

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

MINUTES – AUGUST 20, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Bendix, G. Graham, F. Granade, J. Hronowski, B. Jenkins, S. Richardson

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Kiesling, J. Shukis, B. Wilfley

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, A. Chan, D. Esse, R. Lake, T. McIntyre

Chair Bruce Jenkins called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. and John Hronowski led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Jenkins said on page five, “Caltrain is operating with fewer consists,” should read, “Caltrain is operating with 20 consists, some of which are shorter than they typically are.” The minutes of the June 18, 2008 meeting were approved by the Committee with this correction.

Chairperson’s Report

Chair Jenkins said he attended a meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee that was considering a quiet car because of telephone chatter. This was tabled to their next meeting. The Altamont Commuter Express and the Capital Corridor have a quiet car. Chair Jenkins said he was recently bothered by telephone chatter even after moving two to three rows away. Deputy Director Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard said there have been requests for a quiet car but this essentially restricts one-fifth of the train to a certain group. The Caltrain public information office carried out a fairly successful consideration campaign in the past and conductors made announcements to please keep voices down while using cell phones. She said staff may look again at the campaign but it is really difficult to enforce an issue legislating a private car when trains are now so crowded.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said Caltrain is more popular than ever and bicyclists are being bumped. Caltrain needs to address capacity issues and can’t afford to wait seven to eight years for electrification or people will be leaving the system. He said he has requested for two years that Caltrain address a dedicated permanent funding source. He said VTA has no problem putting sales tax dollars down the black hole money pit for a BART connection to San Jose and they are not addressing residents of Santa Clara county.

Presentation – Update on Proposed Caltrain Fare Increase

Operations Financial Analyst Don Esse presented information on the proposed fare changes being presented at the public meetings and Caltrain Board meeting. He described why specific changes were made and explained the public outreach process.

- a. The proposed fare changes involve the addition of an 8-ride ticket and/or a 25 cent base increase and a 25 cent base and zone increase.
- b. The 25 cent base and zone increase is the maximum increase that can be approved by the board because this is amount that has been presented for the public hearing.

- c. The last fare increase was in April 2007.
- d. Twenty-five cents is a 5.3 percent fare increase, which is 3 percent on an annualized basis since April 2007 and less than the rate of inflation for that time period. A 5.3 percent fare increase would increase revenue approximately \$950,000 in 2009 assuming a January 1, 2009 effective date.
- e. A 25 cent base and zone increase would be a 12.8 percent increase or equivalent to an annualized basis of 7.3 percent since April 2007. The larger proposed base/zone increase would generate approximately \$2 million in revenue, which compares to the current annual farebox of approximately \$40 million.
- f. In April 2007 diesel fuel cost \$2.30 per gallon. Diesel fuel last week was \$3.30 per gallon and has been as high as \$4.25 per gallon in the last year.
- g. Caltrain consumes approximately 4,450,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year. Each 10 cent increase in fuel cost increases Caltrain's cost by about \$480,000 including associated fuel and other taxes.
- h. The 8-ride ticket would receive the same 15 percent discount as the current 10-ride ticket and monthly parking passes would be available if a passenger purchases two 8-ride tickets.
- i. Twenty-five cent increments simplify the fare process and counting coins and minimize the number of coins in ticket vending machines.

Sepi Richardson asked how much demand is there for an 8-ride ticket. Mr. Esse said staff does not have those numbers. Ms Bouchard said the 8-ride ticket is meant to be a substitute for the 10-ride ticket and the best ticket design that will allow Caltrain to convert the validators, which are the machines that stamp and cut, to just perform a date stamp. She said the results of two focus groups of 10-ride users and operational tests indicated the demand for an 8-ride ticket will be equivalent to the 10-ride ticket because they are priced similarly with the same benefits.

Ms. Richardson asked what the validator failure rate is now. Ms. Bouchard said it is not a big number and approximately 95 percent available. She said she would send Ms. Richardson the exact rate.

Francois Granade asked if Caltrain was keeping the same validators. Ms. Bouchard said the intent is to remove the cutter.

- j. There will be language changes to the codified tariff including a common category called eligible discount that will include most seniors, and Medicare and disabled passengers. Language will include the TransLink card.
- k. Three public meetings are scheduled next week, which are not required but an effort to do outreach in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties on the proposed fare increase.

Ms. Richardson asked if outreach details were posted on the Caltrain Web site. Ms. Bouchard said all details are posted on the Caltrain Web site and also detailed in a press release.

Mr. Esse said comments can be emailed to www.changes@caltrain.com. Ten responses have been received to-date. Legal public notices have been printed in the San Francisco Chronicle, and San Jose Mercury News on August 20 and 26 and in the El Mensajero on August 22 and 29. A public hearing will take place at 11 a.m. at September 4 Joint Powers Board meeting.

