

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, June 8, 2023

Transit Maintenance Facility (TMF)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, John Panico called to order the meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at 9:08 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

Paula Pitti, Member of the Public

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

John Panico calls the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

After introductions, John states that he and the other members will be reviewing the previous minutes.

Keith makes a motion to approve the June agenda and the May minutes; John asks for a second to approve the agenda and minutes; Karen Manke states yes; John states that the approval has passed.

MEMBER COMMENTS

John opens the floor for member questions.

Keith asks Adrian about the elections for today's meeting.

Adrian states that yes, elections for the board are today.

Keith asks that an edit be made to the agenda for June to include the elections under the new business section of the agenda.

Adrian confirms the request.

Keith states that he will reserve any additional comments for agency updates.

John passes the floor to Karen Manke.

Karen states that she has experienced several buses where the wheelchair lifts are not operational. Karen would like to know if the issue is being taken care of and if the lifts are being serviced.

Grace states that the lifts should be operational on all buses that are in use, and asks if Karen has any specific dates that she has encountered this issue.

Karen states that one instance was with the #379 GO! bus about three months ago. However, she knows that some of the Access and Dial-A-Ride buses have also had the same issue. In one case a driver had to manually crank the lift in order to get her off the bus, which was an awkward experience. Karen states that is her only concern at this time.

Adrian states that the drivers are to be inspecting the wheelchair lifts prior to leaving the yard for their route, and that if the lift is not operational, they should not be taking the bus out at all. That is a firm policy.

Karen states that she understands that policy, but what if it is working fine when they leave the yard but breaks along the route. She has experienced this issue as well. She is afraid to use the stairs, as they are narrow and she is afraid of falling, so she does not use the stairs unless she has to.

Adrian states that things do happen while the buses are out on route, and that is why we have back up systems like the crank. But the back up should not be the normal operation. And when the vehicles return to the yard after a failure like that, it should be repaired immediately. He asks Karen that if this is happening over and over, please let us know so we can have it repaired immediately.

Adrian asks Michelle if the practice is to have the vehicle return to the yard?

Michelle confirms that the buses are not to leave the yard without a functioning wheelchair lift. There are differences in the old vehicles versus the newer ones. There are emergency shut offs that could affect the function of the lift, and the drivers have to be guided by dispatch to check to try and troubleshoot a lift that is not functioning properly. Maintenance does have a vendor on a regular basis to look at those issues, in addition to the technicians to ensure that the lifts are maintained.

Karen states that she understands, but what happens when it works at the yard but they come to pick us up and it isn't working?

Michelle states that is why all drivers are trained to manually operate the lift. That is not what we want to be the normal operation for the driver or the patron. The training is there to ensure they can assist the patrons that need the lift when there is an issue. They are checked regularly.

Karen states that the situation just scared her, since the driver is cranking the lift and she was still on it. She has slipped and fallen once, and she doesn't want to do it again.

John states that we will move on to agency updates.

AGENCY UPDATES

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Grace states that she has a few updates. She and Justis attended the resource faire at the senior center last month. They had a great turn out, spoke to a lot of people, and had a great time. We had our first beach bus trip last week. The ridership was low, but we believe it was due to the weather. We hope that ridership will improve as the weather gets better.

Keith asks Grace to send him those fliers for the beach bus. He got the fliers to his contacts inside and outside of the Santa Clarita Valley. He agrees that the overcast weather had an effect on ridership. He also states that the Health and Wellness Expo was great, and the City had great handouts. He really liked the water bottle. Keith also mentions that Patrick is doing a great job over at the Senior Center.

John passes the floor to Adrian Aguilar.

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

Adrian states that we have taken delivery of four new transit vehicles- two 40- footers and two 30-footers. We are currently in the process of having all of the technology installed and tested. We are hoping to have those in services in a week or two. We mentioned it at the last meeting, the two new MCI vehicles are now in service. At the next Council meeting we have a couple of items. We have a recommendation for the award of a contract for the updated Transit Development Plan (TDP). Part of that project will include significant community outreach, which will include this group. I know we are meeting in September, so I am hoping that we will have somebody on board that will attend the next AAC meeting. We also have the approval of our Title VI plan, which is an anti-discrimination plan that we have to update every three years. We then submit it to the Federal government for their review and approval.

Keith asks if the anti-discrimination plan also applies to our hiring practices.

Adrian states that this specific plan focuses on the operation of transit and our transit services. But yes, we do have a similar policy that applies to our hiring practices.

Keith asks if there is a date yet for the opening of the Lost Canyon Metrolink station.

Grace states that we do not have a date. They had a meeting, and are scheduling a walk through for mid-July. For the grand opening, it will be in October, probably the third week of October.

Adrian states that we are tying it to the change in the Metrolink schedule, so that's why we haven't had a date set yet.

Keith confirms the information Grace and Adrian have shared, and asks if they will continue to keep the Via Princessa station open.

Adrian states that yes, the Via Princessa station will remain open for at least the next 6-12 months after the Vista Canyon station opens. We will then evaluate ridership at both locations and then determine what we will be doing with the Via Princessa station. Adrian states that another thing he wanted to mention is that we are currently working on a schedule change as well. There is nothing drastic, but we are looking to making some adjustments to some of our routes. We are working on finalizing that in the next couple of weeks, and those changes will go into effect in August.

Keith asks which routes Adrian is referring to.

Adrian states that it will be for our local routes.

Keith asks if it will have an effect on Access or Dial-A-Ride, in addition to mass transit.

Adrian states that Access and Dial-A-Ride don't have fixed schedules, but we are looking to making some adjustments to the service that goes to Downtown Los Angeles. There was a detour implemented on that route due to construction. Now that construction has concluded, we are doing a survey of our riders to see if they prefer the current route alignment, or if they want to go back to the previous routing prior to the detour. The survey closes tomorrow, so we will be able to finalize that route information next week and it will go into effect in August as well.

Keith asks if we are working on the routing of the Golden Valley area.

Adrian states that will happen after we complete the TDP. Part of that project will be to look at demand for fixed-route service, and develop recommendations to provide or meet that demand. So, we will be waiting on the recommendations from the consultant before we proceed with anything on that side.

John asks if all of the buses that we are getting from MCI, etc. are all CNG buses, correct?

Adrian confirms that they are.

John asks about the 799-commuter route- have the numbers gotten better since the pandemic.

Adrian states that it has increased a little bit. We are at about 60% of where we were prior to the pandemic in terms of ridership. So, we are nowhere near where we were, but it is slowly coming back. We are currently running seven trips each way.

Keith states that mass amounts of people are leaving California, so we won't see pre-pandemic numbers.

Adrian states that traffic and cars on the road have reached pre-pandemic numbers, however, many people that were commuting to work every day have found work that allows them to be remote which has an effect on ridership numbers as well. Part of the TDP will be to look at demand both current and into the future.

Keith asks if this effect grant money for funding.

Adrian states it does not.

Keith confirms that the Senior community ridership will not be affected as far as financially.

Adrian states that there has been an increase in ridership for Dial-A-Ride, Access has been a little slower. But that will not negatively impact the service. We always operate to meet the service demand.

Keith states that Dial-A-Ride has always been senior friendly.

John passes the floor to Faustino.

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Faustino shares some metrics from May. On time performance (OTP) is at 92.5%. Kudos to MV and Santa Clarita staff for maintaining that. Calls on hold is slightly above standard at 5.7, due to a shortage in the call center, but the hold time is still 72 seconds. One thing to highlight is that there is no incidents or collisions for the month of May. So that is good, the safety record has continued. I brought two guests with me today, they will be operations monitors. They will audit drivers, callers and dispatchers to make sure that they are in contractual compliance. Cindy Chan will be joining the Antelope Valley and northern region. And Barrett Tate will be joining us here in Santa Clarita and the Southern region. So the team is now comprised of Bryan Lopez and Barrett.

Keith asks Faustino about the "No Show" numbers.

Faustino states that he doesn't have the numbers in front of him, but they are good, especially in Santa Clarita. We do audit no shows every month, to make sure that 1. the driver is waiting the 5

minutes, 2. the callout is being performed, and that we are at the right location. We do that every month, and I can share with you that the numbers have been very good. Any dispatchers found out of compliance, are given a negative observation and it is shared with Michelle and David so they can correct the issue.

Keith confirms Cindy and Barret's roles as OSM (operations service monitor). And their job is to monitor drivers?

Faustino states that they check monthly on no shows, trip negotiations, ETA calls, last business hour- to ensure no call takers are disconnecting calls. That's just a few of the items they monitor. They also check the credentials of new drivers coming in.

Keith asks if the OSMs, if I call in for a complaint, do the OSMs monitor the complaints?

Faustino states yes and no. There is a department that handles complaints, but sometimes they are assigned to me and the OSMs will check to ensure that the complaint is valid.

Keith asks if there is a time limit on filing a complaint that you will get back to the complainant.

Faustino says yes, 5-7 business days.

Keith confirms the timeframe.

Faustino confirms that yes, they will receive a response to their complaint in 5-7 business days. He states that currently our complaints per 1,000 are at 1.2 which indicates that the service is being delivered very well.

Adrian states that for Access in May, we had 53 no shows, which was 2% out of 2,552 trips. For Dial-A-Ride we had 164 no shows out of 5,852, so 2.8% which is down significantly from where it was before.

John asks Karen Menke if she has any questions for Faustino or Adrian.

Karen states that one of the drivers wanted her to ask why there are 4-5 trips scheduled at a time when there's a 20-minute window? Drivers want to know why there are 4-5 trips at the same. For example, there will be 3-4 trips scheduled for 8:30 a.m. with a 20-minute window for each trip. They can't get to Canyon Country fast enough, and so they are always running late. There was an instance when a driver was supposed to pick me up at 9:30 a.m. from my house, and pick up another person at Olive View at 10:15 a.m., and he couldn't do it. He felt bad that he was late for me, but he couldn't help it because he was at Olive View.

Michelle states that she is in control of the subscriptions. That is why we encourage riders to have subscriptions so that we can group riders together to improve efficiency. Once all of the rides have been booked, the system will try to optimize trips by grouping riders together. There are things we try to do to improve service, like offering subscriptions. We also try to implement a 15- minute break period after Olive View trips, to make the service run more efficiently.

Karen states that she understands that, but she felt bad for the drivers. Another issue, about 5-6 months ago, I had a ride scheduled at 7:15 a.m. and the driver starts at 7:15 a.m. How come that happens.

Michelle states that it was probably initially booked on another route. Then once our system re-optimizes the routes, it was switched to a different route for efficiency. The system recognizes the 20-minute window, so even though the driver starts at 7:15 a.m. and your ride is scheduled for 7:15 a.m., the system recognizes that the driver will still be there within the 20-minute window. That is why it allows it to put it there, because it is trying to put like trips together.

Karen states that she is starting to understand the system better now, and sometimes things happen and there is nothing you can do. But some people get very upset with the drivers and that's not fair.

Keith states that initially there was a transfer point at the Jan Heidt station location before it was Olive View. When they moved the transfer point, there is going to be issues that are incurred.

Adrian asks Michelle how much time the system allows for a cushion to return from Olive View.

Michelle states that it depends. Generally, it's about 20 minutes. It's called an ABL, it's constantly moving depending on the run. It will adjust based on driver's speed, traffic, etc. Basically, it's going based on miles, and the calculation of time based on miles. And the drivers that do the Olive View trips are very good with rerouting when traffic issues arise. Dispatchers do have Cig alerts up on their computers to try to be proactive in recognizing potential traffic issues.

Karen states that they do a great job of communicating when they do notice issues like accidents.

Keith asks if the five-minute window apply to the transfer trips at Olive View?

Faustino states that they have a "starter" at Olive View. Their role is to be positioned at Olive View to keep track of all of the trips coming to and out of Olive View. So if a rider is not present and the vehicle is there, the starter will contact dispatch to keep informed of patron's location, if they are running late to avoid any riders being left behind.

John gives the floor to Cindy and asks if she will be attending more often.

Cindy states that she will be in the Antelope Valley, but Barrett will likely be attending to represent Santa Clarita.

John passes the floor to Arcy Torres.

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Arcy provides an update on the driver bid two weeks, and it went into effect on Saturday, June 3. We have not had any issues. The only changes were that there aren't any school trippers, and the

beach bus service was added. The Magic Mountain summer trolley is also operating. We are working on the next bid, since that one does take time, which will go into effect in mid-August. We are currently fully staffed, with the last driver completing training was last week. We are going to start training again, as we lose drivers and we have drivers interested in relocating to our Lancaster offices. That location does not have splits like we do, and the location is closer to home for some of our drivers that transferred here last year when they didn't have anything available for them. We are going to start interviews next week, so we should be good for the fall. Other than that, we are short one CSR in the call center, but we also have Patrick and Geraldine, the ambassadors, helping out in there as well for coverage. We do have one person in the pipeline completing training and hopefully she will be released soon from training.

John asks Michelle if she has anything to add.

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Michelle states that on her end for the driver bid, did not have the ridership to add full routes, but I did make some adjustments for the current routes, mainly on Saturdays and Sundays in the early mornings. We only had one driver to cover that, so I have adjusted those routes to sign on early. Monday through Friday, I did adjust to have an hour earlier. Then we have the drivers who would normally be doing school trippers so we had the opportunity to make an adjustment and add a four-hour shift on Monday-Friday during peak hours of 8-9:00 a.m. and 3-5:00 p.m. to help with some of the drivers in the mornings and afternoons taking their lunch to help keep things on time. Patrons will be seeing some adjustments in their trips. And we started that on Saturday.

John asks if Michelle has been training anyone to be her right-hand person that can fill in if she is out or sick.

Michelle states that she works with the dispatchers to ensure that they have all of the knowledge they need. There are things in place to ensure that operations would be unaffected if she were to be out of the office.

John asks if there are any questions for Michelle.

Karen states that she wants to thank Michelle and David for getting her the phone call outs for her rides to let her know when her bus is going to be there. It works great and she is very happy with that.

John passes the floor to David Tamariz.

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

David states that they are short a CSR, but there is a CSR in training and he is hoping to release her by the end of this week and will be fully trained to take Access calls on her own. Patrick is

taking the first part of his shift as an ambassador at the Senior Center and then returns to the TMF to finish out his shift in the call center. And that's all that he has to share on his end.

John states that he does have a question for Kathleen. John asks if she has any comments or questions, or any data she would like to share with the group.

Kathleen states that she will be participating in some training on the TripShot program, which is the application used to run the GO! service. Because she and other members of the City have taken over auditing the GO! trips, so we will be doing some training. Members from transit, as well as members from MV will be attending the training. It will be a great knowledge tool for her to start from the beginning on understanding the programming, and a great opportunity for others to refresh their knowledge on the program.

John states that his grandchildren want to know about the skating rink. Will the City be putting in a skating rink?

Kathleen states that they are currently in the works of the skating rink. It will be out in the Sports Complex in Canyon Country. She believes they just completing the bid process, and have finalized planning and will begin construction shortly. It will be a while, but it is happening.

John moves forward to public comments.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Manel Rushparajah- Manel states that last week she was on a ride with a driver by the name of Caesar, he was very nice. Another rider had a trip planned to Town Center, but began panicking because there wasn't a bank location at her destination. He was very kind and found the closest Wells Fargo and adjusted the route to get her where she needed to go. Her pick up yesterday was for 4:20 from Friendly Valley. She was outside waiting until 5:00, and she called to get the status. She was told the bus was running late. She was finally picked up at 5:45. Coming home is not an issue, but if she had been needing to get to get to appointment it would have been a problem.

Paula Pitti- Paula states that she has a few issues to address. One is the tethering of walkers. She states that with 90% of the people being elderly- they can't hold on to their walkers. She can't hold on to her walker because of her disability. To expect her to be able to hold on to her walker for the whole ride is unreasonable. She tells the drivers everyday to tether her walker, and not tethering to walker would make it so she wouldn't be able to use the service. She also states that the rules for Dial-A-Ride and Access need to be the same. One day I was on an on demand, and I told the driver that she needed to come and tie down my walker. The driver stated that she didn't need to do that. I became upset and told her that she needed to tie it down. It needs to be consistent- either you tie the walkers down or you don't. And if this is because one lady's walker was damaged. I have been using a walker and Access for 20 years, and I have never had a walker damaged because it was tied down. She also asks that the dispatchers be notified that anything they say over the radio is heard by the passengers. There was a trip that her driver couldn't use the lift, so the young man says I'll take care of it. The dispatcher, a female, began to "rail" on the

driver for five minutes. I have dispatch's number, so I called dispatch and I yelled at them. Listening to them yell at the driver that is trying to his job for five minutes made me mad. Whatever they have to say to the drivers, if it's negative, it doesn't need to be said over the radio. It should be done over a private phone call. Also, I agree that the on-demand buses. When I started using the service in September, none of the lifts worked. Especially bus numbers 368 and 369. A driver will say the lift was working when I started, and by the time I get picked up around 9:30, and the lift isn't working. I appreciate everyone here. I want to give David accolades, he always helps me, knows my temperament and is always calm cool and collected. Also, the hanging up the phones at the end of the dispatch reservation time. I have been hung up on over a dozen times at 7:55. I am not sure who it is, and it has been over an eight-year period. So, if we can address the tethering the walkers- are we tethering the walkers or not?

Faustino states that we tethering wheelchairs, and we secure walkers. It is a policy for Access to secure all mobility devices.

Arcy states that there was an incident where a woman's walker was damaged and MV Transportation was responsible for the damage. We were advised to not secure walkers on any of our services. If Access requires that all mobility devices be secured, then we will have to review that and come up with a solution.

Keith asks Arcy if they can devise a system that will go across the board so that everything is consistent.

Arcy states that yes, she will discuss with Larry to come up with a solution.

John thanks Manel and Paula for coming and participating. He also thanks Manel for submitting a resume to become an AAC board member. He then moves on to old business.

OLD BUSINESS

Keith states he doesn't have anything for old business. Karen also states that she doesn't have anything for old business. John states that we will move on to the elections and new business.

NEW BUSINESS

Keith nominates John for Chair. Karen seconds the motion. John accepts the nomination. The motion passes. John makes a motion to nominate Karen Manke to be Vice-Chair. Keith seconds the motion. Karen accepts the nomination.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting is adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

FUTURE MEETING

September 7, 2023 9:00 a.m. Carl Boyer Room, City Hall.