

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

**ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

**9:00 a.m.**

**Thursday, September 7, 2023**

**Santa Clarita City Hall, Carl Boyer Room**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman, John Panico called to order the meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at 9:15 a.m.

**MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT**

John Panico, Chairman

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Karen Manke, Vice Chair

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Keith Curry, Member

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Barrett Tate, Access Services

Nicholas Echeverri, City of Santa Clarita

Toshia Griffin, Member of the Public

Kathleen Herrera, City of Santa Clarita

Manel Pushparajah, Member of the Public

Leah Kawasawa, Member of the Public

James Gerken, TMD

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES**

John Panico calls the meeting to order at 9:15 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 September agenda and the June 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 states that he does not have any comments at this time.

*John passes the floor to Karen Manke.*

Karen states that she has no comments at this time, perhaps later.

*John asks about the current state of potential new members.*

Grace states that Adrian Aguilar would need to be present to bring new members into the committee.

*Keith suggests tabling the new member confirmations until November.*

John asks how many people have completed their application process to become members.

*Keith states two- and indicates Toshia Griffin and Manel Pushparajah, have submitted their applications.*

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. Grace shares the “No Show” numbers for August- Access 21 no shows out of 2,845 scheduled rides. For Dial-A-Ride, there were 163 no shows out of 6,076 scheduled rides. The Beach Bus was completed this past weekend. It was a successful season, with additional buses needing to be sent out on multiple occasions due to increased ridership. School is back in session as of August 8, with junior high and high school service resuming. The Vista Canyon grand opening has been scheduled for October 20, at 1:00 p.m. and is open to the public. An invitation will be sent out to the group once it has been made available.

*Keith asks Grace to email him the invitation for the grand opening as well as the August no show numbers. He also provides positive feedback that was shared with him on the beach bus destination change to Ventura. Keith suggests a survey to the community to get input on this year’s beach bus service.*

Grace also shares that the bid QR Code sign replacement has closed, and the item will be taken before the City Council at the September 26 to award the contract. The 700 signs will be replaced by mid-November. Grace introduces Nicholas Echeverri to discuss the progress of the Transit Development Plan (TDP).

*Grace passes the floor to Nicholas Echeverri*

## **Nicholas Echeverri, City of Santa Clarita**

Nick passes the floor to the consulting firm and Transit Management Design (TMD).

*James with TMD shares general background of the firm and shares a quick update on the TDP, what it is, and what the timeline is for the project. The agency provides a detailed roadmap of the project phases, public outreach, workshops that will be held, virtual meetings and surveys. James opens the floor to AAC meeting attendees for feedback on mobility needs, areas not currently not served by Santa Clarita Transit that you would like to see served and what would make you more likely to use the services.*

Leah Kawasawa asks to speak on behalf of her son, Benjamin, that uses Access on a daily basis and has multiple special needs. She asks James about the survey process-she would like to know where to go online to be able to complete a survey.

*James states that they are working on adding a link to SantaClaritaTransit.com to complete the survey.*

Leah states that she has concerns regarding people with disabilities, even high functioning persons with special needs, being able to articulate the concerns they have and how they will relate to the survey. She would like to confirm that there will be people available to conduct the in person surveys that are prepared and able to communicate with people that have learning or physical disabilities that have difficulty communicating their issues and needs effectively. She also wants to also suggest paper surveys, as her son does not have a phone and needs to have a physical paper in front of him in order to best communicate his needs and issues.

*James thanks Leah for sharing her concerns. He states that they do have people that are trained and qualified to conduct in person surveys, and will also ensure that there are paper copies made available. For the second survey, it will be done by a mail out to randomly selected sample of the community. They will ensure that the surveys are as comprehensive as possible, and will ensure that several mediums of the survey will be made available for residents to complete.*

Leah asks if the firm will have access to riders through their TAP accounts in order to ensure that all riders have the opportunity to take the survey.

*James states that they will be conducting the surveys at random, and is not sure if the City will have access to personal information of riders, but they will do everything they can to ensure that multiple mediums of the survey are made available.*

John passes the floor to Toshia Griffin

*Toshia asks about whether or not she will be able to print out the survey. Toshia also states that regarding the third question presented by TMD, the discounted fares for Seniors is only available through a long process. She would like to see the City use the technology that is*

*available to provide the ability to obtain the discount through online rather than having to go in person to get the discount. Toshia also addresses the timeframe that Access services are available in Santa Clarita. Currently Access services are not available after 8:00 p.m., which doesn't allow for her to participate in activities that go past 8:00 p.m., as she has mobility issues and relies on Access or Dial-A-Ride for transportation rather than the regular fixed route service. She would like to see expanded hours.*

Keith states that to answer the firm's third question- need and accessibility are the two things that will make people use the transit service more. Keith suggests creating a system to provide the hard copies for the surveys so that people that don't get out are able to complete the survey. He also suggests making the TAP program more user friendly when it comes to the discounted fares for seniors- they should not have to physically travel to City Hall or the Senior Center to reload their card at the discounted rate. Keith inquires as to whether or not there will be an increase in fares in order to pay for the TDP update.

*Toshia once again asks if the survey will be printable. She also shares that it would be beneficial for TMD to come to senior communities and/or the Senior Center and engage with the senior community to ask these same questions and have an in-person presence.*

Leah also addresses expanding the time availability for the paratransit services. Her son often has to be to work by 7:00 a.m. and due to time windows on paratransit programs, and the current service hours, he is often late for work. The service can arrive 20 minutes before or after the scheduled arrival time, making patrons wait, however, the service will only wait for 5 minutes for him before they leave him and declare a no-show.

*David states that Access does not have a 20 minute window prior to the scheduled time, they only have a 20 minute window for after the scheduled arrival time, and that they will wait for a patron for 5 minutes prior to declaring a no show for the patron.*

Leah responds that she understands this policy, however the blame is always placed on the patron. When she has called to report a driver not showing up, or showing up later than the scheduled arrival time and their window, or causing her son to be late for work, the blame is always placed on her son. The patron is always the one responsible, and the drivers are never held accountable. This makes it so people do not want to call in to address these issues. She has video of buses passing riders, she has witnesses of this happening to her son, and every time the consumer is to blame. It is always protecting the driver, not supporting the consumer.

*John states that we will address this in member comments. He thanks the firm for participating in the meeting. He would like to have them share the financial aspect of the TDP.*

James addresses Toshia's question regarding being able to print the survey from the website, and confirms that they will ensure that the survey is available to print off of the SantaClaritaTransit.com website, and will work with City staff to ensure that there are plenty of ways for residents to complete and return the surveys.

## **Barrett Tate, Access Services**

Barrett provides brief Access updates. For August, the service in Santa Clarita met 11 of 12 key performance indicators (KPI). The one KPI that was not met was for denial of service, which affected one rider. On time performance continues to be above standard at 98.1%, excessive late trips were at 0.04%, calls on hold more than five minutes was at 4.9% with an average hold time of 79 seconds. As of June 15 Access, has updated their policies and procedures. The estimated time of arrival procedure has been updated that if a trip is anticipated to be 46 minutes or more outside of the 20-minute time period, the contractor must proactively contact the rider. Access would like to invite the committee and members of the public to our Access Community Meeting on September 23, from 12:30-2:00 p.m. to be held on Zoom.

*Grace states that she will share the meeting information with the group.*

Keith asks if Access still has callouts, and Barrett states yes.

*Leah states that she does have callouts on her son's profile and she does not consistently receive callouts. Her number and all of her information is listed on his profile.*

Keith advises Leah to reiterate to receive the callout when rides are being scheduled.

*Michelle, Barrett and Leah agree to talk more after the meeting to discuss the issues with callouts and other Access needs.*

Karen states that when she makes her reservations they always ask her if she would like a call out, and 90% of the time she receives that call out.

## **Arcy Torres, MV Transportation**

*John asks Arcy about how the additional buses for the beach bus worked out.*

Arcy stated that they did have back up drivers available and were able to accommodate the need. They also did see a significant increase in ridership for Ventura when compared to the previous year with Santa Monica. She then provides MV updates. A new driver bid which went into effect on August 12. There were no major changes, there were some adjustments on time for Dial-A-Ride and Access trips based on ridership and a trip was added in the morning on the Route 14 from the transit center to the senior center, as well as a pick up from the senior center to the transit center. Additionally, there is an open position for an Operations Manager. There was a candidate that had accepted the position however there was a conflict and he declined the offer. The position is being reposted.

*Toshia states that she had inquired about the amenities available for the disabled in Ventura when taking the beach bus.*

Nick provides an overview of the amenities available at the marina, and surrounding areas.

### **Michelle Rush, MV Transportation**

Michelle states that she has a few updates. There was a new dispatch bid, and there have been some changes made but have adjusted some hours to start earlier. She also states that to provide perspective, driver bids are routed 6 months out, so things do adjust and change. They try to keep up with those fluctuations and accommodate in order to keep trips on time and meet the need.

### **David Tamariz, MV Transportation**

David shares that the beach bus was a success. We had riders coming from the San Fernando Valley to ride the beach bus, and the call center received many calls from patrons that really enjoyed and appreciated the service. The ambassadors at the Senior Center- Patrick will be there for his entire shift from early in the morning until his shift ends. Geraldine is another ambassador that is out in the field as well, assisting with trips with the School Trippers and at the Transit Center. He also shares that the call center is fully staffed.

*John asks Grace to provide more details on the TDP as far as funding and grant money is concerned.*

Grace hands that off to Nick

*Nick shares that the TDP funding came from a Federal Grant, the competitive route planning and restoration project, which is intended to help municipalities improve their service. The application and award was completed a little over a year ago. The funds for the TDP are not coming from the City's general fund, it is entirely funded by the Federal Government.*

Keith inquires about fare increases.

*Nick states that we are at the beginning stages of the analysis, but the potential for fare increases is taken very seriously.*

John asks about including newly developed areas in the process.

*Nick confirms that TMD has been made aware of the most recent and upcoming developments which will be included in the TDP.*

Keith inquires about the state of the Via Princessa station closure once Vista Canyon is open.

*Grace states that it is anticipated that it will be a few years before any closures occur at Via Princessa with the newly added Vista Canyon station.*

Keith asks about the Via Princessa Park that the City has in the works at the Via Princessa station, as well as routing in Lost Canyon.

*Grace confirms that there are plans for that station to be reimagined as a park in the future, and that the routing for Lost Canyon will be coinciding with the bridge build out, which is at least one and a half years out.*

## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

John opens the floor to public comments.

*Manel shares that so far, her experiences have been pretty good. She has had a few issues with some trips in the morning, where she has been on the bus for an extended period of time and also being dropped off last on the route. She also is trying to understand the routing, as it seems she will be picked up in Canyon Country, go to Valencia, back to Newhall, then back to Valencia.*

Michelle states that she has been reviewing routing over the last week, and has scheduled a meeting with the IT person that has created the routing programming to work out some issues that have been found with routes that do not make the most sense.

*Leah states that there was an incident that her son had a doctor's appointment and was picked up at 7:15 a.m. and did not arrive to the doctor's appointment at 9:15 a.m. He was late for the appointment so she called and stated that he should not be on the bus for that long, and was told that it is known that riders can be on the bus up to two hours.*

Michelle responds that for Dial-A-Ride trip, the rider should be on the bus for no more than 90 minutes, and for Access, the rule is that a rider should not be on the bus for longer than it would take for a rider to take a standard fixed route service.

*Leah asks regarding going online with the application process for Access, and being able to book trips online.*

Michelle states that would be Access, but at this time they do not have the capabilities to utilize the app or going online to book trips.

*Leah also states that her concerns are not taken seriously or tracked.*

Grace advises Leah to use the Resident Service Center on the City's website to complete her concerns, as they are trackable and will provide her with documentation of the concern as well as the resolution for that concern.

*John passes the floor to Toshia*

Toshia states that she appreciates Access and the services that it provides her. She also states that she received a letter regarding no-shows, and she has had times where she has had to do a late cancellation for various reason, but is never a no show.

*Grace states that the City will send out no show letters when patrons have excessive no shows, and asks if she received the letter from the City or Access.*

Toshia states that the letter was from Access. She then directs to Keith regarding the loading of her card at Senior Center. She followed his advice, and called the Senior Center asking to speak to Helga. When she asked where she needed to scan and email her paperwork for the reduced rate, and they told her that she had to come in to submit the paperwork. The call taker became rude, and Toshia disconnected the call.

*Keith states that we are out of time, so we will table the rest for the next meeting.*

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was informally adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

**FUTURE MEETING**

The next meeting is November 2, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom