

# MINUTES

## **San Gabriel Valley Governance Council**

Regular Meeting

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

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Called to Order at: 5:03 p.m.

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### Council Members Present:

Alex Gonzalez, Chair  
Rosie Vasquez, Vice Chair  
Roger Chandler  
Harry Baldwin  
Steven Ly  
Dave Spence

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### Officers:

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



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

**Metro**<sup>™</sup>

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Called
3. **APPROVED Minutes of Meeting held March 14, 2011.**

4. **RECEIVED Public Comment:**

Ken Ruben, Southern California Transit Advocates, stated that he has used 511 and that it works only intermittently. He expressed disappointment with many of the service changes approved at the last MTA Regular Board meeting. Although he was glad that Line 460 was saved, he was dismayed with Line 217 being cut back. He mentioned that he was waiting for a Line 194 bus earlier, causing him to be late to the meeting. He stated that Mr. Hillmer has appeared at a meeting of the Southern California Transit Advocates. Mr. Ruben stated that Line 439 does not run on weekends and that there was some confusion about Line 439 service at the last meeting.

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

- Performance Report
- Report on Meet and Confer with Art Leahy
- Metro Board Actions in March

Mr. Hillmer reviewed February 2011 and preliminary March 2011 performance indicators. System-wide On-Time Performance (OTP) is 74.8%, and San Gabriel Valley (SGV) OTP is 75.3%. In March, the system-wide OTP increased to 76.3%. There were 3.19 complaints/100,000 boardings in the SGV in February, and 2.47 complaints/100,000 boardings system-wide. The complaint figure for the SGV is slightly above the monthly target. There were 3,760 system-wide Miles Between Mechanical Road Calls (MBMRC) in February. The system-wide March MBMRC figure is consistent with February's data. There were 4,099 MBMRC in the SGV for the month of February. SGV's performance in this category is second only to the San Fernando Valley. There were 2.52 Accidents/100,000 miles system-wide, and 2.12 Accidents/100,000 miles in the SGV during February. SGV performed better than any other region in the category of Accidents. February system-wide ridership was 27,800,000, and SGV ridership was 4,000,000. Ridership in general is trending upward due to the increase in fuel prices.

Chair Gonzalez inquired about the last spike in ridership.

Mr. Hillmer responded that ridership spiked in 2008 due to rising gas prices. Ridership levels may reach 1.7 million boardings per day if gas prices continue their upward trend.

Mr. Hillmer presented a slide showing average weekday MTA bus ridership by Service Council. The SGV region is serving a significant number of riders. He presented a slide showing Silver Line average weekday ridership trends. There was a dip in Silver Line ridership in December due to the holidays and rain; however, ridership has increased since December. March preliminary ridership on the Silver Line is approximately 8,600 riders per day. There are issues with lack of parking at the El Monte Station. Ridership may increase if parking capacity at the Station were expanded.

Chair Gonzalez asked if ridership trends on Foothill Transit's Silver Streak line are similar to those of the MTA Silver Line.

Mr. Hillmer stated that he has observed a higher percentage increase in ridership levels on the Silver Streak line.

Mr. Hillmer presented slides showing progress of the El Monte Station renovation project. Contaminated soil was found on the site. Mr. Hillmer explained that during the 1930's and 1940's, a paint factory occupied part of the site and that factory workers were not careful with disposal of the paint, causing the soil to be contaminated with lead. Mr. Hillmer presented a slide showing Metro's Facebook posting regarding parking capacity issues at the Station. MTA staff is working with City of El Monte officials on securing additional parking spaces. He presented a map of the Station showing parking lots at capacity. The City of El Monte is allowing Station patrons to use green public parking spaces designed for the Valley Mall. In addition, a bus stop is being added to a local line on Valley Blvd. between Santa Anita and Tyler to enable Station patrons to reach the Station without having to walk too far.

Mr. Hillmer reviewed MTA Board actions during the month of March, including: approval of revised Service Council bylaws, approval of service changes to Tier 1 bus lines to be implemented June 2011 or later, approval of a design/build approach for the Crenshaw/LAX Corridor Project, authorization for the CEO to negotiate and execute an Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report and Conceptual Engineering for the Green Line to LAX Project, approval of preliminary funding marks for the 2011 Call for Projects, and approval of FY12 budget planning parameters.

Mr. Hillmer provided an overview of the Meet and Confer meeting with CEO Arthur Leahy on March 31. During the meeting, Mr. Leahy had indicated that a reserve bus fleet was on hand to address any potential increase in capacity. Various topics were discussed during the Meet and Confer, including a contingency plan for potential bus ridership increase, status of transit operations, MTA FY12 budget, and real time bus information. In addition, Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman provided an ethics presentation.

Council representative Vasquez asked why complaints were trending high and what staff can do to address this issue.

Mr. Hillmer responded that customer expectations in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys tend to be higher despite solid service reliability levels. In addition, frequency of service in the San Gabriel Valley is not as high as other regions, resulting in a bigger impact to passengers if a single bus is late. The Westside/Central region provides more frequent service, resulting in less impact to passengers if a bus is late. Customers also tend to have cell phones and know who to contact to file a complaint.

Mr. Hillmer explained that when a complaint is received, a manager reviews the complaint, an investigation is conducted, and any operator(s) involved are contacted. Staff expects complaints to decrease as service quality increases.

Council representative Vasquez asked if most complaints are related to on-time performance.

Mr. Hillmer responded that he will provide a more detailed complaint report next month. Many complaints relate to no-show buses and passenger pass-ups. Overloaded buses are one reason for pass-ups. Staff has the ability to identify individual trips and determine where a bus was located at any given time, whether the bus stopped, and whether the doors opened. He noted that not all complaints accurately describe the actual situation. Undercover riders help evaluate service quality.

Council representative Chandler stated that he heard that buses do not store well for long periods of time.

Mr. Hillmer responded that during the late 1970's and 1980's, RTD maintained an energy contingency fleet, and operators regularly started contingency buses and ran them.

6. RECEIVED report on **Lines 30/31 and 256 ridership trends.**

Carl Torres, Transportation Planning Manager III, reported that road construction has resulted in delays on Lines 260 and 266. This has caused a spike in complaints related to service on these lines. The lack of parking at El Monte Station has also resulted in an increase in complaints.

Mr. Torres provided an overview of Line 256 route modifications. Both passenger boardings and alightings increased after the route was modified.

He reviewed bus lines traveling on 1<sup>st</sup> Street, including Line 30/31 and Line 68. When Line 30/31 service was cut, Line 287a and Line 287b provided alternate service. Line 287 terminated at Montebello Town Center beginning December 2010. The El Sol bus service currently runs on 1<sup>st</sup> Street. El Sol buses, which are operated by the County of Los Angeles, travel a circuitous route in East Los Angeles. MTA staff would like to work with El Sol officials to extend El Sol service to Atlantic Blvd.

Mr. Torres provided an overview of 1<sup>st</sup> Street ridership. Line 31 boardings decreased while alightings increased. Line 287 ridership dropped significantly.

Chair Gonzalez asked if there has been an increase in Gold Line ridership.

Mr. Torres responded that staff has not examined this. Mr. Hillmer stated that there are 10,000 riders per day on the Gold Line Eastside Extension. The target is 12,000 riders per day. He added that there were 1,200 riders per day in the Floral/1<sup>st</sup> Street area in the early 2000's; however, ridership decreased in this area after service was added on Cesar Chavez Ave.

Council representative Vasquez asked if Line 68 is managed by the SGV region.

Mr. Hillmer responded that control of the Line is shared between the SGV and Westside/Central regions. The Line travels through downtown Los Angeles and ends at Eagle Rock Plaza.

Council representative Vasquez inquired about ridership on Line 68, especially from Cesar Chavez Ave./Atlantic Boulevard to Cesar Chavez Ave./Soto Street.

Mr. Hillmer responded that he can provide this information, as well as ridership data on Line 770.

Mr. Torres stated that staff reviewed late night ridership levels on Line 485 and determined that ridership was too low to justify providing a late night trip on Altadena/Lake Ave to assist passengers in connecting with the Gold Line. As a result, the last three trips of Line 485 will be operated by Line 180 buses to allow passengers to connect to the last Gold Line train at 12:25 a.m.

7. RECEIVED report on **Metrolink's new Express Train Program.**

Sherita Coffelt, SCRRA, reported that Metrolink operates 144 weekday trains on 7 lines. There are 55 Metrolink stations system-wide. The agency has a \$173.3 million operating budget. Metrolink's core values focus on safety, people, quality, efficiency, and growth. Ms. Coffelt reviewed ways in which the agency is improving mobility to Burbank's Bob Hope Airport. The changes become effective May 9, 2011. She provided an overview of the Express Train Pilot Program, which will also launch on May 9, 2011. Morning and afternoon express trains have been added to the Antelope Valley and San Bernardino Lines. The express service features limited stops (four on each line). There will be no fare increase for this new service.

Council representative Vasquez asked about the number of trains providing new express service.

Ms. Coffelt responded that one train will be providing service each way on each line during the pilot program. After the pilot program, service may be expanded depending on the impact of the changes.

Ms. Coffelt reviewed special event-driven service, including late-night trips to Dodgers' games and provision of service to Angels' games, San Manuel Casino, and San Clemente Beach from Inland Empire. More service is being provided to Ventura County, Antelope Valley, and San Bernardino at the same great value. Metrolink also offers a corporate pass program in which corporate partners purchase Metrolink tickets and provide them for their employees.

8. RECEIVED report on **Metro Maintenance programs and challenges.**

Matthew Dake, Equipment Maintenance Manager, reviewed the MTA maintenance program. Mr. Hillmer pointed out that the San Gabriel Valley region has the best bus maintenance team consisting of highly dedicated employees.

Mr. Dake presented a slide comparing the number of buses available, both peak and spare, in June 2010 and December 2010. Mr. Dake reported that the agency no longer uses contingency mechanics. Buses that are not used as often can be alternated with buses that are in service more frequently. The agency is acquiring 35 new buses, and a 700 bus procurement is underway.

Council representative Baldwin inquired about the types of buses being acquired.

Mr. Dake responded that the current procurement does not include articulated buses, but rather 45-foot buses. He added that the 700 bus procurement will include 40-foot buses. Mr. Dake presented a chart showing mean miles between mechanical failures and bus cleanliness levels from September 2010 to February 2011. Bus cleanliness has shown an upward trend. He noted that quality assurance teams help rate bus cleanliness.

Mr. Hillmer clarified that when it rains, staff is unable to take the buses through the bus wash. During long periods of rain, staff is only able to clean the inside of the bus. The agency takes measures to avoid polluting the storm drains with the runoff. Anti-graffiti measures remain a constant battle. The agency spent \$3.5 million on plastic guards to help mitigate defacing of buses.

Mr. Dake reviewed ways in which the agency is moving forward in the area of bus maintenance. Road call specific training is offered at operating divisions. Staff is developing a programming methodology that eliminates the audible check engine alarm. The Road Call Reduction Committee has been established to analyze MTA's road calls and develop best practices. Field equipment technicians are providing ride-alongs for bus operations control supervisors. The bus cleanliness inspection program now occurs on a monthly rather than quarterly basis. The Vehicle Technology Department is placing pressure on manufacturers to develop product improvements. Staff has introduced another engine manufacture. Korean-produced Doosan engines have been introduced into the bus fleet.

9. **RECEIVED report on Nextrip.**

Al Martinez, Supervising Engineer, Operations, reported that the Nextrip system will provide real-time bus arrival information for all buses in the agency's fleet. Bus arrival information is available on the web and via mobile devices such as smart phones, cell phones (SMS text), and phone (511). The agency's ATMS fleet management system works in conjunction with Nextrip to provide real-time data for passengers.

Mr. Martinez provided an overview of how Nextrip works. He stated that the system automatically knows the location of a passenger whose phone is GPS-enabled. He indicated that smart phone users may access Nextrip information via [m.metro.net](http://m.metro.net). Cell phone users may text 'metro stop #' to 41411 and select a bus line to receive arrival information. Bus arrival information is available via the web at [metro.net/nextrip](http://metro.net/nextrip). The site is currently in beta and will be going live next week. Passengers may also call 511 for real-time bus information.

New standard and Braille signage regarding Nextrip will be placed at bus stops. It will take some time for the new signage to be placed at all stops.

Council representative Vasquez asked how the sighted community will be informed about the Braille signage.

Mr. Martinez responded that he will have Mr. Hillmer forward the Council this information. He added that Phase 1 of the program (Beta soft launch) occurred on March 5, 2011. Phase 2 (public go-live launch) will occur on April 21, 2011. Phase 3 (post-launch) will involve developing a signage plan, developing an integration plan for bus information, developing a new iPhone/iPad/Android App integrated with Nextrip, incorporating public suggestions where applicable, and developing a plan to integrate rail into Nextrip.

Mr. Martinez indicated that within one week after the soft launch of the program, the Nextrip page became one of the top 20 high traffic pages on [metro.net](http://metro.net).

Council representative Vasquez asked if other transit providers are using Nextrip.

Mr. Martinez responded that Glendale Beeline and VCTC (Ventura County Transportation Commission) are using the system. Other transit providers may be working on a variation of the system.

Mr. Hillmer stated that early customer feedback has been positive. It may be difficult to estimate when a bus is coming using a timetable. Nextrip has been extremely accurate at estimating arrival time. He noted that it may be difficult to obtain real-time information for the first bus leaving El Monte Station as the system does not know when the bus will leave the yard.

10. **RECEIVED Chair and Council Member Comments.**

Chair Gonzalez reported that CicLAvia was a successful event and congratulated staff members who took part in the event. He stated that he enjoyed observing the families participating in the event, particularly the kids riding bicycles with training wheels. Mr. Hillmer noted that bike ridership has increased and that there are many programs to enhance bike routes on streets.

Adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele Chau".

Michele Chau, Council Secretary