

**MINUTES
HYBRID MEETING OF THE
GENERAL MANAGER'S ACCESS COMMITTEE (GMAC)
SEPTEMBER 10, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL and Introduction of Members and Guests

GMAC members present:

Kiran Agarwal	Erika Bruhns, Chair
Monique Chapman	Chonita Chew
Warren Cushman	Pamela Fadem
Shawn Fong, Vice Chair	Melissa Getz
Andrea Johnson	Daveed Mandell
James Robson	Barbara Williams

GMAC members absent:

Sandra Johnson (excused)	Roland Wong (excused)
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Staff:

Tammy Kylo, Administrative Coordinator
Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist
Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering
David Berman, Senior Transportation Planner/Realign Project Manager
Diann Castleberry, External Affairs Representative
Nichele Laynes, Director of Marketing/Communications/Customer Services
Richard Oslund, Director of Management and Budget
Debora Garcia, Customer Service Manager
Chris Durant, Assistant Director of Maintenance
Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs and Community Relations

Guests:

H.E. Christian Peeples, Board of Directors
Michai Freeman

3. ORDER OF AGENDA

The order of agenda was approved.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Fadem/Getz approved the July 9, 2024, GMAC meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 9: Agarwal, Bruhns, Chew, Fadem, Fong, Getz, A. Johnson, Mandell, Williams,

ABSTENTIONS – 3: Chapman, Cushman, Robson

ABSENT – 2: S. Johnson, Wong

5. REGULAR UPDATES

5.A. Service Planning Update.

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning, reported that there are limited resources, with both operators and funding, but the District is committed to providing service reliability improvements. Sign-ups occur quarterly and Staff looks to do service improvements through each sign up, given some of the limitations with both operator resources and funding. Staff made adjustments to schedules, for both customer and operator reliability, as well as, turned on the school tripper service. For the December sign-up, which will go into effect December 1st, there aren't enough resources available to us to make some of the wide scale adjustments what were made in August, but there will be improvement on several routes, including the 56, 72R and some Transbay trips, which have seen an increase in ridership and potential overcrowding on some trips.

Chonita Chew voiced concern about line 7 running only once an hour. Robert replied that there is a routing change to line 7 and Ashby is going to be picked up by a different route, which still have 30 minutes frequency.

Daveed Mandell voiced concern about accessibility of transfers, as riders should be able to get to another bus without having to cross streets. Daveed also stated that more dialogue between the disability community, senior community and the district are needed for better understanding of riders' needs. Robert replied that Staff will consider the transfer experience when making service changes

5.B. Realign Update.

David Berman, Senior Transportation Planner and Realign Project Manager, and Diane Castleberry, External Affairs Representative and Deputy Project Manager, gave a status update on the Realign Project. David reported that Staff has done 2 waves of refinements, and Staff is currently in the middle of the public hearing process, which will end on September 11, 2024. The target date for the Board of Directors to make a decision is October 9, 2024.

Diann Castleberry highlighted the summary of the public engagement metrics. Staff was able to engage with the community at nearly 200 community outreach events, and nearly 6,000 people. Diann also reviewed public engagement feedback:

- Positive Sentiments:
 - Support better transit connections
 - Support more direct routes
 - Support maintenance of coverage
 - Appreciated increase in frequency on more lines
- Negative Sentiments:
 - Concerned with Frequency reductions
 - Concerned with consolidation of Lines 51A and 51B
 - Concerned with level of service in central Alameda, Berkeley Hills and El Cerrito Hills

David Berman reviewed the draft final plan, including the main adjustments since the last time GMAC presentation. These adjustments include:

- Significant public and operator feedback

- Maintain Lines 6, 51A, and 51B
- Move the Line 7 terminal in Emeryville from Amtrak to Public Market
- Line 19 shortened to downtown Oakland
- Line 20 in Alameda Point extended west to Pan Am Way
- Line 21 split between Skyline High School and Chabot Space & Science Center
- Adjust Line 29 to downtown Berkeley, route via Sacramento & Stanford/Powell
- Adjust part of Line 73 and 805 routing near Coliseum BART

Realign Service Levels by Phase, Scope of Public Hearings

- Realign (as soon as March 2025)
 - Operator/Cost-Neutral
 - 85% of Pre-Pandemic Service Levels
- Realign+ (on-going)
 - Operator and Funding-Dependent
 - 100% of Pre-Pandemic Service Levels
 - Focused on Priority Transit Network
- Unconstrained Plan (long-term)
 - Operator and Funding-Dependent
 - Aspirational, unconstrained network plan
 - Incorporating what we've heard from riders, Public, advocates, and municipalities.

Public Comment – Michai Freeman stated that she is very concerned about transfer points and wayfinding and more needs to be done on these accessible items.

Shawn Fong stated that she is concerned about the paratransit impacts especially those who are relying on ADA paratransit services to get to and from life sustaining treatment.

Daveed Mandell agreed with Michai Freeman and Shawn and stated that the California Council of the Blind recently passed a resolution regarding equal access to transportation for everyone.

Kiran Agarwal stated that the problems that were raised also affect senior citizens who do not drive or own a car and hope that AC Transit considers them when making decisions on routes.

5.C. FY2025 Budget Update.

Richard Oslund, Director of Management and Budget, gave an update on the FY 24/25 Budget, which was approved by the AC Transit Board of Directors and is effective as of July 1, 2024. The budget is balanced at \$605.8 million and remains aligned with an 85% service level. \$44.7 million is budgeted to be used this FY, which is most of the remaining American Rescue Plan (ARP) emergency Covid funding. No new positions were added to the budget. The economy is slowing down, and sales taxes are susceptible to economic slowdowns; tax subsidies will decline somewhat from previous years. The District receives a large amount of funding from property taxes which are less susceptible to economic slowdowns. Farebox revenues and ridership, which has increased 13.5% over the previous year, continue to make gradual improvements. It is projected that improvements will continue but will decline year over year going forward. The District has been relying on ARP emergency funding for several years, which will most likely run out next year. At that point, revenues from operations and subsidies will need to make up for the lost ARP funding. Fortunately, the District will receive

additional emergency funding from SB125, which will reduce, but not eliminate, deficits. The District could be facing a large deficit in FY26/27 and FY27/28. After that, the economy, and the ability to find new funding sources, will determine how we deal with deficits.

Richard concluded by stating that an updated financial projection will be presented to the AC Transit Board of Directors in October.

5.D. 2025 Draft Federal & State Advocacy Programs.

Maria Henderson, External Affairs Representative, gave a verbal presentation of the 2025 Draft Federal & State Advocacy Programs, which were attached to the agenda packet. The Community Relations and External Affairs Department is meeting with internal and external stakeholders, including the GMAC, for review and feedback on both programs, which will go to the Board of Directors for review and approval in November.

Maria then offered a summary of the key priorities of the programs, which help guide the District's advocacy work at the Federal and State levels of government. This includes influencing legislation regulations of securing funding. The number one priority effort 2025 continues to be securing more State and Federal funding, especially for operations, and funding for accessible fixed route and Paratransit services. AC Transit, like other Bay Area transit agencies, continues to face major funding shortfalls because of the pandemic, rising costs of operations and employment benefits, due to inflation, and costs of transitioning to a 100% zero emissions bus fleet by 2040, which is a requirement of all California transit operators. Complying with this mandate will cost AC Transit \$1.9 billion. The District faces substantial financial uncertainty with a projected deficit of \$146 dollars over 4 years, beginning FY 2026. Conversations are continuing with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Transportation Revenue Measure Select Committee about placing a Regional Transportation Measure on the ballot in November 2026.

5.E. Customer Service Quarterly Report.

Deborah Garcia, Customer Services Manager, gave the Customer Service Quarterly Report for April – June 2024. There was a slight increase in call volume overall; travel inquiries continuing to be the main call type, with the majority being location or timing of the next bus. The 20 second service levels averaged an 80% answer rate, and the 3-minute service levels averaged a 97% answer rate. As part of the Department's strategic initiatives, an end of call survey has been implemented as an option for AC Transit customers through American Customer Care (ACC). 329 surveys were sent with a 27% completion rate and an overall agent rating of 4.8 out of 5.

The Clipper Customer Service Center processed a total of 546 RTC applications, which was a 17% increase from the previous quarter. The Customer Services Team held an outreach event at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont in April, which resulted in 34 of the 546 applications.

5.F. Review Quarterly ADA Complaints.

Tammy Kylo, Administrative Coordinator, reported on the Quarterly ADA Complaints, comparing April–June 2023 to April–June 2024. There were some increases in Commendations, Conduct/Discourtesy, and Pass Ups. These categories increased in non-ADA complaints as well, citing the fact that there is higher ridership this quarter compared to the previous year.

5.G. Review Ramp Road Call Report.

Tammy Kylo, Administrative Coordinator, gave an overview of the Ramp Road Call report, which covered August 1 – 31, 2024. There was a total of five (5) road calls, all of which passed the pre-trip and all of which were chargeable.

6. STANDING REPORTS**6.A. Chair's Report**

Chair Erika Bruhns reported that AC Transit was at the Solano Stroll on Sunday, September 8th where one of the bus operators was nominated and became one of the top 3 finalized for the Chris Kindness Award.

6.B. Board Liaison Report

H. E. Christian Peebles, Board of Directors, reported that the next Board meeting will focus on Realign. He commended Staff for doing a remarkable job of balancing coverage and frequency in the proposals and ensuring ATU operators have enough time to do their jobs; and for pivoting when the Board has changed the goal posts on them a couple of times. Dir. Peebles concluded by stating that the real trick is going to be how to get funding to continue to operate this organization.

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

Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist, reported that there was no PAPCO meeting last month. The next meeting will be Monday, October 28th, at Alameda CTC, 1111 Broadway, Oakland. She will report on that meeting at the November GMAC meeting.

6.D. East Bay Paratransit Access Committee (EBPAC) Report

Warren Cushman reported that the EBPAC met on Tuesday, September 3rd where they received a report for the EBP General Manager Cyndi Lopez, a Realign presentation, and an update on the complaint process.

The EBPAC also elected Michelle Rousey and Warren Cushman as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

The next EBPAC meeting will be held Tuesday, November 5th at East Bay Paratransit, 1750 Broadway, Oakland.

6.E. GMAC/Veteran Bus Operator Meet Up Report

Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist, reported that there was no August meet up due to lack of volunteers. The next one is scheduled for Thursday, September 19th from 10 am – 12 pm. She emailed the Committee requesting volunteers approximately 2 weeks ago but have not heard back from anyone. She asked any Committee Member who is available to check their calendars and reach out to her via email.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

8. MEMBER/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Warren Cushman commented that it is essential that we think about how AC Transit is going to get funded. It's important because there are some challenges around funding, and he hopes that the Committee Members get involved with that discussion as much as possible.

Pam Fadem reported that she is retiring from the GMAC and that this meeting is her last. Pam started with the AAC, now the GMAC, over 15 years ago. She stated that she appreciated being a part of the community and this work. She gave a special thanks to Mallory, Kim and Tammy who she credits for all of their hard work in helping to increase access to AC Transit buses and programs. She also thanked Dir. Peoples for his support and continued advocacy for accessibility and for this advisory group. Pam ended by stating that it's important for each Committee member to remember that, "while we might come to this committee because of personal issues around accessing public transit, that once we become a member of this Committee, it is not just about what our own experience is, it really is about looking at the whole public transit community, and how do we fit in, and how can we continue to support there being public transit and making it the most accessible, not just physically, but also financially, to all of our communities."

Chair Bruhns requested time for anyone who wanted to, for any words for Pam. Melissa, Director Peoples, Jim Robson, Tammy Kylo, Kim Ridgeway and Erika Bruhns all expressed their feelings for Pam, each stating how valuable Pam is and how much she will be missed on this Committee.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT MEETING DATE

The next GMAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, October 9, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. This will be a hybrid meeting.

Future Agenda Items:

- Review of website access [Requested by Warren Cushman on December 12, 2023]
- Discussion on travel training/orientation and mobility [Requested by Warren Cushman on February 13, 2024]

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Tammy Kylo

Secretary to the Committee