

MINUTES

San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector Office
3449 Santa Anita Avenue
El Monte, CA 91731
3rd Floor, Council Chambers Room

Called to Order at 5:04 p.m.

Sector Representatives Present:

Roger Chandler, Chair
Joseph Mosca, Vice Chair
Harry Baldwin
Ernest Gutierrez
Bruce Heard
Sharon Martinez
Dave Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Introductions.

APPROVED **Minutes** of Regular Governance Council Meeting held July 14, 2008

2. **Public Comment** - Please refer to Item #8 and Item #9.

3. RECEIVED **Chair's Remarks:**

Chair Chandler stated that he and Representative Baldwin attended the Metro Service Sector Annual Meet and Confer meeting held on August 20. CEO Roger Snoble provided updates on Measure R (proposed half-cent sales tax increase) and congestion pricing, among other topics. During the meeting, Mr. Snoble stated that although staff was unable to implement the Sectors' recommendations regarding the proposed June 2008 service changes, he appreciated the time and effort Sector Representatives expended in considering the changes.

4. APPROVED **Governance Council Nomination.**

Representative Baldwin introduced new transit user nominee Alex Gonzalez. Mr. Gonzalez will fill the position vacated by former Sector Representative Henry Lopez.

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

Mr. Gabig stated that there will be less emphasis on labor and financial measures in upcoming General Manager reports. Staff will instead focus on service issues and major milestones and accomplishments.

- Measure R – The California State Legislature recently approved AB 2321, a bill that would allow a new half-cent sales tax, Measure R, to be placed on the November ballot. If approved by voters on Nov. 4, Measure R would generate an estimated \$30 billion to \$40 billion over 30 years to pay for mass transit and road improvements. Mr. Gabig provided an overview of how revenues would be allocated. Because the measure is a tax increase, voters must approve it by a two-thirds majority. If approved, the measure would become law in January.

- Congestion pricing update – The California State Legislature recently approved SB 1422, which allows congestion pricing on two Los Angeles County highways. The bill, which awaits the Governor’s signature, will allow Metro to provide a higher level of service on the El Monte Busway and Harbor Transitway. The bill will also enable staff to implement capital improvements, including expansion of El Monte Station and provision of additional parking.
- October Meeting – Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) – Rod Goldman, Diversified Transportation Solutions, will report back on the SRTP at the October Council meeting. Sector Representatives’ recommendations regarding the SRTP will be forwarded to Mr. Goldman.
- “How You Doin’?” final results (Maintenance and Transportation combined):
 - Division 9 Transportation placed 1st.
 - Division 3 Transportation placed 5th.
- Metro receives Gold LEED award – The San Gabriel Valley Sector Office building was designed for silver LEED certification but received the Gold award, the second highest certification. Only a handful of buildings in the state are platinum-certified.

6. **RECEIVED report on FY08 Financial Recap and FY09 Budget** by Paula Faust, Administration & Financial Services Manager.

Ms. Faust stated that the financial report will be provided on a quarterly rather than monthly basis and will be performance-oriented. The Sector has performed well throughout this fiscal year. She provided an overview of FY08 year-end financials. Total San Gabriel Valley Sector budget was \$8.8 million under budget year-to-date. Savings were realized in the areas of labor, Workers’ Compensation (\$3.4 million savings) and Public Liability/Property Damage (\$3.7 million savings). Ms. Faust reviewed the Sector FY09 adopted budget, including operational cost drivers. There was a slight decrease in vehicle hours due to trip thinning. The number of mechanics and service attendants remains static for FY09. Ms. Faust reported that both fuel cost per hub mile and parts cost per hub mile increased for FY09. Total San Gabriel Valley Sector budget increased by 4%. Ms. Faust presented a slide showing a breakdown of the Sector FY09 adopted budget by cost category. Fuel costs increased by 7%. The agency is now in the second year of the two-year fuel hedging contract. Parts costs increased by 12% due to aging fleets at both divisions.

Ms. Faust presented a slide showing a five-year expense and budget chart for operations only. Comparing the FY07 and FY08 figures, there was a 1% decrease in FY08 actuals. She stated that savings in Workers' Compensation and Public Liability/Property Damage offset labor cost increases in FY07.

Chair Chandler asked when the next financial report will be provided.

Ms. Faust responded that the next report will be presented in November.

Representative Baldwin asked how congestion pricing proposals address the costs of operating and maintaining new buses.

Mr. Gabig responded that any toll revenues generated will help fund operations. The project will need to be completed by December 2010.

