

Committee for Transit Accessibility

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

MINUTES

NOTE: MEMBERS MAY TAKE ACTION ON ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA.

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Chairperson Morrow in Building A, Auditorium, Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), 3331 North First Street, San Jose, California.

1. ROLL CALL

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Lori Arnberg	Member	Absent
Emma Eljas	Member	Present
Christina Fernandez	Staff Aide to Ex-Officio Board Liaison Reed	Present
Linda Gallo	Member	Present
Sandra Gouveia	Second Vice Chairperson	Present
David Grant	Member	Present
Katie Heatley	Ex-Officio Member	Present
Troy Hernandez	Member	Present
Marjorie Jensen	Member	Present
David Julian	First Vice Chairperson	Absent
Connie Langford	Member	Present
Martin Lasich	Member	Absent
Laura Michels	Member	Present
Mike Montague	Member	Absent
Aaron Morrow	Chairperson	Present
Shawna Nourzaie	Member	Absent
Larry Saltman	Member	Present
Dilip Shah	Member	Present
Thomas Slack	Member	Present
Barbara Stahl	Member	Present
William Zhu	Member	Present

2. INTRODUCTION OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS

David Ledwitz, Management Analyst; Steve Johnstone, Senior Management Analyst; Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer; Ann Carey, Executive Assistant to the General Manager; Ali Hudda, Deputy Director of Accounting; David Sausjord, Revenue Services Manager; and Walter Schinkle, South County Advocate.

3. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Walter Schinkle, Interested Citizen, expressed concern and inquired on the status of his application to the Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA).

Chairperson Morrow referenced the CTA vacancies and queried about the delay to fill the open seats on the Committee. Jim Unites, Operations Deputy Director and Staff Liaison, responded during the Advisory Committee Enhancement (ACE) process the appointments to VTA's Advisory Committee vacancies was temporarily placed on hold.

Mr. Unites added the Board of Directors determine the appointments to VTA's Advisory Committees.

David Grant, Interested Citizen, referenced the following two emails forwarded to the CTA Committee Members as information: Pass-Up Complaints from Persons with Disabilities and Low Floor Bus Deployment Information and requested the items be agendized for the October 7, 2009 CTA Meeting for further discussion.

Marjorie Jensen, Interested Citizen, expressed her support for Walter Schinkle to be appointed to serve on the Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) representing the South County.

4. Summary Minutes of August 12, 2009

On order of Chairperson Morrow and there being no objection, the Committee received and filed the Summary Minutes of August 12, 2009.

5. Chief Operating Officer's Report

Dan Smith, Chief Operating Officer, indicated the Chief Operating Officer's Report was contained in the CTA Agenda packet. Mr. Smith reported the decline in ridership for the Highway 17 Express, Monterey – San Jose Express, and Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) Shuttle, noting ridership continues to be significantly lower when compared to last year.

Mr. Smith stated VTA has added new stops to Express Line 181 on Stevenson Boulevard near Fremont Boulevard as a result of customer requests.

Mr. Smith announced CTA Members are invited to attend a demonstration of the installation of Between Car Barriers (BCB) System Event at VTA's Almaden Light Rail Station scheduled on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

The BCB system has been implemented by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and San Francisco MUNI is implementing a similar system on station platforms in the subway portion of their light rail system.

The BCB system is designed to prevent patrons from falling off station platforms into the open space between light rail cars and consists of a set of 16 - 36" high bollards spaced 9 inches apart. The bollards are installed over a base plate on top of existing station platform tactile warning bands at each car gap.

VTA will install a BCB platform fall deterrent test system upon a select number of its light rail station platforms, which stems from recent passenger accidents at other transit agencies involving visually impaired patrons being injured when they stepped off station platforms into the area between coupled light rail cars.

On order of Chairperson Morrow and there being no objection, the Committee received the Chief Operating Officer's Report.

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

6. Board of Directors Report

There was no Board of Directors Report.

Member Grant expressed concern that VTA pays both the employee and employer pension contribution. Member Grant noted the importance to forward the pension contribution information to the Board of Directors for review and consideration.

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

7. Senior and Persons with Disabilities Ridership

Jim Unites, Operations Deputy Director and Staff Liaison, provided a brief overview of the presentation entitled, "Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Ridership," highlighting: 1) Lift and Ramp Use Overall, 2) Lift and Ramp Use by Bus Line, 3) Lift and Ramp Boardings per Passenger, 4) Average Weekday Ridership by Bus Line, 5) Fare Revenue by Payment Type, 6) Regional Transit Discount Card Program, 7) OUTREACH Paratransit Photo ID Card, and 8) 2005 – 2006 On-Board Survey.

Mr. Unites reported in the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2009, VTA recorded 8.35 million passenger bus boardings, where 32,019 of the trips were assisted with lifts or ramps. Mr. Unites noted VTA's main core routes serving medical facilities, schools, and businesses utilize the lifts or ramps the most often, such as Lines 22, 25, and 23.

The use of lifts and ramps ranged between 5 and 45 boardings per weekday and boarding assistance was provided between every 96 and 350 boardings depending on the average number of passengers carried per weekday for each route.

VTA has 73 bus routes within the transit system, noting VTA's top ten core routes carry 60 percent of riders and the top twenty core routes carry 80 percent of VTA's riders. VTA's busiest route is Line 22 with an average weekday ridership of 15,744 passengers and Line 522 carry 20 percent of VTA's combined daily ridership.

VTA collected \$36 million in fare revenue during FY 2009, where the fares are categorized by Adult, Youth, Senior/Disabled, Eco Pass/SJSU, and other. VTA's Adult Fares are approximately 60.5 percent of fare revenues collected with Youth Fares accounting at 16.9 percent, and Senior and Disabled Fares are 8.6 percent.

VTA has approximately 20,027 customers who utilize the Regional Transit Discount Card (RTC), noting 11,628 card holders obtained their cards because they have a qualifying disability, while the remaining 8,579 card holders are seniors 65 years old or older.

OUTREACH Paratransit Photo ID Cards are valid as a free pass on VTA's core, local, community, feeder, and express bus and light rail services. VTA encourages paratransit customers to utilize fixed route services whenever possible.

Mr. Unites commented on the 2005 - 2006 On-Board Passenger Survey, a comprehensive passenger survey of VTA's fixed route services, which obtained information about customer origin/destination travel patterns, access and egress modes, service evaluation, fare payment methods, and demographics. VTA received a total of 13,718 surveys with

an overall response rate of 29 percent. Approximately 1,218 or 8.9 percent surveyed characterized themselves as senior or disabled passengers.

The highest levels of discounted fares for seniors were on Line 26 Eastridge Transit Center to Sunnyvale-Lockheed Martin Transit Center and Line 62 Good Samaritan Hospital to Sierra and Piedmont.

The highest levels of discounted fares for individuals with disabilities were Line 23 Alum Rock Transit Center to De Anza College via Stevens Creek; Line 62 Good Samaritan Hospital to Sierra and Piedmont; Line 68 Gilroy Transit Center to San Jose Diridon Transit Center; and Line 81 San Jose State University to Cupertino Square.

Member Grant expressed his appreciation for the detailed presentation and queried how the lift and ramp information was compiled and tracked. Mr. Unites responded the information is not automatically collected it is determined when the operator calls in the information.

Member Grant queried about the ECO Pass and distribution of the stickers. Mr. Unites responded that approximately 140,000 are produced, noting many companies do not actually pickup their program sticker passes.

Chairperson Morrow spoke on behalf of Member Saltman and read into record the following statement: "To VTA Staff: Thank you for Agenda Item #7 on Senior and Persons with Disabilities Ridership Information. As an individual on CTA, I would like to request follow-up information please: 1) Can VTA follow-up with an analysis on how the proposed service reductions for January 2010 will impact Senior and Disabled ridership trends as presented? 2) More comprehensively, can VTA staff please follow-up with an analysis as to how the proposed fixed route service reductions will have an impact on the seniors and disabled riders system wide? In particular, can VTA staff provide an analysis on the impact of proposed service cuts, such as weekend reductions or service elimination, for Line 13 (Almaden), Line 45 (East San Jose), Line 46 (Milpitas), and Line 34 (Mountain View). It would be helpful to get this requested information to CTA before the VTA Board votes next month on the service plan reduction."

Mr. Unites responded staff will provide the requested information to the CTA Committee.

Member Eljas queried if operators with seniority select the easiest or busiest routes. Mr. Unites responded it depends on the operator, the routes, and other factors, but added VTA has many operators with seniority that request to work on Line 22.

Member Slack expressed concern and queried about the procedures regarding complaints of operators passing up passengers. Mr. Unites responded the reports come from Customer Service Customer Care then the driver is placed in a progressive discipline process where management works to address the situation.

Member Slack stated passing up passengers is totally unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

Chairperson Morrow expressed concern and stressed the importance for staff to look into the issue to determine if the operators are passing up seniors and/or disabled individuals due to short headways or not wanting to utilize the lifts and ramps.

Chairperson Morrow stressed the importance to identify the issues to ensure potential concerns are fully addressed.

Member Eljas noted the importance to share this informational report with VTA's Advisory Committees and requested it be presented as part of the Chairperson's Report.

Upon query from the Committee, Mr. Unites stressed the importance for customers to report incidents and provide relevant information to VTA's Customer Service to ensure the issue and concern is tracked and addressed.

Member Grant requested additional information regarding the recording of the lift and ramp utilization. Mr. Unites responded staff will provide the requested information to the Committee.

Member Shah suggested staff consider developing a special pass for seniors between the ages of 58 to 65 to receive a discount fare price.

On order of Chairperson Morrow and there being no objection, the Committee received the Senior and Persons with Disabilities Ridership.

8. Advanced Farebox System Update

David Sausjord, Revenue Services Manager, reported VTA's bus fareboxes are 20 years old and need to be replaced. VTA released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Advanced Farebox System (AFS) on July 14, 2009. Mr. Sausjord stated the vendor proposal bids are due on September 9, 2009, which will be evaluated utilizing a competitive negotiation process.

Mr. Sausjord stated the CTA Committee is invited to participate in the vendor demonstration of the equipment, which is tentatively scheduled the week of October 5, 2009. The final selection will be presented at the December 17, 2009 Transit Planning and Operations (TP&O) Committee then forwarded for consideration at the January 7, 2010 Board of Directors Regular Meeting.

Mr. Sausjord noted there are approximately three or four manufacturers offering fareboxes in the United States. The manufacturers offer the same features in fairly similar packages; however, the fareboxes will be Americans Disability Act (ADA) compliant.

A significant difference from VTA's existing fareboxes will be the ability to read or validate coins and currency, to accept electronic fare media, a marginally smaller footprint to provide greater access within the vehicles, and greatly improved data capture and reporting capabilities.

Member Grant queried if other transit agencies fareboxes are this old and if so, are they updating their equipment. Mr. Sausjord responded "yes."

Member Grant queried if VTA would have to pay for the upgrades if the equipment uses proprietary software. Member Grant queried if the vendors equipment would have security precautions to deal with fraud. Mr. Sausjord responded all those issues and concerns are outlined in VTA's RFP and will be the focus in the evaluation of the vendor's proposal bid.

Member Slack requested staff send a formal invitation to the CTA to participate in the vendor demonstration to ensure the Committee has the opportunity to provide input.

On order of Chairperson Morrow and there being no objection, the Committee received the Advanced Farebox System Update.

9. Committee Work Plan

Chairperson Morrow noted the following three topics added to the CTA Workplan for inclusion on the October 7, 2009 CTA Meeting Agenda: 1) Elevator and Escalator Retrofit Information, 2) Advisory Committee Enhancement Status Report, and 3) Bus Stop Improvement Program.

Chairperson Morrow noted the request to add the following two topics to the CTA Workplan for inclusion on the October 7, 2009 CTA Meeting Agenda for discussion: Pass-Up Complaints from Persons with Disabilities.

On order of Chairperson Morrow and there being no objection, the Committee Work Plan was reviewed.

REPORTS

10. City of San Jose Disability Advisory Commission (DAC) Report

Chairperson Morrow announced the September 14, 2009 DAC Special Meeting 5th Annual Round Table with the San Jose City Council Joint Meeting regarding the Strategic Plan for Services for People with Disabilities.

Chairperson Morrow announced the City of Sunnyvale is conducting a conference schedule in November 2009 to change job development for individuals with disabilities.

11. Committee Staff Report

Jim Unites, Operations Deputy Director and Staff Liaison, reported the OUTREACH Paratransit Service and VTA fare changes will be effective October 1, 2009, noting staff mailed letters to all paratransit clients to inform them of changes to paratransit fares and service.

Mr. Unites stated information regarding VTA's fare changes is available on VTA's website and posted in bus and light rail vehicles.

Mr. Unites noted VTA's Service Reduction Plan will be presented at the September 17, 2009 Transit Planning and Operations (TP&O) Committee Meeting then forwarded for consideration to the October 1, 2009 Board of Directors Regular Meeting.

12. Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Morrow provided a report regarding the meeting he had with Michael T. Burns, General Manager, on August 17, 2009, highlighting the following: 1) Advisory Committee Enhancement (ACE) Process Structure and 2) CTA Committee plan to focus on key areas of accessibility and fare changes.

Chairperson Morrow expressed his support for having the opportunity and ability to meet with VTA's other Advisory Committees.

OTHER

13. Announcements

There were no Announcements.

14. ADJOURNMENT

On order of Chairperson Morrow and there being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle M. Garza, Board Assistant
VTA Office of the Board Secretary