

**METRO SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GOVERNANCE COUNCIL  
JUNE 8, 2004**

**SUBJECT: CUSTOMER COMPLAINT REPORT**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**BACKGROUND**

The Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector directly operates 26 bus lines. In addition, six MTA bus lines are operated under contract within our service area. These lines are presently managed by the Contract Service group within the MTA corporate offices. All 32 of these lines provide transit service to residents and workers within the San Gabriel Valley Sector service area, and the operator should be unimportant to these customers.

SGV Sector staff will begin to report on service and performance aspects of contracted service including customer complaints.

**SUMMARY OF CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS**

Staff has compiled line level complaint data for all 32 bus lines for the first four months of 2004. Attachment A provides a detailed accounting of all complaints received by line for each month. The SGV Sector target for customer complaints is a rate of three complaints or less per 100,000 passenger boardings. For the period studied, the directly operated service was generating complaints at an average rate of 3.4 per 100,000 passengers, while contracted service was amassing them at a rate of 10.3.

Attachment B provides a graphic view of the monthly complaint rates for these two classifications of MTA bus service. While the complaint rate for contracted service is unacceptably high, it has been trending downward during the first four months of 2004. The six contracted lines operating within the SGV Sector provide about 9% of the bus service hours and 6% of the passenger boardings. Therefore, while they only have generated 16% of the customer complaints, they are being generated at a rate that is nearly three times as great as the service that is directly operated.

Ranking all lines by the rate of customer complaints is illustrated on Attachment C, with the lines generating the highest complaint rates at the top. There are nine lines that amassed more than ten complaints per 100,000 boardings. Three of the ten are

contract lines and the remaining six are directly operated lines. Of interest is the fact that these nine lines, with a couple of exceptions, tend to be lines that operated infrequently, have longer routes, and attract relatively few passengers.

Because of the low ridership, only a few complaints can cause the line to have a high complaint rate. For example, contract Line 177 operates from City of Hope to JPL via Pasadena. This line was recently changed to provide expedited service to JPL. We have received numerous compliments from JPL and passengers for this modified service. Yet, because only about 600 people per day use this line, two complaints in four months would exceed the goal of 3 or less per 100,000 passengers.

Also, because most of these lines are relatively infrequent, and have relatively long routes, any anomaly that might occur, such as traffic, can cause a significant negative impact to riders.

The lines that attract the fewest complaint rates tend to be lines in heavy corridors that operate frequent service, or shuttle type lines that have short routes and also have good service levels.

### **Other Issues**

Planning and scheduling staff will continue to work to prepare service plans that emphasize regional high frequency bus service, and shorter shuttle routes still with good service levels. We will also continue to work closely with our other transit partners to coordinate service and routes.

Also, Contract Services has two field supervisors for the entire county. SGV Sector staff has begun to work more closely with the Contract Services group to coordinate supervision. When Contract Services has a service issue or customer complaint that they would not be able to quickly respond to, the SGV supervisors would be able to assist. This should allow for a quicker evaluation of complaints, and allow for corrective actions to be initiated.

Attachments – A, B & C

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