

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: 5:04 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Bruce Heard, Chair
Harry Baldwin
Bart Doyle
Henry Lopez
Sharon Martinez
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

1. Introductions – Council, staff, and members of the public introduced themselves.
2. APPROVED September 13, 2005 Minutes.
3. RECEIVED Public Comment – Ken Ruben, Southern California Transit Advocates. Mr. Ruben mentioned that Ralph Melching, a Railroad Boosters leader, recently passed away. He stated that members of Southern California Transit Advocates have made arrangements to ride the Orange Line this weekend, and invited the Council to join them. The Orange Line will open to the general public on October 29.
4. Chair's Remarks – none.

Councilmember Baldwin noted that all five Service Sectors presented their annual progress report to the MTA Board at the September 29th meeting. Coby King, Chair of the San Fernando Valley Service Sector, provided the opening remarks and summary of general accomplishments, and this was followed by a detailed presentation by each Sector. Councilmember Baldwin represented the Sector on behalf of Chair Heard, who was unable to attend the meeting. The Sector's presentation was well-received and highlighted its excellent work in public outreach and transit restructuring process. He stated that some requests from the public were included in the December 2005 service change program.

5. RECEIVED report of the General Manager.

Mr. Gabig presented an overview of key performance indicators for August 2005. Monthly Worker's Compensation Costs spiked in July /August, reflecting an agency-wide trend. While the cost of claims was high, the number of claims has remained fairly steady. The Sector is hopeful that its performance in this category will improve next month. There were 11.8 New WC Indemnity Claims per 200,000 Exposure Hours for August, and this is slightly above the target. Bus Traffic Accidents per 100,000 Hub Miles is trending downward with 2.37 accidents for August. There were 4 OSHA Recordable Incidents in August, and this is below the monthly target. Miles Between Mechanical Failures were just over 3,000 for August. The Sector has not yet set a target for this indicator. Mr. Gabig explained that Miles Between Mechanical Failures has been re-defined and that this indicator will now examine all road calls involving a bus exchange.

He mentioned that the Sector has also established an internal indicator not reflected in the handout given to Councilmembers. This indicator will examine all road calls regardless of cause or outcome. On-Time Performance for August was 74%, which is near the target of 75%. The Sector hopes to reach an on-time performance goal of 80% by the end of the fiscal year. Efforts by the field supervision team and follow-up at the divisions have helped boost figures in this category. Complaints per 100,000 Boardings have remained consistent at 3.0 for August.

Mr. Gabig reviewed detailed complaint data for August. The Sector is using a slightly different format in its presentation of complaint data, comparing August 2005 data to the 12-month average.

Chair Heard asked if "running hot" is included in the category of "other." Mr. Gabig responded that "running hot" relates to the category of "schedule adherence."

"How You Doin'?" Program:

Mr. Gabig explained that the weight factors for each performance category within Transportation and Maintenance have been adjusted to reflect a re-prioritizing of performance criteria. Prior to the adjustment, each performance category was weighted equally at 20%. Mr. Gabig stated that bus cleanliness is no longer one of the criteria used to evaluate Maintenance due to the elimination of the inspection center operated by the Regional Rebuild Center (RRC). The Sector is examining opportunities to conduct bus cleanliness inspections through another center.

July 2005 results:

Division 9 Maintenance ranked 5th place and Division 3 Maintenance ranked 4th place. Division 9 Transportation ranked 1st place and Division 3 Transportation ranked 6th place.

August 2005 results:

Division 9 Maintenance ranked 2nd place and Division 3 Maintenance ranked 4th place. Division 9 Transportation ranked 2nd place and Division 3 Transportation ranked 4th place.

Mr. Gabig presented slides of the renovation and expansion of the El Monte Station, one of three bus divisions being upgraded. Renovation of the Station is being sponsored by Foothill Transit. MTA is sponsoring upgrades to the Cal State L.A. and USC Medical Center stations.

El Monte Station improvements under construction include 6 new bus bays, new lighting, landscaping, and signage.

Councilmember Baldwin asked for clarification on the acronym FTA. Mr. Gabig responded that FTA stands for Federal Transit Administration.

Mr. Gabig noted that the re-designed El Monte Station will help reduce congestion during peak hours and mitigate security problems during evening owl service hours. The new Station will also provide opportunities to separate regional from local service. Sector staff will schedule a site visit for the Council once the project is complete.

Mr. Gabig acknowledged Emma Nogales, Sr. Administrative Analyst, for her work at the Sector and her assistance with capital projects. She will be moving on to a new role involving vehicle technology support and bus and equipment purchases at the Regional Rebuild Center.

Mr. Rosenberg provided an overview of financial results for August 2005. Total SGV Sector was \$900,000 under budget for the month. Total Transportation was \$600,000 under budget for the month with a slight YTD variance. Total Maintenance and Facilities was \$110,000 under budget for the month and \$260,000 under budget YTD. Total Sector Office was \$90,000 under budget for the month and \$134,000 under budget YTD. Other Sector Support was \$123,000 under budget for the month and \$184,000 under budget for the year.

Mr. Rosenberg briefly reviewed significant items. Operator Labor was 6.5% over budget for the month and 3.25% over budget YTD. He stated that this trend is likely to continue. Maintenance Labor was slightly over budget for the month. Mr. Gabig remarked that operator labor has been an issue for the agency for quite some time. The agency is struggling to recruit new operators, and approximately 70-80 positions need to be filled. This has resulted in greater overtime for existing operators. Mr. Rosenberg reported that Maintenance Labor was significantly impacted in September due to the need to train the Sector workforce on the new computer system.

Both Non-Work/Fringe Allocation and WC Allocation were under budget for the month of August. There was an error in calculating the August actuals in the latter category, and this will be reflected in the September financial report. Fuel Expense was 5% over budget for the month and 3% under budget YTD. Mr. Rosenberg noted that the trend in fuel prices has been frightening. The Sector budgeted \$.82/therm for CNG, and the cost for CNG in the first week of October has already exceeded this amount at \$1.20/therm.

Councilmember Baldwin asked why the under-and over-budget amounts listed next to Fuel and Fuel Tax Expense are both in parentheses. He stated that placing both these figures in parentheses is confusing.

Mr. Rosenberg responded that he will change this next month to reduce confusion.

Councilmember Doyle asked if the figures for Fuel Expense will get worse.

Mr. Gabig stated that this is a main concern of the Sector. He noted that while the supply of CNG is limited, the agency does not intend to use hedging. He stated that Metro is locked in to what the market requires and that funds will have to be adjusted to accommodate rising fuel costs. Mr. Rosenberg added that even though the operations budget for all the Sectors and Sector support groups combined was under budget for fiscal '05, long-term issues regarding rising fuel costs remain unresolved.

Mr. Rosenberg reported that Parts Expense was 7% over budget for the month and 2% over budget YTD. Public Liability/Property Damage was 23% under budget for the month and 76% over budget YTD. The Sector experienced a significant overrun the first month of the fiscal year, and this has negatively impacted the YTD figures for PL/PD. Other Sector Support was 17% under budget for the month and 13% under budget YTD.

6. RECEIVED an oral update on ATMS by Aurora Jackson, Asst. Transportation Manager/Vehicle Operations.

Ms. Jackson introduced Frank Cecere, Transit Operations Supervisor, who assisted with the presentation. Ms. Jackson reported that the Sector recently adopted ATMS, an integrated system that combines voice, data, dispatching and vehicle location capabilities. She explained that ATMS uses a mapping system to research the precise location of buses, and assists with fare collection and the programming of headsigs. Once GPS locates a bus, it coordinates with the scheduling system to predict the next location of the bus. A live demonstration was presented showing real-time data provided by ATMS, including schedule and line information for various buses, number of each bus, and badge number of operators. The system enables staff to evaluate the on-time performance of each line and make schedule adjustments if needed. Ms. Jackson noted that this information can be accessed for 90 days from the time it was recorded. ATMS can also track live calls from bus operators to the control center located in the downtown headquarters building. Ms. Jackson explained that silent alarms that can be activated by operators in the event of an emergency are highlighted in red on the screen.

Road supervisors are always available to locate a bus activating a silent alarm and deploy the closest unit for assistance. In addition, the new system enables road supervisors to send out text messages to one or more operators to provide detour and other information. An automatic passenger counter allows staff to observe the number of passengers boarding and alighting a bus each time the doors open and close, and this assists in more adequately addressing complaints and scheduling issues. Staff is in the process of resolving glitches in the system, and is testing the video surveillance component of ATMS, which is onboard but not yet implemented.

Chair Heard asked if the entire fleet is equipped with ATMS. Ms. Jackson responded that only a small number of buses are not equipped. Chair Heard asked if contract buses are also equipped with ATMS. Mr. Cecere stated that they are not.

Ken Ruben, a member of the audience, asked if another bus is used to fill in for a no-show bus. Ms. Jackson responded that ATMS does not alert road supervisors of a no-show bus if staff is already aware that a bus is scheduled for a detour and signs have been posted for the public. However, if a breakdown occurs leading to a no-show, ATMS will prompt road supervisors to investigate this and deploy assistance.

Mr. Gabig thanked Ms. Jackson and staff for their role in using this system to improve on-time performance and address complaints. ATMS is an essential tool that allows the agency to spread its resources farther and manage a wider span with limited staff.

7. RECEIVED an oral update on the San Gabriel Valley Transit Restructuring Study by Dennis Wahl, Transportation Manager, IBI Group.

Mr. Wahl reviewed outreach efforts that have taken place or are being planned. These include meetings with transit operators (including Foothill Transit, Montebello Bus Lines, ARTS, LADOT, L.A. County, Alhambra, Monterey Park, and El Monte); meetings with stakeholders (including San Gabriel Valley COG Management, Planning and Public Works Directors), and conferring with a technical advisory committee consisting of MTA staff, Foothill Transit, Pasadena, Montebello, and other operators.

Initial feedback suggests the need for improved connections to the Gold Line, increased Gold Line marketing, a reduction in regional travel times, inclusion of funding when a line is transferred to another operator, expansion of Pasadena maintenance facility, and resolution of access and circulation issues with hubs (including intensity, design, re-routing of service, and funding).

Line segment analysis is halfway complete and data is still needed for a few key services. Next steps involve continuing outreach efforts, identifying needs and deficiencies, developing improvement alternatives and regional/local service changes, and supporting capital elements. Mr. Wahl provided a summary of the project schedule. IBI Group anticipates line segment analysis to be complete in early November, proposal implementation to take place in December, and analysis to occur in June 2006. The Study should be complete by March 2006.

Chair Heard asked about the outcome of the Study and its relation to Metro Connections.

Mr. Gabig responded that the Study is a backbone of the Metro Connections concept and will assist the Sector in evaluating opportunities for regional integration with a focus on smaller operators.

Councilmember Doyle inquired about the capital costs.

Mr. Wahl stated that the budget for the Study is limited and that its financial analysis examines overall costs in broad terms rather than coming up with a solution as to how to fund these costs.

8. Consideration of Items not on the Posted Agenda – none.
9. Recessed to Closed Session: Personnel Matters – G.C. 54957
Public Employee Performance Evaluation Goals for FY06 –
General Manager

NO REPORT.

ADJOURNED at 7:10 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary