

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 3, 2022

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

Ruben Mendoza, MV Transportation

Keith Curry, Vice Chair

Keith Carr, MV Transportation

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Jennifer Elhawary, MV Transportation

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

Lilian Shaw, Member

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Karen Mayhew, Member

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

Motion of approval of the agenda and the minutes.

MEMBER COMMENTS

John Panico, Chairman

Wanted to mention the end of funding of the Freedom Grant to Adrian.

Adrian confirms that the funding from the Freedom Grant has ended due to lack of funding.

Karen Mayhew, Member

Karen wanted to be informed of when the new buses would be available for service.

Adrian confirms that these buses are for DAR and are already in service.

AGENCY UPDATES

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita Transit

Adrian introduces the group to Keith Carr, the new Operations Manager for MV Transportation.

Adrian then moves into informing everyone that the beach bus service will be running soon. The service is under the planning stages and will run from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend.

He also mentions that the City Transit team is working with the tourism group to provide operation of the Hotel Trolley. This service is currently in the planning stages and will operate between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend.

Another project being worked on is partnerships with the parks/recreation and library groups. The goal is to get people comfortable to ride City Transit since the pandemic. The target is to partner with different City departments where transportation is needed. Travel training information, day passes, and TAP cards will be provided. Adrian hopes that this will encourage more people to continue riding City Transit.

The following update Adrian provides is the transition to zero-emission. The City is on the path to introduce hydrogen powered electric buses. The first steps have been taken in which the City Council has awarded a contract and an initial meeting with a consultant has taken place. The consultant has provided specifications and information in the management of the new hydrogen station on site. The next step would be to Request for Proposal for the construction of the infrastructure late summer and to have it operational early 2024. Also, included in next year's budget is the request for two hydrogen zero-emission buses for the fixed route services.

Keith Curry asks Adrian where the funding is coming from?

Adrian explains that it is sourced from local and federal funding. He states that 80% comes from the FTA and 20% comes from local sources like Measure R and Measure M.

Keith Curry asks if Access is aware of this funding?

Adrian confirms that they are, Adrian explains that they are a bit different because they are funded by the region through Metro and he believes they also receive some federal funding.

Keith Curry comments that he notices Santa Clarita receives a lot of funding. And also notices the L.A. County vehicles are older and outdated.

Adrian explains that Access has done a good job at maintaining their fleet and that the difference is the turn over, Access typically keep their vehicles for 5 years before they replace them. Adrian explains the one of challenges Access has is that they have a much larger fleet size of about 350-400 vehicles and Santa Clarita has a complete fleet of about 118.

Keith Curry suggest that if that is the case Access should be more interested in getting more funding.

Adrian responds that the funding is different.

Keith Curry asks what the difference is?

Adrian explains that they do receive funding and that about 80% of their funding goes to the operation of the service.

Faustino also mentions that at the moment it is very hard to get any vehicles due to supply chain issues.

Adrian explains that most projects are planned with much time in advance. For this project specifically, the hydrogen powered electric buses, planning and funding has been set aside for almost 5 years. Capital projects are planned out 10 years. As of now, City Transit is fully funded. Funding for replacements and maintenance is set aside with much time in advance.

Keith Curry believes Access should be as proactive as Santa Clarita.

Adrian explains that they really are proactive, and also explains that Santa Clarita has a relatively young fleet and the average age of vehicles are about 2 years old. Adrian explains that Access has vehicles they placed orders for over a year ago and still have not gotten them due to supply chain issues. Adrian also explains that Access is currently working with their contractors by paying for refurbishments on fleet, such as engine and transmission replacements on vehicles that have reached the replacement age, and because of supply chain issues cannot be replaced.

Keith Curry asks Faustino when their Access vehicles are retired?

Faustino states that the vehicles are retired at 300,000 miles.

Keith Curry asks when cutaways are retired.

Adrian states that they are retired at 7 years, 350,000 miles. He also mentions that the difference is that the cutaway fleet is CNG as opposed to gasoline. Engines are replaced throughout the life of the vehicle at about 80,000-110,000 miles. Most engines are less than a year old.

John asks if the CNG station will be removed within the next couple of years.

Adrian states that it is planned to have CNG vehicles up until 2040. The plan is that when a vehicle reaches their retirement, which is about 12 years for buses, they will then be replaced with the zero-emission vehicles. Even after all vehicles are replaced with zero emission buses, the public CNG station will remain because there is a great commercial use of it. Also, CNG will be used to produce hydrogen.

John asks what the infrastructure for the hydrogen station will look like?

Adrian says that the station will look very similar to the CNG station. There will be a steam methane reformer which is the size of a 40-foot container. In it will be a system that takes natural gas, creates steam, and separates the hydrogen molecules from water. There will also be a piece of equipment called the chiller which takes the hydrogen from liquid form to a gaseous form which is then put into the vehicles. There will also be storage tanks where the hydrogen will be kept until it is used.

John asks how many miles to the gallon does the hydrogen give?

Adrian states that hydrogen is much more efficient than CNG or diesel. 1 Kg of hydrogen has much more energy than the two. The benefit is that you get more mileage out of hydrogen, but it is costlier. CNG cost range between \$0.80 to \$1.10 per gallon, diesel goes between \$3.00 to \$3.20, and Hydrogen will go between \$3 to \$4.

Keith Curry states that he believes Access should take a similar approach to Santa Clarita in the way they plan for vehicle replacements and funding.

Adrian explains there is a difference between the way Santa Clarita Transit receives funding and the way LA County ACCESS gets funding which then creates limitations for them. Also, access to manufacturing is much more difficult.

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita Transit

Grace introduces the update on the Bus Stop Improvement Project. The purpose of the project is to update or replace technology at the stops. Grace mentions there are currently 52 bus stops which have Bus Finders. These Bus Finders are real time information units which are battery operated. These units are about 10-11 years old and will be replaced with solar powered units. There have been 5 bus stops that have been tested and the outcome has been ideal. Within the next 6-7 months, all 52 units will be replaced.

Keith Curry asks if the project was funded by a grant.

Grace confirms the project was funded through a grant.

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

For the month of February, on-time performance was at 96%, late trips were at 0.09%, no trip denials, average call wait time was 54 seconds, and calls on hold for reservations were at 2.07.

Faustino then went on to share some highlights. Keith Carr received Superior Service Award for the month of February. Also, the hiring assistance plan has been added to reservations phone tree for people that may be interested in applying.

Keith Curry shares an experience she had while filing for recertification with Access. He said he mailed in his packet and never received a call to schedule a phone appointment. He called in and was told he need to call them to schedule it. Keith said he would have never known to call in and schedule it himself unless he got sometime of confirmation that his packet was received. Keith tells Faustino he suggests the team notifies the patrons when their packets are received to know when to call in and schedule their appointment.

Karen states that she agrees with Keith Curry.

Jennifer Elhawary, MV Transportation

Jennifer mentions that she has been trying to get out and talk to as many Customer Service Representatives and drivers as possible. She says she tries to use the safety meetings as a form to communicate with the drivers. She wants to stay in constant communication with the drivers, so

they feel comfortable to go and talk to her about any needs or concerns. Her goal is to monitor and keep the services as productive as possible.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

OLD BUSINESS

Keith Curry, Member

Keith asks Adrian if there are plans to service the new Sheriff station area and how the Vista Canyon project is coming along?

Adrian mentions that the project is coming along well and that Grace is the one over seeing the project. He then turns it over to Grace.

Grace informs them the Vista Canyon Transit Center is complete but there are now plans of having operations there anytime soon. The Metrolink section is expected to open in early 2023. Currently they are digging underground tunnels and adding conduit.

Adrian adds that the plan is to evaluate the development in the area. A lot of the commercial development expected to generate ridership is still not complete. The plan is to see what is developed overtime. It will have some level of service and will most likely be used as a layover area for the GO! service. It will be at least 6 months before service is provided there.

Adrian follows with an update with the Sheriff's station. He mentioned there is very little service that goes through there. A request has been placed for funding for the following year to be able to update the Transit Development Plan. Due to the changes in result to the pandemic, this would be a good opportunity to reevaluate the service and areas of operation. The plan is to thoroughly look at the service to improve the overall operation and service the areas that are in demand.

John Panico, Chairmen

John asks Adrian is the Go! service is still operating?

Adrian confirms that the service is still in operation.

John asks if the service has been successful?

Adrian explains that ridership has not been what was anticipated. Currently the service area is limited but there are plans to expand the service to the entire Valley. The service is funded through a grant which will last until August. There are plans to evaluate the outcome of the program to see if this is a service that should continue.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

No general public comments.

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 5, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. City Hall Century Room.