

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, November 2, 2023

Via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, John Panico called to order the meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at 9:22 a.m.

MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT

John Panico, Chairman

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Keith Curry, Member

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Faustino, Access Services

Manel Pushparajah, Member of the Public

Kathleen Herrera, City of Santa Clarita

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

John Panico calls the meeting to order at 9:22 a.m.

John states that he doesn't have the minutes in front of him, but that everybody had a chance to look at them and he doesn't think there were any questions. John states they were recorded, and they were well done.

MEMBER COMMENTS

John states that we'll start off with member comments- Keith, do you have any comments?

Keith states the has no comments at this particular time.

John states he does not have any comments and that we will move on to agency updates.

John passes the floor to Arcy Torres with MV Transportation for any updates on the strike.

AGENCY UPDATES

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Arcy states that there aren't any updates. The company and the Union are still negotiating. You know, we're talking every day, but as of now, the strike is still not over. We don't know how long the strike will go on, and the only trips that are being booked on Dial-A-Ride and Access are urgent medical appointments, such as dialysis, and the trip counts are very low. We currently only have 3 drivers right now. The drivers are Michelle, Larry and Ruben, with Larry and Michelle being the primary drivers servicing these trips.

In the call center we have four people. It's myself, David, Cynthia, and our accounting manager. The call volume has gone down tremendously from when the first from when the strike initially started. We don't really have much else to report.

John asks how the call center is determining what qualifies as an emergency trip?

Arcy states that what they do is when we answer the call, we let them know that the drivers are on strike and the City has a hold message recording that states that the strike is still ongoing. A lot of the time people will just hang up. But the patrons will state that they have dialysis and we will schedule the ride. Some people will be honest and are looking for a ride to the grocery store, or to the senior center, and those are trips that we're just not booking. We're not able to handle that capacity right now with the number of drivers that we currently have, and they are very understanding.

John asks if they are doing any commuter trips, or local transit, or anything?

Arcy states at this point the local was reduced significantly. The only routes that are operating are the 1, 2, the 5, 6, and the 12, which are the busiest routes. The commuter and micro transit are the ones that were eliminated completely.

John states that if someone has to go to Warner Center or Century City, you have to drive. But Los Angeles, you could take the Metrolink more or less, okay.

John passes the floor to Michelle Rush from MV Transportation.

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Michelle states that they are taking medical appointments, not just emergency appointments, such as important bloodwork appointments. We've still gotten them to where they needed to get to. Wednesdays are still our busiest days and we're staying pretty steady at approximately 14 trips for Dial-A-Ride and Access combined for Wednesdays. Mondays and Fridays are about the same with approximately 10 trips.

Most of our dialysis riders already have subscriptions, so those are there continuously. And then we do have a few people calling in just for different services, as far as their medical appointments go. So that's what we're taking care of right now.

John asks Michelle if the medical appointments re to the same locations each time?

Michelle states that yes, they have the same locations such as the Via Princessa, Henry Mayo and the Santa Clarita Dialysis Center, with some trips to Kaiser, Facey Medical and Quest Diagnostics.

John states well, you guys are making the drivers, maybe look bad. I'm pro drivers, and I'll make the drivers look too bad. You guys are covering everything.

Michelle states that they're definitely not covering everything, and they're not trying to make anybody look bad. We're just trying to make sure that you know that these life-threatening appointments they still matter and we still care to make sure that they get there.

John thanks Michelle and passes the floor to David Tamariz from MV Transportation.

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

David says good morning to all. In the call center, every day is different questions regarding the routes and questions regarding the strike. And that's what the primary amount of phone calls that are coming in are regarding. And as Michelle was mentioning, there are clients that are calling for medical appointments and for those we are accommodating.

It doesn't necessarily have to be dialysis or the chemo, or, you know, emergency procedures, but also blood work. I've scheduled a few of those, and doctor appointments that that have come up.

That's all I have.

John asks if there is anything else from Arcy or MV Transportation before we move on to Access?

Arcy states that she did forget to mention that in addition to the limited local routes running, there are some school tripper routes that are running.

Keith states that we are heading into the third week of the strike, and asks if there are any ongoing talks between MV and the driver's union? Because I know the contract agreement, I

believe, is July of 2024 I think that's when it expired from that. If I'm correct or not. Is there any ongoing talk between the Union and the City?

Arcy tells Keith that the negotiations are between MV and the Union.

John states as far as anything with the City would be MV and their contract with the city. That would be something separate.

Keith asks are they just at a stalemate? Because I was on Valencia yesterday, and I saw several individuals out there picketing other locations as well. I saw them out there picketing, and I was wondering if there is any talking? Because the seniors are really hurt. I mean, they're really upset at the senior center and the numbers dropped over there since this since this strike hit.

But have you heard anything? Are there any talks?

Arcy responds that there are talks between MV and the Union.

John states that he is sure that the Union has told MV what they want, and MV has offered what they're willing to give. Eventually, they will have to meet somewhere in the middle.

John then passes the floor to Faustino Salvador and Barrett Tate with Access Services

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Faustino shares his screen and states thank you. Mr. Chair, meeting members and audience and attendance. I will provide the access operational update. Next slide, please. Santa Clarita Transit met all 12 KPIs in the month of October, during the time they were running operation with OTP at be at 92.3%, excessively late trips being at 0%, missed trips at 0.69%. That's just to highlight a few KPIs. For fiscal year 24, all KPI's are being met with the exception of one denial, and calls on hold over 5 minutes being slightly above standard at 5.1%. Next slide, please. Being that we are in a fifth month of the new fiscal year here are few highlights of Fiscal Year 24, what we are seeing so far in and what we will be working on. Access Flex Uber and Taxi Pilot Program was implemented in August in the Southern region. Our contractor, Global Paratransit sends trips to Uber for riders who have enrolled in the Flex Program. As of Tuesday, of this week, 111 riders have fully enrolled, and about 600 trips have been taken on Uber. Ridership increases, which we typically see this time of year have not negatively impacted service quality, including on-time performance due to the contractor's hard work and work is underway to design Access' first operating facility in the city of Lancaster, in the Antelope Valley. Building and operating our own transit facilities will ensure long-term, fiscal, and operational effectiveness.

Much of the funding for the facility is coming from FEMA reimbursements for the special pandemic response services we were provided in 2020 and 2021. Construction is expected to begin in 2024, with our contractor moving in the new operating facility in 2026.

So that concludes my operations update. And I am available to answer any questions you may have Mr. Chair.

John thanks Faustino, and asks if the Lancaster location will be used for the North region for Palmdale, Lancaster, Angeles Forest, and will it be used Acton and Aqua Dulce?

Faustino states that it will not be used for the North region and that the Northern region is the is in the San Fernando Valley, and the site will be used for the Antelope Valley region.

John asks if they will also service unincorporated areas near Lancaster and Palmdale and how far East and West will it go, will it serve Aqua Dulce and the Acton Area?

Faustino states that they currently service areas all around the Antelope Valley, and service areas that are more than 3/4 of a mile from a fixed route. I don't have the exact dynamics, like how far it will go, but I can get that information if needed, Mr. Chair.

John states that he would like that information. I know there's a lot of senior groups in Acton and Aqua Dulce and I don't know, if you're going East. You're going as far as Little Rock or Lake LA? Are you going to go to the west, and they have Antelope Access and things like that out there, too?

Faustino clarifies that the facility is strictly for operations, it will not change service areas, we will just have our own facility. We will no longer lease a facility, we will own it.

John states that's good, and that might enhance the programs out there.

Faustino states that the goal is to make sure they attract bidders when the contract is up, one of the challenges we have, Mr. Chair, is that these agencies don't have their own facility. It is hard to go ahead and get a facility here in LA County in general. So now we will have our own operated facility. And we just need to receive the bids and they're going to go ahead and execute the service.

John asks if Barrett Tate has anything to add?

Barrett states that he doesn't have anything to add, thank you for having us, stay safe, healthy and keep up the good work.

John asks if Keith has anything he would like to say.

Keith asks about upcoming meeting schedules for Access.

Faustino states that we just had our last committee meeting about a month ago. Nothing new and a new date has not been set. Once I do get the date, I'll share it with the committee members.

Keith states that he will reserve comments or questions for Access.

John passes the floor to Grace Ferguson with the City of Santa Clarita.

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Sure, I just wanted to say Thank you. I know Keith and John, I saw you at the grand opening for Vista Canyon. Thanks for coming. I know it was a very warm day out there. But it's a great

facility. It's now open, a week into opening. We are very excited for it to open to community members. I see community members visiting the area a lot, so we're very excited for that. And I did want to let everyone else know that with the strike is happening, we previously discussed the surveys from our TMD group, those will be on hold until the strike is over. So once the strike is over, we will resume operations, and then they will go out 2 weeks after. But I just wanted to let the group know everything else is going according to plan. And then, Keith, I have the no show numbers I can give them to you, and I'll also email them to you, for the month of September for Access, we had 2,713 rides, and there was 46 no shows. And then for Dial-A-Ride, there were 5,955 rides and there were 185 no shows.

Keith states that quite a bit of no shows.

Manel states that maybe with the confusion of the timing with the strike, maybe we should give some grace to people on the no shows.

Grace states that with almost 6,000 rides, the no show count is pretty average.

Keith asks Grace if the no shows are coming from the senior center?

Grace states that she is not sure if they are coming from the Senior Center, but can take a look.

Michelle states that there are not too many coming from the senior center, and that with having Patrick there, and him making sure that everyone is there, the communications from the drivers and Patrick, there is a lot of communication with the Senior Center so usually the no shows are not from that location.

Manel excuses herself from the meeting.

John asks Manel if she has completed her application for membership to the committee.

Manel states that she completed it two months ago.

Keith reminds Manel that there is not a meeting in December, and we will see her next year.

John asks if there are any updates about Vista Canyon. He states that the route he took to get to the new station was quite long via Sand Cyn Rd and asks Grace if there is an access to the South for Vista Canyon?

Grace states that you can come in through Via Princessa and Lost Canyon or through Jake's Way into Lost Canyon.

John confirms that he understands. He also asks if there are still plans to close Via Princessa? Are they going to keep it open for a while?

Grace states that Via Princessa will remain open for a while. We will see what ridership looks like with the new station open, and then we will reassess Via Princessa.

John asks about the parking, and when they will be building the permanent parking building.

Grace states that once the current temporary parking lot is full, at least 80% full, they will begin building a parking structure.

John asks about routing buses to Vista Canyon and the Transit Center, and asks if we have any ridership information from Metrolink at that station.

Grace states that yes, we are hoping to do route planning in the summer of 2024. Metrolink will send us the first report sometime in December and let us know about ridership.

John passes the floor to Keith.

Keith asks Grace to confirm the information for the parking structure upgrades at Vista Canyon, and wants to confirm that they are waiting until 2024 for that.

Grace clarifies that the construction of the parking structure will be dependent on ridership. Her reference to 2024 was regarding operating service at Vista Canyon.

John asks about any updates on new vehicles, grants or anything else from Grace or Adrian. Any new service, or have the hydrogen buses start coming in yet?

Grace states that the first order for hydrogen buses have been placed but we have not received them onsite.

John asks about the status of the hydrogen refueling station.

Grace states that we've started planning the infrastructure. But we have not started construction on it. We're in the planning stages.

John passes the floor to Kathleen Herrera with the City of Santa Clarita.

Kathleen Herrera, City of Santa Clarita

Transit staff has been going out to different stops throughout the City with the emergency contractor that we've been working with to audit, making sure that they are following the schedule on the routes that they're supposed to be and that they're getting there on time. We've also been working with that lot of calls coming in from residents and from patrons expressing the same thing that David was mentioning- wanting to know when the strike is going to be over and wanting to know any updates on that. We're keeping a uniform message to the public to avoid any kind of confusion or misunderstanding. There's a lot of misunderstanding that the strike is between the City itself and the driver's union, so we are making sure to be as clear as possible on who is involved in the strike and what the City's role is. We are trying to keep as consistent possible while we are going through the strike and trying to keep service up as much as we can.

John turns to the budget upcoming in July 2024.

Grace states that we are currently working on our mid-year budget, and will meet in January to start the budget process for the next fiscal year.

John asks if Keith has any additional questions or comments for the City.

Keith asks that with the holiday season coming up, and still being on strike, if the strike ends, what will we do? Will we have the Christmas tour?

Grace states that yes, we are planning ahead as if we will have drivers, and then we will have the holiday light tour this year.

Keith confirms that the tour is the second weekend in December and at the same location as last year. He also asks about the fee or donation requirements for riders.

Grace confirms that we do a canned food drive for the food pantry. We reached out to the food pantry and they requested toiletry items as they get excess food donations during this time of year. Riders can also pay \$3 per rider. We are also doing the event a little differently. The event has grown so much so we are going to have food truck vendors and other fun stuff at the event. Once we have confirmed that the event will take place, she will send out an email invitation with all of the information to the group.

Keith asks if possible, maybe we get some flyers to the Senior Center. Patrick is over there we can get some flyers, and we could have them placed, and to see us in the lobby. They are unaware that this even exists and I think that this is a great holiday treat for some of the seniors who are basically just with a you know with were transplants from other cities and states that have just moved to Santa Clarita. We have large contingency over there that has no idea the amenities that our transit offers.

Grace states that she will make sure flyers are delivered to the Senior Center.

John asks about the status of the two applicants for the committee.

Grace states that she will check with Adrian on the status of Manell's application. With Toshia, we are going to meet with our director and discuss her application.

John state that they would like to add them as soon as possible. He then asks Grace if she has heard any thing from Vice Chair Karen Manke.

Grace states that she has not. The email did go out, but she did not hear from Karen or Toshia.

Keith states that Karen does not do the internet.

John states that he knows that but he will call her to check in with her, because she can call in to the Zoom.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

John moves to adjourn the meeting.

Keith confirms.

The meeting is adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting is January 4, at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall in the Carl Boyer Room