

Minutes

Thursday, April 9, 2015
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:

Richard Burnett, Chair
Gene Daniels, Vice Chair
Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Thomas Martin
Wally Shidler
Cynde Soto

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Executive Director
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

Մետրոյի մասին հայերեն լեզվով տեղեկություններ ստանալու համար, խնդրում ենք զանգահարել այս հեռախոսահամարով՝ 323-466-3876

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

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สำหรับข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับรถโดยสารเมโทรเป็นภาษา [ไทย] กรุณาติดต่อที่หมายเลขโทรศัพท์ด้านล่าง: 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 March 12, 2015 Meeting
4. RECEIVED Security Update, Jon Hillmer, Executive Director

The number of operator assaults that occur on a regular basis has been increasing in recent years, not only on Metro but also at transit agencies across the country. As part of a pilot program to prevent assaults, several new buses have been now coming in with a 2-part door to the operator compartment. The top part of the barrier is made of Plexiglas.

Mr. Timberlake commented that the last time he saw buses with a separate compartment for the operator was in Soviet Union in 1974. He is concerned that the barriers will make passenger communication with the operator more difficult. It is hard enough to ask a question and get a response from the operator. If the barrier window is closed, it will be more difficult. Response varies by operator; some are very friendly, but others won't look at you. He thinks whether the barriers will impede communications between passengers and operators should be considered. Passengers have to ask questions. He is also concerned about the security of passengers. He has been assaulted on the bus. When he reported the assault to the driver, the driver didn't care.

5. DISCUSSED Metro Parking Ordinance, Frank Ching, Parking Management Director

The parking ordinance is scheduled to be heard by the Board in April. Procurement of a parking study consultant is in process, and the study should begin later this year.

Councilmember Shidler asked if the parking fees will be uniform throughout the system, and if parking by non-transit users at Universal City Station would be addressed. Mr. Ching acknowledged Universal City parking is an issue, and that staff is looking to address the issue through enforcement. Once the ordinance is adopted, Metro will be able to cite or tow, though enforcement generally is more effective through citation as it provides a full appeal process. The vote on the Ordinance is scheduled to be heard at an upcoming Board meeting but it does not yet include a pricing plan. It standardizes parking rules and enforcement. Parking fees will remain at their current levels until the comprehensive parking study is completed. Metro has retained a consultant to evaluate and determine how to move forward on whether to charge for parking. They will develop pricing recommendations to Board which may include a two-tier plan that provides discount rates for transit users through use of technology such as the TAP card.

Vice Chair Daniels asked what the current rate is for permit parking, and how much permit parking costs at Artesia Station. Mr. Ching replied that the least expensive rate is \$20 per month, the highest is \$59. He wasn't sure what the rate is for Artesia Station but it wouldn't be any more than \$59 per month.

Mr. Ching added that he can return for further comments and input after the consultant is brought on board, and that part of the program includes outreach. A dedicated email address parking@metro.net has been activated. He encouraged the public to submit questions, ideas and comments and a member of the Parking Program staff will respond.

6. RECEIVED Presentation on Metro Letter Designation Project, Cory Zelmer, Transportation Planning Manager, Rachele Andrews, Transportation Planner

Metro rail and BRT lines are currently identified mostly by color, but also by name (Expo). As new lines are completed, Metro is facing challenges to keep the naming system consistent and identifying new distinct color names. Metro is proposing to rename the rail lines with letters in order of the line's opening date. Letters were proposed to distinguish between local bus lines. Color would remain as a secondary identifier, and would be added to the color identifying dots that currently exist. This transition is proposed to begin implementation in the near future in order to avoid reinforcing rail line names that would change in the future, as will occur with the completion of the Regional Connector project. The changes to maps, customer information, audio announcements and signage will occur incrementally in order to leverage capital project funding, simplify adjustments when new routes come on line, and reduce the need for signage retrofitting. Focus groups were held in English and Spanish. Overall, there was support for the changes.

