

Wednesday, September 2, 2009,

MINUTES

San Fernando Valley Service Sector
Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys, CA 91401

Called to Order at 6:30 p.m.

Service Sector Representatives present:

Richard Arvizu, Vice-Chair
Michael C. Cano
Kymberleigh Richards
Brad Rosenheim, Chair

Officers:

Richard Hunt, General Manager
William Walker, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

ITEM 2

1. Pledge of Allegiance was held.
2. APPROVED Minutes of Regular Council Meeting held on Wednesday, July 1, 2009.
3. RECEIVED Public Comment
 - Nate Zablun – said that he favored more signal priority and better connections between the Orange Line and its feeder lines so Metro can operate more efficiently and serve San Fernando Valley riders with better service and shorter wait times. He said many of the San Fernando Valley lines are around 25 miles long. He added that there should be shorter headways and that longer lines, such as Line 167, should be restructured with either skip stop or short line service in order to speed up travel time and serve major destinations (i.e. Veterans Administration Hospital, Cal State University, Northridge, Valley College, Metro Rail or Orange Line stations) with improved service, thereby potentially encouraging new riders.
4. RECEIVED Chair’s Remarks – NONE.
5. RECEIVED report of the General Manager – Richard Hunt
 - Reported on the Channel 7 news story concerning service to patrons that use wheelchairs, which identified a number of serious issues, but did not represent the overall quality of service provided to approximately 43,000 patrons using wheelchairs monthly. Complaints are relatively low considering the volume of passengers served, but every complaint is fully researched by management staff and action is taken as necessary. The news story provoked the need for the agency to provide additional operator training on use of the equipment and securement procedures. Sector Management has thus far done the following:
 - Conducted operator retraining at Divisions 8 and 15.
 - Reviewed all elements related to the operation of the wheelchair securement, seat belts, and on-board annunciators with maintenance staff to ensure that all related components are operational.
 - Required that operators thoroughly check these elements during pre-trip pull out inspections and report malfunctioning equipment to the appropriate manager so it can be repaired.
 - Ensured that each complaint is investigated to ensure the quality of service deserved by Metro patrons.

Mr. Hunt agreed to keep Council members apprised of any developments.

 - Announced the appointments of two new Governance Council members to be sworn in at the October meeting following appointment at the September Board meeting:
 - Gary Bric, Mayor, City of Burbank
 - Steve Veres, Mayor, City of San Fernando

The two seats for City of Los Angeles representatives continue to be vacant.

- Orange Line North/South Canoga Avenue Extension Update – announced that construction continues on the extension, the operations plan is under development, and that the opening date for the extension is expected in early 2012. Metro Real Estate staff also continues to close out leases with tenants along the right-of-way.
- Zero Emission Bus Rule – In late July, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) voted to delay implementation of zero emission bus rules. CARB would have required that Metro only purchase zero emission buses by the year 2012. Mr. Hunt explained how such a mandate would affect Metro considering many of the zero emission buses (i.e. fuel cell, battery) are not technically mature and could prove cost-prohibitive. Metro still operates the largest alternative fuel fleet in the nation, will continue to be a transit leader in this arena, and will work with CARB staff on identifying innovative technologies that will reduce emissions.

6. RECEIVED oral Report Compo Bus Overview by Richard Hunt, General Manager.

Mr. Hunt announced that Metro is operating a fleet that is 100 percent alternative fuel as of 2009; the bulk of the fleet operates on compressed natural gas, but 6 buses in the fleet are gasoline hybrid buses, which have tested satisfactorily thus far.

In 2003, the Metro and the Advanced Vehicle Technology Consortium Boards directed staff to purchase up to 100 lightweight, high- capacity, and alternative fuel vehicles. North American Bus Industries (NABI) was selected to develop and produce 45 46-seat Compo buses, which were manufactured using space-age technology and materials, and patterned after the Advanced Technology Transit Bus manufactured and evaluated in the mid-1990s.

Since then, the first 100 45-foot Compo buses have performed almost 5 years of revenue service and have proven to be very successful. The buses:

- seat 16 percent more passengers and weigh less than a conventional bus
- are built with strong materials and are corrosion-resistant
- have an estimated service life that is 50 percent greater than the standard steel frame bus

The Metro Board approved the procurement of 260 more compo buses in 2008, which will replace existing 40 foot buses. Metro currently operates a 100 percent alternative fuel fleet of more than 2,500 buses, of which all but six buses operate on compressed natural gas. The six that do not operate on CNG are hybrid buses that operate on gasoline.

