



POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 14, 2006

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chairperson Glickman in Conference Room B-104, Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), 3331 North First Street, San Jose, California.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Mark Brodsky
David Casas
Steve Glickman, Chairperson
Joseph D. Hernandez
Yoriko Kishimoto
Norman Kline, Vice Chairperson
Linda J. LeZotte
Laura Macias
Pete McHugh
Christopher Moylan
Al Pinheiro
Greg Sellers
Kris Wang

Representative Cities

Monte Sereno
Town of Los Altos
Los Gatos
Campbell
Palo Alto
Saratoga
San Jose
Mountain View
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
Sunnyvale
Gilroy
Morgan Hill
Cupertino

Members Absent

Dominic Caserta
Armando Gomez

Representative Cities

Santa Clara
Milpitas

A quorum was present.

2. Orders of the Day

There were no Orders of the Day.

3. Public Presentations

There were no Public Presentations.

4. Committee Staff Report

Michael T. Burns, General Manager reported that the Comprehensive Operations Analysis, the Draft Core Principals for Transit Sustainability, and the VTA Organizational and Financial Assessment are the core initiatives that will set the foundation for VTA strategies for the next 6 months. Mr. Burns stated that he looks forward to working with and receiving input from the Advisory Committees.

Mr. Burns announced the ribbon cutting ceremony that will take place Monday, September 18, 2006 for the I-880/Coleman Avenue Interchange Project and invited the PAC to attend.

Mr. Burns announced that the 2006 American Public Transportation Association Annual Meeting (APTA) that will be hosted by VTA to be held in San Jose on October 8-11. Mr. Burns invited the PAC to attend and noted that all the technical sessions are free of charge but activities that include meals would incur costs to the individual. Mr. Burns commented that the APTA.com website contains additional information concerning the Annual Meeting events and activities.

Mr. Burns provided a brief overview of the organizational financial assessment. With the assistance of Chairperson Glickman along with the other chairpersons from VTA Advisory Committees in the selection process the Hay Group was the firm selected to perform the assessment. Mr. Burns noted the Hay Group has been working approximately four weeks reviewing reports and data through the organization. Mr. Burns commented that the next phase of work would involve face-to-face interviews with the chairpersons of all Advisory Committees. Mr. Burns invited the PAC to submit any input and data they wish to be considered in the assessment to Chairperson Glickman prior to the October 2006 interviews. Mr. Burns commented that the progress of the assessment would periodically be brought to the PAC for review and input.

5. Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Glickman reported that the RIDE Task Force has finished their work and data from that Task Force will be sent to the PAC.

6. City Grouping Report.

There was no City Grouping Report.

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

CONSENT

7. Minutes of August 10, 2006

M/S/C (Brodsky/Kline) to approve the Minutes of August 10, 2006.

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

REGULAR

8. BART Economic Effects Study

David Miller, Commercial Development Manager, drew attention to the handout entitled, “Economic Analysis of the Proposed BART Extension.” Mr. Miller reviewed the PowerPoint presentation and clarified that the study was initiated by VTA for the purpose of evaluating the economic effects of the BART Extension project.

Mr. Miller introduced Ms. Paula Dowell, Ph.D., Vice President, Economics, Freight and Finance, Wilbur Smith Associates, the firm selected to perform the 16-month study. Ms. Dowell introduced Richard C. Carlson, Chairman of Spectrum Economics, Mountain View, California who serves as a local consultant in the study.

Ms. Dowell provided an overview of the Economic Analysis Study and explained that the role of the consultant is to provide information to help the community make informed decisions concerning the BART Extension. The study objectives are aimed at formulating informed decisions on: what do we gain, and how do we pay for it? The three key tasks of the study will include: 1) Economic Impact Analysis; 2) Fiscal Impact Analysis; and 3) Economic Competitive Analysis. The analysis data would be performed for the study region as a whole and later in the study for individual local jurisdictions. M A regional economic model (REMY) impact assessment tool that is FTA-recognized will be used. Within that model, the City of San Jose will be separated out as it’s own region and the remainder of the County will be assessed together.

Ms. Dowell commented that the stakeholders would provide valuable input into the process and the stakeholder led process. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) would serve in an important role in this process and assist in the development of the final methodology. Ms. Dowell clarified that the stakeholders include representatives from all the cities within Santa Clara County, City Managers from those cities, Directors of Economic Development, and stakeholders from the private sector.

Ms. Dowell clarified that for the Fiscal Impact Analysis the concentration of work will involve the Cities of San Jose, Santa Clara, and Milpitas, as they would be the cities that would have stations. Ms. Dowell noted that a detailed breakdown of the incremental revenue as well as the incremental costs of service would be provided. For the remaining cities of the county broad revenue estimates based on the economic impacts would be provided.

Ms. Dowell explained that the Economic Competitive Analysis would demonstrate how the BART Extension could alter the economic competitiveness landscape of the region relative to other regions throughout the United States as well as the competitiveness between the jurisdictions within the region.

Ms. Dowell stated that the Categories of Economic Impacts include: 1) Travel efficiency savings; 2) Travel time savings; 3) Vehicle operating costs (VOC); 4) Emission savings;

5) Affordable mobility benefits; 6) Land use/housing stocks impacts; and 7) Economic competitiveness.

Ms. Dowell noted the timetable for the study: 1) Economic Benefits February 2007, 2) Fiscal Impact May 2007, 3) Competitive Analysis August 2007; and 4) Final Report, in September 2007.

Member Brodsky recommended that the study consider how to better spend 2000 Measure A funds for Santa Clara County. Member Brodsky quoted George Mason commenting that politics involves “ trading off lesser goods for greater goods.”

Member Kishimoto suggested the study consider the cost side of the equation and include the financing mechanisms. Ms. Dowell clarified that upon the completion of the benefit analysis the revenue calculations will be compiled. Member Kishimoto inquired if the PAC would have the opportunity to evaluate the Economic Analysis Study. Mr. Lawson answered in the affirmative.

Member Macias asked in what other regions has Wilbur Smith Associates performed this type of Economic Analysis Study. Ms. Dowell stated her firm has performed similar studies in Rochester, New York for the Redline Extension, and the Eastern Corridor in Ohio.

Member Moylan asked VTA staff if the purpose of the exercise is to determine whether the BART Extension would qualify for Federal New Starts funds. Mr. Lawson indicated the study would clarify questions that arise concerning the economic impacts of the BART Extension on Santa Clara County.

Ms. Dowell explained that FTA has amended their New Starts criteria that now allows for the consideration of economic impacts into their decision criteria. Mr. Lawson commented that VTA has met with the San Jose Downtown Association and the merchants and businesses are very interested in the results and findings of the Economic Impact Analysis of the Proposed BART Extension.

Member Casas asked how the key stakeholders were determined. Ms. Dowell stated that VTA staff assisted with that process and the group includes advocates for the BART Extension as well as opponents. In addition TAC representatives from each of the cities were given the opportunity to nominate members for the study. Scott Haywood, Policy and Community Relations Manager, explained that all City Managers were contacted by mail and asked to assign a representative from their respective cities to assist in the study.

Member Casas stressed the importance of involving in the initial phase political leaders who are both in support and opposition to the project. Ms. Dowell invited the PAC to nominate individuals to participate. Member Casas recommended that Scott Haywood circulate invitations to the PAC membership to participate in the study.

Chairperson Glickman thanked Ms. Dowell for the presentation and suggested at the final stage of the study a critical analysis of the study would be helpful to address concerns and questions.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection the Committee received the BART Economic Effects Study.

9. 2005-2006 VTA Passenger Survey

Ying Smith, Sr. Transportation Planner, reported that the last On-Board Survey was conducted in 2000. She reported that the 2005-2006 On-Board Survey is the first comprehensive passenger survey of VTA fixed-route services since 2000. The surveys were conducted in three separate periods beginning in October 2005 and in March 2006.

Ms. Smith directed attention the PowerPoint presentation entitled “2005-2006 VTA Rider Survey Overview.” She provided a report on the Survey Methodology highlighting: 1) On-Board Passenger was offered in four different languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese; 2) Completed Surveys: 13,718 resulting in an overall response rate of 29 percent; 3) Survey achieved a system-wide confidence level of 95 percent with a +/-0.8 percent margin of error; and 4) survey contained 29 questions collecting information in three categories: rider demographics, travel characteristics, and service evaluation. Ms. Smith reported the survey results would be used in a wide variety of VTA programs and initiatives, including VTA’s Comprehensive Operations Analysis providing data to evaluate VTA’s transit services and abet in the development of strategies for improvement. Ms. Smith commented that survey results are incorporated into the VTA Travel Demand Model and would be used in the development of marketing strategies such as the Annual Service Management Plan and Short Range Transit Plan.

