

JPB CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070

MINUTES JULY 15, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Bendix, G. Graham (Chair), M. Kiesling, S. Richardson,
M. Tekchandani

MEMBERS ABSENT: F. Granade, B. Jenkins, B. Wilfley

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, M. Collins (Amtrak), R. Lake

Chair Gerald Graham called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Michael Kiesling led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Graham welcomed Mona Tekchandani, the newly-appointed San Francisco CAC representative.

Nomination and Election of Vice Chair

Chair Graham asked the Committee for nominations; Paul Bendix nominated Sepi Richardson.

A motion (Bendix/Graham) to elect Sepi Richardson vice chair was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee (Richardson/Kiesling) approved the minutes of June 17, 2009.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said the JPB agencies interviewed applicants in the past for CAC vacancies. Mr. Carter asked why it was not done this year. He asked about the possible BART strike and access to Caltrain at the Millbrae Intermodal station. He has not seen the pamphlet on trains about temporary route changes to SamTrans if BART strikes. SFO is apparently running an airport employee shuttle from the Millbrae Intermodal station to the airport. He said there appears to be soap wash drips on the train windows.

Doug DeLong, Mountain View, asked if staff looked at the possibility of reducing the frequency of CAC meetings in order to save money.

John Hronowski, San Francisco, said Bombardier train 368 had four cars today and he thought all train sets have five cars. Deputy Director Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard said there was a recent cab and crash resulting in the removal of that cab. A four-car consist is operating to keep the Bombardiers in service because there are no spare Bombardier cars available. He said a recent copy of *Momentum* magazine included an article on Caltrain's bikes-on-board program. He expressed concern that he was a San Francisco County applicant and was not interviewed for the CAC vacancy.

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said a train was immobilized this morning and he did not understand why a mechanic or engineer could not repair it on the spot or have it pulled off the tracks.

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said all CAC applicants should be interviewed if they are willing to serve. She said there continues to be a problem with bicyclists being bumped in morning peak hours. Bikes-on-board is a good program but Caltrain needs to strive to have as many bike slots as needed.

Steve Pelt, Menlo Park, said last Wednesday's train problem in Redwood City caused his train to stop in Menlo Park just 50 yards outside of the station and passengers couldn't get off for one-half an hour. He said there needs to be announcements about train problems so passengers can get off the train at other stations in order to continue their journey on alternate routes. He asked why the signals only worked as far as Palo Alto and if the accident took out a control center. Ms. Bouchard said she would review the Redwood City incident report and get back to Mr. Pelt. She said the incident did not affect the signal system.

Ms. Richardson asked if the interview process for CAC vacancies was different this year. Ms. Bouchard said she will check and report back to the Committee.

Ms. Richardson asked about the possibility to meet less frequently if there is a short agenda and the bylaws permit fewer meetings. Ms. Bouchard said she will research this; but added there are pivotal issues from the JPB that need timely review by the CAC.

Chair Graham suggested cancelling the August CAC meeting.

A motion (Richardson/Bendix) to cancel the August 19, 2009 CAC meeting was approved.

Ms. Richardson asked if there are procedures to give paying passengers alternate transit choices when there is a train incident. Ms. Bouchard said it depends on the location but Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and SamTrans are requested to accept Caltrain fare media. Caltrain relies on each bus company, especially if involved with intermodal travel, to have route information. She said there is a large conductor base and it is difficult to have all schooled on all routes that connect to Caltrain stations; but there is a handshake agreement between sister agencies to share fare media. Ms. Bouchard said there is debriefing after every single incident. A second track was opened quickly after the Redwood City incident but with five trains in the peak period in both directions there must be single tracking and time is involved in starting and stopping patterns. Communication devices were deployed to conductors last week to help with communications in trains ahead and behind an incident.

Chairperson's Report

Chair Graham thanked past CAC member John Hronowski for his work and extensive service to the CAC from 1995 to 2009 and presented him with a certificate of appreciation.