Since there are so many signs that would need to be changed, the work will be accomplished in 3 phases. Staff is working to ensure that the size of letter and the contrast will exceed minimum ADA requirements for visibility. Phase I implementation will begin on the Blue, Green, and Expo Lines. Phase 2 will address the Orange, Red, Purple, and Silver lines. The final phase will include the Regional Connector and Crenshaw/LAX lines (includes Gold, blue, Expo, Green).

Councilmember Shidler asked if colors would eventually be eliminated from the background. Mr. Zelmer replied that use of colors would not be eliminated, but that there will be challenges to identify distinct new colors as the rail system expands.

Councilmember Shidler commented that at one time symbols were used. He asked why Metro didn't designate the lines by the number to the public as they are referred to internally. Mr. Zelmer replied that they were not used in an effort to distinguish the rail system from the bus system. In the focus groups, the use of pictograms and those types of symbols were really encouraged by the focus group members.

Wayne Wright commented that in the Valley, the Orange Line depicted in the presentation draft map is represented with the letter G. He asked why it doesn't it have two letters as it has two branches. He thinks it should have at least 2-3 letters, especially after 8 pm, for the branches. That is something that needs to be corrected in the letter designation proposal.

7. RECEIVED Director's Report, Jon Hillmer, Director

- The second meeting of the Blue Ribbon Committee was held on March 26. The next meeting will be held at the Gateway Headquarters on April 23 from 4:30-6:30pm. The

committee will review potential plans for a frequent service bus network, the Metro & municipal operator draft service realignment policy, and discuss Metro bus loading standards.

- The APTA Peer Review has been completed. The recommendations included: that the Metro Board implement Phase 2 & 3 plus regular CPI-based fare increases, minimize duplicate service of rail, Metro and Muni buses lines, create more frequent bus wider spaced network of bus lines, increase bus and rail loading standards, consolidate bus stops to improve bus speed, and redeploy from under-performing routes or segments to higher performing lines.
- Wilshire BRT lines are now open. There is no parking in the lanes during peak hours. The lanes are anticipated to generate time savings of up to 15 minutes during rush hours.
- Metro is launching an all-door boarding pilot to see if all door boarding would speed loading and improve on-time performance. The pilot will occur between the hours of 2-7pm and 6-10 am for a period of 6 to 8 weeks. Staff will have mobile validators pre-positioned. Those paying cash will have to board through the front, and those who have a TAP card will be allowed to tap and enter in back.
- Gary Spivack is the new Deputy Executive Officer to Metro's Regional Service Councils.
- Metro is holding a Budget Public Forum on Saturday, April 25th from 10 a.m. to noon in the Metro Board Room.
- Today was Stand Up for Transit Day.

Councilmember Eros Delgado asked what percentage of the 500 new buses were assigned to the Gateway region. Mr. Hillmer replied that they first were sent to Division 5, which provides some of the region's east-west service, and also to Division 7, which doesn't really serve the region. The arriving new buses are being put into service at Divisions 1, 2, and 3. He can provide a more detailed report by line and division at next month's meeting.

Mr. Timberlake sometimes goes to Westwood for evening events. All-door boarding is already occurring on Line 720 buses even at 9-10 p.m. because the buses are so crowded. Those buses are standing room only, and people are boarding without paying all the time.

Chair Burnett commented that where he lives in Long Beach, the typical bus runs at 1/2 hour to one-hour frequency. There are very few lines that have shorter headways. Mr. Hillmer replied that for building and maintaining high ridership, more frequency is better; lines that run only once per hour typically have very low passenger loads.

8. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the Agenda

Jose Estrada is a regular Metro customer. He would like to inform the Council that some of the operators pass up wheelchair patrons because the bus is too full. This has happened to him various times on Line 260.

Roberto Hernandez commented that Lines 60, 111, and 311 need more service. The buses get overcrowded this community. It is very common to see three Line 211 buses on Atlantic one after another. They are often up to 30 minutes late. If the meeting location changes, the Council must consider Councilmember Cynde Soto's transportation needs.

