

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

**MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2009**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** P. Bendix, G. Graham (Chair), F. Granade, J. Hronowski, B. Jenkins, S. Richardson, M. Tekchandani, C. Tucker, B. Wilfley

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, R. Lake

Chair Gerald Graham called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Brian Wilfley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Committee (Hronowski/Jenkins) approved the minutes of November 18, 2009.

**Public Comment**

Doug DeLong, Mountain View, said there are a few locations along the Caltrain right of way between the second and third rail bridges in San Mateo where some old pole lines and guide wires remain. A couple of poles appear to have failed structurally and are leaning towards private garages. Mr. DeLong said there is a person operating some sort of tire recycling operation along rail property in San Francisco south of Cesar Chavez Street on the ocean side of the tracks. He is not sure this is Caltrain property but is concerned about the problems associated with a tire fire.

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said he will no longer report on the JPB CAC to the SamTrans CAC. He said many SamTrans bus passengers are unhappy about cuts to express service. Mr. Chow said he must purchase two 8-ride tickets for a parking pass and asked when Caltrain customers will be able to purchase an 8-ride ticket or monthly pass for Translink, which is more convenient because there are more Translink locations on platforms than ticket validators.

**Chairperson's Report**

- Election of 2010 Officers:  
There were no nominations from the floor. Bruce Jenkins, Vice Chair John Hronowski and Paul Bendix of the nominating committee recommended election of Mr. Hronowski for chair and Brian Wilfley for vice chair.

A motion (Tekchandani/Jenkins) to elect Mr. Hronowski as chair and Mr. Wilfley as vice chair for 2010 officers was approved.

**Presentation: Holiday Train 2009 Photos**

Public Information Specialist Tasha Bartholomew presented details and showed photographs of the Holiday Train activities.

- U.S. Marines collected 4,045 toys for the Toys for Tots program compared to 5,309 in 2008.
- Cash donations to the Salvation Army totaled \$2,304, an increase of 3 percent from 2008.
- The project takes at least six months to prepare and dismantle.

- Next year will be the 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Holiday Train.
- There have been 43,755 toys collected since initiation of the Holiday Train in 2001.

Mr. Bendix asked for a rough estimate of crowds at all stations. Rail Transportation Director Michelle Bouchard said it is difficult to quantify numbers because station sizes are different but a general figure is approximately 15,000 to 20,000 attendees at the eight stations served by the Holiday Train.

Mr. Jenkins asked why the train did not stop at the Mountain View Station. Ms. Bouchard said the train stopped there last year and there are many variables in the choice of stations including construction and availability of entertainment. Ms. Bartholomew said the stop at Mountain View was successful last year and may be scheduled for next year.

Mr. Bendix asked about types of media coverage for the event. Ms. Bartholomew said the event was well publicized and Caltrain received extensive media coverage before the event. TV channels 2 and 4 were present at several stations. Media sponsors included the *San Mateo County Times* and *Daily News*, which ran extensive ads for the event.

Ms. Bartholomew said there was a very successful snow machine attached to the train this year. Cirque du Soleil representatives provided excellent entertainment at the San Mateo Station.

Sepi Richardson said it is beautiful to watch the Holiday Train from the hills in Brisbane.

Mr. Bendix said, in addition to providing family entertainment and collecting toys, the Holiday Train interfaces with a non-commuter crowd and introduces Caltrain to a new generation. Ms. Bartholomew said a journalist asked her about the partnership with Caltrain, the U.S. Marines and Salvation Army. She said the partnership is all about community and partnering to help needy area families and children during the holiday season.

### **Staff Report**

Ms. Bouchard reported on project accomplishments during 2009, current planning efforts and recently issued contracts and ridership statistics.

- There was a seamless transition to an 8-ride ticket, which was initiated to solve problems of the 10-ride ticket. Conductors typically had to hand-validate approximately 3,500 10-ride tickets in any given month and this number has been reduced to 300 per month with 8-ride tickets.
- Caltrain is involved in the soft launch of TransLink and will be solidifying some technology issues in the next few months. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is fully backing the project and Caltrain wants to make sure that customers are given every opportunity to be able to pay their fares. Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) Program Manager David Chow will update the JPB CAC on TransLink progress in the coming year. Staff is working on policy questions concerning Andy Chow's question about ticket purchases and parking.
- Mini-high platforms, which are basically preboarding ramps for passengers needing assistance, have been installed at five additional high ridership stations including San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City and Menlo Park. These provide better customer service and are an operational measure to increase dwell time savings. New platform projects are going forward in San Jose and Santa Clara and every single new station and new platform

will be equipped with mini-high platforms, which are fully compliant with Bombardier cars. As gallery cars go out of service in the 2015 timeframe, new cars will probably have a consistent floor height with Bombardier cars and with standardization of the way customers are boarded at stations.

