

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB)
San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070**

MINUTES – JUNE 18, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: G. Graham, F. Granade, B. Jenkins, M. Kiesling, S. Richardson, J. Shukis, B. Wilfley

MEMBERS ABSENT: P. Bendix, J. Hronowski

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, M. Espinosa, R. Lake

Chair Bruce Jenkins called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., and Brian Wilfley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Jenkins said on page five that Train #3840 should read Car #3840. The minutes of the May 21, 2008 meeting were approved by the Committee with this correction.

Chair Jenkins recognized newly reappointed JPB CAC members Paul Bendix, San Mateo County representative and himself, Santa Clara County representative.

Chairperson's Report

Chair Jenkins said everyone is getting out of their cars and riding Caltrain. The car he rode to tonight's meeting was standing room only. The northbound four-car from Mountain View was packed at that point.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, distributed a handout on Caltrain special service and out-of-service train cars. He said Caltrain is more popular than ever; trains are crowded and Caltrain needs to address the issue of capacity, especially with cars out of service due to repairs. He thinks there have been more train breakdowns lately. He asked how long the 1985 gallery cars will last and if they will last until electrification is completed.

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, requested the meeting schedule, agenda and past minutes for the Caltrain Bicycle Advisory Committee. Staff will address this request.

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said the Santa Clara County Grand Jury released a report on Dumbarton Rail. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is considering diverting \$91 million of Regional Measure 2 (RM2) funding from Dumbarton Rail to the BART Warm Springs Extension Project. As a San Mateo County taxpayer, he is upset because San Mateo County invested money to purchase the Dumbarton rail corridor and participated in drafting Measure A as well as RM2 to ensure the Dumbarton project. He hopes that any decision on the Dumbarton project be delayed until after the November bond for High Speed Rail (HSR).

Presentation – Update Caltrain Bicycle Master Plan

Manager of Planning and Research Marisa Espinosa presented background on the bicycle master plan, the plan process, recommendations, key findings, next steps and summary of input from public workshops.

- Caltrain was awarded a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant in 2007 to develop a Bicycle Master Plan, which will help address Caltrain capacity issues by looking at wayside solutions. The Plan covers a five-year planning horizon.
- The year-long planning process incorporated extensive public outreach and input through workshops in San Mateo, Santa Clara and San Francisco counties.
- Seven percent of weekday riders bring bikes on board with 16 or 32 bike spaces per bike car. There are no peak-hour restrictions. One to two percent of weekday riders park bikes at stations with 1,900 bike parking spaces systemwide. Caltrain would like to increase that 1 to 2 percent. There are 250 estimated hours of bike-related dwell-time delays per year.
- Key issues of why the plan was initiated include demand for onboard bike capacity exceeding supply; physical onboard capacity at maximum and bike parking management improvement needs.
- Station workshops were completed with data collected from on-line and parking surveys, and annual passenger counts. Key findings will be presented to the Joint Powers Board (JPB) in August with adoption scheduled for the September JPB meeting.
- Plan priorities will address balancing the accommodation of all passengers, prioritizing safety when considering improvements and improving bicycle access and parking and customer service.
- Recommendations were made for issues including: locker rentals; abandoned bikes in racks; improved parking; information on parking locations/usage; improved station access; improved wayfinding within and outside of station areas and customer service.
- Parking guidelines address variety, location, minimum quantity and abandoned bike abatement.
- Access guidelines address stairs/ramps, crossings/platforms, siting of station amenities, wayfinding signage, roadway/bikeways and traffic signals.
- Issues at the top ten Caltrain stations were addressed for parking, access, information and safety with recommendations for problem areas.
- Innovative concept recommendations for addressing on-board capacity included bike-sharing, real-time information; demand-management (congestion pricing model); and folding bike subsidies.
- Next steps will address funding with grants, resource partnership opportunities and public support. Possible grant funding sources include Transportation Fund for Clean Air; Regional Bike/Pedestrian Program, State Routes to Transit, Bike Transportation Account and County Sales Tax Measures.
- Summary of public comment from public workshops included the fact that patrons wanted to hear more about addressing bikes on board issues, including trade-offs of expanding physical capacity of rolling stock, ensuring two bike cars per train consist, etc.

Public Comment

George Lane, San Francisco, takes his bike on Caltrain daily and needs it at both ends of his commute. He encourages any bike plan to include a major piece on onboard capacity, which the current master plan does not do so well.

Shirley Johnson, San Francisco, has taken her bike onboard Caltrain for eight years. She praised Caltrain's bike service. She said service in the past couple of years has been degrading for bicyclists, who are routinely bumped as trains go by with empty seats. She said trains are full as a result of 14 gallery cars being out for service repairs. She said Caltrain should have spent the grant funding for the bicycle master plan on looking at onboard bike capacity rather than a bike parking plan. She said she attended technical advisory group meetings for the bicycle master plan and asked to discuss the bikes on board issue but was told this was out of scope. She doesn't think the bicycle master plan considers customers first and it is a Caltrain-first plan. She said all the money was spent on the 1 to 2 percent of people who park at stations and the 7 percent who bring their bikes onboard are ignored. She encouraged all to read the report from customers that was distributed at the meeting by Pat Giorni. She said Caltrain has the potential to be the best commuter organization in the country and the best service to bicycles. She said as a representative of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, they are interested in working with Caltrain to resolve issues.

Tracy Corral, San Jose, has used Caltrain for 18 years and was on the technical advisory group. She is disappointed in the bicycle master plan because it's about parking. She said the technical advisory group was supposed to receive a draft of the plan before it went public but the meeting was cancelled and no one was told why it was cancelled. She said the Caltrain bicycle program is successful and needs to be built on. She suggested Caltrain have folding bike subsidies and address capacity issues.

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said the packet she distributed contained emails and blog statements from people who attended the bicycle master plan meetings. She said the bicycle master plan is a parking master plan rather than a complete master plan. Ms. Giorni said the presentation noted estimated hours of bike-related dwell-time delays per year at 250 hours but the April 2008 Caltrain performance report noted on time performance of approximately 95 percent of goal. She asked where the 250 hours came from. She noted in the presentation that county sales tax measures can be drawn on for grants and municipalities, organizations and jurisdictions must have a Bicycle Advisory Committee to receive the funds. She said the public needs to be able to access these meetings in order to access the funds, and asked for a meeting schedule. She said there are 2,300 Caltrain riders a day and there were 200 bicycle survey responses. She asked what percentage of actual good data comes from 200 out of 2,300 riders.

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, has been riding Caltrain for 30 years and occasionally brings on a bike. He asked if Caltrain keeps records of how many bicyclists are bumped per day and if these statistics are tracked in the bicycle master plan. He said the bicycle master plan does not address capacity. He said it is sometimes difficult to move a bike from one section of a Bombardier car to another because of narrow aisles. He asked if it was possible to make the lower deck of all Bombardier cars available for bike capacity and add bike capacity to other cars without taking up too much of the regular capacity.

Mike Kiesling asked if there are statistics for bike locker crimes. He asked if commuter checks could be used for bicycle purchases rather than Caltrain funding someone's second bicycle. He suggested employers fund second bicycles. Ms. Espinosa said she did not know if commuter checks could be used to purchase bicycles but thought it was a great idea to pursue. She said Caltrain will be looking at alternative funding sources in addition to grants.

Ms. Espinosa said the survey did not specifically look at locker security statistics but this data could be incorporated into the draft plan. There were survey comments about security and safety.

Deputy Director, Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard said Caltrain has heard clearly that no matter how many outside racks are available, they remain an unpopular option because of the perceived or real lack of security.

Francois Granade said he attended several of the bicycle master plan workshops to get a better understanding of the relationship between the public and Caltrain. He said there was enormous discrepancy between the study and peoples' expectations because people were asking for capacity solutions rather than a study on parking. Bicyclists would like to know ahead of time if they are going to be bumped. The bicycle master plan should formulate a goal; is the goal to increase or reduce ridership and is it simply a question of money. Investment to solve bicycle capacity problems or other station improvements is complex. Caltrain's major investment goal is electrification and there could have been more focus explaining this goal in the plan relative to other financing. Caltrain is unique in bicycle ridership and has a chance to promote bicycle ridership with collaborative communication with the biking community.

Mr. Wilfley said bicycle riders may accept the notion of a fee if there was a guarantee of an onboard spot for their bicycle because being bumped must be extremely frustrating. He said bicycle sharing is something to pursue, which will reduce the demand for onboard space.

Mr. Granade said bicycle sharing is likely to work if a network is available.

Sepi Richardson said airlines bump people even with a confirmed reservation but this is avoided if passengers check in 24 hours prior to departing. She asked if bicyclists could have a reservation system.

Ms. Bouchard replied to CAC and audience comments/questions:

- Thanked Mr. Granade for making the effort to understand the complexities of the bicycle issue.
- Caltrain is seeking to accommodate the whole of passengers and to attempt to balance the needs of all Caltrain passengers.
- Caltrain has the most liberal bicycle policy in the U.S., if not in the world with no peak period restrictions or other restrictions other than capacity.
- Apologized for not communicating the focus of the bicycle master plan ahead of time and not setting the expectation. The reason for the bicycle master plan focus is that previously Caltrain focused all of its capacity increase in onboard solutions, realized that there is a ceiling in the ability to continue to remove seats to provide for bike spaces and to take on dwell time issues that do result from accommodating a large amount of bikes in the peak periods.
- Caltrain is attempting to maintain operations and increasing bicycle capacity is more than a matter of money. Caltrain wants to figure out if there are other options to investigate that would stand to not only accommodate the 1 or 2 percent, but to draw more people because Caltrain is going to increase its ridership. This is why the focus of the Bicycle Master Plan was on wayside solutions because Caltrain has a lot more capacity to increase wayside solutions than onboard solutions.

- Caltrain is trying to work collaboratively with bikers to present solutions that could work for some percent of the population. Caltrain realizes it's not a one-size-fits all solution. Caltrain allows bikes onboard and there is no intention to remove bikes onboard or to reduce or increase capacity per bike car. Caltrain's focus is to increase capacity by increasing frequency.
- Electrification in 2025 presents the composite solution to all of these capacity issues. Caltrain increases onboard bike capacity and seated capacity by increasing train frequency.
- Electrification and use of electric multiple units (EMUs), which provides a quantum leap in performance, will provide the capacity that will bring revenue to the system but this is not presented as a solution at the cost of other projects; it is to enable other projects.
- Concerns about dissemination of bicycle plan information are being addressed and staff appreciates feedback from customers. It is not only a matter of managing expectations and giving the information, but it is also about increasing the efficiency. Caltrain does not have space in the peak for bikes; Caltrain has more space on the shoulder peaks, and if any flexibility is represented in the biking community, then bicyclists can make that choice if they know that one train is more likely to have space than the other.
- The Plan will involve an education process and conversation because there is a lack of understanding about the opportunities and constraints Caltrain faces. Part of the Plan was to try and gain an understanding of constraints and opportunities that bicyclists face.

Mr. Granade said communication works two ways. If riders know how much space will be available on a train, there will likely be dwell time savings of five to 30 seconds of the conductor's time yelling that there is no space available.

Staff Report

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- Introduced Public Information Specialist Tasha Bartholomew.
- Average weekday ridership for May 2008 is almost 42,300, an increase of 12 percent over May 2007.
- Caltrain places the safety of its riders and employees above all else. A Caltrain engineer reported a rough ride and an immediate maintenance inspection discovered a defect in the bolster assembly, which is part of the truck and the truck is the part of the vehicle the wheels attach to. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), other agencies and the riding public were immediately notified. On May 29 all 93 cars in the 1985 and 1998 series gallery cars were inspected. Fourteen 1998 gallery cars were found to have defects in the truck assembly. These cars were immediately removed from service and three cars were fitted with spare parts and are back in service. At its June 5 meeting, the JPB approved \$750,000 in emergency funding to pursue fixes. The Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility (CEMOF) facility has the necessary tools and maintenance pits to inspect and locate problems in the bolster assemblies. Caltrain and Amtrak staffs are in the process of determining a repair process, which may involve bringing in certified welders for repairs. Caltrain is looking at sending the first set of bolsters back to the original equipment manufacturer because Caltrain believes it is a system defect. Caltrain is operating with fewer-20 consists, some of which are shorter than they typically are.. Caltrain is extremely grateful for the patience of the riding public and is looking to return the cars back to service incrementally through the summer months in the manner that really does maintain the

safest running state of the railroad for the customer. Caltrain is also timing the repairs with the fall delivery of new Bombardier cars.

Public Comment

Doug DeLong, Mountain View, said the way Caltrain handled the situation involving the defective bolsters was fantastic. He complimented Caltrain on its ability to get its arms around the totality of the problem as quickly as possible.

Mr. Francois asked if there was any disruption to service as a result of the bolster defect. Ms. Bouchard said there were none. She said Caltrain appreciates the support of staff and the patience of the riding public.

Andy Chow, Redwood City, asked about a recent Caltrain problem/failure in Mountain View and fatality. Ms. Bouchard said there was a train failure that involved having to single track through the peak period. She said this sort of problem could be avoided with the use of EMUs, which has each axle powered. Ms. Bouchard will provide Mr. Chow with additional details.

Committee Comments

Mr. Wilfley reiterated the compliment to Caltrain on actions taken in notifying each entity with news of the bolster problems. He presumed it comes from a fundamental distinction in the minds of everybody who works on Caltrain of the difference between the difficulties of satisfying all the ridership in all the various guises and the pressures of funding of all the various things that make this complicated; the difference between that and rider safety. He said it's the same difference that's being applied to fatalities on the line; there's a fundamental distinction of how life can be difficult and how certain things are critically important. He would encourage everyone to think carefully about how it was that all Caltrain staff involved in the bolster incident made the right decision and how important their thinking was in that regard.

Jeff Shukis said he was asked by the Shasta/Hanchett Park Neighborhood Association in San Jose to raise an issue about noise at CEMOF. Residents have windows open with warmer weather and are hearing more noise. He said residents have been directed to call or email Caltrain regarding the problem. He said it was difficult to find the number customers can use to call in problems. He asked if Caltrain statistics include email complaints as well as phone complaints. Ms. Bouchard said she is the staff liaison for CEMOF and would address these concerns at the upcoming CEMOF meeting.

Ms. Richardson thanked Caltrain for the incredible job they do and how complicated behind-the-scene work must be dealing with funding and problem solving. She thanked Ms. Espinosa for the well-done presentation and the public for attending the meeting with their wish lists.

Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, July 16, 2008 at 6 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, Bacciocco Auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.