

Thursday, February 8, 2007 – 2:00 p.m.

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# Minutes

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

## GATEWAY CITIES SERVICE SECTOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

The Gas Company  
9240 Firestone Boulevard  
Downey, CA 90241

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Called to Order at 2:00 p.m.

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Council Members present:

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

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Officers:

Alex Clifford, General Manager  
George Roqueni, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Gateway Cities Service Sector Council Regular Meeting  
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1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Self Introductions

Public Comment: Jaime Becerra, Norwalk Transit System's (NTS) Transit Administration Coordinator spoke on behalf of NTS about the proposed abandonment of Metro's Line 275 which is to be discussed at the Public Hearing later this evening. NTS supports Metro's plan to abandon Line 275. Discussions were held with the Service Sector with the intent of having NTS operate this service. If Metro abandons Line 275, NTS would operate it along the same alignment it has right now with a very short deviation. NTS Route 8 currently parallels Line 275 from the Whittier Depot, south along Green Leaf, Painter and Carmelita. Service would deviate at Leffingwell to Imperial Highway and then west for approximately ¼ mile to service the MetroLink station. It would then return to Valley View via Imperial Highway and continue south to Los Cerritos Center as Line 275 does now. In addition, NTS has submitted a call for projects application for capital funding to purchase additional clean air technology buses. Their plan would be contingent upon NTS successfully receiving their funding request through the Formula Allocation Process (FAP). This proposed plan is being submitted to the Norwalk City Council at its meeting of February 20<sup>th</sup>.

4. APPROVED **Minutes** of January 11, 2006 Council Meeting.
5. RECEIVED Report from Alex Clifford, General Manager.  
Mr. Clifford reminded council that the Division 1 tour of will replace the previously scheduled line ride for Friday, February 9, starting at 9:00 a.m. Three Council Representatives plan to attend the tour. Mr. Clifford provided the Council Representatives with an article from The Daily News about the currently proposed service changes, as an example of the widespread media attention the service changes have garnered. He reported that Richard Hunt was interviewed on television this morning about the proposed changes. The Council Representatives were given a copy of the letter from the Bus Riders Union (BRU) addressed to Chair Molina protesting proposed service changes and requesting no curtailment of service.

Budget

There continues to be a positive variance, of nearly \$1 million, through the month of December 2006, for labor with a good portion of this related to fringe benefits and non-work time which will be adjusted at the end of the fiscal year. In the area of Non-Labor expenses, there continues to be savings that are primarily fuel related. Allocated Accounts continue to be positive, in comparison to last year, due to PLPD for those law suits which are the result of accidents which have not come up during this year's budget.

Key Performance Indicators

Workers' Compensation year-to-date (YTD) is \$3,837,896 which is below the \$4,151,141 YTD target. The severity of the cases and claims are not as high as anticipated. While there is an increase in the number of claims, the severity is lower which is reflected in the lower cost. In reviewing traffic accidents, December activity increased probably due in part to the rainy weather. In addition, following a shake up where operators may take on new lines, there is usually a cyclical increase in the accident rate.

It was noted that there appeared to be a spike in the number of accidents involving fixed objects where buses are brushing up against curbs, poles, trees or parked cars. A campaign is being developed, in conjunction with Marketing, for posters which focus on having operators check for proper clearances by using the mirrors.

In addition, an application for a safety initiative campaign has been developed.

In the FY08 budget, the Safety Department is requesting \$ ½ million for its program. A process is being created where all five sectors apply for money. A request is being developed which provides for additional Sheriff's Department Officers to focus on the downtown area where most of the accidents occur and to focus on citing the public. In the review of the accident statistics, it was determined that well over 70% of Code 2 accidents are not Metro's fault. Another application for funds will focus on improving operator driving skills by developing a system of operator-mentors or possibly acting TOS. The goal is to have experienced operators riding with their colleagues and to identify how to handle some of the problems encountered in the downtown area where most of the accidents take place. Mr. Clifford expressed dissatisfaction with the current on-time performance percentages and stated that renewed efforts are being made to improve it through analysis of run time and overtime slips submitted by operators due to traffic congestion.

