

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

MINUTES DECEMBER 17, 2008

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: P. Bendix

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

Chair Bruce Jenkins called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Sepi Richardson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes – October 15, 2008

In Committee Comments on page 5, Gerald Graham would like his comment added from the October 15, 2008 meeting that conductors should have more flexibility at times and should give riders a break if they can on validating tickets be included. The Committee approved the minutes with this addition.

Mr. Graham said when he was coming to tonight's meeting using a 10-ride ticket, he got on at the Millbrae Intermodal Station and the validator on the southbound platform was not working. He had to go upstairs to find a validator that worked. When he arrived in San Carlos to validate his ticket he found the validator on the southbound platform was also broken. He said the northbound validator was broken the last time he tried to validate his ticket; he knows the problem is going to be fixed. Deputy Director of Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard said steps are being taken to correct these problems.

Chairperson's Report

A Nominating Committee for 2009 officers was appointed by the Chair. The committee includes John Hronowski from San Francisco County, Ms. Richardson from San Mateo County and Chair Jenkins from Santa Clara County. Mr. Graham was nominated for Chair and Mr. Hronowski for Vice Chair. Elections of officers will take place at the January 21, 2009 meeting.

Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said the price of oil has dropped dramatically in the last few months and asked what the current price for diesel fuel is for Caltrain. He asked if the price remains down will Caltrain continue with the fare increase because it was primarily a result of skyrocketing fuel prices. He asked that since the price is down will SamTrans, Caltrain, VTA and Muni be able to pool their resources to lock in a low fuel price for a lengthy period of time so they don't have to deal with fluctuating fuel prices and huge fuel costs.

Ms. Bouchard said current fuel prices are less than anticipated from the high of more than \$4 per gallon in July 2008. The Joint Powers Board (JPB) passed the Fiscal Year 2009 budget based on an average price of \$3 per gallon. At its December 2008 meeting the JPB authorized amendment of the FY2009 budget upwards in the fuel line item to reflect an increased cost over the budget.

Ms. Bouchard said during the dot.com bust in 2001, history teaches us that it repeats itself and one of the outcomes of the dot.com bust was that the member agencies were unable to contribute their share because they were losing sales tax revenues and, therefore, had the choice of maintaining their own local services or maintaining Caltrain service. Caltrain was fortunate to be proactive and work corporately with Amtrak to come up with a great solution, which was to launch Baby Bullet. She said Caltrain is preparing for some rough times so, in terms of increasing fares, the JPB believes it is still mandated because of fuel prices and also great uncertainty as to how much Caltrain is going to bring in from sales tax revenues.

Ms. Bouchard said staff is looking into fuel hedging for both Caltrain and SamTrans and there are issues on both sides.

Presentation – Caltrain Electrification Project Update

Program Manager for Electrification Rick Schmedes said he has been with the project for more than three years. He will present a status of where the project stands today and details of some main project components.

- The initial project concept was introduced in 1988; project planning began in 1999; environmental/conceptual engineering was completed in 2000-2005 and program milestones were updated in 2006.
- Electrification supports Caltrain's future operational growth, is compatible with regional interfaces and supports statewide initiatives.
- Main components of electrification are traction power supply (TPS); an overhead catenary system (OCS) and communication system.
- Pictures of the project showed minimal visual impact from outside the Caltrain right of way; integration of OCS poles into station design; multi-track design in terminal areas; right of way modifications and vegetation clearing requirements; two electrical substations in South San Francisco and San Jose with incoming PG&E power lines; fiber optic network links control center with field devices; TPS and OCS and communications within one system design and rolling stock options, which include electric multiple units (EMU) and electric locomotives.
- There are no adverse impacts of the environmental assessment and environmental impact report (EIR). Benefits include reduced train noise and vibration, substantially lower air pollutant emissions; lower energy consumption (electric vs. diesel locomotives) and travel time reduction due to enhanced acceleration/deceleration characteristics of electric vehicles.
- Current electrification activities include coordination of project details with PG&E, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Union Pacific Railroad, VTA, Transbay Terminal and High Speed Rail (HSR).
- Construction of the project systems is scheduled for 2011-2013.
- Estimated costs in 2008 dollars including TPS and OCS electrification systems, signals, communications, grade crossings and infrastructure total \$608 million.
- Project risks include funding constraints, regulatory support, development pressures along the Caltrain right of way, managing construction under live operations and community constraints, coordination with other capital projects and maintenance and regional agencies and public support.

