

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 5:13 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Bruce Heard, Chair
Emile Bayle
Bart Doyle
Henry Lopez
Sharon Martinez
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. **Introductions** – Council, staff, and the public introduced themselves.

2. **APPROVED Minutes** of Regular Governance Council Meeting held February 14, 2006.

3. **RECEIVED Public Comment:**

- Mary Griffith, transit user, expressed concern about 3 issues:
 - 1) Sidewalk at El Monte Station is not wheelchair accessible.
 - 2) Ladies restroom at the Station is not always sanitary.
 - 3) Training of operators. Stated that operators and repairmen are assets to the agency.

She expressed support for more express service in the San Gabriel Valley, as long commutes are frustrating.

Mr. Hillmer stated that staff will contact the City of El Monte to discuss the sidewalk issue.

- Ken Ruben, Southern California Transit Advocates – Mr. Ruben inquired about how the SGV Restructuring Study (please refer to Item #8) would impact provision of service, as community-based operators generally do not operate 7 days per week.

Mr. Wahl, IBI Project manager, responded that this is a key element of the Transit Restructuring Study. Creative collaboration between Metro and municipal operators is critical. Outreach, funding, and stakeholder issues need to be resolved. He added that there is a spirit of making this happen.

- Hank Fung, Southern California Transit Advocates – Mr. Fung asked how service changes resulting from the Study would impact fare.

Mr. Wahl stated that because blended services are being examined, fare levels would have to be comparable.

Mr. Hillmer added that staff needs to take a closer look at fares and other operational issues, and that actual fares are yet to be determined. The Sector does not intend to dictate fares and service levels to municipal operators. MTA may provide service on community-based lines that are not operated 7 days a week, but the actual decision will be made in the future by MTA and the munis. He added that ridership tends to decline steeply on weekends.

4. **Chair's Remarks:**

- Resignation of Steve Haderlein.

Chair Heard announced that Councilmember Haderlein has resigned as his schedule does not permit him to attend the meetings. The Council will be notified once a new Councilmember is selected.

- Annual Service Sector Meet and Confer Meeting.

Chair Heard mentioned that this year's annual Sector Meet and Confer meeting will be held on March 29 at 4:00 p.m. in the Gateway Building Board Room. He explained that the meeting provides an opportunity for all the Sectors to meet with CEO Roger Snoble, Deputy CEO John Catoe, and other executive staff to express their concerns and ask questions. He noted that an email notification regarding this meeting was sent to all Councilmembers.

5. **RECEIVED an oral report on Governance Council Term Expirations by Bruce Heard, Governance Council Chair.**

Mr. Hillmer distributed a handout listing term expiration dates for all Councilmembers. The following Councilmembers' terms will expire June 2006: Councilmembers Bayle, Martinez, Spence, Doyle, and Heard.

Chair Heard expressed his appreciation for the contribution and services of each Councilmember and hopes that each one will continue to serve on the Council.

6. **RECEIVED report of the General Manager.**

Mr. Gabig mentioned that Councilmembers Baldwin and Spence are in Washington D.C. to attend the annual League of Cities legislative conference.

He provided an overview of **Key Performance Indicators for January 2006.**

Monthly Worker's Compensation Costs and Bus Traffic Accidents/100,000 Hub Miles are trending in a positive direction. There were 11.6 New WC Indemnity Claims per 200,000 Exposure Hours, and this is slightly above the target of 11.0.

There were 3,488 Miles Between Mechanical Failures in January. This is close to the target of 3,500. On-Time Performance dipped to 59% in January. Mr. Gabig explained that this is an anomaly and that inaccuracies in the clocks used by schedule checkers resulted in a high number of buses running hot. He added that the entire Metro bus system showed a disproportional increase in running hot over the last two months. Staff has initiated a review of the data collection process.

Complaints/100,000 Boardings are trending downward with 1.94 Complaints for the month of January. There were an average of 2.69 Complaints/100,000 Boardings over the past 12 months. The most common complaint categories are Schedule Adherence and Passed Up.

"How You Doin'?" Program:

Division 3 Transportation placed 4th and Division 9 Transportation placed 7th for the month of January. Mr. Gabig stated that a high number of Worker's Compensation injuries adversely impacted the performance of Division 9 Transportation.

Division 3 Maintenance placed 3rd and Division 9 Maintenance placed 1st for the month of January.

Mr. Gabig provided an update on **El Monte Station improvements**. He reported that the project, which represents a joint effort between Foothill Transit, MTA, and Caltrans, is now complete. Mr. Gabig presented slides showing the Station entrance, landscaping, and a new passenger island to the west of the existing Station which will open later this month. The passenger island will include new bus bays and shelters. He stated that a 60% increase in the Station's capacity will mitigate congestion on the upper level.

