

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

**ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)**

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

**9:00 a.m.**

**Thursday, January 2, 2025**

**Carl Boyer Room, City Hall**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman, John Panico called to order the meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at 9:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT**

John Panico, Chairman

Karen Manke, Vice Chair

Toshia Griffin, Member

Manel Pushparajah, Member

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Adam Reyes, MV Transportation

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Sheila Moulton, Member of Public

Resty Musonge, Member of Public

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES**

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

**MEMBER COMMENTS**

**Karen Manke** shares information on her ride Sunday, December 15. She was scheduled to be picked up at 11:30 a.m. from Walmart. Driver told her that he wouldn't be able to pick her up until 12:00 p.m. because he had to take his lunch. She would like to know why her trip is scheduled and she is left waiting more than the 20-minute window because the drivers have to take a lunch. This happens very often on the weekend.

*Michelle explains that the rides are not scheduled intentionally during driver break times. Unfortunately, because the scheduling is fluid and always changing, these issues can happen where her ride is placed or moved to another trip where it will be interrupted due to driver lunch breaks. They are looking into ways to limit these occurrences.*

Karen shares that she took a local route a month ago. There was a pit bull on board with an owner, was not properly leashed and scared her. She knows that they can not deny the animals but wants to know if there is a limit on what dogs are allowed to be on the bus.

*Michelle indicates that unless the animal is causing a disturbance or providing obvious reason to believe that the dog is not a therapy animal, they can not question the owner.*

John asks if drivers are trained to handle issues when there are animals that board that are aggressive, and what is the protocol for that.

*Michelle states that drivers are trained on how to address issues with service animals, while having to cautious that they are not violating ADA rules. If they encounter an issue with an aggressive animal, the driver pulls over, contacts dispatch and a road supervisory is sent to the bus's location.*

**Manel Pushparajah** states that overall her experience with Dial-A-Ride and GO! She has also brought her friend to the meeting.

**Toshia Griffin** states that she enjoyed the Holiday Light Tour. The drivers have been able to pick her up at her designated location. She also thanked the City and Access for adjusting the hold messaging to reduce the time needed to listen to it.

*Faustino thanks Toshia for providing the feedback and bringing the issue to their attention.*

**John Panico** states that Keith apologizes for not being in attendance for today's meeting, but that he will be there in March. He also provided John with questions that he had for the group and he will share them as needed throughout the meeting. He passes the floor to Grace Ferguson for Agency Updates.

## **AGENCY UPDATES**

### **Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita**

Grace shares information on the success of the Holiday Light Tour, which had 2,100 passengers and collected 340 pounds of donations for the SCV Food Pantry. She also provides updates on the Bus Stop Improvement Project which is underway. Twenty-five stops will be retrofitted with updated furniture including shelters, trash cans and benches, which is expected to arrive in March to early April for installation. Access has applied for a grant, and they will be providing a new electric vehicle for SC Transit in December 2025, upon completion of the vehicle build.

*John asks if the TMF has the ability to charge the electric vehicle.*

Grace states that two electric vehicle chargers have been installed at the TMF. One is awaiting a replacement part, but once that part arrives, both charging stations will be fully operational. Transit will look at expanding depending on how many electric vehicles are added to our fleet.

She also shares that a new schedule will be released in February, and the City will be working with MV to have an updated driver bid.

*John asks about the changes to the schedule- is it adding service, removing service?*

Grace states that the City takes resident feedback and many other factors into account to make schedule changes to improve service. She concludes her updates.

*John asks if there are any fare increases on the horizon.*

Grace states that there was a fare increase in August of 2024, so we will not be looking to increase fares any time soon.

*John asks about the progress on implementing the TDP.*

Grace states that the TDP recommendations have not been finalized as of yet. The group will be updated once the City Manager's office has reviewed and approved the recommendations.

*John asks for updates on the Hydrogen project.*

Grace states that we will be breaking ground on the station in the summer and it should be operational in late November – December.

### **Faustino Salvador, Access Services**

*John asks Faustino for the policy on service animals for Access.*

Faustino states that when the trip is scheduled if the rider indicates they have a service animal, the trip is booked to reflect that they will be riding with their service animal. If the rider brings a non-service animal on board, the animal must be contained within a container, must stay within the container for the duration of the trip and may not exceed 25 pounds. If the rider brings on their service animal that was not indicated during booking or they have not been approved through their interview process with a service animal, the driver notifies dispatch and the trip is not denied. The rider will be contacted by Access eligibility to verify that the animal is their service animal- is this animal your service animal, and what task is it trained to help you with. If the animal is indeed a service animal, the information will be added to their profile.

*Toshia asks Faustino the protocol if she is a rider that is afraid of dogs and there is a service dog on board the vehicle that she is being picked up by- will they send her another vehicle, cancel the trip?*

Faustino states that if the rider is choosing to not take the trip or deboard the vehicle due to a service animal, that is the rider's choice. A rider that has a service animal can not be denied a trip due to their need for a service animal. If the rider chooses to not board or deboard the vehicle, Access will try to get them another trip when available, but the rider will have to wait for that

availability. The driver may also try to accommodate for the frightened passenger with seating arrangements.

*John asks on Keith's behalf for a status on how the transfers from Oliveview are going.*

Faustino states that overall, they are going well. There is a starter at the Oliveview location that monitors all trips and communicates with the other transit agencies to minimize issues.

*Manel asks about the transfer service to use Access outside of Santa Clarita, and if riders are having to wait at a transfer point for several hours.*

Faustino states that there are specific time windows at the transfer locations for riders. Depending on the rider's timing needs for their overall trip will indicate what time window will suit them best. He also provides information on the strictness of the no-show policy for Access with transfer trips.

*Toshia states that she is frustrated with the time windows offered for transfer trips. She had a doctor's appointment in Mission Hills at 10:30 a.m. In order to use Access for this trip, she would have had to be picked up by Access at 6:30 a.m. to be at the transfer location by 7:30 a.m., and would be in Mission Hills waiting for her appointment for at least an hour and a half. Then for her return, because of the transfer time windows, she wouldn't have been back home until 4:30 p.m.*

Michelle and Faustino provide Toshia with the breakdown as to why the times she was provided were necessary to guarantee that she would get to her appointment on time. Faustino also provides the option of coordinating between using Access and the Metrolink to avoid the long time periods, which may be a better option for her.

Faustino shares the on-time performance is at 93%. Also, Access will be implementing a functionality to allow the driver to see the rider's picture from their Access ID to ensure a safer and more efficient pick-ups.

*John asks Grace if she has any additional information or numbers to provide for Transit.*

Grace states that she was unable to log in to the software system that provides that information. Once she is able to log in, she will email the numbers to Keith and the group.

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

*John asks on Keith's behalf for updates on how everything is going at the Senior Center.*

Michelle states that she went to the Senior Center during their food bank time period to monitor everything. She indicated that there was an issue with Transitminor which caused an issue with monitoring the scheduled rides. The issue was resolved, and everything else is going well.

*John asks about the ambassador position at the Senior Center.*

Michelle indicates that they are working to get the position filled, and David has some updates on staffing that. She also shares that there is a Trapeze upgrade in progress. Currently, she is checking on the functions to ensure that everything is working properly. It will go live next week. Riders will not notice anything different, the changes are on the transit side. The software will have the capability to schedule rides online, but that will not be implemented yet.

*Toshia asks how long before we will be able to book online?*

Michelle states that the timing is not her call, but we will now have the software to be able to implement it into the future.

*Toshia asks why is it taking so long to be able to book the rides online when other regions are able to do so?*

Michelle states that the other regions utilize different software that already had the capability to book rides online. The older version of Trapeze was not capable of that function, but the update will provide the ability to utilize that function in the future.

*Toshia asks why the City was using outdated software? And who is the person that would make the decision to update the software?*

Michelle states that different companies do things differently. MV utilizes Trapeze. Other contractors in other regions utilize different software.

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

David provides updates on staffing. One of the two Ambassadors did quit last month, so they are trying to replace that staff to enable the rotation at the Senior Center. Additionally, there is one call center staff that is out on leave, which is causing increased call hold times. He is consistently in the call center to help the call takers when there is increased volume.

*John asks what is causing the increased call volume- increased aging population?*

David states that there is increased ridership, as well as an increase in ETA calls. This is mostly due to the use of SilverRide, as patrons need to confirm whether or not they are going to be picked up by a bus or a car.

*Toshia asks if they will be increasing the staffing in the call center.*

David states that may be something that is considered in the future, but at this time they are considered to be fully staffed.

*Toshia thanks David and states that she would like to commend Geraldine in the call center. She is always helpful, polite and does a great job.*

David states that he will share the commendation with her, and provide her with a pin and a letter of commendation, and thanks Toshia for sharing.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

N/A

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Board Member Nominations will be conducted at the June AAC Meeting

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

John gives the floor to public comments.

*Resty introduces herself. She has used the services for the last three years and appreciates the drivers and their patience. Riders are very selfish and even with all of the complaints, they remain patient and focused. She came on the recommendation of Manel. One thing she wanted to address, this morning both herself and Manel, had the same pick up time with the same vehicle. She then states that she will stop there but she is happy to be here to share.*

John asks if she and Manel live close to each other.

*Resty states that they do not.*

Manel indicates that the driver did not arrive at her location until 8:40 a.m.

*Michelle shares that when the rides are scheduled for the AAC meeting, they are made by the same representative. The representative probably booked it for the same time to ensure they are able to ride together. They do like to have the pick-up times more staggered, but the scheduling representative is also looking at the full range of time for the pickup which includes the 15-minute windows.*

Sheila introduces herself, and indicates that Toshia shared the information on the committee and she thought it would be interesting. She has been using Access and the transit system since she has lived in Santa Clarita. Sure there are some issues, but she has always been satisfied with the service. She would like to be included on all future meetings.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

John adjourns the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

### **FUTURE MEETING**

The next meeting is March 6, 9:00 a.m. at City Hall, Carl Boyer