Representative Mosca asked if the decrease in the frequency of oral financial updates is due to lack of staff time or financial data not being as glamorous as other information.

Mr. Gabig stated that Sector Representatives will continue to receive reports on key performance indicators each month, but the oral reports will not be as frequent. Staff would like to focus more on customer and performance issues.

7. **RECEIVED oral update on Community Relations/FY09 Marketing Plan**
by David Hershenson, Community Relations Manager.

- Marketing campaign update - Mr. Hershenson stated that the Board approved a budget of \$65,000 for each Sector to conduct marketing campaigns. This amount is more than double the previously approved marketing budget of \$29,000 for each Sector.
- San Gabriel Valley customer appreciation program – The first round of winners have been selected, prizes were awarded, and car cards have been posted. Two more rounds of awards will be presented in FY09.
- New campaign to promote commuting to and from El Monte Station - The campaign is designed to promote the use of various transit modes at the El Monte Station.
- New route promotion campaign – This marketing program is designed to promote lines with low ridership. Candidate lines include Lines 177, 665 and 287.

Representative Mosca stated that Line 177 buses tend to be outdated and unreliable.

Mr. Hershenson responded that Carl Torres will address this issue as part of item 9.

- San Gabriel Valley coordinating meetings – The next bi-annual meeting with all San Gabriel Valley municipal and local operators will be held in January 2009. Staff is meeting regularly with representatives from transit providers whose services will complement the service that will be provided by the Gold Line Eastside Extension. The Council will have the opportunity to tour the Gold Line Eastside Extension stations sometime in spring 2009.

8. **RECEIVED oral briefing on Dual Hub** by Scott Page, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Gabig introduced Scott Page, new Service Development Manager. Mr. Page has twenty years of experience at Metro, and has held a number of scheduling and planning positions. He previously worked in the Metro Regional Planning Department, where he focused on Rapid bus service, and at the Westside/Central Service Sector where he served as Service Development Manager.

Mr. Page stated that San Gabriel Valley Sector staff has been working in conjunction with Westside/Central Sector and downtown service planning staff on the Dual Hub Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) program. This program will work in conjunction with congestion pricing. The Dual Hub concept involves a route that begins at El Monte Station and ends at the Artesia Transit Center. Mr. Page presented a map of the service concept.

Representative Baldwin asked for more clarification on BRT.

Mr. Gabig responded that BRT is a higher-level bus service that typically operates on a dedicated right-of-way.

Mr. Page stated that two heavily used lines, Line 484 and Line 490, stop at the El Monte Station and provide service to downtown. Four lines operated by the South Bay Sector, Lines 444, 446, 447 and 445, pass through the Artesia Transit Center and also provide service to downtown. The Dual Hub concept would allow for continuous service from El Monte Station to the Artesia Transit Center via downtown. Once implemented, the concept would reduce layovers and improve Sector productivity.

Mr. Page reviewed next steps, including determining patronage impacts at both El Monte Station and Artesia Transit Center, studying and proposing a downtown Los Angeles route alignment, developing operating plan scenarios for new service, determining restructuring of existing local express lines, and studying the fare structure.

Mr. Gabig stated that staff would like to introduce new service based on the Dual Hub concept next June. However, off-board fare payment will not be included as this requires infrastructure improvements at all of the stops along the El Monte Busway and Harbor Transitway. Staff would like to purchase off-board fare payment equipment as part of the congestion pricing program. The June proposal will be at no cost to the agency as existing services will be integrated.

Representative Heard observed that the Dual Hub concept represents a shift away from the trend of cutting back longer lines. He asked if using an exclusive right-of-way allows the Dual Hub concept to be more feasible.

Mr. Page responded that the dedicated right-of-way helps maintain on-time performance. It also requires less manpower. Mr. Gabig noted that Lines 484 and 490 would be broken, resulting in transfers for approximately 10% of riders. Staff will attempt to coordinate service to minimize wait time. Service east of El Monte Station would be local rather than express.

Representative Baldwin asked if buses traveling on the Harbor Transitway share similar routes as those traveling on the El Monte Busway once in downtown.

Mr. Page responded that both buses traveling on the Harbor Transitway and those traveling on the El Monte Busway stop at Grand Ave. and Olive St. in downtown. There are several other parallel routes.

Representative Vasquez asked about the role of the South Bay Sector.

Mr. Gabig stated that service will be jointly operated with the South Bay Sector.

RECEIVED public comment – José Melendez, transit user, stated that he is pleased with the Dual Hub concept. He expressed concern about service on the Harbor Transitway that is provided by other operators, such as Gardena Transit, Commuter Express and Torrance Transit. He asked how these operators will be impacted by the Dual Hub project.

Mr. Page responded that these municipal operators will not be impacted as they do not provide the same levels of service or operate in the same service areas as those proposed in the Dual Hub concept. However, staff intends to coordinate with the municipal operators.

Mr. Melendez asked if municipal operators will provide service that connects to the dual hub.

Mr. Page responded that staff will take this into consideration.

9. **RECEIVED Line 177 Profile Report** by Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Manager III.

Mr. Torres introduced Shannon Anderson, Contract Services Manager, Eduardo Espiritu, Contracted Transit Manager, and Sajjad Hussain, Contracted Transit Manager. He presented a Line 177 route map and reviewed major stops on the line, including Sierra Madre Villa Station, Pasadena City College, Caltech, Del Mar Station, Memorial Park Station and Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He stated that the line is eleven miles long and operates from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays only. The line has 30-35 minute frequencies in both directions, with the exception of the last two westbound trips which have 40-50 minute frequencies. Three older buses provide service on the line. Mr. Torres reported that new thirty to thirty-two foot buses will provide service on the line sometime in the near future. Ridership data on the line is collected manually by schedule checkers once per year, usually in November.

Mr. Torres presented a chart showing early November 2007 daily line patronage figures and ridership comparison figures for the Sector and agency as a whole.

Representative Mosca asked if the transit-oriented development at the Del Mar Station is fully occupied.

Representative Heard stated that he has been told the structure is 90% occupied.

Mr. Anderson reported that funding for the bus procurement was approved by the Metro Board in May and that a bid will be released this week. He stated that the new contractor, Veolia Transportation, provides service in the north region. Mr. Gabig clarified that it will be at least one year before the agency takes delivery of the new buses.

Mr. Anderson stated that receipt of the vehicles is dependent on a number of factors, including when a bid is selected and manufacturer's ability to produce the vehicles in a timely manner, among other factors.

RECEIVED public comment – José Melendez, transit user, stated that he recently noticed that thirty-five foot buses provide service on Line 96 instead of larger buses.

Mr. Hussain responded that passenger loadings determine the size of buses used on various lines.

Representative Heard stated that he regularly rides Line 177 and is pleased that a new contractor will oversee the line. He noted that the buses currently running on the line have weak shock absorbers, resulting in a noisy and bumpy ride. He commented on the severity of the headsign problem. Headsigns frequently malfunction, display the wrong destination, or show no destination.

Mr. Hussain responded that these issues should be resolved once the headsigns are properly programmed.

Mr. Gabig inquired about the field supervision plan, particularly as it relates to service in the Pasadena area.

Mr. Hussain responded that regarding Line 177, supervisors are in the field beginning at 6:30 a.m. Supervisors continually monitor the line and ensure that buses are re-fueled in the afternoon.

Representative Heard asked about the destination signs.

Mr. Hussain responded that the signs will continue to use the same format and will be re-programmed. Staff is attempting to train operators to be more familiar with routes and destinations.

Representative Baldwin asked if the contractor oversees both maintenance and operation of lines.

Mr. Gabig responded that the agency provides the vehicles, and that the contractor is responsible for the entire operation of contracted bus lines. Mr. Anderson added that vehicle maintenance is the responsibility of the contractor.

Representative Baldwin asked if the agency conducts periodic inspections.

Mr. Anderson responded that that both periodic formal and more regular, roll-out inspections are performed.

Representative Gutierrez asked if there are industry standards when evaluating bids for bus procurements.

Mr. Gabig responded that it depends on the class of vehicle being used. Cutaway vehicles are currently used on the line. These vehicles are typically used for paratransit operations such as Dial-A-Ride. The agency would like to obtain new heavy duty, thirty to thirty-two foot vehicles with a twelve-year life. These buses are comparable in quality and life span to a forty-foot bus.

Representative Gutierrez suggested that staff members selecting the bid should ride the bus firsthand.

Mr. Anderson responded that the manufacturer will build a pilot vehicle that will need to be approved by Metro. The bus will need to be appropriately designed for the type of service that is being operated.

Representative Gutierrez mentioned that there will be significant impacts on the surrounding community once the \$1 billion El Monte Transit Village development is completed. He stated that Metro staff may consider providing city of El Monte officials with the opportunity to provide input.

Mr. Gabig stated that staff has worked closely with the city of El Monte and the developer. Meetings are held at least quarterly. The configuration of the station still needs to be determined.

10. **CLOSED SESSION- General Manager Performance Review.**

NO REPORT.

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

ADJOURNED at 6:14 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary