

**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 SEPTEMBER 29, 2010**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** G. Graham, S. Richardson

**STAFF PRESENT:** T. Bartholomew, M. Bouchard, R. Lake

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

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion (Wilfley/Bendix) to approve the minutes of July 21, 2010 was passed.

**Public Comment**

Pat Giorni, Burlingame reported:

- Suggested the CAC chair report on CAC meeting conversations in his report to the JPB.
- Bike car signs are difficult to see and suggested the engineer toot the whistle two times in a station when it arrives with two bike cars.

Shirley Johnson, Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) chair reported:

- At its meeting on September 2, the JPB had a public hearing on proposed fare/service changes.
- Distributed a graph showing Caltrain started to routinely deny service to cyclists in 2006 and, since then, lost revenue amounts to \$1 million.

**Chairperson's Report – Mr. Hronowski**

- At its September 2 meeting, the JPB reappointed Sepi Richardson as the San Mateo County representative and Chair Hronowski as the San Francisco representative to three-year terms; and held a public hearing on fare/service changes.
- An ad hoc committee was formed (Bruce Jenkins, Gerald Graham and Mona Tekchandani) to address proposed Caltrain fare/service changes; elimination of Gilroy and weekend service are off the table.

Ms. Tekchandani reported the ad hoc committee recommended a 25-cent zone fare increase, increasing the GO pass fare, and discourages eliminating weekend, midday, and morning or night trains.

A motion (Wilfley/Tucker) to endorse the ad hoc committee recommendations was approved.

Chair Hronowski asked that the comment on Gilroy service be removed from the ad hoc committee memo because it is not an issue at this point. He will report on endorsement of the recommendations at the October 7 JPB meeting.

### **Presentation: Bike Count and Dwell Time Study**

Director of Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard said the presentation is a culmination of two presentations: the results of the Caltrain onboard Bike Count & Dwell Time Study and the second presentation on the study given to the BAC at their special meeting of September 28, which was scheduled to review staff's recommendations.

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- Caltrain completes a bike count during the annual February counts, but that count doesn't gauge bike boarding denials or capacity constraints.
- Caltrain retrofitted train cars with bike slots in 2009, which has led to a 30 percent increase in onboard capacity. The study also intended to see what the impact of bike capacity had on dwell time, and whether there was any differentiation in a two-bike car or a one-bike car or between a Bombardier or non-Bombardier set.
- Study was performed from April 21 until May 27, 2010, counted 425 trains Monday through Thursday, made 6,600 observations, and counted boardings at all station stops. The goal was to avoid any anomalies due to special service, bad weather and Bike to Work day. Trains that typically experienced high demand or a potential of high denials were sampled three to six times.
- Data was collected on boardings and alightings at each stop, bike boarding by train/time of day, bikes onboard between stops, dwell time at each station/stop and delay to bike boarding/alighting due to non-bike passenger movement or lift deployment.
- There are seven one-bike car Gallery consists that provide 40 bike slots on 34 daily trains; eight two-bike Gallery consists that provide 80 slots on 34 daily trains; and five, two-bike car Bombardier consists that provide 48 bike slots on 22 daily trains.
- Key Findings Dwell Time: Dwell time difference correlated with type of service and dwell time differences between different train configurations is not significant.
- Key Findings Capacity: 16 instances of nine trains at or exceeding 100 percent were observed; capacity issues and denied boardings occurred in the height of the peak period and seven of nine trains were in the reverse peak; more passengers of any type equals more dwell time; and there were nine problematic trains on which denials occurred or capacity was reached.
- Denied Boarding: 15 instances of bike denials observed during the study accounting for 55 denials, which were due to substituted equipment including mechanical delays, bike cars that appeared full and Giants trains.
- Denials occur in the height of the peak period primarily in the reverse direction. There were 10 trains with denials and nine were due to capacity issues.
- Constraints:
  1. Fleet Make Up: This will not change until electrification.
  2. Train Consist Turns: This includes inspections, cleaning, toilet dumps and preventative maintenance.
  3. Safety: Caltrain must maintain a safe path of access/egress in all cars and each bike car accommodates four bikes on each side of the car.
  4. Operations: The conductor is responsible for the safe operation of the train.
  5. Schedule: Caltrain must adhere to its printed timetable.
  6. Capacity: In 2009 staff proposed 48 bike slots per Gallery set and 32 per Bombardier set. The bike community asked for more seats and eight were put back in.
  7. Passenger Impacts: Caltrain focuses on the potential impacts to all of its riders.

