

Thursday, October 11, 2007 – 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

GATEWAY CITIES SERVICE SECTOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

The Gas Company
9240 Firestone Blvd.
Downey, CA 90241

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Jo Ann Eros-Delgado (Chair)
George Bass
Larry R. Nelson
Owen Newcomer
Samuel Peña
Wally Shidler
Vincent Torres
Harley Rubenstein

Officers:

Alex Clifford, General Manager
Raynard Price, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. **Pledge of Allegiance** - Led by Representative Vince Torres.
2. **Roll Call:** Council Secretary Raynard Price called the roll.
3. **Self Introductions:** Introduction of all those present was made.
4. **RECEIVED Public Comments:**

Rafi Katzir: Presented bus route suggestions, including Saturday service on Lines 659 and 705.

Tracy Winkler: Inquired about a meeting (Metro Gateway Cities Transit Providers) she happened upon while at Cerritos Public Library. Metro staffer Dave Hershenson advised while this meeting is not public, the public is not prohibited from attending; it is a meeting to discuss transit related issues amongst transit providers. General Manager Alex Clifford offered to provide Ms. Winkler with information of upcoming quarterly meetings if interested in attending.

Roberto Hernandez: A regular bus rider for 20 years, Mr. Hernandez shared with the Council issues regarding Line 111: Safety concerns, timely bus arrivals, the conduct of some passengers and delayed responses from Operators. He spoke on behalf of other riders who could not make the Sector meeting. The Chair thanked Mr. Hernandez for taking the time to attend the meeting and directed Metro staff to take further information. As a reminder, she advised he can call 1-800 Commute to report future issues.

5. **APPROVED Minutes** of September 13, 2007 Council meeting with Representatives Nelson and Newcomer abstaining.
6. **Received and considered** oral report and possible action from General Manager. General Manager Alex Clifford presented an overview of the Sector budget. Two months into the fiscal year the Sector is trending well with a favorable variance in Labor. However, the appearance of an over run in the Non-Labor Account is related to the Parts Budget.

Representative Nelson requested a clarification of the overage in the Non-Labor Account. Notwithstanding the purchasing of parts to repair engines, Mr. Clifford cited a recent major effort to send buses out in the mornings - against huge odds - without etchings on the windows. This effort often requires the changing of the Plexiglas in the buses which is costly. Metro is changing more glass than ever before.

Representative Shidler asked if Metro can check bus video tapes to capture those responsible for the Plexiglas etchings to turn them over to law enforcement. Mr. Clifford discussed the security process.

Representative Nelson asked about the standardization of parts and available suppliers. The cost for parts may increase when new parts are purchased under limited inventory which does not allow for cost breaks.

Mr. Clifford reviewed the Sector Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Workers' Comp is trending slightly over budget at YTD Actual \$1,131,052M, which is contrasted by New Workers Comp Claims per 200,000 exposure hours below the target at 9.08. As for Bus Accidents, Mr. Clifford reminded the Council that June's numbers were extremely low but spiked in August at 3.11 per 100,000 hub miles below the target 3.65 and dropped again in September. The August spike may be attributed to new Operators with less than one years' experience. He suggested the new Operators may require further training. Subsequently, the downward trends may be related to a successful Sector safety campaign.

Passenger accidents are slightly above the target of .22 at .25. Passenger accidents are related to impatient drivers racing past buses to make a right turn in front of, and before a bus, resulting in collisions or hard braking to avoid accidents by the Operator. Passenger accidents also include passengers falling while boarding and alighting buses.

Complaints per 100,000 Boardings are below target.

In-Service, On-Time Performance continues to be lower than target of 71% at 68.38%.

In comparison with the other four sectors, as requested by the Council, the following are results of GWC's performances:

- GWC continues to remain lowest in Workers Comp system wide.
- Ranked third in Bus Traffic Accidents.
- Rank the lowest in Customer Complaints.
- Ranked third in In-Service-On-Time Performance.
- Rank the lowest in Mean Miles Mechanical Failures. This continues to be a priority to resolve.

Mr. Clifford discussed a new 12-month average column added to the Customer Complaints report. Representative Nelson asked how Operation Discourtesy/Conduct is reconciled. It was explained when complaints are received, whether through the Division or Customer Center, they are forwarded to the manager for investigation. The Operator is interviewed and records are reviewed for complaint consistency. Depending on the complaint and outcome of

the interview, Operators are given either a warning, a caution or sent back for customer re-training.

