

# Draft

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

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)  
MEETING MINUTES**

**July 31, 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** M. Adler, S. Appenrodt, J. Baker, A. Barnes (Vice Chair), I. Chan, J. Galisatus, B. Gomez, S. Johnston, A. Juarez, S. Koya, N. Lacsamana, R. Pico

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** M. Lewis

**STAFF PRESENT:** J. Epstein, S. El-Khatib, J. Castellanos, J. Chen, J. Brook

## **CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Sonny Koya called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and requested that Bob Gomez lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **ROLL CALL**

Chair Koya announced new member Scott Johnston.

CAC Secretary Jean Brook called the roll. A quorum was present.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None.

## **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 26, 2019**

Motion/Second: Baker/Pico

Ayes: Adler, Appenrodt, Baker, Barnes, Chan, Galisatus, Gomez, Juarez, Koya, Lacsamana, Pico

Absent: Lewis

## **PRESENTATION: FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET OVERVIEW**

Jeannie Chen, Manager, Budgets, gave a presentation summarizing the Fiscal Year 2020 capital and operating budgets.

Jason Galisatus asked if the wage and salary increases were already in effect; Ms. Chen said yes. He asked what were the biggest differences in the budget since Fiscal Year 2019; Ms. Chen said the passage of Measure W had had the biggest effect on current budget. Mr. Galisatus asked if Measure W only applied to capital expenditures. Jessica Epstein, Government and Community Affairs Officer, said that Measure W funds are not restricted to a certain expenditure type at the discretion of the Board.

John Baker asked about the Strategic Plan. Ms. Epstein said that Measure A allows funding for the Strategic Plan, but SamTrans' focus is the COA (Comprehensive Operational Analysis). Mr. Baker observed that debt service has gone down and asked if there would be additional financing opportunities. Ms. Chen said yes, with Measure W.

Andrew Barnes inquired about ratios of passenger fares versus operating revenues of SamTrans as a whole, and asked what the trend line is for future passenger fares. Ms. Chen said that she would get back to him with information.

Mary Adler asked what the reason was for the drop in ridership. Said El-Khatib, Manager, Bus Transportation, indicated that some of the decline was due to people moving away from the Peninsula to lower-cost areas such as the East Bay.

Iris Chan asked how long Measure W would be in force; Ms. Chen said for 30 years.

Scott Johnston asked how much Measure W funding increased. Mr. El-Khatib said it increased roughly 0.5 percent.

Nancy Lacsamana asked if the 3 percent salary increase was across the board, and Ms. Chen said that it was. Ms. Lacsamana said that she was concerned about operators' salaries being in line with the cost of living.

Mr. Galisatus asked if the cost per rider that SamTrans subsidizes is increasing this year versus last year. Ms. Chen she would get back to him.

Chair Koya said that he was concerned with declining ridership.

Mr. Barnes asked what was contained in the line item "JPB, TA, SamTrans Cap. W&B" on Slide No. 5. Ms. Chen said wages, benefits, and the JPB and TA share of OPEB (other post-employment benefits) and CalPERS (California Public Employees' Retirement System). He asked if it was a pass-through to the operating revenues. She said that the expense represented a wash and that the actuals could be found in the JPB and TA budgets, and added that it was 100 percent reimbursable.

## **SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE**

In the absence of Margo Ross, Director, Bus Transportation, Mr. El-Khatib distributed a performance statistics handout to the Committee members:

### Director Report July 31, 2019

- Average weekday ridership on all modes decreased 0.7% from June 2018, June 2019 has one week day less
  - Bus -1.3%
  - Paratransit -3.3%
  - Shuttles -1.3%
  - Caltrain +0.2%
  - Bart -1.5%
- Total ridership for June decreases by 3.9%
- SamTrans ridership history:
  - FY 2017 -7.6%
  - FY 2018 -5.9%
  - FY 2019 -4.2%
- OTP ( On Time Performance) FY 2018 79.7%    FY 2019 79.10%

- Bus Ridership for June by Category
  - Adult 446,209
  - Youth 132,107
  - Eligible Discount 239,055
  - Total: 817,371
- Preventable accidents for May for SamTrans, NB 7 and SB 8, compared to April NB 4 and SB 6
- Updates
  - RB 130 and FCX
  - San Mateo Fair in June 10 Kids day , and June 11 Senior day

He said that the new runbook begins August 18. He said that the new FCX (Foster City Express) route had received positive feedback from Foster City residents. He said that there would be five express bus routes coming within the next two years, including the Palo Alto Express (PCX) starting January 2020.

He noted that in 1990, the farebox recovery was 14 to 16 percent, but the driver's salary was around \$9 and the bus cost \$180,000 (current cost is \$1 million). He said that currently, free rides would actually prove more cost effective.

Ms. Lacsamana asked if the express buses would be bidirectional; Mr. El-Khatib said they were.

Regarding preventable accidents, Mr. Gomez asked if that includes a driver hitting a tree. Mr. El-Khatib confirmed that hitting any fixed object is considered a preventable accident.

Mr. Galisatus said that he advocated complete subsidy of bus fares. He asked how Measure W spending would be publicized. Ms. Epstein said that the Marketing department was working on publicity. He asked when Measure A expires; Ms. Epstein said in 15 years.

