

MINUTES

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 5:22 P.M.

Council Members Present:

Bart Doyle, Chair
Sid Tyler, Vice Chair
Emile Bayle
Henry Lopez
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. APPROVED May 10, 2005 Minutes.

2. RECEIVED Public Comment:

Ken Ruben, Southern California Transit Advocates, suggested that the MTA increase the size of the font on all timetables. He stated that he looks forward to riding the new Rapid line 717 on Fairfax, and expressed concern about the inconvenience of having to transfer to the Big Blue Bus if service on Line 20 west of Westwood is reduced.

3. Chair's Remarks:

Chair Doyle announced that the Council will undergo a reorganization at the July 12 meeting and that a new chair will be selected.

Councilmember Vasquez asked if the Councilmembers would need to re-take their oath of office.

Chair Doyle responded that they would not need to do so.

He announced that the Sectors are scheduled to make their annual presentation to the MTA Board this month and that the Sectors are requesting that the presentation be postponed until August to allow new Board Members to be seated. Chair Doyle noted that he had lunch with the chair of the Westside/Central Service Sector and several other Councilmembers to discuss potential topics that the Sectors would like to bring up during their presentation. These include but are not limited to the lack of input from the Councils and Sector General Managers, top-down nature of the budget process, consistency of signage and route information, and issues that need to be resolved before upcoming projects are implemented (e.g., safety and availability of signage on the Gold Line Eastside Extension and new Rapid lines). Chair Doyle mentioned that some Sectors have had service changes that were overridden by MTA executive staff. The Sectors should request the MTA Board and staff to re-evaluate the bylaws in terms of functions of the Sectors. Chair King of the San Fernando Sector Council will provide a Powerpoint presentation on issues common to all Sectors, and this will be followed by presentations from each individual Sector. Chair Doyle suggested that during its presentation the Council mentioned the possibility of a Tier 3 study to supplement the Metro Connections project. He underscored the importance of Sector involvement in the project given the anxiety other Councilmembers have expressed about implementation of Metro Connections.

Mr. Hillmer stated that the Council should also encourage the Board to increase the Sector's role in local marketing functions. In addition, from the standpoint of the bylaws, the control of heavier Tier 1 bus routes actually resides within corporate, although Sectors do provide input. Greater cooperation is needed amongst the Sectors in implementing service changes.

Chair Doyle announced that Councilmember Tyler is leaving the Council and this will be his last meeting. He mentioned that he worked with Councilmember Tyler when they were both involved in the Joint Powers Authority and expressed appreciation for his support over the years. Chair Doyle stated that Councilmember Tyler played an important role in helping increase the Council's understanding of the budget and that he will be sorely missed.

Mr. Rosenberg presented Councilmember Tyler with a personalized mock Metro bus stop sign as a token of appreciation for a job well done. He mentioned that Councilmember Tyler always asked the tough questions and thanked him for his substantial contributions to the Sector.

Councilmember Tyler stated that he will enjoy displaying the sign. He noted that with respect to the creation of the Sectors, management tends to work best when it is decentralized as this allows the agency to work closer to the people and increases opportunities to provide better service.

Chair Doyle stated that Councilmember Tyler was a driving force in helping establish the concept of the Sector. He mentioned that the Council has come a long way since its inception two years ago.

4. APPROVED committee nomination for Transit User position on Council by Bart Doyle, Governance Council Chair.

Chair Doyle stated that the Council formed a committee to aid in the selection of a candidate for this position.

Mr. Rosenberg mentioned that he understands the committee met via teleconference and made a decision to re-nominate Henry Lopez for another term.

Councilmembers approved the re-nomination of Henry Lopez for the Transit User position.

Chair Doyle announced that the cluster cities of Pasadena, La Cañada-Flintridge and Sierra Madre recently nominated Steve Haderlein, a Councilman representing the eastern portion of Pasadena, to take the place of Councilmember Tyler. He will be present at the next Council meeting.

5. RECEIVED report of the General Manager.

Mr. Rosenberg provided the report in the absence of Jack Gabig, General Manager.

Mr. Rosenberg gave an update on the graffiti restitution program. He reported that the LAPD recently conducted a residential search to identify a tagger with a history of vandalizing Metro-owned property.

