

City of **SANTA CLARITA**  **TRANSIT**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2016

Meeting location: Transit Maintenance Facility

Time: 9:00AM

Members Present: Keith Curry, Chair; John Panico, Vice Chair; John Taylor, Santa Clarita Senior Center; Lillian Shaw, Member; Kurt Baldwin, Independent Living Center of Southern California

General Public & Agency Representatives: Adrian Aguilar, SCT, Transit Manager; Elmer Contreras, MV Transportation; Jessica Thompson, Access Services; Billie Jean Curry;

Meeting called to order

March Minutes were approved as corrected

Motion was carried

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Billie J. Curry - no comment

MEMBERS COMMENTS

Keith Curry - no comment

Kurt Baldwin – no comment

John Taylor - no comment

John Panico - no comment

Lillian Shaw

- Dispatchers, and call takers are fantastic. Took them cookies and met some of them to put names to faces.
- Access, bus stalled out and it turned out that the vehicle was out of gas, the driver had to wait for another bus at the bottom of the hill, and it was a rather warm day. Shouldn't they be ensuring that they have a full tank before they leave? The operator was complaining that the last person that used the bus didn't fill up the gas tank. Also, the air conditionings on some of the buses are not working so well.

Adrian Aguilar

- We have two new Access vehicles and four DAR vehicles currently on order. We expect to take delivery of them in July or August. We also have plans to place an order for another four, hopefully by the end of June. We anticipate their arrival in October or November.

Kurt Baldwin, Independent Living Center of Southern California

- We are trying to improve accessibility of our communities. Sometimes we get involved in law suits. We were involved in a law suit with the City of Los Angeles regarding accessible housing.

Para-Transit Riders Coalition

- We are starting to move away from direct political pressure on Access Services. We feel good about some of the changes made that the FTA was requiring; as far as the no show policies and the implementation of reasonable modification of the policies process.
- We are concerned that they took all the responsibilities away from the drivers (the ones that anticipate what those reasonable accommodation needs were) on the road. Not working quite the way that the federal government intended it to go, we are waiting to see how things go. Access does not like to be flexible with the rules. Sometimes that prevents people from getting where they need to get to go and do what they need to do. We are concentrating on trying to develop relationships with individual providers; we will eventually get to Santa Clarita.
- We started out with Global; we had them come to our meeting last month. We are using Google hang outs to connect throughout the County. We were plagued with some technical difficulties, so we only had about 40 mins. of actual dialogue with Global.
- What we are trying to focus in on is the problem with the rider being able to get the information to the dispatcher, that's where the big problem's come up. The rider gives the information to the reservationist, and then by the time it gets to the driver, that information gets lost. There's a lot of confusion about people's individual needs for space on the vehicle. Because some people have wheelchairs that are long, some people have wheel chairs that are wide. Some people want to transfer off their scooter on to a regular seat, but that information doesn't get to the driver, so now they have three people being picked up and only two fit. So were working with providers to try to figure out how do we make sure that the rider is giving the correct information to the reservationist and how to make sure that the dispatcher is actually able to use that information and schedule it correctly in the computer.
- There is a little field in most people's software to put individual's comments, but somehow that doesn't get through in the dispatch process, the driver isn't getting that information. There is a combination of issues that we are talking about. So we're thinking that would improve more efficiency for the providers, they can make more money, and so that they can have a better experience on the trip. We're just at the beginning of developing these relationships and figuring out how we can work together.

Adrian Aguilar

- Our system allows us to make notes of any mobility device that our customers are using, in our case, and in the case of Trapeze, we're able to distinguish between a standard wheelchair, and an oversized wheelchair. Our settings are set up so that if it's an oversized wheel chair, it knows that it can only accomidate one as opposed to try to squeeze two oversized chairs into a vehicle. Those are things that the system looks at. It also has the option to insert notes. Those aren't notes that necessarily pop up to the driver, but they are notes that dispatch can see. But it isn't something that automatically pops up, you have to go in and look at it.

OLD BUSINESS

Keith Curry, Chair

Complaints from the riders at the Senior Center

Several of the seniors were making comments about being picked up by some of the drivers. They are picking them up late and are insensitive to the riders.

Adrian Aguilar

- Drivers are still participating in sensitivity training, during bi-monthly safety meetings. Every other month there is some element of sensitivity training that the drivers participate in. The next one is scheduled for the end of this month. These meetings are mandatory for all drivers.
- Without dates and times, it is hard to say why the driver was late. The best thing to do when something like that happens is to call us and file a concern. At least try to get a date and time so we can look up drivers name and drive history. With a date and time we can usually figure out who the driver was.
- Since all of our vehicles are equipped with cameras and microphones, we usually can start the investigation process by downloading the audio and video. This allows us to sit down with a driver and use it as a training tool. It gives us an opportunity to look at it and address any issues we may see.

Open positions on the committee

- Three open positions
- Ella Clark is the only applicant so far for pending new members.
- Vicky Sokolik expressed interest, she was encouraged to submit a letter to express interest and she has not done so yet.

Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit

Hart School District

The challenge they have is that our meetings are in the middle of the school day and during the summer months they are not in school. I try to maintain communication with them even though they might not be able to send a representative to our meetings. I keep them on the list and I keep them informed. They still receive our agenda, they still receive the minutes, and we also have a strong working relationship in terms of their transportation department, so we work closely with them in terms of issues that may come up on our local buses, issues they may have with transportation, students, special programs, etc.

NEW BUSINESS

Office Nominations

- Elections are next month; the chairman needs to be elected.
- Nominated were Keith as chair and John Panico as Vice Chair

AGENCY UPDATES

Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit

Fair Oaks Bus Service

We still don't have a start date. Originally we had hoped to tie it into the completion of the bridge over Golden Valley. We submitted a request for additional funding for this upcoming fiscal year to expand the service into that area. Unfortunately, it was denied. We are in the process of looking for additional funding that we can go after to start the service. It's a matter of the funding and how were going to pay for it. It's still on our plate in terms of our overall plan for service. This service would require an expansion of our transit fleet, so we would need an additional 3 buses in order to operate the service. We're in the process of getting the funding lined up so that we can purchase those buses as well. What we're doing now is were taking a slightly different approach to get buses in place now so that when we do have the funding for the operation we can start it almost immediately as opposed to having to wait again.

Money Funding Theme

For the last five months, the City has been working on next year's budget, which includes Transit. Overall City staff are submitting the largest budget that we've submitted for approval in the history of the City. The proposed budget is \$219 million dollars, which exceeds last year's budget which was approx. \$185 million dollars.

- Included in this year's budget is for capital projects and capital improvement projects.
- We're asking for an increase in the Sheriff's contract; programs and projects that are dealing with public safety.
- We're asking for additional money for Code Enforcement, Community Preservation, and also training for our public safety groups which include Police, Fire, and Code Enforcement.

- All together that's about a \$2 million dollar request this year.
- We're also asking for about another million and a half in terms of community related projects; things such as new lap tops at the libraries; the funding of a position in terms of parks for program specialists; pre-school program that is operated through the City, we're asking for an \$80,000 increase in the base budget.
- We're asking for additional money for the day camps and the Community Center. Also an increase in the base budget for the arts grants, which all together comes about \$150,000.

On the Transit Side

- Transit has requested approx. \$8 million dollars in the coming year, a majority of that money will go to replacing vehicles in our fleet. Approximately, \$7.7 million dollars - if approved, will be set aside to replace five commuters, five local, and five DAR vehicles in the next fiscal year.
- We're also making some improvements in terms of our infrastructure hardware. The technology equipment has reached its end of useful life, so we've asked for funding to replace that which is about \$80,000.

Operating Contract & Operating Procedures

We've also asked for funding for a consultant to help us prepare for issuing a RFP for our Transit Operation. Our contract with MV expires in August 2018, so we will be going out to bid before that. The plan is to hire a consultant to review our existing operating contract to review our existing structure and make recommendations in terms of how this contract and RFP should be structured in the future based on our current operating environment, based on our funding, based on a number of different things. If approved we'll be moving forward with that in the next year.

Transit Related Projects

- We'll be requesting some funding for the sidewalks and bus stop improvements, a program that we are continuing to fund.
- We'll be working with our streets and our traffic folks in terms of circulation improvement and our non-motorized plan. Looking at ways that we can encourage people to leave their cars at home and using alternative modes of transportation to get around whether it be bus, walking, biking, etc.

Bus Stop Shelter Improvement

Ongoing project: We've updated a number of our current shelters. We are looking at locations that might not have enough sidewalk access. Trying to correct areas where we have 10 feet of sidewalk and then we have an island and there's no way around. A lot of the focus will be the Industrial Center where we have limited sidewalks.

Operating

March: Average on time performance: 87.6%. We measure our on time performance in two ways; we measure it at the beginning of the route.

- In March we were at 89.5% on time
- We also measure time points, if you look at our schedule, you'll see that there is 4 or 5 time points that we list in a route that will allow riders to see when the bus is going to be there. But we also use them to measure the performance of a route throughout the segment. At our time points, that dropped a little bit to 85.9% to give us an average of 87.6%

April: We were about the same. Our on time performance at the start was at 89.3%. Time points it was 86.3%, so our average was at 87.8%

Year to date

- We're at an average on time performance of 88.7% with an on-time rate at 90.6% - at the start, and then 86.9% at our various time points.
- Overall we're doing pretty well in terms of our fixed route. This is system wide, this includes our local fixed route, but it also includes our commuter service as well.
- We're continuing to see some areas where we need to make some adjustments to the route schedules this coming July. It is nothing major that will have a significant impact on our ridership. These changes will mainly be on the operations side. There are some routes where we know we will need a little more time built into the schedule. So were making those adjustments.
- We're also making adjustments to some of the routes so that we have better connections between routes, such as service to North Hollywood and making connections to our local routes, we have a few trips where they're missing each other by a min. or two so we're making adjustments to account for that. Also adjustments to tie into Metrolink, to the changes that they made recently.

Central Park Concerts in the Park

Ben Gonzales who over sees the operations has been working with Arts and Evets folks to identify a designated pick-up and drop of location. We'll be providing service to the concerts. And then we'll be designating a pick-up and drop of area, and it will be our normal fixed route service (4/14) on Bouquet, but we'll also have our and DAR service with a drop off inside the park. You will need reservations to use DAR service.

Summer Beach Bus 2016

- The 2016 Summer Beach Bus will travel to Santa Monica on Saturdays and Sundays from June 4 through September 4. Summer Beach Bus fares are \$3 each way for children and adults, and \$1.50 each way for Senior Citizens and persons with disabilities.

- Ride to the beach with ease on one of the City’s comfortable, air-conditioned commuter express buses. Travelers can bring their beach chairs, coolers and surfboards.

Route 1

Arrives at Santa Monica Pier – 10:10 a.m.
 Departs from Santa Monica Pier -4:30 p.m.

Departure Locations:

- **Canyon Country Park**
 Depart at 8:40 a.m.; Return at 5:45 p.m.
- **Soledad Canyon Road & Solamint Drive**
 Depart at 8:45 a.m.; Return at 5:55 p.m.
- **Soledad Canyon Road & Shangri-La Drive**
 Depart at 8:50 a.m.; Return at 6:00 p.m.
- **Via Princessa Metrolink Station**
 Depart at 8:55 a.m.; Return at 6:05 p.m.

Route 2

Arrives at Santa Monica Pier – 10:08 a.m.
 Departs from Santa Monica Pier -4:30 p.m.

Departure Locations:

- **McBean Regional Transit Center**
 Depart at 8:40 a.m.; Return at 6:06 p.m.
- **Railroad Avenue & 15th Street**
 Depart at 8:50 a.m.; Return at 5:56 p.m.
- **Newhall Metrolink Station**
 Depart at 8:55 a.m.; Return at 5:54 p.m.
- **Newhall Avenue & Valle Del Oro**
 Depart at 8:57 a.m.; Return at 5:52 p.m.
- **Newhall Avenue & Sierra Highway**
 Depart at 8:58 a.m.; Return at 5:45 p.m.

Vista Canyon Project

- We are moving ahead with the Vista Canyon Project. We are in the process of working with the developer of Vista Canyon Ranch to construct a new bus terminal there, as part of the project. We are also working to construct a new Metrolink station and a park and ride.
- The bus terminal is currently in the design phase. We expect to see the preliminary designs in the next week or so. Depending on how that goes and any feedback that we have for the architect, our hope is that we will be able to go out to bid for the actual construction sometime this summer. We’re on schedule with that and if everything works out, we’ll be issuing an RFP this summer, and we can move ahead with the construction.
- The grading has already been completed, not only for the bus transfer station, but at least the access in and out of that area. The developer has already started construction in terms of the infrastructure, sewer lines, and utilities.
- They are hoping to break ground on the water treatment plant in the next 6-8 weeks. It is one of the first things that must be complete and in operation before they finish their first commercial or residential development.
- If everything works out, we can move ahead. Grading has been completed, access in and out of the area. Construction, water treatment plant.
- Lost Canyon Road will connect to Sand Canyon Road.

- There will also be access off of Lost Canyon through Fair Oaks. There will be access off of Soledad (where the dentist is & the giant tooth sign). There will be access off of Sand Canyon. That entire infrastructure is part of the development. The first access to go in will be off of Lost Canyon and off of Soledad. The access off of Sand Canyon will be developed as phase three is developed for the project.

Golden Valley Bridge

- They are getting closer, they are now in the clean-up phase of it, and they are starting to remove portions of the older bridge. We have an update next week; I should have more information by then. From everything I hear, they are on schedule and things are moving along.

Vista Canyon Metrolink

- The initial plan was to replace Via Princessa and we are still working under that assumption. We have received a request from a councilmember to keep the Via Princessa station, as well as construct a new station. We are currently looking at the feasibility of that. Metrolink operations people are not very happy about that idea because of the proximity to the new station. One of the challenges of the Via Princessa station is that it's constructed right on a curb, so the idea behind relocating it out to Vista Canyon is that we're able to eliminate that blind curb into the station and then potentially increase the travel speed of the train. The plan is to decommission Via Princessa, but there's a chance that it could stay.
- Some of the challenges that we are facing at the Via Princessa station is that we are at capacity; there is not a lot of space to expand the parking area there. There's not a lot of space to expand the platform. Metrolink has advised us that if we decide to keep it, we would have to make significant improvements to the station; such as pedestrian bridge over the tracks, or some sort of tunnel, under the tracks.

Jessica Thompson, Access Services

- The focus for the next few months will be out reach. We've planned to visit some locations that have lower on-time performance. We've pulled some data on that and made a list on some facilities that we plan to visit and reach out to. In addition to customers who may be experiencing some issues, we are reaching out to them as well.
- Last month we did do an outreach at Long Beach VA; meeting with them, answered questions ranging from how to schedule a trip to traveling, and from and everything in between. It was a productive meeting.
- Plans to meet with Braille Institute, we try to meet with them at least once a year to make sure things are running smoothly.
- New Customer Service Contract – No definitive update yet.
- CAC Meetings Down Town – 2nd Tuesday of every month. Metro Station: 729 Figman St. Next Tuesday, May 10, 1-3P.M.

Lillian Shaw, Member

I've noticed that in San Fernando, the people on the phones are much friendlier than they used to be. I noticed a huge change verses last year.

Jessica Thompson, Access

- We are trying to improve the customer experience. We meet with the supervisors and dispatchers from call centers bi-monthly, over the past few meetings that we've had with them, courtesy has been an emphasis.

Elmer Contreras, MV Transportation

- We Conducted a Beyond the Curb training refresher with call takers, drivers and dispatchers last month. Jessica and I are working on a plan going forward.
- Rolling out a safety technology to aid the driver, a safety display for the vehicles and drivers
- We hired a new call center supervisor, Justin Sheldon; he was a dispatcher in Van Nuys.
- Will be making small modifications to the current call center schedule for our June through December time period, moving people 15-30 mins, to where we need more help.
- We lost Ivanna, our Safety Manager; we are in the hiring process to replace her.
- Average call wait times are less than 20 secs.
- Bidding for the drivers will take place in June, dispatchers and call takers will go right through that. That's why I want to make the changes to the schedule in the call center

ENDING COMMENTS

Next Meeting – June 2, 2016 (special meeting for elections)

City Hall

23920 Valencia Blvd. (Century Room)

Motion to Adjourn, 10:40 a.m.

Motion Approved