

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Thursday, September 5, 2013

Meeting Minutes

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

Members present: James Hogan, John Panico, John Taylor, Linda Wood, and Keith Curry.

Others present: Adrian Aguilar, James Schultzman, Lorraine Hernandez, Alfredo Torales, Suzy Ochoa, Samuel Moreno, Rodrigo Flores, Anthony Frank, Denise Ware, and Lorena Ortiz.

Call to Order

Approval of June Minutes

General Public Comments:

Anthony mentioned that he has noticed issues with the maintenance on the vans and frequent breakdowns with the Access vehicles. He suggested that there is not enough preventative maintenance, for example, wheelchair lift, air-conditioning etc.

Jim Schultzman responds by saying that MV will continue to look into these issues concerning the vehicle maintenance. He also mentioned that there are a few known issues, however, MV will take an active measure to solve some of these issues.

Jim Hogan also commented regarding maintenance, stating that there continues to be issues with the maintenance of the vehicles for access. He also stated that all wheelchair lifts should be functioning, otherwise the vehicle should be considered, "Out of service."

John Taylor and Jim Schultzman confirm that although a wheelchair lift may be defective, the driver should still be able to lift the wheelchair manually onto the vehicle.

Adrian responded by confirming that all vehicles are checked by the driver prior to leaving the yard. It is the driver's responsibility to check the van and its functions before leaving the yard. This includes; cycling the wheelchair lift. If a driver reports a wheelchair non-functioning, the goal is to have the vehicle swapped out as soon as possible.

Vicki requested that the two hour cancellation policy be reduced. She suggested that it should be reduced down to a half hour.

Jim Hogan stated that you cannot change the ADT policy; therefore, the cancellation policy can't be changed.

Adrian also suggested that it's best for patrons to call in their cancellations, regardless of the pickup time. It's better for dispatch and the operators to know as soon as possible before sending out a driver. Adrian also stated that the operators are reasonable when filing "No shows" against riders. Additionally, Adrian added that the "No Show" policy is in place for abusers of the service.

Alfredo and Adrian stated that the “No Shows” are auto generated in the system, not manually by an operator. Also, it should be considered as a “Gentle Reminder” for its customers. It’s designed to minimize cancellations, and prevent patterns.

Vicki also brought up the issue regarding a “Flexible pick up” when Access is running late during a drop off.

Adrian stated that we can accommodate a later pick up time and operators will try their best, so long as it doesn’t impact other riders.

Anthony asked about the cancellation line when the office is closed.

Adrian confirmed that the messages are checked by the operators in the morning.

Anthony Franck also suggested that Access needs to be more flexible with their pick up times if patrons are going to be dropped off late. He suggested that it’s not fair if the bus arrives late during a pick up time, and the patron has “no showed” because they couldn’t wait, found a ride, etc. Access should be held accountable for when they’re late picking up as well.

Jim Hogan made a suggestion to the committee and riders, those passengers should give themselves enough time and flexibility when scheduling Access and Dial A Ride trips.

Member Comments

Linda Wood: No comment

John Panico asked for clarification on the call center times and cancellation times.

John also wanted to know how the timetable changes and Bid’s involving the drivers went.

Adrian responded that things went well and very minimal changes to the routes, drivers, structure, etc.

Rodrigo from independent living commented about Metrolink ending free fare for PCA’s. (Personal Care Attendants) He stated that Metrolink is proposing to register each PSA \$25 per pass for each PCA. There is no implementation date, and the coalition team is currently still tabling the idea in hopes to terminate the implementation. Rodrigo shared the meeting time for the next meeting.

Rodrigo further explained that Metrolink is suggesting that a PCA isn’t required while riding the Metrolink, however, have failed to recognize that most passengers will need a PCA once they exit the train or board. The conflict is that most people who have a PCA can’t afford to pay the \$25 registration fee for their PCA.

A few members of the public asked if Access was going to begin charging for PCA’s.

Alfredo responded by stating that Access is currently partnered with a number of agencies to offer free fares for Access Riders on local services and has no plans to change.

Jim Hogan asked if Alfredo can check with the Director of Access regarding the change with the Metrolink and see what their response is. Jim asked if Alfredo can request the information on behalf of the committee.

Keith asked if there is actual data about people who abuse the Free Fare system. Therefore, if Metrolink can justify its reasons for charging for PCA's.

Rodrigo closed his comments by announcing the PRC meeting in Van Nuys meets the third Tuesday of every month, and the next meeting will focus on Excessive Share rides lasting over 4 hours. The PRC is trying to schedule a break every four hours for passengers and or service animals. Rodrigo said most are contributed by shared rides and not length. It needs to be compatible to the fixed route for transit on google.com, if not; it's a violation of your civil rights.

Samuel stated that they are happy with the Dial A Ride services and are very grateful for their service.

Samuel asked Rodrigo (Independent Living) if they are opposing the charge for PCA's.

Rodrigo said that they are opposing the \$25 registration fee. Especially because there is a high turnover rate with PCA's. Nothing has been set because there is no implementation for this change as of yet.

Old Business:

Adrian gave an update regarding the issue the stop Main & Ceasar Chavez being moved from Mid-Block to the corner, City staff went to the location and reviewed the Stop and discovered that the City of Los Angeles turned the old stop location into a loading area, so they moved the stop closer to the intersection. What we found was there are trees getting in the way of the wheel chair lift on the bus. So Ben and Cindy suggested that if the stop was moved 8 to 10 feet up (closer to the intersection) it should give enough clearance for the wheel chair lift to be used and wouldn't interfere with the trees.

Adrian also commented that the City of Los Angeles communicated that there are no plans to re-locate the stop location for Santa Clarita Transit. So MV and Santa Clarita feel that it will be better to communicate this information to the drivers and passengers so that they are aware. The issue hasn't been raised by any of the commuters, so it may be a "one-off" situation where a driver or passenger may experience this inconvenience.

Jim Shultzman confirmed that the Safety and Training Manger also communicated this to the drivers during their last safety meeting.

Adrian said that they will continue to outreach to the drivers and we'll continue to monitor the stop.

Additionally, we have had requests to add stop's near Union Station versus the Gold Line. Adrian confirmed that without compromising safety and time, the detour will not benefit our commuters.

Adrian also discussed vehicle maintenance that was brought up by Mrs. Pierce, and Jim Shultzman spoke that they are working on the Hoses and T-Fittings. The age of the fleet is affecting this.

14 vehicles are identical, so if something happens on one, it will usually happen to another.

Freddy is working with his team to prevent this from occurring, however, with the summer months, it's difficult to prevent all vehicle malfunctions. Especially when temperatures are reaching over 100 degrees, MV is made aware of possible issues a vehicle may experience while on route..

We're taking some steps by testing, cutting larger vents, installing air skirts to have better ventilation and installing new fans in the local buses. Currently there are 3 in place, and it has helped with overheating. Also, fuel economy and engine life. Hoping it will have a higher impact.

Adrian discussed TAP Service issues, ongoing maintenance of the fare boxes, monitoring, auditing and inspecting the fare boxes, tap reader, bill reader, etc.

Keith asked Adrian if we anticipating so many complaints and mal functions with the new TAP System.

Adrian responded that the TAP system overall works very well. The issue we're having is education regarding the quirks and the way the system is designed, i.e. Temporary cards. Adrian said that a goal for next year is to create an outreach for our customers to get more education for TAP cards and services. Additionally, to create infrastructures on how to better maintain this service. Adrian also confirmed that even if the drivers are experiencing issues with the fare box, a passenger will not be refused service if the TAP reader isn't functioning; our goal is and always is to transport the customer.

Adrian also discussed that he and Joy (MV) began to send out letters in the beginning of the summer that identifies customer that have a few "No Shows" on their profile for Dial-A-Ride services. Adrian stated that they received feedback from customers who questioned the letter and didn't understand the "No Show" policy.

New Business:

Adrian discussed some of the new things that Transit has been working on .

One is the completion of the transit development plan that had been in progress for close to two years. The plan included a series of recommendations, which transit staff has prioritized by time frame, ease of implementation and by cost. Minor recommendations were implemented immediately, while more extensive recommendations will be implemented as part of the January 2014 schedule change.

One of the recommendations included is to reroute the commuters and local services into the expanded Transit Center which is scheduled to be completed in October 2013.

Long term recommendation, (18 months to 2 years) include expansion of service to Fair Oaks Ranch and the Golden Valley Shopping Center on the east side of the Santa Clarita Valley. Such goals is dependent on outside factors such as housing developments, bridge widening and local construction.

National Transit Database Reporting (NTD): As a recipient of Federal funding, the City reports operating data the NTD on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Every three years the City is required to sample our route and passenger miles traveled. We're currently working with MV to take the random samples and ride the trips to collect the data. Overall this is meant for auditing purposes, however, it's providing an insight on re-occurring events and passenger info. This will continue through June of 2014.

The beach bus ridership was higher than last year. No numbers to report yet. MV and city staff will debrief as far as what worked, what didn't and get feedback from passengers.

Performance for July had a slight increase in local rider, slight decrease in commuter service (Holidays, vacation, etc.) Fixed route was up slightly, however, disabled and seniors had a 13% increase over July of last year. Frees up Dial A Ride, 2.6% decrease in ridership of Dial A Ride.

John asked Adrian if the 757 Commuter Route is still the busiest commuter route.

Adrian responded, "Yes." however didn't have the numbers to report.

Next August, Transit hopes to extend the hours on the North Hollywood Route, possible until Midnight. Initially the extension will take place during the summer months and weekends as a test phase for ridership.

Access Service:

Alfredo stated that 2014 20th anniversary of access services.

MV:

Joy reported that the OTP for August was 91.06%.

No Shows for ASI Was 132, and 214 For DAR for a total of 346 for August.

John asked Joy if there is any coordination for the Letters that are sent to customers who are riding DAR and Access Services.

Joy said that there isn't any coordination, that they treat them as individuals, Access or DAR. Joy also confirmed that the call out to a customer is not a policy; it's a "Courtesy Call." Also, the driver doesn't have the ability to "No Show" a customer. The dispatcher decides whether or not it's a "No Show." The driver has been trained to wait 5 minutes and if the passenger didn't show up, the driver is required to call dispatch to report.

Jim Shultzman stated that customer sensitivity training is done once a year with the drivers and with the new drivers taking on in August, MV will consider offering this training more often throughout the year.

Motion to adjourn.

