

**Santa Clarita Transit
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
January 5, 2012**

Meeting location: Santa Clarita City Hall, Century Room

Members Present: James Hogan, Kurt Baldwin, John Taylor,
Keith Curry, Linda Wood, Sam Sammons, Rebecca Trujillo

Others Present: Adrian Aguilar, Alfredo Torres, Denise Ware, Geoffrey West,

Approval of Minutes: John Taylor

Meeting called to order at 9:10am

General Public Comments: None

Member Comments: Kurt Baldwin informed everyone that Access Services are soliciting people to be part of there revised advisory committee and whoever is interested should submit an application and they are available online. Kurt has already submitted his application but not sure if it will fly because the selection process is a bit different now. It use to be at the board of directors would have three people there to select who will be on the advisory committee and now that process has changed to where there will be a committee or a staff. Anybody interested please submit your application. They are reducing the number of committee members and creating a smaller group, they might be doing so that they can be more effective. The reason it had got out of hand was because they had increased the number of board members and it wasn't the CAC that did that but it was the MTA that wanted it and the locals. That is now six more people on the board.

Linda Wood proceeded with comments about the whole system with the Tap cards. She said she is not into the credit stuff and does not like it and she has never been good with credit. She said she had Access but got better and now she's not happy with it. She confirmed that she was denied a reduction ticket because she had a husband and he did not have Access, she did and now she just got married and thinks it's not fair because she had nothing to do with it. It's not fair. Also DAR use to sell her tickets and now they wont sell them to her she thinks that is very prejudice of them. Everything has changed with the new "thing" she said.

Ken commented on how the Tap card program is not working and that the machines are not advanced so they are not taking them. He said he's had twenty dollars on his tap card for the last month and a half and is down to 32 rides so he said he must be getting a lot of free rides on this system and doesn't know who to go to so that these machines can be fixed because its not hurting him but its hurting us.

Adrian commented to Ken's Tap card concern by first explaining how they have seen a combination of couple of things beginning with how this system we have is brand new and in other words he said we are like the guinea pigs for it and there have been some bugs in terms in the units themselves. He said they are working with the manufactures and have a couple

of representatives and technicians from the manufacture on site today looking at the machines. The next part of it is, and they are also working with Denise on this, is a driver training issue. Access and DAR never had to deal with this before (the fair box or any type of collection type box) and therefore there is some resistance on there part. Overall there is a general lack of knowledge but they are working on addressing that issue and are also monitoring it on a daily basis. Adrian said that in all honestly they expected to see a loss in terms to revenue during the first few months knowing that in return the system would be more effective and we would be able to keep better track of data and records and so this would be part of the training process.

Adrian answered questions on how someone can keep track of how many rides are left on there card. They can go online to www.taptogo.com and enter the 16 digit card number and the card can be tracked with rides and balance remaining on the card. Or they can call Tap services and they can check that for them.

New Business: Kurt asked the members of the committee if they would be applying for the new system coming out. Rebecca replied and said yes on March 1st. Kurt then questioned her if they are going to be able to service that many number of people? Rebecca said that they have not heard back from the state and its unknown at this time because the state determines who will be approved and therefore they can not be sure who will be eligible yet. Adrian asked Rebecca to explain what this change is and if it's some sort of state funded changing to a federal funding?

Rebecca explained that it is a med-cal benefit change; it will now be a managed health care plan where each participant has to opt in or opt out of. There are also certain things and loop holes the people will have to do to participate and this will all take in effect as of March 1st 2012. Kurt asked if this will now allow the state to pull down more federal money and Rebecca said yes it will.

Adrian would now like to share some ideas and updates with everyone:

1. The new seat belt law that took effect in California on the 1st states that any child under the age of 8 or that is under 80lbs and 49 inches or taller has to be in a safely seat so we are extending this to all the DAR passengers and letting them know that they must bring a safely seat or a booster seat with them because it is our current policy that we do not provide these safely or booster seats and that we will be complying with the law in regards to this. But this is not required on the buses only on our Par Transit Vehicles.

2. New things and also a couple of changes are coming in for this year.

Our new schedules will be in effect as of next Sunday January 8th but there were not a lot of major changes that were made to the system just some minor tweaks here and there to make the schedule a little easier to navigate. The one big change we did make was to our commuter bus service where we eliminated one trip from the Antelope Valley and removed those hours over to the Century City Service. The reason for that is primarily because of the low ridership we've had on the Antelope Valley route but yet we have only standing room on our Century City routes where we've had 10-12 people standing on the bus coming home from Century City. So we relocated those hours from the Antelope Valley to Century City.

The Antelope Valley route will now only have one round trip per day. We eliminated the Antelope Valley 4:30am route but adjusted the departure times for the second trip and we did the same for the Antelope Valley afternoon route. What we did is fix the Antelope Valley route so that it fits in with the train route and riders will still have some sort of transportation and not leave people stranded.

3. The other project we have is we are working together with the LA County and Antelope Valley Transit System and looking at creating an all day service. The idea is that this service would run about every hour or so between the hours of 8am – 5pm and during the times when there isn't a lot of train service so that people will still be able to get the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita Valley, and extending to the San Fernando Valley. When this service is up and running, we will be coordinating our times with our local routes as well as our North Hollywood service to allow a pretty easy connection between these two services. This is something that is being worked on right now and were hoping to have it up and running by March 2012 but there is also a possibility it might get pushed back to the summer because they are making sure some basic issues are covered before they proceed but we are hoping for a March 2012 kickoff.

Route 795 would continue thru August 2012 and then the City would discontinue the service to avoid duplication. Those resources would be moved over to the North Hollywood route service and increase the mid day frequency.

Our North Hollywood route is our second busiest route next to our Route #799 Los Angeles route and we are averaging anywhere between 16-17 thousand riders a month and we had projected somewhere between 12-14 thousand when we originally started this service. Our busiest times that we are seeing is the mid day period so we are very anxious to figure out a way to add service there.

Kurt then had some questions and concerns that he began to discuss with Adrian about this new service. Adrian explained that Route 795 currently extends all the way to Lancaster Metrolink, Lancaster Park & ride, Palmdale Metrolink station, and then it goes to the Santa Clarita and Newhall Stations. The idea with this new service is that it would operate strictly from Palmdale to the Newhall Station then the AVTA would also do something similar on there end and readjust there routes so they can feed into that service. This will shorten the travel time between the two valleys but it will still allow people to connect. The down side is that people will have to connect but the up side is that there will be more frequency because right now we only have 3 round trips.

Kurt is curious about what this new service will look like because it's starting to look more like a fixed route. But he did say he does like the idea too because it will connect the communities.

4. Next update on the horizon is as we all mentioned at the last meeting that we are currently working on selecting a consultant to do our updates on our transit development plan. We have received 6 proposals and we are currently in the evaluation phase. We are hoping to schedule interviews in the next couple of weeks and then we plan to go to council for that selection on February 28th 2012. The idea is to have a consultant onboard by early March.2012 and then part of what they will be doing is looking at our fixed route and

commuter service and our Paratransit service as well and we will be looking for several things which are: - over all efficiency - Dispatching procedures - structure - polices

Adrian plans on having the group come out and meet with the our committee sometime in the Spring depending on what there schedule is and there availability, At this point it looks like it will be some point in either May or June 2012 and by then they will be able to provide us with an update on where they are and most importantly to get some feed back form them. Adrian will advise everyone as soon as some dates have been confirmed.

Kurt had a question about the legal definition, if any on a “Fixed Route”? Adrian mentioned that the FTA does have a formal definition of a “fixed route” and there are a number of characters that they look at when they identify a fixed route such as service frequency, number of stops that it makes, type of equipment that is used, and schedules.

Kurt asked Adrian if there is a possibility that the North Hollywood route can get into a condition where it might be defined as a “Fixed Route”.

Adrian’s response was yes, anything is possible. However, the City’s interpretation based in input from the City Attorney is that Route 757 is a commuter service based on the fact that it doesn’t make any stops between Santa Clarita & North Hollywood and that it feeds into other services and not traveling to a destination site. There are also a number of other characteristics that factor into this definition as well.

5. Another thing that is being looked at is making adjustments to the age we will consider for “seniors”. Right now what we consider to be a “senior” in the city of Santa Clarita is anyone over the age of 60. The rest of the region considers a “senior” anyone 62 and over and in the Antelope Valley it is set at 65 and over. We have been pretty set and on this and haven’t had any issues in terms of maintaining the age at 60 years and over however we are seeing that its creating some ripples throughout the region. Part of it has to do with the Tap program. We’ve had to spend some money and most importantly a lot time to maintain that 60 years and over category here in the Santa Clarita Valley. All our cards are programmed and one of the things we have here in the Santa Clarita Valley is that if you have a senior card and live here in the SCV then it’s actually programmed differently than if you lived in the LA basin. And the reason for this is because our system reads it and recognizes it as a senior card where as if you used the same card in Antelope Valley or Metro and your under 62 years of age then it will consider you just a regular adult full fare rider.

The overall goal is to be more in line with other transit providers in the region without significantly impacting our customers. One possible way of accomplishing this is to grandfather all our existing riders at age 60 and then increasing the minimum age over time

The inconsistency is causing issues for some riders who making connections to other services in the region. Some passengers may be eligible to ride free on one portion of their trip but asked to pay on the other.

Keith Curry commented on that issue by questioning why they are looking into changing the senior year but yet when there have been several requests made within last 10 years for a door to door service? Why can’t they get that type of connection looked at and said that

nobody wants to ever touch on that but now they want to increase the senior age to 62.

Keith said that is what is going to decrease the ridership and yet no one wants to touch on the door to door service that Linda Wood has really been hitting on for the last 10 years.

Adrian asked Keith if by door to door service he means “ASI transfer trip” and Keith said Yes he means a ASI transfer trip because that is what they want to get rid of, the transfer but nobody will touch on it. Keith says that this is beginning to look like its going to blow up in the next two years and were headed towards that route but feels its preventable because now getting picky and its nit picking the whole situation.

Adrian responded to Keith’s concern by saying that the point of this discussion was to make the group aware that this issue has come up multiply times but we have always dismissed it as a non-issue. We are beginning to reach a point where we will have to take a closer look at the current policy. The City intends to consider any changes from all angles and will certainly keep the group informed of any developments.

6. The final issue for discussion is that the City is considering a fare adjustment for the local and commuter services. The focus will be the cost of a monthly pass and there are no plans to make any changes to the cash fare or the DAR fares. The City is considering adjusting the cost of a local monthly pass from \$30 to \$32. Adrian explained that the cost of a monthly passes is highly discounted compared to what other transit providers are charging. A Metro costs \$80 a month.

Kurt then asked if it shows up on the fare box returns when doing the reports and that it’s really impacting the Fare Box Ratio. Is this supposed to happen?

Adrian said that what there seeing is that the fare box ratio is decreasing and it’s mainly because the increase in our costs. Operating costs are going up about 6-7% and it’s primarily because of the fuel every year.

Adrian then went back to the issue of the fare adjustment and said that the last time the City had a fare increase was 3 years ago. Prior to that there were no fare increases for about a 15 year period. Moving forward, our goal is to implements smaller increase every couple of years instead of one large increase every 10-15 years. One thing that we will not change is the Freedom4Seniors program, which allows seniors and disabled customers to ride the local fixed route service free of charge.

Since implementing the Freedom4Seniors program, we have seen 200-300% increase senior ridership

Kurt asked about how the Senior Ambassador Program was working out?

Adrian also stated how well this program is also doing. In December 2011, there was a field trip that included a group of 8 people including the ambassadors and staff. The field trip began at the senior center and kicked off with some training on how to read the bus schedules and plan a trip. After the quick training group boarded a local bus route and traveled to the

Cal Arts campus to view a student art exhibit. When they were done, they all boarded a local route and traveled back to the senior center.

Adrian was asked about the Santa Monica Beach trips, Adrian reported that the service was very popular last summer. In fact, by mid August ridership had already surpassed the previous years totals. The City is planning to operate the Beach Bus service again this coming summer and staff will begin the planning process towards the end of February 2012.

Kurt had some comments about the previous issue on the fare increases for the monthly passes that Adrian shared and had explained to everyone. Kurt is against this increase taking effect because of people's incomes not increasing or for some people that are still not working. Kurt does agree with the need for a fare increase and the need to evaluate them every few years. He says that completely makes sense, but what doesn't sense is to implement the adjustment at this point in time.

