

MINUTES

San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

New Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector Office
3449 Santa Anita Avenue
3rd Floor Conference Room
El Monte, CA 91731

Called to Order at 5:02 p.m.

Sector Representatives Present:

Rosie Vasquez, Chair
Roger Chandler, Vice Chair
Bruce Heard
Henry Lopez
Joseph Mosca

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Introductions.
2. APPROVED **Minutes** of Regular Governance Council Meeting held Monday, September 10, 2007.
3. RECEIVED **Public Comment** – Ken Ruben, Southern California Transit Advocates, remarked that he rode the bus to attend the Council meeting and received rude treatment from an operator while attempting to locate the new building. He requested an apology from staff. Mr. Ruben stated that many riders in downtown are being passed up by buses, and this may be as a result of the occasional re-routing of bus lines due to special events. He indicated that Roy Gabriel, who worked in the California Farm Bureau, and was a friend of Representative Heard, recently passed away. Mr. Gabriel was an advocate of rail and bus transit.
4. RECEIVED **Chair's Remarks** – Chair Vasquez announced results of the annual Metro Bus Roadeo held in September at the Santa Anita Racetrack. Division 8 operator Julio Flores placed first in the bus operator segment of the competition. Other winners included San Gabriel Valley Division 3 operators Herman Gavia and Juan Navarro, who finished 5th and 6th, respectively. The Division 9 maintenance crew, which included Armando Martinez, Eduardo Garcia and Adrian Garcia, placed 2nd in the mechanics competition.

Chair Vasquez announced that the San Gabriel Valley Sector will be holding a Veterans' Day event at 10 a.m. on November 7 at the new transportation building. In addition to Veterans' memorabilia, a flag donated by Congresswoman Hilda Solis will be on display at the event.

Sector Representatives discussed possible meeting dates for the November Council meeting. The Council is unable to meet on November 12 due to the Veterans' Day holiday.

Representatives agreed to meet on the following date:

November Council Meeting: Monday, November 19, 2007 at 5 p.m.

In addition, Chair Vasquez announced that the Council will hold a meeting on Monday, December 10, 2007 to consider preliminary service change proposals for the February 2008 public hearing.

5. **RECEIVED report of the General Manager** – Mr. Gabig announced that staff recently moved into the new Sector office building and began unpacking this week. Transportation staff will be moving into the building in two weeks, and the Sheriff's Department will be moving into the building in about one month. The building should be fully equipped by the next Council meeting.

Mr. Gabig provided an overview of Key Performance Indicators for the month of August. Both OSHA Recordable Incidents and New Workers' Compensation (WC) Indemnity Claims fell below the monthly target. Staff hopes the downward trend will continue. The Bus Accident Severity Index, which accounts for both property damage and personal injuries, shows signs of improvement.

The number of Miles Between Road Calls has been stagnant. Accidents at Division 3 have negatively impacted performance in this area. Staff will report at a future meeting on a road call initiative.

Both On-Time Performance and Complaints remain close to target. Mr. Gabig noted that the number of late trips slightly exceeds the number of trips that run ahead of schedule. The number of complaints relating to Operator Conduct/Discourtesy is slightly higher than those in other complaint categories. Mr. Gabig stated that while the Sector has experienced a lower complaint rate than other regions, more work needs to be done to improve performance in this area. He presented a slide showing ridership trends over the past year. The fare increase which took effect on July 1 has negatively impacted ridership. Staff hopes that ridership levels will return to last year's levels by the end of this fiscal year.

"How You Doin'?" Program:

Transportation: Division 9 placed 1st and Division 3 placed 4th.

Maintenance: Division 9 placed 1st and Division 3 placed 6th.

Mr. Gabig noted that signal pre-emption on new Rapid Line 762 is incomplete. Mr. Hillmer stated that staff will continue with the proposal to defer implementation of this new line until June 2008. Although the Consent Decree has expired, some provisions continue until 2010. These include the stipulation that Rapid bus lines must operate a certain level of service.

Representative Heard asked if Line 361 will continue to operate.

Mr. Hillmer responded that the line will continue to operate in its current form (peak-only). He added that more running time may be added to Line 260.

Mr. Gabig announced that staff will be coming back in December with preliminary proposals for a public hearing in February 2008. These proposals, if approved, would be implemented in June 2008 or later. One major challenge for FY09 involves an agency-wide service reduction of approximately 4% to meet budget targets. The service reduction would be spread throughout the Sectors. Mr. Gabig stated that this may result in some line cancellations.

Dave Hershenson, Community Relations Manager, provided an update on the Community Relations program. He reported that Community Relations staff will report directly to Operations instead of Marketing due to an Antonovich Motion approved by the Board of Directors earlier this year.

Mr. Hershenson reviewed goals and objectives of the program and new Community Relations Department structure. He stated that his new responsibilities will involve supporting the San Gabriel Valley Sector and Gateway Cities Sector and serving as a primary liaison between the Operations and Communications Departments for marketing materials. He will work with the Sectors and Marketing team to produce customer notification literature, and ensure that appropriate staff has an opportunity to review marketing information. Other Community Relations support functions include, but are not limited to, improving communication with key stakeholders in the San Gabriel Valley, upgrading the Sector webpage, coordinating special events, assisting with speeches and presentation materials, and working with staff and Marketing to develop special route promotions and improve signage.

