

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

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING – AUGUST 26, 2015**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Baker, B. Gomez, B. Hasten, K. Heatley, S. Koya, C. Laughon, B. Lock, J. McKie, H. Plischke, M. Pye (Chair)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: K. Gilbert, P. Loranger, J. Manalo, A. Merriman

SAMTRANS STAFF PRESENT: J. Averill, K. Cheema, M. Eshleman, A. John, J. Johnson, C. Patton, A. Sayong (MV Transportation)

Chair Margaret Pye called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Wilkerson, Half Moon Bay, said the location of the bus stop in front of Coastside Senior Housing in Half Moon Bay is on the north end of the block on Main Street. When buses pull in from the south they have to go around parked cars, pull forward, and back up to get into location. If the bus stop was at the south end of the building, its location would be the same distance from the entrance to the building, and buses could pull in without having to back up, which would reduce the noise. The south end of the building has a deeper setback from the street than the north end, so there would also be less fume pollution. He said he spoke with a SamTrans supervisor who said a request to move the bus stop was made to the Half Moon Bay City Council, but they haven't responded. The bus stop has a shelter, and people use it to smoke. There is a SamTrans ordinance that smoking in bus shelters is not allowed, but there is a provision that says it would not be enforced unless "no smoking" signs were posted. He said there are no "no smoking" signs and asked that one be put in.

Chester Patton, Director, Bus Transportation, said there is a "no smoking" sign in the shelter, and staff has recently added a second sign to the shelter. The bus does not layover at that location. The dwell time is 10 or 11 seconds and the bus is not idling or polluting. There is no need for backing of the bus. This stop is there at the request of the residents. He does not believe the request to go to the city council is an accurate statement. Staff has not asked to move the shelter.

Mr. Wilkerson said he is a resident of that building and this morning the bus idled there for more than two minutes. This happens regularly. Most of the buses that pull in there back up.

Mr. Patton said he would like to know the bus numbers when this behavior is observed so staff can order the bus driver to stop doing it.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JULY 29, 2015

Motion/Second: Gomez/Heatley

Ayes: Baker, Gomez, Hasten, Heatley, Koya, Laughon, Lock, McKie, Plischke, Pye

Absent: Gilbert, Loranger, Manalo, Merriman

PRESENTATION: SAMTRANS SERVICE PLAN (SSP) UPDATE

Michael Eshleman, Senior Planner, presented:

- Performance Measurement
 - Three goals:
 - Improve quality
 - Grow ridership
 - Increase efficiency
 - Within each goal:
 - On-time performance (OTP)
 - Ridership
 - Passengers per hour
 - Cost per passenger
- Six-month Summary of Key Metrics
 - Total ridership up 2.6 percent, Saturday down 2.6 percent and Sunday up 1.7 percent
 - Average weekday ridership (AWR) up 2.5 percent
 - Passengers per service hour up 1.3 percent
 - Operating cost per passenger down 1.3 percent
 - OTP up 4.7 percent
- 15-minute Service
 - Prime opportunities for ridership growth along routes 120, 130, 131, 281, 296, and ECR
 - Account for 700 new riders each weekday; potentially 175,000 additional riders per year
- 15-minute AWR Trends
 - Route 120: 4.5 percent increase
 - Route 130/131: 12.9 percent increase
 - Route 281: 17.9 percent increase
 - Route 296: 8.2 percent increase
 - Route ECR: 1.1 percent decrease
 - All high-frequency routes: 3 percent increase
 - System: 2.2 percent increase
- Pilot Services
 - Key element of the SSP
 - Pacifica service is operating effectively
 - Carries 12 passengers per hour (system carries 28)
 - Costs \$18.08 per passenger (system costs \$7.35)
 - Responded well to service span increase last June
 - San Carlos service is struggling
 - Carries two passengers per hour
 - Costs \$95.24 per passenger
 - The service is not working

- Next Steps
 - August service changes
 - Improve reliability, respond to increased congestion
 - Added trips on Route 295
 - Late-night Route 122 service
 - Systemwide analysis in progress
 - What is and is not working
 - Propose changes to address shortcomings, build on successes
 - Results this year

Barbara Hasten said there have been no changes to Route 295. Mr. Eshleman said Route 95 is a new route that was created. It only operates one trip in the morning from Redwood City Transit Center through San Carlos up to Ralston Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas, and one trip back in the afternoon. This route is designed to serve the public whose schedules operate around school bell times.

Ms. Hasten said she uses Route 295, but it doesn't run at night or weekends, so she's stuck in her home. Mr. Eshleman said the District has a limited amount of resources and has to make difficult decisions about how to spend them. Some places require service on a lifeline basis. Staff tries to find equitable ways to provide service and that is what the SSP is trying to address.

Ms. Hasten asked why Route 398 even exists because people in San Bruno can go use Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) to go to the airport and it would be better to have Route ECR as express and local. She said staff should return Route KX service. Mr. Eshleman said a lot of tradeoffs were made about those complex issues. Staff is aware of the issues and has a plan for the express bus issue. SamTrans would need \$5 million to \$10 million a year for that service. Staff is constantly looking to see how to improve the service. Express bus service is one of the ways service could be improved if the resources were available.

Bob Gomez said OTP between downtown Palo Alto and Middlefield Road is congested between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. and asked if anything is being done about it. Mr. Eshleman said SamTrans missed 49 trips in June along that segment because it was taking 90 minutes to travel. The city of Palo Alto said it was due to the timing of lights in East Palo Alto. East Palo Alto has resolved the issue and staff hasn't seen the issue pop back up since mid-July.

Mr. Gomez asked why Route 296 can't make a U-turn before the Menlo Park Veterans Affairs Hospital instead of going all the way into the hospital. Mr. Eshleman said staff can look into it.

Mr. Gomez asked how the new Bus Rapid Transit route in the Geneva corridor will affect the area. Mr. Eshleman said it will hopefully feed people onto Route 292. That route may be trying to drive people to the light rail and to BART.

Mr. Gomez asked if anything has been found to increase the ridership on the San Carlos Flex. He said shelters, lights, or marking where the bus stop will be might help. He hasn't heard about any improvements. Mr. Eshleman said some service enhancements were made, but the ridership has not improved. Staff is looking for other options.

Heinz Plischke asked if SamTrans could provide service to Levi's Stadium. Mr. Eshleman said SamTrans has a working partnership with Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), which is the lead agency for service to Levi's Stadium. SamTrans has assisted by sending buses and operators to VTA to be used as necessary.

Mr. Patton said the support for Levi's Stadium is primarily by Caltrain with intermodal cross-platform transfers to VTA Light Rail at Mountain View. SamTrans cannot operate service to another county because of the charter and the Federal government would tell SamTrans to stop. SamTrans does provide buses to help transport people from the stadium to Mountain View station to supplement the light rail so customers can get to Caltrain. Staff is involved in the regional planning for Super Bowl 50.

John Baker said he is excited to see the late night service for San Francisco State University at Stonestown and the Westlake Apartments. There will be a market for the service.

Ms. Hasten said the stores, businesses, churches, and residents along Alameda de las Pulgas in Belmont and San Mateo up to Hillsdale need just as much service as the people who live in Redwood City and Hillsdale to 3rd Avenue.

Bill Lock asked if the Route ECR decline is due to summer vacation for students. Mr. Eshleman said no, because it is a year-over-year comparison.

Mr. Lock said SamTrans has a structural deficit. He asked if SamTrans will receive additional funding since the economy is stronger. Mr. Eshleman said it is important to plan for the worst and have savings if the best happens. SamTrans is projected to have a long-term deficit and is continually making adjustments in the service and budget. There is hope that funding legislation and countywide sales tax funds will provide relief. SamTrans will try to continue to operate effectively as long as possible at the current level and add cost-effective service enhancements if resources become available.

Charlotte Laughon asked what staff is doing to increase ridership. Mr. Eshleman said the SSP was launched and staff is finding efficiencies where they can. Adding service, possibly changing the fare structure, and marketing are potential ways to increase ridership.

Ms. Laughon asked about shuttles on the coast from Pacifica to Half Moon Bay. Mr. Eshleman said any agency, nonprofit, and others are free to put in applications during the shuttle call for projects. Staff offers technical assistance to anyone who is interested in a shuttle.

Ms. Laughon asked if shelters, shuttles and other amenities would increase ridership. Mr. Eshleman said there are conflicting reports about whether shuttles are the most cost-effective way to increase ridership. He looks at service enhancements and fare media types to incentivize ridership growth.

Katie Heatley asked how the new riders are profiled and why new riders were attracted through this program. Mr. Eshleman said the riders were attracted because there is more robust frequency. Staff will conduct a survey to find out specific demographics and choice motivators for customers to ride the bus.