Ms. Smith directed attention to the Rider Profile and noted that the following key findings: 1) 34 years of age or younger – 59 percent; 2) Hispanic /Latino 1- 37 percent, 3) Employed full-time – 38 percent; 4) Income less than \$25,000 - 56 percent; 5) No auto available for trip – 65 percent; 6) Rides four days/week or more – 75 percent; and 7) Walks to stop – 71 percent.

Ms. Smith directed attention to the question, “Who are VTA passengers?” and provided a report on the Rider Demographics, highlighting 1) Respondent’s Home Location; 2) Age Distribution of VTA Passengers; 3) Comparison of Age distribution, VTA Passengers versus Santa Clara County residents; 4) Ethnic Background; Household Income of VTA passengers; 5) Comparison of income, VTA Passengers versus Santa Clara County residents; 6) Employment Status; and 7) Transit Dependency.

Ms. Smith directed attention to the question, “How do VTA passengers travel?” and provided a report on the Travel Characteristics, highlighting: 1) Frequency Riding VTA Transit; 2) Length of Time Riding VTA; 3) Trip Purpose; 4) Access and Egress Modes; 5) Fare Category; 6) How did you pay your fare on this trip?; 7) Bus compared to Light Rail; and 8) Line 22 Compared to Rapid 522.

Ms. Smith proceeded with the question, “What do VTA passengers think of VTA service?” and provided a report on the Service Evaluation, highlighting: 1) Rating of Service Characteristics; 2) Positive Ratings; 3) Fair and Poor Ratings; and 4) Service Improvements by Level of Importance.

Ms. Smith commented that the results of the survey would be utilized in various VTA programs and initiatives, including the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA), an effort to evaluate VTA's transit services and develop strategies for improvement. Also, the survey results are incorporated into the VTA Travel Demand Model and used in the development of market strategies and efforts.

Member Brodsky suggested that the information and data compiled in the Passenger Survey be utilized in the Transit Sustainability Policy to increase ridership and improve service, and along to outreach the portion of the community that does not utilize public transportation.

Member Macias commented that along with outreach to the member of the community who do not use public transportation, she suggested that VTA strive to provide exemplary service to the low-income community, which comprises the majority of VTA ridership.

Member Kishimoto suggested that future survey information include a segment describing the commuter market, additional information on the transit dependent, and location efficient data indicating what market segment VTA is serving well and what segment service could be improved.

Member Mc Hugh complimented VTA for the data and noted that the Passenger Survey seemed well received by the community. Chairperson Glickman thanked staff for their diligence and hard work on the Passenger Survey.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection, the Committee reviewed the 2005-2006 VTA Passenger Study.

10. Draft Core Principles for the Transit Sustainability Policy and Comprehensive Operations Analysis

Chris Augenstein, Transportation Planning Manager, provided an overview and PowerPoint presentation of entitled "VTA TSP/COA Draft Core Principles." Mr. Augenstein reported that the principles were developed in collaboration with consultants and working groups. Mr. Augenstein encouraged the PAC to provide input and comments to staff by telephone or e-mail.

Mr. Augenstein provided an overview of the Goals and Core Principles. He reviewed each of the Core Principles: Financial Sustainability, Capital Investment, Customer Focus, Target Markets, and System Integration. The Goals include: Improve System Ridership, Farebox Recovery, Viable Alternative, and Transit Investment and Resources.

Member Moylan referenced the slide entitled, "System Integration," and commented that it is crucial to integrate service operating plans in capital project and budget development and stated the "Goals" seem to depict ensuring the preservation and survival of VTA. He suggested that the goals be better modified to better reflect the development of a transit system that is preferable to driving for the majority of County residents.

Member Casas suggested financial accountability and responsibility should be primary in the ranking of Goals and Core Principles along with consistency.

Member Kishimoto suggested that Caltrain and ACE ridership figures be included. Mr. Lawson stated that VTA is very supportive of Caltrain.

Member Sellers commented that 80 percent of the residents of Morgan Hill commute north and expressed concern that services to Morgan Hill remain consistent and viable.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection the Committee reviewed Draft Core Principles for the Transit Sustainability Policy and Comprehensive Operations Analysis.

11. Outreach Process for the Comprehensive Operations Analysis

Kevin Connolly, Transportation Planning Manager, provided an overview and PowerPoint presentation entitled "Comprehensive Operation Analysis Stakeholder Outreach Overview." Mr. Connolly stated that the Stakeholder Outreach Concept includes:

1) Involve stakeholders in Comprehensive Operation Analysis (COA); 2) Service implementation beginning July 2007; 3) Incorporates Phase I Community Bus Implementation; and 4) Community involvement throughout process.

Mr. Connolly stated that with the Stakeholder Outreach Concept two board actions are anticipated: 1) Core Principles (December 2006); 2) Final Service Restructuring Plans (April 2007). Mr. Connolly noted the Transit Planning and Operations Committee would provide policy oversight with input from the PAC and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) as well as the Board Workshop in February 2007.

Mr. Connolly provided an overview of the COA, Stakeholder Outreach, Passenger Survey, Existing Conditions, Market Segmentation, Community Bus, Transit Sustainability Policy and Core Principles, Service Restructuring Alternatives, Draft Service Operations Plans, and Final Service Operations Plans.

Member Moylan requested staff consider the City of Sunnyvale as a site for upcoming community meetings.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection the Committee received the Outreach Process for the Comprehensive Operations Analysis.

12. Strategies for Increasing Ridership Presentation

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection the Committee deferred the Strategies for Ridership Presentation.

13. Community Bus Implementation Plan

Jim Lawson, Government Affairs Manager, provided an overview of the Community Bus Implementation Plan. Mr. Lawson stated that VTA staff recognizes the concerns the PAC relayed at the August meeting and modifications have been made to the Plan.

Mr. Lawson highlighted the modifications to the Community Bus Implementation Plan including: 1) Purchase of the twenty vehicles; 2) Meet with communities to establish routes; 3) Extend community outreach; and 4) Establish branding and marketing concept for design and identity to be displayed on vehicles, signage, time guides, system map and promotional materials.

Member Brodsky handed out information from the City of Monte Sereno for a proposed Community Bus expansion plan for the West Valley connection to the North. Member Brodsky suggested the following goal for the program: “A goal for Community Bus becomes the method to rework the VTA service model leading to modern and cashless farebox recovery because of its greater utility to the public.” Member Brodsky stated that new technologies should be considered in the Community Bus Implementation Plan.

Member Brodsky requested that his written letter, “September 14, 2006 Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting – Agenda Item # 13., Community Bus Implementation Plan” be entered into the record:

“A consensus of last PAC meeting was community bus’s goal is to increase ridership:

1. Community Bus has worked on Small Scale trails, It attracts more riders than old routes, It can provide direct access to faster regional connections;
2. Community Bus Creates a better Transit network, Old network is bad, slow and ill suited for our valley’s configuration, Community Bus supports local hubs everyone knows and attracts with branding Fast Regional connection like BRT interconnect a more viable transit network;
3. Community Bus can be the platform to expand new transit technology, Cell phone GPS locator like Muni, Cashless payment, beyond Translink developed locally, Off loop pick up and drop off within 1/8 or 1/4 mile depending upon route; and
4. Proposed community bus expansion plan for the West Valley connection to the North LG connection to SC express because it is faster than Bus-Light Rail Saratoga, West San Jose – Quito/Saratoga Loop to Lawrence BRT, BRT limited Stop loop Saratoga to Cupertino to Sunnyvale on De Anza - Mathilda, BRT limited Stop loop Caribbean Drive up Lawrence to Westgate.

Goal: Community bus becomes the method to rework the VTA service model leading to modern and cashless farebox recovery because of its greater utility to the public.

Mark Brodsky
Mayor, City of Monte Sereno”

Chairperson Glickman commented that the community of Los Gatos enjoys the expression of individuality through branding the vehicles on the Los Gatos Community Bus.

Mr. Lawson stated that fares for the Community Bus Program would be applied consistent with the Board adopted fare policy. Mr. Lawson noted that if a particular city or community group desires to have a certain route(s) operate on a free-fare basis, then a subsidy equaling at least a 25 percent farebox recovery for that route(s) would need to be provided.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection the Committee reviewed the Paratransit Operations – Vehicles, Fueling, Facility and Vendor Contract.

14. On-line Trip Planning

David Terrazas, Customer Service Manager, provided a brief overview of On-line Trip Planning. Mr. Terrazas noted that at the request of PAC Chairperson Glickman, VTA staff has compiled an overview of current efforts to increase the availability of On-line Trip Planning.

Mr. Terrazas commented that since April 2004 VTA has participated in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) 511 Take Transit On-line Trip Planner. VTA has utilized this system to provide customers the ability to plan trips with approximately 30 transportation systems located throughout the Bay Area. MTC has indicated they are currently evaluating alternative trip-planning technologies and plan to introduce a major revision to the system late 2007.

VTA continues to evaluate alternative trip-planning applications such as: Google Transit beta that operates in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area and in early 2006 contacted them to participate in a pilot program.

Mr. Terrazas noted that in February 2006 VTA developed an interactive on-line Bikeways Map located at www.vta.org/schedules/maps/index.html that currently runs atop the Google maps application. This is a free map engine hosted by VTA and is supplied with a global positioning system that coordinates that identify trail markers. This application provides bicyclists with the advantage of a web-based trip-planning tool that can be expanded in combination with other existing maps.

Member Brodsky suggested that VTA staff glean informational data from riders or potential riders of frequented establishments such as local coffee shops and restaurants as highlighted locations on the website and to provide convenient transit near those locations.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection the Committee reviewed the On-line Trip Planning,

15. VTA Website Improvements

Mr. Terrazas directed attention to the handout entitled, "Building a Better Website – VTA.Org. and Planned Future Website Enhancements." Mr. Terrazas stated that the handout contains information about the VTA website history, demographics of website users, website statistics, and the planned improvements. VTA received input from an online survey, customer comments, and the RIDE Taskforce for this project.

Mr. Terrazas noted that VTA's last major update of the website took place in March 2002 with individualized site-specific improvements occurring on an ongoing basis. Mr. Terrazas explained the customer survey results indicated the need for the following improvements: real-time transit updates, simplified navigation, an interactive trip planner, user friendly schedules and maps, up-to-date news and information, and e-mail alerts to updated web pages.

Mr. Terrazas noted that as a result of the online survey, focus groups were created to test the proposed changes and to make recommendations. The groups, with a total of 72 individuals include: current VTA riders, the disabled community, and people that are unfamiliar with VTA services. The testing will be conducted in December 2006 and January 2007 and provide data on the review of the Website's accessibility, design enhancements and new concepts.

Mr. Terrazas clarified that specific website improvements to date include: creation of the online VTA News Room and Rider Alerts, improved navigation, interactive displays, content organization, enhanced visual graphics, and updated promotional elements. Mr. Terrazas stated the redesigned website is scheduled to go live Spring 2007.

Mr. Terrazas noted VTA's website generates approximately 1.6 million annual visits, and offers website visitors the ability to submit online comments to VTA regarding service.

Mr. Terrazas commented that on June 26, 2006 VTA developed an online customer survey posted on www.vta.org and noted that 200 responses have been received from the general public. Mr. Terrazas commented that staff will consider the suggested improvements and in November a focus group will consider in detail the submitted suggestions. Mr. Terrazas noted that upon completion of the focus group review, VTA will create the improved design features and will include an update of the site navigation bar to provide direct links to frequently requested web pages and to initiate design enhancements to the home page.

Mr. Terrazas stated that VTA would better structure content to match visitor interests using input from the focus group and online responses. Mr. Terrazas noted presentations would be presented to VTA Board of Directors and Advisory Committee meetings prior to the January 2007 release date.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection the Committee reviewed the VTA Website Improvements.

OTHER

16. Committee Work Plan.

Member Pinheiro suggested the Wednesday, October 12, 2006 PAC meeting begin at 3:00 p.m.

On Order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection, the Committee reviewed the Workplan and agreed to meet Wednesday, October 12, 2006 at 3:00 p.m.

17. Announcements

There were no announcements.

18. ADJOURNMENT

On order of Chairperson Glickman, there being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline F. Golzio, Board Assistant
VTA Board of Directors