



Board Report

File #: 2015-1662, **File Type:** Informational Report

Agenda Number: 62.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING JANUARY 28, 2016

SUBJECT: SAN PEDRO RED CAR LINE MOTION RESPONSE

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE response to Motion #39 in September 2015 by Director Knabe on the **San Pedro Red Car Line**.

ISSUE

In September 2015, a motion by Director Don Knabe (Attachment A) directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to report on items related to the operations of the San Pedro Red Car Line.

DISCUSSION

A 1990s study of the San Pedro waterfront envisioned significant development along the waterfront, from the Catalina and World Cruise Terminals on the north to Ports O' Call Village and the 22nd St. / East Channel / West Channel / Los Angeles Harbor on the south. One of the components of this study was for a rail line to operate between the locations. In turn, the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) opened the 1.5 mile Waterfront Red Car Line on July 19, 2003 with four high platform stations serving the World Cruise Center, Downtown San Pedro, Ports O' Call, and the Marina.

Initial operation provided regular service Fridays thru Mondays, using two trolleys from 10am to 6pm and on days when cruise ships were in Port. In 2010, regular service was reduced to Fridays thru Sundays using one trolley car, operating from 12pm to 9pm with a \$1 fare for the entire day and free during special events.

Findings

From 2005 through 2009, annual ridership was reported to have about 103,000 passengers on average. From 2010 through 2014, with one less scheduled day of service, annual ridership was reported to average 80,000 passengers. Over the years, expenses ranged from \$1.3 million to almost \$2.0 million annually, with revenues ranging from \$11,000 to \$25,000 thousand annually (Attachment B).

The San Pedro area is currently serviced by nine fixed route bus lines operated by Metro, Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), and Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority

PVPTA (Attachment C). Additionally, the San Pedro Waterfront Business Improvement District (SPWBID) operates weekend only rubber-tire trolley service connecting downtown San Pedro with the waterfront area. There are no specific transportation facilities in the area, except the street side bus stops and the four Red Car Line station platforms.

As directed by the Metro Board in September, Metro's CEO requested that the POLA continue service while evaluations of service alternatives were considered (Attachment D). The POLA suspended service on September 27, 2015 in anticipation of the Sampson Way Realignment project, a \$13.6 million road improvement project that will realign Harbor Boulevard directly into the Ports O' Call Village. This project will enhance access to an important waterfront redevelopment project prioritized by the community, elected officials and the Port. This project was introduced in 2005 as part of the San Pedro Waterfront and Promenade from Bridge-to-Breakwater Master Development Plan and included as a project element in the 2009 approved San Pedro Waterfront Project Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report. The new street realignment is located on the current Red Car Line right-of-way, approximately 0.15 miles south of 6th St. and immediately east of the 8th and 9th Streets alignment in downtown San Pedro. The right-of-way south of the new roadway intersection is planned to become commercial /parking to support new Ports O' Call development. Metro provided \$4.951 million towards this project through the 2015 Call for Projects.

Construction is expected to begin in September 2016 and be completed in early 2018. The POLA is currently in discussions with the SPWBID to fund expanded operations of their rubber tire trolley services.

Once construction is underway, the current Red Car Line right-of-way would remain intact north of Sixth St. and south of the Ports O' Call Stations. There is no immediate plan to relocate the Red Car Line between these stations.

The September 2009 Waterfront Red Line Expansion Feasibility Report, prepared for POLA by Wilson & Company, provided a general overview of options for a rebuilt and vastly expanded Red Car trolley service, linking Wilmington, North Gaffey St., Downtown, Cabrillo Beach, City Dock No. 1 and the Outer Harbor with the Waterfront. The Red Car network would provide transportation between future development, current and redeveloped attractions. The expansion is approached in phases. (Attachment E)

The study suggests relocation of the Red Car Harbor Blvd. / Ports O' Call corridor, moving the operation to the east toward the Village area, away from the Harbor Blvd. / Sampson Way realignment project, as the initial requirement to support expansion of the network. It further suggested that this segment could be constructed in conjunction with the pending new roadway alignments. Additionally, the study called out a need to establish "a clear waterfront nexus to satisfy State Lands Commission restrictions on Port expenditures." At this time, other than a designated location for the right-of-way, there are no plans or funding in place for this to be addressed or occur.

Interim Operating Options

Consideration for operating the north end of the line between the Swinford St./ Cruise Center and 6th

St. Stations (0.6 miles) would require locating and constructing a maintenance facility, as well as a traction power facility. An additional suggested consideration to extend the line north on the railroad right-of-way approximately 0.5 miles to Pacific Ave. and Front St. would have minimal purpose consistent with the service area along the waterfront. In addition to constructing the needed power and maintenance infrastructure, a new station would also be required.

The south end of the line between Ports O' Call and 22nd St. Stations (0.4 miles) has both traction power and a maintenance facility, however the 22nd St. Station area does not presently have significant surrounding development. Additionally, the Ports O' Call Station would have a significant pedestrian access challenge to and from the Village area, requiring walking through a parking lot.

The operation of the line over a short distance, either north or south of the street realignment, is currently not a viable community transit or circulation component. Until additional development in the area is realized, the use of the line would be best defined as recreational.

Funding

Staff has evaluated potential funding sources for the San Pedro Red Car. In terms of funding the truncated service, the San Pedro Red Car would need to compete for the same funding currently used for bus and rail operations. For a new or expanded service, eligible capital sources could include Federal and State funds. Potential Federal sources are: Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, Federal Small or Very Small Starts Grants, Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant. The potential State sources are Cap and Trade funds. It should be noted that each of these sources requires a local match and has specific eligibility requirements. The CMAQ and Cap and Trade Low Carbon Transit Operations Program funds are for capital purposes and can be used for the first three years of operations of a new or expanded service. Although a new or expanded service is eligible for both CMAQ and RSTP funds, these funds are currently planned for existing Metro bus and rail operations, eligible Metro highway projects and the Call for Projects.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will meet with POLA, the City of Los Angeles, SPWBID and other stakeholders to recommend those parties address the findings of the 2009 Study


ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Motion #39, San Pedro Red Car Line
- Attachment B - Port of LA Ridership & Financial Summary
- Attachment C - Metro Bus Service for San Pedro (Effective 12/15)
- Attachment D - Letter of Closure to Port of LA
- Attachment E - September 2009 Report: Waterfront Red Line Phased Expansion

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