

Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (JPB) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building
1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070

MINUTES OF APRIL 21, 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Bendix, F. Granade, J. Hronowski (Chair), B. Jenkins,
S. Richardson, M. Tekchandani, C. Tucker, B. Wilfley

MEMBERS ABSENT: G. Graham

STAFF PRESENT: T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, R. Haskin, H. Lafebre, R. Lake, M. Lee

Chair John Hronowski called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Cat Tucker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee (Richardson/Wilfley) approved the minutes of March 17, 2010.

Public Comment

Andy Chow, Redwood City, said trains were not available for passengers leaving the Sharks' hockey game because of overtime play. Director Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard said Caltrain policy specifies that a train leaves 15 minutes after its scheduled departure time. She said there is a different situation during playoff games when longer games are more of a possibility. She said Caltrain has made arrangements for an extra train in case Sharks' games run overtime during the playoffs. Caltrain will have a press release on its Web site to explain the arrangements.

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said he was on the train recently that experienced the bomb threat. He said Caltrain staff, transit police and SamTrans did a good job of keeping passengers informed and getting them onto buses to the Millbrae Intermodal Station for connections.

Mr. Carter said there was a discussion on High Speed Rail (HSR) with the Burlingame city council on May 19. He said the council is convinced HSR will destroy the community and is demanding it be built underground. He said the city should pay the cost for tunneling the HSR rail line. He said there is a lot of misinformation on HSR and people see certain lines on maps and assume it represents removal of homes.

Mr. Carter is concerned about Caltrain's financial future and possible service cuts on weekends and week nights. He said the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is moving ahead with BART to San Jose, which is very expensive and taking transit funding from other things and VTA should make sacrifices on their pet projects.

Chairperson's Report – J. Hronowski

At the April 1 JPB meeting, Chair Sean Elsbernd said applications for the JPB Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) are due April 19. There are three openings on the CAC.

Presentation: TransLink Implementation Update

Executive Officer Customer Service and Marketing Rita Haskin provided the following details:

- The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) began a pilot program in 2002.
- AC Transit, BART, Golden Gate Transit and San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) are using TransLink. SamTrans and the VTA will begin later this year.
- TransLink is being rebranded to Clipper in June 2010.
- TransLink for Caltrain has gone through testing and soft launch and was hard launched in April 2010 with 2,000 unique users.
- Caltrain will be moving to eliminate paper monthly passes and 8-ride tickets by January 2011. Monthly card holders will need to tag on and tag off at a TransLink card reader to set parameters during their first trip of the month in the station. Failure to tag off will result in the maximum Caltrain fare deducted from the e-cash value on the card.
- Conductors have handheld card readers, which can check if cards are valid.
- Customers are concerned about limited vendor outlets, which currently include Walgreens and CVS Pharmacy in addition to online purchasing.
- Caltrain commuters can get a TransLink card for \$5 and then load passes or cash onto the cards, including online orders. Parking permits are not available with TransLink.
- A marketing program is ongoing to transition customers from paper fare media to TransLink.

Ms. Tucker said she gets a transit card from her employer and asked if this will work with TransLink. Ms. Haskin said Genentech provides auto-load TransLink cards to their employees, which is setup through direct benefits similar to Wage Works or Wired Commute systems.

Ms. Tucker asked about purchasing and loading a TransLink card. Ms. Haskin said it's easy to setup auto-load on a home computer for a monthly pass, which will automatically provide a pass every month and is activated at the first tag on.

Ms. Tucker asked if conductors will activate an 8-ride pass. Ms. Haskin said the passenger needs to tag on before boarding and conductors check to make sure the ticket is valid. She said the station card readers don't note how many rides are left on an 8-ride ticket but notify a card user when the card is getting low on rides so the passenger can auto-load another ticket.

Paul Bendix said it is important that marketing pieces include information on eligible discounts. Ms. Haskin said this information will definitely be on Clipper ticket information.

Sepi Richardson said some communities have 7/11 stores but not CVS or Walgreens. Ms. Haskin said MTC is looking for other vendors but they only have a certain number due to cost and accounting.

Francois Granade said there may be a problem with passengers understanding the card system and forgetting to tag off. He asked why the name was changed to Clipper. Ms. Haskin said the TransLink program has been in development for about 10 years and needed a clean start.

