

REVISED

# Minutes

Wednesday, September 9, 2015  
5:00PM

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL  
SERVICE COUNCIL  
Regular Meeting

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Metro Headquarters Building  
1 Gateway Plaza  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Union Station Conference Room  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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Called to Order at 5:05 p.m.

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Council Representatives:

Dr. Randal Henry, Chair  
David Feinberg, Vice Chair  
Perri Sloane Goodman  
Jeffrey Jacobberger  
Maria Sipin  
George Taule

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Executive Director  
Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer  
Eric Geier, Community Relations Manager  
Carol Silver, Transportation Planning Mgr.  
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst  
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.

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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. ROLL Called
2. APPROVED Minutes of August 12, 2015 Meeting
3. RECEIVE Presentation on Ridership Trends and Initiatives, Conan Cheung, Executive Officer, Performance Measurement

Overall, Metro has experienced a decline in bus ridership since 2014, similar to national and regional trends. Metro Rail ridership has increased despite regional and national downward trends. In examining factors affecting ridership, employment has the strongest correlation. Internal factors that have influenced ridership include the reduction in service hours that occurred a couple of years ago. Though Metro reduced service, ridership remained stable. Fare changes generally have a temporary effect on ridership. Increased enforcement also caused a slight decline, but ridership is rebounding. Overall, customer complaints have increased, which warrants closer examination. Metro has formed a task force aimed at retaining current ridership, and trying to encourage choice riders to use the system for more of their trips.

Wayne Wright commented that a few years ago, Metro promised changes in owl service and night service after 8 pm, from 6-11 pm, on Lines 210, 212, and 2. Other large transit agencies, they provide 15-20 minute service at night. Metro has very few late night buses. EZ Pass needs to be linked to TAP so that it can be used anytime, anyplace and be available at TVMs; a 7-day EZ pass and a 1-day pass exempt from zone fares on express routes should also be considered. Metro-muni transfers should be sold on TAP cards instead of issuing paper transfers; there are often issues with drivers not wanting to issue them. Vice Chair Feinberg commented that Santa Monica Big Blue Bus (BBB) is implementing the TAP system in the spring.

Councilmember Jacobberger noted that when employment improves and congestion worsens, buses are often stuck in the same traffic as everyone else. They're even worse off because they can't use Waze or go off route to avoid traffic. The City has just adopted a new mobility element that is supposed to emphasize a transit network. Aggressive work to implement long discussed time-saving measures such as BRT lanes is needed. The plan may be an opportunity to move forward. There should be a way to get signal prioritization on the Orange Line, which potentially could significantly improve performance, leading to an increase in ridership.

Mr. Hillmer replied that a study of Orange Line intersection speeds is under way. When the line first opened, there were two bad accidents and the crossing through intersections was slowed out of fear of the line being labeled unsafe. When the study is completed, Metro may be able to make improvements that will improve bus speeds through intersections. The City has agreed to modify the signals to accommodate the Orange Line with the caveat that they also follow the new state standards that add additional walk time at crosswalks. There are some concerns that if adjustments are made to signals, there may be longer waits due to longer walk times at lights.

Councilmember Jacobberger commented that tourists frequently seek specific user-friendly information on how to get to key destinations; that information isn't really clear to visitors. Even people who live here would consider going to some of those destinations if it was made easy. Once they use the system, they realize it's not as scary and difficult as they had imagined. Mr. Spivack replied that the Metro Trip Planner on the website allows for trip routing to and from

landmarks. While Metro produces some central destination maps, there is not a central, interactive place on the Metro site with that information.

Eugene Salinsky commented that Metro needs to deal with the fare structure which discourages current riders and daily riders and encourages occasional riders. It needs to be similar to Orange County and San Francisco where cash fares are higher and pass prices are lower. Metro's transfers are also not being honored by the Municipal operators. These operators should be required to honor all Metro passes. Metro needs to stop providing subsidies and services to them until they make it as simple as possible to ride either Metro or municipal services.

Chair Henry thinks students should ride free to attract new markets. He's not sure how to subsidize it, but the free transit pass he had as a student resulted in him becoming a regular transit user. It's a strategy to create future riders. There are a lot of staycation tourists in Los Angeles who don't know the area. Partnerships with major tourist areas, destinations, and events, simpler maps for destinations, simple signage, and a continued customer service focus all would contribute to improving ridership.

Councilmember Sloane-Goodman commented that there are lost opportunities with NextBus and Trip Planner. No one wants a nightmare experience of missing a bus or connection and being stranded. A lot of that has been eliminated by adoption of technology, but if you don't use it regularly, you don't know how. The City of West Hollywood developed a very simple step-by-step instruction piece to teach people to use NextBus. They now have a teen club and are starting a travel club with teens. Teens and students are a great potential market. Recently, West Hollywood's restricted parking for all City Hall employees and forced them to take transit due to construction. Now their new garage is almost done and most employees want to keep their transit passes. Once you teach people to easily navigate the system, they continue to use it.