Wayne Wright asked that the Blue Ribbon Committee consider asking Montebello Transit to take over the southern portion of Line 258 on Eastern Av. The extension that was implemented nearly 10 years ago was supposed to be a bridge between Montebello and Long Beach Transit. Long Beach Transit has expanded their Line 21 north of Alondra to Rosecrans at Garfield. Montebello Transit's Line 30 stops at Firestone. Line 258 isn't frequent, shuts down early, and service is poor. If Montebello expanded its Line 30 on Garfield to run from Paramount to Alhambra, it would provide a better connection with Long Beach Transit.

Mr. Timberlake commented that smoking is increasing on Metro rail platforms and he never sees the Sheriffs do anything about it. It occurs during day and evening hours, and on the trains. The Blue Line bus bridge was a complete disaster 2 weekends ago on March 13th. When he got to the end of the Blue Line, there was no one on the platform to direct patrons to the bus bridge. He found a Sheriff Deputy who was reading his phone. He asked the deputy about the bus bridge but he didn't know anything about it. He had similar experiences 2 weekends in a row. He will no longer try to get across to Long Beach during the Blue Line closures as a result of these experiences. He is fearful what will happen when Florence Station is closed. Mr. Timberlake commended Metro for printing a take one that promotes the 2-hour free transfer with use of a TAP card; the problem is that the take one isn't on the buses anymore. People don't understand that they can save money by getting unlimited free transfers within the two-hour window. It is also a problem in the region that people don't understand a lot of the literature or campaigns that don't target Spanish speakers. Metro needs to do more outreach about the transfer policy.

9. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmember Shidler asked how the negotiations on the Artesia Station and the Compton Transit Center are going. Mr. Sieckert replied that there will be a meeting with the City of Compton in about a week to discuss the Artesia Station. There is a need to install TVMs on the west side which poses a separate problem, as there is an additional cost to install all of the equipment. Metro has awarded a Transit Oriented Development to improve the property on the east side. Staff will talk to those overseeing the project to ensure that the gate issue is included when the study is conducted. Regarding the use of the Compton Transit Center, he talked to the Legal and Real Estate departments. They do not want to get involved as they are still dealing with the boundary issue. Other issues have also been raised such as facility maintenance. There is a possibility that Metro will be able to use the facility but not in the immediate future.

Councilmember Shidler asked for an update on the fare evasion issue. Mr. Hillmer replied that he can provide a monthly report on it. Fare evasion is not just a local problem. Chair Burnett commented that Long Beach Transit handles fare evasion differently, as operators are instructed not to move bus when a patron doesn't pay. Mr. Hillmer commented that approach can be problematic, as the majority of operator assaults occur after fare disputes. Metro is looking at various options with sheriff's contract, and having more security people more involved to address the fare evasion issue.

Councilmember Martin suggested that a small community center located on Alameda & Compton be reviewed to see if it would be appropriate to move to for the Service Council meetings. He attended a meeting there that had 80-100 people in attendance.

Vice Chair Daniels asked about the number of abandoned and unclaimed bicycles left on buses and trains. He heard a figure of 80,000, which he found hard to believe. Mr. Hillmer replied that is likely over the course of a year. Each division generally gets 1-2 bikes per day. Across major divisions, that's 20-30 bikes per day. Bikes are auctioned in lots of 100 bikes at a time.

Vice Chair Daniels observed that there are always 5-6 employees standing around talking at Artesia Station. Mr. Hillmer and Mr. Hershenson replied that certain stations have safety ambassadors to assist patrons with boarding and fare instruction. There are also security guards at the site; neither work on checking fares or citing for fare evasion. There is also typically one person per station that cleans the station.

Councilmember Martin asked about the incident that occurred this morning on the Blue Line Councilmember Shidler replied that someone stepped in front of a train. The person sustained non-fatal injuries and was transported to the hospital.

ADJOURNED at 3:30 p.m.