

Thursday, October 10, 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 2:03 p.m.

Council Members:

Marisa Perez, Chair
Richard Burnett, Vice Chair

Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Wally Shidler

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. CARRIED OVER Swearing in of Aja Brown, Mayor, City of Compton as Council Member
3. ROLL Called
4. CARRIED OVER Approval of Minutes from September 12, 2013 Meeting

5. SAFETY Tip, Lt. Ibelle

Lt. Ibelle announced that he was recently promoted to a new position as Director of Metro security. Deputy La Tonya Clark will take his place, she has several years of experience with the organization.

6. RECEIVED Presentation on Metro's Annual Customer Satisfaction On-Board Survey, Jeff Boberg, Transportation Planning Manager

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 in other languages on-line.

Council Member Shidler commented that lots of participation of women in Ciclavia was nearly equal to that of men, distinct from the Metro survey finding that less women access transit by bike. Mr. Boberg agreed that there is great potential for more people to use bikes to access the system. Metro recently completed a bike survey to examine bike locker usage and amenities.

Mr. Timberlake was surveyed earlier this week while riding Line 111. After he completed the survey he handed it back to the survey taker who then proceeded to read his responses. Mr. Timberlake feels that if the public is expected to provide honest information regarding their age and income, it is inappropriate for the surveyor to read the results while the patron is present. Mr. Boberg agreed that it is entirely inappropriate.

The surveys are conducted by a consultant. Surveyors are trained to collect completed surveys without reading them. Mr. Boberg stated he would discuss the issue with the consultant.

7. RECEIVED Update on Gate Latching ADA Access Issues, Jess Segovia, ADA Compliance Manager

G-Tel is the hands-free device installed at latched rail stations. It is designed to assist passengers with limited or no use of hands. The unit is activated by a motion detector when someone stands in front of the unit. Once activated, the Rail Operations Center is contacted. The operator can speak with the person at the unit, view them through the unit's camera, and provide assistance remotely.

Metro currently has 45 CCTV Observers; 36 have received awareness training developed to assist G-Tel users. There are 3 G-Tel Observers monitoring the systems at any time; a 4th monitoring station is planned. Each G-Tel monitoring station receives 10-15 calls per day. The majority of calls received are not made by persons with disabilities but by people seeking assistance for issues such as TAP cards or travel information. Any malfunctions are tracked in logs and maintenance is contacted immediately. If necessary, Sheriff or Metro staff is sent to the location of the malfunction to assist passengers. A decal is being designed to indicate ideal wheelchair placement, and a standard response scripts to assist Observers interact with callers are being developed.

In August 2013, Access Services Mobility Device Clients made 13,383 rail trips and 76,366 bus trips. Systemwide, Access clients take approximately 2,187,600 trips annually on Metro. Wheelchair usage reached 88,000 in August on Metro buses.

Metro's Operator training currently includes wheelchair securement exercises and sensitivity training in which Operators must board a bus while in a wheelchair. Training consists of both classroom and onboard wheelchair securement practice. Metro is looking to incorporate power wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility devices into basic training and retraining. Metro's operators are required to complete an 8-hour comprehensive training that includes sensitivity training & ADA requirements, use of high/low floor vehicles, use of multiple wheelchair types, and familiarization with walkers and Rollator type devices. Metro plans for all 4,500 Operators to complete the comprehensive training by February 2014.

Council Member Shidler observed a wheelchair so wide that it almost couldn't board the bus and asked if there a restriction on the width of the wheelchairs. Mr. Segovia replied that any wheelchair that can safely board and that does not cause safety concerns by sticking out into the aisle can use the system. Heavy wheelchairs and carts loaded down with lots of bags can be an issue on the high floor buses as those ramps are only rated to hold up to 600-900 pounds. Weight is less of an issue on the low floor buses.

Chair Perez asked how the design of the new buses will better accommodate wheelchair patrons is comparison to the current buses. Once the new buses are received, will

passups still a problem? Mr. Segovia replied that Metro's current stock of buses have 2 wheelchair securement spaces per vehicle, with the flip seats. The new buses will have space for 2 wheelchairs and one walker. They will include the rebranded reserved for wheelchair use features such as decals on the flooring with international wheelchair symbol, the capacity to lock up the flip up seats, and securement space for walkers in rows with one flip-up seat. These features should reduce the number of passups as they will provide capacity for both wheelchair users and storage space for walkers to be stowed outside of the wheelchair securement area. The new buses will also have the new Q-Pod 3-point securement system which will be easier and take less time. A new process in which the Operator will announce when they are pulling up to board a wheelchair-using patron so that other passengers are aware is being implemented. As the doors open and the ramp is deployed, the Operators will request that people move out of that area so that a wheelchair pass-up can be avoided. Pass-ups account for less than 0.02% of ridership, but Metro takes every one very seriously.

Chair Perez asked if policy or the Customer Code of Conduct could be changed to require that passengers move out of the reserved seats for wheelchair or disabled passengers. Better informing passengers may help to gain compliance. She thinks the seats should be locked up rather than being left down as leaving them down makes moving out of those seats optional.

Vice Chair Burnett added that if the seats are going to be locked up, they might as well be removed. He asked if boarding and securing of wheelchairs affects on-time Performance (OTP). Mr. Segovia replied that it does take longer for wheelchair passengers to board and be secured. The Q-Pod system will require 1 less tie-down which will result in less time spent by the Operator on securement. He noted that 80-85% of riders in wheelchairs reject securement.

Council Member Shidler noted that Orange County has side loading wheelchair ramps which deploy rapidly and allow other passengers to board at the same time, as well as allowing more and larger wheelchairs to board. He asked if that type of ramp was an option in the design of the newly purchased buses. Mr. Segovia replied that he did not know if side ramps were considered but that all Metro buses use a front ramp, as side-loading ramps would require the Operator to monitor 2 locations instead of one.

Council Member Shidler commented that it is unfortunate that some riders don't have the courtesy to move to allow passengers in wheelchairs to board. He finds it takes longer for people to pay cash fares than it does for wheelchairs to board. He asked if any wheelchair improvements will be made to rail cars. Mr. Segovia replied that some rail cars will be reconfigured with the blue flooring and the wheelchair area will be separated from the bikes and strollers area.

Chair Perez asked if an event could be organized to show members of the disability community and community transit users the new buses so that they could familiarize themselves with the new features once the new buses are procured. Mr. Segovia replied that Metro has one of the new buses and it is being tested. Comments are being incorporated to better the design, but it is unclear when features will be upgraded.

8. RECEIVED Report on Proposed Minor December 2013 Service Changes (Lines 60, 102, 105, 117, 120, 577, 760), Michael Sieckert, Transportation Planning Manager

A southbound shortline has being added in downtown Los Angeles to Line 60 in order to relieve overcrowding and better serve the garment factories between Flower St. and Alameda St. during the early morning hours. Service starts at Flower and runs to Alameda, then returns to the regular route.

The Line 102 schedule will be changed to meet every third Expo Line train at Western Station, thus providing better connections. The 33rd St shortline layover location had to be moved as the City of Los Angeles will be closing the street permanently to build a housing development. Metro has relocated to 31st St. for the time being. Council Member Shidler asked if the headway on the south end is going to be improved, and if high floor buses could be taken out of use on that line. Mr. Sieckert replied that he would discuss the high floor bus Division assignments with Maintenance. Eventually all high floor buses will be taken out of service as the new buses arrive. Regarding the headways, the service is currently adequate for the low demand on the Huntington Park side.

On Line 105, better spacing of stops has been implemented by removal of four low-demand stops along Vernon Ave. These changes and the reallocation of running time should work to improve on-time performance.

Line 117 was the only bus line that went into Rancho Los Amigos Hospital. As the system has had a significant increase in wheelchair boardings and the Hospital provides rehabilitation services to many wheelchair users, Metro staff met with Access Services and Hospital staff to decide on timing adjustments to better serve the hours that people travel to the Hospital. Schedule changes were made to make the service run later in the morning and earlier at night in order to better serve the Hospital. A permanent new detour route of Line 120 is also being implemented so that two bus lines will now serve the Hospital.

Line 577 is being rerouted to boost ridership and reduce Line 270 overcrowding by serving Rio Hondo College. The change will go into effect in December. Council Member Eros-Delgado asked if the line goes back onto the freeway. Mr. Sieckert replied that it goes onto the freeway at Rose Hills then continues south.

Rapid Line 760 only had 4 or 5 stops in downtown. Additional stops have been added at Main, Gladys, and Ceres. The combination of the shuttle being run on Line 60 and the changes to Line 760 should better handle the loads in the Alameda/7th St. area. Council Member Shidler asked if a stop could be added at Flower by the Arco Plaza between 5th and 6th St. Mr. Sieckert replied that he would discuss the idea of adding a stop at that location with staff.

Wayne Wright stated that the changes to Line 102 were not mentioned yesterday at the Westside/Central Service Council meeting. That line has problems with north and southbound buses showing up late at night in the areas around Figueroa and Jefferson. Buses arrive 10-15 minutes late. Mr. Wright asked that the schedule be extended to have

the last bus leave at 10:26 p.m. instead of 9:26 p.m. on weekends and holidays, which confuses people who think the service runs later. Also, the last buses coming from LAX at 11:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. do not connect with the Expo Line, which is important to provide connectivity. While stops being eliminated from Line 105 may help performance, the line will still have problems with traffic going to North Hollywood. The Line 120 change to serve Rancho Los Amigos should have been done a long time ago.

9. RECEIVED Director's Report on August 2013 Service, Dave Hershenson, Community Relations Manager

- On-time Performance: 74.2%, Goal: 80.0%, System: 74.9%
- Complaints Per 100,000 Passengers: 3.89; Goal: 2.20, System: 3.32
- Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls: 4,545, Goal: 3,900, System: 4,579
- Bus Cleanliness Rating: 8.36, Goal: 9.0, System: 8.54
- Accidents per 100,000 miles: 3.64, Goal: 3.10, System: 3.63
- Bus Station Monthly Cleanliness Ratings by Region: 8.28, Goal: 8.5, System: 8.22
- Average Bus Weekday Ridership: 216,457 of system's 1,140,298
- Lines 60 and 760 Weekday Ridership Average: Line 60: 20,675; Line 760: 5,811
- Line 111 Average Weekday Ridership: 18,911

Council Member Shidler asked how the merger of bus manufacturing companies New Flyer, NABI, and Orion would affect future bidding processes and pricing for new buses. Mr. Sieckert stated he was not aware of the merger but that he would look into it.

10. CARRIED OVER Approval of Service Council Biannual Evening Meeting Schedule, Marisa Perez, Chair, and Council Members

11. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the Agenda

Mr. Timberlake rides the bus 7 days a week and has never seen anyone fail to give up their seat to accommodate a passenger in a wheelchair. Usually when the Operator stands and starts ramp deployment, passengers move without prompting and assist by flipping up seats. Mr. Timberlake added that the video screens installed on Blue Line platform 2 at 7th St. frequently do not display departure times, despite there being no major incidents or maintenance in progress. When the screens do display departure times, they do not show the Blue Line trains that shortline before the Transit Mall. Other times, the train does not show. He has inquired several times over the last several months to Customer Service but has not received any response.

Roberto Hernandez would like more time to be given for public comment and for more members of the public to attend the meetings. He requested that information regarding rail accidents be included in the Director's Report. He hopes that the changes to Lines 117 and 120 help provide needed wheelchair capacity and service to the hospital. He

requested that articulated buses be used on Lines 117 and 111 during rush hours to alleviate crowding. Council Member Shidler replied that there's no room at the terminals for the articulated buses which is why they cannot be used on those lines.

Christine Thayer recently completed her graduate thesis on older adult transportation awareness, use, and planning at CSULB. In reviewing Metro's Strategic Plan, she noticed that 63% of riders are adults 65 years or older, but there's no specific language about older adults. She'd like to see language added that addresses mobility for older adults, and expansion of Metro's On The Move Riders program, which provide hands-on training to assist older adults transition from driving to using public transit. Currently Metro staffs the program with one part-time contractor. There are area agencies on aging that have agreed to make plans with Metro and the Disabled Resource Center. In 2010, creating an older adult transportation plan was given priority by Metro, but by the time the supplement was published, older adult transit was reduced to being discussed in the plan as a future need. There are agencies that can work with Metro to make it happen. Transportation access is key to older adult health.

Council Member Shidler commented that when the Service Councils were created and had a larger Community Relations staff, they traveled to senior centers to help familiarize seniors with Metro Services. Staffing cuts reduced the ability to conduct that outreach. Mr. Hershenson added that a short film was produced that was taken to senior centers to help educate them about using the system. He believes there would be lots of people willing to volunteer to assist such a project and promised to follow up with Ms. Thayer.

Wayne Wright commented that bikes on buses are causing nearly overwhelming problems. Because of safety concerns and union issues, the buses can't be refit with bike 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 onto 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.

12. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

ADJOURNED at 3:46 p.m.