

**Santa Clarita Transit
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
November 1, 2012**

Meeting location: City of Santa Clarita, City Hall, Century Room

Members Present: John Taylor, Kurt Baldwin, Keith Curry, Clark Bridgewater

Others Present: Adrian Aguilar, Arnetha Pierce, Denise Ware, John Panico, Alfredo Torales, Jenni Martin

Meeting called to order

Approval of Minutes: Kurt motioned to approve. Motion was carried.

General Public Comments:

Arnetha wanted to express her feelings regarding a driver never available when she calls to be picked up early and still sees buses sitting in the parking lot as she waits. Denise restated the DAR early pick up policy: dispatch would be called and the passenger must be at least 30 minutes early to be considered. Denise said that she would look into the reason why no one has been available for an early pickup for Ms. Pierce. Denise stated that 60% of the time drivers are available especially on the weekend.

Member comments:

Clark mentioned that the scheduling program has not been working since October 4, 2012, information is up but the screen is frozen. This is also happening at the Senior Center.

Clark also mentioned the recent change in schedules and drivers causing passenger confusion. Since the screen has not been working, Clark has been asking the drivers where passengers should go.

Clark requested to have all passengers arrive at the Adult Day Care Center by 9:15 a.m. at the latest. Adult Day Care program starts at 8 a.m. Denise will review subscription trips to make sure all passengers arrive on time or by 9 a.m. Regarding departures, Clark has spoken to Susie and would like to have passengers picked up by 2 p.m. Adrian committed to make adjustments to get all passengers to the center on time.

Clark spoke about a passenger, Mr. Lopez who was “no showed” during his a.m. pick up and figured that he would be cancelled for the afternoon pick up. Adrian stated that the policy stated if anyone was cancelled for the morning pick up they would automatically be cancelled for the afternoon pick up. Fortunately, the driver was able to take Mr. Lopez in the afternoon. Adrian asked for Clark’s assistance in the future, if a passenger shows up to the center who was originally “no showed” in the morning to please notify Denise and/or Susie to ensure that the passenger is picked up in the afternoon.

Kurt talked about the Paratransit Rider's Coalition meeting. They are trying to include more people from neighboring areas, therefore will be transporting the meeting via satellite. They currently are transporting to Long Beach, Downtown L.A., Lancaster and Van Nuys areas but would like to include areas such as the Santa Clarita Senior Center, Claremont, Ontario, and Culver City. Kurt stated that he would email the information needed to join in on the satellite viewing of the meeting.

Kurt stated that the rate increase for Access services was approved and tabled the reduction of reservation hours.

Kurt had a question regarding trips to Senior Center using routes 4/14. Adrian informed that routes 4 and 14 only service the Senior Center during their normal operating hours, the printed schedule shows the times these routes service the Senior Center.

John mentioned that seniors are confused with the information the TAP machine is giving them and the amounts they think they have on their cards. Adrian explained how the rides are grouped and only the current group of tickets is visible. Adrian stated that the reason for such grouping was due to expiration dates which are now eliminated. The City and TAP services are working together to eliminate groups and just show the number of total trips for each citizen. Adrian feels there needs to be better communication between the citizens and the staff selling the tickets since this program is unique to Santa Clarita and the senior center.

Adrian mentioned that this TAP issue is not a common occurrence and specific to a card or a bus. Adrian said that it would be helpful to get a bus number or TAP card number if this should happen again. The more information the City gets the better they could address this issue.

New Business:

A new schedule for 2013 was distributed to all present, the Century room was reserved for all dates. Everyone was in accordance with the 2013 schedule with the first meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 3, 2013.

John Panico and Arnetha Pierce were presented as candidates expressing interest in joining the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Adrian is waiting for a final response from Darren Hernandez, Deputy City Manager for the City of Santa Clarita and his appointment of the candidates.

Old Business:

Santa Clarita Transit

Adrian updated everyone on the Transit Development Plan (TDP). The last few months the City has held community meetings regarding feedback on surveys and presented recommendations and ideas coming from riders, the general public, stake holders, non-profit groups and interested groups in the community for future Transit goals and needs. These meetings were held to gauge the priorities mentioned by all the above groups. The next scheduled meetings will be held on November 14 at the Newhall Library and on

November 15 at the Activity Center. These meetings are being held to distill ideas from all the recommendations received and to receive feedback from the community. A complete draft of the TDP is expected by the end of December 2012. A final plan will then be presented to the City Council for their final approval.

Adrian informed all about the McBean Park and Ride which is also being considered in the TDP. He mentioned that bidding is now closed for this project with the lowest bid coming in at 3.6 million. This will now be going to City Council for their final approval.

A citizen asked if the new McBean Park and Ride would be considered as a transfer point for Access passengers versus using Olive View. Adrian replied a suggestion could be made but Access would make the decision to make any changes to Access services.

Adrian talked about a long term project in the works within the City and the Transit department. This project would be located in the Vista Canyon area, east of the 14 freeway, south of Sand Canyon and north of Fair Oaks Ranch. This project would include mixed use, commercial, light industrial, retail, and multi and single family homes. The plan includes a bus terminal in the center which would also connect to the Metrolink and relocating the Via Princessa Metrolink to this area. This project would allow the City to work closely with Metrolink to make track improvements to make commuting times into Los Angeles even quicker. The Via Princessa Metrolink would ultimately be turned into a park. Adrian mentioned this as a long term plan which may take 10 years to complete.

Adrian stated that attendances at the past TDP meetings have been well attended. He also mentioned that technology options have been readily available for patrons which were not able to attend some of the meetings.

Adrian gave performance updates relating to call volumes. In September, there were approximately 18,400 calls and 18,500 in October versus 20,000 calls received last year. Adrian stated that the use of technology has helped decrease calls for patrons asking "Where is my bus." Access and DAR calls in October reached up to 5,500 for DAR and 2,700 for Access. He mentioned that the overall number of calls has decreased.

A citizen asked if ridership was going up. Adrian stated there has been a 3-5% increase every month and a trend with more seniors and disabled persons using the fixed route service. It is not as high as it was last year with 150% increase but it is still going up each month. Adrian recognized the free ride program as a reason for the number of seniors and disabled persons riding the local routes.

A question was asked about the Ambassador program. John Panico chimed in and stated that there has been an increase in interest with seniors due to the Ambassador program and has been encouraging seniors to venture by taking route 757 to the North Hollywood station and transferring onto the Metro Red and Orange lines. Adrian mentioned that in August additional mid-day service was added to route 757 to make it more convenient for passengers to ride.

Adrian stated that route 757 has made a significant impact on the on time performance (OTP) due to traffic traveling to and from the North Hollywood area. The schedules will be adjusted to help with OTP in January 2013 to allow enough time for trips to be completed during heavy traffic times.

The OTP is measured at the beginning of each route, at certain time points and then averaging the two. In October the local routes measured at 91.2% at the beginning of the routes, 80% at time points with an average of 85%. The commuter routes measured 89% at the beginning of the routes, 74% at time points with an average of 82%. Adrian mentioned the drop at time points for commuter routes was due to the North Hollywood route. System wide OTP for October which includes all buses local, commuters and school trippers was as follows: 90.7% at the beginning of the routes, 79% at time points with an average of 82%. Adrian stated this was an improvement from September.

Adrian updated everyone regarding the 10 local buses currently on order which will be replacing the existing diesel buses. 1 bus will be going into production on March 13 and the remaining 9 will be following in April and on site by mid-June. The buses will be equipped with new fare boxes, camera system, AVL system, and interior monitors.

The interior monitors, Adrian mentioned, are the last phase of the technology project for Transit. They are currently being tested on one local and one commuter bus. All local and commuter routes will not only have audio announcements but will also include visual displays of the route passengers are on and will display where the next stop will be. The system should be up and running on all buses by early December.

Adrian also mentioned 6 commuter buses which are currently on order and waiting on a production date. These buses will be replacing older vehicles.

A citizen asked if the interior monitors would be installed onto the DAR vehicles. Adrian stated that since DAR is not a fixed route and drop offs were determined by the driver, this system would not be installed in DAR vehicles.

A citizen asked about the vehicles purchased from Antelope Valley Transit. Adrian informed that 3 buses needed painting but were available as backup in the meantime. These buses are considered as added fleet and will not be considered replacements. Adrian stated the reason for their delay was the wait of fare boxes from the manufacturer.

Access Services

Alfredo informed all of the recent board meeting results regarding the fare increase. The board did approve a fare increase of \$.25 for the L.A. basin area starting January 1. This increase will not affect the current fare or transfers for citizens in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley regions. A special member agency meeting was scheduled for November 19 to ratify the proposed change.

Alfredo mentioned that the board did not approve the change or reduction of reservation hours which would have affected the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley region.

A member asked about the current Access ridership, Alfredo informed that Access saw an increase of 3% in the Santa Clarita region with a 9% increase over all areas.

A small discussion was made regarding various propositions on the ballot in the upcoming election and how this may affect Paratransit.

MV Transportation

Denise informed all about the 32 new Rangers on the DAR vehicles. These Rangers have a touch screen with an internal GPS map. The only issue found when first using the Rangers was the discrepancy of the time stamped, this was due to programming. MV has been working on this issue. AVTA vans also should have a Ranger installed very soon.

Denise mentioned that the Trips to Work program will be eliminated. The On Time Performance for October was 90.49%. This was an increase from September

Denise stated that “no shows” are becoming a larger issue on DAR. The Rangers will help with this issue as the Rangers will trigger and start time when a driver pulls up to pick up citizens. Adrian also mentioned that they have not been very good about enforcing the “no show” policy and advising riders of the impact on the system. Adrian stated that letters going out to riders should help with this issue.

Alfredo mentioned the Access policy regarding “no shows” if a passenger “no shows” for 6 days in a 60 day period a passenger may be suspended. Adrian stated that the policy was the same for DAR with differing privileges removed according to the number of suspensions.

A discussion was made about Access passengers riding on a DAR vehicle. Adrian stated the reason for using such vehicles was due to scheduling and availability of vehicles.

A member asked about the Agua Dulce Express which goes to the senior center on Wednesday. Adrian stated that this bus was run by the County of Los Angeles and catered to residents of Acton and Agua Dulce.

A member voiced his concern regarding the Agua Dulce Express offering a fixed route and if they are following ADA guidelines.

A discussion was made regarding citizens breaking the “no show” policy and being suspended. Alfredo stated that their agency is lenient if a patron should call into their office and ask for the ‘no show’ to be removed. Access usually sided with the patron.

Denise introduced Jenni, MV's Customer Service Manager; she will be responding to all concerns coming into the City. She will investigate all concerns and suggestions and speak to the drivers when necessary. Jenni comes with 5+ years of transit experience.

A member voiced his concern regarding Transit office employees knowing the routes and having the experience of actually riding on the bus to be able to perform and answer questions diligently and consider the passenger's needs. Adrian reassured that all employees have been on ride alongs to help with their knowledge of transit routes.

A member commended the drivers on both the local and commuter routes as being courteous and helpful when giving out routing information.

Several members asked about the upcoming installation of bus shelters and how is the need for specific areas determined. Adrian stated that the City does have a list of locations which have been identified within the last 18 months needing improvements or amenities. Transit will be going to council in December to ask for adjustment to their budget to include approximately \$1 million in spending on improvements. These improvements include curbs, curb cuts, benches and shelters at bus stops, and pads for bus stops. Each stop will be looked at individually based on ridership at a specific stop, the calls or suggestions received for specific locations, and the estimated cost for each improvement. These factors will be taken into consideration to determine which sites will be improved.

A motion was made to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.