

City of SANTA CLARITA TRANSIT

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m.

Thursday, May 7, 2026

Carl Boyer Room, City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Chair John Panico called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance

MEMBERS & GENERAL PUBLIC PRESENT

John Panico, Chair

Keith Curry, Co-Chair

Manel Pushparajah, Member

Karen Manke, Member

Toshia Griffin, Member

Resty Musonge, Member

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

Anna Soto, MV Transportation

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Kathleen Herrera, City of Santa Clarita

John Hasegawa, Member of Public

Billy Curry, Member of Public

Debby Jons, Member of Public

Greg Jons, Member of Public

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

March meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without any amendments or corrections noted.

MEMBER/GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Driver Identification/Badges:

Riders rarely see driver name badges causing difficulty in commending or identifying drivers. Drivers have IDs and Access driver pledges but are not required to wear visible lanyards at all times. MV to remind operators to carry/display IDs upon request and evaluate a standard, visible in-vehicle placement or clip solution.

Vehicle Type/Reasonable Modifications:

94-year-old rider (Dial-a-Ride) struggles with sedans and requests van-only transportation.

This requires a reasonable modification request through customer service (for Dial-a-Ride or Access) and must be approved based on need.

Homelessness/Hygiene Policy:

Access eligibility via standard certification process applies to all. Day-of service may be denied if hygiene/safety poses risk to driver/passengers.

Notifications/App/ETAs

Some riders receive multiple or confusing text notifications (standing orders, odd timing). The Santa Clarita Connect app shows pickup window and an estimated drop-off range at the bottom of the trip screen. Multiple notifications are expected (at booking, day-of, pre-pickup). Customer service can provide arrival guidance if needed. MV will review specific cases with Spare for settings/timing issues.

Driver Assistance at Door

Not all drivers exit vehicle to assist consistently, which is standard policy. Access conducted a field blitz where 1 of 4 operators observed did not assist. This was documented and addressed. This topic to be reiterated in safety meetings and more unannounced observations planned. MV to continue reinforcing standards.

GO Service Area and Availability

GO is on-demand within city limits; availability can fluctuate (not pre-bookable). App/website maps show coverage; certain county areas (e.g., across the Old Road in Stevenson Ranch) are outside GO, though nearby Walmart side is in-bounds. The City is ordering 7 electric vans for GO to improve capacity. For trips outside GO area or when certainty is needed, pre-book Dial-a-Ride (1–7 days in advance) or use Access if eligible.

Access Eligibility/Re-evaluation Scheduling

SCV reevaluations historically 2 days/month and were increased to 3 days/month for over a year due to increased demand. Adding a 4th day will be explored with the Access contractor. The Antelope Valley offers 4 days/week but assigns time slots after booking the day.

Participants indicated recent certifications run 5 years; Access to confirm officially.

Discounted TAP Fare Loading

In-person verification from monthly eligibility lists at designated location (Santa Clarita Senior Center). City to confirm all available locations for loading TAP cards with discounted fare and communicate.

Other Notes

- City under budget; maintains ~20% operating reserve.
- Beach bus operated by LA County (to Santa Monica) is separate; City will distribute contact info.
- Concerts in the Park: Grace to send schedule and drop-off info when available.

AGENCY UPDATES

Grace Ferguson, City of Santa Clarita

Ridership for April:

- Dial-a-Ride: 7,337 trips; 124 no-shows
- Access: 3,046 trips; 69 no-shows

Phone System/AI:

The AI voice agent was launched for reservations, cancellations, ETAs. No issues or complaints regarding the new system to date.

Seasonal Service:

The Beach Bus will continue to bring riders to Ventura Harbor, May 23 – Sept 6. Rider pickup locations remain located at Via Princessa Metrolink and the McBean Transit Center. There is a separate LA County-operated beach bus, departing from Castaic & Stevenson Ranch/Faulkner St., going to Santa Monica remains available to residents as well. Both English and Spanish languages are supported. Grace to send out bilingual info. City will email flyer/phone number to AAC members.

Fleet/Facilities:

Transit has received seven hydrogen buses, and the fueling station construction is ongoing with an operational target of year-end. All on-site Santa Clarita Transit and MV Transportation staff have attended and completed a mandatory 8-hour hydrogen safety training, with additional training ongoing. We are in process of ordering 7 electric buses for the GO! service, and EV chargers to be installed at the TMF in coming months.

Budget:

Santa Clarita Transit is requesting \$7.3M for 4 CNG replacement buses and 4 Dial-a-Ride buses; \$589k in FY budget for TMF maintenance to address flooring, roll-up doors, and courtyard pavers. in the upcoming 26/27 FY budget, which will be presented to Council late May/early June. The City's financial posture is stable with a balanced budget and maintains a 20% operating reserve.

Milestone:

Santa Clarita Transit turns 35 on Aug 5. Staff are planning a celebration, giveaways, and social media posts to recognize this milestone.

Kathleen Herrera, City of Santa Clarita

City Infrastructure:

The Bus Stop Inspection process, where systemwide inspections (SCV incl. Stevenson Ranch & Castaic; Burbank, Warner Center, Century City & downtown Los Angeles) are nearly complete. The inspections are conducted to evaluate the condition of stop amenities and determine if any amenities are missing or need to be replaced. The data collected by City staff will guide next stop improvement project prioritization.

Faustino Salvador, Access Services

April Performance:

- All KPIs met except “calls on hold >5 min” at 5.6% due to call-taker shortage.
- On-time performance: 91.6%.

Events/Operations:

In preparation for the FIFA World Cup, Access conducted a safety meeting with SoFi/FIFA/Hollywood Park and temporary Access stand signage was approved for the June through July games.

Access stands have been re-established at Glendale Community College (Lot 1 & Lot A), and websites have been updated.

Contract:

Access Board approved 2-year contract extension of Santa Clarita Transit’s Access service, July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028.

Arcy Torres, MV Transportation

Confirmed AI phone system information shared by Grace. Initial launch of the system was strictly for cancellations and ETAs, and now is also being utilized for scheduling rides for paratransit services.

David Tamariz, MV Transportation

AI Phone System:

Launched the AI system for ETAs/cancellations (Dial-a-Ride and GO) and reservations added this week. Callers can say “live agent” to be transferred to a live CSR. A Spanish queue is also

available. Callers can expect reduced hold times with AI implantation, as well as the call center now being fully staffed. Call center has a new staff members, Anna Soto (Call Center Supervisor), and Miriam (CSR). Additionally, ambassadors have assisted and will continue to assist during medical leaves.

Anna Soto is introduced to the AAC board and participating agencies, and shares a brief overview of her relevant experience.

Management and supervisory staff will continue monitoring hold times post-AI and ensure the Spanish queue and “live agent” routing work smoothly. Additionally, look to develop rider coaching for app-based weekly booking and reading estimated drop-off windows.

Michelle Rush, MV Transportation

Scheduling/Performance:

The March driver bid implemented some changes, such as added PM routes to address OTP dips. The early signs and trends are positive; however monitoring will continue to identify any issues.

Farebox Issue:

New validator/OS fare-set problem caused “low fare” warnings and mischarges for TAP discounted fares. Internal IT is working to fix the issue, and refunds to be coordinated with the authority.

OLD BUSINESS

N/A

NEW BUSINESS

N/A

ADJOURNMENT

John Panico adjourns the meeting at 10:34 a.m.

FUTURE MEETING

September 3, 2026, 9:00 a.m. Transit Maintenance Facility