

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

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING – AUGUST 5, 2009**

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: T. Collette, M. Hall, P. Hitchcock

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee (Ratto/Nobles) approved the minutes of June 3, 2009.

PROPOSED SERVICE REDUCTIONS AND FARE INCREASE

Operations Financial Analyst Don Esse made the following points:

- The Board will hold a public hearing on August 12 at 2 p.m.
- Community meetings were held in South San Francisco on July 27, San Carlos on July 28, Menlo Park on July 29 and tomorrow evening in Half Moon Bay.
- SamTrans is going through this process because of a financial crisis of a \$28.4 million operating deficit for Fiscal Year 2010.
- Cost reductions include a hiring freeze that was instituted earlier this year; two executive positions were eliminated; administrative employees were furloughed four days at the end of FY09 and a fuel hedging program was implemented.
- Based on final service and fare changes the Board may adopt additional actions which may include layoffs of direct operating personnel and reductions in administrative expenses, including staffing levels.
- The proposals the Board will be looking at include reducing fixed-route bus service up to 15 percent; paratransit service reductions corresponding to fixed-route bus service; increasing the adult, youth and eligible discount base fares by 25-cents and increasing other media such as monthly passes and tokens; consider eliminating the 15 percent discount on the SamTrans pass with the purchase of a Muni sticker; increasing paratransit service fares by 75-cents and other on-demand fare media associated with paratransit and making minor changes to the Codified Tariff that would not affect the budget or service.
- The four performance measures used to calculate route efficiency score were farebox recovery ratio, net cost per passenger, passengers per revenue per hour and passengers per revenue mile. Every route is ranked by the efficiency score and staff identified the least efficient routes.

- No decisions have been made by the Board and action will likely take place at the September 9 meeting. The service changes would be effective December 2009 and February 1, 2010 for the fare increases.

Public Comment

Shirley Stewart, Menlo Park, said the senior citizens need Route 295. This is the only route that goes to the Sharon Heights area on Alameda de la Pulgas. She said frequency on this route can be less and smaller buses can be used.

Pat Penning, Menlo Park, asked for a compromise on Route 295. She said all she has heard at the community meetings is all or nothing and there has to be some way to have some service west of El Camino Real in Menlo Park. Ms. Penning said Redi-Wheels isn't the answer for all seniors.

Chuck Kinney, Menlo Park, thanked staff for a great job at the Menlo Park community meeting. He supports Route 295 as it connects people to hospitals, senior centers and shopping and it has good income for SamTrans. He said staff should consider ways to minimize the cost by the timing and possibly combining routes. Mr. Kinney said there are no alternatives for some of the routes if they are eliminated. Staff should consider more advertising and promotion of how important transit is, the use of smaller buses and increase fares.

Chris Douglas, Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, said he represents disabled adults who use Route 295. This route serves the Cordilleras institution and those who need to get to medical appointments, work and vocational training. He said eliminating this route would have a severe impact on people with disabilities and this is not something to be taken lightly. Elimination of this route could lead to a compliance problem with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) as there are no alternatives for people.

Ken Feldstein thanked the community who attended tonight. He said these are tough times and this is not the District's fault. Mr. Feldstein said Route 260 runs every 30 minutes and there are only three or four people on the bus. It is not fair to keep this route when other routes are being cut. He said Route 274 to Cañada College should run only in the morning and afternoon during the school year. The area between Hillsdale Shopping Center and the Redwood City Caltrain station is served by Routes 390, 391 and KX. Mr. Feldstein said in this area routes should end sooner, be combined and have a 15 minute interval. El Camino Real buses are full after 10 p.m. and people need the service. He said if service is cut after 10 p.m. on Sunday nights there is no transit service south of Millbrae. Mr. Feldstein asked why the District hasn't sought Regional Measure 2 (RM2) money for the owl service. He said Route 295 is critical and it could possibly be truncated at 24th and 25th avenues at the Alameda de la Pulgas area. Mr. Feldstein said Route 270 serves people who are transit dependent and Route 262 is the only route that serves Kaiser Hospital in Redwood City. He said Route 14 in Half Moon Bay has a lot of hills and possibly Routes CX and DX could be combined as one line. Mr. Feldstein said Route FX is a very well utilized route. He said there is some elasticity and people would be willing to pay 50-cents to \$1.00 more for these routes. Mr. Feldstein said possibly eliminate the earlier Route NX and run Route FX through the parking lot by Highway 92 and 101. He said if Routes PX and RX are eliminated then Route KX service should be increased and bypass the airport during peak hours and run regular service through the airport which could be truncated at Hillsdale. Mr. Feldstein

said Route KX can not go hourly now that Caltrain has reduced mid-day service. He said the cost of tokens should not be raised from \$14 to \$16, but maybe compromise at \$15.

David Milton asked what can be done to keep the express routes net revenue neutral and whether we can test fare elasticity on these routes as he believes there is elasticity.

Kim Nobles said Route 295 serves two hospitals, three mental health facilities and one mental health home and there is no alternative service. This service can not be cut. She said SamTrans should work with the mental health facilities to share the cost of the service. Ms. Nobles supports fare increases and anything else that will keep Route 295.

Peter Ratto said he favors Route 295 because it provides service where there is no other service. There are portions of the route that are not heavily patronized and there are times when they are. He said service should be provided where it is needed on the route. Mr. Ratto said Routes CX and DX are the only express alternative service the Coastsides residents have to get into San Francisco. This service needs to be preserved or combined.

Andy Chow said any service cuts beyond 7.5 percent should not be considered. He said the priority should be the lifeline service. Mr. Chow said the idea of cutting service after 10 p.m. on Routes 292, 390 and 391 offers no transportation for low income passengers. He said in the evening Routes 390 and 391 could be combined and go to Mission and Evergreen so passengers can connect to Muni. Mr. Chow is concerned about Routes 280 and 281. Currently these routes run every 30 minutes, including Saturdays, but the way the buses are scheduled the service isn't efficient. Mr. Chow said a way to optimize these routes is to combine Routes 280 and 281 and make it a longer route that runs every 30 minutes. He asked if SamTrans has boarding information for all the stops along each of the routes. Mr. Chow said some of the routes on the table have high ridership at certain times of the day at certain locations. He said consideration should be given to combining some of the express routes.

Matey Matev said Route 260 should run hourly between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. because the ridership is really low. He said Route 262 should be eliminated because of low ridership and it also duplicates Route 295 and 260. The afternoon Route 53 should be eliminated as there are no passengers and it goes only one way. Mr. Matev said Route 297 should be eliminated because it duplicates Routes 296, 280 and 281. He said Route 271 should run hourly instead of every 30 minutes because of low ridership and Route 295 provides good service to Woodside Plaza. Mr. Matev said Route 391 should run only to Mission and Evergreen and not to San Francisco because there is Muni and Caltrain. He said service on Route 17 should be eliminated on Saturdays as it duplicates Route 294, but Route 294 should run every two hours on the weekends between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Mr. Matev said Route 14 should run on the hour in one direction and 30 minutes past the hour the opposite direction. He said Routes CX and DX should be combined. Mr. Matev said Route 342 should operate hourly on weekdays only. He said Route 43 should be eliminated because the students from the school around Millbrae can take Route 342. Mr. Matev said Routes 280 and 281 should operate every 45 minutes instead of 30 minutes between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. because both routes duplicate on some part of the route and Route 296 provides service in East Palo Alto. He said Route KX should have a 45 minute frequency because of low ridership. Mr. Matev said Routes 295, 390 and 391 (except service to San Francisco) and 292 should not be reduced because they are always full and very important for the people.

John Baker said he agrees with Pam Hitchcock's recommendations on centralized consolidated express service from Belmont with a stop added at Hillsdale and Highway 101, but disagrees with any route being eliminated from the airport and forcing riders to BART. Mr. Baker agrees with a fare increase. He does not think Route 17 can be eliminated. Mr. Baker said it is absolutely too early to stop El Camino Real service at 10 p.m., especially on the weekends. He believes route consolidation is good idea. Mr. Baker said symbolism is important to the public, the operators and mechanics and if SamTrans administration is going to get any wage concessions from its employees or lay them off, it would be a bold and affirmative statement to the public if there was an equivalent one in administrative costs either through wage cuts or redundancies. Mr. Baker said having no solid number of how much needs to be cut and having the Board decide what needs to be cut leaves a bad taste in peoples mouths. He said three alternatives are too many for people.

Sondra Price said the alternates for Route 390 are BART and Caltrain, but does staff take into consideration how far the alternates are for people. She asked, with the service reductions, is staff looking at Caltrain in terms of coordinating schedules. Ms. Price asked about fuel hedging and the cost of new diesel buses.

Mr. Esse said the funding for the purchase of the buses is a capital budget item and half of the SamTrans fuel budget was hedged.

Katherine Kott said there was a lot of support for a fare increase in her neighborhood. She asked why fare and service cuts are being done first and then the additional items second. Mr. Esse said depending on the service cuts the staffing levels will be affected.

Peter Loranger said Route FX passengers are not passionate about transportation and just take it to get into San Francisco. He said most people probably don't know Route FX is on the chopping block.

David Wilcox said he is in favor of saving Route 295. He said there are a lot of undocumented Hispanics who depend on Route 295. Mr. Wilcox said everyone he has spoken to is in favor of a fare increase up to \$1.25. He asked if SamTrans can ask the county for a parcel/property tax.

Mr. Milton would like management should first try raising fares on express routes for net revenue neutrality before any express routes are eliminated.

Mr. Feldstein said fares need to be increased and if revenue is not sufficient then raise fares again in six months.

Mr. Ratto said express riders end up in the heart of San Francisco versus a Caltrain rider who gets off at 4th and King and then transfers to Muni to get to the heart of San Francisco.

Chair Kingsford-Smith supports keeping Route 295 and supports a fare increase to keep bus service.

Mr. Chow said base fares should not be raised above \$2.

Ms. Price asked if the Title VI review has been completed on the recommendations. Mr. Esse said the review has been done at the highest reduction level.

Ms. Nobles said it needs to be acknowledged that the CAC cares about SamTrans bus riders. Mr. Baker said the CAC cares about the riders and ,unlike the Board, rides the bus.

Mr. Chow would like to acknowledge all the riders who took the time to participate in the community meetings.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Kingsford-Smith had no report.

SAMTRANS STAFF UPDATE

Director of Bus Transportation Chester Patton reported the following:

- On-time performance for June 2009 is 91 percent.
- There were zero missed schedules for June, but there may have been service delays.

Marketing Specialist Mary Knuckles reported the following:

- Ridership was down 7.9 percent for June 2009 compared to June 2008.
- She has moved over to the Marketing Department and will no longer be attending the monthly CAC meeting.

CAC MEMBER COMMENTS/REQUESTS

Mr. Chow thanked staff for listening to the committee and moving the bus stop at El Camino Real and Broadway.

Mr. Baker thanked staff for all the hard work on the service adjustment issue and asked if signal prioritization is still going forward. Mr. Patton said staff is moving forward on this capital project.

Chair Kingsford-Smith asked if the bus shelter project is still going forward because none have been installed in Redwood City. Mr. Patton said yes it is.

Mr. Wilcox said there is a law that prohibits non-senior or disabled persons to sit in the front seats of a bus and would like to see young kids not sit in these seats.

Mr. Matev said he takes Route 54 home from school and there are always two buses with the first bus leaving empty because the second bus arrives five minutes later there only needs to be one bus. School gets out on Thursdays at 1:54 p.m. and the bus needs to arrive at 2:05 p.m.

LIAISON REPORTS

a. SamTrans Board – Wayne Kingsford-Smith

Chair Kingsford-Smith reported on the June and July SamTrans Board meetings:

- A public hearing was held at the July meeting for the purchase of two Redi-Wheels buses.
- Ridership was down in May for both SamTrans and Caltrain.

b. SamTrans Accessibility Advisory Committee – Tom Collette – absent.

c. Caltrain Accessibility Advisory Committee – Peter Loranger – no meeting.

- d. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board – David Wilcox**
 - A fiscal emergency was declared at the June meeting.
 - Did not attend July meeting.
- e. Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board Citizens Advisory Committee – Andy Chow**
 - Staff gave an update.
- f. Senior Mobility Action Plan – Ken Feldstein** – did not attend the meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

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

ADJOURNED: 8:35 p.m.