

COMMITTEE FOR TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY

Wednesday, November 7, 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
Marjorie Jensen
Martin Lasich
Aaron Morrow, First Vice Chairperson
Thomas Slack
Barbara Stahl
Randy Tamez, Chairperson

Members Absent

David Julian
Laura Michels
Barbara Rhodes, Second Vice Chairperson

A quorum was present.

2. INTRODUCTION OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS

The Committee received introductions from the audience including: David Ledwitz, Management Analyst; Ann Carey, Executive Assistant to the General Manager; David Kobayashi, Senior Transportation Planner; Eugene Maeda, Transportation Planner; Keith Roan, Technology Manager; Jim Unites, Operations Planning Program Manager; Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer; Nancy Coss-Fitzwater, Policy and Administrative Manager; Dorothy Reyes, Customer Service Supervisor; Bill Lopez, Chief Administrative Officer; and Joonie Tolosa, Manager, Operations Analysis, Reporting and Systems.

3. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

There were no Public Presentations.

4. Minutes of October 10, 2007

Member Grant expressed concern about the Committee's request for information on the Space Park Bus Shelter as reflected in the October 10, 2007 Minutes.

M/S/C (Gouveia/Jensen) to approve the Minutes of October 10, 2007.

5. Update from the Chief Operating Officer

Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer, noted that accessible memorandum templates were developed.

Mr. Smith responded to the inquiry of Walter Schinkle, South County Advocate, regarding the August 8, 2007 CTA meeting. He described the process conducted when bus service is interrupted: 1) Operator contacts the Operations Control Center; 2) Operations Control Center contacts the dispatcher of the facility where the bus departed; 3) Dispatcher determines the availability of an operator and contacts the Maintenance Department for a replacement bus; and 4) Dispatcher decides whether to send the bus as a replacement or to send the bus to resume the schedule of the interrupted service. He added that there are cases where no bus replacement will be sent and passengers would have to wait for the next bus. He stated that the Operations Control Center may also send a mobile mechanic to repair the bus with mechanical problems. He pointed out that the performance of VTA buses exceeds other transit agencies.

Mr. Smith reported that staff is exploring the possibility of installing a customized bus shelter at Scott and Space Park in the City of Santa Clara. He added that a written report with more information on the issue will be forwarded to the Committee at its next meeting.

Mr. Smith requested the Committee's recommendation on the following items: 1) Dynamic Passenger "Real-Time" Information Project (DPI Project); and 2) Bus Service Plan and Impacts to American Disability Act (ADA) Paratransit Service Area.

Anthony Drummond, staff aide representing Ex-Officio
Board Liaison Forrest Williams took his seat at 1:10 p.m.

Mr. Smith reported that per the Committee's request, the CTA's Motion Tracking Information was divided into current and archival sections for manageability.

Mr. Smith reported that the Committee Workplan was updated based on the information gathered from previous meetings and input from the Chairperson.

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

Mr. Smith reported that VTA's Draft Accessibility Policy is in development and will be forwarded to the Committee upon its completion.

Mr. Smith reported that the following topics will be agendaized for the CTA December 12, 2007 meeting: 1) Travel patterns for seniors and people with disability; 2) Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2035; and 3) Election of Chairperson, First Vice Chairperson and Second Vice Chairperson.

Mr. Smith noted that the following Agenda Item will be acted upon at the November 14, 2007 Transit Planning and Operations (TP&O) Committee meeting: "Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with Robert A. Bothman, Inc., the lowest responsible bidder, in an amount of \$13,461,910 for construction of the Guadalupe South Line Platforms Retrofit Project. This contract is expected to be 80 percent federally funded. In addition, authorize a budget modification to transfer \$10,000,000 of funds from the VTA Transit Capital Program Fiscal Year 2009 appropriation to Fiscal Year 2008 for estimated project expenditures through June 2008. The total approved project budget for both fiscal years will remain the same at \$22,947,000."

