

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

5:00-7:00 PM

Minutes

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL
SERVICE COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

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

Called to Order at 5:05 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Jeff Jaccoberger, Chair
Elliot Petty, Vice Chair
Peter Capone-Newton
Art Ida
Perri Sloane Goodman
Glenn Rosten

Officers:

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



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. APPROVED Minutes of February 13, 2013 meeting

Minutes approved with absention of Chair Jacobberger.

2. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the agenda

Culver City resident and Southern California Transit Advocates (SCTA) member Ken Ruben thanked Jon Hillmer for sharing information with the Council regarding his inability to attend at the previous month's meeting. Pictures from SCTA's meeting with Metro TAP Director David Sutton were included in the most recent SCTA newsletter. It also has an article about when LA streetcars were operated that includes a couple of old photos. Mr. Ruben noted that Long Beach Transit is celebrating their 50th anniversary.

Mitch Paradise lives north of Wilshire. He caught a Line 2 bus to get to UCLA. The entire trip took 45 minutes; 15 minutes of that time was spent travelling between Westgate to Barrington. Mr. Paradise noted that the light at Sepulveda is not long enough to allow enough traffic to allow Wilshire Blvd. turning traffic at San Vicente, so that by the time the light turns green, and no one can move. When you get to Sepulveda from eastbound Wilshire, the entire street is clear. The length of the green light needs to be extended to allow eastbound traffic to be able to move. The sequencing of lights at Sepulveda is within County territory. Mr. Paradise has exchanged emails with Council Member Stitcher regarding this matter and he will forward to Council staff Dolores Ramos to share with the Council.

Council Member Rosten stated that part of the problem may be that traffic is much heavier in different directions during different parts of the day. Systems that sense the traffic load and change the flow accordingly are needed to improve the flow of both transit and traffic. These systems can be much more effective and less expensive than some of the other methods that transportation agencies use.

3. RECEIVE Presentation on TDA Triennial Review Process, Jon Hillmer, Director

The State Public Utilities Code (PUC) requires all recipients of Transit Development Act (TDA) funding to complete an independent review every three years to maintain funding eligibility. The review is intended to be an independent and objective evaluation of public transit operators to which TDA funds are allocated. The review has four primary goals:

1. Assess operator compliance with TDA regulations;
2. Review improvements implemented by the operator as well as progress toward adopted goals;
3. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit operator; and
4. Provide sound, constructive recommendations for improving the efficiency and functionality of the transit operator.

The review is conducted in accordance with the process established by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as outlined in the Performance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operations and Regional Transportation Planning Entities, as well as the Government Audit Standards published by the U.S. Comptroller General.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), in its roles as the Regional Transportation Planning Entity (RTPE), is responsible for completing an independent triennial review of those entities to which it allocates TDA funding. The current Triennial Performance Review (TPR) covers the period July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012.

Local entities subject to the triennial review include: LACMTA (as the RTPE as well as operator), Antelope Valley Transit Authority, Foothill Transit, and the Cities of Arcadia, Claremont, Commerce, Culver City, Gardena, La Mirada, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Montebello, Norwalk, Redondo Beach, Santa Clarita, Santa Monica, and Torrance.

To ensure compliance, the current TPR must be completed and filed with Caltrans no later than July 1, 2013. The TPR findings and recommendations will be presented to LA Metro's Bus Operations Subcommittee; LA Metro's Technical Advisory Committee; LA Metro's Finance, Budget, and Audit Committee; and LA Metro's governing board.

Council Member Capone Newton asked what portion of Metro's budget comes from TDA funds. Mr. Hillmer responded that it's approximately 4% or less. Council Member Ida noted that TDA provides approximately 20% of Culver City's funding, a significant amount.

Chair Jacobberger asked how the funds are generated. TDA funds are generated through various sources including the State general fund, gasoline tax and vehicle registration fees.

4. RECEIVE Report on Santa Monica Big Blue Bus (BBB) Interface with Expo, Timothy McCormick, Transit Planning Administrator, Big Blue Bus

BBB provides bus service to 70,000 diverse users and constituencies every day. BBB faces the challenge of providing feeder service to the new rail stations while continuing to provide service to current customers with no new funding. There are two constituencies to consider when looking at Expo: those who live on the Westside and want to leave via Expo, and, those who are visiting the Westside, either as commuters or visitors. The Expo Line has a projected daily ridership of 27,000 by 2020, and 64,000 riders by 2030. As of February 2013, last month, the average weekday ridership was 25,295, which means Expo reached almost 94% of its 2020 goal as of last month.

Many of the current BBB lines run parallel to the future rail line. BBB will need to do extensive route revisions once the line opens, which will also allow BBB to free up redundancies and diversify service. With the expansion of the Expo line, a number of people will still have to travel last mile by bus, car, shuttle, bicycle or walking. The challenge will be to integrate BBB service to provide feeder service to new rail, new bus stop, and new end of line layover areas into communities that are already congested. . While opening of the Expo Line will provide an opportunity to look at where the current service is redundant and where we can free up resources for new Expo serving bus lines to be created, BBB ridership is very strong and there are not a lot of places where service could be removed without having at least some impacts on current passengers riding pattern which can be uncomfortable.

BBB's bus/rail integration planning process entails three steps with some overlap - Establish a baseline of existing conditions and performance using data & service standards, create an anticipated demand model, and formulate design and implementation plan of new BBB services in order to best adapt to meet the service needs of serve current passengers and accommodate new ones BBB hopes to attract. A working calendar with the study timetable was shared. An Expo survey is anticipated to be completed within the next few months.

Council Member Capone-Newton noted that the connection between Westwood Station and UCLA will be an important one and asked what changes might be implemented on that corridor. He attended an event where there was discussion of bicycle planning on the campus and making Westwood Blvd. multi-modal. Mr. McCormick responded that UCLA is one of the places where BBB will rededicate resources due to the sheer volume and opportunity that the train will provide. BBB currently has eight lines that travel to UCLA. Some of that service may be rededicated to serve the tremendous volume of people traveling from the station to UCLA and the other intersecting lines.

Council Member Jacobberger stated that he attended some of the stakeholder meetings and the homeowners expressed a preference for the Sepulveda station to be the feeder station to UCLA. Mr McCormick stated that there will be service provided between UCLA from both the Sepulveda and Westwood stations.

Council Member Ida commented that he is currently going through a similar review process as one of the stations on the alignment has already opened in his service area (Culver City Station) which has given Culver City somewhat of an idea of the demand. Culver City put trial service at the Culver Station which has turned out to be less productive than it was before. It is difficult and can take time to figure out the best way to provide service when a major line opens. Culver City is also planning for service to Sepulveda Station and weighing how the existing service hours can be allocated to provide that additional feeder service.

Mr. McCormick stated that people traveling westbound will likely alight at Sepulveda and those traveling eastbound at Westwood if there is service provided from those stations. It would be tough to get from Palms to UCLA and not stop at Westwood Station, as service would literally have to pass the station by.

Ken Ruben stated that his friend has continually asked for a stop for BBBB to be installed on Venice Blvd./Expo Blvd. so that people don't have to walk across the Expo Parking lot to get to BBB stop. He would like to see more coordination of service among the various carriers that serve the area and is willing to help however he can. He noted that the elevator on the Venice side of the Culver City Expo Station is out of order which also causes people to have to walk further from the BBB stop.

5. RECEIVE Director's Report on January Service, Jon Hillmer, Director

- On-time performance trends: 77.2% compared to 80% FY13 goal.
- Customer Complaint per 100,000 passengers: 2.25 compared to FY13 goal of 2.20.

- Miles between Mechanical Road Calls: 3,127 compared to FY13 goal of 3,900.
- Bus Cleanliness Ratings: 8.26 compared to goal of 8.0.
- Accidents per 100,000 miles: 4.24 compared to FY13 goal of 3.10.
- Bus Station Cleanliness Ratings by Quarter: Westside: 8.39; System average 8.19.
- Average Bus Weekday Ridership: 622,900 of 1,086,634 system total.
- Line 720 Ridership: 39,664 weekdays, 28,051 Saturdays, 20,732 Sundays.
- Rail Average Weekly Ridership: Red Line: 158,830; Blue Line: 91,709; Green Line: 46,029; Gold Line: 42,295; Expo Line: 23,193.

Council Member Rosten asked if the poor condition of the streets and the numerous potholes have caused damage to the buses that serve the area. Mr. Hillmer responded that when Metro began using a lower profile tire, the road conditions did impact the tires. He will research and provide further data and share at a future meeting.

Council Member Rosten asked if Metro compares its performance metrics with other agencies such as Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus or Culver City. Mr. Hillmer replied that comparatively speaking, Metro does very well. Some are hard to compare as each agency tends to set its own benchmarks for things like on-time performance, but when viewed with the same standard, Metro does very well comparatively in on-time performance and accident rates.

Council Member Rosten asked how Metro compares in terms of the number of complaints received. Operations DEO Conan Cheung added that Metro generally receives more complaints when service changes are made as it takes time for people to adjust. However, in comparison, San Diego's transit agency probably receives about 15-20 complaints per 100,000 boardings. Relative to other similar agencies, Metro does pretty well. Mr. Hillmer noted that passenger surveys reflect that an increasing percentage of Metro riders that have cell phones, which makes them more apt to file a complaint as they can more easily do so right away. Also, urban commuters complain more, as they tend to have higher standards and expectations. Complaints are good in that they provide opportunities and information to improve service.

Council Member Sloane Goodman asked how on-time performance is measured. Each bus is equipped with a GPS tracker and passenger counters. 80% of the buses have good enough data to enter into database at time points, which is compared against the assigned line schedule. Each line has 4 - 8 time points.

Council Member Capone Newton asked what the main drivers for OTP improvement are. The biggest contributor has been a reduction in operators running ahead of schedule. Using the data, supervisors can identify and work with operators that are leaving early, and change running times if needed. They can then work on trips running late. OTP has been somewhat consistent recently; it may be that service has plateaued because of traffic, construction, and other factors influencing performance that are out of Metro's control.

Council Member Sloan Goodman asked if there is a formula to determine the appropriate number of time points on a route. There is not a formula per se, but

generally 10-25 minutes between time points. Typically time points are set at major streets so that the public can plan as the times are reflected on the time tables.

Council Member Rosten asked what are the operator's instructions in a case where there is bus bunching? Can they pass stops if there is no one getting off? Mr. Hiller stated that there was a policy that if a bus was running more than 10 minutes late, the operator was supposed to contact bus control center. The Center could then direct the operator to continue the route without picking up any more passengers in order to try to get back onto schedule. On a Rapid line, it's more difficult to do that. Because there's fewer stops, people want to get on and off at each stop, leaving no stops to pass.

Council Member Rosten has noticed a supervisor car with no one in it parked many times at Sunset & Doheney Rd. He asked if there was some project or reason why it might be parked regularly in that location. Mr. Hillmer stated that he would look into it.

Council Member Jacobberger mentioned that the City of Los Angeles is starting discussions regarding a potential bond measure for road repair. This would present an opportunity for Metro to shape that conversation by ensuring that there is a focus on repairing streets are important to providing good public transit service. Mr. Hillmer replied that a portion of Measures A, C, and other funding mechanisms can be used for repairing streets. Another aspect is sidewalk and ramp repair, an ongoing problem with trees that uproot and make it difficult for people who use wheelchairs to navigate.

Mr. Hillmer shared the Mystery Rider comments received in December and January with the Council. He explained that approximately 210 trips per month are made; the information collected by the Mystery Rider program is distributed to each of the division managers. Operators cannot be disciplined for any of the behaviors recorded by the Mystery Rider unless the infraction can be verified independently by the onboard cameras, GPS data, or other similar means, but managers can work with operators to address any issues observed.

6. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Meeting Adjourned at 6:46 p.m.