Staff Report

Ms. Bouchard reported:

1. Discussed impacts of the FY 2010 operating budget adopted at the July 2 JPB meeting and mitigation to close a \$10 million budget gap.
 - Approved a 90 train schedule, which eliminates eight midday trains between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., so trains will operate hourly. The timetable is effective August 31.
 - On August 31, parking fees will increase from \$2 a day to \$3 a day; and from \$20 a month to \$30 a month.
 - The price of a Go Pass will increase from \$112.75 per person to \$140 beginning August 1.
 - Beginning August 8, the ticket office at the 4th and King Caltrain station will be closed on weekends and weekday hours will be reduced. Caltrain ambassadors will be available on August 8 to assist passengers with information on purchase options.
 - A mid-year assessment will be presented of board recommended changes to balance the budget.
 - The JPB adopted the FY 2010 capital budget at its July 2 meeting. Staff will present details of the budget at the September CAC meeting.
2. Performance Statistics:
 - June 2009 on-time performance was 94 percent compared to 87 percent in June 2008.
 - Caltrain is dealing with some mechanical and vehicle issues because the majority of equipment is reaching the end of its useful life in 2015. The current budget allocates money for preventative maintenance and staff is looking for that to boost performance to maintain on-time reliability through the life of the vehicles. The plan is to employ Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) in a new fleet after electrification of Caltrain.
 - Average weekly ridership for June 2009 is down 3 percent from June 2008. Economic issues may be affecting current ridership.
3. Special Service:
 - Amtrak staff and transit police were recognized for their efforts with the July 4 weekend events, which went off without incident.
 - There will be a Kenny Chesney concert at AT&T Park on July 18.
 - An international soccer match will be held at Stanford Stadium on July 19.
 - Giants ridership has increased 25 percent per game, which will result in continued weekend service in 2010.
4. Bikes on board: Installed eight additional bike slots in 27 gallery cars, which means, of the 15 gallery car consists per day, eight have two bike cars and the remaining gallery car consist has one bike car, which will accommodate 40 bikes. Five of seven Bombardier consists were completed at the end of June.
5. Caltrain and SamTrans have contingency plans in the event of a BART strike. BART has assured staff there will be BART management presence to open gates to allow passengers access to Caltrain platforms. SamTrans ambassadors will be available at stations with alternate route information and conductors will provide announcements.

Ms. Richardson asked if there were any incentives for staff to take early retirement and how cost of living increases will be handled. Ms. Bouchard said this is being worked out and the District generally follows plans worked out by the Amtrak union. Most of Amtrak is covered under a national agreement and the District works diligently with them.

Paul Bendix asked if there were any updates on TransLink implementation. Ms. Bouchard said there is a stepped approach to implementation. An employee soft launch has been completed and the next step is to have conductor base groups use the system for live fares. She said TransLink will help out with 8-ride ticket issues and reduce validator failures. The goal is to have TransLink the primary media for multiple ride tickets.

Committee Comments

Ms. Tekchandani said she is the Associate Director of Development working in Alumni Relations for the Stanford Earth Science Department. She has extensive experience in transit bankruptcies involving United and Delta Air Lines.

Mr. Bendix said he was not affected by the July 8 train incident in Redwood City; but said the more information and appearance of information a conductor provides passengers makes all the difference in easing concerns.

Mr. Kiesling said a friend new to Caltrain travel accidentally purchased an incorrect ticket and was asked to leave the train and purchase the correct ticket. She took the two tickets to the 4th and King station ticket booth to try and combine the two tickets into one and was told she had to call customer service; he was amazed this transaction couldn't be completed by the ticket agent.

Mr. Kiesling said he would be resigning from the CAC after tonight's meeting due to meeting conflicts and attendance policy requirements.

Date, Time, and Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, September, 16, 2009, 6 p.m., City of Palo Alto, Council Conference Room, 1st Floor, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto CA 94301.

Adjournment at 7:08 p.m.