

City of **SANTA CLARITA**  **TRANSIT**

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.
Thursday, September 5, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, John Panico called to order the meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at 9:00AM.

MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT

John Panico, Chairman

Keith Curry, Vice Chair

John Taylor, Santa Clarita Senior Center

James Hogan, Member

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

George Orentlicher, General Public

Karen Manke, Member

Ella Clark, Member

Kurt Baldwin, Independent Living Center
of Southern California

Lillian Shaw, Member

Megan Munby, Access Services

Keith Mbulo, MV Transportation

Jesse Lewis, General Public

Martha Lewis, General Public

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Carmen Taylor, General Public

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the agenda was approved.

The agenda was approved as is.

A motion to approve the minutes was approved.

The minutes were approved as is.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Jim Hogan

New Freedom Program

Those that have submitted their application for the new program which is a shared ride. At first there was a lot of resistance which is what I was told the other day and those lottery people have been approved to use the new facility beginning July 1st. We don't know when the next lottery is going on again. The program is up and running, I feel bad for the drivers.

Karen Manke

Last week, one of the drivers was late, they came from Olive View. The driver is expected to get to Canyon Country from Olive View in ten minutes. What happens if there is a lot of traffic and they can't get to me and then they're late, what can be done about that? I mean Castaic, for Olive View, Newhall, traffic sometimes is so bad, and it takes them a half an hour to forty five minutes to get to. I'm not blaming them, it's not their fault, but something has to be done, this is getting crazy. It was DAR on Labor Day, they were an hour late.

George Mbulo responded to Karen Manke's question

We currently understand the increase in the trip demand, we do see anywhere between forty to five-hundred trips per day. We are looking at the para-transit service to see how we can re-bid it and restructure it, so that we can support that demand, but we are working on it.

I don't have the figures at this time, but generally when it comes to holidays, we cut down the service to a Sunday Service number, but generally we will look at each trip that is already scheduled and base our staffing on that. I will have to look at the statistics.

Adrian Aguilar commented

We build our trips based on the trips that are already scheduled, we know in advance how many trips we have scheduled for a holiday.

Jim Hogan asked George the following question.

I would like to know what your time frame is on your report on Labor Day, does it show that you are late to every trip on that day? It would be interesting to know what are the stats for that day?

George Mbulo responded to Jim Hogan's question.

I'll have to look at the stat's, I don't have them with me right now, but generally when it comes to the holidays, we cut down the service to a Sunday Service number, but generally we'll look at the trips that are already scheduled and base our staffing on that.

Lillian Shaw

The pick-up times are running later and later. I'm talking more than twenty minutes. I had to wait an hour one day and that threw off the whole day.

Where's my Ride App

The new application stinks and the ETA is off.

Ella Clark

The drivers are getting pick up times that are double, triple. The drivers are scrambling to keep up with the riders. When you call about the status of your trip, it's always "five minutes" or "they're around the corner" I don't like to be lied to. Driving around in circles and not getting anywhere. In my case driving around for forty five minutes around my home, dropping off, picking up people all around and I'm within walking distance of my home. I had the driver drop me off, what was the point of going all the way to Newhall to my destination when I was going to make everyone late because I have a standing order every Wednesday to pick me up and take me to my chiropractor which I need badly.

Getting in and out of the Senior Center. The drivers are having a hard time getting in and out of the drive way. Is it going to be fixed?

Kurt Baldwin

Pilot Program

Access Services is expanding the parents with disabilities program throughout the county. It will be going out to the regions and then get implemented here in Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley later on. This is for the parents that are riders who have children for the benefit of their child care needs. It is going to be for parents and if the grandparent is the primary caregiver, then it will apply to them.

The eligible rider who is a parent and has a child, this program is for me so I can go get my child from school when he/she gets sick, like a same day sort of thing.

We have a commitment from METRO. They want to make sure that it's countywide, it's been a pilot in the San Fernando Valley for many years and the money is there and they want to make sure that parents through LA County have the benefit of this program.