Representative Shidler asked if Operators were enforcing the reporting of “fare evaders.” Mr. Clifford responded affirmatively. Fare evasion cards are given to the Sheriff’s department. This is an issue that is also being addressed by the Metro Board.

In a review of the report by Accident Types, Representative Nelson inquired if a particular intersection or area is more hazardous than others and the possibility of being identified in a report. According to Mr. Clifford, accident data are geo-plotted every month. The major problems are in the downtown area. Metro staffer Regina Chan indicated a database exists identifying trouble spots within the Gateway cities but no particular trouble spots have been identified as a trend, as accidents are scattered throughout the sector.

Representative Nelson requested a one-time sampling of a report. Mr. Clifford will provide a plotting of both downtown and Gateway cities. He added that Metro staffers Mike Seckert and Hassan Fakhro are excellent at communicating with Gateway cities to remedy problems that Operators may encounter. The most frequent requests from Metro Gateway Sector to cities are “left turn signal phasing” to assist buses in making timely and safe left turns.

In conclusion of his report, Mr. Clifford noted public commendations received on behalf of Operators: David P. Sanderson, Oscar R. Torres, Maria A. Campos, Derald L. Andrews and Jose Sierra. In one commendation, passengers requested the return of driver Jose Sierra back to Line 26. This will take place.

The Allocated Accounts based on passenger boardings is running on the surplus side.

- **Update on Metro Connections Meetings.** There was no meeting for the month.
- **Update on Artesia Blue Line Station.** Metro’s Mike Seckert reported Rail has been unsuccessful in trying to locate funding. Representative Shidler expressed his concern that the situation now includes a major development around the rail station and that Metro Corporate should work with the developer. Mr. Seckert said Metro Real Estate is aware of the situation. Representative Nelson expressed concern for buses being able to make turns under the new construction and reconfiguration along with ground water testing taking place at the site.
- **Update on Line 577.** With school back in session the numbers are rising but still not where the numbers should be. The Line may require

marketing. Representative Shidler expressed a concern that there is no signage at the transit mall for this line

- **Consider going dark in December.** It was decided to continue to meet in December.
- **Transit Provider's Workshop.** Dave Hershenson discussed the recent quarterly workshop of area transit providers hosted by the City of Cerritos, to share information with no votes or action taken. The next scheduled meeting is in January. Notice of the meeting is distributed to all Transit providers in the Gateway Cities. Representative Nelson acknowledged that all Sector Council Members are emailed notification of the meeting with an opportunity to RSVP.
- **L.A. County Operator Comparison.** In response to Representative Pena's request for a comparison to local area operators General Manager Clifford presented a spreadsheet prepared by Mike Sieckert based on 2005 NTD data (with a two year lag time it is the most current data available). Highlighted in the report, METRO in comparison is 7% above the average in fare-box return. Passenger per revenue hour is at 50%. Over-time, METRO's costs have been much more stable and consistent in comparison.

Representative Shidler expressed curiosity why the City of Norwalk would take over a line that costs more to operate in passenger subsidy than METRO. Mr. Clifford said the City of Norwalk saw great potential that could be tied into other services. Graham Ridley, Manager of Transit Operations for the City of Norwalk, agreed and added this line aids in regional connectivity.

- **Ridership Report (added).** A written ridership report was provided to the Council.

7. **Considered receipt** of oral report, and possible action on Update on Operator Vacancies. Stefan Chasnov, Deputy Executive Officer of Human Resources, reported Metro has solved the Bus Operator vacancy problem of a year ago. He provided a chart showing 137 vacancies with only 21 full-time vacancies. He indicated the part-time vacancy rate is no longer relevant because of an agreement with the UTU allowing part-timers to work more than the hours indicated in the contract. There are financial benefits for Metro to expand the number of hours for part-timers than to hire the full compliment of 824 part-time operators. Metro is continuing efforts to fill all assignments.

This was accomplished by: Affecting changes in the UTU contract that previously resulted in the loss of Operators because of a promotion process resulting in lost earnings. With the help of the unions, this particular process and classification

was suspended allowing hiring directly into the part-time classification resulting in a drop of the 200% turnover rate to zero.

Metro conducted a popular and successful pilot "Bridge Program." Metro partnered with Work Force offices around Southern California, Los Angeles Valley College and Literacy Network to provide additional pre-OCI training to Operator Candidates experiencing difficulty through the application process or training program. This pilot program allowed Metro to hire 200 additional operators. It will continue to be a new source of recruitment for new Operators. It is hoped the program will also increase the quality of new hires in addition to accident reduction. The program has two goals: 1) New Operators and 2) Better trained Operators. Mr. Chasnov suggested returning in a year with a report on both goals although early datum indicates the goals are being achieved.

In regard to filling vacancies for mechanics and service attendants, these vacancies have been filled with new hires scheduled for classes through the end of the calendar year. The budget approval process was the cause for the delay in the hiring of the mechanics.

Representative Shidler asked if the 21 full-time positions will be filled. Mr. Chasnov responded that a small number of full-time positions will need to remain vacant in the eventuality that Operators who are on-leave of absence return.

Mr. Shidler asked if Metro is promoting service attendants to the mechanical trade or if mechanics are coming from outside of the agency. It is a combination of both. Mr. Chasnov concluded his report.

8. **Considered receipt** of oral report, and possible action on Metro Connections Update – Ed Clifford. The goals of Metro Connections is to increase ridership and improve operating efficiency, providing faster service, increasing use of seating capacity and to better serve major activity centers (19 major activity centers throughout the county have been identified.) These changes will be occurring over a two-year period between June 2007 and June 2009. A slide presentation presented highlighted key themes which include: Building out Rapid System; using high capacity buses; developing more efficient schedules; more emphasis on high speed services.

The first phase of the program was implemented in June, 2007 achieving the efficiency and ridership objectives with a key objective of saving 100,000 hours. This was accomplished by focusing on low productivity and duplicated services. The Tier 1 changes will be going before the Metro Board of Directors for approval.

Currently, Metro is in the initial planning for the June, 2008 service changes. This is the most important services changes with an objective to achieve efficiencies of 215,000 hours annually which is a significant cost savings.

Key changes implemented this past June are: Rapid service on both Long Beach and Santa Monica Boulevards; Rapid Express on Hawthorne and Wilshire Boulevards with early results showing the Wilshire Boulevard Rapid Express is successful (8,000 boardings per day); restructuring of four major lines (Wilshire Local, Crenshaw Rapid, Wilshire Rapid and Soto Rapid).

In December, additional Rapid service will be implemented on Olympic Blvd. and Garvey/Cesar Chavez and restructure of 8 routes that may have duplicate segments. There will be minor routing changes on Line 45 (North end) and Line 28. There will be the deployment of 95 more articulated buses on Rapid lines.

Representative Shidler asked if Metro has done a cost/benefit analysis of “Metro Connections” in terms of saving money. Ed Clifford responded the CEO requests status of the projects which includes the net change in the service hours. He suggested that at the end of the program there will be a savings of 370,000 hours which translate to a savings of approximately \$40M.

Representative Shidler requested the number of customers increased daily over “boarding” increases for Metro Connections. Ed Clifford indicated there may be more time needed to accomplish good bench mark surveys. Representative Shilder suggested that Metro should do surveys with riders before decisions are made. There was discussion of the transferring of riders.

Representative Nelson inquired if the new articulated buses can operate on an incline and steep terrain. The new buses are able operate as well as 40 ft. buses. Representative Nelson reminded the Council of a past experience where buses that could not climb hills, held up traffic. Mr. Clifford concluded his report.

9. **Considered receipt** of oral report, and possible action on Governance Council Member Line Ride Report – Larry Nelson & Wally Shidler. Representative Nelson discussed his experience on Line 130. He was impressed that Long Beach Transit posts bus schedules as part of the signage. He shared that the initial Operator did not announce bus stops. The bus was clean but did not have flyers of Governance Council meetings. At the transfer point of Lakewood Blvd., Operator Caleb Brown was exemplary. He announced every stop, interacted well with customers, and helped a customer. Representative Nelson expressed a concern of a stop too close to a freeway ramp on Artesia Boulevard near Prairie Ave.

Representative Shidler reported his ride on Line 60. He discussed the lack of potable water for Operators and a missing air conditioning panel over a seat.

10. **Considered receipt** of oral report, and possible action on Notification of Upcoming Governance Council Member Line Ride Report and Upcoming Line Rides – Alex Clifford. Mr. Clifford announced date and time of upcoming Sector Council ride. Representative Bass will be riding Line 611.

11. Chairperson's Remarks. There were no remarks.

12. Council Member Remarks. Representative Shidler discussed issues related to approving line changes, especially as they related to transfers.

Representative Pena announced a kick-off lunch he attended, "Luis H. Lara Pancreatic Foundation" named after a council member and friend who passed at age 40 leaving behind a wife and a 12 year old and 4 year old son.

ADJOURNED: 3:51 P.M.