

**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 JULY 20, 2011**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** P. Bendix, G. Graham, K. Gardiner, J. Hronowski, B. Jenkins (Chair),  
B. Wilfley

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** S. Richardson, C. Tucker

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

Chair Bruce Jenkins called the meeting to order at 5:44 p.m. John Hronowski led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion (Wilfley/Gardiner) to approve the minutes of June 15, 2011 was passed.

**Public Comment**

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said he has been in contact with Director, Rail Transportation Michelle Bouchard regarding crowding on trains for the Pride Parade and other special event service.

**Chairperson's Report – Bruce Jenkins**

- **Certificates of Appreciation:**  
To be sent to outgoing members Francois Granade and Mona Tekchandani.
- New member Kevin Gardiner was welcomed.
- Welcomed JPB Director Art Lloyd.

**Presentation: Operation Lifesaver**

Public Information Specialist Tasha Bartholomew said it is fitting to have a presentation on Operation Lifesaver (OLS) due to the number of fatalities on the Caltrain right of way, which number eleven to-date. She said OLS is an international rail safety education program, presented by certified instructors. Training was recently expanded internally resulting in eight new instructors. She reiterated several OLS messages: "Any Time is Train Time," "Trains Don't Swerve," and "There is Absolutely No Trespassing on the Caltrain Right of Way." Since 2006, there have been about 270 OLS presentations reaching 16,000 people. The OLS presentations are free with specific presentations directed at school-age children and adults.

Ms. Bartholomew introduced Manager, Rail Operations Rick Degman who recently completed OLS training and will provide the presentation.

Mr. Degman reported:

- The 3 "E's" of rail safety are "Education, Engineering and Enforcement."

- Fatalities, as unfortunate as they are, also affect train crews, thousands of passengers and staff.
- Some trains pass through stations at 79 miles per hour – speed perception is important. The train is wider than the track by a minimum of 3 feet up to 5 feet, and passengers on the platforms must give a train a wide berth.
- The weight of a Volkswagen compared to the weight of a locomotive is comparable to a can of soda versus a car.
- It would take a typical 10,000 ton mile-long freight train with about 100 cars almost a mile to stop at 60 miles an hour; 200 feet for a MUNI car at 30-40 miles per hour, 300 feet for a loaded semi-truck, 230 feet for a school bus and 200 feet for a car going 55 miles per hour.
- There are painted rail crossing warning signs 200 yards before a railroad; it is the law to yield to the oncoming train.
- There is a sign on the rail crossing light pole noting the number of tracks from two-four.
- Everyone must stop when the rail crossing lights are on.
- Gates may malfunction and default to a down position and it is against the law to go around any gate that is down.
- Trains may pass each other in opposite directions and one may be momentarily out of sight to traffic, especially at crossings with tight clearances.
- If a vehicle stalls on the tracks, occupants should exit immediately and run at a 45 degree angle away from the oncoming train to avoid any possible debris as the train hits the vehicle.
- Signal boxes along the railroad include the crossing number and an emergency number to the San Jose control center.
- Trespassing on the Caltrain right of way is illegal, a person can be ticketed by transit police and it is also dangerous.
- Caltrain has a fencing program to keep trespassers off tracks.
- Nothing should be put on a railroad track which can turn into a projectile moving at 60 miles per hour or more.

The CAC was encouraged to submit the names of any group that may benefit from an OLS presentation.

Chair Jenkins said there is a new OLS video on YouTube called “Don’t Cheat Death.”

Mr. Degman said this type of video is a very powerful tool with witness recounts to reach people with the OLS message.

Brian Wilfley said the presentation doesn’t address intervening with suicides. Ms. Bouchard said the message of the presentation was to talk about incidents around Caltrain where people put themselves in harm’s way. She said Executive Officer, Public Affairs Mark Simon is spearheading a collaborative effort with local communities to deal with the output of these incidents and the input that leads to potential suicide including a pilot project to install suicide prevention signage along the right of way.

Ms. Bartholomew said the issue of suicides is addressed with adults but very young children do occasionally bring it up.

Mr. Wilfley said it is important to bring the issue of suicide up with city councils so they realize it is their job in their position of leadership to recommend to the people they lead in the community that they need to address the issue.

Mr. Degman said countless railroad engineers, conductors and staff have had terrible experiences dealing with suicide issues on the railroad.

Mr. Wilfley said the person committing suicide is doing something that isn't sensible by any reasonable definition and someone who is sensible needs to get to them first; people who are thinking about the issues need to be aggressive with those with the potential of suicide.

### Public Comment

Jeff Carter, Burlingame, said he participated with OLS training years ago in California. He said the ultimate solution to problems on the tracks is grade separations.

### **Staff Report**

Ms. Bouchard reported:

- Welcomed new member Mr. Gardiner.
- June average weekday ridership seems to be accelerating and is in excess of 44,000, an increase of 11.6 percent; total ridership is up 12.6 percent and revenue is up 20 percent.
- On July 1 fares increased 25-cents on the base and parking increased to \$4 per day and to \$40 for the monthly parking permit; these increases are expected to increase revenues by \$1.4 million. There have been no technical glitches during the transition.
- Eighty percent of ridership involves commuters but special service and weekend is driving ridership gains. Baseball ridership is up 14 percent. There were 3,000 additional riders for the Genentech concert at AT&T Park, 3,000 for two soccer games and 2,500 for the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks. Ridership must continue to grow in these niche ridership areas where capacity is available.
- All train consists have been outfitted with two bike cars.
- On-time performance:
  - Caltrain successes seem to be negatively impacting the 95 percent on-time performance standard.
  - On-time performance dipped to 90 percent in May and staff and Caltrain's contract operator Amtrak are involved with an evaluation study to figure out causes for delays that can be controlled and develop an action around controlling those delays. Delays need to be identified and mitigated, for example, if one bike car is full and it takes additional time to access a second bike car.
  - There seems to be a correlation between the number mechanical delay minutes in a month and on-time performance. Caltrain has an aging fleet and highlights the fact that staff must aggressively pursue capital funds for the state of good repair. It was anticipated electrification would start revenue service in 2014 and would coincide with the service life of much of the rolling stock but electrification is a few more years down the road, which requires developing a plan and pursuing funding to keep the rolling stock alive.
- Capital enhancements:
  - Money is being put into rebuilding prime movers and head end power and for improvements on the right of way to include the South Terminal Project at San Jose

- Diridon with four additional platform faces and grade separating access to the platforms at the Santa Clara station and providing for access to the Altamont Commuter Express and Capitol Corridor trains. This project is scheduled for completion in November 2011.
- Activity in the City of San Bruno includes a safety improvement to grade separate five at-grade crossings and continued through 2012.
  - The signal optimization project will enhance capacity at four separate areas by installing intermediate signals so trains can travel closer together more safely.
  - Caltrain is continuing with the replacement of the rail operations control real time information system.
  - Caltrain is trying to pursue some low hanging fruit with respect to improving on-time performance and to continue to improve the railroad to help it survive and thrive into the future.
  - Staff is continuing to work with the Friends of Caltrain and Silicon Valley Leadership Group to pursue a dedicated funding source and will provide the CAC links to their meeting schedules.

Paul Bendix said there are lots of people in wheelchairs riding Caltrain, which can add up to a delay in minutes. He said on a recent trip a wheelchair couldn't board because the two wheelchair spaces were full. He asked if there could be more flexibility in boarding wheelchairs and wondered if two wheelchairs could be turned sideways and be allowed in empty bike cars during midday. Ms. Bouchard said staff and Amtrak recently conducted an 18-hour station blitz to observe habits of crews and watch how trains are operating through the stations. They did observe a fairly broad wide ranging approach to boarding wheelchairs; this is one of the low hanging fruit identified for further study.

Mr. Wilfley said it seems obvious to him as a casual observer that dwell time is probably the big component that contributes to missing on-time arrivals. He asked if this is true quantitatively and if it has been measured. Ms. Bouchard said staff has revised the monthly performance report, which typically has ridership and on-time performance stats. It has been expanded to include additional on-time performance data.

Gerald Graham said electrification could solve many of these problems because of better acceleration. Ms. Bouchard said car design with electric multiple units will definitely help performance because all units have double doors and will probably be closer to some scheme of roll on/roll off level boarding.

Mr. Hronowski asked how many wheelchairs can be accommodated on each train. Ms. Bouchard said two wheelchairs per train set. Ms. Bouchard said every single type of passenger is increasing in numbers and staff is working with Accessible Services staff to figure out how to accommodate more wheelchairs onboard.

Mr. Gardiner asked if bike cars could be located closer to each other. Ms. Bouchard said everything is possible but Caltrain has set the system up so the cab car is one of the bike cars and the most northernmost car and the second car is always the ADA car. All facilities on every platform that are platform-based to accommodate ADA boarding including mini-high ramps, benches, shelters, and platform markings are in a set place. These could all be moved but this

would require embarking on a capital program to change every single platform.

**Committee Comments**

Mr. Hronowski asked if there was any discussion on cancelling the August meeting. Mr. Wilfley said an email was sent notifying the CAC the meeting was canceled.

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

Wednesday, September 21, 2011, 5:40 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 7:05 p.m.