

**MINUTES  
HYBRID MEETING OF THE  
GENERAL MANAGER'S ACCESS COMMITTEE (GMAC)  
OCTOBER 8, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 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	Shawn Fong, Vice Chair
Melissa Getz	Daveed Mandell
James Robson	Barbara Williams

**GMAC members absent:**

Andrea Johnson	Sandra Johnson (excused)
Roland Wong	

**Staff:**

Tammy Kylo, Administrative Coordinator  
Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist  
Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager  
Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning  
David Berman, Senior Transportation Planner/Realign Project Manager  
Nichele Laynes, Director of Marketing/Communications/Customer Services  
Debora Garcia, Customer Service Manager  
Jonathan Bair, Communications Manager  
Dan Talbott, Program Specialist, Customer Service  
Chris Durant, Assistant Director of Maintenance  
Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs and Community Relations

**Guests:**

Diane Shaw, Vice President Board of Directors  
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: Fong/Cushman approved the September 10, 2024, GMAC meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 10: Agarwal, Bruhns, Chapman, Chew, Cushman, Fong, Getz, Mandell, Robson, Williams

ABSTENTIONS – 0

ABSENT – 3: A. Johnson, S. Johnson, Wong

## 5. REGULAR UPDATES

### 5.A. Service Planning Update.

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning, reported that staff is still working on the development for the December sign-ups that will include small reliability improvements, and changes related to school bell adjustment times. Changes will be implemented December 1, 2024.

PUBLIC - Jan Robitscher voiced concern regarding eliminated and/or temporary closed bus stops on Durant Street at Dana in Berkeley due to construction. She also voiced concern about the width of the bike lanes, why stops are being eliminated near medical buildings and the distance between bus stops.

### 5.B. Realign Update.

David Berman, Senior Transportation Planner and Realign Project Manager, gave a status update on the Realign Project. David reported that the public hearing process ended September 11, 2024, with over 580 public comments. Comments express concerns about frequencies, schedule connections, and service reliability. Most comments were line specific with the most being lines 7, 65, 67, 21, 51A, 51B and 72R. David encouraged members of the committee to review the Board packet for October 9, 2024 meeting which is available at the project website <https://www.actransit.org/realign>.

David Berman reviewed the 3 primary changes in the draft final plan:

- Line 19 serve Alameda Point instead of proposed line 20
- Changes related to layover locations in downtown Berkeley for the proposed line 29 extension
- The presentation also discusses feedback not addressed in the Staff recommended plan
  - Lines 7, 65, and 67
  - Lines 18 and 21 centering around the project guiding principles

The presentation and the attachments also include a Title VI Service Equity Analysis, which has found no disparate impact on people of color and no disproportionate burden on those with low incomes. The Board will make their proposed decision of the final Realign Plan at tomorrow Board meeting, October 9, 2024.

Public Comment – Jan Robitscher stated that the bus stop signs are too high for her to read, and she is unable to read the stop numbers at a distance.

Warren Cushman stated that public advocates have some equity concerns around Title VI analysis. He is also concerned with all the different processes, service standards, stop analysis and Realign Plan, and how they are all moving forwards and interact with each other. Warren is also concerned about the paratransit impacts especially those who may not get service anymore. Warren recommends that the General Manager's Access Committee (GMAC) and East Bay Paratransit Access Committee (EBPAC) both have input into this process.

Director Peebles commented that the line 6 stop at Dana and Dwight, staff has a good explanation, and it involves lots of interplay between AC Transit and City of Berkeley, those who are interested should attend the Berkley/AC Transit ILC meeting on December 5, 2024.

Daveed Mandell stated he would like to see the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile paratransit restriction removed and have Paratransit provide same day service.

Shawn Fong is also concerned about Paratransit, and the possibility of an innovative dynamic software system that could do a lot more than beyond what the current ADA requires and is interested in the timeline is for these policy discussions and if there might be some discussion about services beyond what the ADA requires. Mallory replied that major cultural change will have to occur with this new platform, policy changes that the Board has to consider, and there are funding constraints that will be presented by Staff. The Board to make decisions on the Realign Plan first, then paratransit follows. The GMAC and EBPAC will be kept informed.

Vice President Shaw commented that she loves all the passion around Paratransit and encourages the committee to bring concerns to the other user groups, so that the people can hear the concerns because it is not just AC Transit but, a partnership with BART. She agreed that the District wants to continue to provide the service that has always been provided, but stated that there is no plan to increasing it because there isn't funding right now; but, we're definitely not looking at decreasing paratransit. It's all about the best service we can provide for the most people that need it.

### **5.C. Communications for Accessibility.**

Deborah Garcia, Customer Services Manager gave an update how AC Transit is making its services accessible to all abilities. Communication teams work cross-functionally to ensure that our services are inclusive and accessible to all riders. Accessibility Department initiative includes, the Ride with Kindness brochure, the Riders Guide, both which the GMAC assisted with creating.

Accessibility Department:

- Wheelchair marking and tether strap program
- Color-Coded Flash Card Kits
- Work with the community (including GMAC) to test pilots, receive feedback, operator meet ups, etc.
- Outreach events focused on Older Adults and People with Disabilities

Other Rider Assistance:

- Update Board Policy 501: Bus Stop Guidelines
- Customer Service Center assists and process RTC applications
- Ongoing training with Call Center agents for wayfinding needs of people of diverse abilities
- Ongoing training for operators
- On-board announcement system
- Recently updated design standards on-bus signs
- New buses with latest features

Recent accessibility improvements to website include:

- Updated pdfs for ADA compliance
- Removal of accessible overlay at GMAC member's request
- Realign planning information highly accessible
- Updated accessibility information
- Added accessibility audits to web contract

Hayden AI – Launched this summer, Hayden AI is:

- Bus-based, AI-powered automated ticketing to help ensure rider safety and stop accessibility by enforcing stops and lanes
- Been very successful in NYC & Philadelphia in reducing bus stop blocking

Looking to the Future – In the works:

- Social media campaign
- Braille map pilot
  - El Cerrito Del Norte BART
  - Downtown Berkeley
- AI Chatbot – which could provide assistance via text or speech
- New mobile app
- QR codes at stops
- MTC regional signage and wayfinding project
- Transit-Supportive Design Guidelines (TSDG)
- Article added to the GM Report

Public Comment – Michai Freeman is concerned about the fines for the automated ticketing, accessible parking taken away in front of a destinations and also the safety for deploying the bus and concerned about paratransit policy.

Chonita Chew asked if the QR Code will be replacing ACT Real Time, because seniors don't feel safe pulling out their cell phones at the bus stops. Jonathan Bair replied that the QR Codes are going to supplement the information that is currently provided at most of our stops in the schedule case. Johnathan also mentioned that there is a dedicated web page for every stop, so a rider can view the information on a home computer as well. Chonita also stated that there is still a problem with the training for the customer service agents as they are still giving long directions or bad directions because they are using Google Maps.

Daveed Mandell stated that many companies including AC Transit and BART refuse to hire people with disabilities in key accessibility positions. He is concerned about wayfinding, Customer Service training and giving directions. He also stated that PDF documents still give him problems and he prefer Word documents.

#### **5.D. Review Ramp Road Call Report.**

Tammy Kylo, Administrative Coordinator, gave an overview of the Ramp Road Call report, which covered September 1 – 30, 2024. There was a total of five (5) road calls, all of which passed the pre-trip and all of which were chargeable.

Melissa Getz thanked the maintenance team for doing a great job and keeping the buses moving.

## **6. STANDING REPORTS**

### **6.A. Chair's Report**

None.

**6.B. Board Liaison Report**

Vice President Shaw encouraged everyone to review the October 9, 2024, Board agenda which includes Realign. There are some interesting presentations that are being given by MTC; Wayfinding projects and Legislation. VP Shaw concluded by stating that she attended the APTA conference and saw a presentation on the new regulations released about website accessibility.

**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 there was no EBPAC this month, next meeting will be in November.

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

Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist, gave an overview of the meet ups. Driver Training is one of the GMAC's top priorities and the Meet Ups is one of the required action items. Staff asks for 2 to 3 volunteers on a monthly basis to go out to the training center on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month. The Meets Ups are a way to foster community with operators. Operators get a chance to talk with volunteers, ask questions, answer questions, etc. We are offering a \$50 gift card as an incentive for those who sign up and complete a meet up.

The next Meet Up one is scheduled for Thursday, October 17th from 10 am – 12 pm. Kim 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 he would like an update on MTC and its regional funding efforts. Mallory encouraged the committee to look at the archived minutes from the Board meeting where MTC did a presentation. Mallory also mentioned that General Manager Mike Hursh is very involved at the regional level working on funding.

**9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next GMAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, November 12, 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 2:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Tammy Kylo

Secretary to the Committee