

JPB CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Giant's Executive Offices, AT&T Park
3rd and Berry Streets, San Francisco CA 94107

MINUTES JANUARY 21, 2009

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, J. Brown (Amtrak), J. Cockle,
M. Collins (Amtrak), W. Hastings, R. Lake

Chair Bruce Jenkins called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Deputy Director of Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard introduced Manager of Rail Operations John Cockle. His work focuses on Amtrak contractors and deployment of day-to-day services including customer service and train operations.

Election of Officers – 2009

Nominating Committee members John Hronowski, Bruce Jenkins and Sepi Richardson recommended Gerald Graham for Chair and John Hronowski for Vice Chair. After no nominations were made from the floor, a motion (Jenkins/Wilfley) to elect Mr. Graham for Chair and a motion (Richardson/Kiesling) to elect Mr. Hronowski for Vice Chair was approved by a unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of December 17, 2008 were approved by the Committee.

Public Comment

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said Caltrain can save money on printing because the schedule printed in black and white is easier to read than the previous schedule printed in color.

Mike Kiesling said the schedule is easier to read because the stations are listed in the middle of the schedule.

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, had three comments: Why have there been some breakdowns in the past couple of months; bicyclists are being turned away; and weekend express service is expensive but he would like to see service scheduled.

Presentation – Positive Train Control

Operations Construction Liaison Will Hastings presented details of positive train control (PTC) and how it relates to Caltrain.

- Older train control systems alert the engineer to slow down or apply the brakes after a train has passed a STOP signal but the train could still occupy a piece of track that was already occupied by another train.
- The Federal Railroad Safety Act of 2008 was enacted as a result of a deadly train accident in southern California when a passenger train passed through a red STOP signal and collided head on with a Union Pacific freight train.

- The Act required a PTC system to be developed, which would prevent train collisions; control train speeds, protect maintenance personnel working in authorized limits; protect trains from operating over improperly lined hand operated switches and PTC systems must be interoperable from railroad to railroad.
- Caltrain is working on a PTC system called Communications Based Overlay Signal System (CBOSS), which will be able to predict train behavior as it interacts with the signal system and physical characteristics of the railroad and then prevent an incident based on that prediction.
- CBOSS will also permit the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to approve new lightweight electrical multiple units (EMUs) to operate on Caltrain; allow crossing gates to be activated after a station stop with engineer sounding the whistle; enforce scheduled station stops; allow a train to increase speed if a signal ahead becomes more favorable anywhere in the block; allow speeds to be maintained longer as trains approach signals that require reduced speed and regulate crossing gates to provide safe but minimal down time, which will relieve auto congestion.
- CBOSS is a key to Caltrain 2025 because it will allow safe operation of mixed fleet; give more flexibility for protecting construction projects; allows more through put giving more trains per hour than is now possible and contains mandated interoperability requirements and Caltrain will be ready to integrate HSR operations into the traffic mix.
- In order to complete CBOSS implementation, design goals must be reviewed and completed; Caltrain must reach out to other passenger railroads for joint development due to costs of development; interoperability standards have yet to be defined by the FRA and implementation by 2015 is possible depending on funding availability.

Mike Kiesling said that nationally the requirement with freight trains that seems really hard to implement is the problem dealing with hand-thrown switches, especially out in the middle of nowhere. He said it would seem at the national level that this is the one point that is heinous to deal with. Mr. Hastings said that is the direction everyone is going and trying to make what is called a vital system so that there will be some kind of a device on the switch that is going to talk to the PTC system and say, "Yes, I'm okay or no, I'm in the wrong position." This is a major problem to implement for all railroads.

Brian Wilfley asked how Caltrain appears for rollout if all systems must be interoperable. Mr. Hastings said by getting all design criteria down first. The interoperability items will be more of a data communication-type problem. The system will be designed with the trend for the freight railroad to go for one type of system so the Caltrain system can be designed and built around certain assumptions in that direction. There is so much data that needs to go back and forth between trains, and the wayside and operations, that in urban areas such as the Los Angeles Basin, it can't radiologically be done and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is looking into ways to give the railroad more data capacity.

Ms. Bouchard said there is a PTC user group and Caltrain is looking to talk with other potential users of CBOSS. Part of that group are the freight operators because Caltrain operates on Union Pacific (UP) tracks and UP also operates on Caltrain tracks; it is in the best interest for all to work together and coordinate designs that will accommodate each other.

Sepi Richardson asked if this is a software system or a control system. Mr. Hastings said it will be a combination of software and new equipment, which will be on the trains, in the signal houses and in operation centers with data linkage among all sites.

Ms. Richardson asked if this would require hiring personnel. Mr. Hastings said this is one of the issues staff is working on and Caltrain will need someone to maintain the system because it is a vital system and it must operate for the railroad to operate.

Ms. Richardson asked if Caltrain would be contracting with a group that has CBOSS or if Caltrain will have its own system. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain has a robust signal group right now but with a CBOSS system Caltrain would need to bolster it. Caltrain would also have to import or grow talent during the construction phase for the electrification project.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, asked if a GPS system could be used. Mr. Hastings said GPS is used in the Northwest corridor and a similar system is used in nuclear submarines and is one option, but no one has come up with a solution.

Ms. Richardson asked what the total cost will be for PTC to 2015. Ms. Bouchard said the project will be in the low hundreds of millions of dollars. The 2015 goal is being pursued with such zeal for Caltrain to meet forecasted future ridership demands, safety and customer service.

Ms. Richardson asked about revenue sources for the PTC project. Ms. Bouchard said all available revenue sources such as local and federal funding are just beginning to be explored.

Doug Delong, Mountain View, said PTC could be the first substantive component of electrification to come to fruition and Caltrain seems to be on the leading edge.

Ms. Richardson asked if there will be controls on every train and what will happen if two trains are coming towards each other. Mr. Hastings said there will be controls on every train. He said currently if two trains are heading towards each other, the signals will start to slow them down. With PTC, the CBOSS system will be reading those signals and if the brakes are not applied or the speed of the trains reduced, CBOSS, with its calculations, will read the active communication signals from the trains, know what is up ahead and take over emergency operations and stop both trains.

Mr. Wilfley asked if PTC is adaptable to automated train control. Mr. Hastings said Caltrain has not gone there. There is not that degree to regulate speed that closely and there is no interest in replacing engineers. He said PTC is an excellent system.

Chair Graham said it is great that Caltrain is a pioneer in PTC. He thanked Mr. Hastings for the outstanding presentation.

Chairperson's Report

Chair Graham said the January meeting of the Joint Powers Board was cancelled.

Staff Report

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- Thanked Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Graham for serving so well as chair and vice chair during 2008. She is looking forward to working with Mr. Graham and Mr. Hronowski in 2009.
- Requested the CAC submit ideas for presentations in 2009.

- Caltrain is working on how the passage of the HSR bond will affect operations and impacts on the capital program that have not previously been issues. In view of that context, Bob Doty will be invited back to the CAC to review the progress of Caltrain 2015.
- There is cautious optimism with Caltrain ridership compared to incautious optimism in 2001 before the dot.com bust, which created local job losses and a perceived benefit of driving on Highways 101 and 280. The difference now is the very relevant model of operating the railroad with the Baby Bullet service with competitive travel times between San Francisco and San Jose.
- Performance statistics for November 2008 compared to November 2007
 - a) Average weekday ridership increased 8.9 percent.
 - b) On time performance returned to the over 95 percent level at 96.29 percent. Amtrak contractors were thanked for their work to reach this level.
 - c) Caltrain had the fewest minutes of mechanical delays for miles traveled this year.
 - d) On time performance for December 2008 decreased to 94.07 percent.
 - e) The 25-cent fare increase on the base fare was implemented on January 1, 2009. A zone fare was not considered due to difficult economic times and decreased fuel costs. Staff was expecting a \$4 per gallon fuel charge and price decreases have helped. The fuel budget is a bit closer to the number expected with increased revenue in the farebox.
- The Fiscal Year 2010 budget process has begun, which involves reviewing ways to economize and cut expenses in terms of the operating budget especially with efficiencies.

Ms. Richardson asked if decreased fuel costs would negate the fare increase. Ms. Bouchard said this is not contemplated with the current economic situation.

