

Minutes

Thursday, September 11, 2014
2:00PM

GATEWAY CITIES
SERVICE COUNCIL
Regular Meeting

Salt Lake Park Community Center
Lounge
3401 E. Florence Ave.
Huntington Park, CA 90255

All Metro meetings are held in ADA accessible facilities. Meeting location served by Metro Lines 111, 311, and 612.

Called to Order at 2:06 p.m.

Council Members:

Gene Daniels, Vice Chair
Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Thomas Martin
Ana Maria Quintana
Wally Shidler

Officers:

David Hershenson, Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.
Michael Sieckert, Transportation Planning Mgr.

For Metro information in English, please call the following phone number: 213-922-1282.

Para más información de Metro en español, por favor llame al número que aparece a continuación: 213-922-1282

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Для получения информации о Metro на русском языке, пожалуйста, позвоните по указанному ниже телефонному номеру: 323-466-3876

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메트로(Metro) 정보를 [한국어]로 알아보시려면, 아래 번호로 전화하십시오: 323-466-3876

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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. PLEDGE of Allegiance
2. ROLL Called
3. APPROVED Minutes from July 10, 2014 Meeting
4. RECEIVED Update on Blue Line Station Refurbishment Plan, James Wei, Systems Engineering Manager

As part of the Blue Line Station refurbishment project, 17 of the 21 stations will get new canopies. The goal is to have 50% coverage on every platform. All metal surfaces will be repainted a light grey color. The color scheme is being implemented at across all stations. Broken tiles and broken concrete at entrances and exits will be replaced, and one ADA compliant bench will be added. The light fixtures are being replaced and upgraded with LED lighting, and improved lighting will be installed at entries and exits that meets today's codes. The trash receptacles are being replaced with a type that will make maintenance easier. ADA complaint directional yellow plaques are also being added, and 2 new CCTV cameras will be installed under each new canopy.

The refurbishment contract is for \$19.5 million; about 90% of the design work has been completed. Construction will be conducted during the Blue Line loop closure from September 20 – October 19. Four stations will be closed during this work, and there will be bus bridges set up to serve each of the closed stations. About 99% of the work will be completed during that time, after which 3 weeks will be spent finishing each station,

Councilmember Shidler asked if electronic signage that displays real time train arrivals is going to be installed. Mr. Wei replied that the stations currently have LED boards which will be taken down then put back up after the work is completed. Electronic signage is not being added as part of this project. All speakers and e-tels are going to be replaced. At the Rosa Parks Station, work is basically the same, but lighting will be improved on the platform and mezzanine beyond the platform.

Vice Chair Daniels asked why the color was changed from blue to grey. Mr. Wei replied that the decision was made to change the color system wide.

5. RECEIVED Update on Artesia and Norwalk Parking, Calvin Hollis, Countywide Planning and Development

Metro has over 22,000 parking spaces at over 48 stations. The number does not include Caltrans Park & Ride lots. When the Expo and Foothill extensions are finished, nearly 3,000 more will be added. Metro has been negotiating with Caltrans to acquire lots and begin improvements, as Caltrans had stopped maintaining and enforcing them and our customers park in them. If Metro is successful at acquiring the lots, it will have 30,000 parking spaces.

Systemwide, Metro has about 19,000 free parking spaces, 1,000 reserved paid spaces, and 1,860 spaces in the Union Station garage. There are also some shared parking lots at Lake, Fillmore, South Pasadena and Del Mar Station garages.

Both Norwalk Station lots are Caltrans owned. Any changes have to be approved by them. The lots have nearly 1,800 spaces. The lots are over-utilized, as evidenced by people parking in unmarked areas. Recently spaces were added by restriping and adding parking on the access road. Additional spaces could be added, but it would require significant improvements to bring the lot up to current code, addressing the current landscaping layout, and restriping the lot. The number of ADA spaces is 7 over the required number. There is a great demand for parking at this station. Metro was recently able to add spaces, but would need additional funding for improvements to add any more.

The Blue Line Artesia Station lot is owned by Metro. It has 272 spaces, and its typical utilization rate is 84%. The number of reserved (paid) spaces was reduced due to lack of demand and will be reduced again in November.

Vice Chair Daniels encouraged transitioning the paid spaces to be reduced near the station where the handicap spaces are and to add more handicap parking spaces. Mr. Hollis replied that the matter has been studied and it was found that additional handicap spaces are needed at the location.

Councilmember Shidler asked if there are any plans to double deck the Norwalk parking lot. Mr. Hollis replied that there are no current plans for such an improvement as it is not a Metro owned lot. Metro is currently preparing a projection of long term demand and potential improvements to be presented to the Board for their action. However, Metro is hesitant to do expensive improvements on a property that is not agency owned.

Councilmember Martin suggested that porous pavement be used especially for sidewalks in light of the drought. Mr. Hollis replied that a sustainable material pilot project is being tested at the Chandler lot in the Valley to see how they hold up to the wear and tear that our lots receive. The project is up for Board approval next week.

Wayne Wright commented that the Norwalk lot needs improvements. He thinks Metro and Caltrans should work together to make improvements and extend the bus bays as they are overtaxed. The Lakewood Green Line parking lot also has problems and needs improvement. The Artesia lot needs work. It is overtaxed and people can't find a parking space. Previously there had been discussion of implementing reserved paid parking, but nothing seems to have been done.

6. RECEIVED Update on Blue Line Security and Quality of Life Issues, Sergeant Marcus Smith, LA County Sheriffs

In July, the Sheriffs completed a redeployment plan to address Blue Line crime trends. One to two times per month, specific teams go onto the line to target specific quality of life issues such as vendors. During the August deployment, the Sheriffs arrested 9 people for vending on trains and platforms. The Sheriffs use information provided

through the Transit Watch cell phone application and intelligence led policing to direct efforts. The team meets every 2 weeks to get updates on crime analysis. Blue Line crime is down 12% year to date. The Blue Line assignment consists of policing 22 stations over 22 miles. However, patrons should be seeing more deputies on the line. They have caught a lot of repeat offenders, and there are 2 deputies namely working the PM shift.

Vice Chair Daniels replied that the report sounds encouraging but has heard similar statements several times. In the last 6 months of riding the Blue Line, he has never seen a deputy. He only sees them at the Rosa Parks Station standing on the platform in groups. There is a woman vendor who sets up on the Artesia Station platform every day with a packed baby carriage. He doesn't always ride the same time or day, but he always sees her.

Councilmember Shidler commented that the officers have to be there in plain clothes. The vendors have phones and advise each other when they see deputies in uniform. He recently saw a vendor board with an ice cream cart. People ride with radios blaring, refuse to move their feet to allow others to sit, and use profane language. He saw a fare inspector buy water from one of the vendors. He sees the same vendors of all the time.

Sergeant Smith replied that the Blue Line deployment is 22 miles long and has 14 deputies. The deputies may be on one train, while vendors are in another. The Sheriffs will keep trying to address these issues and are making headway.

Councilmember Quintana asked if there is different treatment in the policing of the lines, as there are noticeable differences between each of the lines, as the deputies seem to be more visible on the Green Line. Sergeant Smith replied that deputies were reallocated to the Blue Line from the Gold and Red Lines.

Councilmember Quintana suggested that adding signage regarding the quality of life issues might help with establishing some order by helping to establish a culture where the rules are followed. Sergeant Smith replied that they have discussed Blue Line signage with Metro. Signage will be added as part of the improvement project that is scheduled to start on September 20th in Long Beach.

Councilmember Shidler commented that of the deputies assigned to the Blue Line, 2 are always at Willow by request from the City of Long Beach. Sergeant Smith replied that there are 14 deputies assigned to work one shift and 16 on another. The two deputies stationed at Willow are not there due to a demand by the City of Long Beach, but because of the specific crime issues in that area.

Mr. Timberlake commented that as a frequent patron of the Blue Line, he appreciates Council efforts to pursue improvement of the situation. He feels the biggest issue is physical safety. He rides all lines at all times of day, and the only time that he feels worried for his safety is when riding the Blue Line. When he rides late at night, he exits at Florence after 10 p.m. In the last 2 years, he has never seen a uniformed person on the train. The amount of rowdiness and inebriation he sees concerns him. He sees tourists riding the Blue Line to the Green to get to LAX and feels sorry for them. He is concerned for public safety on the Blue Line.

Wayne Wright commented that the quality of life issues on the Blue Line are a problem. There are issues with people riding bikes and skateboards on the platform. At Compton Station fare evaders go through the emergency exits down the southbound tracks to Compton Blvd. to avoid fare checkers. There are individuals playing loud, demeaning vulgar music, and people bring pit bulls and large dogs on the trains that are not service animals. Things are totally out of control. Last month he brought up issue of the individual that was assaulted at the Green Line station to the Sergeant who mentioned that there are deputies are regularly stationed there. Mr. Wright doesn't want to see a similar incident happen again.

7. RECEIVE Presentation on Metro's Rider Relief Transit Program (RRTP) , Armineh Saint, Local Programming Transportation Planning Manager

The RRTP mission is to provide transportation assistance to the most economically vulnerable and transit dependent in Los Angeles County. In 2007, the Metro Board, after raising fares, set aside \$5 million for RRTP with current funding remaining at the same level. Eligible participants are Metro or participating Operators' pass holders whose income is below Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) poverty level.

The program incorporates coupons that are distributed through a network of non-profit agencies to eligible participants for use at the time of purchase. Participants receive a booklet of 6 coupons for 6 months. The coupons are valid for the month printed on them. There are currently 55,000 participants in the program. Individuals receiving subsidies from their city/school are not allowed to participate in the program. An applicant may prove that he/she falls within the HUD "very low income" category and qualifies for RRTP by demonstrating any one of the following: pay stub, proof of receiving Public Benefits, valid proof of income documentation, tax returns, Medi-Cal or Lifeline (water and power) program enrollment. There are additional requirements for seniors, K-12 students, and college/vocational participants.

The minimum eligibility requirements for distributing agencies are: they must be a not-for-profit 501(c) organization or part of a local jurisdiction established in LA County for at least 3 years, they must operate out of a fixed structure, have more than 50 people participating in their program, and be committed to all program requirements.

Motion 55, approved in May 2014, expanded the marketing and outreach for fare subsidy programs. It includes various new marketing strategies to expand participation and knowledge about subsidy programs. It aims to alleviate the burden of fare increases on the most vulnerable populations.

Motion 70, approved in June 2014, directed staff to launch a full scale advertising campaign for fare subsidy programs in August 2014 prior to a fare increase. The RRTP Marketing and Outreach Plan will provide core informational materials for use in a variety of venues, utilize Metro's system for outreach and includes outreach activities in venues outside of Metro. To reach existing riders, Metro has posted RRTP posters and brochures on Metro's rail cars and buses, placed advertisements and banners on metro.net and added messages to Transit TV. Information is included in the on-hold messages on the Metro Customer Relations telephone line and in the monthly Metro

Insider newsletter. To target eligible audiences in venues outside of Metro, RRTP is using radio spots, presentations to Councils of Governments and Service Councils, outreach at senior centers, senior housing, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) locations, Head Start, K-12 schools as well as direct mail outreach.

Vice Chair Daniels asked if the program has reached out to senior centers. Ms. Saint replied that they had not conducted outreach specifically to cities. Mr. Daniels replied that he thinks a good approach would be to contact city human resources departments to make the program available to their senior programs. Ms. Saint replied that lots of cities offer subsidies or sell TAP cards to their seniors. The distribution of coupons has to be separate from sales and redemption of the coupons. Some cities are so small that they don't have the resources to keep both processes separate.

Councilmember Shidler asked for clarification on whether a patron can use more than one discount program, such as a city or the county buy down program and RRTP coupons. Ms. Saint replied that there is no "double dipping" permitted. If a patron is receiving a city or county discount, they will not be eligible to receive the coupons.

Councilmember Shidler noted that there are only 4 participating agencies in the Gateway Cities service area. Ms. Saint replied that Metro is aware of the need to add agencies to the network. They have been using the Rainbow Book to contact non-profit agencies that might potentially partner to distribute coupons. Metro also has an immediate needs transportation program, which has 500 agencies in the network. Metro has tried to get them to enroll in the RRTP as well, but has not had much success yet.

Councilmember Shidler asked if the program gives out tokens. Ms. Saint clarified that it does not, that the immediate needs program distributes tokens. Councilmember Shidler asked what prevents fraud, such as someone giving the coupon to their neighbor. Ms. Saint replied that while it could happen, steps are being taken to prevent fraud such as creation of a centralized database which is in testing stages now and will be put into use next month. The database will have information regarding everyone who has registered for the program and will track when they have requested a set of coupons. Metro is also looking into moving away from paper coupons and incorporating the program into existing TAP technology, perhaps by coming up with an instrument to load the credit onto their TAP card. Then Metro would be able to gather information on how who is using the coupons and how they are being used.

Councilmember Martin asked if the program is being advertised in languages other than English. Ms. Saint replied that the main languages the program is being advertised in are English and Spanish, but that Metro also have the materials available in in 7 other languages and that Metro provides access to translators for other languages as well.

Councilmember Eros Delgado asked if Metro compensates agencies for administering program, and if the distributors are responsible for evaluating patron eligibility. Ms. Saint replied that only 2 agencies are compensated for serving as administrators of the program.

Robert Quillen noted that there is only one location in Long Beach and one in the San Gabriel Valley. If a goal was made to add one location in each of those areas, it would

double the access. The mission of the program is to provide assistance to economic assistance to the most needy. He suggested that giving TAP cards to people who are paying cash fares would help meet that goal.

Mr. Timberlake commented that he had not been aware of the program before the Board adopted the marketing policy. He suggested that the RRTP program flyers be mailed to the County library branches to help publicize the program, and suggested that there need to be more places where people can get and load reduced fare TAP cards.

8. RECEIVE Director's Report, David Hershenson, Community Relations Manager

The fare changes are scheduled to go into effect on Monday, September 15. An extensive marketing plan has been in effect for the month prior to inform passengers about the fare change, including car cards, take one brochures, press releases, email blasts, web banners, and other strategies.

Due to the first big phase of the Blue Line Refurbishment project, the 5th Street, 1st Street, Downtown Long Beach, and Pacific Avenue Stations will be closed from September 20 through October 19, 2014. A free bus shuttle service will be in place to transport patrons between the Anaheim Station, which will temporarily become the last stop on the Blue Line, and the four stations that will be closed during construction.

The Eastside Transit Corridor Project Draft EIR has been released and public hearings are scheduled for Saturday, September 27th in Pico Rivera, Monday September 29 in Montebello, Tuesday, September 30 in Whittier, and Wednesday, October 1 in South El Monte.

9. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the Agenda

Mr. Timberlake commented that the reason the complaint rate is falling is because it takes forever to get through to a customer service representative. He spent 20 minutes on the phone just trying to get information. When he submits complaints via email, the only response he's ever received is that they're sorry for the inconvenience and it will be forwarded to the appropriate staff. He never receives an answer or explanation.

Mr. Lario asked if there was anything to know about the fare increase. Mr. Hershenson replied that the fare increase will take effect on Monday, September 15 and that the proposed changes went through a public hearing process, and received Board approval at their May, 2014 meeting. An extensive public education campaign was utilized to inform the public about the proposal and implementation of the fare change.

Wayne Wright noticed that the car cards regarding the Blue Line closures are out, but they are only in Spanish. Car cards in English should be posted as well.

Roberto Hernandez commented that there is construction in Downey at Lakewood and Florence in the middle of the street. He asked that drivers be instructed to be careful when passing in that area. He would like Line 111 to be made more efficient. It takes

more than 2 hours if one breaks down; it is not a quality service. Line 260 is not working. He encourages people to call Metro and report problems with the service. He suggested Line 260 be shortlined between East Los Angeles and Lynwood. On Tweedy and Atlantic by the high school, another bus is needed because it gets very crowded with students, and drivers get really worried when the buses are overcrowded.

10. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmember Shidler attended the Mobility 21 Conference and attended a session on expanding transit networks through last mile connectivity. He requested that the speaker make a presentation to the Council at an upcoming meeting. The most important fundamentals of transit are safety, security, reliability, and connections.

Councilmember Quintana shared that the City of Bell is hosting a special event next weekend in collaboration with the Mexican Consulate and asked that Metro either have a presence there or provide information to be shared with the public.

ADJOURNED at 3:50 p.m.