

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 5:01 p.m.

Sector Representatives Present:

Joseph Mosca, Chair
Alex Gonzalez, Vice Chair
Roger Chandler
Harry Baldwin
Bruce Heard
Albert Huang
Kathy Salazar
Dave Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers:

Jack Gabig, General Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **APPROVED Minutes of Regular Governance Council Meeting held November 9, 2009.**
3. **RECEIVED Public Comment** – Ken Ruben, transit user and member of Southern California Transit Advocates (SCTA), wished the Council a happy holiday and thanked members for the hard work. He announced that he was recently re-elected to serve on the SCTA Board. He rode on the Silver Line today and noted that many patrons experienced confusion as they did not realize that express lines 484 and 490 were cancelled. Mr. Ruben stated that he rode on the first run of the Gold Line Eastside Extension (GLEE) on Sunday, November 15. He mentioned that he also attended the Gold Line opening in Pasadena in 2003.

Daniel Garcia, transit user, expressed appreciation for the Council's work on behalf of transit riders. He stated that MTA services assist patrons in reaching their places of employment. He mentioned concerns that many disabled patrons have experienced while riding on the subway. He stated that subway turnstiles and Transit Access Pass (TAP) devices are difficult for disabled patrons to access. Providing opportunities for disabled patrons at senior centers and other facilities to share information about their experiences should be a priority. Disabled patrons would like to be more independent and more efforts are needed to obtain feedback from transit users.

Mr. Gabig responded that each station has a designated, manned area in which turnstiles are not required. Management has mentioned the problem to rail operations staff, who will address the issue soon.

Mr. Gabig mentioned that today is the first weekday of operation for the new Silver Line service. The implementation of the new line marks a major change to the region in that it required realignment of service on several bus routes in the San Gabriel Valley and South Bay Sector areas. The Silver Line connects the El Monte Station, Artesia Transit Center and downtown LA via the El Monte Busway and Harbor Transitway. The project is fairly complex and MTA has experienced a few start-up pains. In addition, the start of the bus shake-up has complicated matters. Staff initiated an extensive public outreach program prior to implementation of the line and will closely monitor any ongoing issues.

Staff will continue to monitor schedule adherence and other operational concerns and will report back to the Council at the January meeting.

Wayne Wright, transit user, commented on his experiences on the new Silver Line bus service. He stated that he would like the line to continue to travel east on 1st Street to Spring Street in downtown, or alternatively, he would like the line to travel on Temple Street to Alameda Street and then proceed to the busway. He indicated his frustration with the bottleneck that occurs in the vicinity of Arcadia Street and Aliso Street during rush hour. This may result from traffic caused by both MTA and Foothill Transit buses stopping in the same area. In addition, he remarked that some patrons are reluctant to pay the full \$2.45 fare to take the line in local areas. He observed that Line 485 buses have started to become overcrowded near LA County - USC Station on the busway as it is more cost-effective to travel on this line than to travel from Union Station to Cal State LA. He suggested offering a .60 cent fare zone on the Silver Line for patrons wishing to travel from the LA County – USC Station area to downtown.

José Melendez, transit user, thanked MTA staff, including Scott Page, Service Development Manager, Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Manager III, Conan Cheung, Deputy Executive Officer, Operations, Jon Hillmer, Transportation Manager, and Division 18 employees for their efforts in launching the Silver Line. He is extremely pleased with the service on the new line. He looks forward to riding on the line more often. He indicated that while some patrons are not completely satisfied with the new service, it is still very accessible to riders. He is impressed with the 45-foot buses operating on the line. He stated that these buses do not necessarily have to be painted orange, they can also be red.

4. **RECEIVED Chair's Remarks.**

- New Silver Line 910 service began yesterday. The line provides service to major points of interest such as LA County – USC Medical Center, Cal State LA, Staples Center, LA City Hall, and Central Library, among other destinations. Staff presented slides of stops along the line. The base fare is \$2.45, enabling patrons to travel farther for less.

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

- Dedication of the new Gold Line Eastside Extension (GLEE) took place on Saturday, November 14. The event was very successful and well-attended. MTA and congressional officials were among those in attendance at the ceremony, which included a number of festivities. Revenue service began on Monday, November 16. Ridership on the GLEE during the first few weeks of operation was in the 10,000-11,000 range. Staff anticipates the combined ridership on both legs of the line will be successful.
- Carolyn Flowers, former Chief Operations Officer (COO), has resigned after more than ten years of service at the agency. She has served in her most recent position during the past three years. Ms. Flowers has accepted the position of CEO of the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS). The agency is actively seeking to fill the COO position. The selection of a candidate is at the discretion of the CEO.
- The CEO mentioned at the last Sector Meet and Confer meeting that he anticipates a reorganization of bus operations in response to a motion presented by the MTA Board in May to flatten and streamline the organizational structure of the agency due to budget challenges. A reorganization in 2003 led to the creation of the five Service Sectors and a more locally responsive management structure. However, the separation of various operating functions such as vehicle maintenance, scheduling, field supervision, dispatch and other areas resulted in inefficiencies. The cornerstone of the reorganization will involve centralization of the maintenance, planning and administrative business units. The units will be headed by new Executive Officers reporting to the COO. Mr. Gabig clarified that the five Sector Councils will remain intact as subregional governing bodies. Staff will act as a liaison between the Councils and the central business units. Details are still being worked out. It may take several months to implement the new structure due to the time needed to fill the new Executive Officer and COO positions.

Chair Mosca noted that this was a seismic change. He stated that it appears Sector staff will be placed under the umbrella of community relations under the new structure. He emphasized that the Sectors serve more than just a public relations function. The Sectors are instrumental in making transit more accessible. He hopes that the Councils' roles will not be compromised during the reorganization.

Representative Chandler stated that the Councils play a large community relations role.

Representative Gonzalez commented that he would support the reorganization if it aids in avoiding service reductions and results in an increase in efficiency.

Representative Baldwin noted that the San Gabriel Valley Sector evolved from the field and that there had been concerns from the start about providing adequate bus service levels.

Representative Heard expressed concern about reduced access to Sector staff.

Representative Salazar stated that the Councils play an important role in representing the communities.

Mr. Gabig mentioned that prior to the formation of the Sectors, MTA headquarters staff would handle the entire public hearing process. Hearings would typically be held on weekends, and small changes were often not implemented due to public opposition. After the Sectors were created, changes have been made to improve the system, often with limited resources.

RECEIVED public comment – Daniel Garcia stated that it is important that problems experienced by patrons are reported. He lauded the Councils for their work on behalf of riders.

6. APPROVED Date of Public Hearing for June 2010 Service Changes.

Scott Page, Service Development Manager, reported that a bus shake-up occurs every six months. The next public hearing is scheduled for February 10, 2010. The hearing notice will be published in several local newspapers in January. The San Gabriel Valley Sector will propose two minor service changes:

- 1) Line 287 – Provide service on 1st Street from East Los Angeles College to the Gold Line Indiana Station.
- 2) Line 180/181 – Representative Bator from the Westside/Central Service Sector suggested modifying the line such that it travels on Hyperion Avenue through the Silver Lake neighborhood.

Staff will provide more information next month regarding the proposed service changes.

Representative Gonzalez asked if the proposed change to Line 180/181 will assist riders in avoiding the chokepoint on Los Feliz Boulevard.

Mr. Page responded that congestion tends to occur near Vermont Avenue and the I-5 freeway.

7. **RECEIVED report on Metro Sustainability Efforts.**

Cris Liban, Environmental Compliance Manager, provided an overview of sustainability and climate change management policies and initiatives. Policies that have been created over the last 1-2 years include those that pertain to environmental liability reduction and reporting, energy/sustainability, construction and demolition, debris removal, recycling, and water use and conservation. He noted that the San Gabriel Sector office building has received a gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

Board directed initiatives include creation of the MTA Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee, Clean Air Task Force, Congestion Reduction Task Force, and Measure R Coordinating Committee. Mr. Liban stated that staff also conducts energy audits.

The Environmental Management System (EMS) is under development. EMS will integrate environmental, safety, and quality management best practices. A pilot program at Division 10 and Red Line yard is underway.

The prototype for the Environmental Information Management System was completed in April 2009. The system incorporates GIS functionality and database capabilities.

Clean air and climate change management efforts include emissions reduction initiatives, maintenance of the nation's first and largest CNG fleet, consideration of newer vehicle technologies, tapping of green power, and enabling system vehicles to have multi-modal capabilities.

Mr. Liban reviewed current small capital projects. Staff hopes the Division 3 maintenance annex located in Cypress Park will achieve silver LEED certification. Other capital projects include solar panel installations and energy retrofits.

Chair Mosca asked if any buildings with solar panels are off the grid.

Mr. Liban responded that no buildings are off the grid as the panels can only produce a limited amount of power. In addition, a moratorium by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power makes it difficult for divisions to operate off the grid.

Mr. Liban reviewed large capital projects, including Gold Line Eastside Extension, Exposition light rail construction, Orange Line, and Orange Line Canoga Extension. Staff has implemented sustainability principles similar to LEED in overseeing these projects. In addition, the agency is exploring the use of renewable energy. The updated Call for Projects application will include sustainability criteria.

Chair Mosca asked if there is a preference for selecting California or local companies in purchasing green technologies.

Mr. Liban responded that there is no preference in selecting vendors in the context of sustainability and that formal procedures still need to be developed.

Mr. Liban stated that \$4.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds will be used to install a Wayside Energy Storage Substation at the Westlake/MacArthur Park Red Line station. He reviewed Measure R quality of life improvements. During the first five years, Measure R will return \$3 billion into the local economy, create over 50,000 new jobs in Los Angeles County, and move a minimum of 40,000 people per day on public transit, among other projected achievements.

Staff is also focusing on the greening of the MTA headquarters building. The headquarters building uses the most electricity of any MTA facility. The goal is to achieve LEED - EBOM certification at the building.

Staff completed a greenhouse gas emissions inventory in December 2008. A baseline sustainability report was issued in June 2009. In addition, MTA holds an annual sustainability summit and regional sustainability and environment roundtable. Staff is in the process of conducting a transit mode shift study, water action plan, and cost-effectiveness study for viable sustainability strategies.

Chair Mosca asked if MTA is under a mandate to reduce carbon emissions.

Mr. Liban responded that although MTA is not under a mandate to reduce carbon emissions, the agency endeavors to improve air quality and reduce waste.

Representative Huang asked for clarification on the agency's purchase policies with regard to sustainable technologies and products. He inquired about paying for power generated by solar panels through power purchasing agreements, use and ownership of carbon credits, and installation of solar panels at bus shelters. He has observed that some shelters are lit at night for safety purposes.

Mr. Liban responded that the agency is drafting a green purchasing policy which will establish guidelines for acquisition of sustainable products in the context of planning, construction and procurement. Staff has begun to establish preliminary purchasing procedures in the process of greening of the MTA headquarters building. He noted that in the City of Los Angeles, the amount of energy that a company can produce to power its facilities is limited due to a moratorium by the City. Any excess energy produced will be wasted. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is in the process of drafting a Memorandum of Understanding that includes elements of a Feed-In Tariff ("FIT"), which is designed to encourage the use of renewable energy sources. Staff would like to initiate power purchasing agreements with Southern California Edison and encourage LADWP to follow suit.

Representative Huang asked if the agency owns the solar panels and about the size of the budget for sustainability programs.

Mr. Liban responded that the agency owns the panels and that there is a budget of approximately \$700,000 for non-capital projects. Capital projects involve management of three major areas: environment, energy, and climate change.

Regarding bus shelters, Mr. Liban stated that the City of Los Angeles has jurisdiction over the shelters. The City and the advertising companies that own the shelters are responsible for any energy retrofits that may be needed at the shelters. Mr. Gabig clarified that cities throughout the region are responsible for bus shelters within their jurisdiction, not just the City of Los Angeles.

Chair Mosca asked how staff was able to determine that a minimum of 40,000 riders would use public transit per day during the first five years of Measure R implementation.

Mr. Liban responded that he will need to come back with more information. The projections were based on anticipated Measure R projects the agency will be carrying out over the next five years.

RECEIVED public comment – Daniel Garcia stated that he is happy with MTA’s green efforts. However, he expressed concern about the lack of lighting at bus stops. He stated that it should be a priority for cities and organizations to undertake efforts to increase the safety of residents and patrons.

8. RECEIVED report on **Line 485 Profile.**

Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Manager III, provided an overview of express Line 485, which provides service to Altadena, Pasadena, Alhambra, and downtown Los Angeles. He presented a map of the route. Buses on the line travel via Lake Avenue and Oak Knoll Avenue (Pasadena), Huntington Drive (South Pasadena), and Fremont Avenue and Valley Boulevard (Alhambra), then proceed to the 710 freeway and El Monte Busway. Mr. Torres presented a map of the downtown portion of the route. The line provides service to areas of interest such as Union Station, City Hall, Disney Hall, Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandizing, and California Hospital, among other locations.

Mr. Torres reported that the line is 18 miles long and provides service from 5:30 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. the following morning, seven days per week. Nine buses operate on the line during the afternoon peak.

Average weekday ridership on the line is 2,900, which is below both the system-wide (8,200 riders/day) and San Gabriel Valley Sector (6,300 riders/day) figures. The line ranks 92/137 in terms of overall system-wide ridership and 21/32 in terms of San Gabriel Valley Sector ridership.

Mr. Torres presented slides of main areas serviced by the line. He stated that Line 485 is the only MTA express bus service to provide service from Altadena, Pasadena, South Pasadena, Alhambra, and Lincoln Heights to downtown Los Angeles.

Representative Gonzalez remarked that Line 485 is his favorite bus line and that he is surprised that it does not attract more riders. The line provides service to many major points of interest and in some cases may provide faster service than the Gold Line. However, frequency of service on the line could be improved to attract more riders.

Representative Heard asked why the line is considered an express line. He indicated that the only express portion of the line is the freeway segment.

Mr. Torres responded that any line that travels on the freeway is considered an express line.

RECEIVED public comment – Ken Ruben stated that the line profile project is unique and that he enjoys these presentations. He has suggested that staff provide similar reports at Westside/Central Sector Council meetings.

9. Service Sector Representatives Closing Remarks – none.

ADJOURNED at 6:33 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary