

**SAN MATEO COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT  
1250 SAN CARLOS AVENUE, SAN CARLOS, CALIFORNIA**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING – MAY 4, 2011**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** A. Chow, L. Chow, T. Collette, D. Cruz, S. Curry, M. Hall, S. Koya, P. Loranger, J. McKie, S. Price, P. Ratto (Chair), D. Wilcox

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** K. Nobles

**SAMTRANS STAFF PRESENT:** M. Espinosa, J. Johnson, N. McKenna

Chair Peter Ratto called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee (Collette/Wilcox) approved the minutes of April 6, 2011.

Chair Ratto introduced new members, Daniel Cruz, Sandra Curry and Sonny Koya, who gave a background on themselves.

Lisa Chow arrived at 6:49 p.m.

**PRESENTATION: BROWN ACT TRAINING**

Legal Counsel Julie Sherman from Hanson Bridgett made the following points:

- The Brown Act is an open meetings law that ensures the public is informed and has access to public meetings.
- Any legislative body, any committee created by Board of Directors and any committee created by that committee is subject to the Brown Act. The CAC follows the Brown Act.
- The Brown Act requires all meetings are open to the public; the agendas must be posted at least 72-hours prior to the meeting and the meeting must allow for public comment.
- A meeting is a majority of members of a legislative body at the same place and time to hear, discuss, deliberate or take action on any item within subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body.
- Conferences are not meetings as long as they are open to the public and the majority of the body members do not discuss among themselves any issues within the subject matter of the body.
- The Brown Act does allow for closed session. It is very unlikely the CAC will ever have a closed session. Business conducted in closed session is confidential.
- Serial conversations, email, chat rooms, social engagements and other agencies' meetings are all consider risky business under the Brown Act.
- The two types of serial communications are "hub and spoke" and "daisy chain."
- It is recommended the committee not communicate via email.

- There are penalties and enforcement for violating the Brown Act. When Brown Act violations are not cured there can be civil or criminal action taken.
- A member can call into a meeting, but a quorum of the body must be at the location of the local agencies' jurisdiction and the teleconference location must be available to the public on the agenda.
- If an item is not on an agenda it can not be discussed. The exceptions are when the majority decides it is an emergency, two-thirds of the members present feel there is a need for immediate action and the item came up subsequent to the agenda being posted or from a meeting not held more then five days ago.
- Members or staff can briefly respond to members of the public or the item can be put on a future agenda for discussion.
- A meeting should not be held if there is less then a quorum.

Peter Loranger asked if he is the seventh person on the email what do you do. Ms. Sherman said the best thing is to not comment and suggest it be agendized and discussed at the next meeting.

Sondra Price said the CAC agenda has a section for committee requests or comments where items sometimes are discussed that are not on the agenda. Ms. Sherman said the committee can always ask staff for information or clarification.

Mr. Loranger said it is the chair's responsibility to make sure items are not discussed that are not on the agenda. Ms. Sherman said yes.

David Wilcox asked what a quorum is. Ms. Sherman said it would be seven members for the CAC.

Mr. Koya asked about his restrictions when speaking to people on the bus. Ms. Sherman said it is fine to because he is speaking to a non-member.

Tom Collette asked if there is an emergency item can it be added to the agenda. Ms. Sherman said yes as long as it is considered an emergency in the Government Code and it must pass a two-thirds vote of the members.

Chair Ratto asked if it is appropriate to have a subcommittee for a specific item with less then a quorum and the subcommittee business is not discussed among the entire committee until it is agendized at a meeting for discussion. Ms. Sherman said there are ad hoc committees and standing committees. An ad hoc committee has a finite time period, is required to report to the parent committee and there is no meeting schedule. If these requirements are not met it would be considered a standing committee and would have to follow the Brown Act.

Chair Ratto asked if a member sees an article and wants to forward to the committee what should they do. Ms. Sherman said information should be forwarded to staff for distribution.

## **PRESENTATION: SAMTRANS SERVICE PLAN (PLAN) UPDATE**

Manager of Planning and Research Marisa Espinosa reported:

- The Plan is an analysis of the bus network designed to identify strengths, consider future transit services and analyze the efficient and effective use of SamTrans' resources. The result of the Plan will identify future key transit investments and direct the delivery of the long-term financially sustainable SamTrans service.
- Some of the challenges facing the transit industry are inconsistent funding availability and significant service cutbacks. The industry is trying to address increased customer demand with limited resources.
- In the 1990's SamTrans was a north-south core spine on El Camino Real parallel to the Caltrain corridor. A number of express buses were operated into San Francisco. It was a coverage-based service in various communities throughout San Mateo County. There were Caltrain connections and feeder service.
- The Bus Improvement Plan (BIP) was undertaken in 1999 to restructure the SamTrans service network to better serve its customers, but the BIP faced implementation challenges.
- Coverage-based service design means equal provision of transit regardless of demand intensity, but is a less sustainable model, financially and environmentally.
- Demand-based service provides service in proportion to demand and is more financially sustainable.
- Today SamTrans has a very robust north-south core spine focusing on El Camino Real and parallel to Caltrain. There are a lot of local trips, averaging three to five miles. There are some east-west corridor connections, mostly focused on connections to Caltrain stations. There is reduced coverage-based service in low demand areas.
- Transit choice is influenced by market demand and transit supply. Market demand is influenced by creating livable cities and transit supply is influenced by fast, predictable service.
- Transit supply is under direct SamTrans control. Themes identified are service, customer focus, service markets, financial stability and integrated planning.
- The role of the guiding principles is to understand the SamTrans perspective. It helps to identify perceptions of SamTrans' strengths, weaknesses and future goals. It also provides context for the service plan data review. It will also allow staff to refine and develop a comprehensive framework for coming up with the ultimate service alternatives at the end of the Plan.

Ms. Espinosa followed the presentation with four key questions of the CAC's overall vision for SamTrans service over the next 10 to 15 years.

### **Question 1: What is your vision for transportation in San Mateo County and what role does SamTrans play in that vision?**

Mr. Wilcox said a greater emphasis needs to be put on the public using public transportation and less use of getting into cars. He would like to see enough scheduling or availability of transportation that this could be done. There needs to be more cross Peninsula service and less north and south service.

Mr. Collette would like to see more service in Half Moon Bay and the coastside.

Mr. Loranger said living in Foster City and getting to the main corridor is a big problem. There needs to be an effective way to reach the corridor. He would like to see a light rail system along El Camino Real.

Maureen Hall would like to see more accessibility to the coast and Half Moon Bay.

Ms. Price would like to see more transportation from the east-west to get to the corridor. There needs to be more bilingual outreach.

Chair Ratto said cross county feeder service is pretty weak and not much service on the weekends.

Andy Chow said SamTrans should focus on productivity and then connectivity. There are a lot of transit options on the north/south direction with Caltrain and BART, but not for east/west connectivity.

Judy McKie said people need to use public transportation, but are hesitant to use it because they don't want to wait. There needs to be better east/west transportation to get to El Camino Real and destinations on the east/west sides.

Lisa Chow said she would like to see a reliable system and not an alternative system, but a core aspect of transportation in the county. The buses have alternative riders and it needs it to be more part of the community and everyone should want to get on the buses and use transit. She would like to see a more sophisticated bus system starting with the real time arrival system and website.

Mr. Koya said SamTrans is a very essential public transportation system. He would like it to be cheap, reliable and always readily available. SamTrans should do a meaningful survey to see what the riders needs are. The new buses are not the best and staff should have spoken to commuters before purchasing them. They are very uncomfortable and the seats are not comfortable. Mr. Koya said there needs to be transportation that is friendly, regular and one that accommodates the needs of all passengers who travel at different times of the day.

Mr. Cruz said the predictive arrival system should be at more bus stops.

**Question 2: In what areas is SamTrans currently successful or what does SamTrans do well?**

Mr. Wilcox said the north/south El Camino Real corridor is done very well. There is a very consistent flow of information going out to the public. He would like to get formal feedback from the Board of Directors on information the CAC provides them. Mr. Wilcox said the public needs to be aware of the need for a sustainable income for SamTrans.

Mr. Collette said the buses are maintained very well.

Mr. Loranger said SamTrans has a good safety record, cleanliness of the buses and on-time performance. He is looking forward to the new farebox collection system.

Ms. Hall said the SamTrans has very clean buses, good service and drivers are very knowledgeable.

Ms. Price said the cleanliness and the lack of graffiti on buses is something SamTrans should be proud of.

Ms. Curry said SamTrans buses are very clean.

Chair Ratto said SamTrans delivers a pleasant experience for riders with clean buses, good drivers and they adhere to the schedules.

Mr. Chow said SamTrans buses are clean and very well maintained. He said the front line staff of SamTrans is very good.

Ms. McKie said buses are very clean and drivers are courteous and safe.

Ms. Chow said SamTrans runs a very tight ship and overall do an excellent job.

Mr. Koya said cleanliness and maintenance is good, but there have been problems with timeliness on the express service.

Mr. Cruz said compared to other transit systems SamTrans has quality drivers and very clean of buses.

**Question 3: What are some areas for improvement?**

Ms. Espinosa said comments she has already heard include simplified fare structure, education of drivers to fare system into San Francisco, timeliness of express bus and Route 292 and sustainable funding sources.

Ms. Chow said staff should be more creative and more innovative as it relates to funding and service.

Mr. Chow said staff should look at the issue of appearance and low productivity on buses. People often see empty buses on the streets and it looks like SamTrans isn't being efficient. When it comes to increasing funding and taxes need to be raised people won't vote for the increase if they feel SamTrans is being run inefficiently.

Ms. Curry said there should be a systemwide way for commuters to provide input. There should be suggestion boxes on the buses to encourage people to provide input.

Mr. Collette suggested the phone number be put on the back of the bus for people to call in with complaints.

Ms. Price said there are bus shelters at some locations where they are kept up, some stops with just a bench and some stops where there is nothing. In the evening she has almost been passed up because there is no light or can't be seen. She encouraged SamTrans to work with the local municipalities in terms of transit-oriented developments.

**Question 4: Are there any issues that prevent SamTrans from reaching its full potential?**

Chair Ratto said funding was the unanimous answer among the CAC.

Mr. Chow said the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Transit Sustainability Report shows Caltrain productivity has increased and the cost per rider has gone down, but on the bus side ridership has gone down and cost per rider has gone up.

Ms. Curry said there is no public marketing campaign to promote riding SamTrans.

Mr. Wilcox said as CAC members we should be communicating to riders and promoting the service.

Mr. Koya said in Asia when ridership drops there are fare sales with reduced fares during midday and weekends. This encourages the public to use public transportation.

Ms. Chow commended Ms. Espinosa for coming to the CAC and asking for feedback and input.

Ms. Price commended Ms. Espinosa for being so engaging and for listening to the committee. She said there is a service gap with service workers and SamTrans should target these potential customers to get off their bikes and onto the bus.

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Ratto reported:

- Welcomed new members and acknowledged the reappointment of Mr. Loranger, Ms. Hall and himself.
- Attended a conference at Walt Disney World. They have a well run transit system with over 300 buses that links all the parks and attractions.

**SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE**

Manager of Training Jeff Johnson reported that on-time performance for April was just under the goal of 85 percent.

**CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS**

Mr. Cruz said he enjoyed his first meeting and it was a good experience.

Mr. Koya said he enjoyed his first meeting and looks forward to participating.

Ms. Chow said on-time performance for Route KX is lacking with one-hour headways.

Ms. McKie said the bus shelter for the Route 251 stop at Norfolk Avenue and Hillsdale Boulevard, heading west, has no schedule posted. She said if there is a shelter or a pole, there needs to be a schedule at the location. She asked how often the lifts and wheelchair ramps on the buses are checked. Mr. Johnson said they are checked daily.

Mr. Chow said he is glad Caltrain chose to not cut service.

Ms. Curry said she primarily rides Routes 390 and KX and the drivers need to be trained better on how to brake because there is a lack of skill for a number of them. Mr. Johnson said these routes are operated by a contractor and if a customer calls the 800-number to lodge a complaint, corrective action will be taken with the operator.

Ms. Curry said she gets off at the Palo Alto Caltrain Station and the operator of bus 121 lays over in the bus stop causing problems for buses servicing the station.

Ms. Price said she would like more clarity on who owes what to SamTrans and the funding issues. She said there needs to be a stronger effort from the very top to get a handle on fiscal accountability.

Mr. Collette said when members are at various club and committee meetings they should discuss and push transit and SamTrans.

Ms. Chow said the schedule was changed on April 8 and there were no new schedules on the bus and the old schedule was still on the bus.

Ms. Curry said the new schedules were not noticed and there should be a notice on the bus to let the passengers know there is going to be schedule changes. She said Routes 391, KX and 295 all arrive within five minutes of each other now with the new schedule

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

### **a. SamTrans Board - Peter Ratto**

- Art Lloyd was sworn in as the Transit Expert.
- Approved the appointment of the CAC members.
- Overall ridership continues to increase.

### **b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee - Tom Collette**

- Next meeting is May 19.

### **c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee - Peter Loranger**

- Next meeting is May 24 at 10 a.m..

### **d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board - David Wilcox – no report**

### **e. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board Citizens Advisory Committee - Andy Chow – no report**

### **f. Senior Mobility Action Plan - vacant.**

## **NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be held June 1, 2011, at 6:30 p.m., 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, San Carlos, California 94070.

**ADJOURNED:** 8:52 p.m.