

JPB CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building
1250 San Carlos Avenue San Carlos, CA 94070

MINUTES – APRIL 16, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Bendix, J. Hronowski, G. Graham, B. Jenkins, M. Kiesling, S. Richardson, J. Shukis, B. Wilfley

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: F. Granade

STAFF PRESENT: M. Bouchard, C. Dunn, R. Lake, L. Larano

Chair Bruce Jenkins called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and Gerald Graham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of March 19, 2008 were approved by the Committee.

Chairperson's Report

Chair Jenkins invited everyone to a joint meeting of the National Association of Rail Passengers and the Rail Passenger Association of California at the Sacramento Rail Museum on Saturday, April 19 at 10 a.m. The cost is approximately \$25, which includes lunch. Speakers include Don Phillips, special columnist for *Trains* Magazine; Bill Bronte, Rail Program Chief; Jonathan Hutchins of Amtrak; Gene Skoropowski of Capital Corridor and Don Leavitt of High Speed Rail (HSR).

Public Comment

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said there are now signs in the San Jose station that indicate which platform trains will arrive. The new signs do not include information about ACE trains or Amtrak. Rail Transportation Deputy Director Michelle Bouchard thanked Mr. Chow for recognizing the signage work at Diridon. There are five signage cases with changeable information in addition to the Visual Messaging System (VMS) and public announcement system for station agents to make announcements of last minute changes.

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, reported:

- Complimented Caltrain on the work completed at the Burlingame station. He hopes the work will not need to be altered to accommodate HSR or electrification. He asked when the electronic message boards will be operational. Ms. Bouchard said she would get the information to Mr. Carter.
- After the March 19 CAC meeting four people with bicycles were bumped from Train 723. One of the individuals chained his bike to the railing and boarded the train. He said the next train was also full. He said Caltrain is addressing wayside issues but it is not always practical.

- Why is the southern-most car on the weekend baseball train closed, which increases dwell times when passengers wait at this car. Ms. Bouchard said Amtrak Customer Relations Manager Jon Brown was present at the meeting and suggested Mr. Carter give him details of the specific train and closed cars in order to explain the cause of the problem.
- How is the Go-Pass figured in the ridership data each month. Ms. Bouchard said the Go-Pass is a program offered by Caltrain to local area employers, which requires the employer to purchase a pass for every employee with a very low annual price. The Go-Pass allows unlimited rides on Caltrain for their employees. Each pass is a two-zone monthly pass valid for an entire year. Data from surveys before and after use of the Go-Pass determined the pricing.

Presentation – Joint Powers Board Capital Program Master Schedule

Program Planning Manager Liria Larano explained the format and legend of the Master Schedule, projects in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, electrification, systemwide projects, rolling stock and engineering projects and studies.

- San Francisco County projects include: completion of North Terminal Phase 1; bridge replacements at 22nd, 23rd and Paul avenues and at Quint and Jerrold.
- San Mateo County projects include: South San Francisco station improvements; San Bruno grade crossing project; Atherton and Broadway removal of hold-out rule; outboard platform project at Burlingame; bridge replacements at Poplar, Santa Inez, Monte Diablo and Tilton avenues; grade crossing program; Dumbarton Extension and a parking enforcement program.
- Santa Clara County projects include: California Avenue platform; underpass and bridge deck repair; Palo Alto station underpass and platform; Santa Clara platform and pedestrian underpass; South Terminal Phase 1 platform work and Phase 2 track from Diridon to the Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility (CEMOF); bridge replacement at Los Gatos Creek; Guadalupe bridge repair; grade crossing program and a parking enhancement program.
- Systemwide projects include signal optimization projects, communications and fare collection.
- Replacement and enhancement of rolling stock is in the design phase.
- Systemwide track rehabilitation is ongoing through FY 2015.
- Fencing projects are ongoing until FY 2010.
- State of good repair projects will begin in June 2008.
- Infrastructure database including aerial mapping and track charts are in the design phase.

Presentation Questions/Comments

Brian Wilfley asked how Dumbarton interacts with electrification and if it will be an electrified railway. Ms. Larano said the Dumbarton Extension Project is very preliminary at this time and information is being updated. It will not be electrified.

Mr. Wilfley asked if the platform at the Santa Clara station is a shared platform with Capitol Corridor. Ms. Bouchard said there are three tracks there. The overall project will put a tunnel in to remove the hold-out rule. The tunnel will go from the west side where there will be an outside board platform to a center board platform that will reside between main tracks one and two. At this point it is a shared platform with Caltrain, ACE and Capitol Corridor.

Michael Kiesling asked about the South Terminal Platform Project. Ms. Larano said two new platforms will be put in on the west side of the existing platform at the Diridon station.

Sepi Richardson asked about grade crossings at 25 locations. Ms. Bouchard said this project involves every single vehicular rail grade crossing in San Mateo County.

Mr. Wilfley asked if mini-highs are included in the Master Schedule. Ms. Bouchard said one of the components of the Caltrain 2025 project is a level boarding project to deal with issues related to level boarding whether it be mini-high or level boarding for the entire platform. The goal is to develop an optimal solution for future service that has to accommodate three types of rolling stock with different platform heights. The project involves a major regulatory component and is at the very beginning of the planning stage.

