

Monday, September 13, 2010 5:00 PM

MINUTES

San Gabriel Valley Governance Council

Regular Meeting

El Monte City Hall
Building East
Council Chambers
11333 Valley Blvd.
El Monte, CA 91731

Called to Order at: 5:02 p.m.

Council Members Present:

Alex Gonzalez, Chair
Rosie Vasquez, Vice Chair
Harry Baldwin
Albert Huang
Steven Ly
Joseph Mosca
Dave Spence

Officers:

Jon Hillmer, Director Governance Council
David Hershenson, Comm. Rel. Mgr
Michele Chau, Council Secretary



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Metro

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Roll Called

3. RECEIVED **Public Comment:**

John McCready, transit user, questioned the new temporary layout of bus berths at El Monte Station. He noticed that there are berths for overflow/discharge buses and Greyhound buses, but passengers of other lines such as 287, 267 and 268 need to board on the street. This is an inconvenience. Staff needs to consider re-assigning the bus berths.

Esperanza Martinez, Bus Riders Union, stated that she spoke with residents of the Boyle Heights area concerning proposed service changes to Line 620. However, the residents were unable to attend the meeting due to confusion regarding the new location.

Mr. Hillmer explained that the meeting location has changed due to the construction at the El Monte Station. Announcements regarding the location and time of the meeting were made at the past two Council meetings, and information about the meeting has been posted on metro.net and at the El Monte temporary terminal.

4. APPROVED **Minutes of Meeting held August 9, 2010.**

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

- Performance Report

The key performance indicators for the first month of the fiscal year (July) were presented. System-wide numbers included: On-Time Performance (OTP) has improved to 75%. Complaints per 100,000 passengers exceeded the target slightly for the month of July. The FY11 target for Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls has increased from 3,500 to 3,664 miles. Accidents per 100,000 miles was below the target for July. Ridership is anticipated to decrease due to the fare increase.

Data for the San Gabriel Valley included: OTP is trending well at 78% for the month of July. Complaints slightly exceeded the target. Miles Between Mechanical Roadcalls trended well at nearly 4,000 miles. The number of Accidents per 100,000 miles is right on target. July ridership was slightly under target. Ridership on the Silver Line continues to increase.

Mr. Hillmer presented charts showing the number of boardings and alightings at various Silver Line stops, rail ridership trends, and preliminary estimates of the fare increase impact on ridership levels.

- Meet and Confer Meeting with Art Leahy, September 30

The next Quarterly Governance Council Meet and Confer meeting will be held on Thursday, September 30 at 10:00 a.m. in the Wilshire Conference Room on the fourth floor of the Gateway building. Each Council is being asked to prepare two questions for the CEO which will be addressed at the meeting.

- Tour of Facilities

Following the meeting, Mr. Hillmer will provide a tour of Metro facilities. The tour is primarily for newer Council members who may not have had an opportunity to see Metro facilities. The tour will begin at approximately 11:30 a.m. A box lunch will be provided during the tour.

6. APPROVED staff recommendations on all **proposed service changes** **except** Line 177 proposed changes. Reduced service on Line 177 will continue to be provided until March 2011. Staff will continue to meet with cities that may be able to provide replacement service, and will report back to the Council with additional information regarding Line 177 at the October meeting.

Scott Page provided a recap of the August 9 San Gabriel Valley public hearing to the Governance Council. He stated that 33 patrons attended the hearing, and that the public comment period lasted sixty days.

Mr. Page briefly reviewed the proposed San Gabriel Valley area service changes, including discontinuing service on Lines 177 and 620, discontinuing Saturday service on Line 762 and reinvesting Rapid hours to Line 260, canceling weekend service on Line 780 and reinvesting Rapid hours to Lines 180-181, and discontinuing Line 287 service west of Montebello Town Center and extending Line 68 to provide service to Montebello Town Center. He stated that a minor change not requiring a public hearing was discontinuing Line 256 service north of Colorado Boulevard and ending the line at Pasadena City College.

Representative Spence asked if there are plans to provide replacement service for Line 177 to Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) given the 85 comments against the proposal that were submitted.

Mr. Page responded that staff has contacted the cities of Pasadena and Glendale regarding provision of replacement service. Those cities indicated that they lack sufficient funding and vehicles to provide this service.

Representative Mosca stated that his understanding was that City of Pasadena officials have not had in-depth contact with Metro regarding this issue.

Mr. Hillmer stated that staff has spoken with city of Glendale and Pasadena officials regarding taking over the service. Both cities had concerns about funding and equipment.

He added that Metro needs to reduce its service in order to meet its budget targets. The fare has increased and Metro personnel has been reduced. If the proposed cuts are not implemented, service will need to be reduced in other areas.

Representative Vasquez asked about the number of service hours that needed to be reduced in order to meet the budget targets.

Mr. Hillmer responded that staff reduced service hours by about 360,000. Conan Cheung, DEO, Operations, stated that the reductions total 275,000 annualized hours but since the reductions will be implemented in December, 137,000 hours of service reductions will come from the FY11 budget.

Representative Vasquez inquired about the change in service hours resulting from cuts to Lines 177 and 620.

Mr. Page responded that cutting Line 177 will result in a reduction of 5,687 service hours, and cutting Line 620 will result in a reduction of 10,634 service hours.

Representative Mosca expressed concern that Line 177 represents the only access point to the Gold Line for many La Canada-Flintridge residents.

Mr. Page indicated that staff worked with Caltech and JPL representatives to discuss options and clarify the route performance index. Although vanpools were discussed as an alternative, no specific solutions were presented. Staff had contemplated running a single route during rush hour, but Caltech would not be served. Mid-day ridership is low and the line continues to perform poorly.

Representative Mosca suggested deferring decision on the line until an agreement is reached between Metro and the city of Pasadena.

Representative Hillmer noted that a decision needs to be made soon. Deferring action means that staff will have to find savings elsewhere.

Mr. Herhsenson stated that staff worked closely with JPL and Caltech to try to increase ridership, including modifying the routing and the scheduling of the line, developing e-blasts and other marketing materials for JPL and Caltech students, faculty and employees to promote the new schedule/routing, but ridership on Line 177 did not increase substantially.

Chair Gonzalez inquired about Line 620.

Mr. Hillmer responded that Line 620 is a shuttle route that began service in the mid-1980's. DASH never took over this line. The route, currently a loop configuration, has changed over time. Ridership has been consistently low. Because Metro is a regional operator, this type of service is more appropriate for a smaller local operator.

Mr. Gonzalez asked if Metro has promoted Line 620. Mr. Hillmer responded affirmatively. He stated that there have been general promotions for this line, in addition to promotions for the line in conjunction with the Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Mr. Cheung added that there is a multitude of good service being provided in the areas served by Line 620, which negatively impacts ridership on this line.

Representative Ly inquired about frequency of service on the line.

Mr. Page responded that the line runs every 20 minutes. Other lines such as Line 68 and Line 30 run every 10-15 minutes during peak periods.

Representative Mosca asked about how staff defines minor changes to service.

Mr. Page responded that a change is considered minor when less than 25% of the route miles, passenger ridership or hours of service are impacted. Representative Mosca expressed concern about Line 256 service changes. He stated that more public input is needed on the proposed changes to this line and that proposed changes were not adequately advertised.

Mr. Page stated that many lines offer parallel service to Line 256.

Representative Huang emphasized the importance of exploring alternative solutions to discontinuing Line 177.

Mr. Hillmer stated that it may be necessary for the Council to agendaize proposed changes to Line 256 at the next Council meeting as the proposed change to the line was not listed in the Council report.

Representative Ly stated that Line 256 is listed as a proposed change in the packet received by the Council. Mr. Hillmer indicated that there were references to the proposed change in maps and other back-up documentation but it was not listed as an action item.

Chair Gonzalez inquired about the number of local circulators that remain in the San Gabriel Valley. Mr. Hillmer responded that Line 605 would remain.

RECEIVED public comment:

Jim Cowell, Associate Vice-President of Facilities, Caltech, stated that Caltech is the largest private employer in the San Gabriel Valley. Last month he brought letters and copies of emails from the president of Caltech, staff and students regarding proposed Line 177 changes. He stated that he appreciates the time taken by Metro staff to meet with Caltech stakeholders. Caltech staff learned more about the route performance index. In the case of Line 177, the route performance index data is based on ridership figures dated October 2009, when there was a poor-performing contractor operating the line. Now that a better operator has taken over the line, staff should give it another chance. The route performance index is based on a moving target. Caltech staff expects the demand for Line 177 service to increase once the lease for a surface lot with over 1,000 parking spaces at JPL expires. Line 177 is one of the few options connecting JPL to the Gold Line. There have been huge improvements to the Line 177 route performance index since October 2009. Service on the line should be maintained.

Kristina Valenzuela, Employee Transportation Coordinator, Caltech, stated that she provided testimony against Line 177 service changes at the last meeting and had presented a book of email printouts opposing the proposals. Caltech and JPL officials met with Metro staff. Data for only one day in October 2009 was used to calculate the route performance index. Southland Transit has proven dependable. Since this is a new contractor, more time is needed to determine if the cuts are justified. She inquired about the possibility of using a smaller bus on the line. She reiterated that MTA has not provided good data on the line, and that she never saw any public hearing notices on Line 177 buses.

John Miranda, JPL Employee Transportation Coordinator, stated that JPL has worked very well with Metro over the years. JPL officials have coordinated with Mr. Page and Mr. Hillmer to clarify the calculations used to determine the performance of Line 177. He said the numbers are not current and do not reflect the recent increase in ridership on the line, and that JPL and Metro should work together promote public transit as a viable option.

Esperanza Martinez, lead organizer, Bus Riders Union, stated that the BRU is concerned about the proposal to eliminate Lines 177 and 620. Many petitions have been submitted. The BRU appreciates comments by Council members, JPL and Caltech supporting these two lines. It is not necessary to approve the staff recommendations as proposed. The BRU rejects the proposed cuts.

Eric Romann, Bus Riders Union, stated that the BRU appreciates Metro's rationale for proposing these changes. The BRU, which has worked for 15 years to improve transit service, views the changes as a slippery slope leading to a decrease in service quality. Metro's financial staff has not adequately reviewed the data. Other budgetary options need to be considered in order to maintain service on Lines 177 and 620.

Joanna Gaspar, student and BRU member, commented that over 800 signatures regarding the proposed cuts were submitted to the Board Secretary, but did not get distributed to some governance councils. She requested that the Council reject the elimination of Lines 177 and 620 and reduction in service to Lines 762 and 780. Transit users who work several jobs may be negatively impacted.

Michelle Lopez, BRU member, urged the Council to reject the proposed service cuts. If the cuts are implemented, patrons will need to worry about how to get to work and school. The cuts will encourage transit users to revert back to their cars.

Representative Mosca stated that he would like to renew his request to delay cancellation of Line 177 until the first quarter of 2011 to allow more time for Metro staff to work with the city of Pasadena.

Representative Spence echoed Representative Mosca's sentiments and indicated that the data is outdated and that ridership on Line 177 has improved. He believes proposed service changes to other lines are reasonable due to alternative services available.

Representative Vasquez asked if all of the data was compiled in October 2009.

Mr. Hillmer responded that only the data for contract bus lines was generated in October 2009.

Representative Vasquez asked when data for non-contract bus lines was generated.

Mr. Hillmer responded that data for non-contract bus lines is generated on a continuous basis using the Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS). Staff uses this data to calculate monthly averages. ATMS data is monitored regularly.

Representative Baldwin expressed concern that delaying action on Line 177 will result in cuts to other lines.

Mr. Cheung indicated that staff can engage in more extensive conversations with the city of Pasadena to determine what trips are more essential and trim some of the existing service. Mr. Page added that staff can also examine passenger on and off data.

Representative Ly inquired about the cost to run Line 177.

Mr. Page responded that elimination of Line 177 will result in a total savings of \$477,708.

Representative Ly mentioned that the city of Rosemead is using some of its Measure R dollars to supplement funding for the city's transit services. Perhaps this may be an option for the city of Pasadena.

Representative Spence noted that most of Measure R funding is already committed.

Representative Vasquez stated that she is concerned about Line 620.

Chair Gonzalez commented that there may be perceived social equity issues regarding eliminating this line. He rode Line 620 more than ten times and found that ridership was low on each trip, and supported staff's decision to discontinue service.

Mr. Hillmer noted that the Board can overrule any decision by the Council regarding Tier 1 bus lines. The Board will consider approval of Tier 1 bus lines later this month.

7. **RECEIVED Presentation on the Web-site for the Governance Councils**, David Hershenson, Community Relations Manager.

Mr. Hershenson stated that staff has been working on the Governance Council webpages. There is a general overview page with links to each Council page, agendas and minutes, proposed service changes, timetables, fare information, service updates, contact information, and services provided by other local operators. Mr. Hershenson presented a mock-up of the San Gabriel Valley Governance Council page. A professional photographer will take photos of the members for inclusion on the webpage. Meeting information, code of conduct, bylaws, maps, history, regional projects, Measure R information, 511 program, and links to Councilmember biographies are being proposed to be featured on the updated council page.

8. **CONSIDERED questions for Meet and Confer meeting**
September 30, 2010, 10:00am, All Council Representatives.

Mr. Hillmer indicated that the Council may draft two questions for the Meet and Confer meeting on September 30. Staff is hopeful that there will be adequate time for the CEO to address all of the Councils' questions. Chair Gonzalez provided two possible questions: 1) Please provide an update on TAP implementation, especially when cash value will be available and how will paper passes and transfers integrate, and 2) Are there any plans to eliminate Transit TV, and if not, can staff please turn down the volume on the TV's? Representative Spence suggested one possible question: Are there plans to include in the Council budget provision of incentives for excellent employees? Representative Mosca requested that the following question be posed: Are there financial alternatives to Metro Connections?

9. RECEIVED update on **El Monte Transit Center Groundbreaking**, Henry Gonzalez, Community Relations Manager.

Mr. Hillmer reported that Henry Gonzalez, Community Relations Manager, is off work for personal reasons and is hoping to return to work as soon as possible. Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Manager, provided the report on behalf of Mr. Gonzalez. Mr. Torres announced that at 12:01 on Sunday morning, El Monte Station closed its bus bays to the public after 37 years of service. A temporary terminal has been constructed on Santa Anita Avenue and MTA Way Drive which is shared between Metro, Greyhound and Foothill Transit. Staff will be present during the first week of the transition to assist patrons in locating the bays. Flyers in three languages were distributed last week to help passengers locate the bays. A groundbreaking ceremony will take place at El Monte Station next Wednesday beginning at 9:00 a.m. The event is open to the public.

Chair Gonzalez asked if there were any complaints from disabled passengers regarding the transition.

Mr. Torres responded that staff did not receive any complaints from disabled patrons regarding the re-location of the bays. At this time ADA parking is available on the northern side of the Station and some patrons have had difficulty locating the parking spaces, but otherwise there were no complaints.

10. Chair and Council Member Comments - none.

Adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Michele Chau

Michele Chau, Council Secretary