- The new 8-ride ticket, which will replace the 10-ride ticket, will be implemented on March 2. The 8-ride ticket will be stamped rather than cut and will help with reliability issues on validators.
- Due to Caltrain's robust construction program the evening and weekend train schedules have shifted later roughly 10 minutes after 8 p.m. with the same clock face schedule. The schedule will be posted online in approximately three weeks. This will help expedite the Caltrain construction program.
- Special event service included:
 - a) The Holiday Train operated the weekend of December 6 and 7.
 - b) The Emerald Bowl on December 27 with the Cal Bears had ridership comparable to a Giant's ballgame.
 - c) New Year's Eve fares on Caltrain were free after 11 p.m. Ridership was a record 4,300 to 4,500, which was helped by good weather.
 - d) The Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Freedom Train carried a record of approximately 2,200 passengers on January 19.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, asked how many cars were used for Martin Luther King Jr. holiday service. Ms. Bouchard said crews handled two-five car trains.

- Upcoming service includes Supercross at AT&T Park on January 31 and Giant's KNBR Fan Fest on February 7.
- Caltrain annual counts have commenced and will continue through January and February. Data is typically presented to the JPB at its May meeting.

Mr. Kiesling asked if there would be a combined January/February JPB meeting. Ms. Bouchard said the next JPB meeting is scheduled for February 5.

Mr. Kiesling commented on Ms. Richardson's question concerning reversal of the fare increase. He said the fuel surcharge resulted from \$4 per gallon fuel and while gas prices have gone down, everyone's budgets have gone through the floor so now it's a horrible economic position surcharge.

Mr. Kiesling said ridership for the Emerald Bowl was as busy as he has ever seen for AT&T Park.

Chair Graham asked if the fare increase has affected pass sales. Ms. Bouchard said staff will have to wait for January data. Staff has not heard anything in terms of comments and customers seem to understand the need for a fare surcharge.

Public Comment

Doug Delong, Mountain View, suggested a presentation on how to modestly increase Caltrain bicycle capacity. Ms. Bouchard said this could be scheduled.

Committee Comments

Mr. Wilfley said he took the Baby Bullet to Mountain View today and it was the most relaxing 45 minutes in weeks. He said customers realize Caltrain is very efficient for special event service and are using the service.

Mr. Hronowski said he was on a train on December 31 that was stranded due to an incident in Mountain View. He said the crew was to be commended for the announcements in Mountain View and on his arrival in Redwood City.

Paul Bendix said his Caltrain trip to tonight's meeting was also very pleasant but there was no onboard wheelchair lift available. He asked if there are plans for future lifts for speed boarding similar to the Menlo Park station. Ms. Bouchard said the version one group of lifts was installed at Baby Bullet stations. The version two group was installed the following year. There were wheelchair lift issues associated with cars out of service for bolster repair and Mr. Hastings has pushed forward a project that will provide mini-high platforms in Redwood City, Menlo Park, Sunnyvale, San Mateo and San Carlos stations.

Mr. Jenkins asked if there was any progress on additional express weekend service. Ms. Bouchard said this type of service is not out of the question but weekends provide the time for necessary maintenance and construction on the railroad.

Francois Granade said he recently traveled on the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and it is a much smaller operation than Caltrain, does not have ticketing machines and has only five stops. He said there is no limit to bicycles onboard.

Chair Graham asked if ACE uses a 10-ride ticket. Mr. Granade said yes. He asked if the conductors on ACE are employed by Amtrak. Ms. Bouchard will follow up on this question.

Mr. Kiesling said he did a grand circle tour right before the New Year on Caltrain, ACE and Amtrak back to San Francisco. He said ACE needs to have signage at the Diridon station with details of how to purchase ACE tickets. Caltrain has a ticket window and vending machines. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain owns the Diridon station and can facilitate with ACE signage.

Ms. Richardson hopes that there will be more frequent Caltrain service in the future. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain 2015 is targeting this goal.

Ms. Richardson said some train seats are dirty and asked how often seats are cleaned. Ms. Bouchard said the trash in the train is picked up after every trip. If a mess is reported, equipment can be switched out and if not reported, it is completed overnight. Ms. Bouchard said vinyl seats are easier to maintain than cloth and there is a capital project to change the fabric seats to vinyl.

Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 6 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070, 2nd Floor, Boccaccio Auditorium

Adjournment at 7:09 p.m.