Mr. Granade asked about elimination of paper tickets. Ms. Haskin said there is a dedicated core of ticket-by-mail customers and during the next several months Caltrain will begin the process of transitioning these customer purchases to the TransLink program.

Mr. Granade said it is important to have a Web page that tells how to get a ticket balance or who to call for this information and a comprehensive educational process for transition to TransLink.

John Fox asked if Walgreens could auto-load a \$5 card. Ms. Haskin said the San Francisco, San Jose and San Mateo County Transit District ticket offices can sell the \$5 card and add value because the card includes a chip and can be used over and over.

Ms. Tucker asked if there was an 800 telephone number for TransLink information. Ms. Haskin said the 877.878.8883 number is on the green Caltrain Takeone on the trains.

Public Comment

Andy Chow, Redwood City, asked if a passenger getting off Caltrain at the Millbrae Intermodal Station and connecting to BART must tag off at Caltrain and tag on again at the BART gate or walk over to BART and then tag on. Ms. Haskin said passengers need to tag off at Caltrain or they will be charged the maximum fare.

Mr. Chow asked if current Caltrain vending machines could be retrofitted to read and recharge TransLink cards. Ms. Haskin said it would cost more than \$1 million to do a TransLink interface with current vending machines.

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said TransLink doesn't reduce the cost of using a transfer between modes.

Presentation: Electrification Update

Executive Officer Planning and Development Marian Lee provided an update on the Electrification project presented at the April 1, 2010 JPB meeting. Ms. Lee noted staff intended to request Board certification of the electrification environmental document. However, given the concerns expressed by Caltrain stakeholders, a decision was made to postpone the certification until staff follows up with the stakeholders and addresses their respective concerns.

Ms. Lee said the CAC will be presented with the same information provided at the board meeting. She introduced Manager of Capital Projects and Environmental Planning Hilda Lafebre to provide the specifics as follows:

- Electrification of Caltrain will improve performance, reduce noise, improve regional air quality and modernize Caltrain.
- The project covers a distance of 51 miles from San Francisco to Tamien Caltrain Station with six trains per peak hour per direction with traction power facilities and an overhead contact system to run electric powered vehicles.
- Caltrain has received National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental clearance and now needs California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental clearance.
- Environmental clearance allows Caltrain to access funding and advance the project to final design.
- The estimated project capital costs are \$1.2 billion.
- The funding status includes \$269 million of committed funding and \$352 million of expected funding and a \$604 million needed funding gap. Funding applications have been submitted for HSR and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to address the funding gap.

- The project will have positive environmental impacts including reducing congestion and energy consumption by 64 percent; reducing air pollutants by 90 percent and reducing noise and vibration by 81 percent.
- The project does have negative impacts but they can be mitigated with the development and implementation of specific mitigation plans.

Ms. Lee recited comments made by Legal Counsel David Miller at the April 1 JPB meeting on the culmination of events leading up to the decision to postpone Board action.

Ms. Lee said staff has reached out to those with concerns and will be meeting in the next weeks and months to address their respective concerns hopefully without impeding the progress of the project.

Ms. Richardson asked what is the source of funding for project committed funding of \$269 million and expected funding of \$352 million. Ms. Lee said the primary source for \$269 million is the three partner agencies of the JPB: the District, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SFMTA) and the VTA. The primary source for \$352 million is regional funding that is dedicated to rolling stock.

Burce Jenkins asked if the Planning and Conservation League (PCL) still has standing on its litigation. Ms. Lee said staff is currently meeting with this group.

Bruce Jenkins and Paul Bendix left at 7:11 p.m.

Ms. Richardson said there is a drive in Southern California to ask the League of Cities to end support for SB 375 and AB 32. She suggested people contact her for more information on this.

Ms. Richardson asked if areas with negative impacts for mitigation have been identified. Ms. Lafebre said this is required during the NEPA process and a plan is in place to deal with mitigation.

Ms. Richardson asked how one defends the need for BART, Caltrain and HSR. Ms. Lafebre said each agency has its own purpose; Caltrain for commuter rail and HSR for rail outside of the region.

Ms. Bouchard said these three services have different objectives and the Peninsula Rail Program (PRP) is the embodiment of the planning for joint Caltrain and HSR to build a combined service that is as efficient in terms of its use of resources, and efficient in terms of planning, and as efficient in terms of actually disseminating information regarding those services as it could possibly be.

Mr. Wilfley said the main reason to do the project is dramatic reductions in air pollution and noise and vibration, which he imagines is anything but the most important issue for those nearby the rail. He said the project will be so much more effective for passengers.

Mr. Granade asked if the CAC should write a letter of support for the Electrification project.

Ms. Tucker requested staff provide the CAC with some talking points about the Electrification project. She asked if there was a risk the JPB would cancel the project. Ms. Lee said the JPB is committed to the Electrification project and sensitive to the concerns of people, communities and stakeholders.

Public Comment

Paul Jones, Atherton, said since environmental work began on this, Atherton has not opposed but sought a recognition of their concerns about the number of heritage trees that would be both largely disfigured or killed by implementing the Electrification project. He said people have talked and written to the JPB about this but have been brushed aside. He said people offered a solution to put the tracks in the center of the right of way at the Atherton Caltrain Station in order to reduce the distance the electrification towers will span, which will save trees.

Andy Chow, President Bay Rail Alliance, is disappointed the electrification EIR has been delayed. He said the Federal government gave approval to the EIR and people need to have confidence in what Caltrain has done. He said the PCL should be ashamed of their actions against electrification. He said people who think Caltrain should be shutdown and use BART are not transit advocates and the systems do not compete with each other.

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said Caltrain electrification will allow quieter and faster trains and more frequent service.

Chair Hronowski asked staff to let the CAC know if there is anything they can do to help advance the Electrification project.

Staff Report – Michelle Bouchard

Provided an update on Caltrain's financial crisis, which was addressed at the April 1 JPB meeting. She summarized Mr. Scanlon's comments as follows:

1. The District, SFMTA and VTA partner agencies are all experiencing significant financial problems. These agencies are not in any shape to continue providing the level of funding of \$40 million to the JPB that they have traditionally done.
2. Recommended the District's annual contribution be reduced, which would mean cutting the \$40 million by \$28 million and leaving about \$12 million from the partner agencies. If this amount of money is taken out of the revenue side, the current service level cannot be sustained.
3. Such funding cuts will require draconian reductions in service, which could be done in one or two lump sums, but it is realistic to say that by January of 2011, the JPB could be looking at a railroad about one-half the size it is today.
4. If you take the current business model which costs \$100 million to run the railroad, and nearly 40 percent of that comes from the three member agencies, and if you then cut that in half, but still have to get 40 percent, this means the JPB needs \$20 million. He said JPB is not going to have \$20 million from the partner agencies. He said, according to preliminary math, the JPB will still have something more along the lines of \$12 million collectively. Caltrain is in the 43 percent farebox recovery ratio, which is very high, and second only to BART. When you start cutting the types of service that cuts into the revenue side of the equation this would lead to a death spiral.

Ms. Bouchard said staff is working frantically to figure out options on the revenue and cost reduction sides but, more than anything, Caltrain needs a dedicated funding source. She asked the CAC to help out by continuing to advocate for Caltrain and will reach out to the CAC if needed.

Ms. Bouchard also provided the following:

- March ridership figures are almost on par with March 2009. Year-to-date revenue is tracking down \$1 million but close to budget.
- Special service:
 1. Giants special service for opening day carried in excess of 8,000 passengers.
 2. Caltrain will provide four additional morning trains for the May 16 Bay to Breakers.
- Annual ridership counts were completed in April, data is being crunched and a report is anticipated for the May JPB meeting with subsequent presentation to the CAC.
- The bike and dwell time count began April 21 and staff reached out to San Francisco and Santa Clara county bike coalitions to lay out methodology. A final report is expected in June or July.
- The application process for the BAC is complete and staff is planning for a first meeting in June or July.

Committee Comments

Ms. Richardson asked if the CAC could look at an earlier meeting time.

Assistant District Secretary Rosemary Lake said this item can be put on the May agenda.

Ms. Tucker asked if the CAC could write of letter of support for the Electrification project.

Ms. Lake will check procedural details and provide information to the CAC on establishing a subcommittee/ad hoc committee to prepare the letter.

Mr. Granade provided some anecdotes on how Caltrain and transit operations affect a company's ability to attract and hire people and there needs to be more optimism in Caltrain's potential.

Date, Time, and Place of Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 19, 2010, 6 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 2nd Floor Bacciocco Auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, CA

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.