John Taylor

The Senior Center

Can you please take a look at the scheduling for the Senior Center? Sometimes you have several of the buses there at once. The signal light needs to be looked at too.

Access Van

We picked up someone from the Senior Center going home and then right by my house on Soledad and I said "Wait a minute, I live down the street" and the driver said "Oh no, you're the next stop" she said "I have to go by this".

George Mbulo responded to John Taylor

The way it works is that the operators should contact dispatch to inform them of the change and if that works with the flow of the next pick up then they will grant that. The driver should have called dispatch to inform them, we'll have to take a look at that.

Kurt Baldwin responded to the comments

There's a perception that the drivers are intimidated by the dispatchers. There is a power thing there that does exist.

Adrian addressed some of the questions and comments from the Members.

Karen and Jim, what we will do is look at the schedule and report back in terms of what the actual performance was on Labor Day. The caller on hold messages we've been taking an inventory of those and we'll get those switched out, no later than next week.

Lillian Shaw

The where's my ride app, we will share your comments with Access' IT folks. Unfortunately, other than providing the data, we don't have any control over that so we'll reach out. Megan is here I'm sure she'll share with IT as well.

Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit Division

General Comments

We have noticed that our on-time performance for the past month has slipped quite a bit. It's a combination of a few things, it's not an excuse it's a combination of multiple things. Right now we have a number of street projects going on. We have multiple things going on, and these have had an impact, not just on DAR & Access but our fixed route service as well. We have had a number of street closures and they've been throughout the entire City. Right now, Newhall is one of the most affected areas and unfortunately that is one of our busiest areas in terms of travel to and from. You may be impacted

directly, it has a domino effect, a bus will run behind and then it pretty much stays behind for a little while until we have a cancelation or lunch or something that allows them to catch up. What happens is that dispatch will start to see as they get further and further behind to get them back on schedule.

Adrian Aguilar addressed Ella Clark's concerns

It's not that we forget about your trip, it's not that we didn't schedule it. It's that something has happened that day that has either caused it to be moved to a different vehicle, a driver got behind or we had a cancellation. The other thing is that the drivers don't see their entire schedule for the day, they only see an hour or two in advance so to say their schedule is somewhat of an unfair statement, they don't even know what their schedule looks like and we do that purposely because we are constantly moving stuff around based on schedules. It is something that were looking at and working on as Keith mentioned. Looking at schedules and shifts to see what type of adjustments need to be made.

OLD BUSINESS

AAC BYLAWS

John Taylor made a motion that we approve the Bylaws

Karen seconded it

Adrian opened it up for discussion

Kurt Baldwin

I had written a lot of comments during our discussion and it seems to me like the last time a lot of those comments were addressed. It sounds like two or three members would like to have more time with it, I would allow that time.

Sub-committee meeting, we can discuss it as a group. We can schedule a meeting in place and a conference for those that would rather do a phone conference. We will schedule it towards the end of September or the beginning of October.

NEW BUSINESS

None

AGENCY UPDATES

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita Transit Division

Transit Development Plan

Our Transit Development Plan is moving along, I know that there were some questions at the last meeting. That is going to Council for adoption on September 24th. That's basically a formality for us. We are working on implementing some of the other recommendations in that plan.

The one we are currently working on is the micro-transit or on-demand service. We are in the final process of selecting the software that we will be using for this pilot program. We have also started discussions with MV in terms of how that would look in terms of the operations side of things. Our hope is to have all the details worked out on the operations side early next year and be able to implement the service. It's looking closer to February (I was hoping January) but the plan is to run a six month pilot approximately but the reality is that we will run it until we run out of money, it may be a little shorter or a little longer just depending on demand and how it goes. We estimate it to be approximately six months and then from there we will evaluate and look at the data, evaluate the service and make a decision on whether we want to continue with the service or not, or expand or move it or modify it and try a different pilot.

For us, it's really a new way of doing business here in Santa Clarita. I know that there are some agencies through the country that have done this type of service with moderate success, but for us, it's really going to be something unique and something different than what we have done in the past, so we will be looking at that very closely.