Representative Cheri Kelley asked if routes were examined periodically to determine if travel time is reasonable in the context of traffic congestion. Mr. Clifford responded that there are several ways this is reviewed. The most obvious way to determine delays is when the operator provides an overtime report giving traffic delays as the reason. This is reviewed to determine if the delays were caused by an accident, movie shoot, public works project, a fire, or if there is something more pervasive which would necessitate changing the schedule. There are instances when the operator completes a miscellaneous form which is sent to the Division Manager and ultimately forwarded to the Service Development Manager who reviews the route to evaluate the appropriateness of the time schedule. This review may ultimately lead to line adjustments in the schedule. Mr. Clifford compared the pass-ups in November, 8.47 to 8.97 in December. Chair Shidler asked if operators were calling Bus Operations Control (BOC) on these pass-ups. Mr. Clifford explained that there is a procedure in place where an operator notifies BOC when a stop is bypassed due to overload. When there are a number of complaints focused on a particular operator, the individual is brought in for counseling. In the review of the top ten

accidents, there were 56 in December. There were several customer commendations for Division 1 and 2. The General Manager reviewed the process for receiving input at the public hearings which are combined with those received by e-mail, regular mail, customer service center, and phone. Responses are prepared, the proposed changes are reevaluated based on public input, and staff forwards the updated recommendations to the Governance Council for consideration at the next meeting.

Update on 2008 Budget and Deficit

Metro is faced with projected \$104.3 million budget deficit for FY2008 and this Sector has submitted its request for what was deemed to be absolutely necessary. Requests were made for more mechanics, service attendants and Field Transit Operations Supervisors (TOS). In the \$104.3 million deficit, Metro Connections will offset some of the deficit by resulting in about 100,000 fewer vehicle hours. The Gateway Cities portion of those 100,000 hours is roughly 18,000 hours.

6. RECEIVED Presentation on Metro Ridership Plan by Matt Raymond, Chief Communications Officer who presented an overview of the changes and improvements which occurred this past year. He noted that all indicators involving customer satisfaction and increases in ridership were positive . Increased ridership is budgeted every year at 2%, but is actually trending at 5% and exceeding national averages by about four times. To increase ridership, Metro has been promoting its best lines and services with higher frequencies and where there is still capacity which affords the best return on investment. Convenient fare offerings, such as the Day Pass, have been a huge success in terms of generating ridership and simplifying our fare system. Improving on-street supervision, leveraging park and ride lots, increasing HOV lane operations, rethinking downtown operations - which is the slowest moving area with many accidents - and more customer driven services such as developing true express service have contributed towards improving service and customer satisfaction. Increased marketing and advertising has helped to improve discretionary ridership from 22 to 36% over the last three years. One of the key aspects of increasing ridership is maintaining the best fleet on the street. The recently introduced paint scheme has helped to improve recognition and awareness. Enhancing the customer's experience with improved amenities and lighting and even relaxing the restrictions on some of the rail lines allowing the public to bring coffee on board, could help make the system more inviting, thereby improving ridership. The next steps involve presenting to the Metro Board a prioritized plan to increase ridership and revenue. Representative Nelson suggested that the agency market the fact that Metro is using alternative fuel vehicles to help improve ridership. Representative Newcomer asked if consideration had been given to reduce some services and then transfer these resources to increase the frequency of service on existing lines. Mr. Raymond stated that this is already being done by eliminating underutilized service. Representative Bass asked if any thought had been given to having a flat rate fee throughout the entire system. Mr. Raymond responded that this concept has been reviewed many

times. The existing Formula Allocation Program (FAP) uses the base fare as a key element of the formula. Changing to a flat rate would be very beneficial to Metro but would decimate many of the municipal operators.

