

Thursday, September 12, 2013

2:00-4:00 PM

Minutes

GATEWAY CITIES
SERVICE COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

Salt Lake Recreation Center
3401 E. Florence
Huntington Park, CA 90255

Called to Order at 2:09 p.m.

Council Members:

Marisa Perez, Chair
Richard Burnett, Vice Chair

Gene Daniels
Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Cheri Kelley
Ana Maria Quintana
Wally Shidler
Cynde Soto

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director, Regional Councils
David Hershenson, Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. ROLL Called
3. APPROVED Minutes from July 11, 2013 Meeting
4. SAFETY Tip, Lt. Ibelle

A new cell phone application, LA Metro Transit Watch, has been created through partnership of Metro and the Los Angeles Sheriff's. The application facilitates confidential, anonymous, free reporting of suspicious activity, code of conduct violations, and safety concerns. The application can be downloaded to Android or Apple phones and provides a means to directly contact the Sheriffs. The application also facilitates reporting through text messages and for users to submit photos. Other features of the application include that the shutter click sound is disabled when taking pictures for reporting. Users can also receive alerts and access maps. Calls submitted through the application are routed to the Sheriffs Dispatch who send out deputies as needed.

5. RECEIVED Report on Integration of the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station, Robin Blair, Director, Countywide Planning and Development

County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas asked Metro to evaluate the station conditions in recognition that it is highest crime station, as well as one of the oldest. The station is one of the most active in the system and serves around 30,000 people daily. Based on current activity levels and projected population and use estimates, the station will eventually be overcrowded. As it currently stands, the station does not serve MLK/Drew Center, a major employment and public draw adjacent to the location. Metro is currently negotiating with shopping center leaseholder Kimco and the City of Los Angeles which is the landowner, to rethink the northern section of the area and create better connections between the station and surrounding areas.

The station is currently very dark and the ease of circulation is not desirable. The narrow walkways don't flow well, and the north area has less activity while the majority of activity is concentrated in the south area. The proposed improvement area currently has a high fence and is landscaped in. To reach the MLK/Drew Center from the station, you have to go to the main street then reenter the area.

The project proposes locating a 40-officer facility and other facilities such as a transit court, a County Supervisors' facility, retail establishments and other amenities at the north end. Potential improvements include lengthening the station to the south and installation of new pedestrian crossings which would avoid the need to go under the freeway to access the Blue Line and add system capacity. A wing of Kenneth Hahn Plaza would be taken out and replaced by the new Sheriff's facility. The project has been

endorsed by the Metro Board and has been presented to Congress as part of a funding plan. Metro hopes details can be worked out with Kimco and that construction can start in less than 20 months.

Council Member Daniels asked if the project would open up the shopping center to the transit center. Mr. Blair responded that it would. The vision is to open a new entrance at the south; the entrance is currently at the north. The proposed design would add a new entrance closer to the shopping center that would integrate the areas. The conceptual design of the Sheriffs facility would be located in a more open area and look down on the surrounding plaza area and station, providing more open visibility.

Council Member Shidler asked how the interface between Green and Blue Lines would be affected. Mr. Blair responded that both will stay open but that the project would open up new entrances. The direction of the escalators is going to be reversed so that they lead to the same plaza. The Green Line will be reoriented to bring more people into the plaza.

Council Member Shidler asked what is planned for the existing Rail Operations Control (ROC) facility. Mr. Blair replied that the long term plan is to build a new ROC facility with Measure R monies. The Sheriffs offices would be taken out of their current location moved to the middle of activity, leaving room for the ROC's expansion which will be needed as the rail system expands.

Chair Perez asked how community outreach for design and development input will be conducted. Mr. Blair replied that the community was involved in the Rosa Parks Master Plan process, and as soon as the parties reach a general agreement, Metro will go back to the community with the discussion. How the final project will look will definitely be part of a community process. Chair Perez requested that information regarding the public workshops be shared with the Council once scheduled, and asked what is planned for project lighting. Mr. Blair replied that they are trying to be cost effective but are conscious of the need for improved lighting and are hoping to install iconic lighting. Several concepts have been discussed such as kinetic lighting similar to the LAX pylons. Any lighting to be installed will have to be cognizant of freeway and Caltrans restrictions.

Council Member Shidler asked if installing a community room has been considered. Mr. Blair replied that the county facility will be 3,500 sq. ft. and includes a community meeting room. There will need to determine what groups can use the facility and how, but it is being included in conceptual plans. An agreement with the private partner has to be reached before the project can continue. There has also been discussion of attracting local activity in the facility as well.

