

**DRAFT MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE AC TRANSIT
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)
MAY 10, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL and Introduction of Members and Guests

AAC members present:

Janet Abelson	Kiran Agarwal (2:17)
Erika Bruhns, Vice Chair	Chonita Chew
Pamela Fadem	Shawn Fong
David Fritz	Melissa Getz
Daveed Mandell	Sandra Johnson, Chair
James Robson	Tanya Washington
Hale Zukas	

AAC members absent:

Barbara Williams (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
Michael Eshleman, Planning Manager
Tabby Davenport, Safety Manager
Brian Muerle, Safety Administrator
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications
Chris Durant, Assistant Director of Maintenance
Candice Kelly, Marketing Administrator

Guests:

Director Peeples, Board of Directors
Kacie Conyers, TheCIL
Beth Kenny
Matthew Bomberg
Sarah Glaubman
Sheela Gunn-Cushman
Aleida Andrino-Chaves, Alameda CTC
Jhay Delos Reyes, Alameda CTC

3. ORDER OF AGENDA

The order of agenda was approved.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mandell/Getz approved the April 12, 2022 AAC meeting minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 11: Bruhns, Chew, Fadem, Fong, Fritz, Getz, Mandell, Johnson, Robson, Washington, Zukas

ABSTENTIONS – 2: Abelson, Agarwal

ABSENT – 1: Williams

5. REGULAR UPDATES

5.A. COVID-19 Update

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning, stated that the goal is to incrementally increase service to get back to pre-pandemic levels and improve reliability. The challenges the District is facing is not unique to AC Transit. Transit Operators across the nation are experiencing significant challenges for recruiting and retaining bus drivers.

Tabby Davenport, Safety Manager, reported as of April 19th, the TSA and CDC ended the mask mandate for transportation. As a result, AC Transit ended the mandate as well, effective April 20th. Though the messaging is that the District strongly recommends that passengers wear masks when on board the buses. Drivers continue to be masked and there is still hand sanitizer and masks on the bus for riders.

Public Comment:

Beth Kenny asked that the mask mandate be reinstated for the continued safety of all passengers. She stated that the windows on the bus are closed as well, and open windows are the best resource for air ventilation.

Sheela Gunn-Cushman stated that she is unable to wear masks and can only wear a shield. She also stated that she needs the restoration of bus stops and more accessible signage and wayfinding.

Kacie Conyers, Transportation Specialist, The CIL, also voiced concerns about the lifting of the mask mandate and would like ask AC Transit to reconsider.

David Fritz voiced concerned about the inconsistency between what AC Transit, BART and East Bay Paratransit policies regarding the mask mandates.

Daveed Mandell stated that that dropping the mask mandate makes AC Transit inaccessible. He also stated that bus stops are too far apart, and that full bus stop restoration is necessary and doesn't believe AC Transit has any intention to restore bus service.

Sarah Glaubman also requested that the mask mandate be restored and just because the federal mask mandate was lifted does not mean AC Transit had to comply.

Director Peeples responded that having all the windows closed on the bus is actually the best way to keep the air flowing throughout the bus. If the windows are open you get buffering and air flow happens only within 2 inches of the windows, but not throughout the bus.

Director Peeples also responded that not a single agency with expertise in health and/or medical issues is recommending masks, including the CDC.

5.B. Alameda CTC E14th/East Bay Greenway Project Update.

Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Project Manager, gave an update on the East Bay Greenway Multimodal Project. Ms. Chavez presented a project overview and background on E14th/Mission Blvd and Fremont Blvd Multimodal Corridor Project and East Bay Greenway Project. She described the engagement with seniors, people with disabilities to gather feedback and what they heard and how they have included the feedback received. The presentation also shared design considerations, protected intersections, pedestrian crossings, on-street parking, and public outreach.

Public Comment: Sheela Gunn-Cushman asked that Alameda CTC please give her a call for feedback, she stated that she is blind and that the presentation did not give her a description of the maps and design considerations.

Chonita Chew asked for clarification on what “90% of the corridor is pedestrian high injury” means.

Aleida responded that there are designations of streets where there are high pedestrian injuries along E. 14th Street.

Aleida also clarified the use of textured pathways is for individuals with visual impairments who use a cane to delineate a crosswalk. If the crosswalk is only painted but not textured there is no indication of where the crosswalk is. Having a cane detectable surface will help individuals cross within the crosswalk. The City of Berkeley has implemented textured sidewalks. The City of San Pablo has not.

5.C. Review June Service Changes

Michael Eshelman, Planning Manager, reported that service changes happen in March, June, August and September each year. This June, school service will be removed for the summer and will be restored in the August sign up. Eshelman also reported that the Planning Department made adjustments to improve reliability on several lines, including the 57, 33 and 54.

5.D. Review/Adopt AAC Top Priorities for 2022-2023

Kim Ridgeway, Senior Program Specialist, read the AAC Top Priorities 2021-2022 for the Committee to review again and vote to adopt. These Priorities, numbered but not in order of importance, were created by the AAC and each year the Committee reviews, comments on, and votes to adopt priorities for the following fiscal year.

After reading all 7 priorities and the actionable items associated with the priority, Chair Johnson opened up the floor for discussion.

Public Comment: Beth Kenny asked that the restoration of bus stops also be a priority. Sheela Gunn-Cushman asked that customer service training for the blind and visually impaired be part of the priorities. She also said the call center should be local, or at least in the state of California.

Chair Johnson responded that “Bus stop accessibility and service delivery” is in priority #7 and “customer service training for both phone and in-person customer staff” is in priority #6.

Chair Johnson asked for any additional comments from the committee. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to move that the AAC Top Priorities be adopted for 2022-2023. Abelson moved the motion. Robson seconded.

MOTION: Abelson/Robson move that the AAC Top Priorities be adopted for 2022-2023. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 11: Abelson, Agarwal, Bruhns, Fadem, Fong, Getz, Johnson, Robson, Washington, Zukas

ABSTENTIONS – 3: Chew, Fritz, Mandell

ABSENT – 1: Williams.

Motion passed unanimously.

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

The Committee reviewed the Road Call report for April 3 – April 30, 2022. There were ZERO Lift/Ramp road calls for this month. All vehicles passed the pre-trip inspection.

Pam Fadem commented that it is truly a big credit to maintenance and bus operators for keeping the buses rolling.

Jim Robson commented to say congratulations to the drivers and maintenance and training staff for doing a remarkable job.

6. STANDING REPORTS

6.A. Chair’s Report

None.

6.B. Board Liaison Report

Director Peebles reported that:

- The District continues to struggle with hiring operators; it’s a nationwide transit issue.
- The Board of Directors received reports that enforcing the mask mandate resulted in over 200 operators being assaulted.
- The District is struggling to figure out how finances will be in the long term. Funds obtained due to COVID helped to hold though FY 22/23, but the District is working

with Voices for Public Transportation, which is trying to figure out a local funding source; as well as agencies working to find additional state funding.

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

None.

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

None.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sheela Gunn Cushman, believes that when issues arise at East Bay Paratransit, it should be brought to the AAC including the mask mandate on EBP since AC Transit and BART fund paratransit. She is requested to wear a shield and not a mask on EBP. Also, the mask mandate information needs to be consistent to keep confusion down.

8. MEMBER/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Member Communications:

- David Fritz stated that the people who run The AAC need to make sure this is a safe space and be treated with respect.
- Melissa Getz stated that she wanted to give an opportunity for new members to voice their opinion on the AAC Top Priorities. She also stated that she appreciates the new members and appreciate their comments.
- Chonita Chew stated that the USOAC is having their 36th Annual Convention July 29, 2022 from 9 am – 2 pm. She will email Tammy Kylo the information to distribute to the AAC.
- Daveed Mandell stated that he is not objecting to the generalizations of the priorities but is asking for a list of accessibility issues which the AAC could add to and monitor.
- Mallory Brush, Accessible Services Manager, stated that the Chair, who runs the meeting, and the AC Transit Employees who staff the meeting also disapprove of anyone being disrespectful.
- Mallory also stated that Future Agenda Items are listed on the agenda each month as AAC Members suggest items. Mallory then read the list of current items on the “Future Agenda Item” list. Mallory reported that Staff does agenda planning for the entire year, and as issues come up and as Staff is available, those items and information will be brought to the Committee. Several items are either outside of the Accessible Services Department and could involve several departments. These items have been and will continue to be addressed as timing allows.

Staff Communication:

- Mallory Brush, Accessible Services Manager, stated that Ahsan Baig, Chief Information Officer/Chief Technology Officer for the District sent an email response to the concerns about website accessibility and what testing tools/programs are used, based on concerns

brought up during the April meeting. Tammy Kylo emailed Ahsan's response to the Committee. Mallory read the email in full, as well.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT MEETING DATE

The next AAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting.

No additional future agenda items were requested.

Future Agenda Items:

- Wayfinding [Requested by Daveed Mandell on April 12, 2022]
- 24-hour Customer Service [Requested by David Fritz on April 12, 2022]
- Training Update regarding Manual Deployment [Requested by Pam Fadem on March 8, 2022]
- Accessibility and Safety Issues of BRT Lanes [Requested by Daveed Mandell on March 8, 2022]
- Inaccessible Transfer Points in the Service Area [Requested by Daveed Mandell on March 8, 2022]
- AC Transit Mobile App Inaccessibility [Requested by Daveed Mandell on March 8, 2022]
- Federal and State Guidelines for Underserved Communities [Requested by Pam Fadem on March 8, 2022]
- FASTER Bay Area
- AAC Programs/Projects to increase Senior Ridership

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Tammy Kylo

Secretary to the Committee