

South Bay Cities Council of Governments Transit Operators' Working Group

February 4, 2021

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Joyce Rooney, Leslie Scott & Diane Amaya (Beach Cities Transit); Dana Pynn (GTrans); Martin Gombert (PVPTA); James Lee & Ryan Plumb (Torrance Transit); Steve Lantz, Jacki Bacharach & David Leger (SBCCOG)

1) Self-Introductions & Acceptance of the January 7, 2021 Meeting Notes

The virtual meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. Meeting notes were accepted as presented.

2) Transit Operator Issues and Concerns Including COVID-19 Impacts

Mr. Lantz opened discussion for the agencies to share pandemic and general issues and concerns.

Ms. Pynn noted GTRANS service remains largely unchanged from last month, except for the new federal mask mandate on public transportation. She explained that the regional general managers group has started discussing how to best implement the rule. The trouble would likely be around a situation where a passenger does not want to wear a mask, and how the driver is supposed to respond. Mr. Lantz added that Metro CEO Phil Washington stated that his job was to protect the safety of the operators and he wasn't willing to force them to enforce the mask mandate. Metro is letting the LAPD/Sheriff/Metro Ambassadors do the enforcement. Ms. Rooney reported that Beach Cities Transit doesn't have too many mask compliance issues, but also hands out masks to those who need them. Mr. Lee noted that Torrance Transit previously had a few regular riders who refused to wear masks, but at least one has now started complying.

Mr. Lee asked the group if any other operators had been contacted by El Segundo about using a bus to shuttle seniors to a COVID-19 vaccination site. Ms. Rooney shared that Beach Cities Health District is looking to work with LA County to set up a vaccination site in Manhattan Beach and that BCT is beginning talks with them on what service may be able to be provided. Concerns surround bringing large groups of vulnerable seniors to the sites using one vehicle as well as physical logistical issues at the site being considered. The discussions are in very early stages so additional details can be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Jo shared that Carson is considering working with Long Beach on an interagency partnership to provide service for the main corridors in the city. Additional details may be available in February.

Mr. Plumb also reported that construction of the Torrance Transit Center is well underway and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

3) Measure R SBHP Decennial Transfer Update & Metro Budget Request Update

Mr. Lantz shared that the Measure R Metro Budget Request recommendation is in the agenda packet and includes the previously applied for Transit projects. Please let Mr. Leger know of any cashflow changes before the SBCCOG Board meeting. After the Metro Board approves the transfer in July or later, there may be an additional delay until funding is available while Metro staff drafts guidelines for the new program.

4) Updates on Metro Issues, Initiatives & Studies

- Metro Recovery Task Force Recommendations / Metro Fareless Service Initiative

Mr. Lantz briefly provided a brief update on the Metro Recovery Task Force recommendations and the Fareless Service Initiative (FSI). Ms. Pynn shared that the municipal operators have started to be more involved in the FSI but have not had a meeting with Metro in several weeks. Ms. Rooney added that it was relayed to her through another working group that an update would be going to the Metro Board in the Spring. Mr. Lantz shared that at a recent Metro Board Staff briefing, there was significant concern not only about impact on municipal operators, Access Services, and other transit operators in the County, but also about the FSI impacts on federal grant funding opportunities. As part of federal grant applications, Metro is required to prove the financial capability to deliver the project, including funding to operate the service in addition to existing services and capital projects.

In its most recent full funding grant agreement, Metro had indicated it planned on increasing fares. However, with the FSI and the elimination of hundreds of millions in fare revenues, Metro cannot identify where that funding would then come from, which would jeopardize Metro's ability to qualify for federal capital grant funding.

- 5) **Three Month Look-Ahead:** Item was received and filed.
- 6) **February 2021 Transportation Update:** Item was received and filed.
- 7) **Announcements/Adjournment – Next Transit Operators Working Group meeting**
The meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m. to March 4, 2021 at 3 p.m.