Mr. Kiesling asked how much right of way will be unfenced when the fencing project is completed. Ms. Larano said she did not know but can find out. When the current phase of fencing is completed, staff asked for funds to study what else is needed for the next phase, if a next phase is necessary.

Public Comment

Doug DeLong, Mountain View, asked about the Voice Radio Improvement Project. Ms. Larano said Caltrain is putting the Voice Radio Project together, and it is important because Caltrain is getting into a heavy construction phase and it is important to have an improved radio system. It is a key milestone to allow multiple construction projects at the same time.

Ms. Bouchard said she couldn't emphasize enough the amount of thought and coordination that goes into creating the JPB Capital Program Master Schedule. She said there are many constraints that come from operations. Caltrain is maximizing the resource from operating the railroad and all the work in the Master Schedule must be done without undue delay to trains. The goal is to bring the railroad to such a state of good repair and/or complete projects that give such a level of reliability that the railroad will be able to successfully maintain and sustain through a prolonged electrification program.

Public Comment

Mr. Chow said there was a two-year weekend shutdown during the Baby Bullet project. He asked if there is an opportunity for some kind of service reduction or readjustment where some of the construction could be consolidated. Ms. Bouchard said the General Manager and operations are not in favor of weekend shutdowns but staff has begun to contemplate looking at alternatives on how to complete the electrification program in particular. There is a price to pay for keeping the operation rolling during construction because this limits access to the track. Ms. Bouchard said sometimes there is a bargain or sacrifice that needs to be made in order to get the project completed that often impacts customers. Bridge replacement projects do require a shutdown and could involve a bus bridge. Options to closures are being studied. Ms. Larano said Caltrain is not accounting for any shutdowns in the budget for electrification.

Mr. Chow asked if the non-vehicle hardware component of electrification is ready to go. He asked if the timetable was hard enough and if there was a variable in terms of funding

particularly from Santa Clara County. Ms. Larano said Caltrain has finished 35 percent design. Risk assessment has been completed and identified to management who are dealing with that. She said funding is an issue and everyone advocating for the project will certainly have an impact.

Staff Report

Ms. Bouchard reported the following:

- Giants baseball service began in April with robust ridership but less compared to last year's season for the home run record.
- Average weekday ridership for March is about 36,500, an increase of 5 percent from March 2007.
- Fare revenue is over \$3 million, which is over budget for March.
- Fuel is budgeted at \$2.40 per gallon with current cost at \$3 per gallon, which will be a challenge to this year's budget.
- Visited the Thunder Bay, Ontario manufacturing facility to view Caltrain's new Bombardier rail cars. The first completed car was moved today from Ontario to Plattsburgh, New York, where interior work will be completed. Delivery of the first car is expected in the fall.
- JPB recruitment is ongoing with a term expiring in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. An application is on the Caltrain Web site; applications are due May 14.

Jeff Shukis asked if Caltrain buys any fuel on long-term contracts. Ms. Bouchard said no but staff goes through cost benefit exercises. She said a long-term contract secures a price but there is always a risk with hedging that a lower cost would be available. The CEMOF fueling facility will be operational soon, which will save \$0.12 per gallon in fueling costs.

Ms. Richardson asked about budget plans for increased fuel costs. Ms. Bouchard said staff is currently preparing the FY 2009 preliminary budgets. Fuel prices and the Amtrak labor contract settlement are major influencing factors on the 2009 budget.

Mr. Wilfley asked if Congress had planned for the results of the Amtrak labor contract settlement. Ms. Bouchard said the idea is that Amtrak is going back to Congress in the Appropriations Bill to ask for a certain percent. Amtrak has planned to cover 40 percent of the settlement costs and they are going back to Congress to ask for the remaining 60 percent. The budget will also be impacted by higher wages for Amtrak.

Committee Comments

John Hronowski is riding more weekday trains and notices more four-car trains. Ms. Bouchard said there are no additional trains. The new timetable change on March 3 resulted in a complete change of the consist turn but the compliment of trains that operate the service are still 16 five-car trains and four four-car trains. This change might mean more of the five-car trains on peak runs.

Mr. Graham said BART is evaluating Wi-Fi and asked about the Caltrain Wi-Fi project. Ms. Bouchard said there were non-responsive bids for the project but Caltrain is stepping back to evaluate options.

Paul Bendix reported:

- Read an article about Caltrain's lead role in the Bay Area rail planning process. He requested a presentation on what Caltrain brings with expertise, general philosophy and what is identified as roles and issues. He would also like a presentation on how Caltrain recruits conductors and driver and how they are trained.
- Notices Amtrak buses at Caltrain stations and asked if they go to Emeryville. He said there were no signs or instructions where the buses go. Mr. Kiesling said they go to Emeryville.
- Saw some conductors on the train tonight that were extremely helpful boarding bicycles, which reduces the boarding time by a third.

Ms. Richardson reported:

- Asked for an update on the budget and said the CAC members or a subcommittee were available for help.
- Attended a progress seminar and said that 70 percent of homeowners in San Mateo County are seniors. She asked what Caltrain can do to attract this population to public transportation.

Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 21, 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 6:54 p.m.