Adrian said that he understood the point that Kurt was trying to make, However, the flip side is that sales tax revenue is not increasing yet the City's operating costs are. Fortunately, the City has been able to maintain our level of service unlike a number of providers who have been forced to cut service.

In all likely hood the City will have to make some adjustment to the fare structure and right now we are considering a \$2 increase in the cost of a local monthly pass.

Access Issues: Alfredo thanked Kurt for mentioning the advisory committee for Access and again said if anyone is interested they should submit their application right away.

Alfredo then mentioned that next week, the Access Services board of directors nominating sub committee will be meeting to review applicants and make recommendations for potential committee members. The Access Board of Director will make the final selection at the January 23, 2012 board meeting. The selected committee members will be notified and there first committee meeting is scheduled for February 9th 2012 in downtown Los Angeles.

Alfredo update the group on the activation and distribution of the ASI Visa TAP cards. He has been advised that TAP Card call centers phone scripts have been changed and hopefully now it will make it easier for a customer to call in and activate their card. As a result of the change, customers won't have to deal with the confusion of activating the VISA card if they only want to activate the Tap Card as a pass.

Adrian then asked Alfredo about the balance protection program on the cards and wanted to know if when there activating there cards do they automatically get enrolled into it?

Alfredo's response was that when they call in it will automatically be done for them.

Kurt then mentioned that the number on the back of the Tap cards is not for the activation of the pass portion of it but it's for the visa/debt activation portion of the Tap card.

Keith commented and said that its now been rectified and when you do call in, you must press option #2.

Kurt had some comments and was questioning on why they are pushing for everyone to activate there tap cards.

Alfredo response was simply because they want to make sure the person that is using the card is the eligible rider and also they are trying to prevent any fraud. It will also protect the card if in case it is lost or stolen because if the card had been activated then it would be easier to disable it and transfer that old card into a new tap card.

Adrian added that the Santa Clarita Transit fleet only reads the chip from the TAP portion of the cards so any rider wanting to use their TAP card to ride free or pay their fare would have to activate the card. What is not required is that a customer register their TAP card. However, there are advantages to doing so. When a card is registered it's a lot easier to disable that card, transfer any stored value and issue a new card.

John Taylor then asked Alfredo about the transfers and if there have been a lot of ridership?

Alfredo said that the last time he took a record of them, there was not but because he thinks it was due to the holiday season.

Alfredo was again questioned on the transfers and for the accurate numbers on the transfers and so he explained right now they roughly have about 60 trips that go to the VA on a monthly basis.

Denise Ware reported that MV is currently retraining all DAR and ASI drivers on how to use the new TAP fareboxes. Denise then provided an update on the 5 new data terminals that were recently delivered to Santa Clarita. Install kits have been ordered and the units will be installed by January 23. Denise also stated that there are also four unit being sent back to the manufacture for repair and they hope to have those units back in service by the end of January.

Denise mentioned that they have a new person at the call center and her name is Samantha that is replaced Stephanie because she moved back to Florida. Samantha has already done some training in the call center and she has been riding the commuter, local and the paratransit services so she can get familiar with the services.

MV will be requiring all call takers to complete ride along to ensure they understand what our customers are experiencing. Personally I know this can be very frustrating and can't image what are riders go through.

Kurt then asked Adrian if he had the stats on the on time arrival times.

Adrian said yes and those numbers are as follows:

On Time Performances:

Nov 2011

89% System wide = 92% Access & 88% DAR

Dec 2011

89.5% System wide = 92% Access & 88% DAR

Adrian commented on those numbers by mentioning that we are a little low because historically we have been in the 92% range. And for our ridership, we have been up about 20% for our DAR service but Nov. & Dec. 2011 was flat. We did not see an increase in December compared to last year but it was probably due the holidays falling during the weekend and then having some days off during the week after the holidays and several places were closed as well including the senior center and the adult day care.

Complaints for:

Nov. 2011 = 86 System Wide

61 fixed routes (local & commuter)

11 DAR

Dec 2011= 97 System Wide

67 fixed route (local & commuter)

16 DAR

Meeting Adjourned.

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