

COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) was called to order at 1:00 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
David Julian
Martin Lasich
Laura Michels
Aaron Morrow, First Vice Chairperson
Barbara Rhodes, Second Vice Chairperson
Thomas Slack
Randy Tamez, Chairperson

Members Absent

Marjorie Jensen
Jeanette Law
Barbara Stahl

A quorum was present.

2. INTRODUCTION OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS

The Committee received introductions from the audience including: David Ledwitz, Management Analyst; Mark Thomas, Technical Training Supervisor; Michael Hursh, Deputy Director; Bill Capps, Service Planning Manager; Francisco Salvador, Client Relationship Supervisor; Connie Langford, City of San José Senior Citizens Commission; Susan Stark, Controller; Jerry Mikolajczyk, Chief Financial Officer; Nancy Coss-Fitzwater, Policy and Administrative Manager; Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer; and Joonie Tolosa, Manager, Operations Analysis, Reporting and Systems.

3. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

There were no Public Presentations.

4. Minutes of May 9, 2007

M/S/C (Morrow/Gouveia) to approve the Minutes of May 9, 2007.

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

5. Bus Stop Annunciator Update

Joonie Tolosa, Manager for Operations Analysis, Reporting and Systems, gave a brief update regarding the bus stop annunciator. He reported that the main cause of the problem has been identified. He noted that the invalid public annunciator ID causes bus stop announcements to malfunction. He explained that the annunciator system has a 50-character limit and each character is represented by a bus stop. He added that if a route exceeds the 50-character limit, the annunciator defaults to an invalid public relations ID that causes the bus stop announcements to fail. He stated that staff resolved the problem by changing the character limit to 40. He added that the conducted field checks and system tests proved that the bus stop announcements are now working properly.

Member Slack queried if bus announcements are geared towards people waiting at bus stops. Mr. Tolosa responded that there are internal and external bus announcements directed to inform passengers inside and outside the bus.

Second Vice Chairperson Rhodes queried about the external volume of bus announcements. She also queried about the annunciator's ability to announce every stop or a stop requested by the passenger. Mr. Tolosa responded that the volume is programmed to change automatically at a particular time. He stated that the annunciator does not announce every bus stop on routes that have more than 40 stops because the system has a 40-character limit. He added that operators could verbally announce bus stops upon passengers request.

Member Lasich commented that bus operators are not properly trained. He explained that being visually disabled, he requested the operator to identify a bus stop. He added that the bus operator dropped him off seven blocks away from his requested stop.

Member Grant queried about the process of adjusting the volume of the bus stop announcements. Mr. Tolosa responded that the internal announcements are configured to change automatically at a certain time. He added that the system also has a sensor that minimally changes the volume of the announcement when it is affected by ambient noise.

Member Gallo took her seat at 1:13 p.m.

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

Chairperson Tamez commented that the CTA has a standing request that all bus stops be announced. Mark Thomas, Technical Training Supervisor, stated that in the new automated announcements, some single stop routes are not being announced. He added that staff will study the new system and report back to the CTA regarding bus stop announcements. Chairperson Tamez stated that the CTA should be informed if there are changes made regarding the announcement of bus stops.

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing Ex-Officio
Board Liaison Forrest Williams, took his seat at 1:18 p.m.

Member Slack queried about VTA's policy regarding bus stop announcements. Sam Lau, Deputy Director-Operations, responded that VTA's policy is to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Chairperson Tamez commented that the ADA requirement is only the minimum and that VTA can go beyond the ADA requirement.

The Agenda was taken out of order.

13. FYTD 2007 Third Quarter Transit Operations Performance Report (July 1, 2006-March 31, 2007)

Joonie Tolosa, Manager for Operations Analysis, Reporting and Systems, gave a brief background on the FYTD 2007 Third Quarter Performance Report. His report highlighted the following topics: 1) Ridership; 2) Operating Expense and Revenue; 3) Key Performance Indicators; and 4) Paratransit.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley queried about the long term plan for the San José Monterey Express. Dan Smith, Chief Operations Officer, responded that with or without VTA's contribution, the San José Monterey Express will continue its service.

Member Grant expressed concern regarding the increase in the Outreach late rate. Ex-Officio Member Heatley responded that the report was accurate. She explained that the increase in the late rate of Outreach reflect the transition for the following: 1) Two new parking yards; 2) New fleet of vehicles; 3) Training for the new vehicles; 4) Installation of new lifts; and 5) Acquisition of 30 new drivers.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow queried about the total projected paratransit ridership for FY 2007. Mr. Tolosa responded that the projected ridership for FY 2007 is 1.03 million. Ex-Officio Member Heatley commented that for FY 2006, paratransit ridership increased seven percent. She added that for FY 2007, the paratransit ridership continues to grow at five to six percent. She stated that a five percent growth in paratransit ridership is incorporated in the paratransit budget for FY 2008.

Member Slack queried about the allotted time before Outreach's service can be considered late. Ex-Officio Member Heatley responded that Outreach service is considered late after 40 minutes from the requested time of pick up.

Member Grant queried about the process of having the paratransit service providers accountable for being late in picking up customers. Ex-Officio Member Heatley responded that there are four factors to consider regarding late paratransit service:

1) Information from the automated system; 2) Customer complaints; 3) Information from the Caregiver program; and 4) Information from the dispatcher. She stated that the information gathered from the four factors are compiled in the software for review. She added that service providers are penalized for providing poor service. She commented that there is also a process for service providers to contest late complaints.

6. Comprehensive Operations Analysis: Draft Proposed Service Operating Plan

Kevin Connolly, Transportation Planning Manager, reported on the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA). He conducted a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the following topics: 1) COA Outreach schedule; 2) VTA Board Policy; 3) Core network areas; and 4) Proposal organization.

Member Slack queried about the flexibility of the Community Bus routes. Mr. Connolly responded that it is possible to develop variable routes depending on the time of the day and the needs of the community.

Member Lasich queried about the bus route that services the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center on Homestead Road and Lawrence Expressway. Bill Capps, Service Planning Manager, responded that Bus Line 81 services the Santa Clara Kaiser Permanente Medical Center. Member Grant described the route of Bus Line 81 from Downtown San José to Lawrence Expressway and Homestead Road.

Member Grant queried about the Community Bus that travels to the Santa Clara Transit Center. Mr. Connolly responded that Bus Line 32 travels to the Santa Clara Transit Center. He added that the proposal would convert the existing route into a Community Bus route. Mr. Capps described the modified route of the Community Bus Line 32 and stated that it will have a 30-minute service interval.

Member Grant expressed concern regarding the bus route modifications and its effect on the paratransit service areas. Mr. Connolly responded that the effects on the paratransit service will be addressed in the second phase of the analysis. He explained that analysis of the paratransit service could be conducted once the route changes have been identified.

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing Ex-Officio Board Liaison Forrest Williams, queried about the implementation of the Community Bus, the interval of its service, and its effectiveness to take over discontinued routes. Mr. Connolly responded that 19 routes will be implemented on July 2007. He stated that the frequency of the service is 30 minutes to an hour. He explained that the Community Bus routes are still being studied to ensure its effectiveness. He added that the Community bus has the ability to partner up with different sectors of the community to provide a better service.

Member Michels queried about the marketing strategy to promote the use of public transportation. Mr. Connolly responded that from August 2007 to January 2008, heavy promotion to use public transportation will be conducted. Mr. Capps added that VTA partnered with San José State University to develop the Eco Pass, which is a discount pass for students at San José State University.

Member Julian expressed concern regarding Bus Line 81 that services the Santa Clara Kaiser Permanente Medical Center on Homestead Road and Lawrence Expressway. Mr. Connolly responded that the route of Bus Line 81 will be studied to address issues and concerns of the community.

Chairperson Tamez requested that staff inform the CTA of any changes made to the COA before it goes to the VTA Board of Directors for approval. Mr. Connolly stated that the second draft of the COA will be released in August 2007, and it will highlight changes made from the first draft.

Second Vice Chairperson Rhodes expressed concern about the reduction of service in the Almaden Valley. She stated that the poor service resulting from the proposed changes will drive people away from using public transportation.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow commented that staff needs to study the effects of the service consolidation to the paratransit service area and determine ways to provide service for the affected areas.

Member Grant queried about the information gathered from the public meetings about the COA. Mr. Connolly stated that staff is still reviewing the information gathered from the public meetings.

Member Slack queried about the market analysis that determined the transportation service for the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center on Homestead Road and Lawrence Expressway. Mr. Connolly responded that the presence of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center was identified when the initial study was made. He added that a more detailed study will be conducted in the second draft of the COA. Mr. Capps stated that VTA staff met with the staff of Kaiser and they have no information on the estimated number of patients that would be using public transportation. He added VTA will adopt to the demand of service for that area.

7. Organizational and Financial Assessment Work Plan for Implementation Support

Ann Carey, Executive Assistant to the General Manager, provided a brief background of the Organizational and Financial Assessment Work Plan. She gave an update on the implementation process of the recommendations by the Hay Group that focused on three main areas: 1) Governance, the Board and its Committees; 2) Operational Structure, VTA's Organizational Structure; and 3) Financial Management.

Chairperson Tamez relinquished his seat at 2:03 p.m.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow presided over the meeting as Chairperson.

Ms. Carey reported on the first phase of the work plan that highlighted the following topics: 1) Project Management; 2) Implement Governance process and practices to enable transformation; 3) Implement organization recommendations; 4) Upgrade the SAP system; and 5) Develop strategies with the General Manager on transformation program initiatives.

Ms. Carey reported that the second phase of the work plan that was approved by the Administration and Finance Committee will be heard by the Board of Directors at its August 2007 meeting.

Chairperson Tamez took his seat at 2:10 p.m.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow relinquished his seat as Chairperson and Chairperson Tamez presided for the remainder of the meeting.

Member Grant queried about the Committee's participation regarding an item in the second phase of the work plan that states "Work with the General Manager to develop the Annual Work Program for the Board and its Committees." Ms. Carey stated that the CTA will be included in the development of the work program. She explained that the plan is for the Board of Directors to set direction for the Advisory Committees to achieve their goals. She added that the role of the consultant is to improve the communication between the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committees.

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing Ex-Officio Board Liaison Forrest Williams, queried about Sarbanes Oxley in phase two of the work plan. Ms. Carey responded that VTA will review the concept of Sarbanes Oxley which provides visibility in financial reporting.

Mr. Drummond queried about an item in the second phase of the work plan that states "Improve the conduct of the Board and Committee meetings." Ms. Carey responded that the Board of Directors will empower its Standing and Advisory Committees to fulfill some of its functions. She stated that this action would help the Board of Directors focus on their main role to provide direction and policy to VTA.

8. Revised Accessible Document Program

Francisco Salvador, Client Relationship Supervisor, stated that the goal of the program is to provide accessible documents to everyone. He reported that VTA is changing its business practices to achieve its accessibility goals. He stated that VTA is currently developing new training and procedures. He added that continuous monitoring of produced documents is being conducted to ensure that they are accessible.

Mr. Salvador reported that staff is currently researching new technology that will improve accessibility. He stated that the VTA is also working with San José State University and De Anza College for training and information regarding accessibility.

Mr. Salvador reported that the VTA is redesigning its website. He stated that information gathered from the focus groups will be reviewed and incorporated in the new website.

Member Slack queried about the use of voice interactive technology for the new VTA website. Mr. Salvador responded that staff is exploring voice interactive technology. He stated that VTA has two examples on the web where audio technology was used to convey information.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow expressed concern regarding the verbal reports presented to the CTA. He stated that the CTA passed a motion that reports should be in writing.

Member Michels queried about the availability of large print maps on the website. Mr. Salvador stated that staff is currently studying options that would enable users to enlarge maps on the website.

Member Grant queried about the goals of the accessible document program. Mr. Salvador stated that the goals of the program are the following: 1) Information will be posted on the web and will be accessible to the public; and 2) Ability to provide accessible information in a timely manner.

Member Grant expressed concern regarding the return of the accessibility issue in CTA's agenda. Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manager and Staff Liaison, responded that the issue of accessibility was brought back to the Committee to provide information about the new training being conducted and the availability of new technology that would address the accessibility issues. Mr. Salvador stated that staff is updating its training and restructuring programs that relate to accessibility with the aide of new technology.

Second Vice Chairperson Rhodes commented that VTA employees in various departments should be trained to produce documents in accessible format. Mr. Salvador responded that it is VTA's plan to train staff in every department to produce documents in accessible format. He stated that the initial accessibility training which was comprised of staff from various departments are currently working on producing accessible documents that will be published in a few months.

9. Distribution of Information to CTA

Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manager and Staff Liaison, commented that anyone who would like to be added to the Board or any Committee distribution list should send a written request to the Board office via email or regular mail.

Chairperson Tamez expressed concern regarding the Committee's ability to receive information. He commented that there is denial of communication for the CTA. He stated that there is an inconsistency in the process of receiving information. Ms. Williams noted that staff is not withholding information to the Committee. She stated that staff does not want to send information to members who did not request to receive the information. She stated that there are some members who receive certain information because they made a written request to be added to that distribution list.

Chairperson Tamez recommended that the Committee should receive all information and it is the member's discretion if they want it or not. He referenced the 500-paged Technical Memorandum and stated that it should have been offered to the Committee members if they wanted to receive it or not, instead of having Committee members send a written request if they wanted a copy. Ms. Williams clarified that the Administrative Code states that a written request should be submitted in order to receive information. Chairperson Tamez stated that for a group of people with disabilities, accommodation

could be adjusted so that policies and procedure are fair and equitable. He commented that the issue of not receiving information maybe driven by the Committee's complex requirement of receiving information.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow supported the statement of Chairperson Tamez. He commented that the information produced by VTA is a public record and the Committee should receive the information without sending a written request.

Member Michels stated that she supports the Chairperson and she added that the Chairperson has discretion over the information that will be distributed to the Committee.

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing Ex-Officio Board Liaison Forrest Williams, referenced the Hay Group report and queried if it was distributed to all the Committees. Ms. Williams responded that the executive summary of the Hay Group report was sent to all the Committees. She added that the Technical Memorandum is available upon request.

Mr. Drummond commented on the process of receiving information as a Policy Aide for Council Member and VTA Board Member Forrest Williams. He stated that their office receives all Board and Committee information. He added that they notify the Board office if they decline to receive certain information.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow expressed his concern regarding the requirement for a written request for disabled people who are unable to write and has no access to a computer.

Member Slack recommended that the Committee should receive a list of released documents and they would decide which one they want to receive.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley commented that a procedure should be established regarding the distribution of information to the Committee and the distribution of documents in accessible format. Ms. Williams responded that staff is being trained to produce all documents in accessible format. She stated that this will eliminate the issue of having to provide a separate document in accessible format. She added that all documents that will be released to the public will be accessible.

Member Grant commented that the email that the Committee received from the VTA General Council as a response to the ADA Title 2 that was sent out by Chairperson Tamez was inappropriate. He stated that the Committee was not engaging in a serial meeting.

Member Grant noted that there is a disparity in the distribution of information. He stated that he has an outstanding request for information that has not been acted upon. Ms. Williams clarified that there seems to be a disparity because some members requested a long time ago to receive information and be added to other distribution lists. She queried if the Committee is willing to receive all documents that are produced for the Board and its Committees.

Member Julian commented that he does not have access to the internet and he cannot write. Ms. Williams responded that staff sends a hard copy of documents that are sent out electronically. She added that in this CTA meeting, June 13, 2007, the following requests will be accepted without a written notice: 1) Addition to any distribution list; and 2) Format to receive the information.

Member Eljas commented that Chairperson Tamez and Ms. Williams should talk about this issue regarding the distribution of information to the CTA offline and include it in the next meeting's agenda. She stated that she does not want to receive all information especially the 500 paged Technical Memorandum.

Chairperson Tamez asked the Committee's preference in receiving information and the type of information to be received.

Member Michels, to receive all documents via email.

Member Gallo, to receive all documents via email.

Member Lasich, do not want to receive any document other than CTA.

Member Slack, to receive all documents in large print and via email. He noted that a list should be provided for the Committee to choose the information they want to receive.

Member Grant, to receive the same information Chairperson Tamez receives via email.

Member Hernandez, to receive all documents via regular mail.

Member Eljas, to receive all documents via email.

Member Julian, to receive all documents via regular mail.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow, to receive all documents via email and regular mail.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley, to receive all documents via email.

Second Vice Chairperson Rhodes, to receive all documents via email.

Member Gouveia, to all documents large print via email and regular mail.

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing Ex-Officio Board Liaison Forrest Williams, commented that he is currently receiving all information.

Chairperson Tamez, to receive all documents. He commented that the Committee should receive a list of documents available.

10. Mainstreaming of Individuals with Disabilities into VTA

The Mainstreaming of Individuals with Disabilities into VTA was deferred.

11. **Door-to-Door and South County Service Area Surcharge Deferment Information**

The Door-to-Door and South County Service Area Surcharge Deferment Information was deferred.

12. **Light Rail Station Elevator Announcements**

The Light Rail Station Elevator Announcements was deferred.

14. **Operator Training Quarterly Report**

The Operator Training Quarterly Report was deferred.

15. **CTA members for future Accessible Format Training**

The CTA members for future Accessible Format Training was deferred.

REPORTS

16. **Board of Directors Report**

There was no Board of Directors Report.

17. **Committee Staff Report**

There was no Committee Staff Report.

18. **Chairperson's Report**

There was no Chairperson's Report

OTHER

19. **CTA Transit System Ridership Report**

The CTA Transit System Ridership report was deferred.

17. **Announcements**

There were no Announcements.

18. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee of the Whole adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Diaresco, Board Assistant
VTA Board of Directors