This resulted in the arrest of a minor whose tag was displayed throughout his bedroom. The minor was charged with multiple counts of vandalism totaling \$55,000 in damages for the agency. Mr. Rosenberg stated that the agency decided to file a civil case for restitution, and that County Counsel was involved in the mediation process. The minor agreed to restitution in the amount of \$13,200 to be paid over the next five years, as well as 100 hours of community service to be monitored by the Sector. This represents the Sector's first case of successful restitution for vandalism.

Councilmember Vasquez asked if the restitution will be applied to the Sector.

Mr. Rosenberg responded that from an accounting standpoint, the Sector will receive the benefit of the restitution, and that it will be applied to maintenance expenses.

Councilmember Lopez inquired about the length of time it took for the Sector to apprehend the suspect.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that he does not know this information. He mentioned that the sheriff's department's familiarity with the tags has increased and that they are better able to identify taggers than in the past.

Councilmember Lopez asked if the tagging was done on freeway walls or on buses.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that the agency is focusing on damage to buses.

Mr. Rosenberg gave an update on the status of the Division 9 Transportation Building. He stated that negotiations with the design-build contractor are complete and that a tentative agreement has been reached. The Sector is still waiting to receive permission to begin construction on the Caltrans-owned property. The Sector is currently dealing with the issue of replacement parking spaces. MTA will be required to commit to providing additional public parking when and if capacity becomes an issue. The contract will be awarded in July 2005 contingent on Board approval of Caltrans MOU terms and conditions.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that he will provide an FY05 year-end budget report next month.

Mr. Hillmer provided an update on the Sector Transit Restructuring Study. He stated that Foothill Transit and MTA are co-funding the study along with 15 cities and that IBI has been selected as the consultant team. He noted that IBI is the consultant responsible for the Arroyo-Verdugo study, among other projects. Representatives from the consulting team will provide a presentation at the next Council meeting. IBI will assist with the Sector's master plan for route restructuring, which will dovetail into the Metro Connections project.

Mr. Hillmer suggested that the Council not hold its regular meeting in August due to a shortage of key staff members. The public hearing scheduled for August 9 at 6:00 p.m. will continue as planned as a hearing does not require the presence of a quorum.

APPROVED motion to cancel August Regular Council Meeting and hold the public hearing only.

Mr. Rosenberg provided the General Manager's report in the absence of Mr. Gabig. Monthly Worker's Compensation costs for April exceeded the target at \$620,000; however, the sector experienced a substantial decrease in New WC Indemnity Claims per 200,000 Exposure Hours, which reached its lowest point at 7.24 claims for April. OSHA Recordable Incidents were at target with 4.0 incidents for April. Bus Traffic Accidents/100,000 Hub Miles spiked above the target of 2.76 with 3.46 accidents in April. Mr. Rosenberg stated that the category of Miles Between Mechanical Failures will be re-evaluated due to implementation of a new maintenance information system. Bus Cleanliness rating was 7.77 for the month of April, and this is close to the target of 8. The Sector has performed consistently at this level for the past few months. There were 5,496,946 Passenger Boardings in April, exceeding the monthly target. On-Time Performance continues to hover near 70%. The target is 75%. There were 2.73 Complaints per 100,000 Boardings in April, and this represents a significant decrease over previous months.

Mr. Hillmer noted that ridership has increased agency-wide due partially to the rising cost of fuel. He stated that the additional weekday in April may have also helped boost this figure.

Mr. Rosenberg presented a chart showing a breakdown of complaint data from April 2004 and April 2005. The Sector is responding to requests to provide more information in this area. He stated that Division 9, which has a more vocal constituency, tends to draw more complaints. He pointed out that Division 9 showed considerable improvement in this category as of April 2005.

Councilmember Tyler noted that the category of "other" complaints constitutes more than half of all complaints. He inquired about the types of complaints that are included in this category.

Mr. Rosenberg responded that the "other" category consists of a variety of complaint types, although none of these are as sizable as the listed categories. ADA issues with wheelchair equipment represent one example of an "other" complaint type.

Councilmember Tyler stated that having a bus show up on time is key, and represents the minimum level of service provided by the agency. He asked if the "other" complaints can be categorized against on-time performance measures.

Mr. Rosenberg responded that the category of schedule adherence already encompasses on-time performance measures.

Chair Doyle asked if the figures are adjusted according to ridership growth and usage patterns.

Mr. Rosenberg responded that the Complaint Key Performance Indicators measured per 100,000 boardings are expected to decrease if boardings remain the same.

Councilmember Vasquez stated that the complaint types should be categorized according to ADA and other issues.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that staff will evaluate the top "other" complaint types. The categories listed in the chart are based on an existing classification.

Mr. Hillmer noted that the Sector tends to have fewer complaints than the system-wide average.

Councilmember Lopez mentioned that there are many disgruntled passengers who do not file a formal complaint.

Mr. Hillmer noted that this is a valid observation. Historically, Express routes tend to have higher complaint rates. The Sector will initiate the Secret Shopper program this summer, and this will provide unbiased, anonymous evaluations of the Sector's services from a customer perspective to allow the Sector to identify areas of improvement. He noted that operators will not be disciplined based on the evaluations.

Councilmember Tyler asked if bus pass-bys occur because buses are too full to accommodate additional passengers.

Mr. Hillmer stated that he does not know this information.

Councilmember Tyler asked why the target for on-time performance is not set at 100%.

Mr. Rosenberg responded that the Sector's target is high relative to other Sector targets.

Councilmember Tyler stated that the Sector needs to focus on improving quality of service so that more people will use the system. This should be the number one goal. He expressed disappointment with 25% of buses not being on time.

Mr. Hillmer commented that the Sector is trying to improve on-time performance, and there are multiple reasons for failure to achieve the target in this area. The Sector is collecting a great deal of information with the ATMS system. He expressed amazement at the large variation in the amount of time to reach a destination within the same trip. This may be due to certain customers demanding greater attention, operator performance, congestion and environmental factors, and mechanical problems.

Councilmember Tyler inquired about the target for next year.

Mr. Hillmer stated that the general manager would like to bring the target up to 80%.

Councilmember Lopez noted that operators attribute some of the difficulties with on-time performance to the schedulers.

Mr. Hillmer responded that staff typically sets the time that it takes to reach a destination above the average time it takes to get there. Some operators are more skilled than others at maneuvering through busy streets. In addition, one labor relations issue involves setting a standard that is achievable.

“How You Doin’?” Program:

Division 3 Transportation ranked 1st place for the month of April. This is the 12th month in which Division 3 finished in 1st place over the past 17 months. Division 9 Transportation ranked 4th place for the month of April. In the area of Maintenance, Division 9 ranked 4th place and Division 3 ranked 5th place.

Financial Review:

Mr. Rosenberg reported that Total Transportation was approximately \$133,000 over budget for the month of April. This overrun stems mostly from Worker’s Compensation costs in the transportation divisions. Other Sector Support was \$285,745 under budget for April. Total San Gabriel Sector was approximately \$4.3 million over budget YTD.

Mr. Rosenberg provided an overview of significant budget items, including Operator and Maintenance Labor costs, Non-Work Allocation, WC Allocation, Fuel and Tax Expense, and Parts Expense. He noted that the Sector anticipates that the underrun in Non-Work Allocation will continue until the end of the fiscal year. He reviewed the three areas impacted by FY05 mid-year budget adjustments allocated to the SGV Sector, including Operator Labor, Worker’s Compensation chargeback, and Fuel. The adjustments result from a built-in imbalance and initial misallocation of funding to the Sector’s budget.

6. RECEIVED an update on FY06 Budget by Steve Rosenberg, Administrative and Financial Services Manager.

Mr. Rosenberg reported that the bus operations budget for FY06 totals approximately \$760 million, and the allocation among the five Sectors totals \$642 million. The individual Sector allocations are still under review. SGV Sector service levels consist of 1,276 revenue service hours (down 1%) and 18.9 million hub miles (down .5%). The tentative fleet projection is up by 3. In the area of Sector resources, operator headcount is down 1%, maintenance headcount has not yet been finalized, and Sector staff headcount is down by 1 position. Fuel budget assumptions are \$.80 per therm for CNG (vs. \$.60) and \$1.45 per gallon for diesel (vs. \$1.16). The Sector’s budget for parts is \$.26 per hub mile (vs. \$.29). This is the second year in a row the parts budget has been reduced. WC chargeback is based on headcount, and totals approximately

\$8.7 million. Mr. Rosenberg stated that he will provide a more comprehensive budget briefing next month when the remaining sector allocation issues are resolved.

7. AUTHORIZED August 2005 Public Hearing for December 2005 Service changes by Jon Hillmer, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Hillmer introduced Roy Gandara, Service Development Manager from the Westside/Central Service Sector and Mike Sieckert, Transportation Planning Manager from the Gateway Cities Service Sector. He announced that a public hearing for proposed service changes to be implemented in December 2005 or later is scheduled for Tuesday, August 9, 2005 at 6:00 p.m in the San Gabriel Sector office community meeting room. Two community meetings in Boyle Heights and Glendale will be held prior to the hearing. A notice of public hearing, which includes information for both the Sector's public hearing as well as hearings held at three other Sectors, will be published on July 10. Mr. Hillmer noted that the San Fernando Valley Service Sector is the only Sector that will not hold a public hearing in August.

Mr. Hillmer provided a summary of proposed service changes that will be presented at the September meeting for Governance Council action. The changes seek to improve low-performing lines and reinvest savings into heavier bus lines to reduce crowding and enhance on-time performance. Mr. Hillmer presented a map showing lines that will be impacted by the changes.

Staff is proposing to cancel the following lines due to low ridership and/or service duplication:

Line 170 (El Monte-Montebello Town Ctr.-Cal State LA), Line 255 (Griffin Av.-Rowan Av.), Line 259 (Fremont-Alhambra-El Sereno) and Line 684 (Pomona-Brea Mall via Cal Poly).

Mr. Hillmer explained that there is a significant amount of service duplication on the eastern portion of Line 170, and that Montebello Bus Lines will operate a portion of the route. Line 255 is mostly duplicated by DASH service and one other MTA route. Staff has requested that LADOT extend the Boyle Heights DASH line. The agency is working with OCTA to provide service on Line 684. Mr. Hillmer noted that the City of Alhambra has requested that Line 259 be cancelled for community reasons.

Chair Doyle asked for clarification on the community reasons.

Mr. Hillmer responded that these consist of noise and safety issues. For example, Line 259 travels through narrow streets, and service can be operated in Alhambra proper with better frequency. The Gateway Cities Sector would like to extend this line to the south.

Mr. Hillmer reported that roughly 80% of riders on Line 175 consist of students and that staff is proposing to cancel mid-day service on Line 175 (Fountain Av.-Hyperion Av.) due to low ridership. Staff is also considering increasing service levels on Line 258 due to cancellation of Line 259. Route segments on Line 177 (JPL-Pasadena-City of Hope) and Line 201 (Glendale-Silver Lake-Mid-Wilshire) may be eliminated due to low ridership, and service levels to Pasadena and JPL (Line 177) and the area between Glendale and Wilshire Bl. (Line 201) may be increased.

Staff is proposing to improve the service levels and on-time performance of the following lines:

Line 70 (Garvey Av.), Line 76 (Valley Bl.), Line 180 (Pasadena-Glendale-Hollywood), Line 260 (Atlantic Bl.-Fair Oaks Bl.), Line 484 (Pomona-El Monte Sta.-L.A.), Line 490 (Pomona-Baldwin Park-L.A.).

Mr. Hillmer stated that the Westside/Central Sector is proposing to eliminate service on the portion of Line 68 to Montebello Town Center. It is also considering breaking Rapid line 720 into two parts and using the Red Line as a connector. Although ridership levels are high on Line 720, there have been significant problems with large gaps in service and buses "bunching up." The Gateway Cities Sector is proposing to cancel Line 254, which is not a straight line and has low productivity. Portions of Line 254 are duplicated by other service.

Councilmember Tyler asked about the net impact on total bus operating hours in the Sector.

Mr. Hillmer stated that there will be no net impact, as the Sector plans to reinvest hours back into the system.

Councilmember Tyler asked about the Sector's FY06 budgeted operating hours.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that operating hours have decreased slightly, and the FY06 budgeted amounts do not reflect the proposed changes. He added that the changes are not driven by MTA budget shortfalls.

Mr. Gandara provided an overview of Line 68 and Line 720 service change proposals which will be implemented as part of the Metro Connections project. Staff is proposing to shorten service from Montebello Town Center to Atlantic and implement limited stop service from West L.A. Transportation Center to Rowan or Atlantic. This proposal stems in part from duplication of service with Monterey Park Line 1 and Montebello Line 70. Mr. Gandara noted that there is a gap between Monterey Park Line 1 and Montebello Bus Line 70 at Wilcox Ave. (which operates weekdays only), and that staff will need to examine this further. He stated that staff would like to extend Line 68 to serve the future eastern terminus of the Gold Line Eastside extension.

Mr. Gandara mentioned that staff received clarification on the new Consent Decree provisions from the Special Master last Friday, but more clarification from corporate is needed.

Councilmember Tyler asked about the impact of the new Consent Decree orders.

Mr. Gandara stated that the Sectors are attempting to improve running time and recovery time when reallocating service. There is an \$80 million shortfall within the Sectors.

Councilmember Tyler inquired about the possibility of adding back service hours in the San Gabriel Valley Sector.

Mr. Hillmer responded that not as many service hours will be added in the San Gabriel Valley Sector as the Westside/Central Sector, which operates more Rapid service.

Councilmember Tyler stated that the Sector should examine the impact of the Consent Decree on the FY06, and possibly FY07 budget.

Mr. Gandara noted that Line 720 is long and that there are issues with its on-time performance. Staff is considering eliminating the portion of Line 720 service from Wilshire/Vermont to 6th/Alameda, establishing one Rapid route from Santa Monica to Wilshire/Vermont, and establishing one Rapid route from Union Station or 7th/Metro to Commerce Center/Garfield – Montebello Metrolink Station.

Chair Doyle asked if staff conducted studies of riders' origins and destinations when drafting Line 720 service change proposals. He stated that it would make more sense to run the proposed Rapid line to 7th/Metro rather than Union Station, since many passengers do not intend to go to Union Station.

Mr. Hillmer stated that there are many transfer opportunities at Union Station, but riders unfamiliar with the system may initially feel overwhelmed. He added that it may be difficult for buses to stop at 7th/Metro for an extended period.

Chair Doyle asked if the eastern leg of service on this line will be shifted to the San Gabriel Valley Sector.

Mr. Gandara responded that this is possible.

Mr. Sieckert provided an overview of proposed service changes impacting both the Gateway Cities Sector and the San Gabriel Valley Sector. The proposed changes seek to improve customer service, reallocate resources to provide better service, improve efficiencies through the elimination of unnecessary service duplication, and improve public access. He presented a map showing routes impacted by the changes and noted that few lines operate in any one given Sector.

Below is a summary of service change proposals impacting both Sectors to be implemented December 2005 or later:

Line 65 - Truncate Washington Blvd. segment due to duplication with Montebello Bus Line 50. Establish new Western terminal at or near Soto/Washington.

Line 258 – Extend line along Garfield Ave. from Firestone to Alondra Blvd. This would fill existing service void and provide a connection to Long Beach Transit and Montebello Bus Lines.

Line 265-75 – Extend Line 265 to Montebello Town Center. Establish a Line 275 northern terminal at Whittier Depot. Service north of Depot to be replaced by Line 270 and/or Montebello Line 40.

Line 266 – Provide additional service during weekday peak hours.

Line 577 – Establish new weekday express line between I-605 Station and El Monte Station in order to strengthen north-south connections. Service is proposed to operate during peak hours via HOV lanes on I-605 and I-10 freeways.

Mr. Sieckert explained that the Sectors will publish an official notice of public hearing on July 10 in local/regional newspapers, foreign language print media, and electronic media. Sectors will also continue outreach with affected stakeholders.

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

ADJOURNED at 7:15 p.m.

Michele Chau, Council Secretary