Richard Pico expressed his commendations of Operator No. 49 and said that he asked him what he would like to see more of or less of with SamTrans. Mr. Pico asked how much OTP (on-time performance) is affected once school is in session. Mr. El-Khatib said that South Base has the largest number of schools on its routes. He said that OTP is 85 percent when school is out in the summer and 79 percent once school is in session.

Ms. Chan noted that she used to take the former RX express bus from Redwood City and the former MX from San Mateo. Mr. El-Khatib said the only definite express routes were the FCX and the PCX. He said that it was up to Operations and Planning to create additional express routes and conceded that they need express routes from San Mateo, South San Francisco, and Daly City to San Francisco.

Mr. Johnston asked where the PCX will start. Ms. Epstein said that the Planning department does not yet have the specific routing. Mr. Johnston asked if the PCX would include local stops in Palo Alto; Mr. El-Khatib said it likely would.

Mr. Gomez said that he wanted to talk to the East Palo Alto School District about how they could support express bus service.

Mr. El-Khatib said that East Palo Alto residents could take a local bus to the PCX stops.

Chair Koya said he would like to see a breakdown of ridership by route to see where the declines in ridership are specifically. Mr. El-Khatib said he would ask Margo Ross,

Director of Bus Transportation, to provide this information to the Committee. Chair Koya said he was not in favor of free transit.

### **CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS**

Ms. Lacsamana expressed her thanks to Jean Conger, Senior Mobility Project Coordinator, for her help working with a veterans affordable housing complex project in Colma.

She said the high-speed rail project is proposing locating a light maintenance yard on 100 acres in Brisbane in the midst of a baylands development. She requested that anyone attending future HSR meetings to please request that public meetings be held in Brisbane concerning the maintenance yard.

She said that Chair Koya, herself, and another Route 292 rider requested action from the City of Brisbane to fix the southbound shelter, which is lopsided due to eucalyptus tree roots, has no lighting, and floods when it rains.

Mr. Johnston gave a brief account of his background, including that he has been a San Carlos resident for 20 years. He noted that the signage for the ECR is lacking in ~~San Bruno~~ Millbrae. He reported that at the ECR stop on El Camino Real near the Carl's Jr. at Eaton Avenue that the rear door of the bus opens too close to the row of newspaper stands. Mr. El-Khatib said that he would check on both items.

Ms. Chan said that recently on Route 295 en route to Hillsdale from Belmont, she noticed that the driver skipped stops. Mr. El-Khatib said that the skipped stops were the result of a detour, which will no longer be in place starting August 8.

Ms. Adler said that she likes the ECR service and finds it to be very convenient. Mr. El-Khatib said that beginning August 15, the ECR will run every 15 minutes instead of every 20 minutes.

Mr. Barnes discussed the benefits to the community of offering free service.

Mr. Baker relayed a request from riders to lower the age to qualify for the eligible discount.

Mr. Galisatus said that a precedent for free bus transit is the Palo Alto's Marguerite shuttle run by Stanford University. He said he thought that the conversation on free service should definitely continue and would mark a huge overhaul for the system.

Allie Juarez said she thought that it was wasteful to print a schedule for just a two-month period when the times were changed only a minute or two. Mr. El-Khatib clarified that the runbooks are adjusted only three times per year. Josue Castellanos, Scheduling Specialist, said that the "summer" schedule actually stays in place until January 1. Mr. El-Khatib said that the runbook is not the same as a route schedule but that they may coincidentally coincide.

Steve Appenrodt and Mr. Pico said they supported having free transit. Both Mr. Pico and Mr. Gomez said that riders spend time looking for money or cards when boarding the bus, which delays the schedule.

Mr. Barnes asked what SamTrans' utilization capacity was. Mr. El-Khatib said that he estimated it to be 60 to 70 percent but that this number varies greatly by route.

Chair Koya noted a bus shelter that is slanting due to root growth underneath it, which is located on Brisbane land. Mr. El-Khatib said that SamTrans has no control over the problem since the City owns the land, but if the City fixes the problem then SamTrans could install a new shelter. Chair Koya said that opposite the main Brisbane northbound shelter, there are willow branches hanging in the pathway of oncoming buses, which he had reported to SamTrans in the past. He said the City promised to trim the trees.

He said that he was approached by one of the South San Francisco parking commissioners to help determine the number of places where improvements can be made at bus stops, such as installing benches or shelters. He said he would investigate and report back to the CAC. Mr. El-Khatib said that his department had worked with the City in the past and that he would like to bring Chair Koya's findings to the attention of Ana Rivas, Superintendent of Bus Transportation.

Chair Koya requested that the date on runbooks/schedules be in a larger font to be more readable.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

### **SamTrans Board of Directors**

Chair Koya noted that at the July 10 meeting, there was a public hearing for the codified tariff, Mr. Johnston was appointed to the CAC, a contract was awarded for electric bus infrastructure, there was a report on the COA, and that the directors had an opportunity to view one of the new electric buses prior to the meeting.

### **Community Engagement Committee**

Nancy Lacsamana said that the Community Engagement Committee had nothing to report.

## **NEXT MEETING**

Chair Koya announced that the next meeting will be held August 28, 2019 at 6:30 pm, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, San Carlos, CA.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.