

**SAN MATEO COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT
1250 SAN CARLOS AVENUE, SAN CARLOS, CALIFORNIA**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING – MARCH 4, 2009**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Baker (Vice-Chair), A. Chow, K. Chu, T. Collette, K. Feldstein, M. Hall, P. Hitchcock, W. Kingsford-Smith (Chair), P. Loranger, D. Milton, K. Nobles, P. Ratto, D. Wilcox

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: None

SAMTRANS STAFF PRESENT: M. Knuckles, N. McKenna, D. Olmeda, C. Patton, E. Proctor

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Pam Hitchcock said on page three of the minutes when she was referring to Route MX the old schedules were still on the bus.

The Committee (Baker/Nobles) approved the amended minutes of February 4, 2009.

PRESENTATION ON ZERO EMISSION BUS

Director of Bus and Rail Maintenance David Olmeda made the following key points on Zero Emission Buses (ZEB):

- SamTrans baseline emissions were established in 2002 as required by the California Air Resource Board (CARB).
- In 2004 all the buses were converted into low sulphur diesel fuel.
- In 2008 SamTrans entered into an agreement with the region for an advanced ZEB demonstration.

Ken Feldstein arrived at 6:43 p.m.

- In 2009 SamTrans will begin evaluating Biodiesel usage.
- SamTrans will begin implementing the new hybrid fuel cell bus demonstration project in 2009. The lead agency is AC Transit, but it is a regional effort with VTA, Muni and Golden Gate Transit.
- There was extensive research and a huge learning curve with the challenge of the ZEBs.
- This is a very expensive project. Some of the costs include training staff and emergency responders and a new fueling facility is required. The maintenance bays have to either be brand new or modified to accommodate the safety requirements for these types of vehicles.

- The Region (AC Transit, Muni, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans and VTA) is evaluating an advanced demonstration program with ZEBs and will be purchasing 12 additional test buses at a cost of \$2.1 million each.
- These vehicles are not ready to be used to replace the current diesel bus fleet.

David Milton asked about the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) proposed stimulus funds and VTA was proposing hybrid and not SamTrans. Mr. Olmeda said SamTrans has been in partnership with VTA for a fuel cell bus, not for hybrid technology. The hybrid technology is in the fuel cell demonstration program which is separate from vehicle purchase and vehicle replacement.

Mr. Milton asked about the \$2.2 million cost per vehicle and do the stimulus funds provide the opportunity to jump ahead to get started on something relatively expensive now, but once it is in production the cost would come down. Mr. Olmeda said one of the difficulties is proving the technology is ready for public service before it can be launched and moved forward.

Ken Feldstein asked about biodiesel and what SamTrans is doing with it now and is it less expensive in the long run. Mr. Olmeda said he can not compare the two because it is brand new technology and still hasn't been proven for public service. SamTrans has used biodiesel in public service and knows it works, but the reliability and cost effectiveness has not been demonstrated at this point in time. Mr. Olmeda said staff is evaluating what it would take to rollout a full fleet implementation and not just on the bus side, but potentially on Caltrain.

Mr. Feldstein asked what size VTA used for the demo bus. Mr. Olmeda said the marketplace is testing 40-foot buses.

John Baker asked what the range is of these buses under normal driving conditions. Mr. Olmeda said typically buses have around 300 mile plus range, but the issue is the bus would have to come from and returned to AC Transit's shop.

Mr. Baker asked when the demo buses will be here. Mr. Olmeda said in 2009 and he will provide the dates to the CAC wants he knows.

Andy Chow asked about the first demonstration program and has the bus been driven on a SamTrans route. Mr. Olmeda said it was not operated in revenue service.

Mr. Chow asked what will happen to the buses currently in the demonstration program with VTA. Mr. Olmeda said once the demonstration is completed the vehicles will be parked.

Mr. Chow asked about the biodiesel program and the impact on operating costs to SamTrans. Mr. Olmeda said SamTrans doesn't have a contract for this, but there is an incremental increase.

Pam Hitchcock asked if any study is being done on the air pollution. Mr. Olmeda said this has been an issue of debate. There is an emission benefit, but staff is not sure if it is worth the amount of money paid. Mr. Olmeda said for the cost of the ZEB it does not provide the benefit which is why it is just a demonstration.

Peter Ratto asked why AC Transit doesn't run the demonstration since they have the experience and infrastructure and provide the data to the other agencies in the region. Mr. Olmeda said he thinks this is likely to happen. The majority of the miles will be put on by AC Transit, Golden Gate and VTA. This is a regional effort and staff needs to make sure the region gets the exposure because of the taxpayer's dollars.

Chair Kingsford-Smith thanked Mr. Olmeda for a very informative presentation.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

No report.

SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE

Public Information Specialist Mary Knuckles reported the following:

- The February fare increase went very smoothly with very few customer issues.
- The new printed KX schedules are out and the Brewster loop has been taken out.
- The lost and found hours are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and security will work with customers for after hours.
- Colma Park and Ride is open to anyone and the cost is \$1 per day.

Mr. Chow asked if there was an increase at the Colma Park and Ride with BART instituting a fee to park at their stations.

Mr. Patton reported:

- January 2009 ridership is up almost 12 percent over January 2008 and on-time performance is 91 percent.
- The State Transit Assistance (STA) has been eliminated. These funds have been a consistent source of operating revenue. This year SamTrans will be losing \$2 million and \$4 million for the next fiscal year and several years thereafter. The federal stimulus money SamTrans may receive may minimally offset this loss, but not by much. Staff doesn't know what will be done to recover from this loss, but has begun going over expenses to reduce any non-essential expenditures including cancelling or deferring capital projects, a hiring freeze and mandatory time-off for administrative employees.
- At the last meeting there was some concern expressed regarding Route MX routing. Staff continues to monitor route performance and a passenger survey was conducted last week. Mr. Patton said he should be able to report on the findings and any recommendations at the next meeting.

Mr. Feldstein asked if there are going to be any service cuts. Mr. Patton said he doesn't know.

Mr. Feldstein said several months ago a list was distributed of the routes and number of passengers and would like to get an updated list.

Chair Kingsford-Smith asked about the ridership number showing an increase from January 2008 to 2009, but it is down month-to-month since September 2008. Mr. Patton there is a seasonal pattern and September is a big month for SamTrans.

CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Kim Nobles said at the northbound SamTrans shelter at the San Carlos Caltrain station someone had smeared paste or frosting on the glass. She called the CBS 800 number located on the shelter, reported the problem and within two days later the problem was corrected.

LIAISON REPORTS

a. SamTrans Board – Wayne Kingsford-Smith

Chair Kingsford-Smith reported on the February SamTrans Board meeting:

- A presentation was given on Paratransit service.
- A resolution was presented to outgoing Director Carole Groom

b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee – Tom Collette – The meeting was on February 19, but he was unable to attend. The next meeting will be in two months

c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee – Peter Loranger – no meeting.

d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board – David Wilcox

Mr. Wilcox reported on the February JPB Board meeting.

- Don Gage was elected Chair and Sean Elsbernd Vice-Chair.
- The Board received an angry complaint about the one-minute public comment period.

e. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board Citizens Advisory Committee – Andy Chow

- A presentation was given on bicycle capacity.

f. Senior Mobility Action Plan – Ken Feldstein – no report.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held April 1, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, San Carlos, California 94070.

ADJOURNED: 7:39 p.m.