

Wednesday, October 9, 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 5:11 p.m.

Council Representatives Present:

Jeffrey Jacobberger, Chair

Elliott Petty, Vice Chair

Peter Capone-Newton

Perri Sloane Goodman

Randal Henry

Glenn Rosten

George Taule

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director

Jody Litvak, Community Relations Director

Deanna Phillips, Board Specialist

Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst

Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. ROLL Called.
2. APPROVED Minutes of September 11, 2013 meeting
3. RECEIVED PUBLIC Comment for items not on the agenda.

Ken Ruben from Culver City is still having trouble using the 511 system. The system often does not understand him, so it asks him to call back then hangs up. He suggested that someone from the 511 system make a presentation to the Westside Council.

Wayne Wright commented that bikes are causing nearly overwhelming problems on buses. Because of safety concerns and union issues, the buses can't be refit with racks to hold 3 bikes on all buses. There are arguments between riders about who has been waiting longer and who can use the bike rack. Operators complain about bikes with tall handlebars that obstruct their view, which is a safety hazard. Some operators let bikes into the interior of the bus which also creates safety issues. Also, the bus cards regarding bikes are only in Spanish. He would like a Metro Bike Program representative to make a presentation to the Service Councils to see what can be done to address these issues.

4. RECEIVED Presentation on Metro's Annual Customer Satisfaction On-Board Survey, Matthew Kridler, Transportation Planner

Metro's Customer Information Program conducts an annual customer satisfaction survey, focus groups on various topics such as Ticket Vending Machines (TVM), small-scale line surveys and/or bus stop surveys, a county-wide telephone survey of mostly non-transit users, GIS mapping for Express Lanes and vanpool program, and collects and analyzes data for Federal programs such as Title VI and Limited English Proficiency.

The annual customer survey is taken over the entire transit system within Los Angeles. A total of 19,004 surveys were completed in 2013. The survey is designed to collect data on changes in Metro satisfaction levels, demographic shifts among riders, and quality of Metro services. The survey instrument is in English and Spanish; customers who do not appear familiar with those languages are given a card with information in 8 different languages providing them a link to take the survey online in other languages.

Councilmember Sloane-Goodman asked if the ridership frequency question refers to bus or rail ridership. Mr. Kridler replied that it refers to use of both bus and rail.

Councilmember Rosten asked what the relevance of patron's income level is. Mr. Kridler replied that it asked to gather a basic demographic profile of Metro's patrons.

Councilmember Capone Newton inquired about the origin of the pride question. Mr. Kridler replied that 2013 was the first year the question regarding pride in ridership was included. For the last decade or so, the survey has asked about patron satisfaction. The

question was to attempt to gauge not just how patrons feel about Metro service but also if people who have other transit options choose to use Metro and take pride in that choice.

Councilmember Capone Newton asked why the difference between number of times per week riders use Lines 4 and 704 is so large. Mr. Kridler replied that Line 704 riders tend to be commuters who ride the same bus 5 days a week. Councilmember Capone-Newton asked whether the survey asks what types of trips people are on, if they are work, errands, etc. Mr. Kridler replied that information is not asked. Councilmember Capone Newton replied that knowing the trip type would be helpful to know, and asked if the survey collected data regarding cell phone and smart phone ownership. Mr. Kridler replied that the data is available and will be provided to Council.

Chair Jacobberger commented that it will be helpful to know if people's satisfaction with on-time performance is a function of actual on-time performance or the patron's ability to coordinate their schedule with the bus schedule.

5. RECEIVED REPORT on [Proposed Minor December Service Changes](#), Carol Silver, Transportation Planning Manager (Lines 60, 83, 217, 256, 720, and 760)

The next service changes will be implemented on December 15, 2013. There are no major service changes being made this cycle; the focus will be on making minor changes to improve on-time performance and correct minor safety issues. A minor re-route will take place. Stop changes will be made on Lines 60 and 760 in downtown Los Angeles. A permanent detour route is also being implemented on Line 217 in Hollywood during special event closures and a permanent shuttle route is being implemented on Line 720.

Lines 83 and 256 modifications take place in the Highland Park area. An operator notified Service Planning of an unsafe left turn at Piedmont, an intersection without a signal. Area traffic is getting worse, making it an unsafe turn for the bus. The proposal is to continue northbound on Ave. 61 and make the left at Figueroa and Ave. 61 which is signalized. The minor rerouting will be implemented for both Lines 83 and 256.

Chair Jacobberger asked how busy the current stop at Piedmont and Ave. 61 is and if by eliminating a left turn for buses it will potentially require that people going to the library and park walk across the no-signal intersection. Ms. Silver replied that she didn't have the ridership data with her but that not many people use that stop. Councilmember Capone-Newton commented that the data would assist the Council to make an informed decision.

