

Wednesday, August 8, 2012

5:00-7:05 PM

Minutes

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL
SERVICE COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

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

Called to Order at 5:00 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Joe Stitcher, Chair
Jeffrey Jacobberger, Vice Chair

Peter Capone-Newton
Perri Sloane Goodman
Art Ida
Elliott Petty
Glen Rosten
Jerard Wright

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Regional Councils Director
Jody Litvak, Community Relations Mgr
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Suzanne Handler, Council Secretary
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. ROLL Call

2. APPROVED Minutes of June 13, 2012 meeting

Minutes approved with abstention of Council Members Capone-Newton, Rosten, and Wright.

3. RECEIVED Public Comment for items not on the agenda

Ken Rubin is glad that the Service Council meeting is back at the Beverly Hills Tennis Center. He voiced concerns regarding TAP Card implementation and compatibility issues with EZ Pass and Santa Monica Transit. Will the Santa Monica sticker be able to open the gates once the gates are locked? How are Big Blue Bus and other systems such as Long Beach going to be able to do that? He shared that his fare was checked on the previous day while riding the Expo Line.

Wayne Wright expressed gratitude for the extension of the 217 to Culver City Transit Center via the Westfield Culver City Mall. He has seen ridership pick up on the 217, but more can be done to improve service. He suggested the line be overhauled from truncating service at Vermont and Sunset, to improving night service from 30 minute to 15 or 20 minute headways between Wilshire and Hollywood to accommodate heavy ridership on Wilshire from the Farmer's Market and the Grove. He recommended the line run 30-40 minute headways on the new extension south of La Cienega/Rodeo to the Culver City Transit Center instead of 60-minute off-peak headways, and run weekends service from Culver City Transit Center until 10 p.m. He suggested Line 81 be expanded to run on 5th & 6th instead of on 8th and 9th between Figueroa and Hill as Target is opening a new store on 7th and Figueroa, and there is no south bus service to the store, the 7th & Metro Center, or the LA Public Library. A minor change before December would be helpful.

4. RECEIVED Update I-405 Closure, Ron Macias, Construction Relations Officer

September 29-30, 2012 is the scheduled weekend for the second 53-hour I-405 Sepulveda Pass closure in both directions to support bridge demolition and reconstruction of the remaining half of the Mulholland Bridge. The finished project will widen the freeway, realign ramps to increase capacity, alleviate congestion and improve traffic flow. Ramps will begin to be closed at 7 p.m; full freeway closure will begin at 10 p.m. with full closure by midnight. The freeway is expected to reopen at 5 a.m. on Monday, October 1, 2012. All lanes and connectors including the Mulholland Bridge should be open by 6 a.m. The closure will be coordinated through a unified command with LAPD, LAFD, CHP, LADOT, Metro and Caltrans. There will be some directional closures in the area in the weeks leading up to the full closure.

Much of the same outreach efforts for the freeway closure will be utilized such as local, regional, statewide and media campaigns, digital message signs, public announcements, use of online resources including the project website, and individual business outreach.

There will be service coordination between emergency responders, public agencies, transportation operations, airports and regional ports.

Sunset Bridge, another area project, is nearing completion. It should be finished around the end of September. Once finished, it will function at full capacity and should help to alleviate some of the congestion from the I-405 closure.

Council asked if free system fares would be offered during the closure. Jon Hillmer responded that free fares will not be offered this time, as there are civil rights issues raised with such programs, requiring an equity review to see if fair to all customer bases. If protected classes are disproportionately represented in free fares, the Board has to understand and justify any disparate impact.

Jody Litvak added that Metro had considered providing free fares system-wide during this weekend but ruled out as being too complex for a variety of reasons. Further, past experience has demonstrated that they didn't result in a marked increase in usage. Working with people to stay local, shop local, seems to be the way to go for this freeway closure. Mr. Hillmer added that last closure, Metro had extra service on standby in order to maintain schedules in the event of heavy usage, but it turned out that both transit users and drivers stayed home, and there wasn't a real need. Ms. Litvak proposed that a more complete report on what service adjustments will be made for the freeway closure could be shared at the September meeting

5. CONSIDERED Santa Monica Blvd. Bus Lines 4 and 704 for Corridor Study, Jon Hillmer and Council Members

Local Line 4 is 20.7 miles long and has 111 stops in each direction, from downtown to Santa Monica. It stops approximately less than every 0.20 mile. The Local service standard is 0.25 mile, some stops could be eliminated to speed up service. Rapid Line 704 travels 19.7 miles and has 33 stops in each direction. It operates from Union station to Santa Monica Blvd., stopping every 0.60 mile, slightly lower than the Rapid service standard of every 0.70 mile.

Line Ridership:

- Weekdays: Line 4 – 22,344, Line 704 - 11,247
- Saturdays: Line 4 – 20,613, Line 704 – 8,072
- Sundays: Line 4 – 15,990, Line 704 – 6,948
- Annualized – Line 4 – 7,725,000 annual boardings, Line 704 – 3,698,000
- Number of Service Hours, Line 4: 392 weekday, 361 on Saturdays, 302 on Sundays. Number of Service Hours, Line 704: 217 weekday, 153 on Saturdays, 116 on Sundays. Line 4 ridership does not decline much on weekends, Line 704 does. Service has been adjusted to ridership trends accordingly.
- Over 206, 593 annual hours of service on the corridor. On a marginal cost rate, costs Metro \$100 per hour. A fully loaded cost is \$138 per bus hour.
- Number of Buses in Service: Line 4 runs 22-17 during peak hours, 19-12 on Line 704, Saturdays 22 on Line 4, 14 on Rapid 704, and on Sundays, 16 on Local Line 4 and Rapid 704 runs 13.

- Service frequencies – Line 4 runs 10-15 minutes during peak hours , every 15 minutes during base hours, ranges from 10-13 on Saturdays, 12 to 18 on Sundays, and every 30 minutes for late night service.
- Rapid Line 704 – Weekday peak service is inbound in the morning, outbound in the evenings. Peak hours buses run every 9-15 minutes, every 20 during base hours. Weekends the line runs much less frequently, Saturdays 20-23 minutes, Sundays 22 to 26 minutes. When bus headways are every 20 minutes or greater on a route also served by Local service, riders tend to take whichever bus comes next. May want to examine adding more frequent Local service to avoid people standing around waiting for Rapid.
- Local Line 4 subsidy per passenger is \$1.69, lower than the system average of \$1.75. Per passenger mile, system average is \$0.42, but only \$0.35 on the Rapid line, as people ride the bus for longer distances.
- Both the Local and Rapid seats are filled with passengers 57% and 52% of the time, respectively, as compared to a system wide average of 47%.
- Local 4 line’s most frequent disboarding stop is Santa Monica and Sunset, attractor by itself near Children’s Hospital and Kaiser Hospital, also huge transfer point to Metro Red Line stations. Rapid Line 704 has same pattern.

Council Member Jerard Wright asked what the average trip distance is. Mr. Hillmer responded that it is 4.1 miles system wide. Along this corridor, the Local is slightly longer around 4.3. Rapid is much longer than average, closer to 6 miles.

Mr. Hillmer stated that line rides will be organized in late September to examine utilization of service by different route segments at different times of day and any duplications of service, to understand dynamics of particular routes, explore meets with Big Blue Bus, and evaluate the portion of the route through downtown LA, as on both lines, ridership drops when they get to downtown. These topics will return in October or November as part of public workshop with Planning.

Wayne Wright commented that Line 4 night service is a major problem after 9 to 10 p.m., as there are frequent overloads and buses are consistently late. There are also additional safety concerns with lots of homeless riding Line 4 at night. Mr. Wright suggested that Council ride Line 4 at night to further understand and address its challenges.

Zac Strom commended study of Lines 4 and 704, as it is a very viable corridor with strong ridership. He suggested there should be an emphasis on local routing, particularly since smaller buses are now being used, rather than the 60-foot buses that were being used before. He thinks if there was more frequent service, if there was bunching, those buses may do the work of the Rapid Line, as they would provides the option of more frequent short trips.

Council Member Glen Rosten asked why materials reflected on/off patterns for eastbound routes, but did not include westbound patterns. Mr. Hillmer replied that the on/off stop patterns in both directions are very similar, but he does have data for both directions and can share with the Council members if they want additional data.

Council Member Rosten mentioned that a goal of the Westside/Central Council is getting more public meeting attendance. Focusing meetings agendas on discussing this corridor and routes, and asking people how we could improve them might augment participation. He suggested running a contest to get people to participate by submitting service suggestions. Mr. Hillmer responded that there are legal issues around contests or raffles, as they are considered a giveaway of public funds. Passes have been given away in the past as incentive, that idea can be explored. As such meetings usually attract regular transit users, may be a good idea to offer additional passes, such as 2-3 month free passes.

