

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

MINUTES

San Fernando Valley Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Called to Order at 6:30 P.M.

Service Sector Representatives Present:

Brad Rosenheim, Chair
Richard Arvizu, Vice-Chair
Michael C. Cano
Jesus R. Ochoa
Marsha Ramos
Kymberleigh Richards

Officers:
Richard Hunt, General Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. APPROVED Minutes **as corrected** of Regular Governance Council Meeting held on November 5, 2008.

Amended Item 3 on p. 2 to change spelling of Garafalo to **Garofalo**.

3. RECEIVED Public Comment

Vince Garofolo – Said a Line 233 bus operator on November 29 refused to let him off in front of the In-N-Out Burger on Van Nuys and Ventura Boulevards. He also said the same driver passed him up on a different occasion making him late to an appointment.

Ray Lopez – Suggested a new line to supplement existing Line 158 service. The new line would operate northbound on Arleta Avenue, then eastbound on Paxton, and then serve Sylmar. He wished the Council a Merry Christmas.

Nate Zablén – Said that both Van Nuys and Ventura Boulevards are corridors where Metro should operate evening service with fifteen to twenty minute headways rather than the current thirty minute headways. He added that there should be better connectivity, (i.e. Metro Rapid service) that connects the San Fernando Valley to Glendale. The options currently available (i.e. Line 183; Red Line to Hollywood, transfer to Rapid Line 180) are too slow or only operate during rush hour (i.e. LADOT Commuter Express Line 549). He also said there should be shorter headways and better timed transfer connections between Red Line arrivals and local bus departures, which would make transit riding more attractive to discretionary riders.

4. Chair's Remarks. – NONE
5. RECEIVED oral report of Richard Hunt, General Manager.

Key Performance Indicators

- Accidents continue to fall below the target for FY 2009 thanks to great teamwork of our operators, transit operations supervisors and Division Transportation Managers who have made accident avoidance a top priority for the Sector.

- Steady improvement in mean miles between mechanical failures which is due to the work of Division Maintenance Managers and Staff.
- Complaints are up within the Sector and agencywide. The recent uptick in complaints within the Sector can possibly be attributed to service disruptions related to autumn wildfires and the September Metrolink train collision.

Orange Line Construction

- Pavement reconstruction on the east end of the Orange Line adjacent to North Hollywood, Laurel Canyon and Valley College Stations was completed ahead of schedule.
- Pavement reconstruction on the western segments between Balboa Station and Pierce College stations begins December 3 and will continue no longer than two weeks, weather permitting.
- Orange Line Ridership averaged 25,400 weekday boardings.
- Overall bus system ridership increased by 6 percent over the last 13 months. San Fernando Valley Service Sector ridership has increased by at least 6 percent and it continues to improve.

Measure R Update

- Measure R passed officially on December 2 and staff will solicit input from Council Representatives regarding how Measure R funding will impact the San Fernando Valley Service Sector.
- The Metro Board will consider a motion that directs Metro staff to draft plans and a timeline for Measure R implementation. Sector Councils will also have a chance to provide input on improvements to bus service in the Measure R plan.
- State legislators are meeting to balance the State budget and possibly eliminate State Transportation Assistance funds which would significantly impact Metro operational funding. Mr. Hunt will ensure that Governance Council Representatives are informed of any decisions that will impact the Metro Enterprise Fund as this information is made available.
- Mr. Hunt announced that the next regular Governance Council meeting will be held January 7, 2009, and wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season and prosperous New Year.

6. RECEIVED AND FILED report on Budget Update by Kathy Drayton, Administration and Financial Services Manager.

- Ms. Drayton reported on the Sector Budget for the four-month period ending October 31, 2008. The Sector completed the period with a positive operating budget variance of \$2.3 million and positive variances in all categories including labor, non-labor and allocated other categories.
- Labor ended the period with a positive variance of \$623,000, which includes a negative ATU budget variance, consistent with how ATU budgets have operated over the past two years due to a shortage of mechanics and the aging bus fleet. The UTU budget is operating with a positive variance, which offsets the negative ATU variance. Non-contract labor budget is operating with a negative variance of \$14,000. All other labor groups have a positive variance.
- Non-labor categories are operating with a positive variance of \$280,000. This includes a negative variance of \$90,000 in parts consistent with previous fiscal years; a positive variance of \$221,000 due to the lower CNG fuel costs; and a negative variance of \$180,000 for services and other support due to a timing issue with how charges are made against this account.
- Allocated other items is operating with a positive variance of \$1.4 million because of a \$1.2 million Personal Liability/Property Damage positive variance which can be attributed to fewer accidents within the Sector which causes fewer injury claims to be filed.
- Workers' Compensation is operating with a negative variance of \$244,000, mostly attributed to a higher number of claims in the maintenance department.
- The Sector operated 99 percent of scheduled revenue service hours (RSH), approximately 445,000 hours. The cost per RSH was \$114.39, 97 percent of the Sector target of \$118.52 per service hour yielding a positive variance of \$4.13 per revenue service hour.
- The Sector received \$56.2 million in revenue:
 - 70% from taxes and grants
 - 15% farebox recovery
 - 11% passes
 - 4% from tokens and miscellaneous

- As of October 31, 2008 the Sector has received 66.6 cents per revenue boarding, achieving the target of 67 cents per boarding.

7. APPROVED Motion to Recommend Option 4 as the Governance Council Preferred Alternative for the June 2009 Service Changes Program and RECEIVED AND FILED Rapid Bus Update on Lines 94, 794, 224 & 724, by Michael Brewer, Service Development Manager.

Line 94 operates local service daily from Downtown Los Angeles (Hill/Venice) to Sylmar San Fernando Metrolink Station via San Fernando Road.

Line 794 operates rapid limited-stop service weekdays from Downtown Los Angeles (Hill/Venice) to Burbank Metrolink Station via San Fernando Road and Brand Boulevard.

Line 224 operates local service daily from North Hollywood Station to Sylmar San Fernando Metrolink Station via Lankershim Boulevard and San Fernando Road.

Line 724 operates rapid limited stop service weekdays from Universal City Station to Sylmar San Fernando Metrolink Station via Lankershim Boulevard and San Fernando Road.

On Line 794, from August 2009 to October 2009, ridership increased by 417 boardings per day, a miniscule amount in comparison with total ridership on the corridor. Line 724 ridership has increased by 1,090 riders since the June service change. Line rankings have not changed.

Mr. Brewer presented four options for the June 2009 Service Change Program:

Option 1 – Schedule Changes only

Maintain existing routes of Lines 94 and 794. Service hours from Line 794 would be reallocated to Line 94, thereby removing 24 revenue service hours from and reducing headways on Line 794 and reallocating those hours to Line 94 to relieve overcrowding, improve headways and make the service more productive.

Lines 224 and 724 would maintain their existing routes and 12 service hours from Line 724 would be allocated to Line 224 to ease overcrowding.

Option 2 – Route and Schedule Changes – (Sun Valley via Brand Boulevard/San Fernando Road)

Maintain existing Line 94 alignment and schedule; reduce service frequencies on Line 794; retain existing Brand Boulevard alignment of Line 794; and allocate additional service hours to extend Line 794 from Burbank Metrolink Station to Sun Valley.

Maintain existing routes on Lines 224 and 724 and reallocate 12 service hours from Line 724 to Line 224 to ease overcrowding.

Option 3 – Route and Schedule Changes – (Sun Valley via San Fernando Road)

Maintain existing Line 94 alignment and schedule, reduce service frequencies on Line 794, and allocate additional service hours to extend Line 794 from Burbank Metrolink Station to Sun Valley via San Fernando Road, eliminating Brand Boulevard segment.

Maintain existing routes on Lines 224 and 724 and reallocate 12 service hours from Line 724 to Line 224 to ease overcrowding.

Option 4 – Route and Schedule Changes – (Sylmar via San Fernando Road)

Shorten Line 94 by terminating service in Sun Valley, reallocate additional resources to Line 794 extension to Sylmar Metrolink Station, reduce service frequencies on Line 794 and reallocate those hours to the route extension.

Return Line 224 to pre-June 2008 service levels and cancel Line 724 service.

RECEIVED Questions regarding Rapid Bus Update on Lines 94, 794, 224 & 724

Representative Cano asked if service hour reductions would be spread out through out the day or focused upon peak hours.

Mr. Brewer said that Options 1, 2 and 3 would focus headway changes on the peak period. Headways would change during both the peak and midday with Option 4.

Representative Richards said she supported Option 4 as the recommended option and suggested reallocating weekend service hours from Line 94 local service to Line 794 rapid service since Line 394 operated 7 days per week

before being replaced by Line 794. She also said she could potentially support Option 3 if Option 4 was not pursued.

RECEIVED Public Comment regarding Rapid Bus Update on Lines 94, 794, 224 and 724.

Philip Figatner – Suggested shortening Line 94 to Sun Valley and extending Line 794 to Sun Valley. He preferred retaining Lines 224 and 724, especially considering Rapid Line 724 is more productive than Line 794. He added that Rapid and Local trips departing Sylmar San Fernando Metrolink Station should operate every 30 minutes and be staggered so a bus leaves the terminal every 15 minutes. He said riders transferring from northbound Rapid service (724) to northbound Local service in Sylmar often miss their connection because the two lines do not share a stop near the Metrolink Station.

8. RECEIVED Status Update of December 2008 Service Change Shakeup, by Michael Brewer, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Brewer gave an update on service changes to be implemented within the Sector on December 14, 2008. Most changes were routine schedule maintenance that will:

- Address overcrowding
- Add 13 trips during AM and PM peaks
- Remove a corresponding number of trips from other time period of the day to offset those added in the peak periods
- Implement changes on December 14 to improve on-time performance and customer satisfaction based upon data obtained from runtime analyses on 38 weekday, Saturday and Sunday schedules.

RECEIVED Questions regarding Status Update of December 2008 Service Change Shakeup

Representative Richards asked how the runtime analysis is performed. Mr. Brewer said that each bus is equipped with an automated system that tracks the time it takes a bus to operate from a terminal to the first in-service time point and each subsequent time point until the bus reaches the end of the line. This data is recorded for each trip throughout the day in both directions for daily, Saturday and Sunday operations. That data is averaged and stratified by time period – morning peak, midday, afternoon peak, evening, nights and weekends – to determine the average time it takes a bus to travel along the route of a line. That data is then taken to build the foundation of a schedule.

Representative Cano asked how the difference is determined between day-to-day traffic concerns and situations that can be mitigated with assistance from other agencies such as the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. Mr. Brewer responded that the scheduling department is very active. Staff members ride the lines and solicit feedback from transit operations supervisors and operators. If a condition can be changed by either working with LADOT or within Metro jurisdiction, that work is done if ridership impact is minimal. Left turn signal pockets and traffic signal timing along the Orange Line have been altered in response to requests made by Metro San Fernando Service Sector Service Development Staff. Anomalies from the data are discarded and good data is aggregated and averaged. Peculiar data are investigated and information learned through that process is utilized to suggest changes that can further improve service performance and quality.

Representative Arvizu asked if traffic signal synchronization will be pursued even further with the infusion of funding from Measure R. Mr. Brewer said this will be requested from Los Angeles Department of Transportation and LADOT has been responsive to requests from Metro such as left turn pockets and removal of parking in key intersections. Mr. Hunt added that signal synchronization was a highlighted area within Measure R and will be integral to the implementation of the Measure.

Representative Rosenheim asked whether corridors within the Sector already have bus traffic signal prioritization. Mr. Hunt said when Line 761 (Van Nuys) was implemented, it did not have traffic loop signal priority. After its first year of operation, signal priority was fully implemented on all Rapid corridors in the San Fernando Valley.

Representative Cano recommended submitting a report from the Sector to the Metro Board Operations Committee on a quarterly basis of traffic mitigation requests that are regionally significant and that, if implemented, could further improve Metro service delivery.

Representative Ramos asked if Metro communicated with local public works departments to anticipate major construction projects and plan service deviations if necessary. Mr. Brewer said if given enough lead time, Metro will implement a route detour to alleviate any service delay that could result from road construction. Representative Rosenheim asked if buses would be added under those circumstances. Mr. Brewer responded that recovery time is already built into a schedule for short-term delays and construction projects. If the impediment is longer term, the line schedule can be rebuilt and trips and/or recovery time can be added to a line if necessary.

9. DISCUSSED 2009 Sector Initiatives by Council Representatives.

Representative Cano suggested that the Sector Council work toward attaining the independence, autonomy and resources needed to allow this and other Sectors to function more effectively and efficiently for Metro and continue to work to improve service and decentralize other aspects that have been kept downtown too long.

Representative Ramos recommended that the Sector Council and staff continue to strengthen the relationships with local governments and LADOT and continually enhance the communication so that there is the most efficient use of limited resources. Additionally, she suggested having the Sector work on grade crossing barriers on the Orange Line to make the line work more efficiently.

Representative Ochoa said that there should be more community input and higher attendance at Governance Council meetings, more outreach to the community, and more communication and interaction with the public at regular meetings. He would like the Sector to be more autonomous, independent and achieve more without cutting through a lot of red tape.

Representative Richards agreed that there should be more community input and participation at regular Governance Council meetings and that the Council should take advantage of a 6:30 P.M. regular meeting time which is accessible to riders who work during normal business hours. She also would like to see a review of the Metro Connections program to see if tweaks should be made to the implemented program that could better serve our riders.

Representative Arvizu said he would like to see how to get more operations and maintenance funding for each of the Sectors that might entail developing alliances with other companies. He suggested expediting the TAP program which would allow passengers to board and alight Metro vehicles much faster. He mentioned increasing service to the East San Fernando Valley and strengthening service between the eastern and western portions of the Valley. He added that there should be more generous discounts on monthly passes, and on fares and passes for seniors and the disabled.

Representative Rosenheim suggested further exploring implementation of Orange Line express service and enhancing Orange Line service overall (i.e. grade separations). He recommended exploring conversion of the Orange Line from an exclusive Busway to a rail transit line and potentially extending the Orange Line from the future Chatsworth Metrolink terminus to Ventura

County via State Route 118. He said suggesting these projects might put Metro on the radar for any economic stimulus programs in the near future looking for projects that are ready for implementation.

10. RECEIVED Service Sector Representatives' Closing Remarks.

Representative Ochoa thanked the public for their contributions and comments and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Representative Ramos thanked Sector Staff for working so well and continuing to improve service benchmarks and quality over the past year. She added that numbers continue to improve even under difficult situations and budgetary constraints.

Representative Cano said he enjoyed working with the Council and Sector Staff over much of this year. He added that he hoped that Sectors continue to thrive and stay healthy to continue providing great service while helping Metro to fix its financial problems.

Representative Arvizu thanked the Sector for continuing to be the number one Sector thanks to the work of Sector staff and public input. He hoped that participation at public hearings could be mirrored at regular Council meetings. He wished everyone Happy Holidays and a great and prosperous New Year.

Representative Rosenheim thanked Sector staff for their hard work, the public for attending and for their input, and his fellow representatives for their work. He wished everyone a new year full of health, happiness and prosperity.

ADJOURNED at 7:30 P.M.



Prepared by:

William L. Walker
Council Secretary