6. RECEIVED Report on July 29th Meet and Confer with Art Leahy, Marisa Perez, Chair, and Council Members

Chair Perez and Council Members Daniels and Shidler attended the July 29th Meet and Confer with Art Leahy. Council Member Daniels stated that the meeting was productive and beneficial. Council Member Shidler would like to see all Council members attend

these meetings. Mr. Leahy spoke at length about the dispute between California and the U.S. Department of Labor over transit employee pension plans; that issue has been temporarily resolved. Mr. Hershenson added that the issue pitted all California transit agencies against the U.S. Department of Labor. California Governor Brown agreed to allow an exemption for transit employees, with the right to challenge it in court.

Chair Perez added that the group also discussed potential fare restructuring to occur in the near future, taking a more holistic approach to restructuring fares rather than just raising fares. Options such as distance and time based fares will be examined.

Mr. Hillmer added that Chair DuBois received a great deal of information about the value of the Service Councils and how they represent the Board particularly in the public hearing process to gather public input on fare or route changes. Time based fares would allow transit users to board other services within a predetermined period, such as within a 90-minute time period. There has been discussion about premium fare for rail service. Mr. Leahy is not in favor of premium fares for rail as it may draw people off trains and onto buses, though trains are more efficient to move large numbers of people.

Council Member Shidler asked if there is any discussion of implementing "fair faring" where fares deducted from a TAP would max out at the cost of a day pass. Mr. Hillmer replied that a very small percentage of riders with stored value on their card exceed the day pass amounts when using the system, but that the Board is interested in that feature and it will be looked at in coming year.

Council Member Shidler noted that some systems charge a premium fare for cash payments. If people have to feed bills or count change to pay their fares it takes much more time. Mr. Hillmer replied that using a TAP card does speed up the boarding process and more customers using TAP cards could considerably speed up service and potentially cause savings.

Chair Perez mentioned that the interface between pedestrian and bike users to address first-last mile issues was also discussed. Mr. Hillmer added that a large number of cyclists use the system. However, only 2 bikes can be accommodated on the bus bike racks, with the exception of the Orange Line. Many times bike users have to wait for the next bus because the bike racks are already full when their bus arrives.

Chair Perez added that Metro is close to retiring all of the old high floor buses. Mr. Hillmer clarified that there are currently about 300 high floor buses remaining in use. They have complicated lifts which are difficult to deploy, utilize, and maintain. The high floor buses will be the first buses replaced as the new buses arrive.

7. RECEIVED Report on July 26th ADA Anniversary Activity at Union Station, Cynde Soto, Council Member

Communities Actively Living Independent & Free (CALIF), an independent living advocacy center partnered with Metro to honor the 23rd anniversary of the American

. The event included information about the ADA and a disability sensitivity activity at Union Station. Participants were asked to sign in with their non-dominant hand, and were asked to try to speak with marshmallows in their mouths. There were also wheelchairs and mobility aids available for people to try to navigate the area. People who tried using a wheelchair were paired up with a wheelchair user to help them with the experience. There was also information available about ADA programs. The event had a great turnout in which a couple hundred people participated or asked questions about accessibility.

8. RECEIVED Update on Florence Avenue Corridor Study, Jon Hillmer, Director

Options for Line 111/311 discussed in the corridor study include improving coordination of limited and local service or cancelling the limited service and increasing the local service. Local service could potentially be increased during rush hours to every 8-10 minutes, or could be changed for all trips to reach the ends of the line. Mr. Hillmer stated he would bring back more detailed proposals for the Council's review and approval to potentially be fit into next service change for June next year.

9. RECEIVED Director's Report on Gateway Cities July 2013 Service, Jon Hillmer, Director

- On-time Performance: 77.9%, Goal: 80.0%, System: 77.9%
- Complaints Per 100,000 Passengers: 3.96; Goal: 2.20, System: 3.19
- Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls: 4,545, Goal: 3,900, System: 4,127
- Bus Cleanliness Rating: 8.23, Goal: 9.0, System: 8.54
- Accidents per 100,000 miles: 4.30, Goal: 3.10, System: 3.85
- Bus Station Monthly Cleanliness Ratings by Region: 8.30, Goal: 8.5, System: 8.23
- Average Bus Weekday Ridership: 206,779 of system's 1,096,890
- Rail Average Weekday Service: Red Line 162,746, Blue Line 87,597, Green Line 42,670, Gold Line 44,267, Expo Line 26,908.
- Average Weekday Bus and Rail Ridership: Bus 1,096,890, rail 364, 188, combined total of ,461,078

Council Member Shidler asked if there is anything that can be done about the water spots on the bus windows. Mr. Hillmer replied that most divisions use reverse osmosis treated water and have been washing off the spots by hand. Division 1 has had a setback with the breakdown of their bus-washing machine and is currently using tap water.

Council Member Daniels asked how come it has taken so long for the bus washers to be repaired. Mr. Hillmer explained that when bus washers broke down, Maintenance first tried to fix them but couldn't. Metro then had to go through the procurement process to replace them. The idea of taking the buses to Division 2 for washing was explored, but would have caused other issues. The bus washing machines should be installed and running by October 4th. Buses are washed every day.

Council Member Shidler asked if any the buses that have been wrapped in black have a higher accident rate. Mr. Hillmer replied that they are hard to see at night, and that he will attempt to find out.

Council Member Shidler asked how the Blue Line trains painted orange and black are being perceived. Mr. Hershenson replied that the City of Long Beach felt that the safety banners with lettering looked like crime scene tape. The campaign is nearly over, and by January the safety tape graphic on the trains will be removed. Council Member Kelley asked if the safety campaign has been effective. Mr. Hershenson replied that he is not sure, but that another element of the campaign has consisted of painting some intersections with yellow and black stripes to make the public more aware of where they should watch for the trains. The City of Long Beach did not like the appearance so the painting of intersections in Long Beach is on hold until January when it will be revisited. The train graphics issue was raised by Long Beach Council Member Lowenthal and brought to City Manager's attention to relay to Metro. Metro Board Chair DuBois supports the campaign. Council Member Shidler noted that the wrapped train cars are also used on the Expo Line but that there have been no complaints.

Council Member Shidler noted that he regularly sees Sheriff Deputies at Willow Station. Mr. Hershenson replied that part of the resolution response was to have more security at the Long Beach stations.

10. DISCUSSED Gateway Cities Meeting Date, Time and Location, Marisa Perez, Chair

Chair Perez discussed increasing participation with Board Chair DuBois and wanted to see if the Council had interest in moving the time or date to improve public accessibility.

Council Member Kelley stated that the Council has moved locations twice and discussed changing the time three times. Changing the location has not resulted in more attendance. She does not judge success by number of people in attendance and feels there are several ways that the public could communicate with the Council other than attending a meeting.

Council Member Shidler said that the Service Councils were started to bring Metro to the transit users to Metro so they didn't have to go downtown every month. The people who use the system generally work during the day. With the exception of South Bay, all of the other Councils meet in the evening. The Councils exist for the riders; it doesn't make sense to hold meetings at times when they can't attend because they're working,

Council Member Kelley doesn't believe changing the time or location would make a difference but that if the meeting time were to be changed to 5 p.m., that wouldn't be any more convenient to the public who is just leaving work at 5 p.m.

Council Member Delgado stated there are also lots of technology options that riders can use to communicate. To allow the community to participate, the meeting would have to be held at 6:30 at the earliest as when the Council has hosted evening community

meetings so that people can attend and provide input. Council Member Soto agreed that if the meeting time is going to be changed to evenings, 5:00 p.m. would be too early.

Council Member Daniels feels that there's no way to satisfy everyone. If people need to attend, they will find a way. The Council needs to figure out how the meetings would be most productive. Meeting at 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. is not realistic. If the Council is going to have evening meetings, they should start at 6:30 or 7:00 p.m.

Council Member Shidler asked if the San Fernando Valley's meeting time of 6:30 p.m. is one of the factors in that Council having the most public attendance. Mr. Hillmer replied that it is likely a factor as people have more of an opportunity to attend if there is an item they want to comment on. The current location would not be available if the time is changed to evenings. The meetings would need to move to another location that is accessible by transit.

Mr. Hershenson mentioned that it was previously suggested to maintain day meeting times but to host 2 night meetings per year by either changing the time of one of the regular meetings or holding additional night meetings. The Council could also hold a few meetings at alternate locations within the community to provide more regional accessibility to the public.

Council Member Kelley asked Council to consider that meetings generally last 2 hours. If the meeting started at 7:00 p.m., they wouldn't end until 9:00 p.m. and members of the public would still have to navigate public transit to get home.

Nate Holmes expressed that it is difficult to get to the meetings during the day. If the purpose of the Council is to engage with the public, then it behooves them to do all they can to give as many people as possible the opportunity to attend. He thinks at least half the meetings could be held in the evenings, and that more outreach could be conducted. He's attended various public meetings held in the evening with significant attendance and believes more people would attend Council meetings if they were held in the evenings. If the goal of the Council is not to get more public input on issues but for the Council to discuss issues amongst themselves, then they don't need to hold their meetings in public. He recommended that the Council hold at least some portion of their meetings in the evening.