Ms. Richardson asked if legal notices were required. Mr. Esse said yes and the ~~press releases~~ ads in the San Francisco Chronicle and San Jose Mercury News met the regulatory requirements.

Ms. Richardson asked if the Caltrain budget approved in June included the rates. Ms. Bouchard said the operating budget included a million dollars in revenue to account for additional revenue from a fare increase.

Mr. Esse said the approved FY 2009 operating budget assumed a fuel cost of \$3 per gallon and fuel is currently priced higher.

Ms. Bouchard said although fare revenue is up if fuel prices remain at \$4 per gallon, Caltrain is looking at a potential \$4 million hole to plug with enhanced revenues.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said he is not a fan of a fare increase and hoped Caltrain could lock in a low fuel cost for a long period of time. He asked if it was possible to create a 10-ride ticket in two parts so it could be addressed in the validator instead of creating a whole new fare media. He hopes Caltrain will consider station to station or point to point pricing in the future as it would be a fairer system for people traveling shorter distances.

Presentation – Update on San Mateo County Transportation Authority’s (TA) Measure A Strategic Plan

Manager of Special Projects Todd McIntyre discussed the TA, Measure A, the development of the TA Strategic Plan (Plan) and feedback on items considered in the development of the Strategic Plan.

- a. The TA was created in 1988 by voter-approval of a half-cent sales tax, which was reauthorized in 2004 for an additional 25 years effective January 1, 2009.
- b. Estimated tax revenue over the period of the new Measure is \$1.5 billion.
- c. CAC feedback is requested at this meeting on three transit categories of Measure A: Caltrain, local shuttles and accessible services.

Ms. Richardson asked if local shuttles could be extended to include college students, for example, traveling from Caltrain to Skyline College. Mr. McIntyre said this type of project could be considered and may be eligible for funding as additional connectivity between major transit centers and colleges with limitations. Ms. Bouchard said there are some limitations to this type of shuttle service and SamTrans provides much of the school-based transportation.

- d. There needs to be a focus on Caltrain customer service projects including more restrooms at stations and even on rail cars, which would qualify for funding under customer service improvements.
- e. The accessible services program category has expanded to include a senior population that may qualify for some of the special needs services. Examples of projects include mobility ambassadors and a toll-free number for travel assistance.

Mr. McIntyre asked if there were additional suggestions for project consideration.

Chair Jenkins asked about another San Francisco airport shuttle. Mr. McIntyre said this type of project would qualify for funding.

Paul Bendix said there needs to be consistent functioning of electronic signage at stations. Mr. McIntyre said this would fall under information dissemination upgrades and schedule updates.

Mr. Granade asked about the relationship between shuttles and the buses provided by SamTrans. Mr. McIntyre said Measure A is a stable local source of funding to leverage other funding.

Mr. Granade said a major local problem is that there are many regional agencies to take customers from one point to the next and ultimately, in 20 years, it would be natural to have a unique ticket that could be used on buses and Caltrain. Mr. McIntyre said this is a great objective and an original intent of Measure A, and coordination and overall connectivity of the various services are criteria that the TA is reviewing.

Ms. Bouchard said staff is working on the SamTrans Strategic Plan now and integration and modal integration is very much a hot topic for the reasons Mr. Granade suggested.

Ms. Richardson said the TA would not exist without funding from Measure A. The TA was created to manage TA funds and has nothing to do with SamTrans even though the two agencies work together.

- f. The Plan's transit program category includes ferry service, which is now part of the Water Emergency Transportation Authority for transbay service and countywide evacuation in the event of a major incident.
- g. The Dumbarton Corridor is considered in the Plan's transit category and is going through early environmental review.
- h. The Plan includes a 2 percent annual allocation to BART for extension of BART into San Mateo County and to SFO.
- i. Evaluation criteria and performance measures were reviewed for projects including need, policy consistency, effectiveness and other criteria, economic development and environmental impact.

Mr. McIntyre asked members if there were other criteria relating to member discussion on coordination and system connectivity that were not funded by the original Measure A.

Ms. Richardson said there is no shuttle service from the top of the hill in Brisbane to the Caltrain station and between Caltrain and BART. She asked if there is any round trip shuttle service between Caltrain and BART during the week. Ms. Bouchard said during the week there is the Caltrain BART interface at the Millbrae intermodal station. Mr. McIntyre said there is also the SamTrans KX bus.

Mr. Richardson said there is a shuttle from Brisbane to the Bayshore station but it is service on-demand and is not regularly scheduled. She said connectivity should be directed from hill areas in the county to important transportation centers. Mr. McIntyre confirmed that connectivity to major transit centers is a key criterion to pursue and other projects to consider are airport shuttle connections and weekend shuttles.

Ms. Richardson said she is on the Alliance Board and they are working to expand shuttle service to accommodate connectivity but there is a shortage of money. She emphasized the need for Caltrain to have a dedicated funding source in order to keep the current increased passenger load due to fuel prices in the event gas prices fall and customers return to their vehicles.

Mr. McIntyre said another criterion could be reduction in vehicle miles traveled.

- j. Performance measures for capital projects include the funding plan, scope, budget, and schedule. Performance measures for service projects include matching funds, operating cost, revenue, ridership, on-time performance and customer satisfaction.. Capital projects are one-time large projects and service projects typically have ongoing expenses.

Mr. Bendix asked how research is done to determine, for example, shuttle demand and what focus group would be polled. Ms. Bouchard said it involves looking at a market before and after to determine the type of demand for certain types of service. Mr. McIntyre said appropriate demand modeling sounds like a criterion to review in terms of performance measures – has it accomplished its goals and met demand protections.

Mr. McIntyre said the TA is accepting comments on the Plan through the September period of community meetings. Comments can be emailed to tastrategicplan@smcta.com.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said grade separations in the Strategic Plan are called transit improvements and should be called highway improvements because they make it easier for cars to go faster over the tracks. He said ferry service is a waste of money and probably the most inefficient transit service. He said Caltrain should receive 2 percent annually instead of 2 percent going to BART.

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said 3 percent of Measure money goes to pedestrian and bike issues which is \$75 million over the next 25 years. She said the Caltrain Bicycle Access and Parking Plan does not identify a funding source and she would hate to see Caltrain dip into this portion of TA funding because the bicycle plan is looking for \$13 million to upgrade parking at 10 of the most popular Caltrain stations.

Presentation – Approved FY 2009 Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board Caltrain Capital Budget

Director of Capital Program Support April Chan presented the goals and budget assumptions, budget overview, capital programs/program highlights, program costs, funding sources and JPB member contributions.

- a. Goals include continued safety and accessibility improvements; investment in infrastructure; provide for resources to continue project development and continue design efforts for electrification.
- b. Two major budget categories include 50 percent for stations and intermodal access and 38.5 percent for right of way and signal and communications.
- c. Capital program/project highlights and estimated funding of \$150.8 million include the following:
 - 1. South San Francisco station - \$51 million; Santa Clara Caltrain station - \$26 million; San Jose Diridon station - \$52 million; San Mateo Bridge replacement program - \$46 million;

San Francisco county bridge replacement - \$42 million; Santa Clara county bridge replacement - \$26 million; right of way/signal/communication - \$6.5 million and rolling stock - \$1.6 million.

- d. State and regional grants provide 57.1 percent of funding sources and federal grants provide 16.4 percent.
- e. Member share local match for San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties is \$3.56 million each which will leverage about \$140 million.

Ms. Richardson said the presentation was an excellent overview of funding sources, where funding came from and what it provided.

Chair Jenkins left at 7:12 p.m.

Public comment

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said the Poplar Avenue railroad bridge in San Mateo will have a grade change. She asked about clearance and asked if roadway work below the bridges was part of the budget. Ms. Bouchard said she would get this information for Ms. Giorni from the project manager.

Ms. Giorni asked if Caltrain was looking towards electrification and electric multiple units (EMUs), why would they be looking at life expectancy of rolling stock. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain has a total of 110 cars and 29 locomotives. Seventy-three cars and 20 locomotives will be at the end of their useful life in 2014 and those are the assets that are going to be leveraged to purchase the new EMUs and will be replaced with electrified vehicles. Caltrain will be operating mixed-use electric and diesel units for a long time as the remaining locomotives, Bombardier fleet and 20 gallery cars end their useful lives by 2030.

Staff Report

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- Total ridership for July increased 20 percent. Total revenue increased 18.4 percent from July 2007. Average weekday ridership is a record above 46,000, an increase of 17.5 percent.
- Eleven Caltrain cars were removed from service due to cracked bolsters, which Caltrain believes to be a defect. Eight repaired bolsters were returned and six of the Caltrain cars with cracked bolsters have been repaired and are back in service. Eight additional bolsters were sent out for repairs and are expected back over Labor Day weekend, which means all of the gallery cars will be back in service and Caltrain will be able to expand some of the consists, that were put back to four cars, to five cars. The first of the new Bombardier cars is expected on Caltrain property within a day or so. Caltrain expects to get another new car every week for the next eight weeks until all eight cars are received. Six trailer cars will be delivered first with two cab cars to follow.

Committee Comments

None

Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 17, 2008 at 6 p.m., Santa Clara Police Station, 601 El Camino Real, Santa Clara CA 95050.

Adjournment at 7:30 p.m.