Member Slack expressed concern regarding the availability of back-up coach operators. Mr. Smith responded that standby coach operators are available to fill in on unexpected situations. He added that there are days where there are no available backup coach operators.

Member Grant referenced the issues brought up by Mr. Schinkle at the August 8, 2007 CTA meeting and queried about the following: 1) Possibility of having a third Community Bus in the South County as backup; 2) Issue of Community Buses not having restraints; and 3) Ability of Community Bus operators to drive large coaches. Mr. Smith responded that it will be a waste of manpower to have a third Community bus on standby in the South County. He added that if a mechanical problem occurs on the Community Bus, a replacement bus from the Chaboya yard will be dispatched. He reported on the findings of the investigation that no defective mechanisms were found on any of the Community Buses. He stated that Community Bus operators are also trained to drive large coaches.

Member Lasich expressed concern that bus operators are unaware of certain bus stops. He inquired about the process of updating bus stops and expressed concern regarding the bus stop on the corner of Quito Road and McCoy Avenue in the City of San Jose. Mr. Smith responded that there is a process in place wherein VTA and CTA annually produces a list of bus stops that would be constructed or updated. He pointed out that there are only a few locations where installations of new bus stops are welcomed. He stated that these issues will be revisited at the next CTA meeting.

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

6. Nominating Committee for CTA Chairperson, First Vice Chairperson, and Second Vice Chairperson

Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manager and Staff Liaison, requested Committee direction regarding the membership of the Nominating Committee.

Members Grant, Stahl, and Slack volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley suggested conducting phone meetings to accommodate people with hectic schedules. She also suggested asking Member Julian if he wishes to serve as a member of the Nominating Committee.

7. Dynamic Passenger “Real-time” Information Project (DPI Project)

Keith Roan, Technology Support Services Manager, provided a report titled, “DPI Project” that highlighted the following: 1) Presentation Overview; 2) Background; 3) Development Process; 4) Systems Engineering Management Plan (SEMP); 5) Project Goals; 6) Concept of Operations Key Functions; 7) Key Challenges; 8) Tentative Project Schedule; 9) Example of Real-Time Information Displayed on Internet Web Page (TriMet, Portland); 10) Example of Bus Stop Shelter with Electronic Sign (TriMet, Portland); 11) Examples of Electronic Variable Message Boards/Signs (VMB/VMS); 12) Examples of Audio Way Finding/Audio Sign Technologies; and 13) Questions and Answers.

Member Slack queried about the breakdown of the \$5.6 million project funding. He also queried if staff explored using vandal-free signs. Mr. Roan responded that the project will be funded by federal, regional and local funds. He noted that implementation of the project is included in the \$5.6 million. He stated that staff is looking at signage technology that is vandal-free.

Member Stahl referenced Page 5 of the report and inquired about the survey process. Eugene Maeda, Transportation Planner, responded that the survey was based on the information gathered from both bus and light rail riders at selected bus and light rail stations. He noted that electronic signs that predict the arrival of bus and light rail received positive feedbacks.

Member Grant referenced Page 13 and queried about the “Push-to-talk” sign system. He also expressed concern about access to the signs for visually impaired individuals. Mr. Maeda responded that “Push-to-talk” sign system will be patterned to the San Francisco MUNI sign system where American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant signs are situated at specific locations. Mr. Roan stated that staff is currently exploring different audio sign technology that would address signage issues to visually impaired persons.

Chairperson Tamez recommended including an educational program for the DPI Project that would instruct people with disabilities on how to utilize the sign system.

Member Grant queried if the audio sign system would address language barriers. Mr. Maeda responded that they are exploring integrating the following major languages: English; Spanish; Vietnamese; and Chinese.

Member Stahl recommended having people with disabilities test the sign system prior to completion. Mr. Maeda responded that staff will work with the Accessible Services Department to test the sign system.

Member Jensen inquired about the DPI Project schedule. Mr. Roan responded that the DPI System will begin deployment by winter 2008.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow inquired about the role of the Committee related to the DPI Project. Mr. Roan responded that the Committee's input would be essential in identifying the locations where the signs will be installed and in testing the system once they are in place.

Chairperson Tamez recommended appointing the Mobility Subcommittee to review the DPI Project. He noted that the findings of the Mobility Subcommittee regarding the DPI Project would be reported to the Committee. He also requested the Subcommittee to review the Request for Proposal (RFP) and ensure the integration of accessible technology.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley stated that Outreach staff could provide valuable information about "Real-time" transit data. She noted the lessons learned and the difficult scenarios encountered during a study made through the partnership of Outreach, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), State of California, and Silicon Valley Leadership Group.

Member Gouveia commented that the inclusion of Braille in the sign system will not have a significant impact to visually impaired individuals.

The Agenda was taken out of order

15. Paratransit Origin-to-Destination

Chairperson Tamez stated that he was expecting a memorandum from staff that would provide information on the regional impacts of Origin-to-Destination. He requested that the Item of Paratransit Origin-to-Destination be agendaized at a future meeting with a memorandum informing the Committee regarding the following: 1) Definition of Origin-to-Destination; and 2) Enumerate counties that offer Origin-to-Destination.

Chairperson Tamez noted the position of support of the Department of Transportation regarding Origin-to-Destination. He requested the Committee provide input on the following topics: 1) Impact of Origin-to-Destination on inter-county transfers; 2) Impact on VTA's position.

Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer, stated that staff will provide information regarding the position of the Department of Transportation on Origin-to-Destination at a future meeting. Chairperson Tamez referenced the email from David Knight, Department of Transportation, which was sent to staff and the Committee regarding the support position of the Department of Transportation on Origin-to-Destination.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley commented that the County of Santa complies with Origin-to-Destination. She stated that on a regional level, MTC will encounter inter-county transfer issues because not all counties in the Bay Area offer Origin-to-Destination.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow expressed his support of agendizing the topic of Origin-to-Destination at a future meeting.

8. Bus Service Plan and Impacts to American Disability Act (ADA) Paratransit Service Area

Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer, provided a report on the impacts of the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) to paratransit customers. He stated that Outreach and VTA determined that 33 paratransit customers could be impacted beginning January 14, 2008, when the New Bus Service Plan is implemented, if VTA continues its current policy and practice regarding the paratransit service area.

Mr. Smith requested the Committee's input on the following options:

- 1) Continue existing policy and practice to conform to ADA paratransit service area and charge a Service Area Surcharge for trips originating or ending outside the service area.
 - a. Impacts 33 existing Outreach clients who would have to pay a Service Area Surcharge.
 - b. Consistent with Board direction of June 2003 to continue to serve paratransit customers but charge a higher rate for service over and above ADA requirements.
 - c. Would continue Board direction to exceed ADA requirements.
- 2) Continue to serve ("grandfather") these 33 impacted Outreach clients at current fare (without Service Area Surcharge).
 - d. Would treat customers impacted by the new Bus Service Plan differently than customers impacted by June 2003 change (who have been paying Service Area Surcharge). New customers would pay Service Area Surcharge.
 - e. Would exceed ADA requirements.

Chairperson Tamez pointed out the importance of the Committee's position regarding equal level of service on paratransit surcharges. He expressed concern that 33 individuals would not have to pay the surcharge.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow inquired about on the impact of extending the paratransit service area on Outreach's operation. Ex-Officio Member Heatley responded that effects to the changes of the paratransit service area will not be fully determined until the new boundaries are identified. She noted that individuals who are outside the paratransit service area are in remote locations.

Member Jensen inquired about the paratransit service area surcharge. Mr. Smith responded that people outside the service area would have to pay double the regular rate, \$10.50 each way.

Member Eljas commented that the affected individuals should pay the paratransit service area surcharge.

Member Grant supported the comment of Member Eljas and expressed concern regarding the paratransit service area.

Member Jensen commented the cost of the paratransit service area surcharge is reasonable.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley commented that an automated system should be in place to effectively track people traveling in and out the paratransit service area. She also described the living patterns of the 33 affected individuals and stated that they only use paratransit service twice a month.

M/S (Eljas/Morrow) to recommend that people outside the paratransit service area pay the surcharge.

Member Eljas recommended sending the 33 affected individuals written notice regarding the paratransit service area surcharge. Mr. Smith responded that a draft notice has been prepared and will be sent to the 33 affected individuals.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley recommended providing a 90-day grace period to allow both the affected individuals and the paratransit service provider time to prepare for the change.

M/S/C (Eljas/Morrow) to recommend that people outside the paratransit service area pay the surcharge given a 90 day grace period.

Mr. Smith clarified that the Committee supported option number one with an amendment to include a 90-day grace period.

9. Comments requested for the Bay Area's Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

David Ledwitz, Management Analyst, provided a report that highlighted the following: 1) Draft Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for the nine county Bay Area; 2) CTA evaluates Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 grant applications submitted by the County's social service non-profit and public agencies through the use of a Local Review Committee; and 3) Participation of CTA on an outreach meeting held by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

Mr. Ledwitz noted that the Draft Plan identifies the following: 1) Existing transportation resources serving seniors and persons with disabilities; 2) Documents unmet transportation needs; and 3) Potential solution to address needs.

Mr. Ledwitz reported that MTC is seeking public comment on the Draft Plan and enumerated ways to send them.

Chairperson Tamez inquired about staff's outlook regarding the impact of the Bay Area's Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan to the Santa Clara County. Mr. Ledwitz responded that the Draft Plan is a general view of transportation needs. He added that non-profit social service and public agencies may apply under Section 5310 to propose projects that would address transportation needs.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley provided her opinion that the Draft Plan is inadequate and stated the following: 1) New freedom will have additional money for persons with disabilities that are not covered by ADA; and 2) Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act has provisions.

Ex-Officio Member Heatley noted the complexity of the Plan. She added that there would be limited funds available for programs to serve the vast population of people needing transportation service.

Mr. Ledwitz commented that the local match requirement was decreased from 20 percent to 15 percent. He added that the application process would start in early 2008.

10. FY 2007 Preliminary Annual Transit and Operations Performance Report (July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007)

Member Grant recommended that the report be limited to paratransit issues only.

Joonie Tolosa, Manager, Operations Analysis, Reporting and Systems, provided a report on the Preliminary Annual Transit Operations Performance Report of paratransit for FY 2007. His report highlighted the following: 1) Paratransit ridership increased by 4.6 percent; 2) Net operating cost increased by 0.4 percent; and 3) Eligibility costs declined 28.4 percent.

Member Slack queried on the average rides per day for paratransit. Mr. Tolosa responded that the average number of paratransit riders per day is 3,600.

11. Mainstreaming of Individuals with Disabilities into VTA

Chairperson Tamez reported regarding the use of the term "mainstreaming." He explained that he chose the term "mainstreaming" based on the ADA. He stated that according to ADA, people with disabilities should be included in programs and services.

Member Slack queried if staff explored contracting with a third party to address the issue. Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manager and Staff Liaison, responded that a third party contractor will be utilized once the Mobility Options Program is operational.

M/S/C (Morrow/Grant) to recommend to have the Hay Group restructure Accessible Services Department.

12. Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) Motion Tracking Information

Camille Williams, Accessible Services Program Manager and Staff Liaison, reported on the request of the CTA regarding the motion tracking form. She inquired about the Committee's preference for receiving Motion Tracking Information.

Member Jensen recommended receiving both the current and archived information.

Member Grant recommended receiving both the current and archived information. He stressed the importance of reviewing the Motion Tracking Information. He queried on the status of the Mobility Sub Committee. Chairperson Tamez responded that the Mobility Sub Committee will meet after the CTA meeting.

Member Jensen recommended agendaizing the review of the Motion Tracking Information. Ms. Williams responded that the Motion Tracking item will be agendaized every CTA meeting.

Member Stahl expressed appreciation regarding the new form of the Motion Tracking Information.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow recommended receiving both the current and archived Motion Tracking information. He commented on the following: 1) Effectiveness of the Motion Tracking Form; and 2) Review of the Motion Tracking Information. Chairperson Tamez responded that the content of the Motion Tracking Information can be discussed every meeting under the CTA Motion Tracking Information Agenda Item.

Chairperson Tamez stated that the Committee receives both current and archived Motion Tracking Information.

13. Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) Workplan

Camille Williams, Accessible Service Program Manager and Staff Liaison, reported on the updates made to the CTA workplan. She noted the following additions: 1) Origin to Destination Service; 2) NTD Reporting; 3) CTA Bylaws Amendment; 4) Analyze travel patterns of individuals with disabilities and senior citizens; 5) VTP 2035; and 6) COA impacts to paratransit customers.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow referenced Item #6 of the workplan and queried if the Committee will assess the topic of making changes to the CTA Bylaws.

Member Grant referenced the changes made to the Policy Advisory Committee's (PAC) Bylaws and stressed its effectiveness if adopted by CTA.

Chairperson Tamez requested staff provide information regarding the changes made to the CTA Bylaws.

Ann Carey, Executive Assistant to the General Manager, explained that the Office of the General Counsel must first review the changes to the CTA Bylaws prior to returning to the CTA for review.

Member Slack queried if changes to the CTA Bylaws could be made even if no other Advisory Committee changed their bylaws. Ms. Carey responded that Advisory Committees can recommend changes to their bylaws but it would require approval from the Board of Directors.

14. October 2007 Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) Concerns for the Transit Planning and Operations (TPO) Committee

Chairperson Tamez reported that he forwarded CTA's list of concerns to the TPO Committee. He added TPO Chairperson Sandoval will work with staff and report to CTA to resolve the issues.

Chairperson Tamez recommended agendaizing an item titled, "Update of TPO from Chairperson" that would enable him to report out to CTA on what transpires at TPO. Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer, recommended reporting TPO issues under the Chairperson's Report. Chairperson Tamez responded that he would prefer having a separate agenda item so the Committee could take action if necessary.

Member Grant queried on the status of the list of concerns submitted to TPO. Chairperson Tamez responded that TPO Chairperson Sandoval will work with staff and will then report to CTA.

Member Jensen recommended receiving a written report from TPO regarding the list of concerns of CTA.

First Vice Chairperson Morrow recommended providing enough time for TPO to address CTA's list of concerns.

Member Grant queried if Ex-Officio Board Liaison Williams would review CTA's list of concerns. Anthony Drummond, Staff Aide representing Ex-Officio Board Liaison Forrest Williams, stated that Ex-Officio Board Liaison Williams could work with Chairperson Sandoval.

REPORTS

16. City of San José Disability Advisory Commission (DAC) Report

Chairperson Tamez reported on the letter to the Board of Directors from DAC that expresses concern regarding the elimination of Line 85. He requested the Committee discuss the issue and determine if CTA will support it or not.

Member Jensen expressed concern regarding the elimination of Line 85 and suggested receiving Line 85's ridership report.

Member Grant recommended that the Committee support the letter from DAC that expresses concern regarding the elimination of Line 85.

M/S/C (Grant/Stahl) on a vote of 10 Ayes to 0 Noes to 1 Abstention to endorse the letter sent by DAC to the Board of Directors. Member Jensen abstained.

17. Board of Directors Report

There was no Board of Directors Report.

18. Committee Staff Report

There was no Committee Staff Report.

19. Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Tamez expressed concern regarding staff's response to his complaint about a PowerPoint presentation that he received via email.

OTHER

20. Announcements

Member Hernandez distributed a letter requesting support for AB 423 (Beall) – Healthcare Coverage: Mental health services. He noted that AB 423 would require health plans and insurers to cover the diagnosis and treatment of mental health and substance abuse disorders to the same extent as physical ailments regardless of age.

21. ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned the meeting at 3:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Diaresco, Board Assistant
VTA Board of Directors