Chair Shidler noticed a half page advertisement in a newspaper for the upcoming reduced fare promotion. He found the notice for the public hearing buried in the classified pages and wondered why the public hearing notice was not more prominently displayed. Mr. Raymond agreed with Chair Shidler's suggestion, and will explore the possibility of advertising public hearings in other sections of the paper. Chair Shidler cited the public input system that was used by RTD when they reconfigured their bus system, where the public's recommendations were used to generate line change proposals. He stated that he is unaware of any public input currently being solicited for the current Metro Connections program. Mr. Raymond indicated that in the past some effort was made to approach the changes in this manner. Studies done by others all seem to indicate that the public does not want to transfer, but want a one-seat ride where possible or not more than one transfer per trip. Chair Shidler indicated that the former system used for public input was more effective, comprehensive and provided for a more effective outcome.

7. RECEIVED Update on Reduced Fare Rate Promotion from Dave Hershenson, Community Relations Manager.
  - The original concept, introduced by Director Villaraigosa, provided in concept for free rides for one day across the county. Later, an alternate approach was developed on which there would be a full week of a reduced fare of 50 cents on a set of target lines that need to improve their productivity.
  - The 18 lines identified for this fare promotion were spread throughout the county with Gateway Cities Sector having five of those lines which are the 102, 127, 265, 275 and the 577. Not all these lines are operated by Metro, but all operate in this sector; and of special note, Line 577 express has zone charges which will be waived.
  - This promotion has been marketed in a variety of ways, including car cards, newspaper ads, radio ads, and a special link on Metro's web page listing all the lines and destinations with hyperlinks to the route timetables. In addition, employers along the affected route have been notified of the fare promotion (to share with their employees), and Cal State Long Beach has been contacted to notify their students about the 50 cent fare on the 577X.
  - A major press event, with Mayor Villaraigosa presiding, has been planned and slated for Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>.
  
8. RECEIVED Representative Line Ride Report from Wally Shidler, Chair of the Gateway Cities Service Sector Council who took Line 355 which involved two buses. In both instances the buses were late. In one case the bus had mechanical problems and could not get out of the division. He noted that while

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riding 355, the heaviest ridership appeared to be from Adams and Central into Los Angeles. He found the drivers were courteous, but the ledges on the inside of the bus were dirty. George Bass has the line ride on Line 612 and shall provide the report at the March meeting.

9. Chairperson's Remarks - none

10. Council Member's Remarks:

- Larry Nelson reported that at the Gateway Cities COG meeting an announcement was made that the public hearing was being held for this sector. Nineteen cities were informed about this public hearing.
- Sam Pena thanked the General Manager of the San Fernando Valley Sector, Mr. Hunt, who made himself available at five in the morning for the Channel 4 newscast. He is also pleased to see that the newspaper *La Opinion* ran an article regarding the proposed line changes and provided the address of the meeting location. He also thanked the Bus Riders Union for getting the word out. Hopefully the public hearing will be well attended.
- Chair Shidler reported that he attended the transportation meeting of the COG where the Councilmember from Paramount, Gene Daniels, made a comment about the Artesia Blue Line station and said that the transfer point there was dangerous. He indicated that Long Beach Transit (LBT) no longer has service to this location. Mr. Clifford responded that he is looking into the matter, and security arrangements are being made that will bring LBT into the station again.

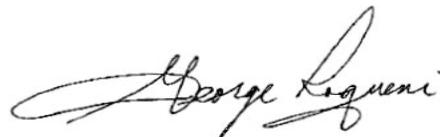
11. Consideration of Items not posted on the Agenda – None

12. Public Comment on Items not posted on the Agenda:

Mr. William Robinson reported that there is grease on the top of the gates. He cannot buy a bus pass in Long Beach with tokens using the machine; it is necessary to purchase it from a bus driver. The bus drivers will not accept tokens because they claim they do not have time. He also indicated that he can not find a schedule for a bus when needed.

Chair Shidler informed Mr. Robinson that the Transit Mall in Long Beach has all of the bus schedules. He also suggested buying the Day Pass using cash at the fare machine.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.



Prepared by: George Roqueni  
Council Secretary