

Monday, June 14, 2010 5:00 P.M.

MINUTES

San Gabriel Valley Governance Council

Regular Meeting

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

Called to Order at 5:06 p.m.

Sector Representatives Present:

Joseph Mosca, Chair
Alex Gonzalez, Vice Chair
Roger Chandler
Harry Baldwin
Bruce Heard
Steven Ly
Dave Spence
Rosie Vasquez

Officers/Managers:

Jon Hillmer, Transportation Manager
David Hershenson, Community
Relations Manager
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Roll Called.
3. **APPROVED Minutes of Regular Governance Council Meeting held May 10, 2010.**
4. **RECEIVED public comment:**

1) Wayne Wright, transit user, stated that Mr. Hillmer mentioned at the Westside/Central Governance Council meeting that their council has control of bus service in Northeast Los Angeles County. He asked if this was true, and requested clarification about how bus lines in the Northeast area will be assigned.

Mr. Hillmer responded that staff is proposing that Councils manage bus lines within their geographical boundaries. Currently, Councils oversee lines that originate from particular divisions. If this proposal is approved, the Northeast area, which falls within the boundaries of the Westside/Central governing area, may be overseen by the Westside/Central Governance Council.

2) Daniel Garcia, transit user, stated that Line 770 operators offer commendable customer service to customers in wheelchairs. He presented a copy of the Metro bus and rail guide for riders with disabilities. A Spanish version is available. He praised the agency for offering this guide and suggested providing tips pertaining to disabled riders on Transit TV.

3) Mary Griffieth, transit user, expressed concern that staff does not listen to riders' concerns about bus operations. Division 9 service has improved over the years. However, about one month ago, she attempted to board a Line 268 bus traveling northbound. The operator had not yet departed, but refused to pick her up. She was unable to obtain the operator's number. Operators are supposed to request that passengers in the wheelchair section of the bus move to another seat. They are also supposed to ask wheelchair patrons if a restraint is needed.

She stated that she prefers to patronize MTA rather than Foothill Transit because she is more familiar with their system.

Item 4 – continued:

Mr. Hillmer stated that complaints from disabled passengers are taken seriously. He suggested taking down the bus number and time of day for future reference. If a complaint is submitted early enough, the onboard camera recording can be downloaded.

4) Ken Ruben, Culver City resident, stated that Albert Vera, former mayor of Culver City, died a week ago. When the Councils were being formed, Mr. Vera had nominated Ken Ruben as a representative to the Westside/Central Governance Council. However, he was not appointed to the Council. He stated that L.A. Times columnist David Lazarus was a guest at the Southern California Transit Advocates meeting. In today's edition of the Metro headlines, there is a link to the Pacific Electric Historical Society. Mr. Ruben stated that the link includes a photo of the last streetcar that he rode. He rode Line 117 to a job fair near LAX. The bus didn't stop for passengers.

5. RECEIVED Governance Council **Director's Report**, Jon Hillmer.

Mr. Leahy recently appointed Mr. Hillmer as Director of Governance Councils. He will be responsible for coordinating all five Governance Councils. He would like to re-energize the Councils and offered to meet with the Chair, Vice-Chair, and any interested Representatives of each Council a few weeks before each meeting. MTA staff and Board members value the Councils' input. Mr. Hillmer would also like to revamp the Governance Council section of the MTA website, including updating Council Representative photos. He presented slides showing geographical boundaries of the Councils and areas of responsibility. All Division 9 bus lines operate within the San Gabriel Valley region. Some lines that travel in multiple regions may be overseen by two governance councils. If there is a difference in opinion between two councils overseeing a shared line, Mr. Hillmer and possibly others will be responsible for mediating the conflict. If no mutually agreeable solution is found, the MTA Board will make a final decision.

Representative Ly inquired about the difference between a contracted bus line and a directly operated bus line.

Mr. Hillmer responded that most MTA lines are operated by the agency. Some lines are contracted out to a private agency.

Item 5 – Continued:

Representative Chandler stated that he also serves on the Foothill Transit board and that every member is briefed before each meeting.

Mr. Hillmer stated that he invites the Chair, Vice-Chair and interested representatives to meet with him a few weeks before the Council meeting. The Chair and Vice-Chair will decide when and where to meet.

- **KPI Report – System-wide data:** April On-Time Performance (OTP) – 74%; Complaints/100,000 boardings – year-to-date figure is slightly above target of 2.6; Miles Between Total Road Calls –April figure was above target of 3,500; Accidents/100,000 miles –April figure was below the target at 3.0; Ridership – Target is 33.4 million boardings per month, and year-to-date figure is approximately 30 million boardings per month. Data for Divisions 3 and 9: The year-to-date OTP figure is 76%, and April figure was 77%; Complaints/100,000 boardings – April figure was 2.7; Miles Between Total Road Calls – April figure was well above the target at nearly 4,000; Accidents/100,000 miles –April figure was 2.85; Ridership – Target is 5.3 million boardings per month, April figure was close to 5 million boardings.

Mr. Hillmer presented slides showing performance trends and operator commendations. He mentioned that various bus operators will come to future Council meetings on a regular basis to showcase their job duties. Staff would also like to re-introduce the Customer Appreciation marketing program.

Representative Baldwin inquired about Gold Line ridership. Mr. Hillmer responded that rail ridership has held steady. Gold Line ridership has increased due to the Eastside Extension. More rail ridership data will be presented at a future meeting.

Representative Heard asked why there isn't a Governance Council dedicated to rail service.

Mr. Hillmer responded that the rail system does not undergo many service changes, and proposed changes generally do not require a public hearing. He added that lengthy public hearings are held before rail systems are approved and constructed.

Item 5 – Continued:

- **MTA Board items from May 2010** – Items of interest include Item 17 - State Route 710 Tunnel Technical Study; Item 20 – Gold Line Eastside Extension four-quadrant gates; and Item 45 - Directors Villaraigosa-Robinson Motion as amended by Director Antonovich, which attempts to develop a seamless fare mechanism amongst Metro, municipal operators and Metrolink. The CEO will provide a status report on Item 45 at the September Board meeting.
- **Draft Budget for FY11** - The operating budget, which will be implemented beginning July 1, has been reduced by about \$100 million. Much of this reduction was achieved by eliminating positions. There was a 10% reduction in non-contract staff, and there will be a 3.5% reduction in contract staff. The reduction in contract staff will be achieved primarily through attrition rather than lay-offs. 400,000 revenue service hours will be reduced. Some of the service hours have already been reduced as part of the December 2009 service change program.
- **June 21 Meet and Confer Meeting** at 9:00 a.m., Gateway Building, Gateway Conference Room. Mr. Leahy has mentioned that he would like these meetings to be more informal.
- **Fare increase for July 1, 2010** - Ridership is projected to decrease due in part to the fare increase and economic slump. Although the price increases may appear to be significant, MTA's fares remain among the lowest in the nation. Senior, disabled, Medicare and student fares will be frozen until 2013 as part of language in Measure R.

Chair Mosca, referring to page 3 of the Council report, asked for clarification on the header and June 2010 data. Mr. Hillmer responded that the data indicates the number of bus lines that is currently managed by each Council, lines that operate predominantly in the San Gabriel Valley, and lines that may be shared.

6. RECEIVED report on **Reorganization of Scheduling and Service Planning Departments**, Conan Cheung, DEO Operations.

Mr. Cheung stated that the agency is going back to a more traditional scheduling structure with three key areas of focus:

- 1) Scheduling staff from previous Sectors have been consolidated into one department.
- 2) Operations planners have also been consolidated. Scott Page will lead this unit.
- 3) Strategic planning group – this new unit will focus on leveraging bus services and assets more effectively, and ensuring a better bus/rail interface.
- 4) Stops and zones group will now be part of the service development group – this will help staff better coordinate service changes and route alignments with bus stop locations and terminal facilities.

7. RECEIVED Report on **Blue Ribbon Committee Recommendations**, Conan Cheung, DEO Operations.

Mr. Cheung reported that Alex Gonzalez has served as the Blue Ribbon Committee (BRC) representative for the San Gabriel Valley Governance Council. The Committee is finalizing its recommendations, and will meet for the sixth, and scheduled last meeting, on the second Tuesday in July. Committee members discussed how regional transit providers can provide more effective service. Coordination between Metro bus and rail services, municipal services, and local return services is a key element that the Committee members identified in their discussions. The members are formulating policy recommendations to the Board, which is scheduled to happen in July. An integrated fare system is critical. There are some members that are requesting a uniform fare system, though it may be difficult to achieve. Providing seamless transfers between operators represents a feasible alternative. There is a Board motion to examine implementation of a daily and weekly EZ Pass. Staff has been discussing ways to make transfer policies more uniform and better coordinate the service changes and schedules of various operators. Committee members suggested enabling the Councils to serve as forums to further discuss coordination ideas. In terms of service design, the Committee highlighted rail and Bus Rapid Transit as the backbone of the system. Service duplication needs to be minimized and the strengths of the various modes need to be leveraged. Effective resource allocation and high quality service will continue to be a priority to maintain existing riders and attract new riders.

Item 7 – Continued:

Committee members stressed the importance of making the system intuitive and easy-to-use. It may be difficult for even regular riders to figure out how to use the system for discretionary trips. Reliability is a critical component of service quality. This includes not only on-time performance and bus maintenance, but communicating with patrons in the event of unforeseen delays or service disruptions.

Representative Gonzalez stated that the BRC members have come to a consensus on various topics. Members adopted a back-to-the-basics approach and debated what constitutes a good transit system. L.A. Times columnist David Lazarus attended the last meeting. Representative Gonzalez noted that as he observed the interaction between Mr. Lazarus and Mr. Cheung, it was apparent to him that Mr. Lazarus came into the meeting with a closed mind. He praised Mr. Cheung for his professional demeanor throughout the interaction.

RECEIVED public comment – Mary Griffieth, transit user, stated that she lives near public transit. Bus service tends to end early and she must rely on rail on occasion. Conductors of commuter rail lines need to have better means of communicating with wheelchair passengers, who may experience difficulty boarding trains. She praised Mr. Cheung for his report.

8. RECEIVED report on **December 2010 Service Changes**, Scott Page, Service Development Manager.

Mr. Page stated that the bi-annual service change public hearing process is underway and that a public hearing is scheduled for August. Staff focused on three areas: 1) restructure or cancel poor-performing routes, 2) right-size the Metro Rapid corridors to meet service warrants, and 3) coordinate service to reduce duplication.

Mr. Page stated that productivity is measured by the number of boardings per revenue service hour. The average number of agency-wide boardings per revenue service hour is 60. Metro's least productive lines average less than 20 boardings per revenue hour.

Item 8 – Continued:

He provided an overview of poor-performing routes in the San Gabriel Valley area: Line 177 and 620, both of which are proposed to be cancelled. He reviewed alternative services.

Staff examined the performance of Rapid Lines 762 and 780, as the two lines were not meeting the five performance criteria used to analyze Rapid services. Staff is proposing to cancel Saturday service on Line 762, and cancel Saturday and Sunday service on Line 780. Current patrons of Lines 762 and 780 will need to use local Lines 260 and 180/181, respectively. Revenue service hours saved from the line cancellations will be reinvested into Lines 260 and 180/181. Mr. Page reviewed data on boardings, travel time, and trip length ratio for Lines 762 and 780.

Representative Vasquez pointed out that Attachment A of the public hearing notice does not list Line 620.

Mr. Page stated that staff will need to correct this and thanked the Representative for noticing the error.

In terms of coordinating service, staff would like to consolidate service operating within a corridor onto a primary path, reschedule service on a primary route to improve frequency and increase capacity, and link services to transit resources. Staff is proposing to maintain Line 287 from El Monte to the Montebello Town Center, cancel Line 287 service along Floral and First Streets, and extend Line 68 to Montebello Town Center.

Representative Heard questioned publishing the public hearing notice on a three-day weekend when readers are not likely to be reading the paper. Mr. Page stated that the first Council public hearing will be held on August 4, and the agency is required to print the notice 30 days prior to the first hearing date. The notice is typically published the first Sunday of the month due to generally higher readership on Sunday. Representative Heard inquired about the possibility of publishing the notice earlier than July 4. Mr. Page responded that he will check with the Board Secretary's office.

Mr. Page announced that throughout the month of July, tables will be set up at El Monte Station and key transfer centers, and patrons will have an opportunity to submit comment cards which will be reviewed by staff and included in the public hearing record.

Item 8 – Continued:

Representative Heard commented that MTA deserves praise for its model approach in handling proposed service changes to Line 177 over the years. He hopes that staff will continue to communicate with JPL and other stakeholders about the proposed changes to the Line. Chair Mosca stated that staff should consider communicating with the city of Pasadena about taking over the service.

Mr. Page stated that he has already begun receiving feedback regarding Line 177. Representative Vasquez suggested including a historical background of MTA's previous actions regarding Line 177 in its communications with the public and stakeholders.

Representative Spence suggested sending a letter to JPL's transit coordinator explaining the changes. Perhaps JPL may be able to pressure the city of Pasadena into taking over the line. He mentioned that his domestic worker can no longer use the line. Mr. Heard added that a large number of domestic workers use Line 177. Chair Mosca expressed interest in participating in the meeting with the city of Pasadena. Mr. Hershenson offered to contact and offer to meet with representatives from JPL and Caltech to discuss the reasoning behind the proposal to cancel service on that line.

RECEIVED public comment – Mary Griffith, speaking on behalf of Daniel Garcia, stated that Mr. Garcia was concerned about wheelchair patrons being aware of the proposed service changes.

Mr. Page responded that car cards and take-ones will be placed on buses. He mentioned the possibility of meeting with Mr. Garcia.

9. APPROVED publishing the **public hearing notice** in all local newspapers sometime *prior* to Sunday, July 4, 2010, and APPROVED **public hearing date** of August 9, 2010.
10. Chair and Council Member Comments – Chair Mosca stated that he has had an amazing year as Chair and thanked the Council.
11. ELECTED Chair and Vice Chair for FY11:
 - Alex Gonzalez, Chair
 - Rosie Vasquez, Vice-Chair

ADJOURNED at 6:33 p.m.



Michele Chau, Council Secretary