

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

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Carl Boyer Room, City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman, John Panico called to order the meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at 9:05 a.m.

MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT

John Panico, Chairman

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

Larry Miranda, MV Transportation

Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Kathleen Herrera, City of Santa Clarita

Barrett Tate, Access Services

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Manel Pushparajah, Member of the Public

Toshia Griffin, Member of the Public

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

John Panico calls the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

John states that he will start with a review of the minutes. John asks for comments or questions on the minutes

MEMBER COMMENTS

John states that we'll start off with member comments- John states that he has noticed that the drivers are back and transit is working again. He took the Metrolink the weekend after Metrolink had taken off a few days and Union Station was a disaster- all of the signals were bad, two trains on the Antelope Valley line were on constant red, people were delayed by 30 – 40 minutes. It seemed that could not get caught up no matter which way they were going due to other rail traffic. John states it was a terrible situation.

John passes it on to agency updates.

AGENCY UPDATES

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Grace states that she has a few agency updates. Grace states that we had a successful Holiday Light Tour, with approximately 2,500 patrons attending and collected 1,400 toiletry items, 43 canned food items, all going to the SCV Food Pantry. December no shows- Access had 1,946 rides with 51 no shows and Dial-A-Ride had 4,218 rides with 142 no-shows. Also, we have two Gillig local buses that are going into production at the end of January. They are scheduled to come off the production line around February 14, and should be delivered to our facility around February 17. It will take a few weeks for our inspections and to install fareboxes, and they should be in service by mid-March. This past November, the Council awarded for the purchase of two additional buses which will be arriving in early 2025. Since the strike is over, we have resumed our TDP items. On board surveys are currently on our buses, asking riders to share their thoughts and opinions on our services. The link for the survey is also available on our website. Grace states that is all she has to share and she is available to answer any questions.

John asks about the mid-year budget. He wants to know how the mid-year budget process is going, and if Transit is on track.

Adrian states that we are currently within our operational budget. We did have a couple of items on our mid-year budget. Operationally, Council approved the expansion of service into the FivePoints, which is the area north of Magic Mountain, so we will have some service that runs in that new development with service to begin in early February. We will be extending routes 3 & 7, as well as providing service from that area to the High School and Junior High School. The other item that was approved was some reclassifications of a couple of our positions within Transit in order to provide some stepping stones within the division. We will begin conducting the recruitment for those open positions this month. As far as the budget for the coming year- we have already kicked off our budget season for our next year which begins July 1. We are still finalizing the list of requests for next year's budget. We know for sure that we will be asking for funding for additional vehicles for our annual vehicle replacement. There is also our ongoing capital maintenance program, which includes repairs and updates at our transit facilities, such as the Metrolink stations, park-n-rides, the Transit Center and our Transit Maintenance Facility. We have identified a few different maintenance projects that we will be looking at. We are still working on budgetary numbers for those requests, but right now it looks like we have at least those two requests for next year's budget. For operational and service requests, we are going to wait until the TDP is completed and those recommendations are finalized before we go to Council to ask for any changes to service levels. The other thing we are working on, it's been about eight years since we have had a fare change, so we are in the process our fare levels and how they compare with other agencies within the region. We will likely be asking Council to make an adjustment to the fare levels to bring them in line with everyone else.

John states that means they may go down.

Adrian states that is not likely. But that is something that we will be working on for the next year's budget.

John asks for any updates on the Vista Canyon project as far as any improvements or parking structures.

Grace states that the permanent parking structure project will not begin until the temporary parking area is at about 80 percent usage.

John asks if they are still keeping the Via Princessa station.

Grace confirms that the station will remain in place until the ridership at Vista Canyon warrants a decision on the Via Princessa site.

John states that based on his experience that if you live by Sand Canyon you are still better off taking the freeway and getting off at Via Princessa to go to the Via Princessa station, rather than going through the route to get to the Vista Canyon Station. Also, when you are coming back in the evening some trains stop at Via Princessa and turn around to continue service, so you are waiting an additional hour to get to Vista Canyon.

Adrian states that the City is working with Metrolink to make some adjustments to our schedules so they line up better with the trains. We are also working with them to have the trains turn around at Vista Canyon rather than Via Princessa. We are hoping that will be in place with the next schedule change.

John asks if there are any other questions for City of Santa Clarita Transit. John hands the floor to Kathleen.

Kathleen states that at this time, we are just getting back to full service after the conclusion of the strike. The public is very happy that we are back to full service. Other than that, she has no additional updates at this time.

John hands the floor to Faustino Salvador

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Faustino states that services are back. The highlight for December, OTP was at 94% which is great. We had 0.0 excessively late trips, calls on hold over 5 minutes was at 3.7% and the average hold time was 7 seconds. There were 0.0 preventable collisions, so service was good. That is all he had to share.

John asks if there are any questions for Access Services. John hands the floor to Michelle Rush from MV Transportation.

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Michelle shares that they are back to business as usual. We're at about 320-350 trips per day. She just completed the last standing order request that she had. The only update she really has to share is that we did hire for our 9th dispatcher. He started training on Monday. Alex has been with the company for 9 years, and had the desire to make a change. He went through the interview process and started on Monday. He is doing a great job so far.

John hands the floor to David Tamariz with MV Transportation.

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

David states that they lost their ambassador, Patrick, to the Senior Center. They are currently in the process of hiring another ambassador. Other than that, there is nothing else to report.

Larry states that with the return of the drivers, we had a very successful return, with only losing one driver. All of our trainees that were out at the time of the strike all returned so we are very lucky for that. We are working on a new bid for the changes that Adrian mentioned. So we will be going out for a new bid that will take effect late January/early February. Next week school resumes, so our school trippers are coming back.

John asks if there are any questions or comments.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

John states that because there are no other members present so we can't accept the new members. John asks Adrian if he has heard from Karen.

Adrian states that he has not heard from Karen, but he would like to wait until the next meeting as he will also be reaching out to the Senior Center to see if they would like to appoint an additional representative. It would be easier to do it all at once.

John states that he will try to reach out to Karen.

David states that MV had also tried to reach out to Karen, but were unsuccessful. As he shared with Grace, the last time he did speak with her, her dog was experiencing some health issues.

John states that any additional new business will be tabled until the next meeting.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

John hands the floor to public comment.

Toshia Griffin states that she has brought this topic up before, regarding payment options. The payment methods accepted for the ADA services are inconvenient as we can pay for some services on our TAP card with a credit card, but not other services. She does know who she

needs to address this issue with. In other areas you are able to pay/load with cash or card, however in our area, we are limited to how we can load out TAP cards.

Adrian states that the ability to pay for your TAP are equal amongst all of our services in Santa Clarita. For your TAP card, you can use on all of our routes, you can also pay cash. We do not accept credit cards on our farebox system. That is something that we are looking at for the future, and we are probably a year or two away from that. In terms of loading your Tap card, you can load the card online or at any of our locations throughout the City.

Toshia states that is not correct. For regular routes, you can load with a card online, but for Access you can not.

David states that they did encounter a situation, however, you can go to TapToGo.net and load your TAP card with a credit card online.

Toshia states that she has tried it on the desktop, but was unsuccessful. She states that the issue she and others have had is the loading of the TAP card, for ADA not for general service. For general service, it's not an issue. But for ADA, the first time she attempted to load the card online, and she receives an error message.

Adrian states that her Access ID works as her TAP card. The technology and the chip is the same.

Toshia clarifies that when she goes online to load her TAP card, she should see an option to select the disabled ADA discounted fare.

Adrian asks Toshia to explain what she means by the ADA discounted rate.

Toshia states that she has to go to certain locations to load her card with the \$0.60 per ride fare discount, and she is not able to load that discounted fare through the website.

Adrian states that the \$0.60 discounted fare is a different program than Access. That is a program that is funded by the City and is only available here in Santa Clarita. So you could not use your discounted \$0.60 trips to the Valley, they are only good here in Santa Clarita. That is why they can only be loaded at certain locations because it is exclusive to the City. The City subsidizes the cost of the trip- for your \$2.00 Access trip, you are only paying \$0.60. But the City pays the additional \$1.40 for the trip. From Access' perspective, it's still a \$2.00 trip. That is why limit the locations to the Senior Center and the TMF, as you have to qualify for the program and it is strictly for Santa Clarita.

Toshia confirms the information. She also confirms that we are still 1-2 years away from having the same payment options available as they do in the Valley.

Adrian states that the City is a part of the TAP program. The TAP program is not something that is specific to Santa Clarita, it is countywide. It is a little more difficult for the region to coordinate that technology and have it installed. We are working with Metro on a countywide procurement to upgrade that technology.

Toshia asks if we have a date or timeframe to be able to schedule our trips online as other areas have access to.

Faustino states that they are still working on that update. Once he has more of an idea of date, he will make sure to share that.

John reiterates the statements that Adrian made regarding the TAP program. John asks Manel if she has any questions or comments for the group.

Manel addresses the group, and states that the strike was a difficult time but she was able to get help on transportation from her friends. She states that she is happy everything is back and operating and everything so far has been great. She also states that she understands Toshia's frustrations. She has experienced issues when she goes to add funds to her TAP card at the TMF or the Senior Center with cash. She appreciates Adrian explaining why the funds have to be loaded that way.

John asks the group about a mother who attended an AAC meeting a few months back that was very concerned about the service her son was getting through Access and the issues he has encountered. Did anyone reach out to her and were her concerns resolved?

Grace states that yes, they reached out to her. Her son's profile was updated with her phone number and there have not been any additional issues for Ben since then.

Michelle state that her phone number was added to the Ripple system, so that reminders and ride updates are shared to her phone. That seems to have resolved the issue.

John states that's great and provided kudos for the group in resolving her issues. He also states that he has waited for Keith to arrive, and states that he is going to give him a call to see if he will be able to make it to the meeting.

Keith confirms via telephone that he will not be able to make the meeting today. Since there is not a quorum for the meeting, he suggests adjourning the meeting and move the induction of the new members to the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

John adjourns the meeting at approximately 9:50 a.m.

FUTURE MEETING

The next meeting is March 7, at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall in the Carl Boyer Room