

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, May 4, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Keith Curry called to order the meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at 9:00AM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Keith Curry, Chairman; Jim Hogan, John Taylor, Santa Clarita Senior Center; Linda Wood, Member; Line Paquine, Member; Ella Clark, Member; Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit; Elmer Contreras, MV Transportation; Keith Mbulo, MV Transportation; Elmer Contreras, MV Transportation; Lorraine Lopez, MV Transportation; Cristina Blanco, Access Services; Fayma Ishaq, Access Services; Yvonne Compton, General Public; Milcah White, General Public; Jose T. Sonsa Jr., General Public; Karen Manke, General Public; Terry Stanley, General Public

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made to approve the Minutes of March 2, 2017 with no changes. Hearing no objections, it was so ordered.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Yvonne Compton, General Public

Access Services here in the City

I am my mother's PCA & my son's PCA. Access & DAR seem to overlap each other. My understanding of Access Service is that Access Service is to all of L.A. County. But here in Santa Clarita, it seems like the rules for DAR merge into the rules of Access Services. How does that manifest? It manifests in the fact that when you call Access Service, you assume that you're going to get Access Service driver & bus, you get a DAR bus, and when that happens, it seems like the Access Service now becomes DAR and you're subject to the rules of engagement for DAR. How does that manifest? We call Access Services for my son all the time. We just found out that we need to wait 50 mins. before our designated window to be prepared for the DAR service even though we called for Access Service. How that manifested yesterday is that not only did we have to leave earlier from the designated prepared time, but in addition to that Access

Service is what picked us up with our second ride and it did not even wait the 5 mins. So that we could be picked up and when we addressed it with the company here we were told that it was going to be 2 hours before they can get us which disallowed me getting to an appointment for myself and my mom for recognition. That was just one situation where this happened, and I just want to understand, why is that? Why is there a crossing of services here in Santa Clarita Valley and it doesn't happen anywhere else?

➤ *Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit*

We have two distinct services here in Santa Clarita, we have the Access Service that is the county wide ADA service and in addition to that, the City operates its own DAR service here within Santa Clarita Valley.

Within the Santa Clarita Valley it's somewhat of a unique arrangement in that Access Services contracts with the City to provide the Access Service here, whereas in other parts of the valley, there are different contractors that provide the service. Here in Santa Clarita, it's the City. That allows us to leverage the City resources with Access resources to provide a level of service that meets the demands of our residents.

Just as an example and you kind of touched on this, we have 9 Access vehicles that are dedicated to the Santa Clarita Valley. There are times when those 9 vehicles are not enough to meet the demand, so what we do is we supplement those with the City owned DAR vehicles which is why from time to time, even though you booked an Access trip, there will be a DAR vehicle that comes to pick you up. However, when those trips are scheduled, they are scheduled as Access. They do follow the same policies, procedures and guidelines as Access. The only difference is the paint scheme on the side of the bus. The drivers are trained to the same level, the policies remain the same, so they are treated as distinct services and distinct rides.

It sounds like there were some issues that we'll have to look into. Because the services are unique, even though they are similar and there is some overlap, they do have some features that are distinct such as the reservation window or the pick-up window.

For DAR for example, if you have a 9 o'clock pick-up the bus can arrive anytime between 8:45 & 9:15 to be considered on time, so 15 mins on either side. Whereas, Access it's from your time of pick up or scheduled time, you have 20 mins after that, so that's one of the main differences. If your son is strictly registered with Access Services, it sounds like there may have been some confusion on our side in terms of confusing that Access trip with a DAR trip. That's something we'll have to look into, but we do treat them as two distinct services with their own policies, their own procedures and even though there is some overlapping we do try to keep them separate as much as we can.

There are some features that are unique to Santa Clarita that you don't see in other parts of the Access system. One example is how far in advance you can make a reservation. Here in Santa Clarita, you can make a reservation for either DAR or Access up to 7 days in advance, whereas in the rest of the Access Service area it's the day before. So you're right, there are some things that are unique to Santa Clarita and there's a long history behind that. Basically what we try to do is we try to provide the level of service that our residents and our riders have become accustomed to and historically that has always been the case where riders were allowed to schedule trips that far in advance. So that is one example of the system being unique in Santa Clarita.

Here in Santa Clarita you can use your Access card or your TAP card to pay your fare. We do have the TAP readers on all of our vehicles both Access and DAR, so you can load money onto your son's Access card which also serves as a TAP card. You can do it here at TMF, you can do it at any of our pass sales outlets here in Santa Clarita, or you can do it online. I believe you can even do it over the phone if you call the TAP To Go number. So there are numerous places where you can do that, you can even do that if you're down in the San Fernando Valley, you can do it essentially at any TAP outlet. Basically all you're doing is adding stored value onto the card and when you tap it on our vehicles and it could be our DAR, it could be our Access vehicles, it could be our local bus or commuter buses, so it's accepted on all of our vehicles here in Santa Clarita. Again, that is one of the things that are somewhat unique to Santa Clarita. We do have the TAP equipment on our fleet here, whereas you may not have that option in the basin or other parts of the County.

Reduced fare from the Senior Center

The subsidy program that the City offers through a contractor and agreement with the Senior Center, so the Senior Center administers that program and that program is income based, it's not limited to seniors; it's based on your income. Again, that is one of the things that are unique to Santa Clarita. Those subsidized trips can be used, so rather than paying the \$2.00, you pay \$.60 per trip, but those trips can be used on DAR or Access here in the Santa Clarita Valley. They are not valid on Access trips in the basin and they are not valid for transfer trips, but if you are just traveling here in town, you can use those subsidized trips. What happens is that the City makes up the difference. You can sign up for that program just by filling out some paperwork, and we go by your household income. It's \$6 for 10 rides, \$12.00 for 20 rides and \$24 for 40. And in order to take advantage and use that program, you do have to have a TAP card. Those are only loaded onto a TAP or your Access Card.

Karen Manke, General Public

Problem with TAP Card & Customer Service

I had a thing happen to me, my Access green TAP card went out. I had 24 rides on it and it just literally stopped working. I had just put money on it. I went to call the 800 number and it took

me an hour to get somebody that would understand that I was from Santa Clarita. Nobody could help me, all they were saying was “You have to pay \$5 to get a new card”. My card went out, I have a regular card that has a chip in it, but why would the credit card go out? How could I get my rides back without calling the 800 number and have my blood pressure not go up? I was so upset that I just had to turn around and have to send in \$5 for a new card. Why would I have to send in \$5 for a new card, if the card decides to die? I’ve never heard of such a thing. It’s just mind boggling.

➤ *Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit*

In general, the TAP cards do have a chip in them that stores the information and their designed to be valid for a certain period of time. In most cases it’s 3-4 years. There are a couple of reasons for that. One is, as the technology evolves we have an opportunity to update it, but also in case they are damaged, lost or stolen. It just allows us to keep track of the technology updated as new technology is available. In the case of Access, because it also works as your ID, you have two different dates on there. You have your Access eligibility date on there and there’s also a date that is associated with the card itself. So your Access card, even though their TAP portion of it is expired, as long as the date is on the front is still valid, it’s still a valid Access card.

In your case, you have already loaded trips on your card. If your card expired, they should have been able to just send you one without charging you. What we can do is chat after the meeting. We’ll get your contact information, your ID # and then these ladies will look into your card side of it. What I will do is look at the money side of it because essentially if your card expires, it’s relatively easy to transfer whatever balance you had on your expired card to your new card, and that is something that can be done over the phone. So, we’ll look into that and get it taken care of.

Milcah White, General Public

Access

I was at a bible study and I had a designated ride to come home. They called me on the phone and I didn’t answer because we were praying, and then I called back and asked them if they would come back and they said “no.” What if there was no one to take me home, would I still be there trying to catch a bus to get home? That is the part that I didn’t understand.

➤ *Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit*

We do have a policy where if a customer is at a location other than their home, we won’t leave them stranded. We will do everything we can to get somebody back to pick you up. There is even a program beyond just here in Santa Clarita, where if you call the 800 number

on Access, they have folks that can send out a vehicle so that you're not stranded. We'll have to get the details, date and time and we can look into your specific incident.

Terry Stanley

None

MEMBERS COMMENTS

Kurt Baldwin is unable to attend the meeting today. He had an important Metro Meeting in Los Angeles County.

John Pancio is unable to attend today for personal reasons. John is our Vice-Chair.

Keith Curry

No Comments

Line Paquine

Why are the drivers uninvited to these meetings? They should be more aware of what's going on and be able to express the problems that they experience.

➤ *Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit*

Drivers are welcome to come anytime they want. The meetings are open to the public, so anyone can attend whether they are a driver or not. They will have to come on their own time, but the drivers are welcome. We have had drivers come in on numerous occasions on their own time. We will post on the message board to remind them.

➤ *Lorraine Lopez, MV Transportation*

We do have a policy where there is no retaliation. We do welcome operators' feedback; we value that, so that we can look at ways to improve. We can actually send out an invitation to all of our employees, especially those who are on Access Services, and see if anybody would like to attend. We have made accommodations, so if an employee came to Elmer or myself or another member of our staff and asked to be in one of these meetings, we can always make accommodations, but we also have to make sure that our operational needs are not being affected.

Ella Clark

Courtesy Calls

I was picked up at the usual time, 12 noon from my chiropractor. We left Peachland & Lyons, went down Lyons to Orchard Village to turn left, we proceeded to McBean where we turned right, we went down McBean, passed Valencia Blvd. into the mall, dropped off a passenger, and then we had to change vans, which was already there and it only took about 5 mins. The new van we got was terrible, the air conditioner was bad, the odor was bad, and my throat and eyes were burning. Anyways, we left there and turned right onto Magic Mountain Parkway, we then went to Railroad Ave. and then turned right again, and then guess what? We went to Lyons Ave. and turned right, and mind you we started off on Lyons and Peachland. Want to guess again, we went a few yards where I was picked up an hour before that. Why? It was way over an hour and a half before I got home that day.

What bothered me was not the change of vans, if they had made a courtesy call to me to say they're going to be picking someone up a half a block away from me from where I was, I would have stayed where I was instead of sitting on the bus, going through the transfer. I would have stayed where I was. That's what I mean about a courtesy call. Same thing happened yesterday, I waited till 20 after at the chiropractor, and nobody came, so I called about 25 after and I get "oh the bus is going to be late" no courtesy call. What I have to do, is call the main number, then I have to go through all the push buttons to get to the part where I find out the status of my trip, which is option #4. Why do I have to go through all that midgerall when a simple courtesy call that could take a couple of mins. saying "I'm sorry, the bus is going to be late, were just letting you know" or "were going to be in your neighborhood in an hour, you're not going to be home anyway, you want to stay where you are and we'll pick you up then." These types of things would be nice, a courtesy call saying "I'm sorry". You expect us to always be on time, you expect us to do this and that. We are not your customers, you are ours because without us, you wouldn't have a job, without all of us that showed up today, you would not have a job because we are your clients - you take care of us. So a courtesy call, less than two mins. That's my biggest complaint.

➤ *Lorraine Lopez – we'll look into that because we do have a process.*

Linda Wood

No Comments

OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Jim Hogan opened up the nominations for Chair. In response, Keith Curry stated that our Vice Chair, John Panico is not present. Jim Hogan responded that we should start with the Chair position. Jim Hogan made a motion that the existing officers remain in place for another term. John Taylor seconded the motion and all were in favor. Jim Hogan stated that at next month's meeting they will entertain additional nominations, and that John Panico will have to accept his nomination for Chair.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

AGENCY UPDATES

Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit

Metrolink Closures on the Weekends for the Month of May

As I mentioned, they are doing track work, so there will be limited bus service between Santa Clarita and the Antelope Valley and also Sylmar. But it's limited to the weekends, so it shouldn't affect the mid-week service.

New DAR Vehicles

Yesterday, we had two new DAR vehicles arrive, so our maintenance team is in the process of inspecting the vehicles. They'll start installing some of the equipment like the radios and the fare boxes over the next week or so. I believe the Access maintenance team is on-site today to inspect the vehicles. Hopefully we'll get them in service in the next week or two. You should see those running around town soon.

We are also planning to go to Council on May 23rd to award a contract for fourteen additional DAR vehicles. The plan is to replace the balance of the fleet over the next two years. We will not be taking delivery of all fourteen vehicles at once, but we will be staggering their delivery with the first group scheduled to be delivered in late October of this year, and then we will get a group of vehicles about every nine months after that.

Based on some feedback that we have been receiving from the folks in operations, and some customers, we are looking at making some minor adjustments to the fourteen that we're planning to order like the steps. That's one of the things that we will be looking at. We will be reconfiguring the steps, but other than that, they will be very similar.

Proposed Budget

Last night there was a study session where our City Manager presented the proposed budget to the City Council, to our Commissioners, and to the general public. In that budget, we are asking for a little over 6 million dollars next year to continue our fleet replacement program. We are requesting about a million dollars in funds to update our facilities; such as the Transit Maintenance Facility, we will be doing some improvements at the Metrolink Stations, and the Park and Rides.

We are also requesting approximately \$200,000.00 to implement or to start a new study or to update our Transit Development Plan. Our current plan is about 6 years old and somewhat out of date just based on the economic conditions that we have gone through in the past three years. Many of the financial projections are no longer valid, and so we are hoping to update that. We've asked for \$200,000.00 in next year's budget to undertake that effort. This will go to the Council on June 6th.

There will be a Public Hearing for the budget, so if anyone has any questions or comments, you are more than welcome to come to that meeting and share your comments or questions with the Council. If things go as hoped, the budget will be adopted on June 23rd and it will go into effect on July 1.

Expanding Service into Golden Valley

We are looking into expanding service into Golden Valley. However as I mentioned, there are some things that have changed including our financial situation with the economy. Also some of the latest sales tax initiatives that have been passed such as measure M and the gas tax bill that was signed by the governor last week. All those will have an impact on the City. So before we start making any changes, what we are hoping to do is update our plan, look at the financial information and situation before we start implementing service or changes to the service. As part of that, we will also be looking at making some significant changes to not just our local service but our commuter service as well. We also expect further development with projects such as Vista Canyon Transit Center, Vista Canyon Metrolink Station and the Vista Canyon Development.

Vista Canyon Development

Vista Canyon is located off of Soledad and Sand Canyon. If you're ever on the freeway and your heading north, if you look over to the right you'll see there's been a lot of grading work and stuff going on in that river valley area. There are plans to build a new Metrolink Station, a bus terminal close to what we have at McBean Park & Ride facility, and it will all be developed as part of a walkable development; the idea is to minimize the use of cars as much as possible.

Via Princessa Metrolink Station

The Via Princessa Station will probably go away. The challenge with Via Princessa is that it was never designed to be a permanent station. It was designed and constructed after the 1994 Northridge earthquake as a temporary solution and in order to keep that station, it would cost upwards of 6 million dollars in improvements just to keep the station as is. Some of the requirements from Metrolink and the Rail Authority are that we segregate the tracks, meaning they want us to fence off the entire area of the tracks. They want us to build a tunnel or a bridge under or over the tracks for pedestrians. They also want us to construct a new platform. It would literally cost about 6 million dollars. That is one of the things that we did look into, "Is it more cost effective, and does it make sense to upgrade this station vs. building a new station?"

The other challenge with Via Princessa is that it is located right on a curve, so as the train is coming in, there's a curve there and as it has to slow down to pull into the station, there's not a clear line of site and it essentially slows the train down as it comes into the area.

The City recently purchased the property on the other side of the tracks, so the plan is to keep some of that infrastructure in place; the parking, the restrooms and to turn it into a passive park. It would be Open Space, Park Space, use of fields, dog park type of thing, so it would still be providing amenities, it's just that we're moving the train station from one location to another.

Beach Bus 2017

We will be starting up our Beach Bus service this summer. The service will start on June 3rd (the weekend after Memorial Day). We will be operating both Saturday & Sunday. It will be running between Santa Clarita & Santa Monica. The fare will be \$3.00 each way or a \$1.50 for seniors or folks with their Access pass. The reason we chose that weekend was based on the past history, we know that there's going to be a lot of folks out of town or already have plans and ridership has been extremely low on that holiday weekend, so we decided to start it the following weekend and then it will run through Labor Day weekend. We have a schedule; I will bring the schedule with me to the next meeting. But we'll have two trips (and these are approximations) but we'll have two trips that leave the Canyon Country area around 8:30AM, arrive in Santa Monica around 10AM, return around 4:30PM and be back in town around 5:30-6PM. We'll get the information out to the community; libraries, senior center, on our web-site, tweet it out, we'll also get it on our local buses.

Fayma Ishaq, Access Services

Fayma Ishaq, the new Administrator for the Santa Clarita Area along with Cristina Blanco who is the Operations Service Monitor. We are the team in terms of resolving any concerns, issues, service or TAP card related issues. We're here to resolve any of those issues for you and with you along with Adrian and the rest of the staff here.

I would like to share that next month Access will be hosting our rounds of community meetings, so the community meeting for Santa Clarita is going to be the 21st. Same location in the Newhall Library. The time should be the same as last year. We are in the process of creating the flyers, so once we get the flyers, we will go ahead and make copies and provide them to the Access riders and share that information with you along with our Access web-site being updated. If you are unable to make the meeting, we will also have five other meetings within the basin area as well.

We have new riders' guides in English & Spanish; we will pass it around after the meeting.

Elmer Contreras, MV Transportation

Numbers for April

The on-time was 96.1% for ADA

The on-time was 92.27% DAR

With both services together are over 7,000 trips

They are pretty good numbers as far as on-time performance.

We are going to look at drivers schedules and call center schedules, I don't plan to make too many changes, but the bodies might change. For now, there are no changes being made in the Call Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting

FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting for the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, June 1, 2017, 9AM in the Century Room at City Hall, 23920 Valencia Blvd. Santa Clarita, CA.