

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

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING – OCTOBER 29, 2014**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** N. Ballator, B. Gomez, K. Heatley, S. Koya, B. Lock, P. Loranger, J. Manalo, J. McKie, T. Miller, H. Plischke, M. Pye, P. Ratto (Chair)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:** K. Gilbert, C. Laughon

**SAMTRANS STAFF PRESENT:** K. Cheema, B. Emerson, M. Eshleman, A. John, N. McKenna, A. Rivas

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 OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2014**

Motion/Second: Pye/Plischke

Ayes: Ballator, Gomez, Heatley, Koya, Lock, Loranger, Manalo, McKie, Miller, Plischke, Pye, Ratto

Absent: N. Ballator, K. Gilbert, C. Laughon

**PRESENTATION: UPDATE ON SAMTRANS STRATEGIC PLAN**

Barrow Emerson, Principal Planner, presented:

- The Plan focuses on the delivery of bus service in the county. Because the District manages the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority programs, the Plan also will focus on how to improve the administration of all three business units.
- The updated five-year document sets a foundation for SamTrans policy, investment and service decisions.
- Process:
  - Staff input and feedback
  - Public review and comment
  - Board direction in March 2014
  - Focus on solving problems, defining success and building consensus

Nada Ballator arrived at 6:36 p.m.

- Vision Statement: The District is a mobility leader, providing safe transportation choices and a sustainable future that meets the needs of our customers and diverse communities.
- There are three priorities at the District: expand mobility options for our customers, promote fiscal health, and become a more effective organization.

- Priority: Become a More Effective Organization:
  - Organization: Where We've Been:
    - Pride in delivering quality transit service and a strong sense of camaraderie.
    - Implement cost-savings measures.
  - Organization: The Challenges
    - Aging workforce and average age is 50.7 with 31 percent eligible for retirement.
    - Safety and security culture.
    - Improve communication.
    - Retain institutional knowledge.
    - Standardize procedures and processes to increase efficiency.
    - Increase cross-department accountability.
  - Organization: Strategies:
    - Develop communication plan focusing on conveying organizational issues and priorities.
    - Develop department workforce change plans to retain institutional knowledge and promote employee professional development.
    - Formalize critical processes and procedures to increase efficiencies and retain institutional knowledge.
- Priority: Expand Mobility
  - Ridership: Where We've Been
    - Ridership is down 14 percent in the last five years.
    - Ridership is up 3 percent since implementation of the SamTrans Service Plan in 2013.
  - Ridership: The Challenges
    - Highest growth of very low income.
    - Senior population is up 72 percent in 20 years and their number one concern is the proximity to bus stops.
    - Youth have different travel patterns. Vehicle miles traveled is down 23 percent to 7,900 miles per year and youth in households of more than \$70,000 doubled their transit use.
  - Ridership: Strategies
    - Focus conventional fixed-route on core markets.
    - Refine service models in smaller markets.
    - Develop senior strategy.
    - Develop youth strategy.
    - Continual enhancement.
- Priority: Fiscal Health
  - Fiscal Health: Where We've Been
    - The District's deficit was reduced by over \$60 million over the past six years.
  - Fiscal Health: The Challenges
    - Funding uncertainty, benefits and pension costs.
    - Debt service is 15 percent of budget liabilities.
    - Contributions to Caltrain.

- Fiscal Health: Strategies
  - Increased efficiencies, sustainable practices.
  - Restructure outstanding debt.
  - Regular fare policy review.
  - Develop a reserve policy.
- Five goals in five years:
  - Increase fixed-route bus ridership 15 percent.
  - Increase fixed-route passenger fare revenue 20 percent.
  - Reduce annual debt service \$1.5 million.
  - Improve organizational performance.
  - Manage workforce change.
- Implementation
  - Establish a Directors Working Group responsible for development, implementation and monitoring.
  - Subcommittees formed to address goals.
  - Executive Team members involved in subcommittees.
  - Regular report to Board, Executive Team, and staff.
  - Annual report to Board sets budget priorities for next fiscal year.
- Next steps:
  - Release draft Plan today.
  - Public meetings will be held in Pacifica, Menlo Park, San Carlos, Half Moon Bay, and South San Francisco.
  - Board adoption proposed for December 3.

Judy McKie asked what is being done since it is projected a lot of people will be retiring over the next few years. Mr. Emerson said the resignations will be increasing and the younger generations will also be moving on as well. He said the first challenge is to hold on to the institutional memory.

Sonny Koya said some of the slides were not in the presentation given at the public meeting. Mr. Emerson said correct but this was the presentation given to the Board.

Mr. Koya said there is a lot of talent at the District and he hopes when these people leave staff takes advantage of their experience and knowledge. Mr. Emerson said that is one of the goals in the Plan.

Mr. Koya said Doug Kim, Director, Planning, and Mr. Emerson did an outstanding job at the outreaches.

Bill Lock said many organizations are facing aging workforces. He asked if the District goes through an annual talent search. Mr. Emerson said departments will start looking at their own organizational charts to identify staff which could be retiring in the next few years and plan for these changes and pursue retaining and passing on their institutional knowledge.

Mr. Lock asked if SamTrans has unfunded pension costs. Mr. Emerson said he doesn't have the answer.

Ms. Ballator said she is concerned about fares and would not like them raised for the low income community. Mr. Emerson acknowledged this, but noted there are financial realities.

Katie Heatley asked how this fits in with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Transit Sustainability Plan goals. Mr. Emerson said ridership growth is vital to meet those targets. He was the author for the year one scorecard. SamTrans achieved their target in one area. Mr. Emerson said meeting the metrics without significant ridership growth will be difficult as there is limited room for increased operational efficiency with the District's current operations budget.

Ms. Heatley asked how ridership and fares were analyzed in developing performance targets. Mr. Emerson said scenarios were run with different ridership growth rates and fare increase to arrive at targets.

Ms. Heatley said marketing has to be increased to help increase ridership. She said the senior population will be on a discounted fare. She would like to understand the ridership profile to increase fares.

Margaret Pye said she keeps hearing about bus riding is free in other cities. If the farebox is only providing between 15 and 20 percent and the farebox does slow boardings why should passengers put up with the slowness. She asked if the taxpayers can be asked to pay the 15 to 20 percent. Mr. Emerson said free downtown zones are very common. He said there are strategies to speed up boarding such as the Clipper Card.

Juslyn Manalo asked if there were any Strategic Plans prior to 2009. Mr. Emerson said no.

Ms. Manalo asked if there were there any milestones between 2009-2014. Mr. Emerson said it had zero performance metrics.

Ms. Manalo asked if the Daly City City Council received the presentation. Mr. Emerson said staff has not been asked to present.

Tryn Miller asked if ridership will be expanded using the mobility ambassadors. Mr. Emerson said that is the goal.

Heinz Plischke said there have been many presentations over the last year and now going through this presentation things don't seem that good. Mr. Emerson said the District is just at a balanced budget right now, but want to grow ridership.

Peter Loranger said he is very impressed with the new staff that has been coming in and not worried at all with the new staff.

Bob Gomez said his main goal is to improve service to his community of East Palo Alto. He said a lot of military people are coming back from overseas, but cost of living is very high. Mr. Gomez said there is a need for vehicles to transport in a more efficient way. He said East Palo Alto wasn't listed as a location for a presentation. Mr. Gomez said there needs to be more outreach to communities and cities.

Mr. Koya asked if the San Francisco routes are being reconsidered. Mr. Emerson said not specifically, however, if and when service increases are considered, routes that were eliminated would be reviewed.

Mr. Koya said at the South San Francisco public meeting a group of people wanted Route 133 reinstated.

Chair Ratto said SamTrans does well and has a good compensation for bus drivers, but people cannot afford to live here. Mr. Emerson said one of the issues is SamTrans bus service does not go out of the county, which requires transfers for out of county trips.

### **SAMTRANS SERVICE PLAN (SSP) SIX-MONTH PROGRESS UPDATE**

Michael Eshleman, Planner, presented:

- Six-month summary:
  - Total ridership is up 2.9 percent.
  - Average weekday ridership (AWR) is up 2.5 percent.
  - Productivity and Operating Cost per passenger are improving as the system settles in.
  - Vehicle service hours increased initially.
- On-time performance is now at 85.6 percent, above the goal of 85 percent.
- Fifteen-minute AWR trend:
  - Route 120 is up 13.6 percent.
  - Routes 130/131 are up 26.6 percent.
  - Route 281 is up 30.8 percent.
  - Route 296 is up 25.3 percent.
  - Route ECR is up 13.4 percent.
  - Systemwide average is up 3.7 percent.
- Systemwide ridership increase is driven by 15-minute service.
- Use of Day Pass has increased significantly.
- Route FLX Pacifica is very successful.

### Public Comment

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said even though SamTrans is in better shape there are new problems. Caltrain is experiencing capacity issues and SamTrans should look at how this capacity could be addressed such as providing express service on El Camino Real.

Mr. Gomez asked if there has been a loss of ridership. Mr. Eshleman said ridership has increased, but productivity has decreased.

Mr. Gomez said there are no buses during late hours. Mr. Eshleman said staff wanted to move away from late hour service to more when passengers ride. He said the changes are set and no major changes will be made in the short term.

Mr. Plischke asked if the Caltrain electrification will cause any changes. Mr. Eshleman said staff will start making any changes approximately two years ahead of the new service.

Ms. Miller asked how much the systemwide increase has been. Mr. Eshleman said just under 3 percent for the entire period.

Ms. Pye asked what runcut means. Mr. Eshleman said there is scheduling software and it cuts the runs so the operator can drive the routes.

Ms. Manalo left at 7:45 p.m.

Ms. Pye said the first southbound Route ECR from San Carlos to Palo Alto Transit Center in the morning allows 31 minutes in the schedule and it only needs 26 minutes.

Ms. Pye asked about Route FLX San Carlos. Mr. Eshleman said it is not doing well and staff is working actively with city staff to see what can be done.

Ms. Heatley asked about the prototype shuttle that operated in San Carlos a few years ago. Mr. Eshleman said it was the SCOOT and it was partially funded through Measure A and focused on schools. His understanding was it was performing well, but exceptionally expensive.

Ms. Heatley said those buying Day Passes will not be buying a monthly pass and if the price is increased that group of passengers will be lost.

Chair Ratto said SCOOT was more of an on-demand and very expensive service.

Ms. Ballator asked if there was an increase in ridership in the Route FLX San Carlos when it was extended to Redwood City. Mr. Eshleman said it is about 10 to 15 riders per day.

Ms. Ballator asked if there is any thought of extending the route more into Redwood City. Mr. Eshleman said no because there is plenty of service in Redwood City.

Mr. Lock asked if the service hours are less or more efficient. Mr. Eshleman said less.

Mr. Lock asked if ridership is up on Route 292. Mr. Eshleman said it is up 1.6 percent.

Mr. Lock said he notices the operators stop more on the northern part of Route 292. Mr. Eshleman said yes, but it may take a few service changes to correct the issue.

Mr. Lock said changes should happen quicker. Mr. Eshleman said it is dictated by work force rules.

Mr. Koya said Route 292 was not broken, changes were made and people had to sit at stops for up to 10 minutes. He said if staff is going to change schedules they should let the CAC know. Mr. Koya said six months is too long for changes to be made. Mr. Koya said there is a confusion with the Day Pass and those who use it when travelling out of San Francisco don't realize they need to pay an additional \$2.

### **DISCUSSION ON THREE-UNIT BICYCLE RACKS**

Chair Ratto said last week Assembly Bill 2707 passed and it allows for additional length on 40-foot coaches and makes a three bike rack legal. SamTrans doesn't have three bike racks. He said it is a new law and now needs to be evaluated internally.

Ms. Pye said bike racks are well used and she has seen people not allowed to board with their bike because the rack is full. She said the Marguerite Shuttle has three bike racks. Ms. Pye said this is a great way to attract more riders and allow people to bike ride their last mile.

Chair Ratto said a seat is not being lost by adding an additional bike on the rack.

Mr. Koya said it is very helpful to have additional bike space. He said he is not a big fan of people bringing their bike onto the bus.

Mr. Gomez said three bikes on a rack would be fantastic. He asked if the operators can lower the bus so it makes it easier to load and unload the bike.

### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Chair Ratto said on October 27 he attended the public workshop for the Strategic Plan in South San Francisco. He said it was very well attended and people would like to see more service and routes to El Camino Real.

### **SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE**

Karambir Cheema, Superintendent, Bus Transportation, reported:

- September performance:
  - Average weekday ridership was 46,310, up 4.3 percent.
  - On-time performance (OTP) was up 3.5 percent.
  - Complaints were low at 180.
  - Miles between road calls was 28,626.
  - Tokens were up 3.5 percent adults and 11 percent for youth.
  - There were 13 missed schedules.

Mr. Cheema said staff will be discussing the bike rack issue and once there is a decision it will be brought back to the committee.

### **CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS**

Mr. Gomez said he was at the Palo Alto Transit Center and the lights are still out around the parking area and the signs need to be replaced where the bus picks up and drops off passengers. He said on the west side of University and Woodland avenues the weeds and bushes are still there and hang over and hinder the bus operators view.

Mr. Gomez said he would like to recognize two outstanding bus operators. The first is Operator 1130 who always has a clean bus, is very courteous, and attentive to the older passengers. The second is Operator 4690 who is always extremely polite, well groomed, very professional, very helpful and answers questions very precisely.

Ms. Pye said passengers waiting to put their bikes on the bus have to wait at the opposite end of the bus stop and when it is raining and the driver brakes the water from the top of the bus splashes all over those waiting with their bikes.

Mr. Lock said the sign at Ninth and Mission streets is fixed. He asked if SamTrans has ever considered operating a bus schedule that coincides with Caltrain to pick-up those passengers that were bumped with their bike.

Mr. Koya thanked SamTrans for the good year. He said riders are very pleased and thanked SamTrans for listening to people and the outstanding service.

Ms. McKie said she still doesn't see a lot of Route ECR paper schedules on Route 292 buses and Route 292 schedules on Route ECR buses.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

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

- Proclamation designating October as "Disabilities Awareness Month."
- The same Strategic Plan presentation the CAC received tonight was given to the Board.
- Residents along Route 275 complained about a stop on their street and staff relocated the stop.
- A public hearing was held for the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board issuance of revenue bonds to purchase rail cars from MetroLink.
- Awarded a new Redi-Wheels contract to First Transit.

### **b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee – Judy McKie – no meeting**

### **c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee - Peter Loranger – unable to attend**

### **d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board – Bill Lock**

- Appointment of Brian Shaw to the CAC, representing San Francisco.
- Lots of discussion on bike capacity and the public wants 13 percent of the new trains be dedicated to bikers
- An update on electrification was given.

### **e. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board CAC - vacant**

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

## **NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be held December 3, 2014, at 6:30 p.m., 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, San Carlos, California 94070.

Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.