



TRANSIT PLANNING & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 23, 2006

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Transit Planning and Operations (TP&O) Committee was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by Chairperson Sandoval in Conference Room B-104, Valley Transportation Authority, 3331 North First Street, San Jose, California.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Dean Chu, Vice Chairperson
Greg Perry
Dolores Sandoval, Chairperson

Members Absent

David Cortese

Alternates Present

None

Alternates Absent

Norman Kline
Jamie Matthews
Ken Yeager

*Alternates do not serve unless participating as a Member.

A quorum was not present and a Committee of the Whole was declared.

The Agenda was taken out of order.

2. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Vice Chairperson Chu took his seat at 4:07 p.m. and a quorum was declared.

Jerry Grace, Interested Citizen, announced that his birthday was on March 19, 2006, and noted his attendance at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Meeting's the week of March 20, 2006.

Chairperson Sandoval wished Mr. Grace a Happy Belated Birthday.

Martin Bishop, N.E.E.D. Project, requested additional time before addressing the Committee in order to gather the information needed.

3. ORDERS OF THE DAY

There were no Orders of the Day.

CONSENT AGENDA

4. Minutes of February 15, 2006

M/S/C (Perry/Chu) to approve the Minutes of February 15, 2006.

5. (Removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda.)

Review the Monthly Legislative Report for February 2006.

REGULAR

5. Monthly Legislative Report for February 2006

Kurt M. Evans, Government Affairs Manager, reported that Governor Schwarzenegger and lawmakers were trying to come to an agreement on an infrastructure bond package that could be placed before the voters in June 2006, but missed the deadline for putting measures on the June 2006 ballot.

Mr. Evans reported that a vote was taken in the Senate on an infrastructure bond package amounting to \$47 billion; \$37 billion would have been placed on the June 2006 ballot and would have gone to the following infrastructure needs: 1) transportation, 2) affordable housing, 3) water storage facilities, 4) levees, and 5) urban parks. Ten billion (\$10 billion) would have been placed on the 2008 ballot and would have gone to education. Mr. Evans indicated that transportation and housing were combined and \$19 billion was set-aside for transportation and housing in terms of general obligation bonds. He reported that most of the funding was for transportation and noted the following funding on the highway side: 1) \$4.5 billion for corridor mobility projects, 2) \$3.1 for port security and goods movement, 3) \$1 billion to reinvigorate the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), 4) \$1 billion for the State

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

Local Partnership Program, 5) \$125 million for seismic retrofit work on local bridges,

6) \$300 million for grade separation projects, and 7) \$1 billion for the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP).

Mr. Evans referred to the bond package that the Senate voted on and indicated that there was over \$500 billion for transit as follows: 1) \$400 million for inner-city rail, 2) \$4.1 billion for transit capital, 3) \$500 million for transit security, and 4) \$300 million for a competitive grant program for transit-oriented development. He noted that high-speed rail did not receive any funds.

Mr. Evans noted the following items that were high priorities for the Democrats, but the Republicans did not consider them to be infrastructure: 1) affordable housing; 2) parks; and 3) transit. He indicated that there was a debate over water storage facilities, noting that the Republicans wanted some bond money for a reservoir in Northern California. The environmental groups and Democrats opposed the idea.

Mr. Evans reported that the Democratic leadership does not want the bond discussion inter-mixed with the Budget. He indicated that the June 2006 ballot is not the same as the November 2006 ballot, noting that there would be a contentious gubernatorial race. The Democrats are feeling somewhat leery about having a bond measure on the same ballot when the Governor is running for re-election.

Upon query by Member Perry, Mr. Evans noted that the deadline to get something on the November 2006 ballot is August 15, 2006.

On order of Chairperson Sandoval, there being no objection, the Monthly Legislative Report for February 2006 was reviewed.

The Agenda was taken out of order.

2. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued)

Mr. Bishop provided a letter addressed to the TP&O Committee regarding the deferment of VTA's mandatory securement of mobility devices and his design proposal for a bus mobility device restraint system for wheelchairs. He provided a brochure entitled "Secure Your Mobility Device." Mr. Bishop noted that he supported VTA staff's deferment of mandatory securement of mobility devices until January 2007, due to concerns of injuries to coach operators, damages to wheelchairs, and other mobility devices. He indicated that the securement device issue came about due to a lawsuit that was filed in the amount of \$1.2 million, noting that there has been a non-mandatory restraint policy on County buses for 23 years.

