

**Santa Clarita Transit
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
March 7, 2013**

Meeting location: City of Santa Clarita, City Hall, Century Room

Members Present: Arnetha Pierce, John Taylor, Kurt Baldwin, James Hogan, Keith Curry, John Panico

Others Present: Adrian Aguilar, Denise Ware, Alfredo Torales

Meeting called to order.

Minutes were approved. Motion was carried.

General Public Comments: None

Member Comments:

Arnetha asked for clarification regarding dispatch not knowing about cancellations to allow other patrons time to schedule for an earlier pick up if needed and also why she was given such a large pick up time for example asking for a 1:30 pick up and given a 12:30 time.

Adrian and Denise explained that the call center will cancel trips off of the driver's schedule directly bypassing dispatch. When scheduling a reservation many factors are taken into consideration. The time requested will be entered and the system will give a time of up to one hour before and one hour after the requested time. Other factors considered are other trips scheduled in the same area and trips travelling in the same direction.

One member suggested calling up to one week's time before to get a better reservation time.

Kurt updated everyone with discussions held at the Paratransit Rider's Coalition meeting regarding scheduling. He stated that it seemed that the scheduling system was not as accommodating for the rider and DOT states there needs to be a better negotiation and not just rely on the computer.

Kurt also mentioned how the West Los Angeles area is being affected by Access services limiting the amount of add-ons that providers can place on routes. Adrian mentioned that the City of Santa Clarita Transit does not offer any monetary incentives to its contractor and they only get paid if the seat is filled.

Kurt stated that the reduction of reservation hours was going to be sent to the Board of Director's attention. The new blog address for PRC is: Paratransitriderscoalition@blogspot.com. He invited everyone to the next meeting held on March 19 from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.; this meeting will be available via teleconference and Google hangout. On the agenda for the next meeting will be the strict enforcement of ¾ mile service area. Future meetings will be held the third Tuesday of every month at the same time.

Jim discussed his upcoming trip to New York and the reservation system used in that area. A discussion was followed using Access services in different cities.

John was considering contacting two Transit groups in the region which he could gain feedback from to share with the group. The two groups he was considering were the Long Beach Older Adult Transportation Task Force and the Southern California Transit Advocates. John will contact them regarding future meetings scheduled and see if they could join AAC as guest speakers.

John commented that overall he was pleased with Transit's local and commuter services.

Kurt mentioned another group to consider, Transit Coalition.

Adrian stated that the City receives newsletters from the Transit Coalition and Southern California Transit Advocates which he could forward the next few issues via email and if anyone is interested in further issues can subscribe.

Keith wanted to make sure his email address was changed to show his new email:
KCurry2205@yahoo.com

John had a few issues to address regarding getting to work on time this week. He said that he gets picked up at 6:45 a.m. and this week has been getting to work after 8 a.m. John said that they have been picking up TLC students and dropping them off before him.

Adrian spoke of the Access to Work Program offered by Access Services which is designed to take people to work and scheduled based on the time a rider has to be at work. The program provides limited or no stops for riders; participation in the program is based on meeting certain criteria. Alfredo said that he could send John an application if he was interested.

New Business

None

Old Business

City of Santa Clarita, Transit division

Adrian had some updates regarding fleet purchase of local transit buses. The first bus came out of production and is in the process of being delivered. The City is expecting arrival at the Transit Maintenance Facility by Friday, March 8. Nine other buses will follow in 3-4 weeks. These buses are all CNG powered and will be replacing the older diesel buses. Six commuter buses will be leaving the factory in North Dakota in the middle of July and these will replace older commuter buses. The buses will be ready for use once installation of radios, electronics, AVL systems, and fareboxes is complete.

Eleven more local transit buses will be arriving in late January, early February 2014. At that time, all local diesel buses will be retired from the City of Santa Clarita bus fleet and the City of

Santa Clarita's local fleet will be all CNG powered which will help provide a clean and healthy environment for all residents.

The local buses on order are 40 feet long and the commuter buses are 45 feet long. All new buses are fully accessible.

Adrian spoke about MCI and Cummins testing out new engines using CNG for commuter buses. The City is hoping that they will consider using the City of Santa Clarita as their testing site.

Someone asked if any of the new buses were articulated. Adrian responded, "No," he stated that they are not used as extensively as they had hoped. The challenge is they look great but in neighborhoods they do not look good to residents. The articulated buses have been extremely helpful and primarily used as added capacity to the school district routes.

Adrian stated that the City is working on request for proposals for additional vehicles. They are currently working with Long Beach to do a request for additional local buses and Victor Valley for additional commuter buses. This will take place in about 3-5 years and by then there should be a CNG option available.

In the past, the Transit division has always replaced a huge number of fleet at one time, the division is looking at replacing 1/5 of the fleet each year maintaining a cycle. This will keep the average age of the fleet down but will also benefit by not having to replace a large number of buses at one time.

