

Minutes

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

GATEWAY CITIES SERVICE SECTOR COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

The Gas Company
9240 Firestone Blvd.
Downey, CA 90241

Called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Council Members present were:

George Bass (Chair)
Harley Rubenstein (Vice-Chair)
Anne Bayer
Jo Ann Eros-Delgado
Lillie Dobson
Cheri Kelley
Larry R. Nelson
Wally Shidler

Officers:

Dana Coffey, General Manager
Raynard Price, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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September 10, 2009

1. **RECEIVED** Pledge of allegiance given by Representative Bayer.
2. **RECEIVED** Safety 1st Contact by Lt. Obenberger Safety Contact: Lt. Obenberger spoke about personal safety and security. He presented handouts on safety tips. Lt. Obenberger advised the Council of the importance of staying alert and paying attention while on transit systems. He spoke of “snatch and grabs” crimes in which other patrons grab electronics or other personal items when leaving transit systems. He says the doors are generally closed before patrons can do anything about it. He announced recent arrests of those who committed crimes on Metro that involved approximately 150 – 200 officers and support staff. He noted Lt. Eric Rubble, Special Problems Unit, willingness to discuss the arrest at an upcoming meeting.

Lt. Obenberger suggested that wallets be carried inside the coat or front pocket. He asked Sector Council members to let him know if they become aware of problems (crime related) on the system. Representative Bass asked if patrols are increased where schools are. Lt. Obenberger responded that more police focus is indeed given to school areas but it is more effective to have administrators observe school areas than police. Representative Nelson requested that police look at students on trains with bikes blocking doors and spoke of students he has observed skateboarding along the length of trains, which Lt. Obenberger said would happen. Additionally, Lt. Obenberger gave home safety advice that included keeping homes well lit and cutting shrubbery away. Lt. Obenberger said he will be attending the Governance Council meetings on a regular basis to discuss safety related issues.

3. Roll was called. Representative Nelson stated he would have to leave at 3:10 p.m.
4. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Gateway Sector Council meeting.
5. Self introductions were made.
6. **APPROVED** Minutes of August 13, 2009.
7. **PRESENTED** commendation for Gateway Cities Sector Vehicle Operations Supervisor Christine Nolan for her heroism and professionalism displayed while a mother and baby were awaiting paramedics after their vehicle was involved in a rear end collision by an 18 wheeler on the 710 freeway on August 17, 2009. The presentation was made by Dana Coffey, General Manager, Metro Gateway Cities Sector. More details were presented by Hassan Fakhro, Service Development Manager, who added that the mother and baby were unable to get out of the vehicle once it was rear ended – no Metro vehicle was involved. Ms. Nolan stayed with the mother and baby until paramedics arrived. He said the paramedics also thanked Ms. Nolan. Ms. Coffey announced that Ms. Nolan will also be acknowledged at the upcoming Operations Committee for her heroic act.
8. **RECEIVED** report on the EXPO Line Phase 1 Project by Tori Hill, Transportation Project Director, Exposition Metro Line Construction Department. Ms. Hill presented a brochure that included a route map. She defined a light rail system as a rail system that runs on street level. She said the electrically powered Expo Line runs along Exposition Blvd. with up to three cars that can carry more than 600 passengers. She said the line is 8.18 miles from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City. Thirteen miles will be shared with the Metro Blue Line, with 11 stations and 1,500 parking spaces, and is expected to be completed by 2010. It is estimated it will take 30 minutes to travel between Downtown Los Angeles and Culver City. The opening station is yet to be determined.

Ms. Hill reviewed the line, including overpasses, underpasses, and at grade stations. She said the line will run through highly congested areas. She said the Exposition Board receives input from every stakeholder along the alignment, including 14 design committees, providing input in areas of landscape, artwork, and overall station design. All stations have the same design; however, the artwork and landscaping will be different featuring drought-tolerant plants native to California. In an effort to conserve water, water will only be used, as necessary, to preserve the plants. She noted that the top panels of the sound walls are installed, which are designed to prevent graffiti from penetrating

the sound walls. She said it was critical that the stations be designed to be environmentally friendly including a continuous bike path.

Representative Nelson asked why rubberized grading is not used on the walkways instead of cement. Ms. Hill said she will look into it. Representative Bass noted that while riding other transit systems the loading areas are marked so that patrons know ahead of time where doors will be opening. Dave Hershenson said he will look into it and may possibly report back next month. Representative Kelley noted it may take place but is just not in the artist renderings.

According to Ms. Hill the project is currently 53% complete. There is a lot of utility work to be done. The alignment goes along 33 schools. There is a safety education program to make sure teachers, students and parents are aware of construction. For more information a 24 hour hotline has been established for construction updates and emergencies at 213.922.EXPO (3976). Expo is also on Twitter to keep concerned citizens up to date for changes that may be taking place. Representative Nelson asked how long would take for the Exposition Line to pay for itself. Ms. Hill noted that she knows of no transit project that does.

Representative Shidler asked if the Dorsey and Foshay school issues have been resolved. Ms. Hill said the issue with Foshay has been resolved (the school has always had an underground pedestrian tunnel for use before and after school) but is still working on the issue with Dorsey. Expo has determined the line can be built providing safety for the students. She said the issue is that the crossings had not been approved prior to construction by the PUC, which will require additional engineering and funding. Representative Shidler asked why there isn't a fly-over at Washington and Flower to avoid a conflict of the Blue Line and Expo. Ms. Hill said this problem is being looked into but there is no resolution at this time. Ms. Hill concluded her report.

9. **RECEIVED** report on the Bike Program, Lynne Goldsmith. Ms. Goldsmith opened her report noting that the Expo Line has bike lanes or bike paths planned. She said bikes are a part of the transportation solutions, which will play a bigger role in green technology with many benefits. She provided a PowerPoint presentation and an overview of the bike program and its goal to double the number of bike trips and reduction of car use. She spoke of the benefits of cycling and of the Call for Projects for cities that may include requests for bike lanes, and how Metro also applies for funding. The Sector Council was advised that Metro developed a bike strategic plan in 2006 which also funds a bike infrastructure for the 14 mile Orange line bike path. She also mentioned that there is a waiting list for bicycle lockers. Representative Shidler asked why there are no triple racks on buses like Long Beach. Ms. Coffey said she will bring this information back next month but there are pros and cons for doing so. Shidler asked why the bike rules are not enforced. Ms. Goldsmith said the rules are under discussion. Representative Kelley suggested the rules may be keeping people from riding bikes. Ms. Goldsmith discussed the folding bike program that may increase bike use and the accommodation for bikes. Ms. Goldsmith responded to other bike related questions and concluded her report.
10. **CANCELLED** report on Timetable Design Update by Mike Lejeune, Creative Service Director – to be rescheduled for another date.
11. **RECEIVED** report on Governance Council Member Line Ride. Representative Anne Bayer discussed her long and exciting ride on Line 266 from the Lakewood Mall to the foothills of Sierra Madre. She said the line crossed five freeways. She said that going 48 passengers boarded the bus with 39 stops, and said it was her first time at the Sierra Madre station. Because of the "Station" fire the foothills could not be seen. She said the station was very clean and she felt safe in the area. She noticed only one bike rider during the entire trip and no wheel chair riders but two skater boarders. She said this was very different from her previous rides. She noted that the Operator was good and helpful with patrons who needed to transfer. Representative Bayer observed the timetable racks were full. General Manager suggested that Representative Bayer call in her positive experience with the line and Operator, and asked all Sector Council members to call in these kinds of Operators so they get acknowledged, noting that there are many Operators who do an outstanding job.
12. **RECEIVED** Chairperson's Remarks. Chair Bass reminded everyone present of 9/11.

13. **RECEIVED** Council member remarks.

Representative Kelley apologized to Gateway Sector staff regarding the parking solutions knowing how hard they worked on seeking resolutions.

Representative Rubenstein welcomed General Manager Dana Coffey.

Representative Shidler agreed with Representative Kelley on the surprise notice of the parking situation at the Artesia Transit Center. He said he met with Mr. Leahy and discussed topics including: communication issues between Sectors and departments at Metro, High Speed Rail, Highway System, quality service, and better operating shops. He said the Council will be meeting with him next month. Representative Shidler suggested getting questions prepared and to expect candid responses.

14. **RECEIVED** General Manager's Report. The General Manager invited Irv Taylor to share with the Sector Council an update on parking at the Artesia Blue Line Station. Mr. Taylor said the MTA adopted a pilot program to test "for pay" parking. The Board in 2003 adopted a policy for the program. It allowed the converting of previously free parking lots for pay. The number of spaces varies from lots. The Artesia Blue Line Station is overly used with more people wanting to park than available spaces. The "for pay" program is a way of meeting the demand. Fees vary between lots. Permanent signs were installed at the Artesia Station. The designated 'paid' parking spaces will still be available to the general public until November 1. Representative Kelley said this is the first time the Council had heard of this program, although Sector staff have been working on the parking issue for an entire year. Mr. Taylor said he has been working with Sectors to develop a solution for the parking problems, including working with the City of Compton to develop a parking structure.

Representative Kelley stated she did not understand the logic of charging for spaces when there are not enough spaces. Mr. Taylor said to maintain the parking lot is an operational cost for Metro. Parking revenue can go back into the system to pay for security, painting, and maintaining the lots. He added that program only sets aside 25% of the spaces for paid parking. The spaces are open to the general public after 11:00 a.m. It is designed for those with a need during peak demand. Representative Shidler said a program like this should have had a courtesy presentation so the Council was made aware of the program and given an opportunity to comment.

Mr. Taylor noted that at some of the stations there is a waiting list because the paid parking spaces are full. He said there are 74 paid spaces dedicated at the Artesia Blue Line Station, with 22 permits sold to date. The program is new and it is expected there will be a waiting list. Representative Nelson suggested that older patrons be given the opportunity to have priority. He also asked if Metro employees are exempt. Mr. Taylor said employees are not exempt from paying for parking here. Mr. Taylor said the preferred parking spaces are considered prime spaces and are located closer to the system. He said the rate for parking here is less than that of private parking operators. He said that many people not using transit have been taking advantage of the free parking spaces. There is a security cost associated with maintaining these lots. Mr. Taylor said that Metro received \$10,000 the previous month in parking fines from violators. Representative Kelley asked what happens when someone without a permit takes the space of someone who pays. Chair Bass shared his dissatisfaction that the parking plan was being implemented while the Council worked and spent valuable time trying to find a solution to the parking problem. Other members of the Council shared their dissatisfaction that no member of the Sector staff knew of the paid parking program at the station. The General Manager requested Mr. Taylor return in November to provide an update and respond to the questions asked.

General Manager Coffey said the CEO will be looking at quality service. She said managers are being asked to do Line rides. She spoke of newer vehicles on the street such as motorized bikes.

Ms. Coffey announced The Gas Company will not be available for a council meeting the month of November, and that the November meeting will be held at Downey City Hall. Mr. Hershenson will make sure the public is notified of the new location for the November meeting.

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Ms. Coffey announced that Metro's Bus Roadeo will be held September 26, and encouraged everyone to attend.

Ms. Myrine White, Financial Service Manager, presented the budget variances. The grand total for both departments is 1.1M. She presented a breakdown of the Support Department charges. She said the favorable budget variance in Labor account is \$520K is mostly in Non-work Time/FB accounts. In Non-Labor the favorable budget variance is \$476K primarily in Fuel account \$490K which is partially offset by the unfavorable variance in vehicles Revenue Parts (\$68K).

Representative Kelley asked if there is a way of knowing how the charges end after corrected. Ms. Coffey spoke of how there is an effort to fix the mis-charges so that staff are not continuing to make this mistake. Ms. Coffey noted the commendations received for Operators for the month of July. Representative Shidler requested a comparison to the other sectors. Representative Kelley asked about the possibility of sectors keeping any budget surpluses to use for projects the following year. She said she would like to see the issue raised again at the Meet and Confer. Ms. Coffey spoke of areas that need improvement but got better, and said the Sector is doing well, with a major effort to work on an Accident reduction manual. Operators can go online to suggest ways to reduce accidents. She said customer complaints are up. She said the highest areas of complaints are Pass Ups, Operator Conduct and Others.

15. **RECEIVED** Public Comment. Wayne Wright spoke on temporary changes to Line 51. He asked staff to expand Line 51 to serve the Artesia Station via Alameda and asked that the Casino owners open the gates that separate the two properties to make it more convenient for patrons to access the nearby shopping center. He said that Line 202 is limited and the expansion of Line 51 will allow the use of the shopping center.

Adjourned 4:30 p.m. in memory of the victims of 9/11

Prepared by

Raynard V. Price
Council Secretary