Mr. Gabig presented slides showing the **new Division 9 Sector office building** site. Foundation work will begin shortly. The anticipated completion date is February 2007.

Mr. Gabig introduced Heather Holt, ethics officer. Ms. Holt indicated that Form 700's were sent to the Council by mail and reminded Councilmembers to submit their forms on time. She mentioned that Councilmembers who wish to do so may pick up extra copies of the forms at the end of the meeting.

Financials:

Mr. Rosenberg stated that this third quarter of the fiscal year includes two long months (January and March) and one short month (February). This resulted in an overrun in labor for January and March and an under run in labor for February. He mentioned that this trend tends to repeat every year during the third quarter.

Total Transportation was \$219,000 under budget for the month of January and on budget YTD. **Total Maintenance** was \$385,000 over budget for the month and \$1.5 million over budget TYD. **Total Sector Office** was \$8,500 over budget for the month and \$200,000 under budget YTD. **Subtotal Sector Operations**, which includes Total Transportation, Total Maintenance, and Total Sector Office, was \$175,000 over budget for the month of January and \$1.3 million over budget YTD. **Other Sector Support** was \$700,000 over budget for the month and \$1.6 million over budget YTD. **Total SGV Sector** was \$900,000 over budget for the month of January and \$2.9 million over budget YTD.

Mr. Rosenberg reviewed **significant items**. **Monthly Operator Wages** were 7% over budget for January, and this is partly due to January being a 31-day month with several holidays. **Monthly Maintenance Wages** were 8.5% over budget for the month and YTD OT was 23% over budget. OT has been an issue throughout the year. **Monthly Non-Work Allocation/Fringe Allocation** was 10% over budget for the month and 9% over budget YTD. **Monthly WC Allocation** was 46% under budget for the month and 45% under budget YTD. The Sector's performance in this category is among the best of any of the Sectors. **Monthly Fuel and Fuel Tax Expense** was 22% over budget for the month and 19% over budget YTD. **Monthly Parts Expense** was 36% over budget for the month and 19% over budget YTD. The Sector is addressing the overrun in parts in next year's budget. Aging vehicles have had a detrimental impact on Parts Expense.

Mr. Rosenberg explained that the latter two categories are the two main drivers of the budget. **Monthly Public Liability/Property Damage** was 43% under budget for the month and 36% over budget YTD. **Monthly Other Sector Support** was 103% over budget for the month and 32% over budget YTD, due primarily to an accounting error. A reversal of this error is in process.

Chair Heard asked why the SGV Sector has the oldest fleet in the agency. He asked if the 4400 buses play a role.

Mr. Gabig responded that 4400's are only part of the problem. These buses were manufactured in the early 1980's and underwent a major refurbishment four years ago. He added that these 35-foot buses require more service. In recent years the Sector has received a fair share of the new NABI buses.

7. RECEIVED oral report on **proposed June 2006 Service changes** by Jon Hillmer, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Hillmer stated that the proposed service changes focus on service reliability, adding running time, and adjusting service levels to match service demand. Service will need to be added to the busway and on heavier lines. Forty buses will be added to the fleet. Mr. Hillmer noted that due to a Consent Decree ruling 1.5 years ago, the Bus Riders Union opposed approximately 50 service changes. The Special Master, an arbiter of disputes, ruled that a handful of services needed to be reinstated. Mr. Hillmer mentioned that because of this ruling, all trips on Wilshire – Whittier Rapid Line 720 would need to be extended to the far end of the line. In late June, 60 articulated buses will run on this line. There will be 100 total articulated buses on this line, including spares.

Mr. Hillmer stated that the Sector will absorb some service on Lines 18, 30/31, and 68. A portion of each of these lines runs through the SGV Sector, and absorbing some service from these lines would minimize the extra cost of moving these services elsewhere. In addition, the Sector will absorb some services from the Westside/Central Sector. Mr. Hillmer explained that joint development construction at Hollywood Blvd. and Argyle St. will cause difficulty at the terminal for **Rapid Lines 717 and 780**. As a result of this, Fairfax Rapid Line 717 will be combined with Pasadena – Hollywood Rapid Line 780 to avoid congestion in the construction area. Although this combined line will be 24 miles long, ATMS and a possible time-point at Vermont and Hollywood will improve service quality. Further, the Sector will absorb 10 additional buses in Division 3 as a result of this route change.

Mr. Hillmer reported that the contra flow lane on Spring St. will be closed south of First Street beginning July 1, 2006. This will impact service on **Lines 28/328 and 70/370**. Line 28/328 will be rerouted northbound onto Hill Street between Olympic Blvd. and First Street. Line 70/370 will be rerouted northbound onto Olive St. and southbound onto Grand Ave. The latter change will match the route of Line 76/376 in downtown L.A.

A map depicting the changes was distributed to Council. Mr. Hillmer stated that notices regarding these changes will be posted well in advance of their implementation. Because the changes are minor, a public hearing will not be required.

Chair Heard inquired about the effective date of the service changes.

Mr. Hillmer responded that they will be effective June 28, 2006.

Councilmember Vasquez asked for clarification regarding how the Sector will absorb service from the various lines noted earlier (e.g., Lines 18, 30/31, 68).

Mr. Hillmer responded that the Sector will only focus on the east end of service on these lines. The lines may start in the SGV Sector and end in the Westside/Central and other Sectors. The Sector will only absorb individual bus trips rather than the entire length of these lines.

Councilmember Vasquez asked about the status of Line 577.

Mr. Hillmer responded that the line is growing gradually and averages about 500 riders a day (580 during peak periods).

Chair Heard requested a future report on the status of Line 177. He also requested a status report on the signal activation plan in Pasadena as it relates to Line 780.

Mr. Hillmer stated that Mr. Gabig raised similar questions regarding Rapid Bus coordination. The signal software package is being completed and will be activated by this summer. He clarified that not only will the City of Pasadena be impacted by the signal activation, but the cities of Glendale and West Hollywood would be affected as well.

8. **RECEIVED oral update on the San Gabriel Valley Transit Restructuring Study by Dennis Wahl, IBI Project Manager.**

Mr. Wahl provided a progress report on the status of the SGV Transit Restructuring Study. He stated that in addition to Metro, IBI Group is coordinating with Foothill Transit, Montebello Bus Lines, City of Pasadena, and DASH in order to carry out the Study. Elements of the Study that have been carried out by IBI include but are not limited to data collection, line segment analysis (e.g., identify operations issues such as overcrowding), and stakeholder outreach to groups such as Pasadena Transportation Advisory Commission, SGVCOG Transportation Committee, and L.A. County Board of Supervisors' staff. Draft technical reports include information on stakeholder outreach, existing needs assessment, service restructuring plan, communications and marketing plan, and capital budget.

Study goals include increasing regional and sub-regional mobility, boosting ridership, improving cost-effectiveness and use of available funds, and supplementing regional service with local service throughout the Study area. The overall goal is to provide a master plan for phased implementation.

Mr. Wahl stated that service needs to be more responsive to local travel demands and that an analysis of local route structure revealed that service should be provided in several areas. In addition, the spans and frequencies of several regional routes should be brought to standard.

Further, the Study identified a great need for high-frequency BRT-type service on the 1-10 busway.

Mr. Wahl reviewed key elements of the Study's restructuring strategy, including core, connector, and local service. The three tiers of service include the first tier (core routes), second tier (sub-regional connectors), and third tier (local routes). He provided examples of strategic hubs at the regional, sub-regional, and community levels. Examples of regional strategic hubs include downtown Pasadena and El Monte Station. Examples of sub-regional hubs include Gold Line Sierra Madre Villa station, LAC/USC Medical Center, West Covina Plaza, etc.

The Study's service strategy includes improving mobility and connectivity, standardizing spans and frequencies of service, improving efficiencies at El Monte Station, transitioning portions of routes to local operators, extending certain routes, and creating higher-speed service through transit priority. Mr. Wahl presented maps showing core services in the east and west Valley.

Councilmember Doyle asked if improvements in efficiency at the El Monte Station will involve site management controls.

Mr. Wahl responded that operational aspects of the Station are being expanded. Fare pay zones and other enhancements will help the Station operate more efficiently.

Councilmember Doyle inquired about next steps.

Mr. Wahl stated that the IBI Group will complete the Study by the end of the month.

Mr. Hillmer mentioned that the Study is a master plan for the entire SGV region. It will dovetail with the Metro Connections project, which will be implemented beginning December 2006.

Councilmember Doyle asked if the Study is consistent with the principles of Metro Connections.

Mr. Hillmer responded affirmatively. He stated that Metro Connections will be implemented over a lengthy period of time and will require significant coordination with other operators and cities.

Chair Heard stated that in terms of establishing a regional strategic hub in downtown Pasadena, there is no room to expand. He added that one option is to establish various hubs near the Gold Line Del Mar station.

Mr. Wahl stated that the hubs can be spread out among several stations and that more physical analysis is needed. From a service planning perspective, one or more hubs should be placed in downtown Pasadena. Mr. Wahl noted that coordinating with the Pasadena Transportation Advisory Commission would help in this endeavor.

Councilmember Doyle asked if it is possible to obtain a copy of the IBI report when it is available.

Mr. Wahl responded affirmatively.

9. Consideration of Items not on the Posted Agenda – none.

ADJOURNED at 6:20 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary