was that non-riders do not use the system because it is too slow. Slowness, or the lack of speed, has less to do with the system and more to do with transfers and traffic. Transfers add time to the entire trip. The team needs to prioritize the traffic and routing when assessing the system. Other findings included safety concerns, both on the bus and walking to and waiting at the bus shelter. The question then is how does the team work with local jurisdictions to improve the system?

Summarized, when analyzing the data by demographics and rider types, faster and reliable service are what seems to be the passengers' priorities. To be in the transportation planning game, the current system needs to be faster. Current riders want service to be more frequent and faster. Others want the same type of service during weekends and night. Similarly, information is as important as speed for both riders and non-riders. For example, making schedules honest and understandable are places to start. The way cohorts process information is also changing. There is a much bigger focus on finger-tip information, where information is displayed to users. There needs to be a legible system that explains the bus network in a simple and intuitive manner. Safety and security, routing, and speed are also some concerns. But with 5 million cellphone devices in use per day, there must be a way to work to integrate with technology to improve the system.

The PAC questioned how current and future rail projects will impact the bus system. Mr. Cheung answered the study currently does not take into account the rail system, and it is one of the many reasons the system needs to be restructured to see how it works together. There is also a need to look

beyond the bus to provide flexible services accordingly. The PAC also questioned if bike trips could be added into the bus study. The team responded that spot surveys will survey people that take the trip that is too far from service areas but still get service to get a better understanding of their bike utilization and how it contributes to the bus combination. The PAC also questioned the use of the Metro app. The team responded that although the app is available, most riders rely on Google Maps to route their trips. The PAC then questioned if the budget will cause a tradeoff between frequency and reliability. The team responded that the bus study is operating with a no-net increase with a plus-or-minus of 10 percent. A way to improve the frequency is to speed up the system. The faster the system, the more resources can be applied to frequency. Some areas also have very high frequency. They could slow headways in those areas and allocate those resources to areas that need and require the service. The financial models need to be discussed to also ensure fares are not increased. The PAC also asked if there will be coordination with microtransit and BRT services. The team responded that coordination with those programs will definitely occur. However, the more immediate purpose of the program is to improve the bus system as it currently stands. The PAC also questioned about the ways congestion pricing and how first-last mile ideas will impact the study. The team responded that those are areas being analyzed, including how the service will continue to be priced.

Ultimately, the team asked the PAC to engage their constituencies so they can inform them of the work they are doing and get input accordingly. Some ways to engage the team include using questionnaires and surveys on the PAC websites; but, the team cannot accomplish the study without the help from the PAC. When the board asks the team who they have had contact with, the team could respond with the PAC. The responses obtained can then be qualified and quantified to help the study accordingly.

### **TOC Policy Update**

Jenna Hornstock, Executive Officer of Transportation Oriented Communities (TOC), updated the PAC on the TOC policy that will be presented to the board in June. Thus far, the TOC working group had meetings with committees, individual stakeholders, county council, town halls, and presented a draft to the board in May. The TOC definition now includes “holistic” per request of Mr. Phil Washington and changed from 18 goals to include five high-level goals with sub goals. TOC activities include three geographic radii including General activities, within 0 – ½ mile of a stop, and within 0- 3 miles of a stop. Activities include items such as affordable housing, business assistance, neighborhood amenities, community engagement, etc. These activities Metro already has done; thus, they are confirmed as TOC activities and it makes it clear about local return funds being spent on these activities.

For activities to be confirmed, a transportation nexus is required. The TOC team and affiliates collected data to define a transportation activity with a transportation nexus. These are permissive but not directive. In other words, the definitions provide examples on what can be used for transportation funds. Local funds, or any type of fund, will be used for activities that are within 0- ½ mile.

Next steps for the TOC policy include presenting to the board and adopting it in June. An implementation plan with performance metrics will be developed within 18 month, or 12 months ideally.

An annual report will be created and the TOC policy working paper will be shared with the PAC. The policy paper and implementation work is expected to commence in July 30<sup>th</sup>.

The PAC asked if they could expand on what is considered a transportation nexus. Ms. Hornstock responded that for a nexus to exist, the board has to agree there is a nexus. Furthermore, in order for something to be considered for a transportation purpose, the legislative body must confirm the opinion. The PAC also asked if PAC support is needed when the policy is presented to the board and Ms. Hornstock agreed. No one anticipates that the Board will hold any reservations because the team listened and addressed their concerns.

### **Short Range Financial Forecast**

The Financial Forecast projects Metro's 40 year capital and operation costs and is updated every year. One of the key outcomes is to pronounce how funds will be allocated to projects and programs. In June, however, Metro proposed a short range forecast that is more digestible and focused on near-term, more refined estimates. Because there are four sales tax measures, formula grants, discretionary grants, and projected revenues, Metro wants to ensure funds are allocated accordingly. For instance, some of the plans included in the short range plan include the Purple Line extension, the East San Fernando Valley corridor, and other projects.

The expenditure plan grouped expenditures including contract records, adopted budgets, and bus and rail operations. The short range plan is adjusted for all previous measures, including SB1 and other updates areas. Some grants are at risk of losing funds. One of the most important tasks the Board undertakes is budgeting and assigning funds so there is federal reimbursement. The Board then determines how projects will be selected. Furthermore, the LRTP is the guiding principles that keep propositions on schedule.

Because current ridership is falling and investment in bus and rail is increasing, allocating funds to bus and rail is becoming increasingly challenging. Bus and rail require subsidies and focusing funds on that means funds cannot be spent elsewhere. Fewer riders also mean less revenue. Thus, earmarked funds are not sufficient to construct projects if the ridership is not there. So, the short range financial plan will provide a 10 year financial forecast that is new and includes financial outlook and analysis of key risks and the Board action will be to designate funds assigned to specific products.

The PAC asked how the string of funds will be used in current years and if the Board will be pursuing projects that may lose funding. The team responded they will be moving forward with discretion and once decisions are final on funding measures, they will ask the Board to react accordingly. They also responded there hopes ridership will increase within the next years that will increase the farebox recovery ratio.

### **Draft Vision 2028**

Ms. Nadine Lee and Ms. Tham Nguyen updated the PAC on comments they received on Vision 2028. Some of the common themes they recorded include standardizing data capturing, being more explicit with language, and questions regarding funding for the overall strategic plan.

For starters, mode share data capturing was not consistent across the board. The team wants to use percentages as a standardized measure of data capturing that serves as a benchmark for year-to-year improvements. Secondly, the team will add language that operationalizes the strategic plan to all other plans. Sustainability and climate change will also be included with clearer language for stand pieces. In general, more explicit language will be used throughout the document.

Other comments shared with the team included ways that partner agencies could help the team accomplish their goals. The language was not very clear and will now reflect ways partnering agencies could support the vision accordingly. Funding mechanisms will also be better addressed. Currently, there are many concerns about funding to accomplish the vision goals. The team will not clarify that funding for initiatives in the strategic plan will be supported by numerous mechanisms. For instance, the vision will leverage grant programming funding and pull resources from other areas to help accomplish the goal. The strategic plan is strategic and will not take away from all programs and their purpose.

The various goals were also amended to include comments from the PAC and other stakeholders. Goal 1 was expanded to not solely look at equity as geographic investments but as investment by higher needs. Language that further explains partnership with active transportation groups, roads, and state of good repair, and highways will be added. Congestion pricing language will also be updated to reflect the process as needed. Goal 2 will also include more language that addresses the concerns about safety to all people and not simply security improvements. Goals 3 will add language that addresses bus stop improvements, homelessness initiatives, and place making that emphasize improvements to street design. Clearer language will also be included that addresses what incentives mean for each grant area, more information on goods movement, and see what funding limitations are. The graphics will also be reworked so that they are more inclusive and representative of the community.

### **L RTP Outreach**

Matthew Maldonado from MBI gave an overview of L RTP outreach efforts. There is a four stage approach to the PAC outreach that includes awareness, engagement, and development of a detailed stakeholder database. Phase 1 will include 90 days to conduct outreach and interviews with community based organizations to get feedback on the project. Approximately 100 interviews will be conducted in 90 days. In general, there is a desire to grow a database of partners that can provide feedback to improve the overall outreach efforts. Phase 1 open ended to get feedback about general community priorities; Phase 2 will talk about values such as mobility over something else; Phase 3 will set-up opportunities for decision-making; and Phase 4 will include drafting a plan.

The PAC asked if separate outreach is being done in different areas. They responded a certain number of outreach will be done at community events, parts of the cities, and they will develop outreach on each question to have more information on the responses are provided. Emails will be sent to the PAC so they

are aware of the plan. The PAC also asked if the COG's will know anything about the outreach plans. Two working group meeting will occur over the summer and the PAC will meet in September. There will be surveys and online tools to collect data and interact with the public. They want to get the stories, concerns, and solution to improve the overall system.

#### **Measure M ATP 2% Admin Procedures Update**

A draft of the administrative procedures for the 2% will be available next meeting. Workshops will be available for those to participate if interested. One of the things causing slower progress than originally anticipated includes the LA River ordinance. The LA River ordinance states there are outdated cash flow exercises that need be addressed.

The PAC stated that a major concern is that the bikeshare program might be premature. It is not known if the bikeshare program will be successful and allocating ATP funds for five years should not be considered a good practice. There is much more to prepare at the moment. Rather than a rapid fire discussion, there should be an opportunity for working group to convene. Nevertheless, the working group will have two opportunities to meet over the summer to update the plan by September.

#### **PAC Announcements**

Questions and comments about Vision 2028 should be forwarded to Ms. Kalieh Honish as soon as possible. In particular, questions and comments should focus on how Vision 2028 relates to the LRTP. Should there be any questions about Vision 2028, the PAC should reach out to Metro staff accordingly.

During their first year as a PAC, the PAC has accomplished many tasks including drafting the policy papers and helping frame conversations about subregional funds. Major accomplishments will be posted as a Board Box and shared with the public. The subregional boundaries will be going to the Board in July and the PAC will be using Measure M subregions going forward.

The Arroyo Verdugo is now a formal Joint Power Authority and will perhaps be incorporated into the next PAC meeting. This idea is still tentative and more information will be provided as soon as it is provided.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled on September 11 due to the typical meeting date is immediately following Labor Day. New PAC officers will be selected during that meeting.

#### **Public Comment**

Mr. Bwarie commended outgoing chair, Jessica Meaney, for her incredible work.

The meeting adjourned at 3:43PM.