

MINUTES

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Service Sector Governance Councils Annual Meet and Confer

MTA Headquarters Building
One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012
3rd Floor Cafeteria
Called to order at 4:10 p.m.

Roger Snoble, Chief Executive Officer
John B. Catoe, Jr., Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Council Members present:

Coby King, Council Chair, San Fernando
Valley Service Sector
Richard Arvizu
Joan H. Leonard
Brad Rosenheim
Kymberleigh Richards

Bart Doyle, Council Chair, San Gabriel
Valley Service Sector
Bruce Heard
Henry Lopez
David Spence
Sid Tyler
Rosie Vasquez

Terisa Price, Council Chair, South Bay
John McTaggart
Lou Mitchell
Curren Price
Howard Sachar
Margaret Hudson

Carol Gross, Council Chair Westside
Peter Capone-Newton
Presley Burroughs
Helen Ann Johnson
Joyce Perkins
Brad Robinson
Anny Semonco

Sam Pena, Council Chair, Gateway Cities Service Sector
JoAnn Eros-Delgado
Jacqueline Rynerson
Wally Shidler
Cynde Soto



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1) RECEIVED Chief Executive Officer's Remarks

2) RECEIVED Deputy Chief Executive Officer's Remarks

- FY05 Budget Targets for Metro Operations
- FY05 Metro Operations Performance Goals and Key Performance Indicators
- Governance Council Roles

CEO Roger Snoble:

- welcomed the Councilmembers. Mr. Snoble remarked that in July of 2002 the MTA decentralized management of the bus system by creating the Service Sectors. The goal was to improve service to its customers by providing local communities with input into its operations. The key principles were to localize control, maintain a single point of contact for service issues, balance responsibility with authority, streamline the decision process and support agency policies, plans and safety initiatives.
- gave a summary of the purpose of the Service Sectors: to improve bus service, increase accessibility and responsiveness, increase coordination, and provide a supportive employee work environment and focused customer service. He added that it is also the responsibility of the Governance Councils to approve Sector budgets within designated funding levels, conduct public hearings for Sector bus lines, develop policy recommendations to the MTA Board and provide input on the Service Sector General Manager's performance review.
- reported on the recent Executive Management Retreat held in the City of Industry Conference Facility where staff worked together on vision, mission and a strategic plan to deal with current challenges.

Vision – Metro, leading the nation in safety, mobility and customer satisfaction.

Mission – Continuous improvement of an effective and efficient transportation system for Los Angeles County.

- Agency's Strategic Plan

Mr. Snoble stated that staff is in the process of updating the Strategic Plan to enable both new and existing leaders to develop a common vision and a shared sense of purpose. He stated that the Strategic Plan serves as the agency-wide blue print and foundation on how the MTA will be leading the nation in safety, mobility and customer satisfaction. The Strategic Plan's key goals to meet the County's transportation needs are:

- Improve transit service
- deliver capital projects on time and within budget
- fiscal responsibility
- leadership for the region's mobility agenda
- develop an effective and efficient workforce

- Major recent accomplishments:

- Continuously upholding safety as a priority; decreasing accidents and Worker's Compensation claims.
- The creation of Sectors to work with the community
- Expansion of Metro Rapid Bus service
- Federal transit security model being put into use on the rail systems
- Update of the Short Range Transportation Plan
- Opened the Gold Line, the safest rail line in the country
- Increase in ridership
- Development of facilities assessment and identification of our weaknesses and strengths
- Attracting commuters to various rideshare programs
- Increasing outreach to businesses and organizations, thereby enhancing image of Metro

- Strategies:

- No. 10 **Pinch Every Penny:** This directive is especially critical as the agency confronts a structural deficit next year of at least \$20 million and funds \$13.2 million of Consent Decree service.
- No. 09 **Work together.** Improve labor relations throughout the organization.
- No. 08 **Look ahead.** Seek public input to facilitate congestion relief, long range planning and improve air quality.
- No. 07 **Keep an eye out.** Keep our eyes and ears open, and be vigilant of bus system security.

- No. 06 **Finish what we started.** Streamline the process and finish projects that have been started. Maintain schedules and close out contracts on time.
- No. 05 **Think Orange.** The Orange Line represents a good alternative to rail. Stay on schedule and budget.
- No. 04 **Go East.** Full Funding Grant Agreement for the Eastside Extension project has been met with approval.
- No. 03 **Get in sync.** Integrate capital and operations plans with 10-year financial plan.
- No. 02 **Make them love us.** Meet the needs of the public and increase customer satisfaction.
- No. 01 **Safety.** Reduce accidents and enhance safety environment for our customers and employees.

