

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB)
San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building
Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070
Minutes of January 15, 2025

Members Present: D. Albohm, A. Brandt (Chair), R. Kutler, P. Leung (Vice Chair),
K. Linqvist, R. Sarathy, P. Wickman (Alternate) (arrived at 5:43 pm)

Members Absent: L. Acosta, A. Kulkarni (Alternate), A. Lohe, M. Pagee (Alternate)

Staff Present: J. Brook, J. Hogan, J. Jest, M. Meader, S. Sargent, L. Zhang

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Adrian Brandt called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm and requested that Member Kutler lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

CAC Secretary Jean Brook called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

3. Consideration of Requests, if any, of Committee Members to Participate Remotely Due to Emergency Circumstances

There were none.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2024

Motion/Second: Leung/Linqvist

Ayes: Albohm, Brandt, Kutler, Leung, Linqvist, Sarathy

Absent: Acosta, Kulkarni, Lohe, Pagee, Wickman

5. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments.

6. Chairperson's Report

Chair Brandt reported on the following:

- Increase the list of items members want to agendize for staff presentations or discussion such as onboard security
- Brown Act requirements for remote participation
- Does not want to see the trains slowed down for the convenience of automobile traffic

Public Comment:

Jeff Carter commented that Train 148 was late and the message board in Car 3232 of Train 102 indicated "final stop Diridon," while other monitors were not working.

7. Strategic Financial Plan

Li Zhang, Chief, Rail Commercial and Business, provided the initial part of the presentation, which included the following:

- Committed to maintaining the adopted fiscal year (FY) 2025 expense level of \$238 million
- Received the highest level of LCFS (Low Carbon Fuel Standards) credit

Ms. Zhang introduced Alex Burnett, Bell Burnett & Associates who provided context on the Strategic Financial Plan (SFP):

- Ongoing need for additional funding
- Ridership assumptions from October 2024: ridership increased almost 40 percent since electrification, especially on weekends and off-peak
- Achieving pre-pandemic ridership by FY34
- Growth assumptions – 2025 reflects actual growth. A bump is assumed by December 2026.
- Service assumptions – increase trains per day from 104 to 116 in FY29

Key assumptions to offset deficit – no assumptions on fare policy or architecture; just shows target in aggregate. Assuming revenues from LCFS

- Energy Procurement Strategy (EPS) – purchasing 100 percent renewable energy; Caltrain has sought the best energy content from PG&E (Pacific Gas and Electric)
- Regenerative braking has reduced energy consumption
- Outlined reasons for projected deficit for December 2024 compared to January 2024
- Measure RR revenues account for 50 to 60 percent of total revenues – 25 percent structure deficit
- Ridership sensitivity – growth at 15 percent per year for balance of forecast, no annual deficit by FY34
- Explored additional operating cost reductions such as service and staff cuts were not feasible strategies

Public Comment:

Jeff Carter commented on Go Pass, frequent off-peak and weekend service, revenue through regeneration, and distance-based fares.

Doug DeLong commented on ridership, fares, regional measure, and increased service frequency.

Aleta Dupree commented on battery storage and fare increases.

The Committee had a discussion and staff provided further clarification in response to the Committee comments and questions, which included the following:

- Go Pass will have different options to get the right balance of riders
- Concerns with potential deferral of staff positions to address deficit
- Need for increased ad saturation to reach tourists and coordinate with local events – working with the City of San Francisco

- European rail systems have EMUs (electric multiple units) in shorter lengths and the trains are coupled together for peak runs
- Distance-based fares, Stadler maintenance contract and in-house maintenance, insurance premiums
- Reducing high fixed costs, particularly TASI (TransitAmerica Services, Inc.) contract
- Monthly passes that are 30-days versus a calendar month

8. Safety Quarterly Update

Mike Meader, Chief Safety Officer, provided the presentation, which included the following:

- Safety strategy and safety leader recognitions
- Top crossings with vehicle incursion problems. At the Broadway crossing, 41 vehicles stuck on tracks
- Geofence set up - staff receives an alert if vehicle is in path for more than two seconds
- Grade crossing enhancements – implementing low-tech enhancements
- Technology options, closed circuit television (CCTV), request for information (RFI) for detection/deterrent/Artificial intelligence (AI) technology; Global Positioning System (GPS) partnerships
- Suicide prevention/trespassers work plan including manufacturing signs advertising 988 hotline
- Tree management policy
- Electrified service safety
- Community partnering/outreach – gathering feedback from residents of risks
- Revision of enforcement policy to ban aggressive riders
- Transit police calls

Public Comment:

Jeff Carter commented on suicide prevention, track incursions, lighting, and tree maintenance.

Doug DeLong commented on RailSentry, concern with being trapped on the tracks, and equipment mishaps.

Aleta Dupree commented on number of vehicles going onto the tracks

The Committee had a discussion and staff provided further clarification in response to the Committee comments and questions, which included the following:

- Track incursions; bike thefts; onboard security; suicide prevention and reporting
- Enforcement of code of conduct for riders and staff training to address incidents
- Methods of alerting drivers at grade crossings
- Live CCTV security feed of bike cars in upper levels
- New sign prototype for suicide prevention
- Unique code to text for assistance from a conductor, police, or dispatch
- Enforce policy to address chronic problem riders
- Suicide prevention – unintentional deaths are extremely rare; need an indeterminate category because current statistics are misleading to the public

9. Customer Satisfaction Survey

Julian Jest, Manager, Market Research and Development, provided the presentation, which included the following:

- Reviewed key findings including train delays communication at stations
- Last survey conducted using the diesel fleet with most riders providing a satisfied rating and majority using Clipper
- New riders are largest customer segment; ride five-plus times per week
- Improvements to station cleanliness and safety to improve customer perception
- Conductors received high ratings for helpfulness on train and in the station
- Concerns about timely receipt of delay information and clarity of posted signage
- Addressing station concerns, wayfinding, boarding, automated alerts, ticket machine instructions
- Recommendations for improvement include vendor partnerships, predictive arrival/departure system
- Upward trends for cleanliness, frequency of conductor announcements reassure customers, sense of safety on train
- Concern about up-to-date information about train delays, availability of printed materials
- Electric trains address many of the concerns from the survey
- Onboard elements including improved wayfinding, digital displays, printed timetables easily accessible
- Diesel to electric train experience comparison – explore different fare structures since five-day commuter is no longer primary customer
- Implement customer relationship management system to improve customer self-help options

The Committee had a discussion and Lisa Peabody, Director, Customer Experience, provided further clarification in response to the Committee comments and questions, which included the following:

- Promote Caltrain as a social meeting place
- CRM (customer relationship management) system implementation to provide an easier way to provide feedback to improve response time
- Customer feedback form available in the mobile app
- Shorter trains feel safer at night, more conductor presence

Public Comment:

Jeff Carter commented on VMS (variable message sign) displays and printed material, monthly pass for occasional riders.

10. Staff Report

John Hogan, Chief Operating Officer, Rail, Rail Operations and Maintenance, provided the report that included the following:

- On-time performance; vehicles on tracks; vehicle strikes

- Train delays – in process to ensure train runs efficiently
- Ran holiday train, Billie Eilish train; looking at innovative ideas such as renting the train out, partnering with San Jose Sharks

The Committee had a discussion and staff provided further clarification in response to the Committee comments and questions, which included the following:

- Loading patterns to determine how to adjust the schedule to avoid delays
- Partnering with Ticketmaster; increase use of digital displays
- Extending monthly parking pass to the 5th of the month
- Caltrain app should point riders to the Clipper app
- Caltrain table at San Jose Sharks games
- Decals for vending machines
- Increased fare checks at gate and onboard
- RailSentry
- PTC (positive train control) fencing impact on delays
- Door closing announcements and customer complaints about loudness
- Flat spot issues
- Repair of damaged EMU cars

Public Comment:

Jeff Carter commented on the grace period for monthly passes and the new schedule.

9. Committee Comments

Chair Brandt asked the Committee members to email him with suggestions for staff presentations.

10. Date, Time, and Location of Next Regular Meeting

February 19, 2025, at 5:40 pm, via Zoom teleconference or at the Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, CA.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.