Councilmember Taule commented that Metro can do more to promote the B-TAP program to businesses. He has personally helped to implement at his workplace. It should be an easy sell to get more hotels on board. Lots of people who work in hotels don't own cars. In his experience, when a tourist asks how to get somewhere, the concierge tells them to take a taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc. He's occasionally overheard those exchanges and taken the time to explain how to take transit; most times, tourists will opt to take transit. Tourists are used to it because they've traveled and are familiar with transit systems. Many tourists and hotel concierges don't even realize that Los Angeles has public transit.

Councilmember Sipin commented that the culture shift is not solely Metro's responsibility. There is a fundamental need for push and pull policies to make transportation more attractive and car use less attractive; it requires a longer term vision.

Vice Chair Feinberg commented on the impact of the bus service reduction. It is clear that complaints went up and ridership stayed the same, but the quality of service is not what it was prior to service cuts. The largest complaint factor is being passed up, which may be related.

Mr. Spivack replied that complaint classification is based on customer perception. Most passup complaints state that the passenger was standing there and the bus passed them by. Complaints are shared with the divisions and the manager investigates. When they find the complaints to have merit, it's generally due to factors such as the operator didn't expect someone to be at the stop and was in wrong lane. Sometimes the passenger wasn't there but expected the bus to stop

or the bus was already leaving the stop when the passenger arrived. Those complaints are still counted as pass ups in complaint classification, whether they were or weren't. Metro collects monthly data on complaints and sorts by category. During the months of January and June, Metro gets lots of schedule reliability complaints just after shake up; they then go back down when people adjust to the new schedules. Metro's complaints have been rising since 2010 as there are now more ways for people to report complaints through various social media channels.

Vice Chair Feinberg commented that while more methods to provide feedback increases complaint levels, it also provides better quality feedback. There is a positive as well.

4. RECEIVE Report on Route Modification Recommendations to Line 110, Scott Page, Director, Service Performance and Analysis

Last month, the Council reviewed the proposal by Culver City Bus to operate from Fox Hills Mall to EA Way and have Metro reduce their service over that segment. Council asked staff to interview patrons and review the potential effects of the change. Service Planning shared the Council's concerns with Culver City regarding elimination of service after 7 pm, and Culver City agreed to extend the service. They also proposed to provide hourly service all the way on top of the entire line. Service Planning surveyed passengers and observed trip patterns from EA Way to see how many patrons were riding past Fox Hills Mall and how far. Many patrons already transfer at that location. Culver City is planning to add to their service and felt that during middays not every trip needs to go to EA Way. In turn, Metro will work with Culver City so that our services are not following each other up and down the street. Staff will monitor and if passengers defect to Culver City's service, Metro may be able to further reduce service.

Wayne Wright commented that about a year ago, Metro South Bay studied potential service changes to Line 110. A couple of months later, Culver City Bus made changes. They were going to expand their Line 4 south of Jefferson to Lincoln/ Sepulveda. He supports expanding Line 110 to Playa del Rey or Marina del Rey or to the shopping center to connect to BBB 3 or Rapid 3. Patrons currently have to walk two blocks to Lincoln to transfer between these three routes. He suggested running Sunday service west of Jefferson to Mesmer to Line 110. He understands that expanding Line 110 to include Sunday service would present in issue regarding costs.

Eugene Salinsky commented that riders won't transfer because it would cause them to pay more unless they have an EZ pass. Culver City doesn't honor Metro transfers. Metro is asking riders to use the Culver City line and pay extra to do it. The change may actually reduce total ridership.

Mr. Page commented that patrons won't be forced to pay more because Metro is continuing the service; but if they get there and they're ok with paying and the Culver City bus is there, they have the option to transfer. The changes will double the service available to patrons. To extend Line 110 line further west would require more resources. For now, patrons will be able to get closer to Lincoln Blvd. by using the stop near the senior center built by Playa Vista.

5. RECEIVE Report on Westside/Central Service July Performance, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer

- Metro Bus Cleanliness Ratings: Westside/Central: 8.69, Goal: 8.5, System: 8.78

- On-time Performance: Westside/Central :74.8% Goal: 80%, System: 77.6%
- Complaints Per 100,000 Boardings: Westside/Central: 2.30, Goal: 3.46, System 2.78
- Bus Traffic Accidents per 100,000 Miles: Westside/Central: 4.54, Goal: 3.38, System: 3.53
- Mean Miles Bet. Mechanical Road Calls: Westside/Central: 4,654, Goal: 4,169, System: 5,314
- Average Weekday Bus Ridership: Westside/Central: 599,563, System: 1,007,793

Mr. Spivack explained that accidents with parked vehicles are usually due to someone in a parked vehicle opening their door. He cautioned that parked on the street, people should check their mirrors before opening their door and striking a bus or cyclist. The appurtenances on the new buses are higher than the older buses and have been grazing the trees, which is counted as striking a fixed object.

Councilmember Sipin commented that Vision Zero, a national and local movement to promote safer street design recommends using the term crashes instead of accidents, as accidents remove responsibility. Mr. Spivack replied that accidents are usually designated as such if an injury or property damage resulted. Incident is used when there was no harm done. For classification purposes, the emphasis is reviewing each case to determine if there was something the operator could have done to prevent the incident or accident. The language is also standardized due to union concerns; for example, they wanted to classify certain types of incidents as non-chargeable such as grazing low hanging branches, and tires hitting the curb.

Chair Henry commented that to be consistent, crash would be a term that would align with national and international Vision Zero, but he understands the distinction and that different language is used internally as opposed to that used by external organizations. He asked that the internal language be aligned with outside language to foster community understanding of what is meant by the terms. Accident has a connotation that it's not preventable; Vision Zero has a goal of identifying what is preventable or identifiable.

Mr. Hillmer commented that Metro tracks passenger vs. vehicle accidents differently. Metro tracks passenger injuries on the bus. The rate used to be 0.2 but has gone up to 0.8, possibly partially due to cameras on the buses that activate with g-force. In the past, operators wouldn't necessarily report if the passenger fell on board but said they were ok. Now, if the video is reviewed and the operator didn't report it, they are charged with not reporting what is considered a minor incident.

Wayne Wright commented that during the holiday weekend, Metro had detour changes around MLK/Crenshaw. People did not know about the changes, had not seen notices on Line 210, and were very upset. Regarding the planned 30-day Line 212 detour at La Brea/Florence to the bridge for LAX/Crenshaw line later this month, he hopes that everything will be in order.

## 6. PUBLIC Comment for items not on the agenda

Lisa Caster sees a lot of good things that the group is trying to do, but in the last few years there has been a trend towards privatization by austerity groups trying to take what is a public service and force it into a profit making mode. It's causing a lot of silly arguments about the type of transit system we should have- if it should all be centralized or broken up. She feels all of it is needed and it has to work together. There have been complaints about school kids on Line 720. The kids who are causing the issues don't know how to be quiet, sometimes pick fights, don't

give up their seats for elders. Metro needs to think about when they receive complaints about being crowded with students, the complaints might be also about their behavior.

Wayne Coombs has been coming to the Westside Central Service Council meetings for several years. He is moving out of Southern CA due to concerns about the State getting ready to hike taxes, and other local government "hassle factors." Metro has been wonderful and he will miss the service.

Eugene Salinsky commented that if there is a potential new rider that wants to travel someplace west of Westwood, they find out they have to travel further west and pay extra to transfer to the Santa Monica bus. If they find out they have to pay extra to go a short distance to somewhere, they're not going to want to ride. How do you get a prospective passenger when you tell them they have to pay extra? They're going to choose to drive instead of exploring transit options.

Vice Chair Feinberg replied that there are multiple transportation systems in LA County that work very closely with Metro to provide comprehensive services. Santa Monica has the rights to operate in its region as per the State Transportation Codes. Metro taking over all transit in Los Angeles County isn't necessarily the solution. BBB is working to make transfers easier, and BBB worked together with Metro to create the EZ Transit Pass. Mr. Salinsky replied that a single fare structure is needed. Unless there is a unified fare structure, Metro will never get increased ridership.

Wayne Wright commented that now that BBB Line 5 is off of Robertson, only Line 220 serves that street and there is no weekend service. He would like to see a plan to keep service going in the near future. Metro can't cut down to the LA library branch or the high school. BBB was bombarded with comments regarding the change. He hopes they can come up with a way to enhance the service to save Line 220 and address future needs.

## 7. CHAIR and Council Member Comments

Councilmember Feinberg shared that BBB staff stood at Hamilton High School on the day that the line was being changed. During the entire 4 hours, only 4-5 passengers were boarding their bus. Most passengers are going south. BBB did lot of outreach to make sure people understood the changes were coming. There were very few trips initiated at Hamilton High School.

Councilmember Feinberg asked if Metro has any plans to adjust Line 220 service. Mr. Hillmer replied that the schedule was changed to better match the school schedule. The bus will now stop at the location after school lets out. Metro is also looking at potential modifications to Line 16 to route it down Robertson. Those changes may be considered for June 2016.

Councilmember Feinberg shared that tomorrow BBB is holding a meeting from 6-7:30 p.m. at Santa Monica Public Library about their fare adjustments to occur in January. Changes will include an increase in base fare and changes to make passes more affordable. Former BBB Transit Director Jack Hutchison recently passed away; he was a public transportation leader for many years.

**ADJOURNED at 6:42 p.m. in honor of Jack Hutchinson, former General Manager of Santa Monica Big Blue Bus.**