

**MINUTES
HYBRID MEETING OF THE
GENERAL MANAGER’S ACCESS COMMITTEE (GMAC)
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL and Introduction of Members and Guests

GMAC members present:

Kiran Agarwal (left at 2:00)	Erika Bruhns, Chair (1:06)
Monique Chapman	Warren Cushman
Pamela Fadem	Shawn Fong, Vice Chair (left at 3:21)
Melissa Getz	Sandra Johnson
Daveed Mandell	Jim Robson
Tanya Washington (1:08)	Barbara Williams

GMAC members absent:

Chonita Chew (excused)

Staff:

Tammy Kylo, Administrative Coordinator
Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager
Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist
Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications
Steven Jones, External Affairs Representative
David Berman, Senior Transportation Planner
Diann Castleberry, External Affairs Representative
Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs and Community Relations
Michael Paine, Innovation and Technology Supervisor
Chris Durant, Assistant Director of Maintenance

Guests:

Director Peeples, Board of Directors
Vice President Shaw, Board of Directors
Clarence Fischer

3. ORDER OF AGENDA

The order of agenda was approved.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Fadem/Getz approved the June 13, 2023, GMAC meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 8: Bruhns, Chapman, Cushman, Fadem, Getz, Mandell, Washington, Williams
 ABSTENTIONS – 4: Agarwal, Fong, Johnson, Robson
 ABSENT – 1: Chew

5. REGULAR UPDATES

5.A. Service Planning Update

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning, reminded the group that AC Transit is still focused on service reliability and service quality. The August 6th service changes that were implemented are showing improvements in performance metrics. The next sign-up is in December and we are looking at some minor changes to routes that would improve running times and layover times to improve reliability.

Pam Fadem commented on a newspaper article about the change in Clipper Card usage and that many agencies, including AC Transit will be able to accept credit cards and debit cards on the buses. She asked how it is going to be rolled out and how will it impact people who use the senior, disabled or youth card. Robert suggested added a Clipper update be added to a future GMAC agenda.

Monique Chapman asked if AC Transit going to make changes to align with BART's new schedule with trains running every 10 minutes. Robert replied that AC Transit schedules don't necessarily match up with BARTs, and buses are frequent enough that riders shouldn't be waiting too long in between transfers from bus to BART. Although some adjustments may be needed with night and weekend service, which, can be reviewed as part of the Realign effort.

5.B. 2024 Draft Federal & State Advocacy Programs

Steven Jones, External Affairs Representative, presented the draft 2024 Federal and State Advocacy Programs. Each year the AC Transit Board of Directors adopts programs that help guide the District's advocacy work in Washington, DC and in Sacramento, including influencing legislation regulations, funding, and more. This week District staff and Board Directors began offering their initial input on next year's programs, including asking Bay Area transportation partners to provide their feedback. A new core principle section was added that calls out our commitment to accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion. Steven gave a summary of the key priorities that will be the focus on next year, including those that are of particular interest to the GMAC, and asked for the Committee's input.

Warren Cushman asked for any specifics on the funding side, especially the legislation proposals that would be brought down to the State level. Steven replied that the 2024 budget that was passed includes significant funding for transit, but it does have a number of strings attached to it. The 2026 revenue measures conversations have just begun. Warren asked about the Wiener bill. Steven replied that the bill would have raised tolls across the bay bridge by \$1.50 for the next 5 years, but the bill has been suspended. Warren also commented on the one seat ride pilot that MTC is leading, and is interested in AC Transit's participation.

Clarence Fischer (Public Comment) voiced concern about short red zones that don't allow the buses enough space to pull up to the curb, which causes difficulties for seniors and people with disabilities, like the Sherry Way/Mission Blvd stop.

Daveed Mandell stated that the district has a lot of work to do to make the network fully accessible and asked about what funding AC Transit has been seeking with regards to general accessibility funds. Beverly Greene responded that the priority right now is just general operations. That will result in the District and Paratransit operations receiving their fair share to continue to increase operations. Daveed also voiced concern that the current ADA Paratransit model is inequitable.

5.C. AC Transit Mobile Application and Website Accessibility Update

Michael Paine, Innovation and Technology Supervisor, gave an update on mobile application and website accessibility. An evaluation assessed the app against a combination of accessibility guidelines and best practices:

- Testing for mobility impaired, deaf/hearing impaired, and blind / low vision users
- Keyboard accessibility analysis (for mobility and physically challenged users) was conducted by attempting to navigate the app using both gestures and a Bluetooth keyboard
- For deaf and hard of hearing users, videos are assessed for proper captioning (when applicable)
- Screen reader testing to identify accessibility barriers that are likely to be experienced by blind users.

Accessibility review for AC Transit website:

- Added accessiBe plugin for providing user with onscreen web accessibility controls.
- Added Google Translate with 17 additional languages.
- Google Lighthouse was used to evaluate website during the beta stages.
- Recently used Lighthouse with new accessibility rating calculations:
 - Homepage is at 79%, dropped from previous tests.
 - ACT Realtime at 93%.
 - Maps & Schedules Overview at 90%. Individual Line Schedule is 85%.
- We now recommend a third-party audit and website updates to be done through an informal Request for Proposal (RFP).

Clarence Fischer (Public Comment) voiced concern that when bus stop I.D. numbers change their device still has the old number and the rider may get the wrong information. He would like to see a transition period so the rider can get information on the older number as well as the newer number. Michael replied they will review that and see what can be done.

Warren Cushman asked if AC Transit is planning on using people with lived experiences in the communities for testing and audits. Michael replied that a user group with volunteers is a great idea.

Daveed Mandell stated that he would be willing to assist in testing of screen readers or any other aspect of mobile accessibility. Daveed also commented on QR codes and descriptions (North side, Northeast side, or even mid-block) should be included with the description of the street location.

5.D. Realign Update Phase 2

David Berman, Senior Transportation Planner, and Diann Castleberry, External Affairs Representative, reported on the progress of the Realign project. Phase 2, (July-August) consisted of aligning guiding principles with community assessments. Phase 3 (September-December) is working on developing service scenarios and gathering feedback. David reviewed the elements that went into making the guiding principles. Diann reviewed the outreach and engagement: 149 pop-up events,

15,718 survey responses. Phase 2 engagement summary included 47 events, and 1 trilingual digital workshop. David reviewed the Guiding Principles: Equity, Reliability and Frequency.

Pamela Fadem asked for a status update on operators, because equity relies on frequency and reliability. David replied that the District is doubling the effort of hiring and training and is seeing improvements in key performance metrics.

Monique Chapman voiced concern about unhoused people using bus stops as their own personal shelters and would like to know if the Realign process could include the Police Department or other agencies in the different cities to keep track so everyone could feel safe waiting at the bus stop. David replied that AC Transit is working with partner jurisdictions who own and operate the streets.

Warren Cushman requested that accessibility for people with disabilities and seniors be thought of as a core value. David replied that accessibility is incorporated within the lens of equity and thanked Warren for his feedback.

Daveed Mandell asked for a clarification on what equity means for the Realign Project. He also stated that AC Transit should talk to people who are transit dependent and find out what their needs are. David replied that equity includes people of color, low-income (less than 200% of Federal poverty level), level of English proficiency, seniors 75 years and over, zero-vehicle households, single parent households, people with disabilities and rent-burdened households.

5.E. Review of Lift/Ramp Road Call Report.

The Committee reviewed the Road Call report for August 1 – August 31, 2023. There was a total of seven (7) road calls; all seven (7) were chargeable. All passed the pre-trip inspection.

Pamela Fadem asked if the ramps were all tested before the busses left the yard. Mallory replied that the 4th column of report shows if there is a pre-trip failure. None on this report failed the pre-trip. Chris Durant, Assistant Director of Maintenance, stated that most of these were related to ramp stowing; and these are older buses, but the manufactures have done improvements since this particular ramp was first developed.

6. STANDING REPORTS

6.A. Chair's Report

Erika Bruhns, Chair reported that she attended the Solano Stroll on Sunday and was happy to see the AC Transit booth very busy. Erika also reported that she will be taking a training on how to lead meetings in the Fall.

6.B. Board Liaison Report

Director Diane Shaw reported on the AC Transit redistricting, which would look at going from a 5 ward and 2 general board members to a 7 ward. More information is available at <https://www.actransit.org/redistricting>

Clarence Fischer (Public Comment) voiced concern about how this will affect the GMAC. Mallory replied that this is now the General Manages Access Committee, and all current members have their

positions until February of 2024. Reappointments and any new appointments to this committee will be made by the General Manager, not the Board of Directors.

Melissa Getz asked about the best way to get more information on the redistricting. Mallory replied that the website has all the information and upcoming dates for public meetings. Tammy will send the links to the committee members.

6.C. Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) PAPCO Report

None. The next PAPCO Meeting is October 23, 2023, at Alameda CTC's offices at 1111 Broadway, Suite 800, in Oakland.

6.D. Service Review Advisory Committee (SRAC) Report

Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager, gave the report for Kiran Agarwal. On August 9th and August 24th respectively, the BART Board and AC Transit Board of Directions inactivated the SRAC. They are now the East Bay Paratransit Access Committee (EBPAC). The first meeting was held on October 5, 2023. These meeting are hybrid meetings. There are 6 vacant positions in the new committee: one from South County (Fremont, Newark, Union City), one from Western Contra Costa County (El Cerrito, Richmond, San Pablo). 2 Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC) positions and 2 Social Services agency positions. She said if anyone who would like to apply, the application is on the East Bay Paratransit website, <https://www.eastbayparatransit.org/>. The EBPAC Committee Charter and By-Laws were presented and subject to approval at the next meeting on November 5, 2023.

6.E. GMAC/Veteran Bus Operator Meeting Report

Melissa Getz reported that she attended the meeting in August and was able to explain how her mobility needs have changed in the last 15 years. She has been through a series of mobility equipment to adjust to her changes in her ability to move and to use public transit. Melissa reminded the operators that some mobility devices are new to the rider and may need help with the understanding that they may not know the equipment very well. Melissa encouraged Committee Members to go and share their stories and experiences with the people who make it possible for you to have freedom to go places via public transit.

Warren Cushman commented that what Melissa is doing is very valuable and that operators are the frontline folks who deal with day-to-day situations that impact our lives. And it is critical when someone steps forward, like Melissa, actually interacting with and educating the operators and lets them know what struggles we're dealing with on a day-to-day basis. Warren thanked Melissa for having the courage and time to do this.

Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager thanked Kim Ridgeway who schedules and coordinates with the training department and stated that it really is valuable for both sides.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Clarence Fischer voiced concern that in order to ride Paratransit a rider must live within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile within an AC Transit bus stop. If Realign takes service away, what happens to people who no longer meet that requirement? Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager, stated that once Realign proposed and the Board makes a selection, we can run that information against our current database, and

see who will be in or out of the current eligible paratransit population. Then the Board can make decisions on how to handle those individuals.

8. MEMBER/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pam Fadem thanked Erika for facilitating the meetings.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT MEETING DATE

The next AAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. This will be a hybrid meeting.

The following items were requested for future agenda planning:

Warren Cushman: Update on Clipper Card 2 with discussion on accessibility and changes to payment on the AC Transit system. Seconded by Pam Fadem/Melissa Getz

Melissa Getz: Protective Service Update on Safety. Seconded by Warren Cushman.

Future Agenda Items:

- BRT Project Traffic Safety Features [Requested by Daveed Mandell on March 8, 2022]
- Update on Accessibility on Tempo (BRT) [Requested by Warren Cushman on July 11, 2023]
- Update on Operator Training and Overview on what Operators go through for training. [Requested by Pam Fadem on July 11, 2023]

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Tammy Kylo

Secretary to the Committee