

Minutes

Monday, September 14, 2015
5:00 PM

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY
SERVICE COUNCIL
Regular Meeting

Metro El Monte Division 9 Building
Third Floor Service Council Conference Room
3449 Santa Anita Ave. (Santa Anita Ave. & Ramona Blvd.)
El Monte, CA 91731

All Metro meetings are held in ADA accessible facilities. Meeting location served by all Metro, Foothill Transit and El Monte Shuttle lines serving the El Monte Station.

Called to Order at

Council Members:

John Harrington, Chair
Dave Spence, Vice Chair
Harry Baldwin
Roger Chandler
Alex Gonzalez
John Harabedian
Bruce Heard
Steven Ly

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Executive Director
Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer
Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Mgr.
Lilian De Loza, Community Relations Mgr.
Dolores Ramos, Council Admin Analyst
Henry Gonzalez, Council Comm. Rel. Mgr.

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

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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:
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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. APPROVED Minutes of August 10, 2015 Meeting
3. RECEIVED Presentation on El Monte Station Bike Hub Opening, Tony Jusay, Bike Programs Planning Manager

Metro's El Monte Bike Hub opening was held this morning and was well attended. The site was originally identified through initial planning efforts to provide more secure bicycle parking. Metro has partnered with Bike Hub, an organization from the Bay Area that provides similar services at BART stations, to operate the hub. The cost of secure access at the El Monte hub is \$60 a year or \$12 per month. The hub also contains bike repair and service parts sales areas. Metro is taking a test approach to providing in-person services, operating only from 7 - 11 am Monday thru Friday. After in-person services are closed, the roll down gate closes and the area can only be accessed through secured access by registered users. Registered users can access the site 24 hours a day. Metro recognizes that as the system grows, people will want to use other similar facilities. Registered bike hub users will only need to register once to access the system's other planned locations which include North Hollywood, Hollywood/Vine, Union Station and Culver City. Opening of the Union Station location may potentially be expedited. The design phase of North Hollywood location will begin next year. Metro will continue to evaluate bike parking needs of the overall system. The target audience for these types of facilities is people who live within 1-3 miles. Use of the facilities helps reduce parking demand, attracts transit riders, and provides additional transit vehicle capacity as people can access transit without taking their bike with them.

Councilmember Baldwin asked if future locations will have similar repair and sales facilities as the El Monte location. Mr. Jusay replied that all locations will have similar facilities. The contractor, Bike Hub, will operate the first 3 and provide that service. Metro is looking at potentially expanding the staffed operating hours of the Culver City location, depending on the El Monte location's success. At Union Station, plans are to provide least 300 bike parking spaces, and at Hollywood around 200 spaces. The El Monte pilot will allow Metro to gauge the potential of these types of facilities.

Councilmember Harabedian asked if there is a charge to park a bike for less than 24 hours. Mr. Jusay replied that users have to be registered to gain access. The cost would depend on their membership, if they've signed up for a year, month or week. The lowest cost is for a full week, but it is more cost effective to get a longer term membership. If a bike is parked for more than 72 consecutive hours, there is an additional separate charge.

Councilmember Baldwin asked if there has been any progress on allowing 3 or more bikes onto buses. Mr. Hillmer replied that all buses are currently equipped with racks that hold 2 bicycles. The new buses that are 40 ft or shorter are being equipped with 3-bike racks.

4. RECEIVED 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 and regional rail ridership has declined despite national upward trends. In examining external factors affecting ridership, employment has the strongest correlation. However, the reduction in service hours as an internal factor that occurred a couple of years ago did not influence boardings. Fare changes generally have 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.

Councilmember Harabedian asked when the fare increase was implemented and if it correlates with a substantial drop in ridership. Mr. Cheung replied that the increase became effective in September 2014; the ridership decline started before from April-June. A ridership drop was expected with the fare increase, but the increase was larger than what was expected. The ridership decline is likely partially due to the fare increase, but there are also systemic contributing factors that existed prior to the fare change.

Councilmember Chandler asked if people who do not pay their fare are counted in the ridership numbers. Mr. Hillmer replied that they are; ridership is counted by the automated counters on buses, rather than fares paid.

Councilmember Baldwin commented that some of the ridership decline may be due to the gate latching. Mr. Hillmer replied that rail ridership is declining but not at the same rate as bus. The method for counting rail ridership is not as advanced. It is completed by counters on the train. A 6-month rolling average is calculated with their counts. Metro is exploring putting automated counters on the trains, but that would not occur for a few years.

Councilmember Baldwin asked if Metro has measured the difference in fares collected since the gates were latched. Mr. Hillmer replied that revenue per passenger has gone up, though overall ridership is down. Mr. Cheung added that revenues recently rose to 0.78 per boarding, but since boardings dropped, overall revenues have not hit the target goal.

Councilmember Harabedian suggested Metro might attract more ridership by having buses offer more modern services. The next generation will expect things like Wi-Fi for free that other modes provide. These things might be inexpensive to implement on a systemwide basis, but that would provide good publicity and might make a small difference. Mr. Hillmer replied that Metro is experimenting with equipping buses with Wi-Fi. A pilot is being tested on a small fleet. It would not only give passengers access to Wi-Fi while on board, but also potentially facilitate real time monitoring of buses so camera feeds could be downloaded and reviewed if there's an on-board incident before sending security. Technological advances would also enable to people also can see how long it will take to get to their destination, and their chance of getting an open seat.

Foothill Transit Joseph Raquel mentioned that his agency was an early adapter. They used to provide free Wi-Fi on their Silver Streak line. It proved to be too expensive for the number of users that accessed it. It would've been cheaper to give the people their own Wi-Fi cards.

Foothill Transit is now looking at a different provider, but for short local trips, Wi-Fi doesn't make sense.

Mr. Cheung added that Wi-Fi would facilitate loading of fares onto TAP cards faster. The TAP department is working on an application that would also allow phones to be used to purchase or load a TAP card. Eventually phones will be used as a TAP card to render payment.

Councilmember Gonzales commented that the NextBus application has improved greatly compared to a few years ago. He hates the ads, but it takes the insecurity out of not knowing when the bus is coming, which removes a huge barrier to ridership.

5. RECEIVED Report on San Gabriel Valley Service Performance, Gary Spivack, Deputy Executive Officer

Councilmember Harabedian mentioned that he was a victim of a pass up today because the, there were 5 buses lined up, so the driver didn't stop. Other than obvious similar situations, it seems like there is no good justification. Why do they occur in the first place? Mr. Hillmer replied that operators are not supposed to pass stops unless they're authorized if behind schedule. He noted that a large amount of complaints received for passups are found to not have actually passed up a patron.

Mr. Hillmer shared that an item will go to the Metro Board in October or November for a new Express service between Pasadena and North Hollywood. The service would run every 15 minutes during peak during rush hours to provide a connection between the Gold Line and Orange/Red Lines. The line will serve Memorial Park and Del Mar Gold Line Stations.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT for items not on the Agenda

Eric Haack of Access Paratransit commented that as a regular rider, it saddens him to see the declining ridership trends, but as a representative of Access, they're noting an increase in ridership. Access service is expensive to provide; if there's a way to work with Metro to develop a partnership to develop a mutual solution to provide more services, they are open to it. Access has an internal travel training program, but if there's any other ideas, some of their customers are using fixed route. Increasing that training would be helpful. Mr. Hillmer replied that Metro records approximately 80,000 monthly wheelchair boardings on the bus system. Fixed route service is the most efficient way to serve those riders and also helps to mainstream them.

Councilmember Chandler asked how Access Services works and is paid for. Mr. Haack replied that handicapped folks are happy with Access services, but don't really care for fixed route transit. There are 44 fixed route agencies throughout the County. Each fixed route provider partners with Access services to provide the Civil Rights service component. Access is the only ADA partner in the County. They have found in some cases, especially with aging populations, in many cases people begin using Access after giving up driving. It's not a big leap from driving themselves to being driven. Transitioning to using fixed route bus service is a bigger conceptual leap, which may be why they tend to prefer Access over fixed route service.

Mr. Hillmer added that Access is a separate agency. Half of their funding comes from the FTA, the other half comes from local sales tax revenues apportioned to Metro. All of fixed route providers and access draw from that pool. Because service is one on one, it is very expensive to provide. The more Access riders there are, the more quickly they use up the available sales tax dollars.

Lisa Caster commented that the directional signs posted for the meeting should have language added that the public is invited to attend.

7. CLOSING Remarks, Council Members and Staff

Councilmember Harabedian commented that he has been having a difficult time leaving work early enough to arrive for the 5 p.m. meeting time. He asked that an item be placed on the next meeting agenda for the Council to consider changing to a later meeting time.

ADJOURNED at 6:09 p.m.