The other thing that we have going on is that we will be taking delivery of two new commuter buses sometime this month. They are actually shipping from or leaving the factory in North Dakota I believe next week and they will be arriving in Los Alamitos where we will go and inspect them and anything that needs to be repaired will be repaired at their facility. Depending on what issues pop up we should have them on site by the middle of this month and be putting those into service. These are 45-ft CNG commuter buses and will be replacing our diesel powered vehicles.

We are looking at zero emission vehicles, these are electric and hydrogen buses. We have a vendor coming out later this month to bring a vehicle that we can touch feel, kick the tires, drive it around town and see what it does on our hills and with our heat. We had a vehicle come out a couple of months ago and it performed surprisingly well. We are in the testing evaluation phase and the plan is to make a final decision by next June in terms of what path we will be taking. State law is required us to move away from fossil fueled vehicles and go to a zero emission fleet. Right now the only two options are either hydrogen or electric. Both have advantages and both have disadvantages. The biggest disadvantage to both is the amount of infrastructure to support a fleet of our size. We are probably looking at close to twenty five million dollars in just infrastructure to support this change. We are required to make a decision by the end of next year and then start moving down that path and purchase our first zero emission bus by 2024.

A part of this on demand service, is possibly purchase an electric shuttle vehicle that we can use as a test. One for the technology, but also as a way to train our staff and get them familiarized with that technology without having to jump in to the deep end with both feet, so that's our longer term plans.

Ella Clark responded to Adrian's comments

When you do get these vehicles, you consider buying them because of their performance and everything. The current Access vans have narrow steps and their steeper than the old ones. Please consider using people that are disabled to go up and down, get in and out of them as feedback.

Adrian Aguilar responded to Ella Clark's comments

We do take that feedback into consideration. The next low floor platforms similar to a full size bus, so steps go away all together. The challenge that we have is that those vehicles are only available in gasoline, they are not available in CNG, they are coming out with some electric versions of that vehicle but then the challenge for us here in Santa Clarita is the range. From what the manufacturers are quoting they get a range from 110 miles per charge and that is under perfect optimal conditions. The reality you see is 80% of that range if you are lucky. Our average route on access and DAR is approximately...150-200 miles which means we would have to switch out buses, so for every one DAR vehicles, we would need two electric vehicles to do the same level of service.

Adrian Aguilar responded to Ella Clark

On the City Fleet, yes I don't know what Access has planned in terms of their fleet, but yes we have four City owned vehicles that have the lift on the vehicle and honestly those we use, for lack of a better word "Our spared fleet". There are the oldest vehicles in our fleet and the reason that we haven't retired them to be honest, is because they have very low miles on them. All our new purchases will have either the lift in the front like I said, we are looking at the low floor ramp vehicles. I know that also Access is looking at a new type of vehicle as well, if I'm not mistaken will eliminate the lift to the front.

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

In August, we didn't do so well with the start of school. That drooped down to 84.19%. This is on the fixed route service. This is across all services, so this includes commuter, but the majority of that drop was experienced in local service.

We've been making some adjustments, we did start a new route to Castaic High School this year. We've had a lot of ridership and ridership continues to go up but it has created a few challenges and that the school, the campus itself was still doing construction up until this day. The first day of school, they didn't even have any sidewalks. It created a few issues in terms of getting busses in and out, and changing traffic patterns and such.

We are starting to make some adjustments based on the first few weeks of operation and will continue to make those tweaks as we go.

Local Service	
July	91.28%
August	84.19%

Karen Manke

How come sometimes when you TAP your card on the fare box it doesn't work, is there a reason?

Adrian Aguilar

They should be inspected on a daily basis, when they are not working properly, it's the responsibility of the driver to write that up and notify.

Karen Manke

On September 3rd – It took me almost thirteen hours, from 6AM to 3PM to get a hold of the call center, was there something going on?

Adrian Aguilar

Yes, there was a problem with the calls. I don't know all the details because I haven't received a follow up report, but there appeared to be an issue with the Access 800 number and the way that those calls are transferred over to our call center. If you were to call our local number, the 294.1BUS. Once we became aware of it, we notified Access, opened a ticket with the phone company, and in the interim Access put into play, a patch or a work around, so that as calls were coming in they were routed properly. You can also call 661.294.9327.

John Panico

Street closures vs. Street openings, anything happening with the road that connects five points of Golden Valley Rd., from Plum Canyon going over to Sierra Highway, are they going to open that shortly?

Adrian Aguilar

I have not received any updates on that, I think that a lot of that is tied to the construction schedule even if the road is complete, they probably won't open it. It is part of a much larger housing development that is going in up there, it's called Skyline, I'm sure you've noticed the grading that is going on up on the hill, so that's what that is.

John Panico

Kings Gate to Whitney over by Newhall Ave. and Eternal Valley, is that opening up too?

Adrian Aguilar responded to John Panico

The first phase of construction was approved and is currently under construction. The second phase was recently approved, I don't think they have broken ground yet, and they are coming back to the City for final approval on phase three within the next couple of months. We should see them finalizing the project within the next three months. Phase one was being constructed basically on spec, without having tenants and hoping to have tenants in place at least they even start push that timeline out a little bit but it is moving along, there is some transit infrastructure that is included or required as part of that development including a number of stops and amenities.

Status of Bermite behind Metrolink – Part of our overall transportation plan. There are no immediate plans to construct that road. That construction will be tied to development of that property. The last update that I received was that Whitaker Bermite expects to be done with the clean up by January of 2020. The plan is to have the clean-up completed by January of next year.

Status of Sand Canyon Metrolink – The Vista Canyon Transit Center which is the first phase of that project that will be constructed, the RFP for construction is actually being released today. Our plan is to select a contractor and award a contract by December, and be in construction by January. The Metrolink Station is approximately six to nine months behind that. We're still finalizing the design phase for the Metrolink station, however we are now fully funded for that station.

John Panico

Last time we had members of the public that came in requesting issues regarding challenges with emotional and mental health and different types of Transit and they made requests to the City, any update on that at all?

Adrian Aguilar responded to John Panico

Following our meeting we met with the group we discussed resources that are currently available. Really, what their main concern was service outside of the Santa Clarita Valley. We shared what is currently available in terms of Access and the expanded transfer trips, so we shared that information. We shared information that hopefully will help. Recently, there were changes made to Medicare medical insurance that cover that type of transportation and it's just a matter of setting up that billing process and that type of service. We discussed some of those options, I made myself available to help with that – setting that up or identifying vendors. Unfortunately that's not within our operation right now, however I did offer to help in terms of serving as a resource. I have not heard back.

As far as a follow-up discussion after that meeting, but that offer is still on the table. On demand service for all folks not just people with disabilities and not necessarily somebody that would qualify for Access. That is where the challenge came into place.

Access Services

Megan Mundy

Transfer Trip Expansion

It started July 1st and I added a few slots throughout the day and added the weekend options. We are still computing all of the exact numbers as far as comparison to this time last year and now, but just overall trips for Santa Clarita in general, you can see the spike, overall you all are traveling more in general, just looking at year to year, even from month to month.

In July, there was about 3,700 trips, and in August there was 4,036 completed, it is actually just growing every month. It looks like you guys are taking advantage of the service. Since the transfer trip expansion started of course anything new, there are going to be areas of improvement, so we're always asking if there are any reported issues.

I am the project administrator for the San Fernando Valley which is where a lot of the transfer trips take place because Olive View Medical Center is in Sylmar. I'm always in communication with them, asking if there is something that we are missing, just asking for feedback from the riders, the process flow, because it's a very unique time for that because all six of our regions meet up at that location, so everything has to run smoothly especially if you're making multiple layer trips.

For example, if you're starting at Disneyland and you're trying to get down to Santa Clarita. Every step has to be seamless, so we've been working very hard just to make sure that everyone is getting to where they need to be there smoothly.