A minor stop change will be implemented on Lines 60 and 760. Line 60 and 760 operate between Downtown L.A. and Artesia Station on Long Beach Blvd. There are lots of stops on the downtown segment of the Line 60 route, but very few on Line 760. Feedback has been received that Line 60 buses are getting overcrowded in the downtown area, particularly around the 7th/Alameda stop. A lot of patrons exit the 7th/Metro rail station and transfer to ride to 7th and Alameda. A short-line shuttle that operates on 7th St. between Flower and Alameda in the very early morning hours was implemented on

September 30th to help address the issue. Stops are also being added on the Line 760 route at Main St. and Gladys/Cirrus Ave. to help on-time performance and should help address the heavy loads on Line 60.

Line 217 operates between Hollywood/Vine station (Howard Hughes Center) via Hollywood Blvd., Fairfax Ave. and La Cienega Blvd. Special event closures are a major contributor to on-time performance issues. A permanent detour route is being adopted for use during major event closures. Buses will be re-routed from Hollywood Blvd. to operate along Highland to Sunset and from Sunset to Fairfax, bypassing a 1.5 mile segment of Hollywood Blvd. Passengers will be impacted but Service Planning thinks the permanent detour route will work better than current detour routes used. Performance of the permanent detour route will be monitored. The stop information does not include stops at Hollywood/Highland, Hollywood/Orange, and Hollywood/Sycamore since those stops are always impacted by special event detours. The table shows patrons that will be impacted at the additional stops traveling further west to Fairfax Ave.

Councilmember Sloane-Goodman asked if the permanent detour route is being implemented for all buses that operate on the route. Ms. Silver clarified that the reroute will only be used during special event detours. There will be a permanent sign that says the stops will occasionally be impacted by detours. Paper signs will be posted when a detour is scheduled. Councilmember Sloane-Goodman asked if there will be different schedules for the detour route and how on-time performance will be affected. Ms. Silver replied that buses currently can't get through Hollywood Boulevard whenever there is a detour which impacts the entire line. There have been a lot of complaints on Line 217 from people standing at the bus stops waiting. If a permanent detour route is adopted, these buses will automatically go on that route. Councilmember Sloane-Goodman asked if Line 780 follows the same route. Ms. Silver said it does but that line is not be impacted as much because it only has 2 stops at Hollywood/Highland and Fairfax.

Councilmember Capone Newton asked what route is currently used when an event affects Hollywood/Highland. Ms. Silver replied that buses take Sunset for a short distance, make a right on La Brea, then a left on Hollywood. Councilmember Capone Newton asked if this is a strategy to address multiple circumstances so that the message can be relayed to customers that the bus will take the alternate route whenever there's some type of activity or event in Hollywood. Ms. Silver confirmed.

Councilmember Sloane Goodman asked if the ability to send out notifications via the Nexttrip application exists. Ms. Silver replied that route detours are posted on the website when planned in advance.

A shuttle route was also implemented on Line 720 on September 16, 2013 in response to complaints from operators that overcrowding was occurring during the afternoon peak period. A few of the westbound trips are being short-lined on Westwood and operated back eastbound to Vermont. Four eastbound trips are being added to try to improve the on-time performance of the 720 during the peak period.

Wayne Coombs does not believe the Line 217 permanent detour will work. If the bus travels down Sunset, patrons waiting at Hollywood Blvd./Fuller or Hollywood Blvd./Gardner will not know that the bus is coming. It should be implemented as a permanent route change. A permanent detour on Sunset is not going to work because people will not know where to catch Line 217. Line 780 needs to automatically detour at the same point all the time and Line 212 should also turn at the same bus stop so that passengers can catch Lines 217, 780 and 212 at the same bus stop. After 7:30 p.m., Line 212 short lines; something needs to be worked out. The permanent detour will inconvenience more people, and it's better to walk the 2 blocks south on the street they're on to Sunset.

Wayne Wright agrees with the shuttle route implemented on Line 60 but as Wal-Mart recently opened on Cesar Chavez, he suggests moving the Lines 60 and 55 layovers to Sunset to get patrons closer to Wal-Mart. He thinks the shuttle line should travel to the Washington Blue Line station and return to the regular route at Washington/Santa Fe. He suggested a public hearing be held on the Line 217 detour, because if the detour service is moved to Sunset and there's no service on Hollywood between Highland and Fairfax, there will be problems. He reminded the Council not to forget about wheelchair patrons, handicapped people and seniors who are not going to take this route. Line 212 was not mentioned. Passengers are complaining that they have to walk 2 blocks from the Red Line station from Hollywood/Highland to Hollywood/Sycamore to catch the bus.

Ken Ruben expressed agreement with Mr. Coombs' remarks. He understands why it is being routed to return to Hollywood Blvd. but agrees that there will be confusion and that the detour will likely generate complaints. For example, a few weeks ago, the street was closed off for a Jimmy Kimmel show event. People were confused whether buses were running or not. He had to check with 511 service.

Councilmember Taule commented if a patron lives on Franklin, it adds another 2 blocks making it 4 or 5 blocks to access the stop. It's worth considering as that whole section is closed frequently. He believes it would be okay to change Line 217 but that Line 780 should not be changed so as to leave additional options for patrons.

Councilmember Capone Newton commented that it would be helpful to understand how many events per year the street is closed and detours are required. Mr. Hillmer replied that the number of events held last year can be compiled but that the number of events seems to increase each year.

Chairman Jacobberger asked if there's an existing far side stop at Fairfax/Sunset on Line 217 and if this route affects that stop. A member of the public confirmed that there is a stop at that location.

6. RECEIVED Corridor Study Update, Jon Hillmer, Director

Line 220, which runs hourly, only carries about 280 people a day; ridership has been dropping continuously. The Council could suggest that service remain as is, though it

may be canceled in the future, or invest in the corridor to see if additional ridership can be generated by connecting to the Culver City Expo station. The Expo Station in Culver City is a good attraction and it should be generating significant ridership from central Los Angeles. If limited stop service was implemented, it may generate enough savings to alternate trips to service the Culver City Station at 30 minute frequencies.

Another concept is to add a branch on Line 16 service to the Arts District to the Little Tokyo Gold Line Station. Service could be provided by one bus every 20-25 minutes. The line could be extended from its current terminus on 5th and 6th St. near Wall St. which would add some service in that area.

Councilmember Henry asked how much ridership would rise if Line 16 was extended to Little Tokyo. Mr. Hillmer responded that it would likely be a small number to begin with. Building up ridership on a new route in a new corridor typically takes 6 months to a year.

7. RECEIVED Director's Report on Westside/Central August 2013 Service, Jon Hillmer, Director

- On-time Performance: 72.9%; Goal: 80%, System: 74.9%
- Complaints Per 100,000 Passengers: 2.60%; Goal: 2.20%, System 3.32%
- Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls: 3,146; Goal: 4,000, System: 3,850
- Metro Bus Cleanliness Ratings: 8.47%; Goal: 9.0%, System: 8.54%
- Accidents per 100,000 miles: 4.45%; Goal: 3.10%, System: 3.63%
- Metro Bus Station Cleanliness Ratings: 8.12%; Goal: 8.5%, System: 8.22%
- Average Weekday Ridership: 654,785

Councilmember Capone Newton asked why on-time performance decreased other than the change in schedule. Mr. Hillmer responded that he will need to study it further and that it may be related to seasonal ridership patterns.

Councilmember Jacobberger commented that it would be helpful to compare ridership patterns by year.

8. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmember Taule commented that the improved electronic signage at some of the stations including 7th/Metro Station looks amazing. The colors are bold and the numbers are huge, making it much easier to read. Also, the bus listings at the exit of Wilshire/Western Station look really good. He commended one of the greeters who works at the 7th/Metro Station in the morning. He added that while Ciclavia is a great event, it caused serious bus delays and confusion. There were a few transit riders complaining because they didn't know where to catch their buses. Additional coordination for transit patrons is needed during such events. Lastly, he asked why TAP cards with value can't be tapped more than once so that people can tap for several

members of their group. Chair Jeff Jacobberger responded that it's to avoid double-tapping the cards.

Councilmember Henry reported that since he commented last month about the cleanliness of the Crenshaw Expo Line Station, it has been cleaned and looks pristine. The bougainvillea has been trimmed and the platform has been washed. He added that since the Earlz Grill property at Crenshaw Blvd. and Expo Line was obtained by Metro and the business closed, trash has been accumulating. He asked who is responsible for maintenance of the area. Mr. Hillmer replied that the property is likely in the acquisition process for staging of construction of the Crenshaw Line. He will look into who is responsible and what needs to be done to get the area cleaned up.

Councilmember Sloane-Goodman reminded everyone there will be significant road closures and transit detours during the Halloween Parade along Santa Monica Boulevard and advised that everyone plan accordingly.

Chair Jacobberger commented that the automated restroom at the corner of Vermont and Santa Monica was surprisingly clean, though there was a pile of dirty diapers because there's no trash can. He thinks that providing restroom facilities is important to transit customers and maybe it can be done in additional locations. He added that at night, the electronic signage at the rail stations do not display when the next train is coming. A number of times, he has missed trains by 30 seconds because the train departure time is not posted.

ADJOURNED at 6:27 p.m.