

Monday, February 13, 2012

5:00 P.M.

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## MINUTES

### **San Gabriel Valley Sector Service Council**

Regular Meeting

Metro San Gabriel Valley Service Council  
Council Chambers  
11333 Valley Boulevard  
El Monte, CA 91731

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Called to Order at 5:05 p.m.

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Council Members Present:

Rosie Vasquez, Chair  
Steven Ly, Vice-Chair  
Harry Baldwin  
Dave Spence

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Officers/Managers:

Jon Hillmer, Director, Regional Councils  
David Hershenson, Community Relations  
Manager  
Henry Gonzalez, Council Community  
Relations Manager  
Suzanne Handler, Council Secretary

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Called
3. **APPROVED Minutes of Meeting held December 12, 2011.**

Item 3 was addressed after Item 4 was completed.

**4. Public Comment -**

Mr. Wayne Wright addressed the Board regarding the line 190's Saturday service. He said his only comment was he had ridden it a couple of times on Saturday and has seen increased ridership for Saturday, but he could not speak for Sunday information. He asked the Board to recommend to staff that they consider increasing headway from hourly to 30-minute headway from El Monte east to Ladera Shopping Center.

Chair Vasquez thanked Mr. Wright for his input.

**5. RECEIVED UPDATE on status of El Monte Division, and Express Lanes Construction, Timothy Lindholm, Director of Capital Projects.**

Chair Vasquez introduced Timothy Lindholm, Director of Capital Projects, as the presenter on this agenda item.

Mr. Lindholm started off the presentation by saying he wanted to get everyone up to speed on the Express Lanes Transit facility project on the El Monte station, and he would guide everyone through the slides for ease.

Mr. Lindholm showed four different renderings of the future El Monte station which he described as a two-level bus structure with a Foothill Transit retail store and bike station. He explained with two levels, buses will be able to enter and exit using the El Monte busway one way or in the yard on the second level, and buses can circulate on a system of ramps on the north and south sides.

One of the renderings of the new El Monte station showed street-level view. Mr. Lindholm explained below in the concourse level is where the local service will be and then showed an interior picture of the Transit Store.

Mr. Lindholm gave some statistics on the project including the fact it is a \$60 million project funded by the Express Lanes project, which is not just providing funds for the 10 and 110. It is a substantial component on transit facilities.

Mr. Lindholm said the Transit Store will sell transponders and passes. It will have a bike station, and a speculative retail space is estimated at 2,000 to 3,000 square feet in one building. It will include LEED gold solar panels and KRPS. It has been under construction since 2010 and is expected to open in August 2012.

Mr. Lindholm then showed a slide of the old station as of September 2010. He explained the process of building the new station. The first step in September 2010 was to open a temporary terminal where passengers are going now. That temporary terminal was housed in one of the customer parking lots in El Monte station. The next step in November involved knocking down the station.

Mr. Lindholm's slide show presentation showed the process step-by-step in building the new facility. He noted the first major milestone was in January where the site used to be transversed by a 20-inch gas line through the entire San Gabriel Valley. He explained the line had to be relocated to get it out of the way before building a new facility. The Gas Company took care of that line. This was the final tie-in, so Metro could now start digging the new station.

The access road to the new station was the next step so Metro could run the buses into the terminal. Then the entire eight-acre site could be dug. The digging went down 20 square feet and involved 14,000 truckloads of dirt being hauled out. Debris including asbestos, bricks, and other contaminants were found in the dirt that was hauled out.

Mr. Baldwin asked where the contaminants and dirt went to. Mr. Lindholm explained the material was sent to different places. The non-hazardous waste went to Puente Hills landfill which is the closest place for these daily trash operations. Some of the debris had lead impact soils and that had to go to Arizona; some went to a place above Magic Mountain and Lynnwood where some of it is burned. A lot of junk was found including concrete. Metro learned it was a former private landfill that had accepted a lot of demolition debris. In addition, there was some material that could be recycled. That was a silver lining, where Metro was able to have some material recycled.

Mr. Baldwin said he had heard in the Alameda corridor East Terminal Island was talking about building a new island, and trash might go there. Mr. Lindholm responded Metro knew of that operation for debris, but it was too expensive to truck it there. The best solution was to stay as close as possible, as the trucking is very expensive.

Further, Mr. Lindholm showed more slides depicting the new facility site, noting it is a very large site, and fine grading is complete. The building of utilities and foundations had started in July. In August columns and walls were going up, and he presented a slide depicting that progress.

More slides showed continued progress. In September more walls were visible, and columns went up into the air. The January photos showed the decks. The last deck had been poured as of two weeks ago. With a ramp coming down to the yard, he noted, it is starting to look like a real station. He concluded the current up-to-date status report by saying Metro has another seven months until August, and he does not see anything in their way to opening up the station on time.

Mr. Lindholm then talked about the next project which is the Express Lanes at Patsaouras Plaza's busway station. This project is a \$17 million project funded by Express Lanes and a livability grant Metro received. Specifically he mentioned there is a long-standing El Monte busway that zips right past Patsaouras from El Monte to Union Station, and it drops passengers off at the corner of Union Station, which is not connected to the place Metro wants. So the plan is to widen the bridge and build a station ramp, and that way buses can stop and passengers can go into the plaza. Buses cannot go into the plaza because of a low overhang, so buses go right past. Currently Metro does not feel that is very world-class.

Mr. Lindholm said the preliminary work is done. Metro is putting together a final package for a design/build contract in April, will advertise in April, and open in September. The last slide showed how it passes Patsaouras Plaza right now and drops passengers off right at the outside of Union Station.

Mr. Lindholm said they were going to really market the Silver Line BRT, not traditional bus service. People leave El Monte, and all of the sudden they are at the curb. He showed photos explaining how Metro plans to make changes. There is a station ramp bridge, and the rendering of the final product was shown. Overall, he explained it is a pretty good project for connecting passengers to Union Station, and it makes a nice front door visible from the 101 with pretty good signage, so people know Union Station is right there.

Another project Mr. Lindholm is involved in is the 10 portion of the Express Lanes under construction. The second lane being added is closed right now as cars drive past it, but it is getting close to be completed. Sign foundations are under construction. Toll rates are going to be between a quarter a mile and \$1.40 a mile. It will depend. Lanes must flow 45 miles an hour, and that is maintained by adjusting the tolls. The tolls get higher if the lanes slow down and vice-versa. The lanes are switchable. If people are solo or two or three, they can switch. It is self-declare, and the CHP can monitor what people declare. Metro plans to sell passes in the summer of 2012 when the El Monte store will sell them.

Metro plans to distribute them early in El Monte because they will already have a temporary facility where people can get their Express Lane passes that opens winter 2013. It is all coming together.

Mr. Baldwin asked if passes can be purchased at other places as well as El Monte. Mr. Lindholm explained they are available at the terminuses in the middle, Union Station, and a store near Artesia Transit Center where the 110 is. Also, Metro is working on getting other places to sell them too, even via a CVS-type arrangement and also through the internet. There will be plenty of places.

## **6. RECEIVED Director's Report, Jon Hillmer, Director of Regional Councils**

### **Performance Report Service Quality Compliance Report**

Before giving his report, Mr. Jon Hillmer, Director of Regional Councils, presented a brief overview of the public presentation that Metro has been making to the community in the last few weeks about the Civil Rights Act Title VI and Environmental Justice Executive Order.

Specifically Mr. Hillmer explained Metro has been going out particularly to limited English-proficiency groups to reach out to them to get their comments on programs and inform them. Metro will be receiving a report for action to approve the standard for what constitutes a major service change and what percentages of impact would qualify for a disparate impact. The presentation has been made to many groups, albeit modified a little bit for each, and Metro plans to present it to more people in the coming months. The presentation discussed how Metro is more than just buses and trains. Metro also does construction, as Mr. Lindholm's presentation showed, as well as planning and funding of other transit property.

As part of the general overview, this Metro presentation also informs customers of other Metro facts. Metro services an area approximately the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined, and that translates into 36 million riders a month on Metro buses and trains. There are 185 bus lines and when the Expo Line opens, 6 rail lines.

Mr. Hillmer's presentation reviewed statistics of who Metro customers are. This information was obtained through an annual survey which determines ridership based on signed declarations. Of Metro customers, 89.6 percent describe themselves as members of a minority group, which is a fairly large percentage, but he noted L.A. County is a minority county as 72 percent of residents in L.A. County are minority: 48 percent Hispanic, 27 percent White, 13 percent Asian, 9 percent Black, 1 percent Native American.

Mr. Hillmer explained Metro makes basic bus service changes twice a year, and services are evaluated in a variety of ways. For determining what is a major service change, Metro is proposing a definition of “major” as a 25 percent change in the number of bus miles or bus hours that would change on a given bus line. This has been updated, because Metro has added a 25 percent change in the miles from length of bus ride from Point A to B so that more than 25 percent constitutes a major service change. This can be a service change over a period of years. Although it is proposed for two years, public comment has indicated a consecutive 36-month floating average is preferred, so if there is a series of minor changes that add up to more than 25 percent change for those criteria, that constitutes a major service change. These would be the lines Metro would have to take to a public hearing. The presentation given to the public includes examples of what it means to be a 25 percent change. If it is less than 25 percent in, for example, taking out enough service or shortening a line, that is not a major service change.

There are two tracks on this. The Civil Rights Title VI is the first. That is based on the 1964 Civil Rights Act where you have a major service change. If a bus line is major, you have to determine if it is a protected route under Title VI. Any bus line that has more than the system average of minorities would be protected, and currently the percentage is 89.7 is minority, so one above would be a protected route. If it is determined to be such, Metro moves onto evaluation and to the Board of Directors.

For the Environmental Justice Executive Order, which is a presidential executive order, if the threshold meets the 50 percent minority rule, it is considered a protected route. This also includes low income as a threshold point. If 35 percent of our riders are low income, then that line also is protected. It goes on to a similar evaluation and to the Board.

For Title VI a protected route is identified as 89.6 percent minority. Then it goes into the analysis looking for what is called “disparate impact.” If an individual protected line compared to the nonprotected bus route as a total has been changed during this period of time and the change is over 20 percent worse than the non-protected in customer travel time, walking distance of cost, then it is considered a disparate impact.

Metro goes through this process. If any of those measuring sticks are triggered, it is disparate impact, and it goes to the Board. The Board, of course, can enact them or approve the changes, or decide not to.

While Metro holds the public hearings, if there is a protected route that has disparate impact and it is approved by the Service Council, Metro will write a report to the Board of Directors to receive and file, and it will say services were approved, which routes were protected, and disparate impact. In addition, Mr. Hillmer will outline the analysis that the Service Council went through.

A disparate impact determination could be made from many things. For example, if there is a bus line on a protected route that has a \$9.50 fare, and Metro determines based on the system average and policies that is excessive, that line may be canceled.

Mr. Hillmer explained that Mr. Carl Torres, who is a supervisor and manager, will be preparing a report on the disparate impacts that will go to the Board for further action. Mr. Hillmer will be providing the background for what the Service Councils do and their thought process.

Mr. Hillmer noted the bulk of Metro lines are at least 50 percent minority ridership which is a trigger for the Environmental Justice Executive Order track, so they would be considered protected. Also, if 35 percent of riders are considered to be in low income, that would be a protected route. Metro puts these lines through the same evaluation process regarding the system difference between the protected and non-protected, and that will go to the Board for action regarding disparate impacts.

Further, Mr. Hillmer explained Metro can offer mitigating impacts, such as if Metro had a limited-stop bus line but increased the frequency of a local, that is a mitigation cancellation of that line. That can be offered Metro asks the public for their thoughts and asks them to fill out a survey. This will be changed once the Board takes definitive action, and it becomes an information item. The information then goes to many communities. He noted Metro has been communicating with customers about the Title VI/Environmental Justice presentation programs, and Board Members also received this information.

Moving into Performance Review, Mr. Hillmer then reviewed the performance regarding the San Gabriel Valley for December, as that is the latest information he had, although he did have some January updates. He showed slides of graphs showing Metro trends for December. Specifically, he noted on-time performance goal was 83%, 84% for March, and 85% by the end of 2012. The system went down a little bit, but San Gabriel went down significantly. This is a major drop in on-time performance as reported for San Gabriel Valley. Part of the drop, he said, was due to the fact that December includes a lot of shopping and because several bus routes go by shopping centers, particularly the 781 and 80 Rapids from Pasadena to Hollywood right by the Glendale Galleria could not get through very often. They were hit hard with on-time performance. He was confident the statistic would bounce back for January.

In addition, he noted Metro has up's and down's. The December boarding is on a trajectory as well, so there is a continual trajectory for improved on-time performance.

The customer service complaints category all went down to 3.85 for San Gabriel and 3.07 for the system. He noted this is still pretty high, and it had a big bump up. His plan of action was to meet with John Roberts, Executive Director for Transportation, who is responsible for all bus operators and talk to him about the programs for reducing customer complaints.

In “The Miles Between Road Call” category, the system bounced up to exceed 4,000 miles per road call. This was the first time the Metro system exceeded this level. San Gabriel went down just a tad, but it is still significantly over the goal. The system is slightly below, but San Gabriel is doing pretty well. The trajectory is up.

Under the category of bus cleanliness for January, Metro did well. The numbers on the slide were for December, and they showed trajectory is up for San Gabriel at 8.52 and well above target. The system was at 8.32 for December, and for January the system is slightly below 8.5. San Gabriel is up 8.54 and is moving in the right direction.

In terms of accidents for 100,000 miles, San Gabriel and the system bounced to 4.3, but the trend is slightly down. The plan of action is Mr. Hillmer will speak to Mr. Roberts about this topic because Metro has been emphasizing the accident reduction goal. The policy is every accident, no matter how small or who is at fault, goes to an accident review board at the division. A manager and a supervisor and a line instructor, who is an operator and operator instructor, review each accident, and this gives them the opportunity to emphasize safety to the operator. This also leads to a higher level discipline when necessary.

Ridership information for December showed it was down that month which is attributed mainly to the holidays and schools being out of session for a couple of weeks. Nonetheless, the system is below target, while San Gabriel was slightly above its target. For the recent three-year period, the system is slightly down while the San Gabriel Valley is steady. He noted while the system is losing some riders, Metro is staying steady particularly due in part to the Silver Line.

Daily ridership slipped down in December, but that is a pattern every December when Metro loses some riders, but they tend to come back. As for January, ridership shows a 2.5 percent increase already for the Silver Line, as the latest numbers just came out earlier in the day. He noted the trend is upward despite December being down. For January, ridership was back up over 10,000 at 10,602.

Gold Line ridership showed a very nice increase for weekend and weekdays and is moving forward very quickly. In fact, for January it is up to almost 2,000 boardings which is getting very close to the record. Ridership is moving back up for rail and bus.

Mr. Hillmer showed a slide depicting by region the percent of trips that are above loading standards with more than 30 percent of passengers standing. Westside and South Bay have the most crowded conditions, but they are down at about 3 percent. He said 30 percent for standees may be too low, but with reduction of ridership in December, when that comes back, since Metro does not adjust the service level for December, the crowding will go up again. Staff will look at that. Mr. Hillmer explained the reason the standee statistic has moved up is because Metro moved the loading standard from 1.2 to 1.3 a year ago which explains the upswing on the chart.

Mr. Hillmer noted the bus station cleanliness topic was an important topic because it is part of an upcoming Board report he will be making later in the week. Based on a Board motion to monitor Metro bus service quality including a survey on cleanliness of the bus stations by staff and volunteers, Metro has evaluated 20 stations. Of the top five, four are maintained by other agencies. Of the low scoring stations, it was surprising to see the Aviation and LAX City bus stations.

Mr. Hillmer said one benefit of the survey is that Metro is paying much more attention. Both the Aviation Green Line and LAX City bus stations have significant repairs and maintenance being done, so their scores are higher than they were. The scores represent a two-month average. January is significantly higher than it was in December.

In the category of ADA complaints, Metro receives complaints about pass-ups and fare disputes. The number of complaints has come down a bit to 47, but the trend is slightly up, and that must be worked on.

Based upon Mystery Riders, the undercover contractors Metro uses, the average is less than 1 percent of the time they have observed a wheelchair passenger being passed up. However, that is still too high, and is working on getting that down to zero.

Mr. Hillmer noted Metro is doing much better in the category of operator employing a lift or ramp for people not in a wheelchair who request it. That score was 100 percent.

Mr. Hillmer reviewed customer survey information and noted the annual survey has been changed to quarterly. Specifically, the questions here in terms of satisfaction scored 83 percent, which is slightly below previously when it was at 86. He explained this was a smaller survey, and the big survey will be done in April. He will report on that in May, hopefully.

On-time performance rated 76% which is remarkably close to the December performance. For safety on the bus 88 percent said they felt safe; while 82 percent reported feeling safe on the street. That disparity is much lower than what Mr. Hillmer expected.

At the South Bay meeting, it was requested to do some cross tabulations to review the perception of safety on and off the bus relative to region, gender, and income to see if there is a different perception of safety. As for bus cleanliness, 82 percent said they agreed it was clean, and 74 percent said the bus stop was clean, and that was expected. As for pass-ups, 28 percent said they were passed up, and 13 percent reported broken down buses. These two categories need to improve greatly.

Passenger information revealed some rider information. 81 percent of riders walked to the bus stop. It took them 11.7 minutes on average, while wait time was 11.6. However, he reminded the Board that when people are waiting for something, time seems to go on forever, so people typically overestimate that. Of respondents, 77 percent have cell phones, and almost 40 percent of riders have smart phones.

As for how people pay the fare, Mr. Hillmer was surprised that 8 percent used tokens. He thought that was a high number. Income statistics showed half of Metro transit users have household income of below \$15,000 which is very, very low. However, it was slightly above the last time that question was asked when the average was \$13,000.

Under the category of "Ethnicity," 91 percent of the passengers were minority. Of the surveys that were filled out, 35 percent were filled out in Spanish and 65 percent filled out in English. And a card was provided with 11 languages instructing people to fill out the survey on the internet. Seven people did that. He noted that 16 bus lines counted twice because they go through two regions.

Mr. Hillmer said the last slide was of the Expo Line which is in the process of being built. He hoped it would be open in March but noted that is an optimistic estimate, but he has been told if it is March, it will be late March.

Mr. Hillmer then invited the Service Council Members to take a trip with him on the Expo Line. He offered two or three different occasions to give everyone an opportunity to see it.

## **7. Chair and Council Member Comments:**

Mr. Ly had two comments. The first was in regards to the Silver Line. He said he took the Silver Line to downtown, and on the way back he noticed because of the "Occupy L.A." situation, the stop for the ride by City Hall had been cordoned off, and benches were not in the condition they were prior to Occupy LA. He asked if Metro is working with the City to get access back. Mr. Hillmer said fixing that bus stop is part of the rehab the City is doing, and it is moving relatively quickly, he hoped, on the benches, because they were being occupied and abused. Hopefully, Metro will get them back sooner than when the City Hall lawn is back up.

Mr. Ly's second comment was he and a couple of friends in Pasadena took the Gold Line this week, and there were a lot of people using it. It looked to be very packed and busy. He hoped that was a good sign for Metro to see many people using the Gold Line.

Mr. Hillmer added ridership continues to go up. He noted the line was a winner.

Adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

PREPARED BY:  
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