I've been listening to the meeting, so I just wanted to address a couple of those things. Kurt mentioned the parents with disabilities, currently it is just in the San Fernando Valley. It's going to be opened region wide. Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley get it after we've worked it all out in the basin because the basin is so much larger traffic wise. It's almost like we work out the kinks before bringing it to you guys. It might not seem like that sometimes, but it has to take that process.

Currently, in the San Fernando Valley we do about 400 parents with disabilities per month. It shouldn't be used as a same day service trip, you do have the option to do two round trips same day trips in a month, but most of the people using the service are taking their children to school. In some cases there is emergencies like Kurt mentioned. Currently the fare is only a dollar per person. They charge you as the parent and the child that is over five years old or more. You're able to take up to four children at a time which is a non-

share ride service. It is considered premier service but it doesn't necessarily mean for you all. On the operation side it is a more expensive service to run just because there's non-share rides and contradicts what Access typically does but we did understand that there was a need for it and that is why it was developed. One of our CAC Members, Gail Hagan one of the users of the service and was very instrumental in creating the service. So we did have rider feedback when creating it and there's definitely going to be room for improvement regarding that.

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Staffing Changes

We have some staffing changes, Jacob Fritz is no longer with our company, we do have an open position, and it is currently posted. I will be conducting interviews later today and tomorrow, and part of next week, hopefully we can make a selection because we do need to have an operations manager. We also have a call center supervisor position open. The individual that was in that position, was promoted to dispatcher. I've already conducted interviews and made a selection and that person is going to be going through the hiring process. We do also have a new CSR, her name is Martha Pena, she was hired two weeks ago and she is as of Saturday on her own. As far as call takers, we are fully staffed, we just need to fill the two positions that we have open.

Keith Mbulo, MV Transportation

Operations

We did some interlining with some of our fixed route service, nothing with para. We will be having a driver bid this Saturday, I don't foresee any major impacts with DAR or Access drivers. It will be mainly the fixed route operators that will be moving around a little bit, but then again, it is by seniority so it's not guaranteed but I don't see any major changes there.

Bid will go into effect next Monday, so you will see those operators put there.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

George Orentlicher

The thing I find consistent is the scheduled pick-ups. The other day there was a pick up, at point A, then at point B, two minutes later, the point C, two mins later, point D one minute later, there's no way. I said as a joke at the time, they should have dispatch or CSR ride on the bus for a full shift to see what it takes to go on and off the bus, get through traffic, making turns, going through Sierra and Soledad, making a left at that intersection, seeing what time it does take and not schedule pick up and drop off within one to two minutes. This is consistent, in fact I mentioned something like this last time (page 13).

Jesse Lewis

There is a bus stop in front of our mobile home park. It is east bound west of Soledad & Golden Triangle. It's not a safe intersection (it has a cross walk on both sides) the bus stop before it has to merge left.

Adrian Aguilar responded to Jesse Lewis

Typically what we do, we place stops on the far side of the intersection, so after you go through the intersection, we have the bus stops, so that it has clearance and it doesn't back up traffic into the intersection, it's also why we don't stop before an intersection, because then were not only blocking through traffic, but also blocking traffic turning. In terms of the stop, I have to go take a look at it.

Martha Lewis

No Comments

Carmen Taylor

About two weeks ago, John and I were almost involved in a traffic accident on Soledad going west bound just by Rainbow Glen. The bus was stopped, it was picking up Patrons and off-loading and a little pick-up truck was speeding down. I came up right even with it, he couldn't stop in time, and he comes into the bus. I was in the next lane, so I was able to keep going, but I witnessed it, when I got passed the bus, the pick-up truck took off, went up to Ruther, went up to Walmart. I called MVT and I called the Sheriff's to give a description and you guys were able to catch him within the hour. It was scary, he almost hit us. He messed up him truck pretty bad, but he was able to take off.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting for the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, November 7, 2019, 9:00AM at City Hall in the Century Room, 23920 Valencia Blvd., Santa Clarita, CA 91355.