

**MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE AC TRANSIT
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)
APRIL 12, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL and Introduction of Members and Guests

AAC members present:

Erika Bruhns, Vice Chair	Chonita Chew
Pamela Fadem	Shawn Fong
David Fritz	Melissa Getz
Daveed Mandell	Sandra Johnson, Chair
James Robson	Tanya Washington
Barbara Williams	Hale Zukas

AAC members absent:

Janet Abelson (excused)
Kiran Agarwal (excused)

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
Tabby Davenport, Safety Manager
Brian Muerle, Safety Administrator
Darrell Takara, Project Manager
Margaret Tseng, Customer Services Manager
Aaron Priven, Marketing Administrator
Candice Kelly, Marketing Administrator
Nichele Laynes, Marketing & Communications Director

Guests:

Diane Shaw, Board of Directors
Kacie Conyers, TheCIL

3. ORDER OF AGENDA

The order of agenda was approved.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Fadem/Mandell approved the March 8, 2022 AAC meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 12: Bruhns, Chew, Fadem, Fong, Fritz, Getz, Mandell, Johnson, Robson, Washington, Williams, Zukas

ABSTENTIONS – None

ABSENT – 2: Abelson, Agarwal

5. REGULAR UPDATES

5.A. COVID-19 Update

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning, reported that a service change was implemented in March and there will be minor changes in June. Those changes include improvements on line 57, to get the frequencies back to pre-pandemic headway times. School service will be turned off from June to August. Due to the limited number of operators, there is difficulty restoring service as quickly as the District would like. Staff is going to the Board of Directors to provide a timeline for full-service restoration and a timeline for the new network. The report on the new network will go to the Board May 11th.

The new network consists of travel patterns that have changed due to the pandemic, for example less people are traveling to San Francisco by transit. The routing network that we have out there does it really meet the needs of the public? We don't think it fully does, and so we want to make sure that we can use those resources to build a route network that would better utilize the resources. There will be a long process of public engagement, setting up guiding principles, goals and objectives and ultimately building a network that we can get comments and feedback on. Then try to implement, the timeframe could be 18-24 months.

Chonita Chew asked when the Van Hool buses would be phased out. Robert responded that buses have a 12-year life span and the Van Hools will be in service for a while longer.

Tabby Davenport, Safety Manager, gave an update on the District's Covid procedures. The mask mandate has been extended to the April 18th. However, there is a chance TSA will extend mask mandates on public transportation. The District will review protocols if/when that happens. Wheelchair securement is still optional for the passenger, and operators are to ask if the passenger wants securements. If the passenger refuses securement, the operator must still assess the situation and continue with safe operating procedures, especially when a chair is not secured.

Tabby concluded by reminding the Committee that masks and hand sanitizer is still on-board buses and that will remain in place as the District continues to assess the pandemic situation. Some administrative controls like social distancing or the amount of quarantine time is required could change as the District gets more information.

5.B. Review of AC Transit Website.

Darrell Takara, Project Manager, gave an update on the AC Transit website. He gave an overview specifically of the Accessibility page, which can be accessed through google by typing "AC Transit Accessibility", the search bar in the upper right corner of the website or by clicking "Customer Service", then "Civil Rights". The accessibility page gives a breakdown of accessibility features including on board accessibility, the Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap program, and a link to the Riding the Bus is Easy brochure.

Darrell also reviewed the widget, a blue “man”, at the bottom right of the screen. This accessibility widget gives several profiles that can be toggled on and off to customize the page based on an individual’s needs, including vision, cognitive and ADHD.

AC Transit contracted a web vendor who ran an audit of the website and found some issues, such as duplicate IDs and picture/icon tags, which the vendor fixed. Three software applications were used to assess the website: Wave, AccessiBe, and Dynamapper.

Director Shaw thanked Darrell for the update and encouraged the AAC to continue to review the website and send feedback as necessary.

Daveed Mandell stated that The California Council for the Blind is glad to work with Staff and also stated that AccessiBe is a not a reliable source for accessing website accessibility.

5.C. Customer Service Quarterly Report

Margaret Tseng, Customer Services Manager, gave the Customer Service Quarterly Report which reviews October – December 2021. This report was provided to the Board on March 23, 2022. Some metrics reviewed included:

A 9% increase in calls to the Call Center.

Over 50 % of calls received are for travel information.

47% of complaints received are filed via the mobile app.

Completed 290 new clipper applications for a total of 70,178 users.

61% increase in ridership.

Concerns were raised about:

Why the customer service center is in Iowa and not ran locally

Why customer service is not 24/7 if bus service is 24/7

The lack of wayfinding information customer service provides

Margaret stated that in 2010, call center services were outsourced due to budget reasons. A consultant evaluated the cost of in-house services, in state services, and out of state services and found that in- house services were extremely costly. The Board of Directors, after a proposal, bid and evaluation period, awarded the contract to the out of state provider. Margaret also stated that customer service does use both AC Transit and Google maps to help with wayfinding.

Nichele Laynes, Acting Director of Marketing and Communications stated that even when the call center was in house, it was not a 24-hour operation. Nichele also stated that Staff is in the process of evaluating new vendors for Call Center Services and although the bids for the service have come in, Staff can explore how to get pricing for 24-hour service and evaluate the information to see if its cost prohibitive.

5.D. Review of Quarterly ADA Complaints

The Committee reviewed the Quarterly ADA Complaints which compared ADA Complaints in 3rd Quarter 20/21 to 3rd Quarter 21/22. Tammy reminded the committee that all complaints are

answered within 5 business days. If there is a driver related ADA complaint, the Superintendent pulls the video and a conference with the operator is requested.

Pam Fadem shared concerns on pass-ups and bus stops that are not accessible. David Fritz said the stop ID numbers used to be a good size with bold print, but many are now in a smaller print and are hard to read.

Aaron Priven, Marketing Administrator, responded that the bus stop crew is instructed to make larger labels. Aaron suggested that if anyone sees those particular “small” stop IDs to contact the customer service department and lodge a complaint so Staff knows immediately which stop has the issue especially because the bus stop review / survey will take some time to complete since there are over 6000 stops in the service area.

Daveed Mandell stated that pass ups are a problem for blind people because if you are not exactly at the bus stop, some drivers think you don’t want that bus. He also stated that when there is bus bunching then a blind person doesn’t know which bus is which. If multiple buses are at a stop each bus should pull up and open the doors to announce the line number, so passengers know which bus is which, which helps blind people.

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

The Committee reviewed the Road Call report for February 27 – April 2, 2022. There were six (6) road calls; three (3) were chargeable. All vehicles passed the pre-trip inspection and thus any road call listed occurred in service. Please note that five (5) of these road calls did not require another bus, the driver was able to fix the problem themselves by manually deploying the ramp.

Pam Fadem commented that it is great to see that bus operators are now attempting to and succeeding in clearing a ramp and not having to wait for another bus, this is a huge improvement.

6. STANDING REPORTS

6.A. Chair’s Report

None.

6.B. Board Liaison Report

Director Shaw reported that:

- The Board is in the process of interviewing a new Director for Ward 4, who would take Mark Williams’ seat now that he’s resigned.
- The Board decided to delay the fare increase for another year.

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

None.

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

None.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mallory Nestor Brush, Accessible Services Manager, read an email from David Vartanoff, a member of the public, which stated: The ongoing installation of concrete bus pads on Telegraph repeats the inconvenience of the previously installed rubber/plastic pads. Neither are sufficiently tall for Roll On/Roll Off thus requiring lift deployment. As evidenced in the 1 Tempo BRT full height platforms are far more convenient, and faster loading/unloading. The supposed extra cost on Telegraph would be easily covered by both faster operation and elimination of road calls. Thanks for listening.

8. MEMBER/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Shawn Fong reported that the Ride on Tri-City program started its travel training program again yesterday. They are still signing people up for Senior Clipper Cards and have distributed over 200 cards.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT MEETING DATE

The next AAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting.

Tammy Kylo, Secretary to the Committee, explained that in order to have agenda items placed on the agenda for a future meeting, a member must request it at the AAC meeting and that item must be seconded by another member. Each member can suggest no more than one (1) item per meeting.

Daveed Mandell stated that he'd like to add wayfinding to the agenda. This was seconded by Fadem, Chew and Getz.

David Fritz stated that he'd like to add 24-hour Customer Service to the agenda. This was seconded by Chonita.

Future Agenda Items:

- Wayfinding
- 24-hour Customer Service
- Training Update regarding Manual Deployment
- Federal/State Guidelines added to the Service Recovery Updates
- Accessibility and Safety Issues of BRT Lanes
- Inaccessible Transfer Points in the Service Area
- AC Transit Mobile App Inaccessibility
- Future Funding regarding the Federal Infrastructure Bill
- FASTER Bay Area
- AAC Programs/Projects to increase Senior Ridership

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Tammy Kylo

Secretary to the Committee