

Minutes/Proceedings

San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector Office
San Gabriel Valley Conference Room
3369 Santa Anita Avenue
El Monte, CA 91731

Called to Order at 5:08 P.M.

Council Members Present:

Bart Doyle, Chair
Sid Tyler, Vice Chair
Harry Baldwin
Bruce Heard
Henry Lopez
Sharon Martinez
David Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Helen Ortiz, Community Relations Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary

1. APPROVED March 2, 2004 Governance Council Minutes.

Steve Rosenberg announced that April 2004 marked the first anniversary of the San Gabriel Service Sector.

2. RECEIVED Public Comment from Elzy Bryan, a transit user who offered a proposal for an express bus line that would extend from Pasadena/Sierra Madre to the Westside. He presented a map showing his suggested bus route. Transit user William Widrig expressed his dissatisfaction with Lines 70/370, citing the lack of regular, efficient service on these lines. He expressed his concern that some operators do not allow passengers to stand near or exit the back door of the bus, and there appears to be no consistent policy regarding this issue. In response to the Council's discussion of the Gold Line Eastside Extension, Ruben Ramirez, an operator on the Gold Line, stated that lack of parking at some of the proposed stations along the Eastside extension, among other issues, may discourage potential riders from using the system once it is implemented.

3. Safety Contact – Steve Rosenberg announced that a new Sr. Safety Specialist recently came on board and will be introduced at the next Council meeting.

He stated that spring cleaning at home should involve many of the same precautions exercised in the workplace. He explained that lifting with the legs and not the back, and knowing one's limits while cleaning at home can greatly minimize exposure to injuries involving overexertion, falls, and bending/slipping.

4. RECEIVED report of the General Manager.

Steve Rosenberg stated that that he will provide the report in the absence of the General Manager.

He reported that the Sector continues to perform well overall in the safety categories for the month of February. Monthly Worker's Compensation Costs for February were \$446,000, which shows an improvement over the previous month.

OSHA Recordable Incidents - There were 5 incidents for the month of February, and this is the third consecutive month that the Sector has maintained this level. 8 is the target.

Bus Traffic Accidents per 100,000 miles were 2.65 for the month of February. The target is 3.1. Mr. Rosenberg stated that both Divisions 3 and 9 showed improvements in this category.

New Worker's Compensation Claims per 100 employees reached the lowest point for a non-strike month in the recent past, with 0.55 claims for the month of February.

Councilmember Heard asked why New WC claims decreased so dramatically.

Mr. Rosenberg responded that this was due to a combination of factors. Sector employees who were receiving Worker's Compensation are beginning to return to work. Additionally, the Safety 1st program, which has been in operation for quite some time, is beginning to have an impact on the number of new claims incurred.

Miles Between Mechanical Failures dropped to 6,406 miles for the month of February. Mr. Rosenberg stated that 9,000 miles continues to be a somewhat elusive target for the Sector, and that a study of trends in this category is being conducted to evaluate ways to make improvements in this area. There were slight improvements for the month of March, and these will be reflected in next month's report.

Bus Cleanliness Ratings - Mr. Rosenberg explained that bus cleanliness inspections were conducted quarterly through December 2003, and have been conducted on a monthly basis since January 2004. The rating for February was 7.62, representing the Sector's best rating in over a year. The target is 8.

There were roughly 4 Complaints per 100,000 Boardings for the second month in a row since January. The agency as a whole experienced a slight dip in performance in this category for February. The target is 3.

Passenger Boardings - There were 4.5 million boardings for February. Mr. Rosenberg reported that ridership increased dramatically in March, and this will be reflected in next month's report.

Councilmember Tyler inquired about the reason for this change, and Mr. Hillmer explained that the fewer number of days in February may have had an impact.

On-Time Performance for February was 69%. The target is 80%. The Sector is somewhat ahead of the agency as a whole.

“How You Doin’?” Program – Mr. Rosenberg reported that for the third consecutive month, Division 3 Transportation finished first. He stated that Division 3 had the lowest number of New WC Claims/100 employees. Division 9 Transportation also performed well, ranking second for February. Division 9 and Division 8 Maintenance tied for first place in February. Both Divisions 3 and 9 Maintenance scored very well in the category of New WC Claims/100 employees.

Financial Review

Transportation is \$4.4 million under budget. Maintenance is \$1.7 million under budget. Total Sector Office is just over \$50,000 over budget. Sector Operations (not including Other Sector Support) is \$58.8 million (YTD actual), and this is roughly \$6 million under budget. Mr. Rosenberg explained that the Sector Operations figure is under budget primarily because the Sector did not operate during the strike. Strike-Adjusted savings is \$1.3 million under budget. Other Sector Support is \$1 million over budget. Total Sector Operations is \$5 million under budget. Revenue Service Hours delivered for February were roughly 697,000. Mr. Rosenberg stated that RSH were short by roughly 127,000 due to the strike. February Actuals are \$238,000 under budget. YTD Direct Labor is \$3.2 million under budget and YTD WC Charges are \$1.1 million under budget. YTD Fuel Expense is \$76,000 over budget, and YTD Parts Expense is \$72,000 under budget. Mr. Rosenberg stated that CNG fuel rates increased 16%.

Councilmember Heard asked if CNG fuel is as volatile price-wise as diesel. Mr. Rosenberg responded in the affirmative.

Chairman Doyle asked if the MTA buys any fuel stock, and Mr. Hillmer responded that the agency does not. He stated that the agency knows the quantity of fuel needed but not the future price with the same surety. Chairman Doyle responded that it would be a good idea for the agency to consider purchasing about 60-70% of its fuel needs with a long-term supply contract.

5. RECEIVED a status report on the FY05 Sector Budget by Steve Rosenberg, Administration and Finance Manager.

Mr. Rosenberg stated that the figures provided as part of the estimated funding sources for the FY05 budget are still fluid and that the Board is continuing to make budget cuts and changes. He reported that total revenues available for bus operations are roughly \$756.8 million. This represents a 1% increase over the revenues available for FY04. Mr. Rosenberg stated that farebox revenues are roughly \$245 million and advertising revenues are roughly \$14 million, totaling \$259 million. The target is to balance expenses to available revenues. Mr. Rosenberg stated that the current budget does not include consent decree funding as the decision of the Board of Directors regarding this issue is still pending. He mentioned that a mid-year budget adjustment is likely. In addition, the current budget activity involves reductions in staff, non-core services, and non-essential expenses. Thus far, roughly 224 positions have been eliminated. Mr. Rosenberg stated that the budget allocation process is based on historical expenses rather than service provided.

He reported that the Revenue Service Hour assumption is flat (roughly \$1.2 million/year), and that the Sector has experienced less than 0.1% increase in RSH.

Councilmember Tyler asked if the RSH assumption is flat for the current year.

Mr. Rosenberg responded in the affirmative. He explained that base services will be about the same for the current year. Mr. Hillmer added that the Sector will be adding service as a result of the Consent Decree, but this is not reflected in the current budget.

Councilmember Heard asked where the Sector stands with respect to the Consent Decree.

Mr. Hillmer stated that from a corporate standpoint, the Board will be adding approximately 340,000 revenue hours of services sometime next year, 40,000 of which will be allocated to our Sector. He mentioned that there will be some service improvements that will be implemented in June, and the agency expects to receive new articulated coaches next year.

Chairman Doyle noted that it is difficult to draw any conclusions at this point because there is not yet adequate information regarding the direction the Consent Decree will take. He stated that a status report is needed and that this should be discussed further next month.

Mr. Rosenberg added that the Sector will not provide a review until the budget is solidified.

6. RECEIVED an oral report on **Community Relations** by Helen Ortiz, Community Relations Manager.

Ms. Ortiz presented slides showing participation in various community outreach activities. She reported participation in the following events: Foster Youth Fair at the Jackie Robinson Park in Pasadena, El Monte/So. El Monte Chamber of Commerce Legislative meeting, a Merci parent support group in Monterey Park, the Wisteria Festival in Sierra Madre, opening of the Foothill Transit Store in El Monte, and a Career Day at Griffin Avenue School in Los Angeles. Upcoming events include a Health and Work Life fair at Caltech, a Family Fun Festival at Bassett Park, and a South Pasadena Arts and Crafts festival.

Ms. Ortiz announced that there will be a tunneling presentation on April 29 to be hosted by Dr. Eisenstein, an expert in the field. The event is open to the public.

She also mentioned that there will be a Metro Connections presentation by Nancy Michali at the next Council meeting on May 11.

7. RECEIVED an oral report on Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension by Diego Cardoso, Director of Regional Transportation, Planning & Design.

Mr. Cardoso gave an overview of the project alignment and stations. He stated that tunneling of the portion of the Eastside Extension that runs through Boyle Heights will be the most effective way to resolve the difficulties associated with widening the streets in that area. Mr. Cardoso explained that the Eastside Extension represents a significant project as 20% of Eastside residents depend on public transit to get to work. The Extension would complement job and population growth on the Eastside.

Mr. Cardoso reviewed some of the major steps involved in the project beginning in 1998. At the present moment, the agency is seeking a full-funding grant agreement with the federal government. The agency hopes to sign this agreement by June.

Public hearings were held throughout the various stages of drafting the Environmental Impact Report. The project involves community outreach activities, including monthly advisory committee meetings and community linkage presentations.

Mr. Cardoso noted that the agency is working with the City of Los Angeles to widen the 1st Street bridge, and that it has facilitated a grant with Caltrans to accomplish this. He presented slides showing proposed station sites along the Extension, many of which are located near hospitals, restaurants, and proposed mixed-use housing developments. He stated that because the system is scheduled to open in 2009, there is still ample time to create an optimal interface with buses.

Councilmember Heard asked if a bridge will be built across the freeway on the east side of Union Station.

Mr. Cardoso responded in the affirmative, stating that an aerial bridge will be built over the freeway on the east side of Alameda.

Councilmember Heard inquired about the number of railcars that will be used once the Extension is completed.

Mr. Cardoso responded that approximately 10 railcars will be added to the existing Gold Line system.

Councilmember Vasquez inquired about the location of the Park and Ride that will be constructed near the Extension.

Mr. Cardoso stated that the Park and Ride will be situated next to Kaiser Permanente, near Atlantic Blvd. He remarked that the agency will need further evaluation of how commuters will enter and exit the parking structure, as well as the impact on the residents in the immediate area.

In response to Councilmember Tyler's inquiry about the projected daily ridership for the Extension, Mr. Cardoso stated that there should be about 18,000 riders daily by the year 2020.

Councilmember Vasquez asked about the impact of the Extension on other municipal lines such as the Montebello Bus Line. Mr. Hillmer responded that the agency will consider improving connections to buses at various stations along the Extension, and that bus lines to Downtown (i.e., the Montebello line 30) will be maintained. Mr. Cardoso added that the community linkages program would better maximize passengers' accessibility to stations along the Extension. It would also evaluate traffic management issues and ways to attract potential users to the system.

Councilmember Doyle mentioned that there may be potential problems associated with signage and ability to locate stations along the Extension. He suggested the agency consider ways to make it easier for transit users to find their way to and from various stations along both the existing Gold Line as well as the proposed Extension. Mr. Cardoso acknowledged that this issue will need to be considered.

8. Chair's Remarks

Chairman Doyle announced that there will be an MTA Board Operations Committee information hearing on Thursday, April 15 at 1:00 P.M. He noted that he will give a presentation highlighting the Sector's activities and its service quality, among other issues, at the meeting. The presentation will focus on accountability and improving local services in the Sector. Chairman Doyle stated that he will emphasize the need to channel greater resources to the Sectors for community outreach and marketing purposes.

Councilmember Spence stated that the Operations Committee should consider the possibility of allowing the Sector to provide some kind of financial reward to those employees who demonstrate efficiency in the use of Sector funding. Councilmember Martinez added that an incentive should also be given to those employees who are instrumental in helping increase ridership in the Sector.

Chairman Doyle remarked that the Committee should also consider providing Councilmembers with greater opportunities to participate in local and national transit conferences. He emphasized the importance of interacting with other transit boards at these conferences.

9. Consideration of Items not on the Posted Agenda – None.

ADJOURNED at 6:53 P.M.

Michele Chau, Council Secretary