

**Santa Clarita Transit
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
May 3, 2012**

Meeting location: City of Santa Clarita City Hall

Members Present: Keith Curry, John Taylor, Kurt Baldwin, and Clark Bridgewater

Others Present: William White, Arnold White, Arneatha Pierce, Ed Moya, Jim Moore, Adrian Aguilar, Denise Ware, Alfredo Torales

Meeting called to order at 9:04 am

Approval of Minutes: Kurt Baldwin

General Public Comments:

William White gave a scenario and based this scenario on a concern as not knowing what time to schedule a trip on DAR because he does not know how long it will take to get to his destination.

Adrian Aguilar explained this is a shared ride system and could not guarantee that passengers will be picked up and taken directly to their destination, while passengers may have a pick up time they could not tell how long it will take to get to passenger's destinations.

William White suggested using zip codes to organize time points at certain locations and then passengers could set up appointment times according to these time points.

Kurt Baldwin stated that nobody is negotiating a pick up time. He stated that it is not really a negotiation when the call center is just giving the first time stated by the computer and not giving an option of a negotiated time as stated by the FTA.

Arneatha Pierce expressed her concern about one of her neighbors, Phyllis Zelinski, an elderly lady who came out of her speech therapy appointment 10 minutes late, the bus left her, and when she came out of her appointment she called for another pick up and waited 5 hours. She also stated that the driver that picked her up reprimanded her for being late and told her that the next time she would be suspended from using the service for 6 weeks. Arneatha said there was no reason for a driver to reprimand an elderly lady in that manner.

Denise Ware told Arneatha that this was completely unacceptable behavior on behalf of the driver and she would look into the matter and find out who was the driver.

Arneatha asked if all drivers were aware of the concept 15 minutes early/15 minutes late rule and stated an occasion where she was waiting for her bus at 10:30 for a scheduled pick up of 11:00. Arneatha stated that the driver was parked in the parking lot and waited

until 11 am to pick her up. She said it would have been to the driver's advantage to pick her up earlier but did not.

Adrian Aguilar and Denise Ware explained to her that the goal of the driver was to pick up passengers at the scheduled pick up time. Even though she was waiting out front and he was sitting in the parking lot he might have had someone else to pick up after her and the drivers do not want to make another passenger sit on the bus while waiting for someone else's window to open. Many reasons come into play when scheduling and picking up passengers. These factors have to be taken into consideration before picking up passengers. Denise Ware also explained that if a driver arrives during a passenger's window and the passenger is not ready, the driver is only supposed to wait for 5 minutes before leaving even if it the time falls before the actual scheduled pick up time.

Denise Ware went on explaining further about negotiations with Access and DAR service. She stated that for Access riders the call center is not allowed to ask for appointment times from passengers. Access policy is to schedule strictly based on requested pick up time and three options are given but the call center only offers the first available to the passenger because that is the best choice as far as the system goes and does not encourage the call center to give out all options. She also stated that they are able to negotiate more options because they offer DAR. Access policy is more confining than DAR policies.

A discussion occurred about negotiating time for riders and how the call center will call as a courtesy to let passengers know that the bus is waiting for them. William White and Arneatha Pierce talked about having a plan for riders traveling to the same location without having to zigzag back and forth through town and dividing areas into zones. William White also stated that it would benefit the passengers if the drivers had the passenger's appointment times in their schedules therefore accommodating the passengers by getting to their destinations on time.

Clark Bridgewater brought up an issue regarding coordinating rides and the list generated via the internet of who is riding the bus to the Adult Day Care Center. He stated that the list is very unreliable and wanted to know who was in charge of maintaining this list. He prints this list as late as possible but still not reliable.

Adrian Aguilar stated that this list comes directly from the scheduling system - real time information and the challenge is that the information is updated every 60 seconds. The information can change frequently due to mechanical issues or cancellations made throughout the day.

Clark Bridgewater brought up the issue of drivers coming in and out of the Adult Day Care Center to use the restroom. His concern was the Adult Day Care is regulated by the state under Title 22 which states that everyone coming in and out of their facility needs to be TB tested.

Adrian Aguilar stated that he was going to instruct drivers not to use their facility for restroom services to solve this issue.

Clark Bridgewater went back to discussing the list coming from the scheduling system and stated that if this list was more accurate he could be giving the city more accurate information.

Adrian stated that the information needed from the Adult Day Care Center should not be coming from the real time system but should be pulled from client files. The real time information is produced to let the Adult Day Care Center know who is being picked up at specific times and which vehicle they will be traveling in. What the City needs is information based on what the Adult Day Care Center billings such as income levels. This in turn determines what the City bills Day Care.

Clark Bridgewater continued on to say that they have an issue when passengers arrive late because they cannot legally mark citizens in attendance if they do not participate in at least four hours of their program. Clark stated said that they would work on the efficiency of getting everyone where they need to be when the buses arrive.

Kurt Baldwin was curious about how the fare for citizens using the Adult Day Care Center was calculated.

Adrian Aguilar explained that the City has an agreement with the Adult Day Care Center and instead of having the clients pay for the fare as they board, they are billed at the end of the month according to their income level.

It was announced that the Para transit Rider's Coalition meeting was changed from May 11 to May 24 from 1:30 – 2:30 in Van Nuys at the Independent Living Center. They were hoping to have satellite locations or have the ability to connect from home for those unable to attend the meeting.

Member Comments:

It was announced that member comments will be skipped.

New Business:

It was noted that elections were coming in June; Adrian Aguilar concurred also stating there was a meeting scheduled in June. John Taylor voted Keith Curry as Chair and stated that he would stay on as vice chair due to conflict of interest because of the Senior Center. Only four members were present, not a quorum so it was decided that voting would happen in June.

Adrian Aguilar spoke about the proposed fare changes. Adrian mentioned that there would not be any changes made to the following cash fares: local route of \$1, DAR \$2, and the senior free fare and passengers with disabilities on fixed routes. Adrian stated

that the changes being made were for the cost of the monthly passes. For two reasons: one to bring the cost more in line with what other agencies in the region are charging and two keeping more in line with what the actual cost of the service. The subsidized program will still be in place based on income requirements for seniors. The following are some examples of the proposed changes: local monthly pass going from \$30 to \$32, there will be a new monthly pass for the North Hollywood route which will be \$100 and the reduced fare will be \$50. The changes being made are for the commuter routes at approximately \$5 more per month and the reduced fare will be 50% less than the actual full fare. Another change is the cost of the subsidized fare for DAR from \$.50 per trip to \$.60 per trip. These subsidized tickets used to be called "punch tickets" and we have stopped selling the paper tickets 4 -5 months ago, therefore no longer valid as of May 1, 2012. Now it is a subsidized fare purchased on TAP cards. The public hearing scheduled for the proposed changes is May 24, 2012 as part of the regular council meeting. If adopted the new rates would be effective August 5, 2012.

Someone asked for the rationale of charging personal care assistants (PCA) when traveling with a disabled person.

Adrian Aguilar stated that the City was not part of the ASI Free Fare Program. The City of Santa Clarita is a stand alone program and not reimbursed by Access. When the program originally started it was designed to allow seniors to ride local service for free and provide seniors additional independence and increased mobility throughout the City. Adrian stated that they received feedback that people with disabilities should be included in this program, therefore, Santa Clarita City Council stated that persons with disabilities would be included in the program but PCA's would have to pay the fare.

Someone stated that charging the PCA defeated the purpose of having increased mobility for seniors or the disabled if they did not have the money to pay for their PCA to come along with them.

A discussion was made about Access and Metrolink issues. Adrian Aguilar addressed this issue by saying that it had nothing to do with the local service. The issue had to do with citizens getting off Metrolink and wanting to continue on the City's commuter service for free.

Someone suggested a system of using a DAR and/or Para transit vehicle deviated from its fix route in highly utilized areas for patrons to use by calling in a day in advance.

Adrian Aguilar stated this was a good introduction for Jim Moore's presentation of the Transit Development Plan. In which they will be looking at the Para transit and fixed route service, its current and future demands, how we can meet that demand, and recommendations of how it can be financed.

Jim Moore of Moore and Associates introduced himself and his business partner Eric, a market research survey and outreach specialist. Moore and Associates is creating a five year business plan for the continuing development of public transit services in Santa

Clarita. His business is based out of Valencia but they work all over the country and have experience with implementing DAR zonal fare. The TDP is the blue print that will guide the Santa Clarita plan over the next five years. Moore and Associates encourages public participation opportunities and in the last week have administered community surveys in 3-4 neighborhoods in Santa Clarita and have received positive feedback. They will be conducting additional surveys online, sending out 2000 mailers and issuing DAR surveys focusing on geographically based groups, focus Groups such as senior center and Cal Arts. Finally, Moore and Associates will be conducting community workshops which will present the information gathered from the surveys to the community. Jim Moore wanted to address the committee and wanted to know if the survey was on target and looking for recommendations for how to reach out to seniors and the disabled to facilitate their participation.

Jim Moore opened up for group discussion, Keith Curry had a question and Jim Moore responded by stating that question #6 pertained to the satisfaction regarding possible characteristics most common to the service offered and if he wanted to add another part to the characteristics being addressed Keith could make a suggestion and they would take his suggestion into consideration.

Another question was asked by Kurt Baldwin about how the survey was addressing DAR and Access as one survey. Adrian Aguilar addressed this question by stating that the survey was originally for DAR but they did not want to exclude Access riders. Jim Moore also added that most customers do not differentiate the service as Access and/or DAR; they are more concerned about using the bus to get to and from their destination. Jim stated if the committee felt the need for differentiation he was ready to hear suggestions for such a change.

Further discussion was made about the survey. Adrian Aguilar addressed the concerns and stated that the surveys would help with future planning and give the City ideas of how to market and how to better serve the community. Adrian also stated that this could lead to another opportunity to continue annually to be able to measure trends. Jim Moore closed by saying that comments were welcome and appreciated from the committee and this was only the beginning to finding out the needs of the community.

Old Business

Adrian Aguilar updated everyone on overall On Time Performance for DAR 90.32% and 91% for Access. Adrian stated there was a slight drop in call volumes and thought this drop had to do with the use of technology and has seen the largest drop in transit related calls.

A suggestion was made regarding looking into a system of having the call center call patrons back instead of holding on the phone. It was discussed that this was something to consider.

Alfredo Torales stated that Access recently conducted their own survey administered by the Fairfax Group via telephone of 1,200 customers, with 54 active riders in the last 6 months. Alfredo stated that the overall survey brought back mostly positive satisfaction. Alfredo stated that he would be emailing the survey results to all and was also available on their website. Alfredo also informed everyone that the Antelope Valley had a new contractor.

Denise Ware updated that MV was working hard on hold times for patrons. Adrian added that the average hold time in March was 47 seconds and 56 seconds in April for Access. DAR had hold times of 49 seconds in March and 54 seconds in April. Denise Ware informed all about 2 newer buses for Access with larger capacity for wheelchairs up to 6. Adrian Aguilar informed all about the 4 newer DAR vehicles which are coming from AVTA. These vehicles will be equipped with radios, fare boxes, and should be available for use in 4-6 week.

Meeting was adjourned and noted as not a quorum.