Vice Chair Jeffrey Jacobberger suggested meeting in different location to encourage public participation. Council Member Perri Sloane Goodman offered to assist staff in locating facilities in West Hollywood.

Council Member Jerard-Wright asked if the workshop discussion would only include the 704 and 4, or would it include discussion of other lines. Mr. Hillmer replied that, at this time, the focus is on the 4 and 704, but discussion would be open to other lines similar to the Santa Monica corridor, such as Beverly. Mr. Wright suggested the Third Street corridor also be reviewed, as it is very similar in that it also runs east-west.

Council Member Rosten commented that because these lines are so long, it might be helpful to examine information line performance in smaller segments, for example, movement through Beverly Hills as opposed to through West Hollywood. Mr. Hillmer replied that he has limited average bus speed performance information. He does have bus arrival schedules, on-time performance, and how many people are boarding and alighting at each stop. He can work with scheduling group to get more information for the Local and Rapid on those corridors.

Vice Chair Jacobberger asked whether a separate meeting is needed or if the discussion should be part of a regular meeting. Mr. Hillmer responded that it could be done as part of the regular meeting cycle. There would still be regular meeting items, but bulk of meeting time would be spent on workshop.

6. DISCUSSED USC/Expo Game Day Service and Crowd Control Plan, Brandon Farley, Rail Operations Planner

Expo Line is gearing up service levels for USC game days. Game times are not available until around 12 days before game. The first game is scheduled to start on September 1 around 4:30 p.m. Tailgating on USC campus starts as early as 6 a.m. Expo service will start ramping up two to three hours before game time, running 3-car trains every 6 minutes on the Expo Line, compared to standard 12-minute service. Blue, Red, and Purple Lines all will operate regular times, 6 cars trains on the Red, 4 car trains on the purple line. Linkages with Gold and Green Lines will be maximized with 3-car trains operating on regular schedules.

Several measures will be in place to control pedestrian crossing the tracks before the game, such as barricades and lineator tape along the corridor. Exposition Blvd. will be closed to vehicle traffic between Pardee Way to the Expo/Vermont Station approximately 90 minutes before game time, when people start leaving the tailgate parties on campus and walking over to the Coliseum. Staff will be on hand directing pedestrian traffic. Each crossing, including non-station crossings, will have revenue selling tickets to avoid queues at the machines, and customer service representatives to answer questions. Metro will also place staff throughout the system at terminal stations and transfer stations such as Willowbrook and 7th and Metro to facilitate riders getting from one line to the next. Staff at outlying locations will be redeployed during the course of the day to assist with game break and queue lines as needed.

An additional 125 Metro employees were recruited to supplement regular special event staff. Metro is scheduling a lot of staff for this first game, then will adjust as necessary through the season. The event will also be supported by LA Sheriff's department. Metro has been observing special events in the area over the last 2 years to prepare. Metro also ran an exercise to help pedestrians cross the street during the season last year, which was quite successful. Trains will be running under slow orders as they approach the USC Stations, no more than 15 miles per hour between stations.

Metro is also working with USC to market rail service to and from the game, and both will be leveraging their social media outlets. USC has developed a Game Day application which will include information on how to get to and from the Game Day event.

Council Member Glen Rosten asked if there will be any security at the Westside Park and Ride Lots such as Culver City on game day. Mr. Farley replied that there is not security at the lots on a regular basis. There are 3 Park and Ride lots that to the west that might be used by game attendees - Culver City/Robertson, La Cienega/Jefferson, and Crenshaw/Expo, each of which have approximately 500 parking spaces.

An observation of prior year game day activity was that people were placing empty drinks on the bollards that separate the crossings, which would then get knocked over by passing pedestrians, strewing broken glass. This year, Metro will remove the bollards, and place trash receptacles around the area.

Council Member Jerard Wright asked if there a potential to use purchase of football tickets at the Coliseum as a fare media. Mr. Farley replied that Metro and USC have been meeting on a regular basis, and sale of fare with game tickets is among the questions being explored, along with joint efforts to promote Expo service to game attendees.

Council Member Wright asked if the lessons learned from Expo Line handling of special events such as USC games, are any of the findings being incorporated into the Farmers Field final Environmental Impact Report, or if the information will be used in other applications for other locations. Mr. Farley replied that USC will likely draw crowds of 90,000 per game, while the NFL stadium standard is closer to 72,000. Given USC's tradition of pre-game tailgating and the large number of pedestrians walking from

campus to the Coliseum, USC games likely present a greater challenge than an NFL game.

Wayne Wright expressed concerns regarding Line 102 and DASH access to the section of Exposition Blvd. between Vermont and Figueroa on game days. He asked if there will be Metro Staff, LA Sheriffs, and fare checkers at the Expo stations north of USC, particularly at Pico/Chick Hearn Station, as there will be crowds coming from Blue, Red and Purple Lines and the Silver Line onto Expo trains. What measures will be implemented to ensure that there isn't heavy overcrowding on the platform? Will staff implement the same processes when USC holds its basketball home games at the Jefferson/USC station in the future? Mr. Farley replied that routes in the area will run regular schedules, but that as Expo trains will be running at twice the regular frequency, it should alleviate any crowding at Pico Station. While the basketball games near Jefferson/USC Station are on the radar, Metro is waiting for the next season before starting to prepare for those events.

Ken Rubin commented that he frequently rides the Expo line and thinks Metro will need many more fare checkers. He added that he has submitted a request to the Mayor for bus bench installation at the west side of the Culver City station, as there is no seating for westbound travelers from the station.

Council Member Peter Capone-Newton expressed concerns about the median at Expo Park/USC station. He asked if crush loads have been considered, and how people will be accommodated coming on/off the platforms. Mr. Farley replied that Exposition Blvd. will be closed on game days for up to 90 minutes before and after game, depending how long it takes to serve customers. Staff will be lining up people on each side of the street, primarily cuing up on south side facing east, not in the street. There will be staff and LA Sheriffs to keep people behind the crosswalk and out of the right of way from vehicles and train.

Council Member Capone-Newton asked if Metro will intentionally split traffic between the Expo/Vermont and Expo park/USC stations to alleviate crowding. Mr. Farley responded that Metro will use signage to split the crowds to the stations, with half being directed to Expo park station, and the other side of the Coliseum park will have signage directing people to the Vermont station. LADOT will control the intersection, and is aware of pedestrian concerns on southwest corner of Exposition Park.

Council Member Capone-Newton asked if crowds would be permitted to wait on Expo Station platforms. Mr. Farley replied that staff will ensure that each train is only loaded half or three-quarters full in order to leave capacity for other passengers waiting to board on the next westbound or eastbound station platform. Staff will also help people cross and will limit the number of passengers waiting on the platform, so that crowds will not be allowed to build on the platform unless they will be able to get onto the next train.

Wayne Combs commented that signage at the 7th Street/Metro Station is woefully inadequate and needs to be reexamined as to how to better direct people to Tracks 1 and 2 and to the Red Line. Mr. Farley responded that signage has been a concern, but that the signage has been improved in the past 3 or 4 weeks. The shared platform previously

had two different toned blue dots to represent the Blue and Expo Lines, which could be confusing for visually impaired patrons or in dark conditions. Metro has added an “E” in the middle of the dot to enhance the Expo Line symbol. Metro is looking at expanding a signage program where each line would have a letter designation, determined by when the line opened for service. Expo was the 5th line, and was thus assigned an “E.” Mr. Farley added that when Expo was first planned, draft EIR documents projected 43,800 riders first year. The line has only been operating a little over 2 months, June carried 16,500 on average, and expects July ridership to be higher.

Council Member Jerard Wright asked if Silver Line service will be augmented during game days, as some transit users may opt to use Silver Line in order to avoid Blue Line crowds. Mr. Fraser responded that as in previous years and events, Metro will have additional buses on standby in the event something happens and to alleviate lines in the vicinity that are experiencing capacity issues.

7. ADOPTED FY13 Work Plan, Jon Hillmer

The Westside/Central Service Council’s priorities include:

Expanding Public Involvement:

- Metro staff to enhance public notifications of meetings, which may include Metro.net, Twitter, and Facebook. Articles about the Service Councils have already been posted articles and received some feedback.
- Bi-Annual meetings at other locations – up to Council to decide whether to hold an additional meeting at different location, or move meeting location every 6 months
- Bi-Annual Service Workshops - Conduct planning workshops in November and April to discuss service concepts that may be considered
- Conduct public hearings regarding significant service changes as needed. Will be no December public hearing as there will not be significant service changes in June. There may be a hearing in January 2013 for June service changes, significant outreach will be conducted to increase public participation. If there are a general service changes, will conduct a Saturday meeting in downtown, always well attended at that location.