Ms. Richardson said storms can affect utility lines and asked how that will impact the system. Mr. Schmedes said one reason for clearing trees from the right of way is to protect against the possibility of branches coming down on the electrical lines. Vegetation near the right of way is cleared about 10 feet behind the OCS poles and, in most cases, is still within the right of

way. As part of the environmental work, an arborist went through the entire right of way and reported on the exact amount of tree trimming required because cities are concerned about this. Mr. Schmedes said there is also a protection system as part of the traction power; if a branch falls on the electrical line a circuit breaker will trip immediately and will de-energize that section of the line and minimize any sort of damage.

Ms. Richardson asked if the idea of underground utilities was explored so there wouldn't be a need for overhead wires. Mr. Schmedes said, that as part of the early conceptual engineering, a BART-type third rail system was reviewed. It would not work on the Caltrain system because it is not a totally fenced off right of way and there are many grade crossings. He said having the wire at ground level would be a safety issue because the third rail power gets picked up by trains with a shoe that slides along the rail that is energized. The contact between the shoe and a train has a practical limit of speed. There is a voltage issue because in order to push the heavy bi-level trains Caltrain uses there must be a higher voltage for this type of system for the distances and speed involved.

Brian Wilfley asked what the total power requirements of the system are. Mr. Schmedes said each of the two transformers at each substation will be regulated at 60 megawatts. Total power requirements in the horizon year of 2035, which is the full five-minute headway, 12 trains per hour in each direction – fully loaded is about 110 megawatts. Each one of the transformers has to be able to pick up the load in case one transformer was lost.

Ms. Richardson asked if the public right of ways for substations and electrical facilities are permanent easements. Mr. Schmedes said one of the initiatives, which will be in the environmental update, is to move each of the electrical facilities, if possible, to JPB property. The two large substations are actually sited immediately adjacent to PG&E in an industrial area with lots of electrical equipment and are off the right of way by no more than a couple of thousand feet. This will minimize the distance to bring the power to the tracks.

Ms. Richardson asked where the project would be now if the whole project was organized into three phases. Mr. Schmedes said, with a project of this size, the planning and environmental work take about a third to 40 percent of the time because all options need to be reviewed. With the funding in place and the environment document signed off, staff could start to move more quickly. Taking planning and design and construction and operations, staff is pretty much done with planning and environment work and needs about four and a half years to design and build the system, which would be the middle portion of the project.

Mr. Hronowski asked when the decision on rolling stock has to be made. Mr. Schmedes said it needs to be made as soon as possible in order to optimize the design but many of the possible units are very similar.

Ms. Bouchard said the choice of rolling stock is very much linked to the process staff is going through with the Federal Railroad Administration. The EMU option represents the longest lead time, and this is the preferred solution, so staff is looking at roughly a five-year procurement timeframe.

Ms. Richardson asked about local, state and federal funding sources. Mr. Schmedes said there is a mixture of funding sources. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) allocates money to Bay Area projects. The majority of funding is not from federal sources because local funding must be put in place in order to receive the federal match.

Ms. Richardson asked if this project would qualify for some of the proposed funding by President-elect Barack Obama. Mr. Schmedes said the project design is ready to continue and the environmental work is complete so if people are looking for projects that can be implemented, the project is far enough along to proceed.

Mr. Graham asked about the need for seven substations in addition to the two main substations in South San Francisco and San Jose. Mr. Schmedes said the seven substations are called paralleling stations and they parallel the two tracks and the supplementary feeder wire, which allows having fewer larger substations. It is the current industry standard of operation around the world for HSR systems.

Mr. Graham asked if electrification would integrate with California HSR. Mr. Schmedes said yes.

Public Comment

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said funding for electrification is tight and some agencies don't care. It is important that Bay Area transit agencies get together and demand that Caltrain electrification be funded at the local, regional and federal levels. He heard that all transit agencies are trying to get their lists ready for any funding that might result from a federal stimulus package. He encouraged committee members to write to their senators and congressional representatives expressing the need for funding for electrification.

Staff Report

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- Ridership statistics November 2008 compared to November 2007
 - a) Total ridership increased 13.9 percent.
 - b) Year-to-date ridership increased 12.5 percent.
 - c) Year-to-date revenue increased 14 percent, which is slightly over budget.
 - d) Ontime performance levels of 92-93 percent have been affected by mechanical challenges, construction along the right of way, capacity and repair of bolsters, which involved removal of some ADA cars. Staff has been working with Amtrak on the mechanical issues; all bolsters are back in service and on-time performance is close to 97 percent. A trespasser incident and control system problem on December 4 affected performance this month.
- In light of electrification, Caltrain has a current program to replace the control system. The Digicon system owners informed Caltrain last spring that they would be ceasing to support the software as of today, December 17. In the last six months, Caltrain has done everything to stabilize the control system, to develop standard operating procedures, which enabled Caltrain to deal with the control problem, which occurred on December 4 and purchased additional hardware in the event of any failures. The CAC will be receiving updates from staff on replacement of the Digicon system.
- 2008 was a banner year for completion of construction and working towards bringing the right of way and stations into a state of good repair. There were celebrations for the completion of the

Burlingame Station Project and North Terminal Project. Caltrain is close to completing the station work on the Palo Alto and California Avenue Stations. These projects continued the progress of removing the hold-out rule at train stations, which allows the increase of service to keep up with demand.

- The Holiday Train event, in collaboration with the Marines, collected 5,300 toys for needy children the weekend of December 6 and 7.
- Thanked the CAC for their part in Caltrain successes during 2008. She wished all a Happy New Year and safe Holiday Season.

Committee Comments

Mike Kiesling said Mr. Carter forgot to announce the Emerald Bowl, which is a very important event for Caltrain. It will be held on December 27 at AT&T Park but he doesn't think many people will be riding the train to get there. He thanked the CAC for all their work in 2008. He said every time the Caltrain schedule is messed up he thinks of Ms. Bouchard because she is the one trying to fix it. Ms. Bouchard thanked Mr. Kiesling.

Mr. Wilfley said there was a recent TV news article on Translink and he was stunned to note that it was still being checked out. He asked for an update on Caltrain's plans for this project. He thanked Caltrain and Amtrak staffs for their excellent work. Ms. Bouchard said she would pass along the message.

Mr. Hronowski wished all Happy Holidays. He looks forward to working with the CAC in the coming year.

Mr. Graham enjoyed working with the CAC this year and looks forward to working with Mr. Hronowski, hopefully as Vice Chair. He thanked Ms. Bouchard and Assistant District Secretary Rosemary Lake for their support during the year. He wished Happy Holidays to all.

Ms. Richardson thanked staff for attending CAC meetings and for keeping the committee updated on issues. She also thanked public attendees Mr. Carter and Mr. Chow for their comments. She thanked Ms. Bouchard for doing a superb job and Ms. Lake for her work with the CAC.

Francois Granade said Caltrain has definitely improved in the last few years. Caltrain is doing great things such as electrification and he hopes work on bicycle concerns, improvements on use of proof of payments issues and weekend service continues.

Date, Time, Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 21, 2009 at 6 p.m., San Francisco Giant's Executive Offices, 2nd Floor Porthole Room, 3rd and Berry streets, San Francisco, CA 94107.

Adjournment at 7:12 p.m.