Chairperson Sandoval indicated that Matthew O. Tucker, Chief Operations Officer, would meet with Mr. Bishop to discuss Mr. Bishop's design proposal for a bus mobility

device restraint system for wheelchairs, noting that the VTA Board of Directors has already looked at various securement options.

Mr. Tucker reported that approximately six to nine months ago, the Board of Directors approved the purchase of new equipment, which is now installed on all VTA buses. The equipment is state-of-the-art, off-of-the-shelf, and Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) approved technology.

Chairperson Sandoval requested that staff provide a report back on the subject matter at the April 24, 2006 TP&O Meeting.

REGULAR (continued)

6. Agreement with Parking Company of America for Los Gatos Community Bus Light Rail Shuttle Service

Mr. Tucker reported that the contract with the Parking Company of America was previously approved by the Board of Directors and noted that VTA is currently in discussions with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) to try to reach an agreement relating to the provision of Community Bus service, and remedy an arbitration decision relating to Lines 48 and 49.

Chairperson Sandoval queried if an agreement would be reached by the next TP&O Meeting. Mr. Tucker noted that ATU will take action the week of March 27, 2006, with subsequent action at the April 6, 2006 Board Meeting.

M/S/C (Chu/Perry) to approve submitting a recommendation to the Board of Directors to authorize the General Manager to enter into up to ten one-month contract extensions (from May 2006 through February 2007) at an estimated cost of \$71,000 per month with the Parking Company of America Management, LCC (PCA) for the provision of the Los Gatos Community Bus Light Rail Shuttle Service (Lines 48 and 49) for a total estimated cost of up to \$710,000.

7. Paratransit Eligibility Certification Program Modifications

Jim Unites, Operations Planning Program Manager, directed attention to the document entitled "Paratransit Eligibility Certification Program Modifications," and provided a report. He noted that paratransit eligibility is for persons who have disabilities that

prevent them from independently accessing and using VTA's bus and rail system. Eligibility is not based on age, inability to drive an automobile, or having a disability.

Eligibility is all related to the disability preventing a person from using VTA's bus and rail system.

Mr. Unites referred to the paratransit program and noted that this fiscal year, VTA will be carrying a little less than a million passengers. VTA's current program provides free transportation to eligibility interview. VTA serves approximately 10,000 to 11,000 clients in a year and, currently, VTA is serving slightly over 9,000 clients. The paratransit operating budget is \$24.6 million and represents 7.5 percent of VTA's overall operating budget. The cost to provide a paratransit trip is \$25.69 per trip.

Mr. Unites indicated that in 2002, the VTA Business Review Team recommended that VTA look at its Paratransit Eligibility Certification Program to continue to refine the program and to ensure that VTA meets ADA requirements. Mr. Unites provided a report on the new process implemented in July 2003 and the program modifications implemented in May 2005. Since May 2005, VTA worked with a Subcommittee of the Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) to review VTA's eligibility program and to review the proposals that were incorporated into VTA's Community Plan. VTA held two listening sessions and community organizations throughout Santa Clara County were invited to attend the sessions. VTA also held three community meetings throughout Santa Clara County.

Mr. Unites noted that CTA endorsed a new eligibility process at their December 2005 meeting and that he provided a report on the changes to the Paratransit Eligibility Certification Program that amends VTA's contract with Outreach to have Outreach perform the eligibility certification function. This will create a one-stop shop for all paratransit services. He indicated that VTA recommends adopting a "hybrid" certification model that is based on MTC's Regional Model and also recommends that Outreach manage the appeals process. VTA is projecting that the current modifications will save the paratransit program approximately \$300,000 to \$500,000 a year. VTA will continue to work with Outreach through audits and customer service surveys to ensure that the program is meeting VTA's needs and ADA requirements.

