



COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY

Wednesday, April 11, 2007

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Chairperson Tamez in Building A, Auditorium, Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), 3331 North First Street, San Jose, California.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing
Ex-Officio Board Liaison Forrest Williams
Emma Eljas
Linda Gallo
Sandra Gouveia
David Grant
Katie Heatley (Ex-Officio)
Troy Hernandez
Marjorie Jensen
Martin Lasich
Laura Michels
Aaron Morrow, First Vice Chairperson
Barbara Stahl
Randy Tamez, Chairperson

Members Absent

David Julian
Jeanette Law
Barbara Rhodes, Second Vice Chairperson
Thomas Slack

Representing

City Group 1 – City of San Jose

City Group 1 – City of San Jose
Los Gatos Senior Center
City Group 1 – City of San Jose
Independence Network
OUTREACH Services
City Group 1 – City of San Jose
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center
City Group 3 – City of Saratoga
Vista Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired
City Group 5 – County of Santa Clara
City Group 2 – City of Santa Clara
City Group 1 – City of San Jose

Representing

City Group 2 – City of Santa Clara
Community Options
City Group 5 – County of Santa Clara
City Group 2 – City of Santa Clara

A quorum was present.

2. INTRODUCTION OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS

The Committee received introductions from the audience including: David Ledwitz, Management Analyst; Jerry Mikolajczyk, Chief Financial Officer; Susan Stark, Controller; Mark Thomas, Technical Training Supervisor; and Ann Carey, Executive Assistant to the General Manager.

3. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

There were no public presentations.

4. Minutes of March 7, 2007

M/S/C (Morrow/Gouveia) to approve the Minutes of March 7, 2007.

BUSINESS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS/GENERAL MANAGER

5. VTA Organizational and Financial Assessment

Ann Carey, Executive Assistant to the General Manager, provided a brief background of the Organizational and Financial Assessment and the selection process. She thanked Member Morrow for participating in the selection process of the Hay Group.

Ms. Carey reported that the Hay Group's findings focused on three main areas: 1) Governance, the Board and its Committees; 2) Operational structure, VTA's organizational structure; and 3) Financial Management.

Ms. Carey reported on the top nine recommendations: 1) Implement governance processes and practices to enable transformation; 2) Operate VTA like a business; 3) Align VTA's mission with its operating practices; 4) Align the organization structure and executive team with the new strategy; 5) Improve VTA's financial condition and stability; 6) Build commitment to the commercial development program; 7) Make VTA a better place to work; 8) Upgrade the SAP system; and 9) Develop a labor negotiation strategy that is aligned with VTA's financial capabilities.

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing Ex-Officio Board Liaison Forrest Williams, took his seat at 1:17 p.m.

Ms. Carey reported on the findings regarding paratransit. Her report highlighted the following: 1) VTA provides premier transit, Outreach; 2) Successful partnership between VTA and Outreach; 3) VTA to strengthen relationship with Outreach and the disabled community; 4) Review finances with Outreach; and 5) Review paratransit improvement plan.

Ms. Carey reported that the recommendations of the Hay Group are consistent with the goals of the General Manager for VTA which are the following: 1) Build relationships with riders and the community; 2) Transit Sustainability Policy (TSP) and Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA), tools to increase ridership; 3) Capital program delivery; and 4) Achieving financial stability. She noted the addition of Jerry Mikolajczyk, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), to improve VTA's financial management.

NOTE: M/S/C MEANS MOTION SECONDED AND CARRIED AND, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Member Morrow commented that VTA should focus on transportation and reduce the size of its Congestion Management Program (CMP) division. Ms. Carey responded that the CMP directly relates to transportation and VTA is given the opportunity to utilize the

planning function of CMP to ensure better transportation. She added that focusing on CMP's planning department to compliment transportation is a better approach than shrinking the size of its division.

Member Grant commented on the committee procedure. He stated that it takes a long time for staff to respond to motions and recommendations made by the CTA Committee. Ms. Carey referenced the Hay Group's recommendations and stated that VTA needs to improve communications with its committees. She added that recommendations from the committees are always heard even if the Board of Directors or the General Manager decides to go in another direction.

Chairperson Tamez commented that advisory committees should receive information early in the process so enough time is given to the Committee to provide input and recommendations before the information goes to the Board of Directors. Ms. Carey responded that VTA staff will review the process to get advisory committees more involved.

Member Stahl requested more information on how VTA, could become more cost effective. Ms. Carey responded that VTA will revisit the business plan for Outreach to determine service improvements that would save cost. She added that VTA already implemented cost effective measures by having Outreach use VTA property; entering into a the fuel purchasing agreement with Santa Clara County; and developing the COA that will reconfigure transit service to improve ridership.

Member Michels queried if the Board of Directors will undergo an evaluation and the process of such an evaluation. Ms. Carey stated that the evaluation process is under the Board's prerogative. She noted that if the Board decides to have an evaluation, the Board should look at other Board's best practices.

Member Eljas commented that VTA should maintain its premier transit service. She also inquired about VTA's plan when its revenue source is reduced. Ms. Carey replied that VTA is properly managing its reserve funds by maintaining it at a certain level. She noted that VTA is also broadening its sources of revenue since both its Capital program and Operating budget rely heavily on sales tax revenue.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley queried about the process on how the TSP and the COA projects will work. Ms. Carey responded that the TSP and COA will guide VTA in its investment decisions. She noted that the VTA will revisit the COA every three to five years to determine if it is still productive and the TSP will serve as the framework to perform that analysis.

Member Jensen queried about the disaster preparedness and its financial effect. Ms. Carey responded that there were no findings regarding disaster preparedness in the Assessment. She added that VTA has a disaster preparedness plan that is routinely exercised.

Member Morrow expressed his opposition to the Board's approval of a consultant contract to implement the recommendations of the Hay Group. He recommended

providing CTA with a work plan for the contractual agreement between VTA and Karen Antion Consulting, LLC. Member Gouveia supported the recommendation and suggested adding Karen Antion's work history.

MSC (Morrow/Grant) to provide CTA with a work plan for the contractual agreement between VTA and Karen Antion Consulting, LLC that would include Karen Antion's work history.

Ms. Carey stated that the Board approved a \$150,000 contract and staff will prepare a work plan in two months. She added that the Administration and Finance Committee (A&F) will oversee the implementation of the plan.

Chairperson Tamez queried if Measure A funds for seniors and the disabled are still available. Ms. Carey responded that there were some projects that did not qualify under the Measure A and VTA is looking for other sources to fund those projects.

Chairperson Tamez noted that the CTA should receive information on transit service modifications in enough time for the Committee to provide input on how the changes will impact the disabled community.

6. Accessible Services/Paratransit Budget for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009

Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manager and Staff Liaison, reported on the Accessible Services/Paratransit Budget for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009. She stated that the budget report is given to the CTA Committee in advance and that the format was changed to match the National Transit Database (NTD) report. She reported on Ongoing Programs that highlighted the following: 1) Bus Mobility Device Securement; 2) Customer Relations; 3) Regional Transit Connection (RTC) Discount Card Program; and 4) Paratransit Services.

Ms. Williams reported on proposed programs that emphasized the Independent Travel Options which has the following travel option support programs: 1) Bus Buddies; 2) Travel Training; 3) Personal Trip Planning Instruction; 4) A Mobility Information Resource Center; and 5) A Fixed-Route Barrier Assessment Team. She stated that the CTA Committee and VTA's Accessible Services will work together to implement some of the programs.

Member Grant queried about the mission statement of Accessible Services. Ms. Williams responded that the mission statement of Accessible Services is to provide services without boundaries and become a resource for the disabled community, VTA operators and staff.

Member Grant queried about the top five duties of Accessible Services and the process of monitoring programs. Ms. Williams responded that the duties of Accessible Services are the following: 1) Monitor Customers Are Resources for Excellence (CARE) reports; 2) Review public comments and complaints regarding accessibility; 3) Implementation of the Securement Policy; 4) Strengthening relationships with different agencies; and 5) Develop and implement programs for the community. Ms. Williams stated that

Accessible Services monitors programs and used the Securement Policy as an example of where daily reports are received.

Member Eljas queried about the high cost of paratransit service. Ms. Williams responded that paratransit service is more expensive compared to fixed route service. She clarified that VTA will not restrict or reduce paratransit service. She added that VTA is looking at options on how to improve paratransit service.

Member Stahl commented on paratransit service in Europe and Asia. She stated that Europe has a good paratransit service, while some countries in Asia do not have dependable paratransit service.

Member Morrow expressed his support with the fuel purchasing agreement with Santa Clara County where fuel purchases are exempted from the federal excise tax.

Chairperson Tamez commented on the costs of fixed route service and paratransit service. He stated that VTA should strive to increase ridership to improve farebox recovery and look for options to improve paratransit service while lowering its cost. He noted that more information is needed on the following proposed programs: 1) Bus Buddies; 2) Travel Trainings; 3) Personal Trip Planning Instruction; 4) A Mobility Information Resource Center; and 5) A Fixed-Route Barrier Assessment Team. He expressed concern regarding the Travel Training program and explained that it is not for people who are visually impaired. He suggested that a subcommittee should review the proposed programs before it goes to the Committee. He stated that VTA Customer Service should receive training on how to handle complaints from people with disabilities.

Ms. Williams responded that the programs listed require development and implementation by the CTA Committee and Accessible Services. David Ledwitz, Management Analyst, explained that Accessible Services staff review customer complaints and monitors them until they are resolved.

Member Grant expressed concern regarding some expenses in the Fiscal Years 2008 & 2009 Proposed Biennial Budget. His concerns highlighted the following topics: 1) Purchased Transportation; 2) Personal Services; 3) Reimbursable Program; and 4) Contributions to Other Agencies. He commented that part of the Budget for General Administration can be allocated for Outreach to extend its customer service hours. Susan Stark, Controller, explained the breakdown of the figures in the budget. Ms. Williams responded that Outreach is given a budget and it has the discretion on how to fund its departments.

Member Michels left her seat at 2:36 p.m. and the quorum was lost and a Committee of the Whole was declared.

Member Eljas queried if the increase in gas prices was considered in the budget. Ms. Williams explained that the increase in gas prices was considered and paratransit service will not be affected. Ms. Stark responded that there is an allowance in the budget that would accommodate gas price increases.

Chairperson Tamez supported Member Grant's comment regarding more funding for Outreach. He explained that Outreach is growing and additional funding is necessary to match its growth. He queried about a detailed breakdown of the expenses in the Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009 budget. Ms. Williams responded that the growth of Outreach was considered in the budget. Ms. Stark explained that the budget for paratransit services was reconfigured in the 2008 & 2009 budget. She emphasized that there are no charges from Operation's Planning and charges from Accessible Services were reduced.

7. Mobility Device Securement Update

David Ledwitz, Management Analyst, reported on the Mobility Device Securement Update. His report highlighted the following topics: 1) Total bus ridership; 2) Bus ramp and lift boardings; 3) Total passengers declined securement and refused to deboard; 4) Total passengers declined securement and deboarded coach; 5) Claims information; 6) Injury; and 7) Damage to mobility device. He explained that VTA has been successful with the securement policy and that the number of people refusing securement continues to go down.

Member Morrow suggested adding the number of Workers Compensation claims to the report. Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manger and Staff Liaison, responded that there were two to three Workers Compensation claims and they were not major injuries.

Member Grant requested a copy of the Government Code 910 Claims form and queried about staff monitoring the mobility device securement data. Ms. Williams responded that staff will provide the claim form and stated that staff continues to monitor implementation of the securement device policy.

REPORTS

8. Board of Directors Report

There was no report from the Board of Directors.

9. Committee Staff Report

Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manager and Staff Liaison, reported that information on the fare structure, budget, and COA is almost complete and the CTA will receive a presentation.

10. Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Tamez proposed that every member of the Committee who has email should be on the CTA email distribution list. He added that Committee members should receive an electronic copy of the agenda, instead of a link to the agenda.

OTHER

11. Announcements

Donald Smith, Chief Operating Officer, gave a brief update on the progress of the bus announcement system. He stated that VTA met with a company that uses the same announcement system used in light rail vehicles and another presentation is scheduled with a different provider that has a software system that might give better announcement quality. He stated that the Committee will receive more information in the future. He clarified that VTA is not abandoning the current announcement system and stated that options to improve the current system are under review.

Member Grant requested for a follow up report on the bus shelter/stop at Scott and Space Park in the City of Santa Clara.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The Committee of the Whole adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Diaresco, Board Assistant
VTA Board of Directors