

Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council
Meeting of the Transportation Committee
July 25, 2022
DRAFT MINUTES

I. WELCOMING REMARKS

A. Call to Order

A duly noticed meeting of the Transportation Committee of the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council (“GWNC”) was held on Monday, July 25, 2022, via Zoom (online and by telephone). Committee chairperson Cindy Chvatal called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Mr. Carpenter called the roll. Seven of the nine Committee Members were present at Roll Call: Jonah Bliss, Jeffrey Carpenter, Cindy Chvatal (chair), Frank Moser, Owen Smith, Conrad Starr, and Sam Uretsky. Julie Stromberg and Jon Vein were absent. GWNC board secretary Jennifer DeVore moderated the meeting. *[The GWNC Transportation Committee quorum (the minimum number of Committee Members needing to be present to take binding votes on Agendized Items) was 51% of 9 Committee Seats, or five, so the Committee was able to take such votes.]*

II. COMMENTS BY GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Joaquin Macias, Field Deputy for Council District 5, joined the meeting at 7:07 pm after item IV.A was acted on and made brief comments.

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments from public attendees.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

A. Review and Adoption of Committee Minutes. Draft minutes for the March 28th, April 8th and May 23, 2022 meetings. Mr. Uretsky asks if he is eligible to vote on the meeting minutes and it decided, since he has been attending the meetings in question (and providing corrections) he is eligible to vote.

MOTION (by Mr. Carpenter, seconded by Mr. Smith): That the GWNC Transportation Committee approve the draft meeting minutes for March 28, April

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8 and May 23, 2002.

MOTION PASSED 7 in favor, no opposed, no abstentions.

A.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion with Ned Racine, Metro, Updates on Construction and System Issues.

Mr. Racine's presentation on current Metro rail system challenges was put up on Zoom with Mr. Starr's assistance. Mr. Racine outlined a pilot effort proposed for the Red Line to address rider concerns and complaints.

Cleanliness. Mr. Racine explained that the train car cleaning equipment at Division 20, the maintenance facility east of Downtown that maintains Red Line and Purple Line train cars, has been out of operation recently, which is partly responsible for train cars being dirtier than they would be otherwise.

A longer-standing problem are fogged and water-spotted train windows, which are the result of the caustic chemicals that have been used to clean train windows.

Safety and Security. There is a recognized need for more transit security officers to check who is riding and to try and curb homeless transients from taking up residence in train cars. One initiative is to add train "ambassadors", as many as 300, starting sometime in the fall.

Mr. Starr raised concerns that some of the more extreme cleanliness issues, such as defalcation in elevators, needed to be vigorously addressed, and that personal security onboard trains had become a serious issue. Mr. Carpenter raised the issue created free fare initiatives that significantly limit Metro's ability to control about of Metro facilities and services. Mr. Uretsky asked for more information on the implementation of the ambassador program.

8th and Highland Pedestrian Crossing. Changing topics, Ms. Chvatal asked if Metro had a position or proposals relating to providing a pedestrian crossing across Highland at 8th Street, something that had gotten mention in Metro's "Frist/Last Mile" plan for the La Brea Purple Line station. Mr. Racine said he would have to research that topic.

Fairfax Station. Mr. Racine noted that removal of the decking at the Fairfax station would commence on September 9th, working from east to west over weekends from 9 PM Friday to 6 AM Monday morning.

A.

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B. Discussion with LADOT Engineering on Implementation of a Pedestrian Crossing of Highland at 8th Street

Ms. Eliana Goehring, addressing the Committee on behalf of the new LADOT District Engineer Rudy Guevara for this portion of the GWNC, stated that installing a crosswalk across Highland at 8th Street would likely involve the installation of a beacon signal of some sort and that would likely take 3 to 5 years to get programmed. She questioned, however, the justification for such a crossing, noting that all major trip attractors are located north, at Wilshire, but stressed she was “here to listen” on why this crossing was seen to be needed.

Mr. Bliss responded that the primary, underlying concern was neighborhood connectivity which is increasingly being disrupted by intensifying street traffic, that the neighborhood needed to be better connected together if it was going to be better connected to transit.

Mr. Starr brought up graphics from Metro’s First/Last Mile plan for the La Brea station that indicated a crossing at 8th and Highland as part of a “pedestrian pathway network”. He noted that 8th Street is a much more pleasant street to walk on than a major boulevard like Wilshire.

Ms. Goehring responded that these were aspects that she typically did not work with but there would be LADOT staff that could address the issues involved. She re-iterated, however, that making the case for a crosswalk would come down to a level of usage that would justify the improvement.

Mr. Carpenter recounted that, in the recent past, LADOT had been seeking community input on the need for “less stress” pedestrian connections that would help promote pedestrian mobility and had specifically solicited input for a Highland crossing at 4th Street. The question was raised why that same evaluation framework should not be applied to this Highland crossing.

Mr. Macias asked Ms. Goehring about the scope of the study she was anticipated being needed, suggesting it should extend at least from Wilshire to Olympic. He noted that with the recent re-districting, staff with experience and history with many of these concerns had been scattered about and that it would be useful to convene meetings between appropriate LADOT and Metro staff clarify a project framework.

He said he would endeavor to get a meeting organized.

Mr. Bliss added that tying into Metro’s programming might help identify potential funding sources to support LADOT’s installation of improvements. Ms. Goehring responded that aspect would be good to explore and that Rudy Guevara would be the best person to involve in those discussion.

B.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Continued Transportation Committee Member Outreach: Transportation and Traffic Safety Priority Issues in Greater Wilshire Communities.

Mr. Uretsky noted that his neighborhood is now in CD13, which seems to be in a different LADOT “district” than Mr. Guevara's, and asked if the appropriate staff from that district can be included in the Committee’s meetings. Ms. Chvatal said that she would follow up on that concern.

Ms. Chvatal noted that recent left turn restrictions appear to have helped improve traffic flow on Highland, but that there was a need for greater traffic enforcement generally. Mr. Macias responded that he would look into increasing enforcement on Highland.

B. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Bliss announced that he was having to resign from the Committee as he was leaving the GWNC and moving to West Adams.

Mr. Starr noted the recent hearings on the Crenshaw Northern Extension and that it appears that the GWNC requirement for any La Brea alignment to be underground now seems to be an accepted baseline.

VII. REQUESTS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Chvatal identified updates on pending traffic calming measures on 6th Street for the next agenda. This was echoed by Mr. Uretsky, citing the promised CD 13 study of potential speed tables on a section of 6th Street in Windsor Square.

There were no other requests for future agenda items. The next meeting of the Committee was noted to be at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, July 25, 2022. via Zoom ID 921 5993 555.

Mr. Smith moved for adjournment of the meeting at 7:56 PM.