Member Perry asked if VTA currently limits paratransit use by proximity to bus service. Mr. Tucker referred to enforcement of the service area and noted that ADA states that paratransit service must be provided within three-fourths of a mile of a fixed-route transit corridor. He referred to the preparation of VTA's budget for Fiscal Years 2006-2007 and indicated that there was a discussion within the Service Management Plan, because in South County VTA had deferred implementation of a surcharge for paratransit trips that were outside of the three-fourths mile area. As VTA approaches mid Fiscal Year 2006, staff will be coming to the Board of Directors with specific recommendations to address the out-of-area surcharge for South County.

Member Perry asked if persons living outside the three-quarter mile service area are eligible for paratransit. Mr. Unites noted that they are eligible for the service, however, VTA does not provide service outside of its overall service area.

M/S/C (Perry/Chu) to approve submitting a recommendation to the Board of Directors to approve the proposed modifications to the Paratransit Eligibility Certification process, adopting a VTA “hybrid” model based on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Regional Model and having Outreach manage both eligibility and appeals processes. Further, authorize the General Manager to amend Outreach’s contract to perform eligibility and appeals functions. The proposed modifications would become effective July 2006.

8. Transit Service Change Proposal

Bill Capps, Service Planning Manager, reported that since the last TP&O Meeting, staff held six community meetings to present the Transit Service Change Proposal, where a total of 17 persons attended. In the community meetings there was a sense of relief, because VTA is proposing to reduce some service and reallocate resources back into the system. Mr. Capps noted that the improvement of service on Bus Line 81 to the new Kaiser Hospital in Santa Clara and the improvement in light rail evening service to the HP Pavilion in downtown San Jose were favorable.

Mr. Capps noted that VTA is looking at a July 2006 implementation date for the proposed Transit Service Changes.

Member Perry asked if staff had reviewed reallocating the savings from non-performing services to Caltrain. Specifically, Member Perry queried if staff had reviewed adding service to Caltrain rather than improving the headways on light rail to downtown activities occurring in the late evenings. Mr. Tucker responded that VTA had received numerous requests to improve the frequency of light rail service in the late evening to support events occurring in downtown San Jose. Jim Lawson, Government Affairs Manager, noted that he would be meeting with Caltrain staff on March 24, 2006, and that this issue would be discussed at the meeting.

Chairperson Sandoval requested that a revised Board Memorandum be forwarded to the Board of Directors at their April 6, 2006 Board Meeting reflecting the following change to the Board Memorandum, Page 2 of 3, Proposed Service Improvements – Light Rail (Mountain View to Winchester Line): *“Increase the frequency of late evening service from 60 minutes to 30 minutes between trains”*.

M/S/C (Perry/Chu) to approve submitting a recommendation to the Board of Directors to adopt the recommended Transit Service Change Proposal to reallocate resources from underutilized transit services to areas in need of service improvements, to become effective Monday, July 3, 2006. Further, requested that the discussion regarding looking

at the issue of adding service to Caltrain rather than improving the headways on light rail to downtown activities occurring in the late evenings immediately follow the motion.

Vice Chairperson Chu recommended that the Committee approve submitting a recommendation to the Board of Directors to adopt the recommended Transit Service Change Proposal and to look at the issue of adding service to Caltrain rather than improving the headways on light rail to downtown activities occurring in the late evenings as a future change.

Member Perry expressed concern about implementing the service now and not being able to remove the service five months from now if the service proves not to be successful.

Chairperson Sandoval asked about the financial situation pertaining to the proposed transit service changes. Mr. Tucker responded that the incremental cost to keep operators out there is not significant.

Mr. Tucker indicated that additional transit service changes would be implemented in October 2006 and that discussions about those proposed transit service changes would begin during the April/May 2006 timeframe. Mr. Tucker noted that the Caltrain issue could also be discussed during that timeframe.

M/S/C (Chu/Perry) to approve submitting a recommendation to the Board of Directors to adopt the recommended Transit Service Change Proposal to reallocate resources from underutilized transit services to areas in need of service improvements, to become effective Monday, July 3, 2006.

2. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued)

Upon query of Mr. Bishop, Chairperson Sandoval noted that the bus mobility device restraint issue would be placed on the April 24, 2006 TP&O Agenda.

