MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT:  P. Bendix, J. Berk, B. Jenkins, A. Levin, A. Sweet, C. Tucker, K. Gardiner

MEMBERS ABSENT:  Y. Mills

STAFF PRESENT:  J. Averill, T. Bartholomew, C. Fromson, A. Maguigad

Chair Kevin Gardner called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
A motion (Tucker/Bendix) to approve the minutes of September 18, 2013 was approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Jeff Carter, Millbrae, said last month he asked for a short explanation about how the Predictive Arrival/Departure System works and how Caltrain handles incidents such as delays or mechanical failures and how they play into the operation of the system. He said this would be interesting to hear in the future. He said last Monday in Mountain View he missed a forum regarding the future of Caltrain, the blended system, and level boarding, and he would like to hear a report about it.

LEVEL BOARDING UPDATE – Casey Fromson
Casey Fromson, Government Affairs Officer, presented:

- The Caltrain Modernization Program (CalMod) does not include funding for level boarding.
- Level boarding is important to Caltrain so passengers do not have to step up or down between the platform and train.
- Key benefits include safety, operating efficiencies, passenger convenience and passengers in wheelchairs can get on and off trains without assistance.
- There are 32 Caltrain stations and the tracks are shared with multiple tenants including freight trains.
- Currently Caltrain does not have level boarding. Caltrain has two cars: bi-level and gallery.
- Station platforms are eight inches above top of rail. Caltrain vehicles are 18 inches from top of the rail.
- Caltrain is subject to conflicting regulations. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirement states there should be level boarding with trains and platforms next to each other. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) requirement states that today Caltrain is fine, but if the platform height becomes
higher than eight inches, a gap must be provided between the platform and trains.

- To be ADA compliant mini-high platforms and various types of lifts are used.
- Intermodal stations with dedicated platforms include Essen Central Station, Germany, Los Angeles Union Station and Denver Union Station. These facilities house multiple tenants and have dedicated platforms at different heights to support the different systems.
- The future Caltrain-shared corridor will have an increase in multiple tenants with different floor and first-step heights. Freight requirements and conflicting regulations will need to be addressed.
- In the future Caltrain will strive for level boarding at 27 stations from San Francisco to Tamien. It is unclear what will happen to the five stations south of Tamien to Gilroy because this is Union Pacific right of way. At the Santa Clara and Diridon stations there would be dedicated platforms because they are shared stations with the Altamont Commuter Express, Capitol Corridor, and Amtrak. At Millbrae and the new Transbay Terminal there will be dedicated platforms for high-speed rail (HSR).
- Multiple stakeholders have asked staff why Caltrain is at 25 inches and not at eight, 18, or 50 inches. It would be ideal to have the same floor and platform heights for all trains. Staff is challenged with a corridor that supports different systems with different operating objectives.
- Caltrain has been looking at the industry for in-service vehicle options for the lightweight electric multiple units (EMUs). There are two options, single level cars with a floor height of 50 inches and bi-level cars with a floor level height of 25 inches. It is important to find service-proven options.
- Staff is recommending the bi-level at 25 inches. This provides the most number of seats which are critical to support increased ridership and this floor height will be compatible with the Bombardier cars after removal of the first step.
- As staff works on the procurement for EMUs, the CAC will be consulted for input.
- Next steps include:
  o Long-term level boarding effort in planning, analysis and timing
  o Presentations to stakeholders and Friends of Caltrain
  o Discussions used for procurement of the EMUs

Paul Bendix asked if the conflict between ADA and CPUC regulations pertains only to the mini-high platforms that support wheelchair boardings or if the gap noted in the CPUC regulation applies to everyone. Ms. Fromson said it applies to everyone and that is why the mini-high is set back from the track. She said the JPB has a waiver from the ADA regulation because of the mechanisms to help wheelchairs get onboard.

Mr. Bendix asked if wheelchairs will be able to roll onto trains using the level boarding style that Caltrain will have in the future. Ms. Fromson said in the future they can and that is why the JPB would need a waiver from the CPUC stating Caltrain would not need the spacing for a person to hang off a freight train.

Mr. Bendix said the gap on the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (MUNI) light-rail is shortened by an extension that sticks out from the rail car and asked if that
could be something Caltrain can use in the future. Ms. Fromson said all options will be considered during the EMU procurement.

Cat Tucker asked if hanging off the train is still practiced. April Maguigad, Manager, Rail Operations, said on corridor-type operations it is not common, but it is common for switching operations in a switchyard. It may be required by a Caltrain conductor depending on the circumstances. She said the waiver is the best way to get around the issue because there is not a high likelihood that the CPUC regulations would change.

Adina Levin said at the event in Mountain View there were about 45 people in attendance. She said there were discussions about the concerns for the amount of space in the Transbay, compatible platform heights with HSR and Caltrain, and potential security issues for HSR. She said Caltrain and the Transbay Terminal are working together to conduct a technical analysis of capacity issues in the Transbay and what would help reduce the issue of tight space.

Ms. Levin asked if the CPUC rule would be addressed at the regulatory level or if it would be addressed in legislature. Ms. Fromson said that would need to be looked into because it would be precedent setting for the State.

Ms. Levin said she would like capacity information with the Transbay Terminal to be made available at future CAC meetings.

Ms. Tucker asked if staff will provide updates to the CAC. Ms. Fromson said staff will provide updates about the EMU procurement and the Caltrain Strategic Plan to talk about level boarding and other goals.

Mr. Bendix asked if every station will be reconstructed to achieve the new height for level boarding if Caltrain gets the waivers it is seeking. Ms. Fromson said there will have to be station work to achieve level boarding.

Public Comment
Jeff Carter, Millbrae, said he appreciated the JPB looking at this issue because it is long overdue. He said there should be at least two entry doors per car per side. He said he is interested in hearing more about the forum in Mountain View and the capacity information at the Transbay Terminal. He said the CPUC regulation dates back to the 1940s when it was more common for people to ride on the side of freight cars. He said if there is a need for someone to ride on the side of a Caltrain car, a platform should be provided for them to stand on that is above the height of the station platforms. He said he doesn’t understand why it has to take so long for projects like electrification, level boarding, CalMod, and others.

Chair Gardiner said the Caltrain Strategic Plan is tentatively set for next month and it is a high-level policy document that the CAC will want to weigh-in on.

Ms. Levin said it would be a positive supportive statement for the CAC to produce a resolution in support of level boarding and it would help face the challenges to the
CPUC regulation and finding funding and overcoming issues. Ms. Fromson said it is very clear there is support of level boarding and there has been no opposition.

Ms. Tucker said she thought the Board was interested already. Ms. Fromson said everyone was generally supportive of it. Ms. Tucker said she is okay with supporting the opinion with a resolution.

Jonathan Berk said he opposes the resolution because he doesn’t know enough about the cost, priorities for Caltrain, or what difference it would make.

Mr. Bendix said it doesn’t seem necessary but he has no objection.

Chair Gardiner said at this point the CAC isn’t sure exactly what the resolution would be in support of without more details, so he can report to the Board there is a general interest in level boarding. He said the CAC would like to hear about the logistics of moving through the CPUC waiver and at that point the CAC might do something more formal in support or endorsement.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: GOAL SETTING PRIORITIZATION DISCUSSION – Paul Bendix, Kevin Gardiner, Cat Tucker**

Chair Gardiner said he would like to find out how the CAC would rank the items in the Work Plan. He said once this input is received the subcommittee will work with staff to find out which items the CAC can work on and be productive. He asked if the CAC has any feedback on the list.

Ms. Levin asked if anything has been done to consolidate the list. Chair Gardiner said no.

Mr. Berk said it would be nice to come up with an overriding goal to prioritize the list. He said some things would be interesting to comment on but the CAC’s effect on them would not matter as opposed to things the CAC could have a direct and immediate effect on. He said capacity is a big problem right now, and is an immediate concern for Caltrain riders. He said the response of Caltrain to the fire in Millbrae is not acceptable, and there is a general feeling of agreement about that. He said he thinks if the CAC could have an immediate impact on those things the average rider would appreciate it.

Chair Gardiner said one element that was not discussed last month was the relationship of these items to the Caltrain Strategic Plan. Some of the items will be folded into the Caltrain Strategic Plan, which the Board has specifically asked to hear the CAC’s input on.

Ms. Levin said putting input into the Caltrain Strategic Plan should be a CAC priority, and she would include operating funding, a medium and long-term capital plan, and a set of service goals and vision. She said this would address incident response and the decisions and input the CAC makes now will have an effect on Caltrain as it will be in 2020. She said another item might be topics relating to station area planning, land use
and transportation policy decisions being made at the city and county level that affect how many people will be likely to use Caltrain.

Ms. Tucker said land-use planning is way outside the scope of this committee.

Chair Gardiner said Mr. Bendix made the point about framing managing capacity in the next five years to get five more years use out of the existing stock.

Ms. Tucker said her priorities are managing capacity, incident response, and dedicated funding.

Alex Sweet said communication to riders could be a broader task under incident response and the CAC’s job is to be the liaison between Caltrain and the riders not just when there is an emergency but about rules and regulations. She said the CAC can’t solve the bike capacity issue but they can improve communication about it. She said it is more tangible to use the CAC to teach people why the trains are at capacity, what Caltrain is doing, what Caltrain anticipates for the future, and what strategies Caltrain is using to increase capacity or decrease demand.

Mr. Bendix said he would like to focus on communicating the need for dedicated funding, CalMod and the relationship between HSR and Caltrain, and grade separations.

Bruce Jenkins said his priorities are stable funding for operations and capital funding.

Chair Gardiner said his priorities are managing capacity, incident response and communications, and dedicated funding.

Mr. Berk said he would put communications as his third choice.

Chair Gardiner said the CAC has a cluster of votes for managing capacity, incident response and communication, and funding. He said he is not sure if funding is part of the Caltrain Strategic Plan.

Ms. Levin said some topics including grade separations and operating funding and capital funding are under the Caltrain Strategic Plan, so if the Caltrain Strategic Plan was on the priority list it would include those items.

Chair Gardiner said the Caltrain Strategic Plan is already something the CAC will be working on so adding capacity and incident response is plenty for the CAC.

Mr. Berk asked what the CAC envisions the action plan to be. Chair Gardiner said maybe a subcommittee could work with or supplement staff, or maybe it would just be asking staff to schedule topics for future agendas. He said the CAC should be cognizant of staff workloads where the CAC can tap into the existing work and be productive instead of creating more work for staff.
Ms. Maguigad said staff wants to find out where the CAC’s interests are so staff can be prepared to educate the CAC on those topics. Then the CAC can advise the Board of their position or communicate with the community.

Mr. Berk said Caltrain staff is concerned about the same things and are working on them, but somewhere there is disconnect because from the CAC’s perspective, some things are not working. He said in order to find out where the disconnect is the CAC should list the problems as they see them and ask for explanations about why the problems are there and why the CAC is wrong about them.

Chair Gardiner said the CAC can let staff know what they feel the problems are and find out from staff the nature of the problems and constraints, and then come up with ideas about how to help.

Mr. Berk said he suggests a subcommittee meet and come up with questions that go to staff and then staff could present to the CAC with those questions in mind.

Ms. Tucker said there may be some issues about which the CAC simply needs to be informed, and there may be some issues that the CAC can work on and help with.

Mr. Berk said there are things that make no sense because he is not knowledgeable about them and they might make sense after a report and explanation from staff. Mr. Berk said he would be happy to collate questions about these topics and then relay them to the chair so they can be addressed with staff.

Chair Gardiner said he could send the questions to staff in anticipation of the presentation so they would be prepared to respond to them. He said the committee should send Josh Averill, Assistant District Secretary, their questions about the topics, who will send them to Mr. Berk to collate and consolidate, and then they will be presented at the next CAC meeting. He said the three topics the CAC has agreed on are managing capacity, incidence response and communications, and the Caltrain Strategic Plan.

Mr. Berk said the questions should be sent to Mr. Averill by November 11 so Mr. Berk could consolidate and return them for the agenda posting by November 15.

**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT – Kevin Gardiner**
No report.

**STAFF REPORT – April Maguigad**
Ms. Maguigad said:
- On-time Performance (OTP) for September was 90.9 percent.
- The OTP for October so far is at 92.9. Excluding the Monday numbers due to the fatality, it rises to 95.5 percent.
- Ridership for August was 1,466,168, an 8.6 percent increase over August 2012.
- Average weekday ridership for August is 53,840.
- The 150th Anniversary of the rail corridor is this Saturday at the Menlo Park Station. It is a family friendly event with booths and a reenactment of the grand picnic.
The rail corridor was done in two segments so a second, more formal event will be in January in Santa Clara.

- Giants games are over and ridership was down.
- Sharks games are on and staff expects to see an increase in ridership.
- Stanford football against University of California is in November and staff expects an increase in service.
- Delay information is displayed on the website. Customers can choose a station on the website and it will display the arrival times of the next trains to that station. Staff working on additional functionality for that feature.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS
Ms. Levin asked what is supposed to happen to a rider waiting on a platform when there is a significant delay in the service. Ms. Maguigad said that warrants deeper discussion and should be addressed when incident response is agendized.

Mr. Jenkins left at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Berk said at the last meeting Michelle Bouchard, Director, Rail Transportation, said she would get back to the committee about why Caltrain does not keep track of early trains. He said at the next meeting he would like to know why it is impossible to do or why Caltrain is not doing it. He said the only reason there are early trains is because they are not tracked. He said the conductors have an incentive to run the trains early because they don’t want late trains.

Chair Gardiner asked if it is a common problem. Mr. Berk said it happens often from the San Francisco Station.

Ms. Sweet said she has not had that experience. She thinks they close the doors because riders walk down the full length of the platform and they can’t hear conductors tell them to come aboard. She said maybe they close doors to the station to allow everyone to get onboard so the train can leave on time. Mr. Berk said if that is true they need to adjust their schedules. He said he doesn’t think that is the problem.

Mr. Bendix said he would like an update next month on any news to report on wheelchair access at 22nd Street and South San Francisco stations.

DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING:
November 20, 2013 at 5:40 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 3rd Floor Gallagher Conference Room, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, CA.

Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.