- Took delivery of eight additional Bombardier cars.
- One of Caltrain's major initiatives was elimination of the "hold-out" rule so approaching trains no longer had to hold out while another train was in the station. Projects were completed at the Burlingame and California Avenue stations. Improvements at the Palo Alto Station included replacement of the north and southbound platforms and fully grade separated pedestrian access across the tracks.
- Thousands of feet of fencing were installed along the Caltrain corridor to keep trespassers away from the tracks. Maintenance of the fencing is ongoing.
- The San Mateo County At-Grade Crossing Improvement Program looked at every single vehicular grade crossing in San Mateo County and identified improvements to include striping, pedestrian gates and arms and median improvements. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) approved a similar project in Santa Clara County.
- Completed a Bicycle Access and Parking Plan and continues a very productive dialogue with the bike community. Plan outcomes included increased bike capacity with more than 300 additional bike spaces and installation of signs indicating which trains have two bike cars. An outcome of the plan was the recognition that Caltrain needs a comprehensive access plan whether it's bikes, pedestrians or cars to figure how to balance the competing needs and the overall goal to get as many people to ride the train as possible within limited funding and resources. The San Francisco Bike Coalition will be handing out cookies tonight to thank Caltrain for the progress made together on increasing bike capacity.
- Contracts awarded at the December JPB meeting include South Terminal and Santa Clara station improvement projects and a rail operations control system including an integrated Predictive Arrival/Departure System. Funding of the project with Regional Measure 2 funding will provide real-time information to the 511.org Web site and interface with existing platform signs and personal digital assistants. The CAC will be updated in the new year with project details.
- Acknowledged Peninsula Rail Program Director Bob Doty's work with the Peninsula Rail Program. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding recipients will be announced soon and Caltrain stands to gain much largely due to Mr. Doty's efforts working with High Speed Rail (HSR) to forward Caltrain's goals of electrification, Positive Train Control and new terminals at the north and south ends of the Caltrain corridor.
- Acknowledged Amtrak, Caltrain staff and the CAC for their sound planning, support and solicitation for funding.
- The "mini" Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) provides the basis for Caltrain to receive funding from the MTC for some important projects. The full SRTP will provide more detailed goals and objectives of Caltrain.
- Performance information:
  - a. November ridership saw a decline of only 7.5 percent compared to a decline of 10 percent in the previous six to seven months. November is typically a busy month and marketing for the Holiday Train is priceless in boosting special event ridership.
  - b. Revenues are down but tracking on budget.
  - c. Fares were not raised but midday service was cut this year.
  - d. San Jose Sharks ridership increased from about 90 customers per game to about 270 per game.

- e. Stanford/Cal Big Game service had an additional 5,000 riders.
- f. The United Football League ridership is not meeting expectations.
- g. Saturday service was provided for the Friday after Thanksgiving with more than 2,000 riders than a typical Saturday.
- h. Sunday service will be provided on Christmas and New Year's.
- i. Four southbound special trains will be provided on New Years Eve after the San Francisco fireworks with free rides provided after 11 p.m.
- j. Extra service will be provided for the Emerald Bowl at AT&T Park on December 26.

Ms. Bouchard wished everyone a Happy Holiday season and said it was a pleasure to work with the CAC and looks forward to what can be accomplished in 2010.

### **Committee Comments**

Mr. Wilfley said Caltrain has transformed itself over the past several years and is a boringly, effective successful resource because one can go to a station and get on and off with little to think about to use it well. He is concerned that a little wedge may be formed between Caltrain and some communities, including Palo Alto, on grade crossing issues and the perception of the effects of HSR. He hopes Caltrain will be mindful to prevent a wedge from further affecting the relationship through continued public outreach, commentary on programs, publication of information, getting input from people, and by having regional and community meetings.

Cat Tucker thanked everyone for their hard work and wants to promote Caltrain in all possible ways.

Mr. Graham thanked Ms. Bouchard for her assistance, hard work and accomplishments this year. He is concerned about more trains being cancelled and lack of announcements on trains and said this may be the penalty for success. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain can always do better but said complex things fail in complex ways.

Ms. Richardson congratulated the new chair and vice chair; thanked the audience for their comments and the riders who provide input for improvements; and acknowledged Ms. Bouchard for the impressive list of Caltrain's accomplishments.

Mr. Jenkins thanked Ms. Bouchard and Assistant District Secretary Rosemary Lake and staff for a successful year. He and JPB Director Art Lloyd attended the opening of the new Alstom railcar repair shop on Mare Island in Vallejo.

Mr. Bendix thanked Ms. Bouchard and Ms. Lake for their support. He said in the era of budget cuts it was wonderful to see the 4<sup>th</sup> and King Caltrain Station men's room kept so clean. Francois Granade said Caltrain has made great progress especially with the change to the 8-ride ticket, which simplifies validation conflicts. He said many conductors still validate tickets on the train but some refuse, which creates problems of uncertainty. He said it is impressive what Caltrain has done to increase bicycle ridership. He said the comments received on the SRTP from bicyclists indicate they are not completely at peace. Mr. Granade looked at BART, San Francisco Municipal Railroad and Altamont Commuter Express SRTPs and none are following Caltrain's plan for a reduction in ridership. He will discuss this offline with Ms. Bouchard.

Chair Hronowski thanked Ms. Bouchard and Ms. Lake for their support.

Public Comment

Mr. Chow, Redwood City, said the SRTP was completed in order to be compliant with MTC and Federal government requirements and he was amazed that bicyclists take every opportunity to make public comment just to make their point of view even though it doesn't mean anything in terms of what could happen for bicycle service. He said Caltrain is required to review plans every couple of years and when things change Caltrain will change the SRTP. He said VTA is implementing a bicycle sharing program at popular Caltrain stations.

Mr. Graham thanked the committee for their work this year; thanked Ms. Richardson for taking over the vice chair position and Mr. Hronowski for being chair. He thanked Ms. Bouchard and Ms. Lake for their help and support.

**Date, Time, and Place of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, January 20, 2010, 6 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Bacciocco Auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, CA

**Adjournment at 7:07 p.m.**