

## **BART/AC Transit Interagency Liaison Committee**

### **Meeting Notes: February 8th, 2023**

Meeting notes are provided for convenience, may be incomplete, and should not be considered an official record or verbatim dialogue.

#### **1. OPENING**

##### **A. Roll Call/Welcome and Introductions**

BART: Director Robert Raburn, President Rebecca Saltzman, other position vacant

AC Transit: Director Diane Shaw, Director Chris Peeples, Director Sarah Syed, Director Murphy McCalley,

Meeting chaired by Director Raburn.

##### **B. Announcements/Public Comments**

###### **Public Comments:**

Adina Levin: This comment is in the context of local Menlo Park activities. Climate Related Communities hosted an event for the Environmental Justice element of Menlo Park's General Plan. The group was discussing a number of environmental justice related policies that were desired. The topic of bus stops arose, and particularly the stop for the Dumbarton Express that connects to BART. That stop is in bad shape, it's not a dignified or comfortable experience. It is also stressful in terms of making the connection. Improvements that could be made to the bus stop include real-time information, I'll reach out to connect this group to Director Shaw to discuss this.

#### **2. NEW DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **A. Joint State Funding Advocacy**

Presenters: Alex Walker – BART and Claudia Burgos – AC Transit

Walker: In addition to existing regional transit coordination (including General Managers' meetings and Government Affairs working group) a new structure has been set up to address the regional transit financial situation called the Backbone Group. This group includes SPUR, MTC, The Bay Area Council, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, advocates, including Ms. Levin, and four transit operators, BART, AC Transit, SFMTA, and WETA. The Backbone Groups has been meeting weekly since November and has brought together operators and other stakeholders. This committee has produced a coalition letter in response to the Governor's budget. We were disappointed to see cuts in capital funding, particularly in the TIRCP funding. The letter had over 60 signatures including community based organizations and labor. The Backbone Group has worked on this coalition building.

The group has started to talk through potential solutions, potential funding sources, and organize stakeholders as we coordinate with the California Transit Association (CTA) working on the statewide level.

Burgos: We've heard from our State legislators that we need to be plugged into the statewide effort that CTA is leading. Beverly Greene is the chair of the CTA State Legislative Committee. Coordination of a statewide ask is critical to our success. They have established a Transit Operations Funding Subcommittee. AC Transit & BART have representatives on this subcommittee. Last month, CTA put out a survey to assess the statewide operating funding support need. They are also gathering additional details from a handful of agencies, including AC Transit and BART, and are in the process of establishing principles for a statewide budget request. Bringing this back to the regional level, we are reviewing the draft principles of the CTA subcommittee, to ensure that our needs are addressed while understanding that other agencies have other needs.

Michael Pimentel (CTA) and Rebecca Long (MTC) have attended the General Managers' meeting coordinating on these issues. There has been a lot of coordination at the regional and statewide level.

There are a number of key hearings coming up of the Assembly Transportation Committee, and a joint hearing at the end of the month. We are coordinating and ensuring that we have a presence and our voices heard.

**Public Comment:** Adina Levin – Seamless Bay Area: Thank the agencies for working together and with MTC to advocate for funding from the State. The Advocacy organizations are working together. We have a petition with 800 signatures to date, and that signatories contact their legislators, so we're doing what we can to support this effort.

Shaw: Coalition building is great. The letter you put together was impressive. Thanks.

Salzman: I'd like to thank staff, glad to see you working together throughout the Bay Area and the State, this is the only way we can do it. Request that you keep updating this committee through the end of the year or until we are successful.

Syed: Echo my colleagues. Are there any reports from anyone that has been part of this advocacy the last couple of weeks, any developments we should know about?

Raburn: Many of the directors were at the State capitol last week lobbying. We were informed that the TIRCP awards were made. I'm uncertain about whether these resulted in overturning or expanding the budget for that this year.

Hursh: I was also in Sacramento with a group of General Managers around the Bay. We met with the Bay Area Caucus and it did not go well. There is a \$20 billion state deficit, and our timing was not great in that TIRCP had just been awarded and RM3 cleared. The message we received was to look somewhere else. We will continue to keep the pressure on. As much as we're the leader

and advocate for zero emissions, I tried to make the argument that we may need to look at the 2040 deadline and use some of our flexible funding to address operations funding gaps.

Salzman: Don't disagree with what Hursh said but I have a slightly more optimistic take. Between all the BART directors we met with all the legislators in the Bay Area delegation. Although the state does not have a lot of money, we also heard that they understood the enormity of the problem and that collectively we need a solution. Now we need to figure out together how we'll get the money.

Raburn: Of course the goal is to have a revenue source. We're considering a number of options in the future, including moving a revenue bond up into the near future as well as some gap funding until a bond goes out.

### **B. Presentation from California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) [Requested by Director Raburn]**

Presenter: Gillian Gillette – Cal STA

**See presentation included in packet.**

Raburn: I find this very compelling, I'm excited to see the new terminals in all the Capitol Corridor trains.

**Public Comment:** Adina Levin – Seamless Bay Area: Great to see the progress with Cal-ITP and validation of the hypothesis that this will really help people that are underbanked. In terms of supporting discounts, Monterey-Salinas has a demonstration working with a senior discount. I know Cal-ITP was looking at opportunities to include discounts for Clipper Start and seniors, and people with disabilities. What is the progress with that?

Gillette: There's a myth that you can't do discounts on debit and credit cards. We are demonstrating this in Monterey. We are working with Login.gov an agency of the General Services Administration in Washington D.C. and the California Department of Technology. We've built a connecting piece of software that allows a senior to opt-in to getting their senior discount on their general purpose debit or credit card. A transit agency will then know that and you will get your discount. The benefit of doing it this way is that it's a national model. South Coast RTA in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina used our contracts and went live in 6 weeks. Within the first 10 business days, 15% of their customers started tapping this way. We sent a senior from Monterey to South Coast RTA to make sure that this worked, and it did. We want to add additional types of discounts and are seeking to offer this program to every transit agency that works with us. Our current software is not meant to scale yet, and not just for transit but for all types of government services. This software connects a consumer with their Login.gov account to the benefits they are allowed to receive.

Salzman: Excited that it will be launching on Capitol Corridor soon. It's amazing to see the progress of Cal-ITP. It makes me more frustrated how slow Clipper2 is. We'll have to wait for

Clipper2 to provide free transfers between agencies. Is there talk about other options other than Clipper.

Eiseman: We are committed to Clipper, we have a 10 year contract. We are planning to do open-loop through the Clipper system, some of the advantages of open-loop will be achieved that way.

Salzman: Does that mean someone coming from outside the region such as Monterey couldn't use what they are using now.

Gillette: Correct, they would need to use Clipper.

Salzman: It's not 10 years, it's 11 years because we haven't launched yet. I'm concerned that we'll be very far behind by the time the Clipper contract is complete. I'm interested in BART and AC Transit staff looking into other options in addition to Clipper, not saying get rid of Clipper. I'd hate for people coming from just outside the Bay Area to realize they can't get on because something they use everywhere else in the state doesn't work here.

I'd also like to request that we bring this presentation to the BART Board sometime this year.

Shaw: Reiterate everything Director Salzman says, I have the same concern. This is really exciting. I'm also headed to Myrtle Beach in a few days to see how that works. Can I use Venmo on my phone to pay for transit? Also interested in the social benefits - when people are given other cash benefits, can these be loaded onto these cards?

Gillette: Peer to peer apps like Venmo don't work within the banking system, you're just sending money to friends. But Venmo and Cash App will issue you a debit card if you request it. You can then put that into your phone wallet and then pay that way digitally or just use the card when you use transit in Myrtle Beach.

Credit card companies are highly regulated through the banking system. They have described every merchant in the world except for government and transit. In government we over-engineer things. Some have asked if EBT cards can be tapped on transit. EBT cards are not real debit accounts, and like Clipper don't have fraud/security protections. If I could, I'd like to make sure that EBT were a pathway to financial inclusion rather than a separate pot of money that keeps those customers out of the financial system. This is possible, we just need to ask for it.

Raburn: I concur with the two speakers before me and find the benefits to the public very compelling to adopt a ubiquitous program. The prospect is that the Cal-ITP program could leapfrog over Clipper 2.

### **C. Fare Coordination and Integration Study (FCIS).**

Presenters: Michael Eiseman, Lisa Raffetto, Ryan Reeves – BART

See presentation included in packet.

**Public Comment:** Adina Levin – Seamless Bay Area: I serve on the Policy Advisory Council and have been chairing the Transit Transformation Action Plan Subcommittee. Glad to hear about the progress of BayPass. I listened to a presentation at UC Berkeley and the early data is exciting. I’m looking forward to the roll out of the free and reduced cost transfers as soon as possible. In that study their model suggested it would increase ridership and the BayPass data is starting to show that it is increasing ridership and this increase is providing mobility to those that need it.

Raburn: Earlier we had discussed setting the fare to the highest cost segment, this presentation suggested that it would be set at the segment you board first. Has this been set in stone yet?

Eiseman: It’s not set in stone. I’m going to have a hard time explaining it, and that was the problem. What we’ve landed on is a simple cap on the transfer discount amount that applies across all agencies. For most local trips it’s a free transfer. If you take a longer trip you pay the difference. It’s a free transfer up to \$2.50. We decided to prioritize a policy that was easy to explain in an environment with lots of different fares.

Syed: Would like to learn more about the pricing of the employer pilot starting later this summer. Are employers allowed to pass the cost on to their employees, are they encouraged not to? Is it a universal program where all employees get access to it or is it opt-in? Is there any financial support for employers in an industry with lower profit margins?

Reeves: It is a universal pass, available to all eligible full-time employees. That’s how we can offer deeply discounted pricing. Some will use the pass more, some less. Pricing is incremental at this point, initially set by the location, density/access to transit, and number of employees. We have a limited amount of funding to manage the forgone revenues in case we get the pricing off a bit. We don’t plan on providing subsidies to employers, but plan to price it such that employers would be able to provide it to all their employees.

Syed: Excited to see the early data analysis on the success of the student program. What is the update of the timeline for this data to be more accessible, available on a public portal.

Reeves: We just received the results of the survey from our university partners. We are hoping to have more data we can share later this summer. The evaluation is just beginning. I appreciate the recommendation to share the data more broadly.

Syed: Is there real-time data that is being collected that can be made available to advocacy groups that have been supporting funding this effort?

Reeves: Our colleagues at MTC are doing the analysis on the aggregated Clipper data. We haven’t discussed a dashboard platform to share that data but can bring that back to see what we can do.

Raburn: Preliminary results on increased ridership are very exciting and that’s the desired outcome we sought from this project. This sets the bar, whether Clipper or Cal-ITP. I hope Cal-

ITP is considering full fare integration. I encourage future reports back to ILC on the results you are getting, we're very interested in the results and this affects all the agencies in the Bay Area.

#### **D. Berkeley-El Cerrito Corridor Access Plan (BECCAP).**

Presenter: Rachel Factor – BART

Salzman: The slide you showed for El Cerrito improvements is different from the one on the website, could you update the website with this information?

When AC Transit is ready, could you present an item here on your process as you consider all of your service, would appreciate an update.

Syed: Could you share more about the on-demand analysis. I'm not surprised that proved unfeasible. It's something I get a lot of questions about and would love to understand your analysis better.

Factor: The analysis was case studies, looking at the community survey data, the residents' access options and what the reasonable demand for this service would be. We were looking at a \$70 to \$75 subsidy per trip. We also looked at AC Transit Flex service and talked to private operators such as Via and determined that it was not financially feasible. Those requesting the service were primarily from the hills areas, with higher incomes and other access options. There are other details I'm willing to share.

Shaw: Following on Director Syed's question, did you talk to the cities about that too? That may be an option for them to provide a shuttle even if on-demand doesn't work. Thanks for all the research, it helps with our network redesign.

Raburn: This is a very exciting study that coincides with the development at each of those stations. The focus today is on transit, but access improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians are also proposed. Are there bike stations proposed at the El Cerrito Plaza and North Berkeley Stations?

Factor: At El Cerrito yes, and we got TIRCP funding for the bike station. For North Berkeley, it is still to be determined. It has been proposed as part of the concept, but we have not gone through any review so we'll see.

Raburn: The recent reconfiguration at N. Berkeley has increased capacity and access to bike parking. This bodes well for the future. Many more electric bikes and scooters are sold than electric cars. The future is clear on every BART train. I'm hoping we can incorporate those, and I know they can be parked securely at existing electronic lockers.

### 3. UPDATE ON PAST ITEMS

#### A. Service and Operations Updates – BART and AC Transit

No verbal discussion

#### B. Early Bird Express Changes - BART and AC Transit

No verbal discussion

#### C. AC Transit Restroom Access - BART and AC Transit

Shaw: Thank you for the renewed focus for Fremont BART. Want to acknowledge the work being done now. Excited to see that going forward.

Raburn: Thanks for continuing to roll out the coordination between agencies by creating these restrooms breaks at our stations.

#### D. 2023 Joint Priorities - BART and AC Transit

No verbal discussion

#### E. Paratransit Update – BART and AC Transit

No verbal discussion

#### F. Regional Coordination Update - BART and AC Transit

No verbal discussion

### 4. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Funding advocacy progress (Raburn)
- Reports on the survey progress for the fare coordination and integration study (Raburn)
- Update on AC Transit Realign Project (Salzman)

### 5. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

No verbal discussion

### 6. PROPOSED DATE AND TIME OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Next meeting will be May 10<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

This will be a hybrid meeting. Committee Members to attend person. Others may attend in person or remote.

Meeting location will be 1750 Broadway at East Bay Paratransit.

We'll be following the new AB 2449 requirements – Committee members will be there in person, and if not, there are two reasons you can call out, just cause and emergency.

Dates for the remainder of the year: August 9<sup>th</sup>, November 8<sup>th</sup>.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

10:33am