OTHER ITEMS

9. Monthly Ridership and Fare Revenue Performance

Member Perry left his seat at 5:06 p.m., the quorum was lost, and a Committee of the Whole was declared.

Joonie Tolosa, Sr. Management Analyst, directed attention to the document entitled "VTA Transit Operations, February 2006 Ridership and Fare Revenue Performance," and provided a report on VTA's ridership, highlighting: 1) system wide ridership increased 9.7 percent, 2) bus average weekday ridership fiscal year-to-date is up 2.8 percent, and 3) light rail average weekday ridership is up 13.8 percent. He noted that VTA's average weekday ridership for February 2006 is the highest it has ever been since February 2001.

Member Perry took his seat at 5:08 p.m., and a quorum was declared.

Mr. Tolosa referred to Fare Revenues & Average Fare per Boarding and noted that for the month of February 2006, fare revenues decreased 1.5 percent and the average fare per boarding decreased 10.1 percent compared to 2005.

Vice Chairperson Chu asked how could VTA have an increase in boardings and a decrease in revenues. Mr. Tolosa noted that the VTA's Senior discount fare promotion that began in January 2006 had an impact in February 2006. Mr. Tucker indicated that throughout the fiscal year, VTA was below its average fare per boarding, and this was due to customers taking advantage of VTA's discounted programs rather than paying full fare.

Vice Chairperson Chu noted that in the retail world there is something called "same store sales" and "new sales," where you look at existing stores and see how much the sales have increased versus new stores that have been added on. Vice Chairperson Chu indicated that it is obvious that a light rail extension has been added to the Capital Light Rail line. He expressed an interest in knowing what the light rail ridership is as it has changed on the old line separate from additional ridership on the new light rail line. Mr. Tolosa noted without the Vasona Light Rail line, ridership for light rail would increase about 6 percent to 7 percent as compared to the 14.6 percent fiscal year-to-date.

Member Perry requested information on VTA boardings and disembarkments on light rail stations.

Mr. Grace expressed appreciation for VTA's Simple and Free Promotional Program for Seniors and persons with disabilities during the months of January through March 31, 2006.

Member Perry asked if VTA's subsidy per rider decreased under the promotional program. Michael T. Burns, General Manager, noted that if in fact VTA is getting more riders, which the numbers indicate out of the promotion, VTA did not add any cost, so

the subsidy per rider would decrease. Mr. Tucker noted that the subsidy information would be included in the Quarterly Performance Report.

On order of Chairperson Sandoval, there being no objection, the Monthly Ridership and Fare Revenue Performance was reviewed.

10. Update on the RIDE Task Force

Nancy Coss-Fitzwater, Policy & Administration Manager, directed attention to the Memorandum that was distributed, dated March 15, 2006, addressed to the RIDE Task Force. She indicated that the Memorandum was agendized at the March 22, 2006 RIDE Task Force Meeting and contained a list of approximately 140 ideas for increasing ridership that the Task Force has generated to date.

Ms. Coss-Fitzwater provided a report on the following proposals relating to fare affordability and convenience that were presented by staff at the March 22, 2006 RIDE Task Force Meeting: 1) Leisure Travel Campaign; 2) 8-Hour Light Rail Excursion Fare; and 3) Lifeline Transit Fares for Low-Income Persons. Ms. Coss-Fitzwater noted that the Task Force accepted and endorsed the proposals. The Task Force also proposed that VTA provide an additional subsidy or discount for the lifeline transit fare.

Ms. Coss-Fitzwater noted that staff would be meeting with a small group of RIDE Task Force Members to discuss the next steps; over the next several months, staff will prepare recommendations in the following three broad areas: 1) Better information for riders; 2) Better access to system; and 3) Service improvements.

Member Perry expressed concern regarding the lack of connectivity between VTA's most productive Bus Line #22 and San Mateo's most productive Bus Line on El Camino Real. He asked if VTA could work with San Mateo County regarding regional connectivity, so that passengers would not have to transfer from one county line to another. He requested that staff look into the possibility of having VTA operators driving outside the County of Santa Clara and San Mateo operators driving into the County of Santa Clara. Mr. Tucker noted that the issue would be agendized for a future TP&O Meeting.

