

**MINUTES
VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE AC TRANSIT
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AAC)
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL and Introduction of Members and Guests

AAC members present:

Kiran Agarwal	Erika Bruhns, Acting Chair
Chonita Chew	Pamela Fadem
David Fritz	Shawn Fong
Melissa Getz	Daveed Mandell
Jim Robson	Tanya Washington
Hale Zukas (2:19)	

AAC members absent:

Janet Abelson	Pamela Fadem (excused)
Sandra Johnson (excused)	Barbara Williams

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
Claudia Burgos, Director of Legislative Affairs and Community Relations
Beverly Greene, Executive Director of External Affairs, Marketing & Communications
Margaret Tseng, Customer Service Manager
Steven Jones, External Affairs Representative
Tabby Davenport, Safety Manager
Ramakrishna Pochiraju, Executive Director of Planning & Engineering
Nichele Laynes, Marketing & Communications Director

Guests:

Director Peeples, Board of Directors
Director Shaw, Board of Directors
Director McCalley, Board of Directors
Jumana Nabti, BART, Manager of Access Programs

Sheela Gunn-Cushman

Warren Cushman

Betsy Morris, East Bay Gray Panthers

3. ORDER OF AGENDA

The order of agenda was approved.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4.A. Approval of Minutes

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

AYES – 8: Agarwal, Bruhns, Chew, Fritz, Getz, Mandell, Washington, Zukas

ABSTENTIONS – 2: Fong, Robson

ABSENT – 4: Abelson, Fadem, Johnson, Williams

5. REGULAR UPDATES

5.A. Service Planning and COVID-19 Safety Update

Robert del Rosario, Director of Service Development and Planning, reported that a new service change was implemented on August 7th to restore school service and improvements to some of the routes. The next service change will be in December, keeping the operator runs the same. The big focus for the coming months is to improve service reliability. Working diligently to address and meet the District's target of 98% of the service operating on a day to day basis. AC Transit is still focused on hiring and training new operators to bring back more service based upon the Service Recovery Priorities approved by the Board of Directors earlier this year.

Tabby Davenport, Safety Manager, reported that the mask requirement on buses and AC Transit properties continues. However, as more information is received, the Committee will be updated with that information and any changes to policy.

David Fritz asked when South County would start getting better service. Robert replied that AC Transit will focus on operating the service that is planned and scheduled out there today. We are currently at 94% of the service operating and want to get to that up to 98% before adding additional service.

Jim Robson asked if BART and AC Transit coordinate the schedules. Robert replied that both agencies have coordination meetings that take place about 4 months before service changes are implemented. AC Transit also has other times to match, such as school schedules. However, we try to coordinate as best we can.

Jim Robson also asked if long trunk lines will these stay the same in the future. Robert replied that there will be outreach efforts to develop a new network, and the trunk lines will likely stay the same, however there may be an increase in frequency.

5.B. 2023 Draft Federal & State Advocacy Programs

Steven Jones, External Affairs Representative, reported on the 2023 Draft Federal & State Advocacy Programs. An update from previous Federal & State Advocacy Programs included the addition of Core Principles which are further guided by the District's commitment to: a) promoting accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion; b) combating racism and promoting environmental justice; and c) fostering healthy communities and environments. The 2023 Federal & State Advocacy Programs also included a breakdown of Funding and Transportation Related Advocacy as well as a calendar of key dates for each program.

Steven also highlighted the following specific items in both the Federal & State Advocacy Programs:

- Accessible fixed route and paratransit services and infrastructure.
- Provide funding and improve coordination between state health agencies and transit operators to provide services to clients, including the accessible community.
- Full implementation of the District's zero emission bus (ZEB) rollout plan.
- Exempt public transit providers from state sales tax.
- Establish bus only lanes on major transit corridors and create bus only lanes on state owned bridges.
- Initiatives that enhance fare payment options and support broad-based access to public transit, including reduced or fare free service.
- Maintain the tax exemption on municipal bonds and restore the tax exemption for advance refunding bonds.

Public Comments:

Sheela Gunn-Cushman stated that she is concerned about the signage at bus stops for blind and visually impaired people. She would like to see QR codes at bus stops and Customer Relations trained on giving turn by turn directions. She also liked the idea of using cameras for cars parked at bus stops but is worried about her neighbors being penalized due to no other parking available.

Warren Cushman stated that coordination should be done with other agencies. Regional Transit agencies and MTC all need to work together in a regional effort with regard to ADA. He urged the AAC to learn more about Seamless and regional efforts. He also stated that looking at fare free legislation is encouraging news.

Members comments:

David Fritz would like to see all bus stop IDs be in larger print and bold to make it easier to read. He also wants to have air condition in all the buses.

Chonita Chew asked for more information about Zero Emission buses. Steven Jones replied that the State of California requires that 100% of the buses be zero emission fleet by year 2040. The fleet would be either fuel cell, electric or battery/electric buses.

Daveed Mandell stated that he is happy to see fare-free ideas because lot of people are expressing a need for it. He also stated that, regarding ADA funding just meeting ADA is not enough. In regard to Paratransit, many jurisdictions are now adopting the same day on demand Paratransit and he would like AC Transit to consider this when talking about funding.

5.C. BART Station Access Signage and Wayfinding Program

Jumana Nabti, BART, gave an overview of the BART Station Access Signage and Wayfinding Program.

Feedback from the Committee, Guests and Members of the public included:

- Ensure there is real time signage rather than just having people rely on their phones, especially because not everyone has a smart phone.

- Add audio buttons to real time information signage.
- QR codes are also a good resource, but should not be the only resource.
- A QR code with a link to customer service is also helpful.
- Color signage should be used over black and white signage.
- BART escalators and elevators need signage as well and need to include icons.
- BART should have a kiosk of the bus lines in numerical order indicating where the bus would be at the bay, instead of people looking specifically for the bay to figure out if the bus line they want stops there.
- Starting with signage at Fruitvale and Bay Fair stations would be helpful due to the how busy those stations are and the parking availability.

Daveed Mandell stated that because the program is such a complex plan, a number of key accessibility features are either buried or missing. He stated that Braille and raised letters are a good assist but if you don't know how to find the buses the signage isn't as helpful, that some of the signage is too high for wheelchair users, and that there needs to be videos for the deaf and pictograms for people with cognitive issues. He also asked what signage is being proposed inside the BART station. Finally, Daveed suggested that BART conduct a wayfinding summit with all the agencies in the region to ensure its consistent.

Melissa Getz stated that she uses mobility equipment to ride Transbay and AC Transit and was unaware that she needed to be at the front of the line to board. She wanted clarification on if that is AC Transit policy or operator choice.

Director Peebles stated that Aaron Priven has been hired by MTC to take on the project of regional wayfinding and he hopes MTC pays attention to what BART has done.

Jumana concluded by stating that the feedback provided at this meeting would be fed into the process as she works with Aaron Priven, and that the bus route signage will be reviewed as part of the MTC project over and above the interim project AC Transit will be taking on for bus stops. Jumana also stated that there will be plenty of outreach, as a process as well, for feedback opportunities.

5.D. Discussion on Wayfinding - AAC

Mallory Nestor-Brush, Accessible Services Manager, began the discussion by asking the Committee what direction they would like to see the District take in response to wayfinding. This is an opportunity to give thoughts and feedback on wayfinding and signage.

David Fritz stated that at a bus stop near Southland Mall there are bus benches that are not where the bus pole is located. Drivers are telling him that he needs to be at the stop. He specifically brought up the Line 28 bus stop in Castro Valley near Lake Chabot Road.

MOTION: Daveed Mandell moved that the Discussion on Wayfinding (5d) and Feedback on the Braille/Raised Letter for Bus Stop Identification (5e) be moved to the October 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Chonita Chew.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES – 10:., Agarwal, Bruhns, Chew, Fong, Fritz, Getz, Mandell, Robson, Washington, Zukas

ABSTENTIONS – 0

ABSENT – 4: Abelson, Fadem, Johnson, Williams

5.E. Feedback on the Braille/Raised Letter for Bus Stop Identification

Item was moved to the October 12th meeting agenda.

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

The Committee reviewed the Road Call report for July 31 – August 27, 2022. There was a total of three (3) road calls; three (3) were chargeable. All vehicles passed the pre-trip inspection and thus any road call listed occurred in service.

Director Peebles commented that Maintenance is doing a great job, noting that the report only had 3 road calls, and all were older buses.

6. STANDING REPORTS

6.A. Chair's Report

None.

6.B. Board Liaison Report

Director Peebles reported the Board received a presentation on wayfinding from MTC.

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

None.

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

Kiran Agarwal reported that the SRAC meeting was held Tuesday, August 2, 2022. The Committee received reports on:

- The findings of the Annual EBP Customer Satisfaction Survey, in which 82% of those surveyed replied that they were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the service and 90% stating a good or excellent trip satisfaction.
- The Broker's Report from General Manager Cyndi Lopez that included Key Performance Indicators for April – June 2022.
- The Contactless Payment App, which launched in July.

The Next SRAC meeting will be Tuesday, October 4th at 12:30 pm via ZOOM.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Warren Cushman stated that it is important for the AAC to engage with MTC, BART, local City Council and City staff; there is a lot going on with transportation. He also encourages the AAC to think along the lines of Paratransit and to be aware of and inform themselves of the upcoming elections.

Betsy Morris, East Bay Gray Panthers, stated that wayfinding and accessibility issues are not separate from building back a robust constituency and funding for AC Transit. A survey was done that concluded, If we had better information about where we could go on AC Transit, then we would use it more often.

Sheela Gunn-Cushman – Regional approach to transit is really appreciated. Bus stop on Castro Valley Blvd., west of Chabot Lake, has a bench that is too far away from the bus stop pole.

8. MEMBER/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chonita Chew reported that the United Senior of Oakland and Alameda County (USOAC) 19th Annual Healthy Living Festival is September 29th from 9 am – 2 pm at the Oakland Zoo.

Jim Robson thanked Daveed for the wayfinding information that Tammy forwarded to the AAC, but he was unable to open it. Tammy will send the information out again as separate files to the members.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & NEXT MEETING DATE

The next AAC Meeting will be held Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting.

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]
- Lyft – Wheelchair accessible Vehicle presentation [Requested by David Fritz on July 12, 2022]
- Bus Shelter and Results of the Survey [Requested by Shawn Fong on June 14, 2022]

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Tammy Kylo

Secretary to the Committee