

Minutes/Proceedings

San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector Office
San Gabriel Valley Conference Room
3369 Santa Anita Avenue
El Monte, CA 91731

Called to Order at 5:12 P.M.

Council Members Present:

Bart Doyle, Chair
Sid Tyler, Vice Chair
Harry Baldwin
Emile Bayle
Bruce Heard
Henry Lopez
David Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. APPROVED July 13, 2004 Minutes.
2. APPROVED August 10, 2004 Minutes.
3. RECEIVED Public Comment.

Please refer to Item #6 for comments related to service change proposals.

4. Chair's Remarks – Chairman Doyle introduced Carol Gross, Chair of the Westside/Central Service Sector Governance Council and Jim McElroy, General Manager of the Westside/Central Service Sector.
5. RECEIVED an oral report on the Spring Customer Satisfaction Survey by Jeff Boberg, Transportation Planning Mgr., Program & Service Development.

Mr. Boberg gave an overview of the biannual on-board satisfaction tracking survey conducted in June 2004. The survey consists of a sampling of all non-contract bus lines and three contract lines, and involves short yes/no core questions as well as questions for targeting new campaigns. Mr. Boberg mentioned that the agency received high response rates and that results indicate that customer satisfaction has increased since the Winter 2004 survey taken shortly after the strike. He noted that the increase in customer satisfaction may be tied to the agency's advertising program as well as word-of-mouth about benefits of the system.

With respect to trends in system-wide bus service, results show that a majority of passengers are satisfied with Metro bus service. In addition, most bus riders indicated the following:

- Metro bus service is convenient to use
- Passengers normally have seats for their trips
- The new Metro Day Pass is convenient to use
- 62% of those surveyed were aware of Metro's Service Sectors

With respect to trends in the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector, a slightly higher number of passengers surveyed (87%) expressed satisfaction with Metro bus service. In addition to the results noted above, most bus riders in the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector indicated the following:

- Metro's image is improving
- Metro's bus service has improved since last year
- 65% of respondents noted that their bus was generally on time
- Bus drivers are generally courteous

Passengers on the Gold Line indicated the following:

- A vast majority (97%) were satisfied with Metro rail service
- Most passengers did not experience a train breaking down in the last month
- Most passengers were asked to show proof of payment sometime during the prior month
- Those paying cash indicated that the ticket vending machine was easy to use
- 56% indicated that they have a car available to make their trip

Mr. Boberg mentioned that the next survey in Fall 2004 will be significant in that it will show if gains over strike-influenced results will continue.

In response to Councilmember Spence's inquiry about the number of people surveyed, Mr. Boberg stated that roughly 70 people were surveyed on each line.

Mr. Gabig asked about the sample method used.

Mr. Boberg responded the market research team conducted the survey using random sampling and that passengers must be on a bus at the time the survey is taken; that is, a passenger cannot request to have a survey mailed to them.

Councilmember Vasquez inquired about the time of day that the survey was conducted. She stated that results may vary depending upon whether respondents took the survey during rush hour vs. non-peak periods.

Mr. Boberg stated that the survey is taken during the day, either from 6-9 A.M. or 3-6 P.M.

Councilmember Tyler mentioned that the market research team should be receiving a great deal of feedback due to the large number of passengers surveyed (13,000 bus riders and 2,000 Gold Line patrons).

Mr. Boberg stated that the survey was a diagnostic one and that it was intended to find significant trends rather than provide a detailed analysis of customer satisfaction. It did not include a section for rider comments.

Councilmember Tyler asked if the research team will follow up with those respondents who indicated that they were not satisfied with Metro service.

Mr. Boberg stated that the agency periodically coordinates focus groups of about 12 people to discuss the pros and cons of various issues related to customer satisfaction (e.g., marketing campaigns). These focus groups allow the agency to obtain more in-depth information from transit users. He mentioned that a line-by-line analysis is available for the June 2004 survey.

6. APPROVED the findings of the August 10, 2004 Public Hearing.

Mr. Hillmer reported that the August 10, 2004 Public Hearing on proposed San Gabriel Valley Service Sector changes held at Pasadena City College was well-attended and that the placement of service change alerts on buses helped increase public input at Sector meetings.

Mr. Hillmer summarized the Public Hearing findings and staff responses to proposed service changes. Staff recommends postponing changes for Lines 85, 170, 181, and 685 pending further study.

Proposed service changes to Lines 78/378, 267, 380, 491, 687, and 787 will be implemented as proposed. Of the 300 passengers onboard Line 491 during both peak periods, approximately 150 riders (75 in each peak period) who do not alight at the El Monte Station would have to transfer at this Station to complete their trip. Mr. Hillmer stated that Foothill Transit bus line 492 which runs along Santa Anita Blvd. from Live Oak Ave. to the El Monte Station would be able to provide service along portions of the discontinued segment of Line 491. The extended route of Line 487 will replace the discontinued segment of Line 491 between the City of Sierra Madre and El Monte Station. In addition, service will be added to Lines 484 and 490 between Downtown Los Angeles and El Monte Station. Mr. Hillmer noted that with respect to Line 687, staff will adopt a routing proposal by the City of Pasadena to remove service on Los Robles through the city of San Marino. He stated that the Westside/Central Service Sector received a significant number of comments regarding changes to Line 787 compared with the San Gabriel Sector. This is primarily attributed to reductions in local service in the Westside/Central Sector resulting from implementation of Rapid Bus service.

Councilmember Tyler noted that of the 105 riders impacted by service changes on Line 687, a majority are high school students. He asked about impacts to those who are not high school students.

Mr. Hillmer stated that passengers boarding at California and Los Robles would have to migrate about ¼ to ½ mile to Del Mar in order to reach alternate service.

Councilmember Heard mentioned that he is a regular passenger on Line 687 and has observed quite a few domestic workers heading northbound on the Line from their originating points south of Glenarm St. He expressed concern about the impact of service changes on these domestic workers.

Mr. Hillmer stated that the service changes are intended to build up the ridership base on Line 687, which is on the edge of being one of the poorer-performing lines. The changes would also provide better access to the Gold Line as well as Huntington Memorial Hospital.

Public comment regarding the proposed changes included the following concerns*:

- Most riders who have offered feedback on proposed changes to Line 687 support the changes. A few expressed opposition to reducing access to Los Robles south of Glenarm St.
- Overcrowding and desire for increased frequency of trips on Line 170. Desire to maintain or expand service on Line 170.
- Opposition to reduced local service on Line 217 in the Westside/Central Service Sector due to implementation of Line 787 Rapid Bus. Concern that buses will “bunch up” along the lengthy route of Line 787 and on-time performance will suffer.
- Opposition to changes on Line 491 and inconvenience to passengers who will have to transfer at El Monte Station to complete their trip. Potential difficulty transferring to Foothill Transit Line 492 during rush hour.

Councilmember Spence asked which Sector will monitor Line 787.

Mr. Gabig responded that monitoring of Line 787 will require close coordination between field supervisor teams at both the Westside/Central Service Sector as well as the San Gabriel Service Sector.

Mr. Hillmer added that the newly implemented ATMS (Advanced Traffic Management System) will aid in remote monitoring of the Line by both Sectors.

Chairman Doyle asked where Foothill Transit Line 492 terminates.

Mr. Hillmer responded that it terminates near Wilshire/Union just before Alvarado St., and the Line is comparable to service provided by existing Metro Line 491.

Councilmember Vasquez noted that passengers using Foothill Line 492 due to cancellation of Line 491 would have to transfer twice if they plan on traveling past the Downtown area.

Mr. Hillmer stated that approximately 60 passengers would be impacted by this situation.

Councilmember Baldwin inquired about the speed of service on Foothill Line 492.

Mr. Hillmer responded that it is comparable to that of existing Line 491.

*Detailed service change proposals and Public Hearing findings are available on the metro.net website under Board of Directors Information.

Pls. refer to Recaps/Agendas and Previous Calendar link on the bottom of the page, select September Schedule and Agendas, San Gabriel Service Sector Agenda:

http://www.metro.net/board/Agendas/2004/09_September/mtgsched.htm

7. RECEIVED report of the General Manager

Mr. Gabig provided an overview of key performance indicators for July 2004:

SAFETY:

- **Monthly Worker's Compensation Costs:** the Sector experienced an unusual spike in costs (\$910,000). The target is \$376,000. Reasons for the significant increase in chargebacks include two serious accidents within the Sector, a large reserve, and the way in which charges are determined. Mr. Gabig explained that the large overhead charge to the Sector is due in part to lower WC Costs amongst the other Sectors for July. He stated that this figure represents an anomaly for the Sector.
- **OSHA Recordable Incidents:** There were 5 Incidents for July. The target is 4.2. Historically, the Sector has seen a downward trend in this category.
- **Bus Traffic Accidents/100,000 Hub Miles:** There were 2.91 Accidents in July. The Sector recently established a new target of 2.76.
- **New WC Indemnity Claims per 200,000 Exposure Hours:** This is a new category for the Sector. Previously, New WC Claims were calculated per 100 employees. There were 6.26 Claims in July. The target is 14.

BUS OPERATIONS:

- **Miles Between Mechanical Failures** were 6,288 for July. This falls well below the monthly target of 9,000 miles. Mr. Gabig stated that July and August are particularly difficult months because of the heat and increased use of air conditioning, both of which raise the potential for mechanical failures.
- **Bus Cleanliness Rating:** The Sector is still struggling with a rating of 7.2. The target is 8.

Chairman Doyle asked if a discrepancy still exists between Divisions 3 and 9 in this category.

Mr. Gabig responded that performance in this category tends to be somewhat higher at Division 9.

Councilmember Heard asked if Cleanliness Rating penalizes for etched windows.

Mr. Gabig responded in the affirmative. Councilmember Heard mentioned that separating vandalism from Cleanliness Rating may increase the Sector's rating in this category.

Councilmember Lopez stated that the buses he rides are generally clean, but the windows have water spots on them from the car wash.

Mr. Gabig stated that this is a challenge throughout the agency. The MTA installed a reverse osmosis system on the wash racks of the car wash to reduce the minerals in the water that are causing the spots. While it is possible to buff each window individually, this would be labor-intensive.

Councilmember Vasquez inquired about how often buses are cleaned.

Mr. Gabig responded that buses are thoroughly cleaned in the morning prior to leaving the bus divisions. He added that operators are responsible for pickup of light debris as they begin and end their shifts. Every 60 days, each bus receives a scrub as well as a 3-4 hour detailing.

- **Complaints/100,000 Boardings** were below the monthly target at 2.99.
- **Passenger Boardings** show a slight increase over the target. Ridership has remained flat within the agency as a whole.
- **On-Time Performance:** Mr. Gabig noted that the Sector has revised its monthly target. It will now focus on a year-round goal of 75%, and may aim at incremental increases to this goal over time. The Sector would like to reduce instances in which operators run ahead of schedule from about 15% to 8%. (need to double check this figure)

“How You Doin?” Program*:

- **Transportation:** Divisions 9 and 3 performed extremely well in this category with rankings of first and second place, respectively.
- **Maintenance:** Mr. Gabig stated that this category presents a challenge for the Sector and that it placed in the middle of the pack for July with rankings of 4th for Division 9 and 5th for Division 3. Division 9 intends to focus on attendance while Division 3 will place greater emphasis on road calls to improve in this category.

*This Performance Incentive program is designed to increase productivity and efficiency and to provide internal recognition to Divisions with high rankings in various categories of performance. Transportation Division rankings are based on the sum of weighted scores for each of the following performance indicators: In-Service, On-Time Performance, Running Hot, Accident Rate, Complaints/100,000 Boardings, and New WC Claims per 100 Employees. Maintenance Division rankings are based on the sum of weighted scores for the following performance indicators: Miles Between Mechanical Failures, Attendance, New WC Claims/100 Employees, and Bus Cleanliness. Summed values are sorted from high to low and the Division with the highest score wins the program award for the month.

Mr. Gabig provided an update on the Sector's status on each of the four Strategic Initiatives which were originally formulated at the June 18 Special Council Retreat and later refined.

- **Initiative #1:** Developing a plan for improving relations and building trust with the MTA Board and Metro staff. The Sector intends to devise a communications program to enhance relations with the Board after receiving final responses from the Council regarding contacts that each individual member has with the Board.

Mr. Gabig mentioned that the Sector is working on multiple messages that it wants to communicate to the Board. In addition, staff will set up a meeting with Michael Cano, Transportation Deputy for Director Antonovich with respect to increasing communication with Director Antonovich and other Board members.

- **Initiative #2:** Developing a long-term strategic transit plan. Mr. Gabig stated that he and Mr. Hillmer devised a strategy to approach core cities within the western portion of San Gabriel Valley to find out if they would be interested in partnering with the Sector to engender broad support among constituents for public transit. The Sector would conduct a 4-6 month study on efforts to build consensus as well as financial and moral support for this initiative. The study would involve reviewing the transit needs of each constituent city (possibly using an outside consultant) and would move forward in the next fiscal year. Costs for the study are estimated at \$100,000. Mr. Gabig mentioned that the Sector may fund half of this cost.

Chairman Doyle asked that in light of the categorical cuts that cities have experienced in their transportation budgets, would it be possible to use AB 2766 funds for this study?

Mr. Gabig stated that it's possible to investigate this. He noted that some cities have reserves in Prop A and C local return dollars.

- **Initiative #3:** Developing a business case for the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector requesting budgetary accountability. Sector Office teams have met and will meet again with the Council on September 22.
- **Initiative #4:** Improving customer communications resulting in higher customer satisfaction (combination of the original Initiatives #5 and #6 involving increased local marketing representation and improved customer satisfaction, respectively). The Council followed through with a formal request to John Catoe, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for a Marketing Department presentation at the October 12, 2004 Governance Council meeting.

The Council requested that the presentation provide information regarding the Marketing Department's plans for marketing bus and rail service in the San Gabriel Valley, as well as the portion of the marketing budget that would be allocated to this area.

FINANCIAL REVIEW:

➤ Year-End results:

Steve Rosenberg, Administration and Finance Manager, gave an overview of year-end (final) and July financial information. He noted that MTA operating budgets were reduced at the close of FY04 to minimize the strike surplus and offset substantial fare shortfalls. The \$3.4 million reduction in the San Gabriel Sector budget was taken in the fourth quarter, which exaggerates the June monthly variances. San Gabriel Sector Operations, which includes total Transportation, Maintenance and Sector Office financial data, finished \$1 million under the revised annual budget. Other Sector Support overruns were primarily due to Risk Management overruns of \$2.2 million. Mr. Rosenberg stated that he was pleased with the year-end results and noted that given the reduction in operating budgets to minimize the strike surplus, the Sector showed a great deal of financial responsibility. He mentioned that the Sector's performance was due in large part to the significant reductions it has made in Worker's Compensation costs over the past year.

➤ FY05 Financials through July:

Transportation is \$200,000 over budget due to minor overruns in labor offset by non-work underruns. Mr. Rosenberg mentioned that there is a significant overrun in WC costs and that the Sector is still dealing with overruns in operator overtime. He stated that a new program has been implemented to minimize unstated operator OT.

Maintenance Labor is 3.2% over budget and Maintenance OT is 3.8% over budget. Fringe Benefits is 10% under budget. Mr. Rosenberg explained that this category tends to run under budget during the first quarter of any fiscal year. Fuel Expense is \$66,000 over budget and Parts Expense is \$45,000 under budget despite a significant budget reduction at Division 3. Mr. Rosenberg stated that he expects Parts Expense to be a challenge for the Sector throughout the new fiscal year.

Mr. Rosenberg mentioned that Overhead is no longer being allocated to Sector cost centers and this will no longer be shown on the financial report.

Councilmember Bayle asked if the cost of CNG has been rising in relation to diesel fuel.

Mr. Gabig responded in the affirmative. He stated that CNG represents about 80% of the Sector's fuel bill.

Mr. Gabig introduced Laura Cornejo, manager of strategic planning and intergovernmental relations at Montebello Bus Lines.

8. RECEIVED an oral report on Community Relations by Liz Armijo-Holbrook, Community Relations Officer

Ms. Armijo-Holbrook mentioned that she will provide more detailed information about the Rail-Volution Conference and Symposium to be held September 18-22 at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel as needed.

Community Outreach activities for August included a SGV Economic Partnership Technology Awards Reception on August 12 at the City of Hope National Medical Center, an Alhambra Chamber of Commerce After Hours Mixer on August 25, and an event at Almansor Court in Alhambra on August 31 which was attended by Dave Kilby, Sr. VP of the California Chamber of Commerce.

9. RECEIVE an oral report on Graffiti Removal Program by John McBryan, Div. 9 Maintenance Manager and Sgt. Mike Herek, LASD Transit Division.

WITHDRAWN.

10. Consideration of Items not on the Posted Agenda – None.

ADJOURNED at 7:25 P.M.

Michele Chau, Council Secretary