Upon query of Mr. Grace, Ms. Coss-Fitzwater noted that she would talk to Mr. Grace following the meeting about the 8-Hour Light Rail Excursion Fare.

Chairperson Sandoval asked about VTA's advertisement of the 8-Hour Light Rail Excursion Fare. Bernice Alaniz, Marketing & Public Affairs Deputy Director, indicated that VTA will be launching its Leisure Travel Campaign on April 1, 2006, and could

incorporate the 8-Hour Light Rail Excursion Fare. VTA is conducting a fairly heavy advertising campaign through July 2006.

On Order of Chairperson Sandoval, there being no objection, an update on the RIDE Task Force was accepted.

11. Report regarding the March 8, 2006 Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) Meeting

Mr. Unites noted that CTA heard a report on the following items at their March 8, 2006 Meeting: 1) Bus Stop Accessibility Improvement Project; 2) Comprehensive Operations Analysis; 3) Transit Operations Performance Report; 4) Scoring Criteria for the Lifeline Transportation Projects; and 5) Transportation Field Supervision Program.

Mr. Unites referred to the Transportation Field Supervision Program and noted that CTA passed a motion to recommend that VTA reinstate an "800" telephone number in order for customers to call in to report non-operating lifts. He indicated that staff is looking at various alternatives to address CTA's concerns.

Mr. Bishop noted that in the past there was a phone number available for customers where they could contact Bus Operations directly when there were non-operating lifts. Upon query of Chairperson Sandoval, Mr. Unites noted that VTA had a telephone number available in the past when VTA was having quite a bit of trouble with its lift operations. He indicated that since then, all of VTA's recent bus procurements have been with ramps, so VTA's field issues regarding lifts have declined dramatically.

Mr. Unites noted that CTA also expressed concern about having the ability to contact VTA about transportation issues when VTA's Information Center is during the evenings and on weekends.

12. Items of Concern and Referral to Administration

There were no Items of Concern and Referral to Administration.

13. Committee Work Plan

Chairperson Sandoval directed attention to the revised TP&O Committee Work Plan.

Mr. Tucker noted that the revised Committee Work Plan reflected the addition of the following items: 1) Energy Conservation Initiative – agendaized for the April 24, 2006 TP&O Meeting and 2) Sheriff's Department Contract Options – agendaized for the April 24, 2006 TP&O Meeting.

Member Perry referred to the “Allocation of TDA Funds to Cities” and requested that the item be listed as an Information/Action item for the April 24, 2006 TP&O Meeting.

On order of Chairperson Sandoval, there being no objection, the revised Committee Work Plan was accepted.

14. Committee Staff Report

There was no Committee Staff Report.

15. Chairperson’s Report

Chairperson Sandoval noted that it was great to see that VTA’s ridership numbers have increased.

16. Determine the Consent Agenda for the April 6, 2006 Board Meeting

CONSENT: Item #6. Authorize the General Manager to enter into up to ten one-month contract extensions (from May 2006 through February 2007) at an estimated cost of \$71,000 per month with the Parking Company of America Management, LCC (PCA) for the provision of the Los Gatos Community Bus Light Rail Shuttle Service (Lines 48 and 49) for a total estimated cost of up to \$710,000.

REGULAR: Item #7. Approve the proposed modifications to the Paratransit Eligibility Certification process, adopting a VTA “hybrid” model based on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Regional Model and having Outreach manage both eligibility and appeals processes. Further, authorize the General Manager to amend Outreach’s contract to perform eligibility and appeals functions. The proposed modifications would become effective July 2006 and **Item #8.** Adopt the recommended Transit Service Change Proposal to reallocate resources from underutilized transit services to areas in need of service improvements, to become effective Monday, July 3, 2006.

17. Announcements

There were no Announcements.

2. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS (continued)

Mr. Bishop provided the Committee with all of the information he submitted to date regarding the deferment of mandatory mobility device restraints and conceptual drawings of his proposed mobility device restraint system.

18. **ADJOURNMENT**

On order of Chairperson Sandoval, there being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracene Y. Crenshaw, Board Assistant
VTA Board of Directors