Enhance Council Understanding:

- Monthly meetings will include performance information will be presented by the Director of Service Council
- Highlight one bus line within WSC region every other month, will bring comments from riders, operators, and photos
- Staff will organize site visits to Divisions, to Regional Rebuild Center and Rail Control Center to review the operations if there is Council interest. Visits may be in conjunction with other Service Councils for good participation.
- Line rides will be organized in advance of public hearings and as requested by Council. Council Representatives may also provide reports on individual line rides they have taken at their monthly meetings

Service Development:

- Receive briefing from Service Planning and Scheduling staff in November for June 2013 potential service changes
- Receive quarterly information on line performance and complaint rate for each line to give a better feel on performance

Operations:

- Receive regular reports from senior Metro Operations staff on what they're doing to improve performance.
- Receive regular reports from John Roberts, now responsible for Metro Maintenance, on work being done to improve the appearance and cleanliness of both rail and bus stations

Council Member Glen Rosten asked if there is value in spending time on the Metro Operations budget, as Council has no real impact on budget decisions. Mr. Hillmer replied that it is worth understanding the overall budget to understand agency's challenges.

Vice Chair Jeffrey Jacobberger-asked if a decision on potential location or different meeting times is needed from Council. Council Member Rosten added that holding an additional meeting or hosting in a different location only makes sense if it serves a particular purpose such as examining service in a particular area, but moving just to attract more participation doesn't accomplish anything. Mr. Hillmer replied that an alternative would be to hold a meeting much farther east, as the Council does represent the area including Highland Park and El Sereno. A meeting could be held in that area to see if it generates more participation.

8. RECEIVED Metro Board Motion – Coordination of Transit Agencies' Schedule Development and Transfers, Jon Hillmer, Director

Metro Board adopted a policy goal for coordination and synchronization of service changes and transfer points with a request for staff to return to the Board in October. The report from staff will include the following:

- A. Establish meetings with other transit agencies to discuss changes;
- B. Develop a prioritized list of Metrolink stations, transit hubs and transfer points;
- C. Develop an implementation plan by December 31, 2012; and
- D. Develop an MOU or agreement to coordinate when agencies schedule service changes

Current planned actions include:

- A. Informing Metro Service Councils of this program;
- B. Including this Motion as a topic of the August 2012 Quarterly Service Providers Meetings;
- C. Including Metrolink in these meetings;
- D. Inviting Service Council Representatives to the meeting in their region;
- E. Developing a summary report on the results of said meetings; and
- F. Preparing an Action Plan for review by the Metro Board in October 2012.

9. RECEIVED Director's Report on June 2012 Service, Jon Hillmer

- On-time performance trends: 75.69% compared to 75.0% prior month and 76.3% YTD average, as compared to 85% FY12 goal and 80% FY13 goal.
- Customer Complaint per 100,000 passengers: 2.50 compared to 2.36 prior month and 2.58 YTD average, as compared to goal of 2.04.
- Miles between Mechanical Road Calls: 3,142 compared to 3,063 prior month and 2,865 YTD average, as compared to FY12 goal of 3,650 and FY13 goal of 3,900.
- Clean Bus Ratings: 8.14 compared to 8.21 prior month and 8.19 YTD average, as compared to goal of 8.0.
- Accidents per 100,000 miles: 4.46 compared to 4.83 prior month and 4.45 for YTD average, as compared to goal of 3.53.
- Monthly Ridership: 17.96M compared to 18.95 prior month and 17.68M YTD average, and 16.89M goal.
- Line 720 Ridership: 41,861 weekdays, 29,835 Saturdays, 23,256 Sundays
- Rail Weekday Ridership: Red 163,510; Blue 89,523; Green 46,278; Orange 47,025, and Expo 16,569.
- Bus Station Cleanliness Evaluation on 20 bus stations: No "D's" this month. Culver City went down by 0.4 to a C-; Patsaouras Plaza down by 0.9 to a C; Pico Rimpau Bus Center up by 0.5 to B-. Average bus station cleanliness score was 7.73 (C grade) , an improvement of 0.27 since December 2011. .

10. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Council expressed their well wishes for Suzanne Handler's upcoming retirement, and thanked her for her service to the Westside Service Council.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:05pm