

Thursday, October 7, 2004

3:00-5:00 PM

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# Minutes/Proceedings

## Westside/Central Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

La Cienega Tennis Center  
325 S. La Cienega Blvd.  
Beverly Hills, CA 90211

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Called to Order at 3:13 P.M.

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Council Members Present:

Carol Gross, Chair  
Peter Capone-Newton, Vice Chair  
Brad Robinson  
Anny Semonco

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Officers

David Armijo, General Manager  
Jody Litvak, Community Relations  
Manager  
Michele Jackson, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. APPROVE September 2, 2004 Minutes.

CARRIED OVER to November Council meeting due to lack of a quorum.

2. RECEIVE AND FILE Minutes of June 22, 2004 Service Sector Governance Council Annual Meet and Confer.

CARRIED OVER to November Council meeting due to lack of a quorum.

3. RECEIVED report from the General Manager.

Chair Gross introduced David Armijo, the new General Manager for the Westside/Central Service Sector. Mr. Armijo joined the MTA in 2002 and previously served as the General Manager for the San Fernando Valley Service Sector. Mr. Armijo mentioned that he has worked with the Westside/Central Service Sector before and looks forward to the challenges ahead.

Mr. Armijo announced that he sent out an email to the Council regarding the California Transit Association Conference to be held November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> at the Universal City Sheraton Hotel. Sector staff will provide more information and coordinate registration in the coming weeks for interested Councilmembers. MTA will host the event this year and John Catoe, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the MTA, will act as Chair.

Mr. Armijo gave an overview of the status of the operating budget. He mentioned that the Sector's total year-end FY04 actual was \$6 million under budget, and that the FY04 budget was adjusted due to the revenue shortfall from the 35-day strike.

Councilmember Robinson noted that the total amount in the FY05 budget, \$127.2 million, seems low compared with the FY04 budgeted amount. Mr. Armijo stated that the Sector is on a tight budget this year. He added that because the Sector came in under budget for FY04, the budget is constrained further in the following fiscal year. Further, the addition of buses to the Sector under Consent Decree mandates will increase the Sector's risk tolerance.

Councilmember Robinson requested that Sector financials incorporate major line item categories for FY04 and FY05 unadjusted budgets.

Mr. Armijo noted that the agency has been aggressive in carrying out the Safety's First program. Although OSHA accidents have fallen about 60% and lost-work time has decreased during the first few years of program implementation, there has not been a corresponding reduction in cost of Worker's Compensation.

Mr. Armijo explained that WC tends to be costly at payout. He added that costs have gone down on a per capita basis.

The Sector is \$420,000 under budget (total YTD variance) for the month of August. Worker's Compensation is \$380,000 under budget and Fuel is \$360,000 over budget (total YTD variance) for the month of August. Mr. Armijo stated that the agency continues to look at historical averages in the Fuel category and this may not be relevant. He stated that fuel costs are expected to increase and that CNG costs are impacted unfavorably by the cost of diesel. The agency has only one supplier for natural gas. Mr. Armijo mentioned that in the future, the agency may need to consider converting liquefied natural gas to CNG to keep costs down.

The Sector is slightly over budget on the labor side due to the fact that there are two more FTE's (Full-Time Employees) than were budgeted. Mr. Armijo stated that the problem with the month-to-month structure currently used is that the number of holidays in any given month can impact the financials for that month, and there were a few holidays during the first few months of the fiscal year.

Mr. Armijo stated that systemwide KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) show mostly positive results. The Westside Sector has performed extremely well in the area of Mean Miles Between Chargeable Mechanical Failures. The FY05 YTD figure is 8,113. The goal is 7,500. The Sector is still struggling in the area of On-Time Performance with a 64% rating for the month of August. The goal is 70%. Mr. Armijo stated that figures in this category are affected by statistical validity, and he will discuss this more at length in the future.

Bus Traffic Accidents per 100,000 miles were 3.46 for FY05 YTD. The target is 3.67. Mr. Armijo stated that the Sector has shown incredible improvement in this category.

Complaints per 100,000 boardings were 5.13 (FY05 YTD). The goal is 3.75.

New Worker's Compensation Indemnity Claims per 200,000 Exposure hours were roughly 17 for July. The goal is 20.

4. RECEIVED update on December 2004 Metro Rapid Changes on Line 787, Roy Gandara, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Gandara stated that implementation of Metro Rapid Line 787 was approved by the Westside/Central and San Gabriel Valley Service Sectors in September 2004. This was accompanied by a reduction in the frequency of service on local Line 217 in the Westside/Central Sector. Because of concerns about the route length and route speed of the proposed Rapid line and impacts to Line 217, the new Rapid service (Line 780) will only be implemented in the San Gabriel Valley Sector from Pasadena City College to the Hollywood and Vine Station. Limited stop service will be implemented on Line 217 in the Fairfax and Hollywood corridors from the West L.A.

Transit Center to the Hollywood and Vine Station, and this will be known as Line 317.

Mr. Gandara noted that the alignment of Line 217 will stay the same, and that Line 317 will operate every other trip from approximately 6 AM to 6 PM. In addition, all trips on Lines 217 and 317 will originate at the West L.A. Transit Center.

Chair Gross noted that the Council has written letters and attended a San Gabriel Valley Sector Council meeting to share its concerns regarding implementation of Line 787. The San Gabriel Valley Sector Council acknowledged the Westside Sector's concerns but approved the changes as proposed.

In response to Councilmember Robinson's query regarding any improvements that could be made to the service change process, Chair Gross noted that the Sector's formal channels of communication with MTA executive staff and other Service Sectors are adequate, but all Sectors would stand to benefit from greater use of more informal channels of communication.

Councilmember Capone-Newton asked if Line 317, when it is running, will operate in place of Line 217.

Mr. Gandara responded that Line 317 will operate on every other trip from 6 AM to 6 PM.

Councilmember Capone-Newton asked if the 6 minute headways will remain.

Mr. Gandara stated that the headway for peak periods is 6 minutes and 10 minutes for the base.

Councilmember Capone-Newton inquired about the advantages of the current changes relative to implementing proposed changes.

Mr. Gandara stated that limited stop service was considered due to concerns about the route length of the Rapid line as originally proposed. This will hopefully result in greater speed efficiencies. Line 217 has also been improved in that it is now running end to end. He noted that a more cautious approach is being taken than proposed and that expansion of Rapid service will depend on how well the current pilot program works.

Chair Gross added that shortening the proposed Rapid Line will reduce the potential for buses to bunch together at certain points on the route.

Mr. Gandara stated that staff will need to closely monitor the changes being implemented and come back to the Council with monthly reports on cumulative impacts.

Councilmember Capone-Newton asked if fewer buses will be used on Line 317.

Mr. Gandara stated that he does not have an actual count, but most likely the number of buses used will remain the same.

Councilmember Semonco asked if changes to Lines 217, 317, and 780 will be implemented simultaneously.

Mr. Gandara responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Armijo stated that based on the success of the two Rapid pilot programs originally approved by the Board in Fall 2002, the agency plans to roll out roughly 23 additional Rapid lines. He stated that an analysis of the pilot Rapid lines did not take into consideration intricacies such as the length of lines and other matters being discussed by the Council. Mr. Armijo noted that the agency could stand improvements in the area of planning, and that one goal would involve implementing an early warning system for new Rapid lines to avoid unexpected issues such as those noted above.

Councilmember Capone-Newton inquired about the type of information that Sector staff will provide in updating the Council about the progress of approved service changes.

Mr. Gandara responded that boarding and alighting information, running times, and other data will be provided.

5. RECEIVED report on Transit Service Policy, Isaac Lim, Transportation Planning Manager IV.

Mr. Lim reported that the transit service policy was adopted in September 2003 and has been updated. The policy guides decision-making during the service change process and consists of design guidelines, performance measures, rail policies, and the planning process. Key themes of the existing policy include focusing on regional services, providing 30-minute policy headways, implementing a mystery rider program, and using a performance index to trigger corrective actions for poorly performing bus routes. Mr. Lim gave an overview of progress made since adoption of the policy last year as well as specific proposed policy changes. The Service Planning Department is currently engaging in on-going stakeholder review and briefing of all Sector Governance Councils. The policy will be presented to the MTA Board for approval in January 2005.

Councilmember Semonco asked for clarification of 30-minute headways.

Mr. Lim stated that a 30-minute headway implies that buses are running 30 minutes or less in frequency during peak periods.

Councilmember Semonco inquired about the service change program template and how this can be accessed.

Mr. Lim responded that the template details specific lines, impacts of service changes on ridership, as well as goals of the service change program. He added that the template can be accessed by the public.

Councilmember Semonco asked if the mystery rider program will involve members of the public or MTA staff.

Ed Clifford, Director of Service Planning, responded that the mystery rider program will consist of two elements: 1) a marketing firm that will rate service based on numerous criteria, and 2) an agency management team that will tie a coach operator rewards program with the mystery shopper program.

Councilmember Semonco suggested that those participating in the mystery rider program be required to complete only a limited amount of paperwork to make the process less time-consuming.

Councilmember Capone-Newton asked if there is an analysis of whether bus lines are in compliance with the transit service policy.

Mr. Clifford responded that the Service Planning Department prepares annual reports, but they may not be comprehensive. He added that lines are measured with respect to passenger boardings and systemwide characteristics, among other factors.

Councilmember Capone-Newton asked if there are any connections to the Gold Line from Fair Oaks on Line 780.

Staff responded that there is a stop near Fair Oaks and Colorado that is situated about 2 blocks away from a Gold Line station.

Staff mentioned that the MTA Board recently considered a strategy for extending the Wilshire Blvd. peak period dedicated transit lane, which is part of a pilot Rapid bus project.

Councilmember Robinson asked about criteria for structuring bus lanes.

Mr. Clifford responded that two criteria are used: 1) bus volume (i.e., 50 buses per direction during rush hour and 2) congestion (making the bus more competitive with the automobile).

He stated that the Service Planning Department is identifying areas for Rapid bus improvements. It is evaluating community receptivity, parking and operational issues.

Councilmember Capone-Newton, referring to a handout, asked why it is necessary to have a boardings level of 50,000 passengers to justify extending a rail line.

Mr. Clifford responded that this figure is based on operational feasibility. For example, in some instances it may be more efficient to operate light rail service rather than bus service when there is a high passenger boardings level during peak hours.

Mr. Armijo stated that the Service Planning Department will come back next month with more information regarding the transit service policy.

6. Chair's Remarks – None.
7. RECEIVED Public Comment.

ADJOURNED at 4:56 P.M.

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Michele Chau, Council Secretary