Sonny Koya said Route 292 is not on the 15-minute AWR trend slide. Mr. Eshleman said it runs every 30 minutes, so it is not a high-frequency route. He said Route 292 is up about 1.1 percent.

Mr. Koya said he is impressed with Route 130/131 despite the disadvantage of losing Route 132. These are encouraging numbers because people were feeling bad about losing that route. He would like to know if the South San Francisco shuttle service will continue to run after the two-year life. He said he is concerned about the San Carlos Flex service and hopes San Carlos won't lose service. There are senior citizens who would need service. Mr. Eshleman said at \$96 per passenger it is financially irresponsible to continue the service, so staff is looking at ways to get more ridership.

Judy McKie said Route ECR is great, but she's heard that in the afternoon, sometimes the large buses are not used. Mr. Eshleman said sometimes SamTrans doesn't have enough large buses to make sure they're there at all times and sometimes the operators were on a route beforehand with smaller buses. He said he will look at the allocation of large buses and try to make sure they're in the right place at the right time.

Chair Pye said she is surprised that Route ECR has declined at all. She said bike riders are an untapped market. She takes Route 398 and would like it to be more frequent. She said it is commendable that staff did not cut off the San Carlos Flex and it is great that staff is giving the route an opportunity. She said there is too much free parking in downtown San Carlos, so people drive instead of take transit. She said maybe the San Carlos Flex should go along Laurel Street.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

No report.

SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE

Mr. Patton reported:

- July performance:
 - AWR was down 1.7 percent.
 - Total ridership was flat.
 - OTP was above 85 percent for the seventh consecutive month.
 - Complaints were low at 143.
 - Miles between road calls was almost 31,000.

- Tokens continue to be popular but there was a seasonal decrease for youth ridership.
- There were 24 missed schedules due to residual issues with University Avenue.
- The CAC Chair reported to the Board at the last meeting the CACs discussion about mid-coast shelters and the CACs recommendation to put shelters in when funding is available in the proper fiscal cycle. That will not be possible this fiscal year because there is no line item set aside for that. The best case scenario is they could be rolled into the competitive assessment for capital projects for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. He does not know what the chances are due to the competition with other priorities, especially in light of the low ridership at those stops. This conversation has resulted in a lot of contemplation at SamTrans. Staff is going to take a comprehensive look at Coastside needs. He will bring a presentation to remind the CAC of the investments and changes to the Coast. Staff will take a strategic look at the future and will set up meetings on the Coastside to talk to stakeholders, conduct a needs analysis and develop a strategic plan for capital and operating improvements in the longer range. The problems on the Coast are daunting. He will report back when those plans crystalize.

Ms. Laughon said she is curious about what meetings are being held now or in the near future to find out the needs of the Coastside are. Mr. Patton said the current discussions are internal and the plans are coalescing. He welcomes input on where and when having public meetings would be appropriate. The idea is to have stakeholder meetings along the Coast in the coming months to get direct input from residents.

Ms. Laughon said residents don't want advertisements in their bus shelters. Mr. Patton said that is an important data point.

Ms. Hasten said the way to get more people on buses is to provide more buses and more frequent service. Mr. Patton said staff would love to design more service, SamTrans just needs more money.

Ms. Hasten said SamTrans should try to get an excise tax on gasoline so the money could go for buses.

Mr. Plischke said over two years ago he introduced and donated a small American flag to the CAC, and he puts it up before every meeting and takes it down afterwards. He said he wants Chair Pye to take over the duty, and he wants this mentioned in the minutes.

Ms. Heatley said she would like a reminder sheet on planning cycles and timelines for capital budgeting, grants, shuttles, and other things. Consumers need to better understand the planning process. Mr. Patton said he will think about how to do that.

CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Ms. McKie said she would like hand straps hanging down in the senior area of the buses.

Mr. Koya said 292 is working well and there were adequate notices regarding the bus schedules. The Day Pass is meant for Peninsula riders, but riders can go up to San Francisco with it. Coming back from San Francisco, though, customers have to pay another \$2 and every once in a while these riders get into altercations with drivers. Mr. Patton said the solution is to change the fare structure in January.

Mr. Koya asked what the status is regarding his suggestion to move the bus stop on Bayshore Boulevard outside the donut shop near the Geneva Avenue entranceway to Grocery Outlet. Mr. Patton said he will look into it.

Ms. Heatley asked if SamTrans is involved in the study for the low-income pass for the region. She wants to make sure the CAC has an opportunity to comment for transit-dependent customers. Mr. Eshleman said he will check into it.

Ms. Laughon said she has a petition with 234 signatures for shelters on the coast. She said people do want shelters, and she has been told by businesses in Montara that they have asked SamTrans for shelters. She showed a picture of a bus stop in front of the hostel in Montara on Highway 1 where the bus stop sign is blocked by overgrown vegetation. She said there are several more like that along Highway 1.

Mr. Lock said southbound Route 292 was standing room only. He asked for staff to check that the lights are on at the northbound bus stop on Arroyo Drive and El Camino Real in South San Francisco. He asked to have the southbound bus stop at Hickey Boulevard and El Camino Real in South San Francisco reviewed and analyzed because the bench is on the dirt three or four inches below the pavement, which makes it challenging for people to get up the curb to get to the bus. He said most benches are behind the sign, but in this case the bench is in front of the bus stop sign, trees are hiding the sign, and if people are sitting on the bench it is difficult for the bus driver to see people sitting on the bench waving it down.

Ms. Hasten said the seats are dirty at the southbound bus stop at the San Bruno BART Station. She asked if dogs are allowed on bus and if the bus driver can do anything about them. Mr. Patton said under certain circumstances, dogs are allowed on the bus. The driver can ask the passenger to remove dogs from the bus if they are disruptive, unruly, could hurt someone or are not under control by the owner. He said they are not supposed to be on the seats.

Mr. Baker asked if there has been any further talk about the limited Route ECR service. Mr. Patton said a study was done and revealed the service is cost prohibitive. Mr. Eshleman said a wide variety of models were looked at. A cost-effective solution was an overlay during the peak hour where extra buses would be run every 10 to 12 minutes in addition to the existing Route ECR service from Palo Alto to Daly City from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. This would cost an extra \$5 million a year, but SamTrans couldn't afford that at this time without taking service out from somewhere else. This would also require more drivers and capital money for buses. The service plan is ready to go in the event SamTrans came up with the funding.

Mr. Lock asked if Route ECR would work at 20-minute intervals with one limited or express per hour. Mr. Eshleman said yes, but it was determined that passengers would not wait for the express bus, they would take the next available bus. Express buses should be running more frequently than local buses.

Mr. Gomez said students say it is not classy or stylish to ride the bus.

Chair Pye asked if buses are not allowed to leave the base early when they start their routes. Mr. Patton said operators have structured work assignments and have 15 minutes to do a safety check, fill out a card that everything is working, and then have a specific pull-out time and deadhead time to get to their first time point. Occasionally an operator may leave a few minutes early, but they are restricted from going past their first bus stop ahead of schedule.

Chair Pye said her bus on southbound Route ECR at San Carlos Avenue and El Camino Real is consistently four minutes late and it is only the second stop on the route. Mr. Patton said there is a mechanism for the operator to report that issue. Mr. Eshleman said he will look at that issue for a future runbook.

Chair Pye said there is construction at the corner of Arroyo Avenue and El Camino Real in San Carlos and the southbound bus stop sign was moved down the block without any notice to passengers. She said the bus driver did not know the stop had been moved either. She said the northbound side is by the tunnel that goes under the train tracks, and the construction has blocked the access to the pedestrian crossing button. She said no one else would be there except bus passengers. Mr. Patton said the city did not work with staff on these issues, so staff will contact the city to work it out.

Chair Pye asked when the CAC will have a chance to weigh in on the fare changes that are being contemplated for January. Mr. Patton said there will be a presentation in October to the CAC, and the CAC can comment at that time and report any consensus the CAC reaches to the Board at their meeting the following week.

LIAISON REPORTS

a. SamTrans Board – Margaret Pye

- The Board issued a proclamation in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- She let the Board know about the CAC's discussion about Coastside bus shelters and that the CAC hopes the Board will make an investment in the FY2017 budget for shelters.
- The Board received a presentation on Connect! Redwood City.
- The Board received a presentation on the Transit Sustainability Project and discussed measures and strategies. All the factors under the measures improved.

b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee – Judy McKie

- No meeting

c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee - Peter Loranger

- Absent

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- d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) – Bill Lock**
 - No report
- e. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board CAC – Vacant**
- f. Senior Mobility Action Plan – Vacant**

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held September 30, 2015 at 6:30 p.m., 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, San Carlos, California 94070.

Adjourned at 8:12 p.m.