

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

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING – SEPTEMBER 5, 2012**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: K. Adler, A. Chow, D. Cruz, S. Curry, K. Gilbert, M. Hall, S. Koya, P. Loranger, T. Miller, M. Pye, P. Ratto (Chair)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: L. Chow, T. Collette, J. McKie, S. Price

SAMTRANS STAFF PRESENT: J. Averill, T. Bartholomew, E. Harris, A. Hughes, N. McKenna, C. Patton, T. Dumandan (MV Transportation)

Chair Peter Ratto called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee (Pye/Koya) approved the minutes of August 1, 2012.

PRESENTATION – UPDATE ON THE SAMTRANS SERVICE PLAN (SSP)

Project Director Aidan Hughes said:

- The San Mateo County Transit District (District) is facing an uncertain future with debt obligations, contributions to Caltrain, SamTrans ridership declining, paratransit expenses increasing and unresolved structural deficit.
- The SSP does not resolve the structural deficit, but will improve service efficiencies, increase ridership, increase revenues and hold costs at current levels.
- The vision of the SSP is to build ridership, increase revenue, expand service, evaluate new service types and other creative ways of delivering service, establish a framework for continuous expansion and improvement and provide some of the steps towards financial sustainability.
- The vision reflects the District's family of services, meets the needs of transit dependent communities, improves quality of life, begins to address east-west connectivity and actively engages cities and local and regional stakeholders.
- The service plan includes service route recommendations, balances reinvesting existing resources with proposed service improvements, aims to increase ridership and revenues, anticipates no increase in operating cost and does not address fare policy.
- Service and financial metric goals are ridership, passenger per revenue hour, cost per passenger, cost per passenger mile, cost per service hour, farebox ratio and subsidy per passenger boarding.
- Core markets are considered areas where transit is a competitive travel option, there are higher concentrations of population and/or employment, walkable communities with mixed use and located near major activity/employment centers.
- Sixty-five percent of SamTrans routes are below the system average for both financial effectiveness and productivity.

- Proposed El Camino Real improvements include building upon the weekend route consolidation pilot program of Routes 390 and 391, with 15-minute frequency between Palo Alto and Daly City, and discontinuing Route 391 San Francisco service.
- The enhanced bus network would build upon core market area transit potential with enhanced east-west connectivity to El Camino Real. The routes affected by this are Routes 120, 130, 281 and 296.
- Modifying routes will impact a number of riders. Riders on modified routes may see new or added frequency, shortened travel time and increased service reliability. Some riders will have reduced service coverage and increased bus transfers. The routes being considered for modification are Routes KX, 14, 122, 133, 140, 141, 250, 251, 260, 262, 270, 271, 292, 294 and 295.
- Current service to San Francisco is being recommended for modification because it is slow due to road conditions, long trip times, it duplicates other transit services and is a costly service to provide. Staff recommendation for the San Francisco service is to operate Routes KX and 292 during peak periods only (6 a.m.-9 a.m. and 3 p.m.-6 p.m.) and discontinue Route 391 to San Francisco. There will be no change to Route 397 late night service.
- Routes recommended for discontinuation are Routes 118, 123, 132, 280 and 359. These routes have low ridership, duplicate other SamTrans routes and there are other transit options available for passengers.
- New routes are being proposed in San Mateo, Route 252; and Redwood City, Route 275. These new routes better connect origins and destinations, provide more east-west connections to El Camino Real and provide more efficient service on productive segments.
- Two pilot demand routes are being recommended in San Carlos and Pacifica. These are being introduced to mitigate for reduced fixed-route service. Staff will monitor this pilot program's performance and possibly expand to other areas based on lessons learned.
- The SSP is a living process and staff will continually monitor and make adjustments as needed.
- Public outreach began in fall 2012 with rider forums, public meetings, presentations to city/town councils, stakeholder forums, community colleges, employees and union leadership and an upcoming public hearing at the November SamTrans Board meeting.
- Staff will present a final draft to the Board for adoption in late 2012/early 2013 with anticipated phased implementation beginning summer 2013.

Sonny Koya asked how staff will be increasing ridership. Mr. Hughes said the increased frequency on El Camino Real and core markets will be the main drivers. Mr. Koya asked if there will be any advertising. Mr. Hughes said staff has not defined the advertising outreach yet. Mr. Koya said SamTrans needs more direct marketing via newspapers, radio spots, bus sides and inside the buses to increase ridership.

Kathy Gilbert asked if the metrics are already reported to the Board. Mr. Hughes said currently they don't receive this information but staff anticipates reporting on the metrics quarterly, both in general, and on a route-by-route basis. Ms. Gilbert asked what is being proposed to Route 122. Manager of Operations Planning Eric Harris said it is just some realignment to the route.

Margaret Pye said she is very interested in seeing how ridership can be increased. She said as routes are reduced and modified staff should reach out to bike riders for them to ride their bikes part of the route and bus the other. She asked how financial effectiveness is different from financial productivity. Mr. Hughes said financial effectiveness is the farebox recovery and a passenger per revenue hour is a metric for financial productivity. Ms. Pye said with the discontinuation of Route KX she believes most people will transfer to Caltrain than Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART). She asked for more detail on the new proposed route in San Carlos. Mr. Hughes said it has always been a challenge to serve the hills of San Carlos with fixed service so the intention is to create a service that serves the hills, downtown San Carlos and the San Carlos Caltrain Station. This will be a demand response service and will take people from their origin directly to their destination. Ms. Pye said the use of tokens should be promoted more in Hispanic communities.

Kris Adler said he is glad to hear the frequency of buses along El Camino Real is being increased. He said there should be increased marketing, possibly with a wrapped bus, to promote this new service. The new recommended Route 275 on Woodside Road is a great idea and is definitely needed.

Peter Loranger asked if Route 43 was ever successful. Mr. Harris said most of the two-digit routes are serving school bell times and some are duplicate routes that can be served by another route. Mr. Loranger said there has been an aggressive marketing campaign for ridership in the past and increasing it wouldn't necessarily increase ridership.

Tryn Miller asked how Route 140 is being modified travelling from San Bruno BART. Mr. Hughes said the route is being straightened out on Sneath Lane between Cherry Avenue and San Bruno BART. Ms. Miller asked if this will increase the reliability. Mr. Hughes said yes.

Chair Ratto said he applauds staff for the two new routes and the increased service on the El Camino Real. He is a little concerned about the reduction of Route 292 for passengers in South San Francisco and Brisbane. Chair Ratto encouraged all the CAC members to attend the public meetings.

Andy Chow said he will be submitting written comments on the changes. He said he understands the elimination of Route KX to San Francisco, but thinks it should terminate at San Bruno BART instead of the airport. He said recently he took Route 292 from San Francisco and it was standing room only. He agrees with the Route 391 elimination but thinks staff should reconsider cutting the San Francisco service on Route 292. Mr. Chow said there is no link to the SSP on the SamTrans website homepage. Mr. Hughes said overall ridership on SamTrans, Caltrain and BART have increased. This is the first time SamTrans has done a comprehensive review in 10 years and there have been changes in commute patterns, jobs and travel needs. This is an opportunity to reconfigure the service to new market patterns and become more efficient to the travel demographics.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Ratto said the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) provided excellent service for the recent America's Cup in San Francisco.

SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE

Director of Bus Transportation Chester Patton reported:

- Community Relations Officer Tasha Bartholomew was introduced.
- July performance:
 - Average weekday ridership was 35,920.
 - On-time performance was 88.4 percent.
 - There were 170 complaints for the month.
 - Miles between road calls was 24,279.
 - There were seven missed schedules for the month.
- Implementation of the new Route ECR began on August 26. On-time performance for August 26 was 87 percent, September 1 was 73 percent, September 2 was 86 percent and September 3 was 84 percent. The Stanford football game on September 1 may have caused the low on-time performance.
- Follow-up on items from last month:
 - Place bench on sidewalk at El Camino Real and Oak Grove: work order has been issued, but construction is still occurring so it is blocking the site.
 - Install permanent signs at or near Aragon High School: work order has been issued and should be completed in September.
 - Decommissioned railroad tracks across Bayshore Boulevard and Geneva Avenue: Superintendent Karambir Cheema is working with the California Public Utilities Commission on official sign-off to not have to stop at this location.
 - There was an incident on July 31 along El Camino Real where a bus operator gestured to waiting passengers he passed up to take the next bus immediately following: the operator received authorization from Radio Control to pass up passengers due to the bus getting out of sequence and being very late.
 - Route 292 at Industrial the bus has to go forward in a right turn only lane: staff is working with the Division of Sustainable Streets at SFMTA. They are doing a legal review to make sure they have the authority to change the sign and hope to have it resolved soon.
 - A glass panel was missing from the shelter on Old County Road: it has been replaced.
 - How do MV operators report missing signage and like issues: they use an incident report system that goes to MV management for review and is routed to bus contracts department for further review and action.
 - Information was requested on hybrid buses: the District received a \$4.9 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration for the District's diesel hybrid electric buses. This will allow staff to upgrade the fleet with up to 25 of these new buses. Staff doesn't have an implementation plan or schedule, but will probably go before the Board in December or January for authorization to proceed with the purchase.
 - Allow for a combined Muni/SamTrans stop at Merced and Font: staff is working with Muni and have an agreement in principle, but still working on the permanent signage.
 - There was a question about the Fiscal Year 2013 Operating Budget concerning an item called "other costs" that went up a very large amount: this item had to do with the PeopleSoft upgrade.

- A comment was made about the California Avenue Caltrain Station having no ticket vending machines on both platforms: this has been passed along to Director of Rail Michelle Bouchard.
- Predictive arrival signs effective date: they are working at selective stations, Daly City Bart, Colma BART, Redwood City Caltrain Station and very soon at the top of the hill Daly City. The 511 real time system is not yet functioning, but is imminent.
- Transfer agreement between SamTrans and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) using the CAC bus pass: SamTrans and CAC passes aren't accepted by VTA as a fare credit, just as SamTrans doesn't accept VTA employee passes. Staff would discourage the idea of providing CAC members with loaded Clipper cards. It's wonderful that members want to ride other systems, but it's not appropriate for SamTrans to fund those rides. Staff is exploring with VTA a possible change in the transfer agreements for customers.

CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Ms. Miller said she was pushed off a bus this morning because a lot of people were rushing. The operators usually accommodate her to get off the bus before allowing passengers on. She likes the Route 140 and it allows her time to interact with the passengers and the drivers are friendly. She asked if there can be more occupancy on Route 140.

Mr. Loranger thanked Mr. Patton for the information concerning Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) wheelchair passage requirements that constrain bus bench placement on narrow sidewalks and asked if there were any alternatives. Mr. Patton is going to see about installing semi-seats which can be installed on poles. Mr. Loranger asked if one could be brought in for the CAC to see. Mr. Patton said yes.

Mr. Adler said he rode the Route ECR over the weekend and was very happy with it and the frequency was very good. He did notice on the southbound ride the bus seemed to be moving extraordinarily slow with not much traffic on El Camino Real. He has noticed that some of the interior ad space on the articulated buses is going unused. Mr. Adler would like to receive an update on revenue sources from advertising.

Ms. Pye said she rode Route KX on August 25 and the new Route ECR schedule was very well advertised, but what was less clear to the riders was many schedules were going to be changed. Mr. Patton asked if she had seen the *Riders Digest*. Ms. Pye said the scrolling message referred to it, but there were none in the schedule rack. She was the third bike to arrive at the Palo Alto Transit Center and Route 390 was very crowded. She wants to keep mentioning the bike issue as there is opportunity for more ridership with bike passengers. Ms. Pye said on September 15 there will be a bike safety workshop at the San Carlos Library from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Saundra Curry said she was very disappointed the same thing happened with the last changes on Route 390 and KX happened again this time. There was no notification the schedules were going to change. A flyer should be put on the schedule rack on the buses notifying passengers of upcoming timetable changes. The Routes KX and 390 are only four minutes apart coming out of the Palo Alto Caltrain Station and commuters are dumbfounded by the closeness and yet with the schedule change they are still four minutes apart. Mr. Patton said the schedule was changed for the arrival time in San Francisco for Route KX.

Ms. Curry said Route 390 departs Palo Alto at 5:46 p.m. and picks up the bulk of the passengers and now has a smaller bus. It is more crowded and is one of the more uncomfortable buses with the vinyl seats and asked why the bus type was changed. Mr. Patton asked if people were not able to get on the bus. Ms. Curry said it is definitely more crowded and people aren't standing, but it is more congested and uncomfortable. She said the Route KX has an articulated bus and is a more comfortable bus than the one being used for Route 390. Mr. Patton said staff can do a ridership study on that trip, but if there are no standees the bus being used is sufficient.

Ms. Curry asked why the bus was changed. Mr. Patton said it was probably reallocated to a different service with heavier ridership earlier in the day. He said if an articulated bus is not needed it is reallocated to a service where there are standees or passengers who are not able to board the bus. Ms. Curry said it is certainly uncomfortable when there are handicapped passengers, passengers with small children or people with carts. Mr. Patton asked what is uncomfortable about the ride. Ms. Curry said there is no space. Mr. Patton asked if she was asking for a seat to herself. Ms. Curry said it is a more uncomfortable seating bus than the larger bus. Mr. Patton asked again if there are standees. Ms. Curry said no, but she feels standing is not the only criteria for being comfortable on a bus. Mr. Patton said it is the only criteria for assigning an articulated bus and that is why staff would change a 40-foot bus to a 60-foot bus so people didn't have to stand or not be able to board the bus. He said what Ms. Curry is describing is a normal transit bus with adequate capacity without any standees, but staff will look at the ridership. Ms. Curry asked if Route KX has the larger articulated bus because it has more ridership. General Manager MV Transportation Tim Dumandon said they try to put articulated buses on Route KX during the peak periods because of the high ridership.

Chair Ratto said the bus bunching on Saturday is gone and the Route ECR seems to be running well.

Mr. Chow said the new Route ECR seems to be doing well and he is seeing the old articulated buses on the route. This is giving people a good first impression. He said the new bus stop signs now have five routes listed and this seems a bit much.

Daniel Cruz said today he was on Route 292, Bus 656 with Driver 720. He would like to commend the driver who had his air brakes lock up and the driver had to call for a backup bus and was able to have all the passengers transferred to the new bus within 20 minutes.

Ms. Gilbert said she has noticed a lot of people sitting on the sidewalk at 87th Street at Park Plaza waiting for Route 122 and she said it would be great to have some semi-seats at this location. She asked if the number of complaints reported include operators and service. Mr. Patton said yes most of the complaints are about operators. Ms. Gilbert asked if this number is broken down. Mr. Patton said he will see what the Customer Service Department has for these numbers.

Mr. Koya thanked Mr. Patton for following up on his requests from last month. He said the semi-seat is very popular in South San Francisco. There is one located at Linden and Grand avenues and he frequently sees people using it. Mr. Koya said he has heard positive comments on the new Route ECR. He asked if the news release announcements they receive via the website can be sent as a flat PDF format.

Ms. Miller left at 8:19 p.m.

LIAISON REPORTS

a. SamTrans Board - Peter Ratto

- Multimodal ridership report was given for May and June.
- Presentations were given on Paratransit and the SSP.
- Board approved an 18-month pilot program for to encourage group sales and travel.
- Two public hearings were called for at the October Board meeting for the discontinuation of the BART Plus and elimination of three community routes.

Ms. Curry left at 8:23 p.m.

b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee - Tom Collette – no report

c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee - Peter Loranger – no meeting

d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board - Andy Chow – no report

e. Senior Mobility Action Plan - vacant

Mr. Patton reminded the CAC there will be detours and rerouting for Routes KX and 292 due to the Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco on September 23 and for Route 112 due to the Fog Fest in Pacifica starting at 5 p.m. on September 28 until 6 p.m. September 30.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held October 3, 2012, at 6:30 p.m., 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, San Carlos, California 94070.

Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.