

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, January 6, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT

John Panico, Chairman

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Keith Curry, Vice Chair

Garrett Rodriguez, Access Services

John Taylor, Senior Center Representative

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Ruben Mendoza, MV Transportation

Lilian Shaw, Member

Jennifer Elhawary, MV Transportation

Jim Hogan, Member

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

It was agreed that approval of minutes would be added to approval of agenda. John Taylor received an excused absence from the previous meeting. This absence was requested by the Senior Center since they were not having anyone attend in-person meetings. Agenda and minutes were approved.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Keith Curry

No comments at this time.

John Taylor-

No comments at this time.

Lilian Shaw-

No comments at this time.

Jim Hogan-

No comments at this time.

AGENCY UPDATES

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita Transit

Adrian starts by sharing that ridership has shown an increase. Dial-A-Ride has hit a high since the start of the pandemic. There were over 3700 trips for DAR and 2200 trips for Access in December. Ridership for local routes have fluctuated. Ridership drops for Local routes were the result of hardware issues of the fareboxes and the passenger counting system. A significant increase was later seen. The same drop and increase was seen in the Commuter routes.

John Panico asks for comparison of numbers pre-pandemic.

Adrian states that ridership is at 50% - 60 % compared to the numbers before the pandemic,

John Taylor states that numbers would also be higher if the Senior Center was open, it would help increase ridership

Adrian agrees that since the alteration of service to the Senior Center, this caused an impact to ridership numbers. Adrian then begins to share updates for on time performance. Driver call offs impacted on time performance in August and September which then continued into November. On time performance is now starting to reverse but is still but close to the 90% standard. On time performance will be focused on in the next coming months.

John Panico asks what caused ridership to drop in November.

Adrian states that this was in result to the driver call offs and the recruitment/training of new drivers. He also shares that traffic conditions have gone back to how they were before the pandemic. Traffic has also increased since school is also now back in session.

Adrian then begins to share call-center updates. He states that the call volume has trended upward, DAR takes the lead. Lots of the calls were parents asking about the routes being used for different schools. You can see a jump in call volume from 1300 in July to 2100 in August. It then went back down to normal at about 1200 calls a month. Adrian also mentions that driver bids went into effect and this change allowed for additional routes to be added to both the DAR & Access Services. This change has allowed for there to be an adjustment to fixed schedules. Also, a recent delivery of two DAR buses took place. There is additional equipment being installed on them. Adrian hopes to have those in service by the end of January. Adrian then shares that MV Transportation has stepped up recruitment to well over 20 new drivers. This has allowed to significantly reduce the number of missed trips in both the local and commuter services. Adrian mentions the federal mask mandate for public transit, and states that it now has been extended through March 18. Adrian then updates everyone on the attendance incentive program performed by MV. Some of the items the operators won were an Xbox, TV, PS5, sound bar, and much more. Adrian states that MV Transportation continues to look for new drivers and recruitment will surely continue.

John Taylor asks if buses are still loading from the back of the bus or entering the front now?

Adrian answers that patrons are entering from the front now. In some occasions, depending on the route, patrons are able to load from both the front and back. This would be an option for school trippers when they are crowded.

John Taylor asks:

We are still requiring masks?

Adrian states that passengers are required to wear masks. If a patrons does not have one, operators are provided with masks to share with passengers. If someone refuses to wear a mask, drivers are advised to stop at the next safest stop for the patron to exit the bus.

John Taylor asks if the patron refuses to get off, do they call the supervisor?

Adrian explains that they are to initially call the supervisor and as last resort would be to call the sheriffs.

Faustino Saldar, ACCESS Services

Faustino starts by sharing that for the month of December, the on-time performance was 92.2% & 91.6% for the fiscal year. For late trips it was at 0.15% & 0.31% for the fiscal year. The percent for calls on hold for over 5 minutes were at 2.6% and were standard for the fiscal year. Faustino shares that ACCESS will be holding an important virtual committee meeting on Saturday Jan 15. From 11:00 am – 1:30 pm.

John Taylor asks Faustino how the transfer trips are going and are there lots of transfers happening?

Faustino states that transfers are not as they were pre-pandemic but are still getting some from the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita regions.

John Taylor asks how much a transfer trip to the Valley costs?

Faustino states that a transfer to the Valley is \$3.50.

Keith comments about a re-evaluation he has in March and asks is reevaluations are taking place in person?

Yes. Recently opened in person evaluations in early Dec. due to spike in COVID, it closed back down. Currently only doing phone interviews.

Keith comments about only getting a renewal for one year and did not understand why he did not get it for 3 years.

Since interviews were over the phone, renewals were only granted for one year.

Lilian comments that she's has used transfers to the valley with no problems at all.

Ruben Mendoza, MV Transportation

Ruben starts off by announcing how they are taking precautions during the pandemic. He mentions that they have closed off all the break rooms to keep the drivers safe. They plan to retrain drivers in January in ways to keep safe.

Jennifer Elhawary, MV Transportation

Jennifer starts by announcing the significant improvement within DAR and ACCESS. She mentions that there are less complaints for these two services. She also mentions that a new Customer Service Supervisor has now been hired. There is now a lead in the room with the CSR's. This has helped lessen the number of calls that get placed on hold and wait time. She also mentions the precautions implemented within the CSR's to keep safe while eating and taking breaks. Jennifer also talk about the new driver bids taking place and how they have helped other areas. These driver bids have helped add new runs each day and have allowed for new times to be scheduled.

Keith asks if operators are required to be vaccinated or to test.

Ruben states that vaccines and COVID testing is not a requirement for operators.

NEW BUSINESS

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita Transit

shares that the AAC meetings have been revised. The dates and times are not affected but the locations of the meetings have changed slightly. He shares that the March meeting has now been moved to City Hall.

Keith Curry states that he remembers the March meeting would be taking place in the Canyon Country Community Center and the May meeting would be at the Transit Center.

Adrian informs them that the Canyon Country Community Center is in demand and cannot be booked that far in advance. City Hall was scheduled instead to secure a meeting spot.

Grace Ferguson states there has been a recent change in the scheduling and City Hall was not available so instead the TMF was booked for March.

Adrian ensures a revised meeting schedule will be sent out to everyone. He also mentions that meeting through zoom and in person might be a backup plan.

OLD BUSINESS

Keith Curry, Member

Keith asked for an update in regards to Vista Canyon.

Adrian asks grace if the project has officially been accepted.

Grace mentions that the project is pretty much done but will be finalized fairly soon.

Adrian mentions that this location will be used as a layover location for DAR and ACCESS. The on demand service will also be expanded to this Area.

John Taylor asks for an update on the GO service.

Adrian states that ridership for this service has been low. Adrian informs them that there is funding for GO up until June. If the service is successful it will be continued, if not, it will be discontinued. The program is therefore now considered a pilot program. He comments that there are plans to keep Via Princessa Metrolink Station open. Recently there has been a contract awarded to develop a park in the adjacent to Via Princessa. There is a plan to create an access from/through the station over to the park area. These plans will not impact train service. The Vista Canyon is 12-13 months out in terms of completion.

John Panico, Member

John asks for an update on the City's finances and COVID policies.

Adrian informs the group that financially the City is doing great. The City is following county guidelines. He also mentions that the current COVID policies have not affected any City services.

Keith asks if there are masks mandates for all employees onsite.

Ruben informs them there is. He explains that while in their office space they can keep masks off but once they are in a shared space, they must wear their mask.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jennifer Elhawary, MV Transportation

Jennifer mentions she has recently been receiving positive feedback from patrons.

Keith Curry, Member

Keith asks Adrian if there are drop offs locations at the Senior Center for DAR for the month of January.

Adrian stated that there were not many drop-offs or pickups seen within the data. There were accommodations made for those who needed to reload TAP cards. Patrons were allowed to quickly go in and reload while having the operators wait on an as needed basis.

John Taylor comments that he believes they are now able to reload TAP cards by appointment.

Jennifer mentions that the area was not being serviced due to the fact that food services were still taking place and it was being blocked. Instead, service was taking place on the side or the rear of the Senior Center.

Adrian Aguilar, Santa Clarita Transit

Adrian gave an update in regards to staffing. Janet, a dispatcher, has rejoined the team at the start of December.

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, March 3, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. Transit Maintenance Facility.