Financials:

Ms. Faust reviewed financial data through August. The Sector composite budget, which includes all functions within the Sector, is trending right on budget. Some savings have been realized in the areas of Fuel and UTU labor. Ms. Faust noted that in past years, the budget trended lower at this time due to less significant Workers' Compensation and Liability costs. Because the Sector has managed its costs well, the budget was reduced this fiscal year. Total Transportation is under budget due to savings in UTU labor. Total Maintenance is slightly under budget due to savings in Fuel. The Sector has experienced challenges with mechanic overtime, but realized some savings in regular mechanic labor. Additional mechanics will be added to the Sector sometime in December or January. Although the budgeted amount for Workers' Compensation was reduced for FY08, it is trending on budget.

6. RECEIVED oral report on **Customer Service Satisfaction Survey Results** by Carl Torres, Transportation Planner II.

Mr. Torres stated that Mr. Hillmer introduced the program last year. Objectives of the survey include collecting unbiased information on operator performance and condition of buses and bus stops, de-briefing operators, and finding useful trends. Mr. Torres noted that 600 surveys were completed, and 411 operators took part in the quarterly survey process. Staff hopes to eventually survey all 915 operators at Divisions 3 and 9.

Mr. Torres reviewed trends in the areas of operator courtesy and use of electronic devices and seatbelts. He reported that most survey respondents found that operators were courteous, with less than 10% indicating that operators were discourteous. A vast majority of operators are refraining from using electronic devices such as cell phones and portable radios while driving. He stated that a disturbing number (almost 50%) of operators were not using seatbelts while driving. Earlier this month, Metro introduced a new policy which considers not using a seatbelt while operating a Metro vehicle a major rule infraction. He commented that an attempt was made three years ago to introduce this policy but it was grieved by the union. Only recently did the union put forth a new directive on seatbelt usage.

Representative Chandler asked if operator seatbelt usage was in the vehicle code.

Mr. Gabig responded that transit operators are excluded from the vehicle code, but local agencies can set their own policies.

Chair Vasquez asked why the union opposed this policy three years ago.

Mr. Gabig responded that some operators prefer not to use seatbelts as they feel they would be restricted in the event there is a need to get out of their seat quickly.

Representative Mosca asked for more clarification about how the seatbelt standard has changed since this new policy was introduced.

Mr. Gabig responded that operators who violate this rule will face heavy discipline, and may need to attend a formal hearing.

Mr. Torres stated that over 80% of respondents indicated that overall bus service was good. He explained that staff will introduce several new fare-related survey questions beginning in March. He introduced Phil Moores, Division 9 Assistant Transportation Manager, who provided a review of the operator de-briefing process. Mr. Moores stated that the de-briefing process enabled him to directly meet with operators, many of whom he is not able to see on a daily basis. Staff has recognized those who received high ratings on the survey.

Representative Mosca asked how staff chooses who fills out the surveys.

Mr. Gabig responded that the Sector hires a firm with training and expertise in completing these types of surveys. Respondents fill out the surveys anonymously while observing the operators. The goal is to have one survey completed for each operator at least once per year. Staff has received mostly positive feedback about the operators. He clarified that the survey is not used as a disciplinary tool.

Representative Heard asked if survey respondents use cash fare or a pass.

Mr. Hillmer responded that at this time, respondents use a Transit Access Pass to board the bus.

Mr. Gabig announced that Mr. Moores will be leaving the agency to take on a new role as Operations Manager at Riverside Transit Agency.

7. RECEIVED oral report on **Service Reliability** by David Castillo, Assistant Transportation Manager of Vehicle Operations.

Mr. Hillmer provided the report on behalf of Mr. Castillo. He indicated that the Service Reliability team, which consists of two Transit Operations Supervisors and one Assistant Manager, was created to improve quality of services for the customer. Tactics include schedule adherence monitoring, complaint investigation, undercover assignments, interviews with operators, safety monitoring, line sweeps, monitoring locations with high accident rates, and maintaining visibility. On-Time Performance, while still below target, is beginning to improve. The percentage of late trips has dropped from 22% to 17%, while the percentage of trips running ahead of schedule has dropped slightly from 15% to 14%. He indicated that while the Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) exhibits some anomalies, it is by far the best system the agency has had for documenting this type of information.

Staff is currently focusing on the 25 worst performers, use of an automated passenger count, monitoring ATMS for off routes, delays, and running ahead of schedule, and the seat belt adherence program.

As a result of the Service Reliability initiative, both On-Time Performance and passenger/operator relations have improved. In addition, staff has relocated stops at problem areas, worked with LAUSD and LAPD on a safe passage program, and adjusted schedules to reduce tardies, among other efforts.

Chair Vasquez asked if it was possible to establish a link between the 25 worst performing lines and the 411 operators surveyed in the Customer Service Satisfaction Survey.

Mr. Hillmer responded that while there may be some connection between the two, this has not yet been identified statistically.

Representative Chandler asked about the use of on-board cameras.

Mr. Hillmer responded that while buses are equipped with cameras, images need to be physically downloaded.

8. Consideration of Items not on the Posted Agenda – none.

ADJOURNED at 6:10 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary