

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 5, 2020

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

Line Paquine, Member

Kurt Baldwin, Member

Jim Hogan, Member

John Taylor, Santa Clarita Senior Center

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

George Orentlicher, General Public

Karen Manke, Member

Ella Clark, Member

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Lilian Shaw, Member

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

Christine Pernodet, MV Transportation

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Hector Fuentes, MV Transportation

Larry Miranda, MV Transportation

Carmen Taylor, General Public

Justin Sheldon, Access Services

Carmelita McLean, General Public

Kathleen Russ, General Public

Amanda Rodriguez, Access Services

Yvonne Compton, General Public

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the agenda was approved.

The agenda was approved as is.

A motion to approve the January 2020 Minutes was approved.

The minutes were approved as is.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Jim Hogan

No comments at this time.

Keith Curry

Please speak as loud as you can so that everyone can hear.

John Taylor

I'd like to ask a question about "Go-Santa Clarita" later.

Lillian Shaw

The minutes stated that I didn't report myself for the last meeting, but I wanted to go on record that I did call in to let Adrian know that I wouldn't be there for it.

John Panico

Responded to Lillian's comment. If you can't make it that's fine, but please email me or Adrian. If you have anything to add, including comments, agenda, or any experiences you've had, you should share with me or Adrian, so we can bring it up at the meeting for you.

Adrian and Cindy Valdivia were very kind to host me on Monday. I stopped at the City side of the building at the Transit Maintenance Facility and had a good talk with them.

They showed me around and introduced me to the other Administrative Analysts, as well as some folks I knew in the past since I was on the Commuter Advisory Group. It was good to be there and get some information from them.

I also asked Adrian to bring copies of the Vista Canyon Project design for us to take a look at later on during this meeting.

Kurt Baldwin

Linda Wood

Linda Wood moved to Texas, as her husband needed to move for his job.

Kurt will be giving Keith Curry Linda Wood's phone number.

Aging and Disability Transportation Network

We were working closely with METRO because of Measure M. They've asked us to continue working with them. They put us in the Office of Equity. It's not the civil rights group, it's the equity group.

What is Equity Group

The idea that METRO is trying to foster is that equal doesn't necessarily provide Access to everybody. Equal is important, but it doesn't mean that one group has the same advantage as the other groups. They recognize that older adults and people with disabilities are in that classification.

The ADA is there. If you feel that your rights have been discriminated against, then you can report it. Unfortunately, there is no ADA police out there, so a lot of this has to do with pushing policies that make it more usable for people with disabilities.

Access Services

The board approved the "Parents with Disabilities Program" to go county-wide. There was a pilot program in the San Fernando Valley, and eventually one here in the Santa Clarita Valley, where parents with disabilities will be able to get their students to school on Access.

METRO

I don't know if anyone is aware but METRO is redoing their bus lines. The one that came up Balboa to Foothill by the county assessor's office, they want to get rid of that line.

Faustino Salvador

Responded to Kurt Baldwin's comment.

Once we have all the logistics on that program, I will be sharing the information with the committee.

John Panico

Responded to Kurt Baldwin's comment about Linda Wood and wanted to address that we now have a vacant seat in the committee with members.

Line Paquin

I have some health issues which is why I haven't come to the last few meetings.

Subscriptions

I've been on the waiting list since September to be on the subscription. I'm still waiting to get on that list. How long is it going to take?

Line Paquine

Call outs

You have this new system with the call outs. Sometimes they call me to tell me that my ride is going to be there and they give me the times. They did that for one ride. Actually, this is the second time that this has happened and apparently, they gave me a different time than I had originally booked.

I was relying on the extra time that I thought I had to get ready. Then they called me and told me that my ride was going to be late. When I went outside, my ride had already left and I was marked as a "no-show".

The call out should be at the time that they are going to come, not the time that they think they are going to come.

Adrian Aguilar

Responded to Line's comment regarding the call outs.

Your window time is based on your reservation time. The call out time is based on when we estimate that the vehicle will be arriving – they are two different times.

The call out is if you have an 8AM schedule time and we estimate that the vehicle will be there at 8:05AM. When you get your call out, the automated system will say 8:05AM, it won't say 8AM. We want you to be ready and be aware what time the vehicle is going to be there.

It sounds like there might be some confusion in terms of the times. In terms of the wait time, once the vehicle arrives, so if it arrives at 8:05AM, you have five minutes from that point.

You schedule time didn't change, it is based on your arrival time. As hard as we try to get there at 8AM every time, there are going to be certain factors every time that affect whether we are going to get there at 8AM. Which is why they have a call out.