- Update on FY05 MTA Adopted Budget

Mr. Snoble reported that the Board adopted a balanced \$2.9 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2004-05. He said that the budget-spending plan eliminated at least 233 jobs and reduced the administrative overhead to balance a structural operating deficit. The fares will remain the same. Mr. Snoble said that the agency may lose up to \$2.3 billion in state transportation funding between FY03-09, but will continue to push forward with projects such as the Orange Line and the Gold Line Extension. The FY04-05 budget is greater than the current budget due to costs associated with the Gold Line Eastside Extension and the Orange Line transitway. The risk factors that could potentially drive up the MTA's costs include the final settlement of health care contract issues with the union, Consent Decree, Worker's Compensation costs and energy prices. He stated that manpower costs constitute a significant portion of the budget and that the agency will be starting the fiscal year with a full operator staff, lowering unanticipated overtime costs.

3) DISCUSSED Governance Council approach to achieving Metro Operations performance & FY05 budgetary goals

Mr. Snoble mentioned that agency management will be meeting with Sector General Managers to review the budget on a monthly basis.

Councilmember Richards inquired about the possibility that the increase in ridership and farebox revenues will help fund costs associated with the Consent Decree, given the recent fare restructuring.

Mr. Snoble responded that he prefers to focus on what can be controlled. He will deal with the structural deficit from the cost side of the agency.

Councilmember King asked about the nature of MTA's approach to achieving its mission of continuously improving an efficient and effective transportation system, and what this would entail (attracting discretionary riders, reducing congestion, etc.)

Mr. Snoble responded that the agency needs to focus on people and providing high quality service. As long as the agency can devise ways to save people time and money, it will be able to attract discretionary users to the system. He mentioned the importance of applying the right tools and resources to the right places.

Councilmember Tyler stated that a key component in improving the Sectors' services involves gathering current, ongoing information on ridership by line, segment and time of day. He asked when it might be possible for the Sectors to obtain this information.

Mr. Snoble stated that the agency currently does not have definite data. The new fare boxes will solve the problem in another 1 ½ years. There are a lot of schedule checkers out there counting for the Consent Decree, but those counts are worthless from a management standpoint.

Mr. Catoe stated that he would like to leave it up to the Sectors to guide the MTA into deciding how best to achieve performance and budgetary goals. This would possibly involve having Sector staff attend presentations at Gateway, which would necessitate enhanced internal communication between the agency and Councilmembers.

Mr. Catoe mentioned that Rapid Bus service is very important and that the agency is transferring responsibility for Rapid Bus service out of the Countywide Planning department and into Operations. This will allow Sectors to have greater control over structuring of Rapid Bus service.

Councilmember Leonard noted that she would like to receive more comprehensive information, possibly through email, about meetings and presentations at Gateway.

- 4) DISCUSSED best practices for community outreach and involvement through the sectors.

Councilmember Leonard noted that people attending meetings about the Orange Line were asked for their email addresses, but were not contacted about Sector meetings. She feels we are losing an opportunity to get more people from the community to attend Sector meetings.

Terisa Price requested MTA email addresses for Council members or one central address for each Sector.

Councilmember Richards would like to provide passengers with an ongoing updated schedule of meetings so it would not become outdated. She added that the best way to achieve best practices is to assure that ideas are shared.

Terisa Price noted lack of information at bus stops and asked if Sectors could enter the Marketing area.

The CEO responded that the signage issue is being looked at throughout the agency. But consistency must be maintained throughout the area because people travel among all Sectors. This is another hugely expensive proposition.

Mr. Capone-Newton would like to see internal web communication or some other formal way for Sectors to share information and more bi-directional communication with the Board.

Councilmember Terisa Price asked for some guidance as to how best to coordinate corridor changes with Metro Connections.

Mr. Catoe responded that we will focus on the direction that Metro Connections will take us when we make our service changes this year. From an operating perspective, the Sectors should get an "A". Prior to Sectors, customers would have to come downtown on Saturday from 10-12 to meet with people who had their interests in mind but really didn't know the service area. Now we have planners who know the routes, and ride the lines and this is just the infant stage.

ATMS will be activated later this year. That will give us much more accurate passenger counts.

Councilmember Johnson mentioned her experience in the Vermont Corridor where she sees people waiting for the Rapid Buses with no place to sit; the buses are not clean and the drivers are rude.

Mr. Snoble responded that bus benches are provided by the city, but MTA can influence them. With Metro Connections the bus stops will be bigger and more customer oriented.

Councilmember Perkins, also Executive Director of Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, would like to have a dialogue as to how she could work more closely with the MTA to provide more comfortable, safe and secure bus stops and other amenities for the customer.

Mr. Snoble replied that Rapid bus stops are very expensive yet don't provide much shelter. Perhaps there's a better way to stretch the money.

Councilmember Perkins asked if there is any kind of assessment in place to address the lack of parking spaces at some MTA-owned Park and Ride facilities. She noted that these facilities tend to get full early in the day.

Mr. Snoble stated that the North Hollywood Park and Ride facility is an example of that but there are other places where we would like to pay people to park. We also need to create a much better feeder bus system to the rail lines.

Councilmember Tyler inquired about the role of the Sectors and ways in which they can help the agency achieve its objectives. He asked "Are we passive advisory boards receiving public comment, or are we sovereign independent kingdoms?"

Mr. Snoble stated that the Sectors are the eyes and ears of the agency and should be focused on serving the public and knowing the local environment. They need to spend time on bus routes i.e. where they should go, where the stops should be, and look at quality of service. Of course, this will all work much better when the Consent Decree ends.

- Better Communication

Councilmember Terisa Price stated that it would be helpful for the agency to assign an MTA email account to each Councilmember in order to increase Councilmember's accessibility and to facilitate both internal communication as well as communication with the public.

Mr. Catoe stated that he will work with all of the Sector General Managers to determine ways to communicate more effectively with individual Councilmembers.

Councilmember Leonard stated that the Sector is dependent upon limited resources to communicate information about meetings to the public, and this is exemplified by the relatively few members of the public appearing at Council meetings.

Councilmember Richards added that it is important for Sectors to reach the average customer since few people are aware of Council meetings. She suggested distributing general information about when Sectors meet in a given month so that the public has a way to communicate to the Sectors if the need arises.

Councilmember King observed that each Sector had at least one creative idea to improve performance and service quality that wasn't being communicated to other Sectors. He stated that the best way to ensure best practices is to share information and ideas across Sectors.

Councilmember Price noted the lack of information about bus schedules and routes at most bus stops. She stated that adopting new marketing techniques would raise existing and potential passengers' knowledge about services offered by Metro.

Mr. Snoble stated that the agency is working to improve signage at bus stops in order to provide specific information for both transit users and passersby. He stated that it's important that any signage that's added demonstrate consistency across all Sectors. He stated that he would like to see the agency make changes in this area over a period of 2-3 years.

Councilmember Capone-Newton expressed his desire for more web presence for the Sectors. He stated this would allow the Sectors to better communicate internally and encourage feedback from the public.

Councilmember Doyle mentioned the possibility of recording generic videos about service changes, new fare media, etc. for use on public access channels on cable television in order to help people obtain more information about the system. He stated that the agency would benefit from sustained marketing techniques as well as synergy with local operators in order to promote service.

Councilmember Curren Price added that marketing of Metro services should also include print media.

Councilmember Gross stated that the agency should consider forming focus groups to discuss ways to convince motorists to get out of their cars and onto the system.

5) DISCUSSED Councils' report to the Board of Directors, July 22, 2004

Mr. Catoe announced that each Council will be providing an overall briefing about the progress it has made during the past year at the regular Board Meeting to be held July 22. He expressed his appreciation for the efforts and energy the Councils have shown since their inception. Councilmembers selected Coby King, Chairman of the San Fernando Service Sector, to be their spokesperson at the July 22 meeting.

Howard Sachar encouraged all Sector Chairs to meet with Coby King and John Catoe to discuss what they would like communicated to the Board.

6) DISCUSSED schedule and approach for FY05 Annual Meetings

A decision regarding FY05 annual meeting will be made at a later date following meetings with the Council Chairs.

7) Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Council Final Comments

Councilmember Rynerson suggested a need for better communication between downtown and Sector staff. Two meetings were held in his city regarding Rapid Bus and Sector staffs were not notified. Not even the Sector Community Relations person was aware of them.

Mr. Catoe responded that Rapid Bus was assigned to the Planning and Programming area of the agency. As of July 1, it will be transferred into Operations and the Sectors will have a lot more involvement, but there is still a need for better communication.

Councilmember Burroughs asked what MTA could do for the Friends of Expo line.

Mr. Snoble responded that the completion of the Exposition Light Rail Project is a priority and included in the strategic plan. He noted that the agency has obtained an additional \$5 million to fund the environmental to Culver City, so it will be completely cleared by this time next year. Then if we can find the money, perhaps we can start constructing sometime after that.

Mr. McTaggart asked what "grade" Mr. Snoble would give the Councils to date.

Mr. Snoble responded that some are ahead because they started earlier; but he sees a lot of energy, concern and desire to make things happen. He added that he did not want to be out in the Sectors during the first year. He wanted to allow the Councils to get to know the General Managers. Both he and Mr. Catoe will visit each Council this year.

Mr. Catoe stated that Metro Connections should be looked at from the perspective of the Sector, and that Matt Raymond, Chief Communications Officer, may be collaborating with the Sectors in this process. He mentioned that the agency will consider producing a publication that is Sector-specific in order to communicate Sector meeting times and restructuring efforts, among other issues. He emphasized the importance of focusing on the basics, including on-time performance, bus cleanliness, and bus operator courtesy.

Mr. Snoble stated that MTA will consider providing monthly updates to the Board of Directors about each Sector through an oral report given by the Deputy CEO.

8) RECEIVED public comment.

Prepared by: Christina Lumba-Gamboa and Michele Chau
Recording Secretaries

Michele Jackson
Board Secretary