Council Member Kelley asked Mr. Holmes if he would not find it easier to communicate with Metro in another manner such as by calling or email. Mr. Holmes replied that he finds that when using technological processes it can be difficult to identify and contact the appropriate person on a particular matter. He prefers to talk to people in person. He enjoys learning about current issues and being engaged in the public process. He thinks if more people could come they would become more engaged and attend more frequently.

Council Member Shidler said the Councils are here to listen to the public. If the riders and the public wanted to correspond electronically, then why have Council meetings?

Council Member Kelley replied that the charge of the Councils is completely different from when they started. The Council does not have the ability to change routes when people make requests. She does not want the criteria for the Council's success to be the number of people in the audience. She thinks the Council could be made more accessible through use of technology.

Mr. Hillmer stated that a monthly article is published on Metro's website which highlights each of the Council's meeting dates, times, and topics. It also provides information on how to contact the Councils via email or phone. Emails directed to the Councils are forwarded to the appropriate regional Council and are invited to be added to the Council's email list to receive meeting information and reminders. Meeting announcements are also distributed to approximately 2,000 Gateway Cities partners, such as local city officials, in an effort to publicize the meetings.

Wayne Wright stated that he attends all five Service Council meetings. Each Council has its own style, some of their members are local City Council members, others are involved with regional transit systems. They have work schedules and try to be at the meetings as much as possible. The reason the Councils exist was because if you wanted to address your complaints to the Metro Board, they'd give you one minute. He likes the Service Councils; he believes they do the best they can. The Councils give the public the chance to interface with Metro. He is concerned that if the time changes that some Council members may not be able to attend due to other commitments. He thinks the Council meetings can leave as they are to make sure the Council Members can attend, and hold Saturdays meetings twice per year.

Council Member Daniels said that the Council should in no way do anything to discourage public participation. The meetings should be available for people to attend.

Council Member Quintana joined because she wanted to be better informed as to what services were provided to better serve her community. She sees it as her role to take that information back. If the meeting was changed to the evening, it would accommodate a lot of her residents, but she doesn't necessarily think a lot of them would attend. As long as the Council has outlets and mediums for people to voice their concerns and complaints, then there is a need being served. Council Members also need to work to ensure that they share information with their communities. She is ok with keeping the meeting as is or changing.

Council Member Perez thanked everyone for their input. She recognizes that the original intention was that the Councils were to serve as a link between the community and Metro so they would not have to come downtown and wait 3 to 4 hours to speak for one minute. There are lots of ways to communicate, but the role was to bring the Metro to the community. Another concern is the money spent on holding the meetings and if it is being used effectively. Perhaps as some members are not willing to change the time the Council could hold two evening meetings per year in addition to the two evening or weekend meetings held for public hearings.

Mr. Hillmer explained that in some years, 2 hearings are held per year, typically in January and July. The month prior is when the Board approves the public hearing date and the Council meets the month after to review the public comments and proposed changes and vote on those actions, typically making for 3 months of lots of activity around public hearings. The night meetings that have been held have not really been designed for general interaction with the community but to gather input on the service changes. He suggested that if the Council were to hold additional meetings that they be held in April and October so as to provide distinct opportunities for public feedback.

11. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the Agenda

Roberto Hernandez recommended that Service Council meetings be advertised through paper notices and mailings. Last Thursday had problems with Line 111 at 10:50 at Lakewood, which consistently arrives 5 minutes early. Last week he had to go to Firestone and was waiting for the bus but the operator passed him. He had to go back to Florence and wait for the bus to Norwalk then had to walk a long distance. The basic service should come until 9 30 p.m. He asked suggested that Line 111 operation be checked, as they get ahead of the schedule when they're supposed to be at 11:57 p.m. at Lakewood and Florence. Mr. Hillmer asked Mr. Hernandez leave him a message when he has issues such as these so that he can investigate service issues more promptly.

B. Timberlake shared that the change made to Line 111's late night schedule in July has been much more convenient in his experience, and has resulted in him having to take fewer long treks down Florence Blvd. He has noticed that even the 1:00 a.m. last bus east of Pacific has a number of people on the bus. He believes that change to the Owl service has attracted more riders than expected. He seldom uses it, but when it needs it, it's a great service.

Wayne Wright stated that Line 130 service east of Artesia Station during mid-day has standing loads and needs to be overhauled from 60 to 30 minutes during mid-day Monday through Friday, and possibly to 40 minutes at weekends and holidays, as ridership is growing. He asked that Metro consider expanding the line to Cerritos Town Center as it is difficult to get there when the Cerritos COW service is not running or is infrequent.

12. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

ADJOURNED at 3:51 p.m.