7. RECEIVE & File Budget Update for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 by Kathy Drayton, Administration and Financial Services Manager, METRO SFV Service Sector.

For the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2009:

The Sector ended the year with an overall funds balance of \$3.194 million, a positive variance of 2 percent.

Labor fund balances overall were at a positive variance (\$1.28 million), which includes a negative variance for ATU (\$1.5 million), a positive variance for UTU (\$1.9 million) and

other smaller positive variances for other labor categories. Many of the reasons for the variances are similar to trends mentioned throughout the fiscal year, utilizing part-time operators and maintaining a full complement of operators to reduce overtime spending for UTU, and many of the maintenance campaigns to keep the fleet clean, well-maintained, and moving caused a negative variance in the ATU category. Attendance and the age of the fleet also contributed to the negative variance in the ATU category. These trends were considered when formulating the FY 2009-2010 budget.

Non-Labor categories ended the year with a positive variance of \$2.37 million, which includes a positive variance \$409,000 in parts, due to some unexpected parts reimbursements, and a positive variance of \$1.3 million in **fuels and lubricants** primarily due to lower fuel costs and not operating all budgeted bus service.

Average cost per **therm of compressed natural gas** (CNG) was 67 cents per therm, much lower than the budgeted 90 cents per therm.

Allocated and other categories were at a negative variance of \$460,000, primarily attributed to higher than average **worker's compensation** claim costs (\$2.1 million total), even though fewer claims were reported this fiscal year than the previous. **Personal Liability / Property Damage** ended with a positive variance of \$1.4 million due to fewer claims and lower accident rates.

The Sector operated \$1.3 million revenue service hours, about 98 percent of budgeted hours.

The average cost per revenue service hour operated was \$119.63, 57 cents above target.

The Sector collected \$163.9 million in revenues: 71 percent from taxes and grants, 14 percent from farebox recovery, 11 percent from passes, and the remainder from tokens and miscellaneous.

Each fare yielded 66.7 cents per boarding, just below the agency target of 67 cents.

8. RECIEVED oral Report on Traffic Accidents by Dave Miklic, Senior Safety Specialist.

Mr. Miklic began by highlighting how both the Sector and agency have seen a downward trend in accident rates, one that may be difficult to continue decreasing at the same rate, considering how well the San Fernando Valley Service Sector had done in recent history, keeping accidents just below 2 per 100,000 hub miles. The rates can be attributed to lower levels of traffic, bus division performance and how the Sector handles traffic accidents. He added that accidents tend to increase and decrease at nearly the same rates when comparing the Sector to the agency as a whole.

Mr. Miklic stressed that each operator is required to undergo annual vehicle training. This training is now more focused on both avoidable and unavoidable accidents, slightly different from the agency's sole focus on avoidable accidents in the past. Mr. Hunt added that much of the work done by Division Managers and Training Instructors nurturing and supporting operators has been very beneficial for the Sector continuing to be successful at keeping accident rates low.

9. RECEIVED oral report on December 2009 Service Change Update by Mike Brewer, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Brewer informed Sector Council Representatives of the impending FY 2010 budget crisis and how the loss of State Transit Assistance funds has caused an operating deficit of 190,000 revenue service hours systemwide, 38,000 of which will be required to be reduced from San Fernando Valley Service Sector service in December of 2009. He summarized some of the anticipated service change proposals for December:

Trip Thinning on Lines 94, 164, 165 and 224

Trip Thinning candidates for December 2009 include reductions from over 17 bus lines, but the bulk of those reductions will come from Lines 94 (Downtown Los Angeles-Sun Valley via San Fernando Road) and 224 (Olive View Medical Center-Universal City via San Fernando Road and Lankershim Boulevard). However, a portion of the above-mentioned service reductions will be offset by the deployment of larger 45-foot, 46-seat Compo buses, ensuring that the line will continue to offer the same seat capacity even though fewer trips will be provided.

Also, Lines 164 (West Hills – Burbank Station via Victory Boulevard) and 165 (West Hills – Burbank Station via Vanowen Boulevard) will lose 15 trips and 12 trips respectively on Saturday.

Line 902 – Pacoima to North Hollywood via Van Nuys and Burbank Boulevards (Orange Line Express Demonstration Line) – Metro Corporate Planning staff and representatives from Los Angeles City Council District 6 and 7 Offices developed a plan to connect the Northeast San Fernando Valley with the Metro North Hollywood Station via Van Nuys and Burbank Boulevards. This line duplicates Line 233 from Pacoima to Van Nuys and makes all local stops. It also duplicates service provided along Burbank Boulevard between Van Nuys Boulevard and North Hollywood Station but only observes one stop on this corridor at Fulton Avenue (Valley College Orange Line Station). Service would be operated on a demonstration basis Monday through Friday during morning and afternoon peak periods. The line would also operate 45 foot buses with a distinctive paint scheme similar to the Orange Line and borrow resources from existing Line 233 service and other valley services, possibly lengthening headways for customers who use Line 233. A public hearing will be held in February 2010 to discuss whether the line would become permanent and potentially expand to all day service.

Representative Richards expressed dismay at how the proposal was presented as a *fait accompli* without Council input. She added that a realigned Line 156 or a Line 902 that observes only rapid stops could have also been considered. Mr. Hunt acknowledged that the plan was not presented to the Council in a timely manner and added that the line offered an opportunity to provide an Orange Line express service that Council Representatives have supported in the past. He added that service development staff will observe the line, specifically how trip thinning on Line 233 might impact Line 233 riders south of Burbank Boulevard and said that the public hearing in February 2010 will give both staff, Council

Representatives and the public the opportunity to inform Sector and Corporate Service Development staff whether or not Line 902 is a viable line for the Sector.

Several Representatives commented on how placing the Line 902 terminal at North Hollywood Red Line Station east of Lankershim, might cause confusion or safety-related issues for riders who cannot decide between waiting for Line 902 adjacent to the Red Line Station entrance, or running across Lankershim Boulevard to the Orange Line Station, west of Lankershim Boulevard, which is a high volume traffic generator, potentially causing an opportunity for conflict between pedestrians and motorists. Mr. Brewer responded that the Orange Line Terminal is already at capacity with 5 layover bays that are all in use by Orange Line buses during peak periods. He added that Line 902 might be better from a convenience standpoint for riders along the Van Nuys Boulevard corridor, but that with only 12-minute headway, a rider will more than likely choose to ride the Orange Line at rush hour, since it operates on a 4-minute peak headway.

Mr. Hunt added that high ridership levels are projected on the Orange Line when the Canoga Extension opens in 2012. At that time, Line 902 may be needed to accommodate the increased demand for transit service to North Hollywood Station. The line segment between Van Nuys Blvd. and North Hollywood Station is where Orange Line ridership is heaviest (with over 2,500 daily boardings) and, at times, is already at capacity.

Representative Cano suggested providing real-time arrival and departure information for both the Orange Line and Line 902, empowering Metro riders to make the right choice before departing the station.

Line 96 Reroute to Serve Los Angeles Public Library Silver Lake Branch – Representatives from Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti's office requested San Fernando Valley sector staff to provide more direct service to the branch library by routing Line 96 in the northbound direction from Riverside Boulevard and Fletcher Drive via Fletcher Drive, Glendale Boulevard, north on Riverside Drive, then returning to its regular route and continuing on to Sherman Oaks. The southbound route would operate in reverse of the stated northbound route. The reroute adds about three to five minutes to the existing trip time and would bring riders within a quarter-mile of the library, located at Glendale and Silver Lake Boulevards.

Representative Richards noted that Line 92 already serves the library with more frequent service than would be provided by Line 96 and suggested that the Sector keep track of any complaints received by existing riders that should be considered at the public hearing should the change become permanent. Mr. Hunt agreed to bring the change to the Council at the public hearing even though the magnitude of the proposed change did not meet the threshold of requiring a public hearing.

10. Service Sector Representatives Closing Remarks

Representative Arvizu requested a report on citations issued for fare evasion on the Orange Line. Mr. Hunt agreed to forward the report to the Council.

Representative Arvizu requested a status report on the Long Range Transportation Plan at the next meeting and specifically requested information on the possibility of using Proposition C 40 percent discretionary funds to backfill some of the operations revenue lost from the elimination of the State Transit Assistance. Mr. Hunt suggested that Council Representatives discuss this topic at the Sector Council Annual Meet and Confer meeting on October 23, 2009 at MTA Headquarters.

Representative Arvizu requested a report on Orange Line Extension operations plan with specific regard to how the line will accommodate ridership growth once the extension opens in 2012, whether operating dollars will be readily available to augment service if projections are incorrect, and how existing infrastructure can be improved (such as adjustments to signal timing) in order to provide better service. Mr. Hunt confirmed that operating dollars are available in the Metro 10 Year Financial Forecast. He agreed to bring something back to the Council in coming months regarding this topic.

ADJOURNED at 8:30pm



Prepared by: William L. Walker
Council Secretary