In terms of technology, upgrades to on board visual displays have taken place. The monitors will visually display the stop in terms of the route with audio announcement going on. The announcements would include City wide events and would be triggered based on the location of the bus. Part of the technology upgrades includes installing Wi-Fi to the commuter fleet.

Someone asked if there was volume control because one of the buses had issues with such. Adrian stated that there was but, the drivers have no control over the volume. If any issues arise, citizens would need to identify the bus and notify the City so it could be adjusted.

Another update regarding technology which Adrian mentioned was the installation of QR Codes or Quick Response Codes along with the numbers for citizens to text to receive real time information. He stated that there has been a significant increase in the use of text, at least 40% each month with approximately 20,000 texts a month. The increase in use of technology has decreased the number of transit related calls for the call center. Access and DAR still continues to receive the same amount of calls.

The website for Transit has been redesigned. There will be a Spanish version of the website coming in the next couple of weeks. Transit will be starting to increase the usage of social media such as Facebook and in the process of creating a Twitter account specifically related to Transit information. The Facebook name is City of Santa Clarita Transit which is used to post service alerts and events.

Someone asked if there were any upcoming hearings for unmet needs. Adrian responded by mentioning the meeting held on March 18 at the Newhall Library at 2 p.m. and 2 meetings held on March 19, one in Lancaster and one in Palmdale on the same day.

A member wanted to know if the City offered emergency transportation during evacuations. Adrian stated that emergency transportation is provided during evacuations through the City's own emergency management system. The City also works with the county, state, and federal levels during an emergency. Drills are held once a year.

Jim talked about First Alert, an emergency battery operated device which is connected to the persons land line and waterproof. With the push of a button notification is given to anyone who could assist the person in need. The device costs about \$300 and thought it was a wonderful product.

Kurt announced that the California Utilities Commission is offering a free cell phone, with certain amount of minutes, to anyone who is on SSI, collecting food stamps, or on Medi-Cal.

John made a few comments regarding citizens using texting while in Century City and coming back to Santa Clarita. He stated that this service was accurate. He also mentioned the monitors on board. Adrian stated that they have been running a testing phase the last couple of weeks, running the same audio and video to make sure that they were syncing correctly.

John had a question regarding emergency preparedness. He wanted to know if there was a plan in case of an emergency for citizens stranded in another city, would there be a bus available to pick them up and bring back to Santa Clarita? Adrian stated that there have not been any scenarios practiced and it would all depend on the circumstances and challenges to get to the location. Adrian stated that this was a great issue to consider and would look into this further.

Jim mentioned that Vanpool has a policy where if someone had an emergency at home a vehicle would be sent to pick them up.

Access Services

Alfredo had applications and flyers for anyone interested in joining the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month.

A member wanted to know if Access services would provide transportation to the CAC if representing the City of Santa Clarita and take them directly to the meeting versus using a transfer or the Metrolink. Alfredo stated that if this was an issue in joining the committee, applicants could write this on the application for consideration.

Access Services will be strictly enforcing the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service area from every bus stop and red line. In the coming weeks, they will be notifying any citizens directly affected. Citizens will be given 60 days to find alternate transportation.

Access has a 511 system, a regional effort, where citizens could retrieve information on destinations, bus routes, check to see whether an address is in the service area, and find out what local buses are free. Citizens could call 511 or go online to 511.com to get more information.

Alfredo spoke about the active Agua Dulce shuttle offered through the County of Los Angeles and Transit Systems. Alfredo mentioned that they operate a deviated fixed route with curb to curb service. Therefore, there is no need for complimentary Access service according to ADA regulations.

Alfredo wanted to address a question regarding transfer times. The times available are 7:30 – 12:30 – 3:30 – 5:30. The group was discussing adding on a 9:00 or 9:30 transfer time.

There was also a discussion regarding Access Services and the fact that they only operate service to a certain area only during the specified areas scheduled local service.

MV Transportation

Denise informed that the on time performance was constant at 92% for the past two months. She also mentioned that handouts were given to passengers as they were boarding the bus regarding the “no show” or cancellation policy. She stated that there was not a significant drop in “no shows” but there was a significant increase of riders calling, worried about forgetting to call and cancel. Therefore, awareness is out there and they are hoping to see a decrease in “no shows.” She said that there were a total of 309 “no shows.”

Jim suggested having a 10-15 second delay on the hold message when citizens call to make reservations, informing riders of the “no show” policy.

Keith mentioned that he had personal information from riders who were having TAP issues. Denise said that she would forward the information over to Corie, a City employee.

Arnetha wanted to know what type of acknowledgement drivers received when citizens call or mail to recognize them. Denise informed that they received a Customer Service Certificate which a copy was kept in their personnel file. Acknowledgements of these certificates were also given at the Safety meetings which are held every 2 months and included in the monthly newsletter.

Meeting was adjourned.