

**SAN MATEO COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT
1250 SAN CARLOS AVENUE, SAN CARLOS, CALIFORNIA**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING – JUNE 3, 2009**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Baker (Vice-Chair), A. Chow, T. Collette, K. Feldstein, M. Hall, P. Hitchcock, W. Kingsford-Smith (Chair), K. Kott, P. Loranger, D. Milton, K. Nobles, S. Price, P. Ratto, D. Wilcox

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Matev

SAMTRANS STAFF PRESENT: C. Harvey, M. Knuckles, N. McKenna, C. Patton, E. Proctor

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee (Hall/Baker) approved the minutes of May 6, 2009 (Collette abstained).

SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE

Chief Operating Officer Chuck Harvey updated the CAC on the SamTrans FY2010 budget and some actions staff will be asking the Board to consider at their June meeting. The governor is continuing to take funds from many programs and services. Mr. Harvey said the State Transit Assistance (STA) account has been hit very hard and funds have been zeroed out for the next three to five years and this is going to have a huge impact on both SamTrans and Caltrain. Mr. Harvey said there are local issues which are getting worse. People are losing their jobs so ridership and revenue is dropping and the half-cent sales tax revenue is dropping because citizens in the county are not spending.

Mr. Harvey said the net result is the FY10 has a \$30 million deficit. SamTrans has some reserves and some flexibility to use one-time funds to help solve this problem. At next week's Board meeting staff will ask for a public hearing in late July or early August to consider service changes that could result in up to a 15 percent reduction in all SamTrans services and a reduction in complementary paratransit services. Mr. Harvey said because of the timeframe required to do both the environmental assessment, the federal Title VI reviews and redesign the routes and schedules these changes will occur between the third and fourth quarter of this year. The process staff will use to consider the 15 percent will be the ranking of effectiveness, but service cannot be cut or redesigned service simply based on mathematics. There are many other factors that come into play including Title VI, which is a federal requirement that mandates service or fare changes be distributed in an equal and equitable manner. Mr. Harvey said this will be a very involved process with at least four community meetings and the Board will consider a number of options and ultimately have to make some hard choices. Finally, the administrative side is going through a reorganization which will be announced over the next few weeks and there will be reductions in senior staff through administrative staff.

Chair Kingsford-Smith asked when the Board will receive the final recommendations. Mr. Harvey said any service options would be adopted at the September meeting.

Ken Feldstein asked if this is a good time to restructure the entire system. Mr. Harvey said to the extent it can be looked at it, but it is hard to do a complete comprehensive analysis. There may be a possibility of combining two routes to accomplish the same goal at a reduced cost.

Mr. Feldstein asked if the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) would force SamTrans to merge with another agency. Mr. Harvey said he can not speculate on this. Mr. Harvey said the Peninsula is unique and does not have the same density as San Francisco MTA or Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency (VTA).

John Baker asked about fares being raised and will it be put on the table again. Mr. Harvey said staff's recommendation is not to raise fares at this time, but maybe in FY11.

Kim Nobles asked how much leeway upper management has in reducing labor costs. Mr. Harvey said operators, mechanics, utility workers and storeskeepers are covered by a collective bargaining agreement which is in place and the costs paid are fixed. SamTrans is more cost efficient than any other transit agency in the area because 33 percent of the work is subcontracted.

Andy Chow said he is pleased with the work staff did on the Caltrain side to close the budget gap. He hopes on the SamTrans side the pain is minimized as much as possible and as a committee they can provide positive feedback on routes to look at. Mr. Harvey said on Caltrain staff was fortunate with lower fuel costs and able to roll forward the fuel savings into FY10. Staff will try to minimize impact on ridership and the only way to save money is to take out peak service and drivers. Mr. Harvey said staff needs to stabilize the numbers this year so not all the reserves are used and some remains for the future. He said a 10-15 percent service cut for SamTrans is a lot of service.

RANKING OF ROUTES AND RIDERSHIP

- Mr. Feldstein said Route 270 through Redwood Shores should be changed to hourly service; Cañada service should be hourly if there is no school and service on Route 262 during the day should be eliminated.
- Ms. Nobles said she was told by a driver that she can not ride the bus by her work because it is community/school service. Director of Bus Transportation Chester Patton said Ms. Nobles is allowed to ride the bus and staff will correct this issue.
- Mr. Feldstein said Routes 342, 260, 262 and 274 should all be looked at and would not affect too many people, if adjusted.
- Katherine Kott said she rides Route KX and there is an extension in the morning and afternoon which goes up Page Mill Road as well as free shuttles that run the same extension area.
- Ms. Nobles would like to see a mid-day run on Route 295 for the Cordilleras area. Mr. Harvey said if 15 percent of service is cut there will no longer be a Route 295, but this route carries 1,295 passengers a day of which 840 are school children. This is a route that is not used from end-to-end, but segments are heavily ridden.

- Mr. Harvey said Route 342 is the worst performing route in the system, on an efficiency score level, and would be the first route to go.
- Ms. Nobles asked how many government agencies direct what SamTrans does. Mr. Harvey said the two controlling entities for running fixed-route service are the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).
- Maureen Hall said Route 294 goes to Pacifica and Route 14 runs late at night with very few riders. Mr. Harvey said Routes 17 and 14 will never have the ridership of a higher density area like Daly City.
- Mr. Feldstein asked about Route 260 and the ridership through Redwood Shores. Mr. Harvey said it may not save any money reducing it to hourly. El Camino Real service is being looked at and Route KX was discussed at ending at Sequoia Station. Mr. Harvey said if connectivity is broken for passengers SamTrans may lose them. Taking Route KX service to hourly could save \$2 million. Staff's goal is save peak service, but may save money by stopping service an hour earlier.
- Mr. Baker asked if staff could address looking at demand based service by increasing in fall and reducing in spring. Mr. Harvey said it is impossible to design service by seasons.
- Pam Hitchcock said she knows the express services will be on the list and asked if Route RX not be drop-off only on the El Camino Real and be allowed to pick up passengers. There is only one Route RX in the morning and one in the afternoon and it doesn't have high ridership, but a large number of people get on at Third Avenue in San Mateo. Routes RX and KX arrive at Third Avenue at exactly the same time so service is being duplicated into San Francisco. Ms. Hitchcock said in the evening most people have gotten off the southbound Route RX by Redwood City and it doesn't make much sense if the bus is already stopping at Third Avenue to not pick up passengers. Mr. Harvey said if the buses turn into a local bus the cost structure and run has to be adjusted. He said with 15 percent cuts there will be no express buses.
- Ms. Hitchcock said the El Camino Real buses should be just called El Camino Real buses and no one has to look at a schedule. Mr. Harvey said the El Camino Real buses don't all start and end at the same location.
- Mr. Chow said the Route 391 goes to San Francisco in both directions in the peak hours and are there opportunities to shorten. Mr. Harvey said with 15 percent cut the Routes 390/391 would end at Daly City.
- Ms. Kott asked if deadheading goes into the formula. Mr. Harvey said yes it does, but it is very challenging.
- Peter Ratto said the express riders are very loyal and if the passengers are told their trip will be slowed down as a local or their service may be cut they would be receptive to a local on the El Camino Real.
- David Milton asked how far can staff go between zero to 15 percent before express service is cut. Mr. Harvey said the Owl Service would be taken out because it has the least amount of riders and it is expensive to run, Route 342 is the most inefficient route in the system and soon after are the express routes.
- Mr. Milton asked about another fare increase and the elasticity would allow the express service to continue. Mr. Harvey said staff hadn't thought about charging a premium fare. He would have to look at how much revenue would come in versus how much would be saved if the route was eliminated.
- Tom Collette said 33 percent of ridership is youth and schools operate at different days. Why can't the school districts coordinate their school calendars?

- Mr. Chow said in regards to school service is there an opportunity to subcontract this service and is there a cost savings. Mr. Harvey said a couple of the school routes are contracted, but it is challenging with the number of routes that serve schools and not sure if it would save any money.
- Chair Kingsford-Smith said Route 295 goes to Sequoia Hospital and if this service is cut will other service go to this location. Mr. Harvey said when staff starts looking at service reductions one of the things that needs to be done is mitigation strategies for the reduction or elimination of service.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Kingsford-Smith said during the summer the CAC has a bye month. The committee agreed to have a bye month in July.

Mr. Harvey said staff is looking at public meetings the third or fourth week of July and a service discussion could take place at the August CAC meeting.

SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE (CONT'D)

Public Information Specialist Mary Knuckles reported the following:

- SamTrans sponsored an Earth Day event on April 23.
- A mailer has been sent to households which includes two free ride tickets valid on any route.
- The new Art Takes a Bus Ride bus is wrapped and in service.

Mr. Patton reported:

- Ridership for April 2009 is down 0.5 percent compared to April 2008.
- On-time performance is over the goal of 85 percent at 90 percent.
- There were 10 missed schedules in April.

CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Sondra Price said along with budget cuts private companies start looking at benefits programs and how much outreach is done to private companies on flexible spending to encourage their employees to take public transportation. Ms. Knuckles said Take Ones are being issued on flexible benefit spending.

Mr. Chow said BART will have a fare increase effective July 1. The connectivity for Route KX at Belmont and Route 292 at Broadway/Burlingame needs better coordination with Caltrain.

Mr. Baker asked about the mailer and was it geographically targeted. Ms. Knuckles said she did not know.

Mr. Collette said he was at the Millbrae BART station reading the electronic schedules and there is a divider right in the middle of the screen which makes it is very difficult to read.

LIAISON REPORTS

a. SamTrans Board – Wayne Kingsford-Smith

Chair Kingsford-Smith reported on the May SamTrans Board meeting:

- Presentations were given on fixed-route service and the FY10 operating and capital budgets.

- b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee – Tom Collette** – no meeting in May.
- c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee – Peter Loranger** – no meeting.
- d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board – David Wilcox**
 - Eighteen of the 27 bike cars have been converted.
 - The public comment period was extended to two minutes on non-agendized items.
- e. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board Citizens Advisory Committee – Andy Chow**
 - A presentation was given on the FY10 operating budget.
- f. Senior Mobility Action Plan – Ken Feldstein** – no report.

Ms. Hitchcock asked if staff's service recommendations could be included with the August agenda packet.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be held August 5, 2009, at 6:30 p.m., 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, San Carlos, California 94070.

ADJOURNED: 7:55 p.m.