

**JPB CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Santa Clara Police Station, 601 El Camino Real, Santa Clara 95050**

**MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 17, 2008**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** P. Bendix, F. Granade, J. Hronowski, B. Jenkins, M. Kiesling,  
B. Wilfley

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** G. Graham, S. Richardson

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

Chair Bruce Jenkins called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Brian Wilfley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes – August 20, 2008**

Chair Jenkins said at the top of page three, press release should read “ads.” The minutes were approved by the Committee with this correction. Michael Kiesling asked that the following be added to his Committee Comments: *“It was awkward to have to surrender his ID at the Santa Clara police station.”*

**Chairperson’s Report**

Chair Jenkins attended a meeting of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Board today and the Caltrans Division of Rail received approval to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for 27 cars.

**Public Comment**

Yasumasa Morita, Sunnyvale, requested that Caltrain provide weekend express trains and more scheduled trains from Santa Clara to San Francisco.

Mr. Wilfley asked, without any assumptions, if the request concerned frequency of service or reduced transit time. Mr. Morita said increased frequency and reduced transit time can be a good marketing opportunity for people traveling to San Francisco from Santa Clara.

**Presentation – 2008 Amtrak Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Marketing Manager Pat Boland presented background information, methodology, key findings, factors in scores and next steps for the Caltrain survey:

- The survey was conducted in June 2008 with 2,733 eligible Caltrain passengers and a survey completion rate of 80 percent.
- The survey was self-administered in English and Spanish on 34 trains of all types with a mail-in option.
- Key Caltrain customer satisfaction 2008 findings compared to 2007:
  - a. Seventy-eight percent somewhat or very satisfied, a decrease from 81 percent; 4 percent very or somewhat dissatisfied (same in 2007).
  - b. Onboard cleanliness rating increased from 2007, likely due to expansion of services at the Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility (CEMOF).
  - c. Overall experience with the ticket agents, on a five-point scale, was 3.96, an increase from 3.93.
  - d. Overall experience at Caltrain stations 3.95, a decrease from 4.01.
  - e. Being informed of delays that exceed 10 minutes 3.51, a decrease from 3.69.

- f. Availability of printed materials 3.89, an increase from 3.88.
- g. Overall onboard experience on Caltrain 4.04, a decrease from 4.11.
- h. Overall onboard experience ratings by bike car 4.04, a decrease from 4.08 in regular cars and increase from 3.85 in bike cars.
- i. Overall rating by bike car 3.85, a decrease from 4.11.
- j. The main reasons for riding Caltrain included: 44 percent saving money, an increase from 32 percent; 38 percent avoiding traffic, a decrease from 40 percent; and 24 percent helping the environment, an increase from 20 percent.
- Factors affecting survey scores include increased ridership (up 17 percent); construction and removal of cars due to the bolster problem, which increased station dwell times. Special service events also increased ridership.
- Caltrain service next steps include repair of all cracked bolsters and return of cars to service, which will be completed in early October; arrival of eight new Bombardier cars by the end of the year; construction benefits along the railroad, for example, removal of the hold-out rule at the Burlingame station; and a predictive arrival system.

Mr. Wilfley asked what can be done about the small changes in satisfaction. Mr. Boland said factors that may have included changes in customer satisfaction include growing pains with the system; removal of cars and increased dwell times, which may have resulted in more service delay notifications; a number of fatalities; and bicyclists being bumped, especially in summer.

Deputy Director of Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard said one of the things the findings do indicate is that Caltrain has actually been focused on areas of changing satisfaction with real time efforts and work with Amtrak for emergency protocols. In the last six months Caltrain has provided a system to contact conductors onboard trains, which confirms Caltrain is looking in the right direction.

Mark Collins, Amtrak Assistant Superintendent Commuter Operations, said Caltrain is refining the Nextel service, which allows contact with each individual conductor to send messages in order to update customers with real time information from dispatch.

Mr. Boland said on time performance is 93 percent, a decrease from 95 percent in 2007. This could affect customer satisfaction.

Paul Bendix said there may be an increase in ridership due to environmental concerns and this could be turned into a marketing strategy. Mr. Boland said, helping the environment as a reason for riding Caltrain, jumped from 20 percent in 2007 to 24 percent in 2008. Caltrain has placed ads about being green.

Francois Granade said notification of train delays will be a positive outcome for customers. He asked if there were plans to contact customers at stations. Mr. Boland said visual message boards will be added at more stations. Ms. Bouchard said the existing system sends manual messages through message signs. She said, depending on the station, there are public announcements.

Mr. Boland said real time notification is not currently sent to Blackberry phones but may be included in the future.

Ms. Bouchard said if there is a train delay of more than 10 minutes, a clerk at dispatch enters train delay data including train number, direction and delay time. Some vintage station systems require a higher level of maintenance and diligence. Caltrain is base lining infrastructure needs and functionality to communicate with passengers as part of the state-of-good-repair standard. Most stations have visual communications and public announcements to communicate train delays.

### **Staff Report**

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- The final eight repaired bolsters are expected to be returned the first week of October for reinstallation, which is to be completed by heavy maintenance operator Beach Grove and Amtrak. The remaining five cars are estimated to be back in service at the end of the first or second week of October. This will dovetail with the arrival of the Bombardier consists; two were received in August and a third car arrived last weekend. One car is scheduled to arrive every six days until all eight of the Bombardier cars are delivered. The testing and acceptance process is going exceptionally well. Generally when a car arrives on a Saturday, it is put into service the following Monday. In addition to static testing the cars are run up and down the line for movement testing. It is anticipated that all new Bombardier cars will be in service by the end of October. Caltrain will be able to operate with five Bombardier consists in the fleet and will be able to outfit all of the existing four car consists up to five cars. This means Caltrain will not be experiencing the kind of crush problems that happen when there is a need to substitute a four car consist for a five car consist. Additional cars will allow more spare trains at either end of the Caltrain line, which will help when contingencies happen.
- Average weekday ridership (AWR) increased 13.6 percent compared to August 2007. AWR for August 2008 was in excess of 44,000 and has been sustaining well above the 40,000 mark throughout the summer. The winter season typically results in ridership decreases of about 16 percent from high season. Year-to-date AWR increased 15.5 percent from August 2007. Fare revenue increased 9.3 percent from August 2007. Year-to-date fare revenue increased 13.8 percent from 2007.
- At its September meeting, the Joint Powers Board held a public hearing for a 25-cent base or 25-cent zone fare increase effective January 1, 2009. A 25-cent fare increase would generate approximately \$1 million in FY09 and a 25-cent zone fare increase would generate approximately \$2 million additional revenue in FY09. Staff has recommended the JPB authorize, at its October 2 meeting, a 25-cent base increase effective January 1, 2009.

Mr. Boland asked is there was anything on the horizon for weekend express service. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain has a very aggressive construction schedule. In order to bring electrification to fruition with all of the bridge change outs, all of the continued station improvements at South San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Jose Diridon stations, Caltrain needs to retain the areas in the schedules where it can accommodate single tracking and operations to make sure the railroad remains in a state of good repair and can aggressively pursue the construction programs, which will benefit all riders. If Caltrain were to begin weekend express service that would really prevent the agency from doing the construction it needs to complete.

Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain is looking into implementing a plan for evenings and weekends so it can shift where trains move so Caltrain can accommodate the projects that it cannot currently accommodate because, otherwise, operations would be impacted in an adverse manner.

### Public Comment

Mr. Yasumasa Morita asked if extra trains could be run during construction work. Ms. Bouchard said when special service for the Giant's is scheduled both on the weekends and weekdays, staff meets with the construction department and asks which construction project it wants to accommodate, and this is scheduled around the Giant's game. Ms. Bouchard said if there are other things going on, the construction department does not construct during those days when the Giants are in town.

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said, regarding electrification, Santa Clara County's Measure B is threatening because it would take away the VTA share for electrification and could potentially push the project back 10-20 years. He said VTA has not come up with their complete share and said they need to wait until the November elections are complete.

Mr. Chow commented on the Metrolink accident in southern California and asked what Caltrain was doing in terms of improving safety in addition to what they have been doing. He asked what Caltrain was planning with the new proposal for positive train control. Ms. Bouchard said the railroad community deeply feels the pain of the individuals and community due to the horrific Metrolink accident. She said as a result of this accident, there is a rush from all political arenas to implement positive train control. Implementation of positive train control has been a major element of Caltrain's Project 2025 Project and 2015 Systems Improvement Plan for three years. Caltrain is looking at the Communication Based Overlay Signal System (CBOSS) system, which implements roadway worker protections to include positive train stopping and automatically enforces civil train speeds if there is a slow order. Ms. Bouchard said this is one major reason why the 2015 program is so important for Caltrain to pursue because there is a huge added safety benefit and cab signal overall has positive operating benefits including reducing headways, which is an operating benefit. Rail Transformation Chief Bob Doty went to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to speak about implementing European style equipment with crash energy management vs. heavy steel compliant equipment. The FRA said Caltrain must implement two things: limit freight, which Caltrain does and has the ability to do now with a far greater degree than Metrolink and Caltrain must implement a safety system that includes positive train stop and civil speed control. Caltrain is well-placed because it is far along in the development of this product and if the Feds did put money toward the program, Caltrain is already in a position to get funding.

### Committee Comments

Mike Kiesling thanked the Santa Clara police department for providing the venue for the CAC meeting.

John Hronowski took Baby Bullet train 368 to Redwood City and the locomotive seemed to have more exhaust than normal.

Mr. Wilfley said he drove from work, which is a trip of 16.5 miles, and left with a 40 minute headway. The first eight miles were normal and the remaining trip took 30 minutes.

### Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 15, 2008 at 6 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 1250 San Carlos Ave., San Carlos CA 94070, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Boccaccio Auditorium. 94070.

### Adjournment at 6:56 p.m.