We can discuss after the meeting because I believe there might be some confusion.

Larry Miranda

Responded to Line Paquine's comment regarding subscriptions.

We have some subscriptions that are old and need to be cleaned out from the system, getting everything available so that the subscriptions can start moving forward. we are working on it, and we are getting close to September for the list. It should be here shortly, but we are making availabilities and cleaning out the system.

Karen Manke

No comments at this time.

Ella Clark

Lost and Found

Please find a better system for your lost and found process. I lost an important key on a bus. My driver turned it into "lost and found" with my name on it. I called a couple of times to look for my keys and I was told to come into the office because they have a drawer full of keys.

Eventually I got my key because I let Adrian know about it, but there has to be a better process for issues like this.

My suggestion is: What bus did it come from? Who lost it? Who turned it in? And that should help narrow it down.

Standing Orders

I've had a standing order for more than three years and I keep missing my Dr. appointments because the driver keeps driving around my neighborhood or is running late. I'm asking if someone can please look into it because the Dr. found more things wrong with me and I really need these appointments.

I don't see any point in keeping my standing order because nine times out of ten, I end up missing my appointment.

Adrian Aguilar

Responded to Ella Clark's standing order comment.

The challenge that we have with your standing order, it is not that we are late picking you up, it's the travel time to get to your destination. One of our policies is that we schedule based on pick up times. I know that in the past we've talked in terms of basing or scheduling times based on drop off times. That's a conversation that we've reopened every couple of years, and maybe it's time that we look at that.

Right now, the way our system is set up, whether it's fair or not, right or wrong, it's just the way it is right now, that our system is based on schedule times. That is what everything works off of and is based off of.

NEW BUSINESS

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita Transit

Hector Fuentes, MV General Manager

Hector Fuentes has extensive experience in fixed route service. He is very familiar with this area as he has family here and at one point he lived in Santa Clarita.

He worked in the Antelope Valley for AVTA as part of their contract. He was recently in Anaheim. We are happy to have him. I'm sure he is going to be interested to hear what you have to say and to start making those contacts and connections.

AAC Meeting Change of location

There is a couple of meetings later this year that we had to unfortunately move. Work is being done in the Century Room where we normally meet. That room is not available, so we've moved those meetings to "The Activity Center". At the next meeting, I will have an updated calendar for you. We've also updated the calendar on the web-site.

I believe it's the November & June Meetings that will be moved. I'll email out the new schedule when I get to the office and bring new copies at our next meeting.

Jim Hogan

Regarding Karen's comment regarding the driver being late. Most of the discussion was regarding transit not being prepared for the increase. Not just in one area, but in the overall areas. That is what I'm concerned about, when we talk about the drivers trying to get to places on time, the lack of drivers. Is someone qualified looking at these trips appropriately.

I've also noticed that when you give your monthly report, you say that ASI has a 91%. How can that be when you are always running late?

Adrian Aguilar

Responded to Jim Hogan's comment.

We look at one time performance and we monitor the performance of the overall service on a daily basis. We have seen some increases in ridership and we have seen some fluctuations. While ridership is going up, the numbers that we are seeing show a shift in the ridership.

The overall numbers in terms of trips per day, we are averaging between 430-470, however they are different trips than we have seen in the past. The trips are getting longer.

We did have some changes in operators and in terms of the most recent bid. All of the on-time data is automatically captured based on the vehicle location, it's not something that can be easily fudged by the operator or by us, the system captures the data automatically.

Going back to my original statement, I think what is happening the types of trips have changed. Where we were seeing the trips that are being late, they are the same types of trips that are going to further distances, not your trip around town or going to the grocery store. It's the trips where you are going from one end of the valley to the other that have the larger impact because we are starting to see more of these trips.

I know that there are some concerns in terms of the drivers and how their trips are scheduled. Again, looking at the numbers, and numbers don't lie, if you look at productivity in terms of how we measure it, then that is the number of trips per hour that are performed by each driver. They're at their lowest level in probably eight years.

Each driver is performing an average of two trips per hour. Providing Access and DAR service is very different than driving a bus or operating any other type of service. I think what's happened is that also, with the new faces that have come in, it's different, it's not what they were used to. I think that us as Management and you as the rider expect more, and these are things that they weren't used to (commuter & fixed route service). I believe that there's a bit of a shift in the expectation of what their job function is.

If you look at the numbers, our ridership is averaging less than five hundred trips a day and on average, each driver is performing less than two trips or about two trips per hour.

I will put a graph together that shows ridership over a ten-year span for you Jim.

AGENCY UPDATES

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

Hydrogen Powered Buses

Some of you may or may not know, in 2018 the State of California passed regulations that require all transit agencies to begin operating zero emission buses. For the last year or so, we've been looking at researching various technologies available. We are currently working on a grant to purchase three hydrogen powered buses.

Based on what we've found and the conditions here in Santa Clarita, we feel that hydrogen is probably more efficient, a more effective technology than battery electric.

1. Hydrogen has roughly the same range average than a CNG vehicle (300-350 miles between fueling). That's about what we're getting with our CNG vehicles. We can have a vehicle out all day and not have to worry about refueling.

2. The other advantage is that all the fueling infrastructure that supports it would only have to be installed at our Maintenance Facility. Unlike battery/electric vehicles where it's common practice to have charging stations developed throughout the City. In our case, we would have to install something at the Transit Center, at Vista Canyon or Newhall just to enable our vehicles to stay out all day and bring them back and recharge them, or find two buses so that we can swap them out.

3. Long term cost, even though both electric and hydrogen are significantly more expensive than CNG in terms of fuel or energy costs, long term hydrogen has lower costs for us. As our fleet reaches a certain point, the cost per vehicle drops significantly. Whereas with battery electric, you're always going to need to charge that vehicle and at some point, we're going to have to try to figure out how to charge all sixty buses within a four-hour period.

That's the direction that we are moving in as a City. We are working on a number of grant applications now. Our hope is to have our first zero emission vehicles here sometime late in 2021 or maybe early 2022.

I'll keep this group updated as we continue to move down that path.

That is going to have a big impact on our operation. Primarily from a capital expenditure perspective. On average a CNG bus is about \$650,000, whereas electric and hydrogen buses are in the million-dollar range, a lot more expensive.

Vista Canyon & The Transit Center

The other update that I want to provide is Vista Canyon and the new Transit Center that is coming in. I'm handing out an aerial color photo of where the project is located.

The aerial photo gives a visual where this development is. This development is on the south east side of the freeway between Jakes Way and Sand Canyon. This will give you perspective in terms of where the overall development is.

The other layout is the Transit Center that we're in the process of building. We broke ground in terms of construction in mid-January, and we're currently underway. This is just for the Transit Center.

Adjacent from this will be a new Metrolink station. We're finalizing the design now, we are planning to go out to bid for construction in June, and award a contract by the end of the summer.

We anticipate that the Metrolink project will break ground right as we are wrapping up the construction of the Transit Center. The Metrolink Station will be about a two-year project. I will share renderings when I get them and share them with the group.

As part of this project, we are also building a space for a surface lot. Long term, the goal is to build a 750-space structure on that same property. We will be starting off with a 500 space with a plan to expand to a 750 space.

Go Santa Clarita

This is the go on demand service that we started this past Monday. I received my first official ridership report today.

Even though ridership started off a little slow, what's encouraging is that in the first three days of the service, we've gone from a handful of people registering to use it to over 130 people registering for this service as of yesterday.

The service area for the pilot project is in Canyon Country, so the areas that are included are Fair Oaks, James Way, along Sierra Hwy. In addition to the base area, we also have destination locations that you can travel to outside the area.

Those include, Via Princess's Metrolink Station, the Golden Valley Wal-Mart, the Child & Family Center, COC (Canyon Country Campus). If you're in the zone, you can travel outside the zone to those specific location or from those specific locations back into the zone.

On-Time Performance

January

Fixed Route - Local & Commuter: 90%

DAR Overall OTP January 94%

ASI Overall OTP January 96%

February

Fixed Route - Local & Commuter: 87.7%

DAR Overall OTP February 93%

ASI Overall OTP February 95%

Faustino Salvador

Responded to Adrian's Comments

I wanted to echo Adrian's comments on our stats, the performance is way above standard here in Santa Clarita. The standard is 91% as Adrian stated. As far as the buses being late, I need the specific details in order to look into it.

Justin Sheldon, Access Services

Emergency Operations Updates

Basically, any major event that would impact our operations, and transportation of our riders, we would operate under an emergency operations center. We have forty-one folks that are trained in emergency operations and Access. What we do is collaborate with our partners at the County level contractors such as Adrian and our other basin region contractors. We get information and try to make high level decisions and try to mitigate the impact to our riders.

Our first activation was the Saddle Ridge Fire on October 10th. It was a pretty major fire; all the major freeways were shut down. There was a severe impact to operations that day. Transfer trips were cancelled for October 11th and were slowly reopened once the freeways started opening up again.

Approximately 100 trips in Santa Clarita were cancelled, and eight hundred trips in our northern region, San Fernando Valley were cancelled. We had about 8,799 acres burned and 2,300 residents were evacuated.

One important thing that I want to mention is that we sent out an "Everbridge" notification. If your phone number is updated in our system, it sends you a text message, basically letting you know that operations are being impacted and that your ride is either cancelled or delayed, and give you some brief information on what is happening.

Be sure to have your current phone number up-to-date, it's something you can go over with the call taker when you are making your reservation or simply call Access Customer Service so that we can update your profile information.

The following activation was on October 24th when we had the Tick Fire. It impacted 40,000 residents, and was actually the largest evacuation in Santa Clarita history. What we did was we had a lot of riders from our basin region that had to get up to the Antelope Valley, so we had to move the transfer point from Olive View over to Mont Claire Plaza in San Bernardino.

Again, those are the high-level decisions that we make when these types of incidents happen because our riders need to get home. It's a team effort, we do everything we can, a lot of folks are involved on the contractor's side to make that happen.

The next one was the Getty Fire, just a few days after. We had to go ahead and activate our EOC again. Approximately 656 acres burned, small amount of acreage, but is a highly dense populated area; 7,000 residents had to evacuate.

We actually got a call from the LA County EOC requesting assistance. We dispatched four Access vans to the unified command post over by the fire department, and we all staged there for multiple hours and basically waited to assist with evacuations. We didn't end up evacuating anyone, but we were there to assist.

Then we had a snow and ice incident in the Antelope Valley on Thanksgiving and the day after. I got a call early in the morning, letting me know that the EOC was activated. I got there about 8AM, it was totally iced over and was going five MPH. The Antelope Valley Transportation Authority went ahead and cancelled services as well. My purpose in being there was to go ahead and assess the situation and give updates hour by hour in the hopes that we could eventually operate.

We had another incident, the day after Christmas. The service was highly impacted that day. We were able to run the local service, however the transfer trips running for 10AM were cancelled, and were moved to 12:30PM.

During the day, the sun melts the snow and ice and you get a lot of water run-off. In the high elevations in the mountains of the Antelope Valley when the sun goes down about 4-5PM it freezes the ice again.

We made the call about 5PM to go ahead and suspend service. We had twenty-three riders who were on board vehicles at that time, so we got them home safely.

We do an annual table top, which means that every year we have a consultant come out and basically run through different scenarios to help us prepare and be able to respond to these types of situations. One of the purposes for these table tops is so that the EOC will only run if everyone knows their roles and knows how to do it efficiently.

Faustino Salvador

Commented on Justin Sheldon's presentation.

I encourage the committee to make sure that we have the most up-to-date information in the system. In the event that the EOC needs to be activated, "Everbridge" will send communication out to all of our Access riders to keep you informed with important information.

Larry Miranda, MV Transportation

Corona Virus

I want to address the committee regarding this topic and let you all know that we are sanitizing the buses on a regular basis. We are using hospital grade sanitizer to make sure that they are good to go.

Last night we had a meeting with Access regarding the issue to ensure that we're all on the same page and addressing this together. We are asking that if you are feeling sick and if it's not a mandatory trip, we encourage you to stay home and not use the services if you don't have to.

However, we are staying abreast, we are working with the City as well to come up with a plan and solution in case situations arise. Thankfully, we haven't had any cases in Santa Clarita and there is no alarm at this point.

Christine Pernodet, MV Transportation

No comments at this time.

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

No comments at this time.

Hector Fuentes, MV Transportation

No comments at this time.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carmen Taylor

No comments at this time.

Kathleen Russ

If we are registered with Access, are we able to use DAR as well? I'm an Access customer, but sometimes DAR picks me up. I'm curious because initially I was being picked up by Access but then I started noticing in January that DAR is also picking me up.

Adrian Aguilar

Responded to Kathleen Russ's question.

Yes, you can do either or, you just need to register for the service. One of the things we do here in Santa Clarita is that we have the two distinct fleets, the Access and DAR fleets.

Whenever possible, we try to book Access trips to the Access vehicles, however there may be a situation where we don't have an Access vehicle available. The other scenario is if we have two people being picked up and taken to the same location, one is an Access customer, the other one is DAR customer. What we do in those cases is we will send you a DAR vehicle. Our policy is that we will schedule Access trips to an Access vehicle, but we won't schedule a DAR trip to an Access vehicle.

Georgia MeneouNew Software

I was supposed to be picked up today at 8:26AM, I didn't get picked up until 9AM, and he still had four other stops to make, but he only made two and I arrived here after 10AM. This happened to me on Monday as well.

Our drivers are having a hard time because the new software doesn't work in all the areas, this started last week. The software cannot bring up the schedules for the address at the same time as taking the fare.

We were looking for one street and he was having a horrible time. If they can't use the equipment because it's not working correctly then that makes it harder for all of us.

Larry Miranda

Responded to Georgia Meneou's comment.

We had new fareboxes installed to the system and unfortunately the farebox has an RF antenna radio that is actually disturbing the tablet, so that's where the GPS issue is coming from, however we have corrected the issue and by the end of this week, that won't be an issue anymore.

Adrian Aguilar

Responded to Georgia Meneou's comment.

In terms of the late trip, we will look into it and see what the reason was for your trip being late.

Carmelita McClain

On February 21st I had a scheduled DAR pick up at 2PM to go to Citibank on Soledad. My window opened up at 2:45PM, they went to Citibank to pick me up. They always call my house instead of calling my cell phone.

My granddaughter calls me and says "Where are you? They're looking for you".

I was at the dollar tree store where they were supposed to pick me up. So, I called them immediately and said to them "Call the driver, and tell them that they're supposed to pick me up over here". They said "You don't have an appointment for today". Then they told me that the bus would come at 5:15PM. They came to get me at 5:55PM.

That's why I'm here, this happens a whole lot. How come they cannot distinguish "house or cell"? They leave me every single time because they call the house and not my cell phone.

I spoke to someone the other day and she told me that she would put my complaint with the rest of my complaints. The only thing that I keep complaining about is that you guys keep calling my house phone instead of my cell phone.

What can you do to make sure this doesn't happen again? There has to be something you can do to fix this.

Christine Pernodet, MV Transportation

Responded to Carmelita McLain's comment.

I received your complaint Ms. McLain, I remember looking into it and we did request phone records. The Call Center reservationist committed an error, and I believe that we both discussed this. The reservation was made to pick you up at Citibank for the next day.

I'm usually the one that handles the complaints, and I remember looking into the information that we have for you in the system and everything seems to be correct.

Carmelita McLain

Responded to Christine Pernodet's response.

Yes, I remember speaking to you. You guys have all of my correct information, I just don't understand why you guys can't call my cell.

George Orentlicher

Responded to Carmelita's comment.

Don't they have anything to separate the cell phone number from the home number? What is the problem there? Maybe it's a physical thing with how the information is placed in the system.

Yvonne Compton

Food Pantry Pick Up

I heard at the Food Pantry that Access is no longer picking up at the entrance and that you'll be picking up around the corner. I'm looking out for people who don't have a walker or can't stand up, what can be done about that for them? Some people don't have phones, and even though you made the reservations, how would they know that Access is going to pick them up around the corner.

Larry Miranda

Responded to Yvonne Compton's comment.

The problem with picking up at the front of the pantry is that if there is a vehicle parked in front of the pantry, then it requires for our vehicles to have to stop in the lane of traffic, which is unsafe.

What we have done is to notify everyone that we are now picking up on the side street. It's safer there because there isn't any traffic.

We will work with The Food Pantry and look into getting some seating installed for when the food pantry is available, but I will address it with the Pantry.

Kurt Baldwin

Responded to Yvonne Compton's comment.

You can also request a "Reasonable Modification of Policies". It's a formal process where you may want to ask the driver to get out of the vehicle and come get you from where you need to be picked up from.

Eugenia White

I'm a constituent and a resident of Santa Clarita and have dealt with the tragedy and pandemic of housing, it's been very egregious.

The issue I'm having is with transportation in Santa Clarita and Access, now that I finally have housing, I'm dealing with two Cities, I live in a gated community, and they will not bring me or my mom through the gate to bring me into the property.

The other issue I'm having is that it seems like Santa Clarita is still dealing with two rules of engagement in regards to their transportation between Access and DAR. Because of that, that is why all of us are suffering.

My son is a young person who is still classified under homeless and is going to be high income to this City. He is going to college. I have issues when I call Access to assist him in getting his transfer rides from where I'm located now into the City and into his school, I get a lot of blarney in their behavior and actions.

Then when I don't take Access and choose to take public transit, the drivers are passing me up. I made three complaints about this, they know me. Is it because I open my mouth too much? I've spoken to Christine about these concerns.

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, May 7, 2020, 9:00AM at the Transit Maintenance Facility, 28250 Constellation Rd., Santa Clarita, CA 91355.