

Monday, September 14, 2009

5:00 PM

MINUTES

San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Governance Council

Regular Meeting

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

Called to Order at 5:00 p.m.

Sector Representatives Present:

Joseph Mosca, Chair
Roger Chandler
Harry Baldwin
Kathy Salazar
Dave Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. APPROVED **Minutes** of Regular Governance Council Meeting held July 13, 2009.

2. RECEIVED **Public Comment:**

Ken Ruben, transit user, stated that he attended Foothill Transit's last Board meeting and obtained a great deal of information about the use of TAP cards. He looks forward to using the EZ Pass TAP card when it comes out. He announced that he participated in a recent transit convention in downtown. The event was well-attended and included presentations by Metro staff.

Tony Gin, speaking on behalf of residents of the Oak Knoll area in San Marino, stated that he and fellow residents have engaged in discussions with city officials and MTA on excessive noise caused by Line 485 buses traveling through the Oak Knoll residential area. Residents appreciate the efforts by MTA to decrease the number of buses that travel up and down the street and implement minor schedule changes, but would like a greater reduction in the number of buses traveling through the area. Residents have observed that many of the buses that pass by throughout the day and evening are empty. It may be more useful to run the service at a more optimal time for riders. In addition, residents would like MTA staff to consider possible re-routing of the line. Residents have also expressed concern about the high speed of buses in the area given the small size of the street. He mentioned that residents have prepared a petition.

Chair Mosca requested that Mr. Gin provide his contact information so that staff may follow up on his concerns.

Mary Griffith, transit user, stated that some Division 9 operators may require additional training with respect to dealing with disabled patrons. She mentioned the names/badge numbers of two operators who have caused her problems. She noted that some bus operators may not be able to see patrons in wheelchairs and she has needed to resort to wearing reflective safety wear such as fluorescent vests in order to grab the attention of the operator.

Mr. Gabig stated that staff will follow up on Ms. Griffith's concerns. A report will be provided later in the evening on services for disabled patrons.

Wayne Wright, transit user, stated that there is frequently a huge bottleneck of MTA and Foothill Transit buses at the last stop of the El Monte busway, near Union Station. This creates delays for passengers. He suggested shifting the bus stops for Lines 485 and 487 from their current location at the end of the busway to a less congested area near Temple or 1st Street. It would be ideal to consider such a change before the Silver Line is implemented.

Daniel Garcia, transit user, stated that staff needs to place more emphasis on addressing rider accessibility issues, particularly for patrons who use wheelchairs.

3. **RECEIVED Chair's Remarks:**

- Chair Mosca announced that the annual Service Sector Governance Council Meet and Confer will take place Friday, October 23 at 9:00 a.m. at the MTA headquarters building (third floor Board Room). Staff and Sector Representatives will discuss financial, performance and other issues related to Sector services.
- The Metro Bus Rodeo will take place on Saturday, September 26 at the Santa Anita Racetrack. Last year MTA placed first in the competition.
- Representative Baldwin was recently recognized by the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership for his long-standing record of outstanding public and community service.

4. **RECEIVED AND FILED report of the General Manager.**

- a. 2009 Yr End KPI and Financial report
- b. Metro Bus 4th Qtr FY09 Performance Indicator Report

Mr. Gabig provided a status update on Council vacancies. When the Sectors were created in 2003, Representative Baldwin represented the two-city cluster of Rosemead and San Gabriel. The Sector clusters were re-structured in 2006 to allow a city of El Monte representative to participate in the Sector Council. In addition, the two-city cluster noted above was re-structured to include only the cities of San Gabriel, Alhambra, South Pasadena and San Marino. The Sector erroneously notified the cities of Rosemead and San Gabriel regarding the vacancies rather than the new four-city cluster. This error has been corrected. Vice Mayor Albert Huang representing the city of San Gabriel has been nominated to fill the vacant seat. Staff hopes to forward the nomination to the MTA Board of Directors soon.

Staff will provide an update on TAP card issues and challenges at the next Council meeting. An internal audit of the program will be conducted prior to the next meeting.

Chip Hazen, ADA Compliance Administrator, provided a report on the tether strap program for patrons in wheelchairs. Mr. Gabig noted that some issues pertaining to wheelchairs may be related to equipment and/or operator training and behavior. Sector staff has placed greater emphasis recently on re-training operators in dealing with disabled patrons.

Mr. Hazen reported that the wheelchair marking and tetherstrap program began about two years ago when the agency was awarded a freedom funding grant as part of the SAFETEA-LU appropriations act. He provided an overview of ADA transportation service requirements, including lift and securement use, and diversity of the mobility aids used today. Service cannot be denied to any patron using a mobility device. Scooters tend to be difficult to secure. Wheelchair securement issues include identifying attachment points on wheelchairs and scooters. Mr. Hazen noted that most new wheelchair designs are not yet compliant with the WC-19 transit option. He displayed slides of wheelchairs that are compliant with WC-19 standards. Markings and tether straps require careful implementation. Straps are sturdy and easily replaceable. Contractors involved in the tether marking program travel to different locations to mark wheelchairs.

Chair Mosca asked if patrons are informed about the new WC-19 compliant wheelchairs.

Mr. Hazen explained that the contractor relays this information to all patrons.

Chair Mosca asked if there is a way to provide additional notices about the new WC-19 transit option to prospective wheelchair buyers.

Mr. Hazen responded that this would depend on the manufacturer. He reviewed guidelines for marking of wheelchairs. If markings are not feasible, tether straps are installed.

Mr. Gabig reviewed key performance indicators. Ridership per month decreased 5.7% compared with FY08. The decline accelerated during the fourth quarter. Agency-wide ridership decreased 7.5%. The ridership loss is partially explained by the re-allocation of service. Some lines originating from the San Gabriel Valley were shifted to the Westside Sector in June and December 2008, including Lines 28, 30 and 42.

On-Time Performance (OTP) has improved with the FY09 year-to-date actual reaching close to 70%. The target is 68%. The August figures are even more impressive, with Division 3 OTP reaching 76.6% and Division 9 OTP reaching 78%.

In the area of Customer Complaints, the FY09 year-to-date actual was 2.94 complaints per 100,000 miles. The most common categories of complaints include pass-ups and late or missed service. A customer complaint investigation initiative and additional operator training should address some of the complaints.

There was an increase in the number of customer commendations received. There were a total of 46 commendations during the 4th quarter of FY09.

The number of Bus Accidents is below target. There was a spike in March due to incidents on Line 81, a challenging line. Performance in this category has since improved.

The Bus Accident Severity Index is above target year-to-date due to a major incident in Altadena several months ago when a bus drove into an Altadena hardware store.

There has been a downward trend in the area of Miles Between Total Road Calls. In addition to On-Time Performance, this performance indicator will be a primary focus of the Sector. Mr. Gabig noted that the Sector is performing well in this category relative to other Sectors.

The number of OSHA Recordable Incidents was above target year-to-date. Performance in the area of Workers' Compensation claims parallels the OSHA data.

“How You Doin’?” program FY09 year-end results (Maintenance and Transportation):

Division 9 placed 2nd overall.

Division 3 placed 4th overall.

Representative Chandler asked for clarification on the indicator of Miles Between Total Road Calls.

Mr. Gabig responded that this represents the total miles the Sector operates divided by the number of road calls. While the Sector has shown improvement in this category, weather and other conditions can impact performance.

Representative Chandler noted that road calls, on-time performance and complaints are all inter-related.

Mr. Gabig explained that road calls have the greatest direct impact on the patron and that staff is placing greater emphasis on reducing road calls.

Representative Chandler asked about performance of newer buses.

Mr. Gabig responded that new buses do not always outperform older vehicles. As vehicles age, performance tends to decrease. The agency is behind on its refurbishment program for buses due to budgetary constraints.

Representative Chandler asked how MTA compares with other bus lines.

Mr. Gabig stated that Foothill Transit experiences fewer road calls. However, each agency has a different way to measure performance indicators. MTA is conservative in its calculations.

Representative Baldwin mentioned that the battery problems the agency experienced recently may be impacting road calls.

Mr. Gabig responded that no-starts and stalls are common issues related with batteries. Testing of Odyssey and Interstate batteries is being conducted at Division 3.

Cliff Thorne, Maintenance Manager, indicated that Odyssey batteries were tested and showed positive results. Road call figures may be misleading as not all road calls result in a delay for the patron. However, these figures are included for record-keeping purposes.

Representative Salazar asked about new bus orders.

Mr. Gabig responded that the agency will receive approximately 100-120 buses over the next year. The agency will use NABI 45-foot buses on the Silver Line. There is a new order for contract buses as well. Future options for additional vehicles will depend on funding availability.

Representative Vasquez, referring to the report for Item 4, stated that two operators received commendations for upholding the value of safety during difficult circumstances. She inquired about the nature of the circumstances.

Mr. Gabig stated that he does not have the specific information.

Financial Review:

Paula Faust, Administration and Finance Manager, provided an overview of the FY09 year-end and FY10 budgets. The Sector as a whole is \$4.9 million under budget, mostly due to savings in operator labor and Public Liability/Property Damage (PL/PD) credits. In the area of Transportation, savings were realized in both Worker's Compensation and PL/PD. Maintenance is slightly over budget. Parts costs are slightly over budget due to both road call issues and actual cost of the parts. Ms. Faust noted that despite the decrease in the Worker's Compensation budget this year, the Sector was slightly under budget in this category for FY09. Ms. Faust provided an overview of the FY10 adopted budget and operational cost drivers. There is a slight increase in anticipated boardings. The slight decrease in hub miles is due to the June 2009 service reductions and anticipated service reductions to be implemented in December 2009. Staffing on the Maintenance side is fairly static. There is a slight increase in fuel cost and an increase in parts cost due to an aging fleet. Although the agency is engaged in a hedging contract, it does not hedge all of its fuel costs. There was a 3% decrease in bus operator FTEs on the Transportation side due to service changes.

Chair Mosca asked if the increase in parts cost is partially due to certain parts being more difficult to acquire.

Ms. Faust responded that it is attributed to an aging fleet and greater number of repairs, as well as an exponential increase in some parts costs.

Mr. Thorne clarified that although parts costs are more expensive in newer buses, warranty policies provide a refund of some of these costs.

Representative Salazar asked if warranty credits are included in the financial data. She inquired about how much is spent in parts costs versus the amount that is refunded through warranties.

Ms. Faust responded that the report does not reflect this level of detail, but that staff may be able to provide this information.

Representative Baldwin asked if the warranty refund is applied to the budget in the month it was incurred.

Ms. Faust stated that she does not have this information. It is likely that the refund is applied to the budget in the same month it is received.

Ms. Faust reviewed the Sector FY10 adopted budget by function. Total San Gabriel Valley Sector budget is 1% below the total budget for FY09.

Referring to the function category of the slide, Ms. Faust stated that there is a 14% increase in the FY10 Sector budget due to an increase in transportation supervisors in Vehicle Operations during FY09 that was not reflected in the FY09 budget. Ms. Faust presented a chart showing the adopted budget in a composite form that organizes the budget by expense category. The service re-allocations have resulted in reduced vehicle hours and a corresponding 1% decrease in labor costs for FY10.

Ms. Faust presented a slide showing the San Gabriel Valley Sector expense and budget from FY06 through FY10, including FY06 through FY09 actuals. The FY10 budget is a 2.6% increase over FY09.

5. **RECEIVED report on Silver Line Fare Implementation.**

Conan Cheung, Executive Officer of Service Development, reported that the proposed Silver Line 910 will combine Lines 484 and 490 with Lines 444 and 446 in downtown Los Angeles and truncate the routes at the two transit hubs from which they operate, El Monte Station (Lines 484/490) and Artesia Transit Center (Lines 444/446). The goal of the proposal is to increase the on-time performance of the local portions of the four Express lines and improve the performance and coordination of bus service along the El Monte Busway and Harbor Transitway. The proposal was approved through the public hearing process at both the San Gabriel Valley and South Bay Sectors. However, the proposal has not yet been approved by the MTA Board. The implementation of the line has been postponed to December pending creation of an equitable fare structure for the new service that does not result in a revenue loss to MTA. Mr. Cheung clarified that staff doesn't anticipate a major change in ridership or revenues after the line is implemented. Most riders on local portions of the lines will continue to pay the same fare on these lines. Those who are currently paying a two-zone fare will continue to pay the same fare once the Silver Line is implemented. He noted that some individuals on a one-zone trip may see a slight fare increase. The Day Pass will be accepted as full fare when riding the line.

Mr. Cheung announced that a public hearing on the Silver Line fare structure will take place on September 24 at 9:30 a.m. at the MTA headquarters building.

6. RECEIVED update on **Congestion Reduction Program: Express Lanes Project.**

Kathleen McCune, Transportation Planning Manager IV, Congestion Reduction Program, reported that a number of public hearings were held in June on the toll policy. The MTA Board approved toll rates at the July Board meeting. The tolls will range from a minimum of \$.25 per mile to a maximum of \$1.40 per mile.

Chair Mosca asked if monitoring of congestion levels is automated.

Ms. McCune responded that dynamic pricing will be used and that detectors will track motorist speeds. In addition, speeds will be monitored from an operations center. When speeds drop to a certain level, variable message signs will be displayed that alert single drivers that they cannot enter HOV lanes.

Ms. McCune noted that those who are currently able to enter HOV lanes will be able to continue doing so once the program is implemented. Those who are presently unable to enter HOV lanes will be able to do so for a fee once the program is implemented. Anyone who wishes to use the toll lanes must have a transponder device in their vehicles. This will allow for automatic debit of tolls. During the first few months of operation, CHP officers will be present to provide information and applications to motorists interested in obtaining transponders. A toll lane education program will provide further assistance to motorists.

Representative Chandler asked if two people can travel on the toll lanes for the price of one.

Ms. McCune stated that the toll applies to the vehicle and not each individual within the vehicle. A switch is available on the transponder that allows the user to declare whether he or she is driving alone or as part of a group.

Chair Mosca asked how staff is reducing congestion if only the existing carpool lanes are being used as toll lanes.

Ms. McCune responded that the grant includes bus purchases. Staff is trying to shift more travelers into fewer vehicles. Tolls will be a minimum of 150% of the cost to ride transit. Providing more capacity for toll lanes on portions of the 10, 710, and 605 freeways will encourage single drivers to use the toll lanes, freeing up space on the regular lanes.

7. RECEIVED report on **Altadena Alternative Transit Study**.

Steve Wilks, IBI Group, stated that he has completed an analysis of unmet transit needs in the unincorporated portions of Altadena and Hacienda Heights. He provided an overview of project objectives and presented slides of the study area map. Objectives include profiling existing transportation services, determining transit needs and community demographics, and recommending alternatives and solutions to meet the needs of the community.

The work plan involves conducting telephone surveys, reviewing recent studies, determining transit markets, identifying transit demands, completing an alternatives analysis, and preparing a final report and action plan. Mr. Wilks stated that the final report will be completed in mid to late December.

Mr. Wilks reviewed results of the Altadena telephone survey. Two-thirds of respondents use a private automobile to commute. When asked why public transit was not used as a primary source of transportation, 44% of respondents cited inconvenience as a factor, while 28% cited poor transit accessibility as a reason for commuting alone. 57% of respondents identifying themselves as current transit users indicated that they were satisfied with public transit.

8. CARRIED OVER receipt of **profile report Line 76** by Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Mgr. III.

9. Service Sector Representatives Closing Remarks – none.

ADJOURNED at 6:25 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary