

**MINUTES
EAST BAY PARATRANSIT CONSORTIUM (EBP)
SERVICE REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
and
SERVICE REVIEW COMMITTEE
March 4, 2008**

1) SRAC ROLL AND INTRODUCTION OF INDIVIDUALS PRESENT

SRAC Members Present: Chris Mullin, Janet Abelson, Harry Cota, Don Queen, Peter Crockwell, Patricia Affonso, Carolyn Orr, Marvin Dyson, Robert L. Kearney, Harriett Saunders, and Ann Varni.

Staff: Mary Rowlands and Anne Muzzini, PC Office; Mark Weinstein, Veolia; Susan Gallagher, BART.

Public Members: Earl Perkins, Naomi Armenta, Gary Brown, Leslie DeBique.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 11, 2008

MOTION: Abelson / Crockwell to approve the January 11, 2008 minutes. Unanimous.

3) PUBLIC COMMENTS: none

6) REPORT FROM THE EAST BAY PARATRANSIT BROKER

Mark Weinstein gave the report from the Broker's office.

Recently, driver recruitment has been good. There is an inverse relationship between the strength of the economy and providers ability to hire new drivers. When the economy is depressed hiring drivers is easier.

The performance report, included in the meeting materials, shows there has been a drop in very late trips in this fiscal year's second quarter as compared to last fiscal year. Go-backs/re-scheduled trips have also decreased. On the other hand, productivity is up.

In the past few weeks, two schedulers have left the Broker's office. Interviews are being conducted and the positions should be filled shortly.

The new Certification ground floor office space is nearly complete. After the Certification Department moves down to that floor, the 3rd floor, where the rest of the Broker's operation resides will undergo some renovations.

Several members asked the broker questions about standby scheduling. Chair Mullin agreed to put the topic on the next agenda.

It was also suggested that Broker staff consider analyzing go backs/rescheduled trips to see if there are consistent locations where go-backs are necessary.

4) DISCUSSION CONCERNING MODIFICATIONS/IMPROVEMENTS TO EAST BAY PARATRANSIT'S RESPONSE TO CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Susan Gallagher referred members to the staff report included in the pre-meeting materials. She thanked members for their suggestions at the last meeting and said staff had been working on implementing suggestions they had made, including:

- Development of a website. Staff has contracted with a web designer to develop a web page. This site will address the request from riders and SRAC members who want a way to submit complaints and commendations by email.
- Increased visibility of comment cards. Staff has recorded an on-hold phone message about the availability of comment cards from the driver and will also be putting a sign in each vehicle reminding riders that they can ask the driver for a card.
- Modifications to complaints response post card. Based on input from members at the last meeting a revised postcard was drafted.

Members suggested a few further modifications:

1. Change "we take our rider's complaints seriously" to "we take your complaint seriously"
2. Eliminate the section on what actions are taken by staff.

Ms. Gallagher said that staff will produce the new postcards and start using them. Staff will report back periodically on how well they are received.

**5) REPORT FROM THE CHAIR ON THE RECENT FORUM
SPONSORED BY THE ALAMEDA COUNTY COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

Chair Mullin said there had been a transportation forum hosted by the Council on Developmental Disabilities on February 13 in downtown Oakland. Transit operators attended, along with representatives from East Bay Paratransit, and gave a presentation on the services they provide.

6) REPORT FROM SRAC MEMBERS

Chair Chris Mullin agreed to take both comments from members and to also re-open Public Comments.

Earl Perkins said drivers continue to arrive early to his home almost every day he takes his standing order to San Francisco.

Leslie DeBique asked to make a correction to her comments as listed in the January 11, 2008 minutes. She asked that the last paragraph on page 1 of the minutes be stricken and replaced with the following: “Ms. DeBique also said there is a design flaw in the lift vans. The chord from the lift control box is not tacked to the door or wall in many of the vans. The chord gets caught in the lift as it raises and lowers. The chord becomes worn and the inner wires eventually cut, shorting out the lift’s operation. Additionally, riders in wheelchairs can run over the chord if it’s lying on the floor. Ms. DeBique offered her services to East Bay Paratransit to consult about service issues.”

Ms. DeBique also asked staff to consider whether the new procedure of requiring the rider to call in the night before service on a standby trip to confirm the pick-up time is doable by all riders. Susan Gallagher responded that the policy was changed because East Bay Paratransit staff had a difficult time contacting riders on standby. Many don’t have cell phones or message machines. The new procedure has not received a lot of complaints from riders and appears to be accepted by them.

Members Harriett Saunders and Robert L. Kearney mentioned some problems they had with calling in for standby pick-ups: getting a time that was too far beyond the requested time and having to make last minute arrangements and the difficulty of remembering to call in.

Gary Brown had difficulty with a trip last Friday. He had scheduled an appointment based reservation with an appointment time of 10:45 am. However, upon calling he found out the pick-up was 10:45 am. He had to cancel the ride and do his business by phone.

Robert L. Kearney said the new lift vans have a bar on the right side to help you step up onto the first stair, but then the next bar to hold onto is on the left. Riders who have had strokes on their left side have a difficult time using the left bar. Mr. Kearney also said that carrying four riders in one sedan is uncomfortable and almost impossible for him, as his stroke affected his ability to use his left side.

Patricia Affonso mentioned that it took nearly four hours for her to get home from the last SRAC meeting. Harry Cota was also in the vehicle.

Several individuals, Carolyn Orr, Earl Perkins, Patricia Affonso, and Harriett Saunders all complemented the drivers.

8) NEXT SRAC MEETING

Mary Rowlands said the next SRAC meeting is May 6. Staff will work with the Chair on the agenda. One topic will be standby scheduling.

9) INTRODUCTION OF SRC MEMBERS

Carter Mau, BART's Manager of Planning and Budget and Nancy Skowbo, AC Transit's Deputy General Manager of Service Development introduced themselves.

10) REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE PARATRANSIT PLAN TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE ALAMEDA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVMEENT AUTHORITY AS PART OF THE APPLICATION FOR FY 08/09 MEASURE B FUNDING

Anne Muzzini reviewed EBP's FY 08/09 claim for Measure B funding, noting:

- Measure B is a ½ cent sales tax used for transportation development and programs, and is managed by the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority.
- Fares fund 7% of the total cost of East Bay Paratransit; Measure B funding provides about 23% of the subsidy required. AC and BART cover the rest of the costs from their general funds (77% of the subsidy).
- It's EBP's objective to continue to deliver high quality, cost effective paratransit that meets the service criteria of the ADA.
- The FY 08/09 Budget includes: 1.8 total passengers per revenue hour – productivity; flat demand; Broker cost and Provider rates at contract amounts

MOTION: Dyson / Kearney to support East Bay Paratransit's claim for FY 08/09 funding and move their recommendation forward to the SRC

11) DISCUSSION AND COMMENT ON AC TRANSIT AND BART REQUESTS TO THE ALAMEDA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY FOR GAP FUNDING

Anne Muzzini explained AC Transit is seeking funding for three Gap Projects:

MDC/AVL: This project is the continuation of a grant received in 2006 for \$500K for the purchase/install of MDC/AVL software and up to 80 MDC/AVL units. The software license and 45 units have been purchased to-date. The balance of the units (35) will be purchased prior to June 30, 2008. This Gap Grant funding request will include the purchase, install of the MDC/AVL units and associated training for the balance of the EBP fleet, up to 120 units (approximately \$360,000.)

IVR/Web Based Scheduling System: First and foremost this software will allow the system to call-out vehicle arrival times. Based on the parameters, established in conjunction with the SRAC, the consumer will get a call indicating their vehicle's arrival time e.g.; "your vehicle will arrive in 5 minutes". Additionally, it will allow appointments, cancellations, etc. to be made on-line. Grant request will be for approximately \$200,000.

New Freedom Funds Grant Match: AC Transit was awarded \$144,000 in New Freedom Grant funds from MTC on February 27, 2008. The grant awarded will allow for a detailed inventory of all traditional and non-

traditional transportation resources in Alameda and Western Contra Costa Counties, an easily updateable database of said resources and a summary of options to develop a truly coordinated transportation system in the region. Requested amount is \$36,000.

Ms. Muzzini asked members to support the AC Transit Gap requests and to recommend funding of the last two in full. She noted any project that benefits consumers in Alameda County will also benefit consumers within EBP's jurisdiction but falls outside the ACTIA's authority in Contra Costa County, at no cost.

MOTION: Dyson / Kearney to support the three Gap Grant funding requests presented by AC Transit; to recommend fully funding them without regard to county boundaries; and to move their recommendation forward to the SRC.

Susan Gallagher informed SRAC members that the current BART Gap Funding for East Bay Paratransit's Rider Care Specialist has been extended for one year. Ms. Gallagher then explained the three Gap Grant funding requests BART is currently preparing:

Vehicle. A car (and associated costs--insurance, parking, maintenance) for East Bay Paratransit (Veolia Brokerage). The car will be used for site visits to social service agencies, community outreach events, and off site eligibility interviews. At the moment, EBP staff have to use their own cars or have the road supervisors drive them.

A comic book or graphic novel "How to Ride BART." This grows out of an effort in Alameda County (primarily South County) to train seniors and people with disabilities to use fixed route instead of paratransit. BART brochures, while accurate, are often too many words for some seniors, people with limited English, or cognitively impaired people. The booklet would consist of good pictures (best is drawings) would be helpful either to substitute for a personal tour or as a take away aid afterwards.

A communications project aimed toward BART patrons with disabilities, and designed to keep them informed of construction projects, elevator outages, system changes, etc.

Ms Gallagher explained that she hopes to complete the application for this third project, but if she can't will submit it in the next cycle.

The intent of this project is to keep fixed route accessible so that people do not need to use paratransit to deal with these kinds of issues--even temporarily. A consultant will develop a data base of agencies, newsletters, groups, and individuals who can be contacted when construction or other actions are in place that affect accessibility of BART. How to deliver the message will also be considered, although it is expected that some individuals will receive updates on BART's Webmaster on using the Govdelivery system.

MOTION: Saunders / Abelson to support the three Gap Grant funding requests from BART and to move their recommendation forward to the SRC.

12) SRAC ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.

13) SRC ONLY MEETING: Carter Mau opened the SRC only portion of the meeting.

14) PUBLIC COMMENTS: none

15) ACTION ON THE PARATRANSIT PLAN TO BE SUBMITTED TO ACTIA FOR FY 08/09 FUNDING

MOTION: Skowbo / Mau to approve East Bay Paratransit's claim for FY 08/09 funding and move their recommendation forward to the Boards of Directors of AC Transit and BART for approval and submittal to ACTIA.

15) ACTION ON THE GAP GRANT FUNDING REQUESTS TO BE FORWARDED TO ACTIA FROM AC TRANSIT AND BART

MOTION: Skowbo/ Mau to approve all of the Gap Grant funding requests presented by the two agencies and forward them to the Boards of Directors of AC Transit and BART for approval and submittal to ACTIA.

16) SRC ADJOURNMENT: The SRC adjourned at 3:00 pm.