

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

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING – MAY 27, 2015**

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: P. Loranger, J. Manalo, J. McKie

SAMTRANS STAFF PRESENT: M. Eshleman, S. Gaffney, A. John, N. McKenna, C. Patton, A. Rivas, J. Sung (MV Transportation)

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF APRIL 29, 2015

Motion/Second: Baker/Koya

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

Absent: Loranger, Manalo, McKie, Merriman

Annette Merriman arrived at 6:33 p.m.

PRESENTATION: PRELIMINARY FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2016 OPERATING BUDGET

Shannon Gaffney, Acting Manager, Budgets, reported:

- Preliminary FY2016 revenues are \$163.3 million, a decrease of \$300,000.
- Preliminary FY2016 operating expenses are \$139.1 million.
- District-operated bus expenses increased by \$2.7 million.
- Contracted Bus service expenses increased by \$1.5 million.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Program expenses increased by \$1.3 million.
- Multimodal Transit Program expenses increased by \$700,000.

John Baker asked what is included in the Multimodal Transit Program. Ms. Gaffney said it is mostly shuttles.

- Debt service requirement is \$21.7 million.
- To balance the budget, \$3 million in reserves will be used.

- Strategic Plan was adopted in December 2014 and identified five goals for five years. The FY2016 Operating Budget has a number of items in it to further the goals of the Strategic Plan:
 - Increase weekday ridership by 15 percent
 - Filling vacant operator and mechanics positions
 - Mechanics Apprenticeship Program
 - Build on these activities to grow ridership through the continued implementation of the SamTrans Service Plan
 - Increase fixed-route fare revenue by 20 percent
 - Increased ridership should lead to increased revenue
 - A major revision to fare policies and practices, with a goal of simplifying and increasing use
 - Planned fare increases
 - Reduce annual debt service by \$1.5 million
 - In April 2015, SamTrans finalized the reissuance of its debt, resulting in a savings of \$2.8 million annually
 - Improve organizational performance
 - Support to improve internal communications
 - New position focused on a wide range of employee professional development
 - Funding to conduct a benchmark survey of employee satisfaction and attitudes
 - Manage workforce change
 - Ongoing resources to support recruitments
 - An employee compensation study to ensure that current and prospective employees compensation consistent with the market
- Issues and opportunities:
 - Significant steps have been taken in the past few years to reduce costs, increase efficiencies and enhance services and revenues.
 - The refinancing of the debt resulted in annual savings of \$2.8 million.
 - Use of \$3 million in reserves to balance the FY2016 budget represents 1.8 percent of total budget.
 - Looking ahead five years, with the FY2016 preliminary budget as the base, SamTrans continues to face a structural deficit that ranges from \$3 million to \$8.1 million. The deficit is projected to be down to \$6 million in FY2020.

Bob Gomez asked if there is any funding in the budget for scholarships. Chester Patton, Director, Bus Transportation, said that would be against the law and would be considered a gift of public funds.

Barbara Hasten asked if there is going to be changes to the routes. Mr. Patton said the SamTrans Service Plan (SSP) was implemented over the past 18 months and staff continues to monitor the service and make tweaks to the service. Staff will look at poor performing routes, such as the San Carlos Route FLX where the cost would be better spent on other routes.

Heinz Plischke asked where the mechanics will come from for the Maintenance Apprenticeship Program. Mr. Patton said SamTrans will recruit for entry-level positions. This program provides a defined career ladder from utility worker to master mechanic.

Ms. Merriman asked as staff leaves and/or retires if the replacement of these employees cost more. Ms. Gaffney said this will be determined by a compensation study that will be done during FY2016.

Mr. Baker asked how long the District's reserves will last. Ms. Gaffney said they are diminishing, but will find out how long they will last.

Kathy Gilbert said continued sales increases would definitely help the budget. She said other transit agencies provide tuition reimbursement to employees as an incentive.

Katie Heatley asked how this budget fits in with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Sustainability Financial Goals that the District has. Mr. Patton said the FY2016 Operating Budget is designed to support the effort to achieve the goals set by the District.

Ms. Heatley asked if there is a living wage policy for contractors. Ms. Gaffney said there is no official living wage policy for contractors.

Ms. Heatley asked how secure the Measure A funding is from the County for paratransit. Ms. Gaffney said the District is not guaranteed the Measure A funding. It is allocated on an annual basis.

Ms. Heatley asked what the increase in cost per trip would be if there were no Measure A funds. Ms. Gaffney said she does not know.

Ms. Heatley said 15 percent increase in ridership is very ambitious. Mr. Patton said Doug Kim, Director, Planning, came up with a good Strategic Plan and this number is based on recent performance. Since February 2014 there has been month-over-month increase in ridership. Staff thinks the goal is achievable and takes action on the poor performing routes and put those resources towards routes that people ride.

Charlotte Laughon asked what services are being provided in the Coastside line item. Mr. Patton said it is for RediCoast, SamCoast Demand Response Lifeline Service, 5311 Rural Demand Service, and Route 17.

Ms. Laughon asked with the increase in weekday ridership if there has been any consideration for additional shelters. Ms. Gaffney said she is not sure if shelters are being added.

Bill Lock asked if contract service is cheaper. Mr. Patton said MTC encourages contract service and SamTrans contracts 32 percent of its fixed-route service.

Mr. Lock asked what factors drive the structural deficit. Ms. Gaffney said she will get the information.

Sonny Koya asked when outreach will be done for fare increases. Michael Eshleman, Senior Planner, said there will be a series of meetings once staff develops the proposed fare increases.

PRESENTATION: PRELIMINARY FY2016 CAPITAL BUDGET

Ms. Gaffney reported:

- Parameters and priorities:
 - Sustain District's existing service and infrastructure network, including the necessary replacement of revenue vehicles and other capital assets.
 - Ensure operating and maintenance facilities are maintained in a state of good repair.
 - Invest in facility and equipment improvements to provide a safe and secure environment for customers and employees.
- Category highlights:
 - Revenue vehicles replacement: \$35.3 million
 - Replace 60 2003 Gillig low floor buses and 55 2002 North American Bus Industries buses
 - Replace 10 2011 paratransit minivans and nine 2009 paratransit cutaways
 - Revenue vehicles support: \$1.4 million
 - Procure bus parts, engines and transmissions
 - Replace support vehicles
 - Upgrade bike rack capacity from two bikes to three per bus
 - Information technology: \$1.8 million
 - Replace and upgrade information technology equipment, servers and software applications
 - Replace the existing TransitSafe software system, which will become obsolete
 - Enhance the existing fixed-route Mobile View Video Surveillance System to allow for real time surveillance
 - Development: \$600,000
 - Evaluation and study the current you market in support of the Strategic Plan
 - Develop, support and monitor the District's capital program
 - Facilities: \$1.2 million
 - Facility improvement and rehabilitation of the District's maintenance and administrative facilities designed to support revenue operations
 - Safety and security: \$1.8 million
 - Security improvements to maintain a safe and secure environment for transit operations and customers
- Total proposed FY2016 Capital Budget is \$42.4 million.
- Funding sources include Federal, State and District sales tax.

Mr. Koya asked if there will be some money coming in from Homeland Security for the safety and security portion. Ms. Gaffney said there is some grant opportunities in this area, but they are diminishing, and there is State funding.

Mr. Lock asked if the sales tax number estimate an accurate number. Ms. Gaffney said there is an estimate in the operating budget and an allocation to the capital budget, which is an actual commitment due to need on the capital side.

Ms. Laughon asked if there is money for shelters in the safety and security category. Ms. Gaffney said this line item is focused on safety. Mr. Patton said there is a dual shelter program. There is the program with the vendor who provides, installs, and maintains the shelters for free and they get advertising revenue from them. The other program is the existing shelter inventory and the maintenance of those shelters are in the maintenance/facilities budget.

Ms. Heatley asked about the sales tax match required to receive funding. Ms. Gaffney said the match required is for Federal dollars for the purchase of vehicles. She said some projects cannot be funded by Federal or State funds and then sales tax is used.

Ms. Heatley asked what funds are used for funding the youth mobility project. Ms. Gaffney said local sales tax funds are being used, but staff will look for all possible grants available.

Nada Ballator asked if the Federal and State funds are committed for just one year. Ms. Gaffney said funds are committed to a project and not by fiscal years.

Ms. Gilbert asked what the cost is for the vehicles and if the \$35.3 million includes disposal or resale of vehicles. Mr. Patton said buses are very expensive. Articulated buses are almost \$1 million and the 40-foot buses are about \$750,000. Mr. Patton said the resale of the buses does not produce a significant source of revenue.

Mr. Baker said it would be nice to see a reliable real-time tracker for buses in next year's capital budget. The 511.org system defaults to the published SamTrans schedules.

Ms. Merriman asked if buses are ever donated for tax considerations and if WiFi is being considered on buses. Mr. Patton said staff has studied the WiFi issue for many years and on fixed-route service it is not beneficial because the average trip is six or seven miles. WiFi works best for express routes or commuter rail. Ms. Gaffney said when Federal money is used for purchasing buses there are strict rules on the disposal of the buses.

Mr. Plischke asked if Federal and State funding is automatic or if the District has to lobby for it. Ms. Gaffney said some funding the District is entitled to and some staff has to seek.

Mr. Plischke asked if SamTrans has lobbyists in Sacramento. Ms. Gaffney said yes.

Ms. Hasten said a lot of buses have seats ruined by wheelchairs. Mr. Patton said those buses will be cycled out and replaced in the capital budget.

Mr. Gomez asked what the youth market survey is in support of the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Gaffney said staff wants to survey youth and ask what services they use and would use to build them into lifelong transit users.

Mr. Gomez said 83 percent of the capital budget is for replacement of buses and asked if this number will be lower next year. Ms. Gaffney said yes.

Mr. Gomez asked when someone buys a bus is the District liable. Mr. Patton said no ownership is transferred to the new owner.

SUPPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE DISCOUNTED DAY PASS

Ms. Heatley said the Day Pass offers benefits to the average user and is very valuable for low-income people of all ages.

Mr. Baker requested a letter be sent by Chair Pye to the Board telling them the CAC supports the continuation of the Day Pass.

Motion: Baker/Koya

Ayes: Baker, Ballator, Gilbert, Gomez, Hasten, Heatley, Koya, Laughon, Lock, Merriman, Plischke, Pye

Absent: Loranger, Manalo, McKie

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

No report.

SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE

Mr. Patton reported:

- April performance:
 - Average weekday ridership was 43,910, up 3.7 percent.
 - On-time performance (OTP) was 88.2 percent.
 - Complaints were low at 127
 - Miles between road calls was 23,515.
 - Tokens continue to be popular.
 - There were two missed schedules.

At the March meeting he was asked how accidents were tracked. Every accident is reviewed and the District's standard goal is 105,000 between preventable accidents. In January North Base had three accidents with almost 90,000 miles between preventable accidents. Mr. Patton said most accidents are small. He said in April North Base had zero accidents.

Ms. Heatley asked how this information is captured. Mr. Patton said accidents are operator reported and an employee can be discharged for not reporting an accident.

Mr. Gomez asked how OTP for SamTrans compares to other transit agencies in the Bay Area. Mr. Patton said San Francisco has a 46 percent OTP, but that is a larger system.

Mr. Patton distributed the District's vital statistics produced by Customer Service and Marketing. There were only 15 complaints per 100,000 trips in March. This is an improvement over last year.

CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Mr. Gomez asked when East Palo Alto can get new shelters or more shelters. Mr. Patton said the process starts with a request from the customer. The request is then evaluated if it is an appropriate location and if ridership warrants a shelter.

Ms. Hasten said the area is filthy where passengers wait for the bus at the San Bruno Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Station. She said complaints went up in January 2014 when Route KX service was cut. Mr. Patton said complaints rise when a major service change is made. He said the bus waiting area is on BART property and he will have staff make a call to BART and see if it can get cleaned.

Mr. Plischke asked if the CAC members can receive a \$15 stipend every three months to cover expenses to attend the meeting. Mr. Patton said this is one of three CAC's and the enabling legislation that created the CAC does not mention a stipend.

Ms. Merriman said she lives in El Granada and there is only one stop with a bench and there are no shelters. Mr. Patton said there is a project in the works to look at seven locations on the coast and they will take considerable infrastructure to build up.

Mr. Baker said the CAC badge is worth \$165 per month and he would not want a stipend. He said northbound El Camino Real at West Orange Avenue there is a bucket sign at the stop. He said the two bike racks on his bus were full and the operator allowed a third bike on in the wheelchair location where the seat was locked up and he supports this practice of allowing a bike in the wheelchair area when it is not being used.

Ms. Gilbert said she is totally opposed to being compensated for her service on the CAC.

Ms. Ballator said there should be a sign for the Route FLX at Industrial Road and Howard Avenue and by the In and Out or the Palo Alto Medical Foundation on Industrial Road and Holly Street.

Ms. Laughon said coastside shelters should be put in before the El Niño rains. She asked what happened to the work Mr. Patton was going to do with the bus stops they looked at on the coastside. Mr. Patton said this will be accomplished. The engineering group has other priorities, but it will be assigned and assessed. He said he doesn't know what the cost will be. The only figure he has seen is from the "Connect the Coastside" report, which cites \$150,000.

Ms. Laughon said the cost is obscene and would like to know the breakdown of the costs. Mr. Patton said he doesn't know, it was just from the report.

Mr. Lock asked if there could be some volume data on the South San Francisco shuttle. Mr. Eshleman said the data is available and he will get the information from the city and forward to the CAC.

Mr. Lock said the font on the shuttle stop signage is too small. Mr. Eshleman said he will let the marketing department know.

Mr. Koya said the bus stop at Arleta and Geneva avenues, in front of the donut shop, should be moved south 100 feet to the Grocery Outlet. It would be safer due to the line of parked cars and would serve those shopping at the store. He said the CAC bus pass is a \$165 monthly value and is an adequate compensation for members.

Ms. Laughon said due to the bus schedule from the Coastsides she can't take SamTrans to the CAC meetings.

Mr. Gomez said he told members of the East Palo Alto City Council about the garbage by the bus stops.

Chair Pye said there are two benches at bus stops no longer used. One is on Arroyo Avenue outside the Broiler Express and the second one is southbound on El Camino Real at James Avenue. She said the northbound bus stop sign at El Camino Real and Dumbarton Avenue has been vandalized and has stickers all over it.

LIAISON REPORTS

a. SamTrans Board – Kathy Gilbert

- May is Older Americans Month.
- Art Takes a Bus Ride contest winners were announced.
- Jim Hartnett, General Manager/CEO reported he has had 85 meetings with staff, looking at transparency, alignment of resources, and improving internal communications.

b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee – Judy McKie – absent

c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee - Peter Loranger – absent

d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) – Bill Lock

- New six-car trains are in service.
- JPB CAC recruitment closes May 29.
- Staff provided an update on Caltrain Modernization and working with the California High-Speed Rail Authority.
- Preliminary FY2016 Operating and Capital budgets were presented.
- The annual passenger counts were given.

e. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board CAC - vacant

f. Senior Mobility Action Plan - vacant

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held June 24, 2015, at 6:30 p.m., 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, San Carlos, California 94070.

Adjourned at 8:46 p.m.