

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, May 4, 2023

Transit Maintenance Facility (TMF)

CALL TO ORDER

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

MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT

John Panico, Chairman

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Keith Curry, Vice Chair

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Karen Manke, Member

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Manel Pushparajah, Member of the Public

Kathleen Herrera, City of Santa Clarita

Billy Jean Curry, Member of the Public

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

John Panico addresses the approval of the March 2 meeting minutes. Keith Curry brings a motion to approve both the January and March meeting minutes as this meeting has met quorum. Karen Manke seconds the motion. John puts the motion to a vote. Motion is approved by unanimous vote.

MEMBER COMMENTS

John Panico states that he is going to hold on making any comments and asks members if there are any comments. Keith Curry states that he will reserve his comments for agency updates. Karen Manke states that she does not have any comments right now.

John, Keith and Karen agree to proceed with agency updates.

AGENCY UPDATES

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Grace shares that the beach bus this year will be going to the Ventura Harbor, and will begin June 3 and end September 3.

Keith asks Grace to repeat that a little louder.

Grace repeats the beach bus information.

Keith asks if the City will have fliers with the beach bus information?

Grace confirms that we will have fliers very soon, which will include pick up times and locations. There will be a pick up at the Via Princessa Metrolink station and then the bus will head to the McBean Regional Transit Center (MRTC) and then head to the Ventura Harbor.

Keith requests that the fliers be provided to him in both English and Spanish via email so that he can send them to his constituents in the Santa Clarita Valley as well as the San Fernando Valley. Keith repeats the information to confirm the bus is going to the Ventura Harbor.

Grace confirms that she will get Keith the fliers. She also states that Transit conducted a survey on our social media platforms and that the residents all voted to go to the Ventura Harbor rather than Santa Monica.

Keith states that it's something new.

John states that he thinks the Ventura Harbor is better.

Keith states that the trip has always been to Santa Monica, and that his mother has gone to the Ventura Harbor with one of her groups and that is very nice.

Grace also shares that City staff will be going to the Senior Center on Wednesday, May 10, to participate in a resource fair for the caregiver resource day. There will be about twenty vendor booths, and the City will be there and we're excited about it.

Keith states that he will be there as well and was made aware of the event at his last board meeting at the Senior Center.

Grace shares that the Vista Canyon grand opening date has been moved to October.

John asks if there is a set date in October.

Grace states that there will be a meeting in mid-July and the set date for the event will be decided in that meeting.

John states that regarding the Beach Bus, that at the Ventura Harbor there's the beach on one side and shopping on the other, so that's good.

Adrian states that was part of the reason for the change. The City will be working with the Harbor Master. On the weekends, they have concerts and event, so we will doing a lot of cross promoting to encourage residents to ride out on the Beach Bus.

John asks Grace what time they will be at the Senior Center.

Grace states that they will be there at 10:00 a.m. to set up and the event ends at 2:30 p.m.

Grace also states that this week, Transit staff reviewed the Transit Development Plan (TDP). Interviews were held this week, and will be sent to the City Council for approval on June 13. The kick off meeting will most likely happen at the end of June. One last update, we have been sending out the no show letters. In February, there were 21 people that received letters. In March, there were 20, and in April the number went down to 12, so we are hoping that the letters are working.

John asks if any of the members have any questions for Grace.

Karen states no.

Keith states that he may have a comment or question later in the meeting, as things may come to him later in the meeting.

John asks Adrian if he has any comments.

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

Adrian states the last couple of weeks, we took delivery of two new commuter buses. One was delivered last Monday, and the other was a couple of weeks ago. We are in the process of getting the fareboxes installed, the drive cam and other technology installed. We have CHP scheduled to come out and inspect them in a couple of weeks. We will hopefully have them on the road by the end of the month, if not early June at the latest. The other update as far as vehicles, at the last meeting he mentioned that we had placed the order for our first zero emission hydrogen buses. All of the contracts have been signed for those buses and a purchase order (PO) has been issued. He is scheduled to take a tour of the production plant in Riverside, and he will be touring the facility in late May. We are also in the process of finalizing the contract for the construction of the hydrogen station here at the TMF. We are hoping to have that kicked off within the next few weeks.

Since the last meeting, we have submitted a couple of grant applications. One was for the Low No bus and bus facilities federal grants. We requested additional funding for zero emission buses. We also partnered with Access services to include a request for additional electric Access vehicles. So we requested funding for four vehicles, and hopefully we will have a response later this summer.

Keith asks if the vehicles will be cutaways or minivans.

Adrian states that they will be cutaways. They will also look at what is on the market, as Access has been also looking at minivans, the larger 10 passenger vans.

Keith asks Grace are they going to install hydrogen stations at the new Metrolink station in Lost Canyon?

Grace states that no they are not. And as of right now there is no plan to install a hydrogen station at the Metrolink.

Adrian states that there won't be a need to install hydrogen stations. We will be able to fuel the vehicles here before they go into service, and the range on the fuel cell buses is similar to the CNG buses. Once they are fueled here, they should be able to operate all day. That is one of the reasons that we opted to go the fuel cell path as opposed to battery electric. Battery electric we would have had to install charging stations throughout the City, which would have gotten pretty expensive in terms of the capital investment. But with Hydrogen we fuel once here at the yard, and should be able to operate all day.

John asks Adrian regarding the electric buses, do you already have hook ups installed here already, or are they going to be installed?

Adrian states not yet. As part of the grant application we did request funding to install the charging infrastructure. For these vehicles, it would be the smaller chargers, so it wouldn't require a lot of retrofit from what we already have. We've had a couple of consultants, including the Access team to come out and inspect the facility and do an assessment. We are confident that at this point it is buying and installing the equipment and that there wouldn't need to be any major modifications to the facility since we already have the infrastructure in place to accommodate a small number of electric chargers. We are looking at 3-4 vehicles at the most depending on the fleet size.

John asks if the two new commuter buses that we are getting are CNG vehicles.

Adrian states that the two buses that were delivered are CNG. We will continue to order CNG vehicles through at least 2028. Right now, they don't have a fuel cell commuter bus available, but we have been in discussion with the manufacturer and they are hoping to have something on the market in the next couple of years. Once that's available we will reevaluate our strategy. For now, we will continue to order CNG vehicles, not just for commuter vehicles but for some transit vehicles as well. The reality is they're less expensive to purchase and operate, so we'll continue to incorporate those into the fleet for as long as we can.

John asks as far as the public, are we going to allow the public to come in and use the hydrogen?

Adrian states not initially. Initially, it will be behind our gates here at the facility. As part of the design of the facility, we are including the design of the infrastructure to expand our public CNG station to include hydrogen. Unfortunately, we don't have the funding to do that piece of the actual construction, but we are including the design work in our initial efforts and will go after the funding to do the modifications of the public station. Our long term goal is to expand our public CNG station to include hydrogen. There is a public hydrogen station at the top of Lyons Avenue at a Shell off of the I-5 freeway and they have a hydrogen pump there that was installed in the last six months. The second nearest hydrogen station is off of Rinaldi and the I-405.

John states that he hears that the hydrogen is better than electric.

Adrian states that they have greater range.

Keith asks Grace about the Concerts in the Park- will we have the same location for drop off?

Grace states that the drop off location will be the same.

Keith asks Grace to provide him with fliers for Concerts in the Park as well, as he has many people that wait for him to provide them information on particular events every year.

John asks if there are any other comments for the City.

Karen asks for direction on what to do when the TAP readers and fareboxes are not working?

Adrian states that if the farebox is not working, the liability is with the City. He adds that we have started a campaign to go through and inspect the fareboxes. The last round of safety meetings, there has been additional training for the operators on the fareboxes, and made a few changes to the display that doesn't affect the riders but gives more information to the operators. It's something we're working on and that's critical for us. Fare collection is important, but more importantly it's the data that we collect for monthly and quarterly reports to both Metro and the FTA. If you come across a farebox that's not working, feel free to give us a call or send us an email so that we can take a look at it.

Karen states that the drivers tell her that they note the issue, but nothing changes and she feels bad because the City is losing money.

Adrian states that he appreciates that and of course it's public funds so it is important to us to collect fares.

Keith asks Grace to bring applications to the resource event for Access and Dial-A-Ride.

Grace confirms that she will have applications and information for both services.

John passes the floor to Faustino Salvador.

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Faustino greets the group and provides the group with Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The City of Santa Clarita met nine out of 12 KPIs. On time performance ended at 92.7% at the end of April. Excessively delayed trips ended at 0.04, we did have one denial in April and the calls on hold over five minutes finished slightly above standard of 5.3%. The only highlight I have is that we ended the mask mandate on March 31. Drivers and riders are not required to wear masks but it is highly recommended and this is in accordance with Los Angeles County ending the emergency declaration. We still ask if riders are sick that they do not ride Access.

John asks if anyone has questions or comments for Faustino.

Keith states that he did email Faustino regarding his eligibility renewal.

Adrian asks Faustino if he wants to share the recent vote to extend the eligibility period.

Faustino states that they are currently in the process of trying to extend the eligibility period to three to five years. It has not been finalized yet.

Keith states that he has been Access certified since 1998, and they have him coming in every year and getting all of the paperwork sent to his house every year. His mobility hasn't changed since 1998, so it's something that needs to be looked at.

John asks if there are any additional questions or comments for Faustino.

John passes the floor to Michelle Rush.

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Michelle states that there is a new dispatcher in training. She should be released within the next two weeks and we will have a full staff of dispatchers. She does have some numbers, but can come back to it after Arcy provides her updates.

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

David states that they are also fully staffed. The new CSR started yesterday and is in training. Hopefully, by next month she will be released to answer Access calls and we are excited to have a fully staffed call center. That is the only update I have.

Keith asks if the client can request callouts and can you see the callouts.

David states that yes, with Access they can. The request is noted to make sure they receive the callouts. It is upon availability, but it is always done for Access.

Keith states that clients at the Senior Center have shared that they have not received callouts but have requested them. He is not sure what the issue is. He also asks if they are going to be moving more toward text callouts.

Michelle states that she has something to add. At the Senior Center, they have added an ambassador that is there at the Senior Center. Patrick is there during peak times to assist with callouts. He sees the rides coming in on his tablet and lets the riders know that their ride is on its way. As for the text alerts, they do have that service through the Ripple service. They can sign up for automated text alerts and calls.

Keith states that he has been at the Senior Center and has been watching Patrick, and he is doing a great job.

Michelle states that he was put at the Senior Center as an ambassador to assist with directing the riders as well as help the drivers.

David states that the other great piece of that is also that he gets other people to sign up for Dial-A-Ride.

Arcy states that next week they will have another ambassador, Geraldine.

John asks if the second ambassador will be there at different times.

Michelle states that they will be there on rotation and also to get her acclimated.

Adrian tells Keith to encourage people to sign up for the automated texts and/or calls. But they do have to opt into the service.

Keith states that he has shared with people that they should sign up and to make sure that their cell phone number is linked to their profile. Many of the seniors have their land line associated with their profile for it to work.

Karen states that she was signed up to receive the alerts and she was getting them but now she isn't getting them. She is not sure what happened. She states that she did change her phone number and David updated it.

Michelle states that they will check her profile to ensure that everything is input to the system correctly. If there is more than one number associated with the account or if the number is input incorrectly on our end that could cause an error. The number needs to be put in the system in the way that the system would recognize it to call out.

Keith states that he has some food for thought. For the future maybe we could send out the automated text alerts for the Beach Bus and Concerts in the Park. Instead doing the fliers, send out the text alerts and be proactive.

Adrian states the only issue with that is that when people are opting into our service they are opting in for a service that is very specific and trip related. We can't use the information for other purposes. We do have other email services through the City, but it a service they have to opt in for because they are providing personal information. We can add the information to our

hold messages to make sure that when they call to book their trips they are getting that information.

John passes the floor to Arcy Torres.

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Arcy states that there is a new driver bid coming up. There are no major changes, the only changes will be that the schools will be out. So we will be taking the school trippers out and putting the beach bus and the summer trolley in. The bid is only going to be about two months. The bid is on May 20, the drivers will be here at 4:00 a.m. to bid. The new schedule will go into effect on June 3.

John asks if there are any questions for Arcy.

John moves on to new business.

NEW BUSINESS

John states that there is a resume pending for Tashia Griffin for another member.

He asks if the members have anything to add for new business.

OLD BUSINESS

John moves on to old business and asks if there is any old business to discuss.

John moves on to public comment.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

John calls on Billie Jean Curry.

Billie states that she did not have anything at this time.

John calls on Manel Pushparajah.

Manel states that she is on a standing order so that has been helpful. One incident that occurred last week on Thursday, which is not her standing order, she needed to be picked up at 4:15 p.m. to go to Newhall at the Salvation Army to do volunteer work. The bus arrived on time so she was very happy with that. When she got on the bus she saw there were other passengers that were wanting to be dropped off immediately. The driver went all the way to TJ Maxx in Canyon Country, then to a senior care facility, then back to Friendly Valley senior center, and she was not dropped off until 6:00 p.m. So, she was late and unable to teach the classes she was supposed to. We need the drivers to be mindful about where they are at and where they are going. But overall, she is very happy with the service.

Michelle states that she has began training with the dispatchers to share with them ideas and information to be proactive with the route schedule. With the new bid, they are considering

doing a four-hour time frame to assist with getting an additional driver out to reduce the wait time and travel time. As well, they have shared with the drivers to be vocal in any changes they want to make with routing to improve efficiency, so hopefully we will start seeing the results of those changes.

John thanks Manel and Michelle.

David states that he will get in touch with Manel next month to arrange for her transportation to the next meeting.

Arcy asks if the meeting is at the TMF or was that a typo?

Grace states that the conference at City Hall is booked, so it will be at TMF.

John asks about MV Transportation with their contract. Are they going year to year?

Adrian states that they had an initial four-year contract. Last July, they signed a two-year extension, so we will be starting year two of that extension in July. After that we have two, two-year extensions remaining in our contract. So, five years left in the contract.

Keith asks if those additional years, are they optional? Is it based on their performance?

Adrian states that they are City options. So, the City has the option to exercise those extensions.

Keith asks if it is based on their performance.

Adrian states that it is based on whatever we want to base it on. MV Transportation is doing a very good job. Obviously, there are a few things they need to focus on but we are happy with their performance.

Keith states that all in all they are doing very good? As opposed Veolia?

Adrian states that what boils down to is the local team. We have a very good team here. They have all made sure to have the service run well.

John asks if MV Transportation is still a small, privately owned company?

Adrian states yes.

Keith asks what percentage would he give them.

Adrian states that on a scale of 1-10, he would give them an eight.

Keith asks if we get the public's input before renewing the contract.

Adrian states that yes, we encourage residents to share their experiences and comments with us. That is part of what we take into consideration when evaluating and monitoring their performance. We do not take direct comments from the public when it relates to contract negotiations, but we do consider their overall performance. And part of that evaluation is input from the public.

John states that transparency is important in the public sector. You can go to the City Council and the purpose of this committee is similar. I am sure that our input is also considered.

Keith states that he concurs with Adrian. Eight out of 10 is a B, which means that there is room for improvement. He then asks if MV Transportation still does sensitivity training.

Arcy states that yes, it is covered once per year but if there is anything that comes up where it needs to be addressed it is.

Faustino states that it is contractually required to do six hours of defensive driving and six hours of sensitivity training and Access comes out to audit to ensure they complete that training.

Keith states that when hiring drivers you're dealing with human nature. And every driver doesn't have a good morning, and he or she can upset six or seven riders on that bus. That could be an issue for MV. He does get a lot of the comments from riders, and he tries to offer benefit of the doubt they could just be having a bad morning.

Adrian states that one of things that we do on a regular basis, and one of the many things that Kathleen works on is tracking complaints and comments. We not only look at topics, but also drivers, routes. What Kathleen does is look for trends- do we have a large number of complaints on a specific route or driver. They prepare reports that we review and share with MV to address them quickly rather than them blowing up to something larger. That is something we do keep a close eye on and we track. Access does the same on their side in tracking complaints. It is something that we monitor and take serious.

Kathleen states that to add to what Keith was inquiring about and what Adrian was saying, she is not the only one that audits the complaints or requests that come in from the general public, there is a staff of us that do that. In addition to tracking and analyzing trends and getting the information over to MV, we also make sure that when we do get resolutions reported back by MV that the response is appropriate for the complaint. So, it not just a general response, they provide us with details of what action was taken and we make sure that it meets in line with what the complaint or request was from the rider. So they do their due diligence on there end and we also do it on our end to ensure that the issue was properly addressed.

Keith states that all departments are policed.

Adrian states that yes, we do monitor all aspects.

Keith thanks everyone for clarifying the sensitivity training. He also wants to confirm that the contract for MV will be addressed at the end of this year or next year.

Adrian states that the current extension expires June 30, 2024.

Keith asks if we have a meeting next month.

Adrian confirms the meeting next month.

ADJOURNMENT

John adjourns the meeting.

FUTURE MEETING

June 1, 2023, Transit Maintenance Facility