- Problem Statement:
  1. Bike denials due to mismatch of bike capacity vs. demand.
  2. Unanticipated consist changes due to fatalities and major mechanical issues.
  3. Special events when non- bike passengers may stand in bike cars.
- Trade-off Analysis staff identified:
  1. Option A – rework consist turns, which can begin immediately but may create passenger impacts.
  2. Option B – targeted capacity enhancement, which requires capital funding. Conversion of a Gallery car costs \$30,000.
  3. Option C – builds on Option B and converts 10 additional Gallery cars that would outfit the remaining seven Gallery sets with 80 bike slots and outfit the two spare sets with 80 slots. This would allow swapping in a two-Gallery car set. This requires more capital funding and time.
- Optimization of train turns to match capacity with demand must apply across the board and applies to all options. Staff is working to get capital funding for Options B and C but can begin with Option A to improve the onboard capacity and as capital funding is found, cars can be identified that need to be converted. Conversion of one car takes about one month and initial three months involves planning, procurement and fabrication stages.
- Staff Preliminary Recommendations: All options provide some level of benefit and Option C provides the biggest probability of alleviating the mismatch of bike capacity vs. demand and unanticipated consist changes impacting bike car capacity.
- Next Steps: Refine recommendation based on study results, continue to search for available capital funding, develop and implement available operational remedies as soon as possible and continue to lay groundwork for Options B and C, while the search for capital funding continues.

Brian Wilfley said the study indicates trains take longer to dwell when there are more people regardless of their characteristic; and bicyclists have learned to use trains that have capacity. He said there is no reason not to begin Option A now as Option B is investigated, and said, as cars are retrofitted, the turns analysis becomes much easier to do except the burnings may burn out.

Cat Tucker asked if grant funding searches will focus on consumers bicycling more. Ms. Bouchard said there is grant funding specifically for bike/pedestrian projects, but the question is availability.

Chair Hronowski asked if the Caltrain Web site is updated daily or weekly. Ms. Bouchard said, typically, Caltrain will change consist turns for new schedules or when it comes out with a new and improved Option A. The schedule is meant to be followed but if there is a major mechanical delay, it is a static schedule and not updated on a daily basis to reflect any unscheduled change in capacity.

Chair Hronowski said it is best to have two gallery cars in the peak because there would be 80 bike slots and Bombardier sets could be used at other times. Ms. Bouchard said this would result in customer impacts.

Ms. Tekchandani asked about customer impacts. Ms. Bouchard said this could be ride quality, number of seats and Bombardier sets don't have onboard American with Disabilities Act (ADA) lifts. When a Bombardier set is used in local service, and there is a need for a wheelchair or a person needing assistance, conductors must use the crank lift if there are no mini-high platforms. This creates a

potential for a larger delay because it takes the crank lift four minutes vs. two minutes for a Gallery car.

### Public Comment

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said aside from special trains, if 40 seats were removed from other trains, how much real impact would that make in terms of day-to-day service. She said she didn't think any ADA passengers or pedestrians have been denied a seat. The average ticket price is \$3.60 and replacing 40 seats with bike slots would generate \$576 a day on the four-time turnaround of a consist. Caltrain could recoup the investment of \$30,000 per retrofit in 50-60 business days. She said there is a possibility Caltrain will eliminate eight trains and it will probably eliminate two consists. She suggested Caltrain take the cab cars from the eliminated consists and put them in the Gallery sets as the second bike car because they are already outfitted.

Shirley Johnson, BAC chair reported:

- Dwell time is caused by more passengers, not more bikes.
- The BIKES ONboard bike count reports voluntary counts from people from February 2009 to August 2010 and shows there are 20 trains that have bumped bikers in 2010 alone. Caltrain's study missed 10 of the trains bumping bikers.
- Unreliable Caltrain service results in inconsistent bike capacity. Option C would result in 48-80 bike slots.
- Bikers like Bombardier cars because they are smooth but only have 48 bike slots; bikers are suited to bullet trains and encourage Caltrain to put more Gallery sets with two-bike cars on bullet trains.

Doug DeLong, Mountain View, reported:

- Option B would provide 80-90 percent of the benefit for 20-30 percent of the expense and Option C would require no bike car signage.
- Bike car conversion cost for 10 cars is about \$300,000-\$500,000 and is a rounding error in the grand scheme of Caltrain capital projects.
- Pedestrians are denied boarding on Giants trains and passengers in wheelchairs have been denied boarding because there are only two wheelchair slots per train.
- The current bike count study was not comprehensive because it did not count pedestrian and wheelchair passengers and did not calculate the regression coefficients for each of the three categories of passengers that were done in a study several years ago.

Francois Granade asked if there are numbers on the composition of cars. Ms. Bouchard replied yes.

Mr. Granade asked who is responsible for building the trains in the mornings – the JPB or Amtrak. Ms. Bouchard said the JPB sets the policy and Amtrak makes the operational decisions. She said trains are not built in the mornings; consists operate in the whole. Consists are put into slots dependent on the schedule.

Mr. Granade asked if there is a financial affect on Amtrak if JPB targets are not met. Ms. Bouchard said, typically, there are provisions in the contract.

Mr. Granade asked if the CAC should create a resolution for promoting the three options.

Ms. Tekchandani said her reaction to the study is somewhat negative (not towards Caltrain) because the study wasn't even close to hitting maximum bike capacity of 80. She said it is irresponsible discussing Option C when there are so many other things that can be done for all types of passengers.

Ms. Bouchard said an ad hoc committee could be organized.

Mr. Wilfley asked if this has been presented to the JPB. Ms. Bouchard replied no, and said it is an operational decision that doesn't merit board approval; the studied opinion is important and the CAC reports to the JPB.

Ms. Bouchard said the study includes the bulk of staff recommendations at this point.

Ms. Tucker referenced the public comment that the complete retrofit could pay for itself in 60-90 days and said if this results in ridership increases, could Caltrain count that money.

Ms. Tekchandani said one could not because the 80 bike capacity is not being hit. There were 425 trains counted in the study with only 55 denials.

Mr. Granade said denials are a strong disincentive to ride Caltrain.

Ms. Tekchandani said any recommendation needs to be balanced against that fact that there were only 55 observed denials.

Ms. Bouchard said this is true, but pointed out that the study time was a fantastic month, 55 denials is a low water mark, and the average denial is more like 150 per month.

Mr. Granade, Ms. Tucker and Ms. Tekchandani volunteered for the ad hoc committee to review the three options and/or possibly another option for a recommendation.

#### **Staff Report – Ms. Bouchard**

- Thanked the CAC for their support during the budget work and for having a statement of support for a particular stance, which meant a lot to staff and the JPB.
- The JPB had a public hearing on fare/service changes at its September 2 meeting. About 1,700 comments were received on all measure of things that were or were not advertised. Based on some of that feedback Gilroy and weekend service were taken off the table. Staff must still bridge a \$2.3 million deficit and hopes to recommend modest service reductions and a fare increase effective January 1, 2011 in a package to include an increase in the GO pass and closing two staffed ticket offices on October 8. Director of Rail Operations Rick Degman was in San Francisco today to educate customers on how they can purchase a ticket either through the ticket vending machine or how to transition to the Clipper card. Staff is putting together a proposal for a demonstration for a very limited Baby Bullet service that is proposed to operate on the weekends on a few trips beginning in the New Year.
- Caltrain will support special service for any sort of Giants playoff games.
- August ridership is showing a 2 percent quantum leap over August 2009. Revenue increased 7.6 percent over the same time period, but there was a fare increase in 2009.

Mr. Granade asked if Caltrain has fewer trains this year. Ms. Bouchard said Caltrain reduced eight midday trains and most of these riders migrated to trains on either side.

### **Committee Comments**

Chair Hronowski asked if there would be provisions made to upgrade the Clipper card now that the ticket offices will be closed. Ms. Bouchard said she would provide information; Walgreens' stores are the Clipper card centers in San Francisco.

Chair Hronowski said Clipper cards are also available in San Carlos at the San Mateo County District administrative offices (District).

Ms. Bouchard said the Clipper card information is also available on Caltrain's Web site.

Ms. Tucker thanked staff for the public outreach meeting in Gilroy on possible service changes, and hopes Caltrain can find additional funding.

Ms. Tekchandani thanked staff for the outreach in San Francisco and was impressed with the professionalism of staff and how well informed they were in dealing with the public.

Chair Hronowski said Mr. Degman and Manager, Community Relations Todd McIntyre did an excellent job at the San Francisco outreach meeting

Mr. Granade said the outreach at the District was excellent.

Mr. Granade said he has not seen any signs in San Francisco that indicate the ticket office is closing.

Chair Hronowski said the sign at the San Francisco ticket office notes the office is open 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Ms. Bouchard said signs indicating the closure of the ticket office were posted and must have been removed. She will follow up with staff.

### **Date, Time, and Location of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, October 20, 2010, 5:30 p.m., San Mateo County Transit District Administrative Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Bacciocco Auditorium, 1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos, CA

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.