

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 5:01 p.m.

Sector Representatives Present:

Roger Chandler, Chair
Alex Gonzalez
Ernest Gutierrez
Bruce Heard
Dave Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVED **Minutes** of Regular Governance Council Meeting held February 9, 2009.

2. **RECEIVED Public Comment** – Ken Ruben, transit user, stated that he was impressed by how well Chair Chandler handled both the February Regular Council meeting and public hearing. The Chair treated members of the public fairly during the hearing. Mr. Ruben suggested using an odor-eliminating product on rail line station elevators.

3. **RECEIVED Chair’s Remarks:**

- Staff is recommending that Line 256 service be cancelled only if a municipal operator assumes operation of the line. No service disruption is currently planned for the line. Scott Page will provide a report on Line 256 later today. Those who would like to provide public comment on Line 256 service changes may do so during discussion of Item 6.

4. **PRESENTED Customer Appreciation Rewards.**

David Hershenson, Community Relations Manager, announced winners of the “We Can’t Go Anywhere Without You” campaign. The program, which was successfully initiated last year, recognizes notable transit users. Car cards from the last campaign are on display in the Council Chambers Room. Mr. Hershenson presented Customer Appreciation awards to the following individuals:

Transit user David Correa, nominated by bus operator Gerald Bingham.

Transit user Reyna Gonzalez, nominated by bus operator Juan Navarro.

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

- Mr. Gabig announced that Art Leahy, who current serves as Chief Executive Officer of Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), will succeed outgoing Metro Chief Executive Officer Roger Snoble effective April 6. Mr. Leahy began his transit career in 1971 as a bus operator at Southern California Rapid Transit District, the predecessor agency of Metro.

He held a number of management positions while employed at Metro, including overseeing bus operations and activation of the Metro Blue Line. Prior to heading OCTA, Mr. Leahy served as General Manager of the transit agency in Minneapolis-St. Paul between 1997 and 2001.

- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which was passed by Congress last month, will provide approximately \$300 million for public transit bus and rail capital projects and \$215-\$435 million for highway and other transit capital projects. A number of Tier 1 projects are ready to go, meaning that they are able to be programmed and obligated within 90 days. These include bus midlife programs, bus replacement for directly operated and contracted services, and electrifying compression of natural gas combustion engines at CNG fueling stations.
- Beginning March 15, day passes will only be sold on TAP cards. Mr. Gabig presented a sample TAP card. New TAP cards will cost \$2 after June 30, but will be free until April 11 while quantities last when a regular day pass is purchased.

Representative Heard inquired about the shelf life of the new TAP cards.

Ms. Faust responded that the cards are good for five years.

Representative Gutierrez noted that senior citizens who submitted an application for the new TAP card received their card within two days. He stated that he was impressed by the quick turnaround.

6. APPROVED findings of February 9, 2009 Public Hearing and ADOPTED a revised service change program.

Scott Page, Service Development Manager, stated that there were 101 attendees and 41 speakers at last month's public hearing on proposed service changes. The San Gabriel Valley Sector also received a total of 178 comments via email, fax, mail, and phone by the close of public record on February 14. In addition, staff received a petition signed by 1,575 individuals opposing the proposed cancellation of Line 256.

Mr. Page presented a summary of San Gabriel Valley Sector proposals. He reviewed the revised service plan for the Line 910 Silver Line, contract bus Lines 177 and 256, and Gold Line Bus-Rail Interface Plan. Regarding Line 910, staff recommends maintaining this new line and related changes to Lines 484 and 490 as proposed. Staff would also like to add Line 910 stops near the downtown Los Angeles civic center and at Olympic Blvd. and Washington

Blvd. Regarding the Gold Line Bus-Rail Interface Plan, staff would like to implement the changes as proposed. Regarding proposed service modifications to Line 177, staff recommends peak direction service with mid-day service operating between Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Pasadena City College. The headway will improve to every twenty minutes in the peaks, hourly in the mid-day. Regarding proposed service modifications to Line 256, staff would like to cancel the service as proposed only if another transit provider agrees to operate the service.

Representative Spence asked if staff knows which operator will take over Line 256.

Mr. Page responded that Montebello Bus Lines and Commerce Transit expressed interest and that Metro staff has been communicating with these providers. Mr. Gabig added that Montebello Bus Lines is not yet prepared to commit to assuming Line 256 as it will need to determine how the southern terminus of the line will interface with its existing network. If either provider decides to only assume service on a portion of the line, Metro will provide service on the remainder of the line.

Representative Vasquez asked if it is possible for all three providers, including Metro, to operate the Line.

Mr. Gabig responded that this will not likely occur. He added that Metro will either operate the entire line or operate the portion of the line north of Highland Park.

Representative Spence asked about the incentives of operating the line for Montebello Bus Lines.

Mr. Gabig responded that the service would complement their existing network, and would provide a north-south connection to their two primary Lines 40 and 10. Montebello Bus Lines may be able to obtain regional funding to unify service in the East Los Angeles area by assuming a portion of Line 256.

Representative Heard noted that he rode Line 256 last Friday and that service on the line was excellent. He observed clear signs that service on the line should continue. The operator was courteous, equipment and signage were functional, and a large number of regulars rode the line.

Representative Chandler inquired about fares that Line 256 patrons must pay when transferring.

Mr. Page responded that an extra fare is required if a Line 256 patron transfers to or from another service provider. He stated that most patrons who ride Line 256 travel within the line. Mr. Gabig added that while both Montebello Bus Lines and Metro charge \$.25 to transfer to another provider, Metro's base fare is slightly higher at \$1.25.

RECEIVED public comment:

José Melendez, transit user, stated that he was anxious to know the outcome of the proposals for Line 910, particularly as they relate to the recommendations put forth by the South Bay Service Sector.

Mr. Page indicated that the new Line 910 will offer improved service levels and lower fare than the existing freeway express service provided by Lines 444 and 446/447.

Wayne Wright, transit user, inquired about the type of buses that will be used on Line 910.

Mr. Page responded that forty-foot buses will be used initially, followed by forty-five foot composite NABI buses.

Mr. Wright asked if LADOT has participated in discussions regarding Line 256.

Mr. Page responded that staff has not yet engaged in discussions with LADOT regarding operation of Line 256. He stated that it is a good idea to have DASH operate a portion of the route, and that staff will look into this.

Mr. Wright asked about service levels on Line 287 between El Monte and the Gold Line.

Mr. Page responded that service will be provided every thirty minutes from the Indiana Gold Line station to the Montebello Town Center. Stops at El Monte will be made on every other trip. He noted that an extension of Line 487 would allow patrons to travel from the Sierra Madre Villa Station to El Monte.

Representative Vasquez expressed concern about buses bunching up due to the added service.

Mr. Page mentioned that staff discussed this issue prior to the public hearing, particularly in terms of how patrons will queue. Currently there are queue lines for Line 484 and Line 490. He noted that buses will be coming more frequently and that extra buses will be available at the yard to fill service gaps.

Additional operators may be available to assist patrons with boarding and alighting. In addition, the TAP program will be in place by the time the service changes are implemented. Mr. Gabig stated that staff will experiment with allowing patrons to enter both doors of the bus to expedite boarding.

Representative Vasquez requested an update on this issue.

7. **RECEIVED Ridership Analysis report.**

Mr. Page reviewed San Gabriel Valley Sector average daily ridership trends for the one-year period from January 2008 to January 2009. He noted that ridership dipped during the summer and Christmas holiday season. This corresponds to a system-wide drop in ridership during the months of December and January. Mr. Page provided an overview of trends in San Gabriel Valley Sector passenger miles traveled. He reported that passengers appear to be riding farther as average trip lengths have increased.

8. **RECEIVED performance indicator report.**

Steven Fox, Transportation Planning Manager IV, provided an update on San Gabriel Valley Sector second quarter FY09 service performance results using the new performance indicators. He noted that the route performance index is limited in that it focuses only on the business aspect of providing service rather than the customer experience. Mr. Fox stated that the new indicators will assist in decision-making, focus on both the network and line perspective, balance mobility with efficiency, and enable staff to identify certain line characteristics that require greater scrutiny.

The four broad categories of service performance identified by staff include availability, quality, quantity and effectiveness. Eleven indicators correspond to the four core values. Mr. Fox reviewed the accessibility and connectivity indicators (corresponding to the core value of availability), in-service, on-time performance, headway variability, and customer complaint indicators (corresponding to the core value of quality), frequency and load factor indicators (corresponding to the core value of quantity), and boardings per service hour (productivity), cost per passenger mile, passenger miles per seat mile, and service reliability by time period indicators (corresponding to the core value of effectiveness).

Representative Gutierrez asked if the increased use of surface streets by motorists seeking to avoid freeway congestion is taken into consideration when compiling the statistics.

Mr. Fox responded that staff takes these factors into consideration when performing data cleansing. An incident that creates a long delay for passengers would be treated as an outlier so that it doesn't skew the rest of the data.

Representative Heard inquired about the amount of time required to complete the performance analysis.

Mr. Fox responded that the process was time consuming as there are only six staff members in the service planning department performing the quarterly analysis. The analysis takes approximately 1-1.5 weeks to perform. Service planning staff is working with Sector staff to automate several activities.

Representative Heard asked how the San Gabriel Valley Sector compares with other Sectors.

Mr. Fox responded that the Sector is doing well in many of the indicators, including load factor.

Representative Heard asked how unsatisfactory service performance is addressed by staff.

Mr. Fox responded that staff can zero in on performance issues at the line level and segment level of a line. In addition, data can be divided into seven distinct time periods. Trip-by-trip and stop-by-stop information is also available.

Representative Spence expressed concern about whether the benefits of conducting these analyses outweigh the time and costs involved.

Mr. Fox stated that the service performance plan, which will include the new performance indicators, will be presented to the Metro Board in April. Mr. Gabig added that many of the indicators have been used by operations planning for quite some time. The indicators are useful tools for the Sectors.

Mr. Page reported that on-time performance reports are now prepared on a monthly basis instead of a quarterly basis. Scheduling staff was able to use this data to determine which trips to add or remove, which significantly improved on-time performance.

Representative Gonzalez asked about the extent to which GIS or similar software assists staff in compiling the data.

Mr. Fox stated that GIS software assists staff in compiling census track data and information on employment and accessibility. Mr. Page stated that automated passenger counts also assist staff in obtaining data.

Representative Gutierrez commented that the data contributes to increased transparency.

Representative Heard stated that he feels the Sector Council is best qualified to handle performance issues.

Mr. Fox stated that the Board will consider modifying the Transit Service Policy in April. He suggested communicating any reservations about the Policy to corporate staff.

Mr. Gabig stated that staff needs to determine the best way to apply performance analysis results in a way that is not detrimental to the Sectors.

Chair Chandler requested that Sector staff communicate the Council's concerns about the modified Transit Service Policy to corporate staff.

9. Service Sector Representatives Closing Remarks – none.

ADJOURNED at 6:16 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary