

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SAN MATEO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
1250 SAN CARLOS AVENUE, SAN CARLOS CA 94070
BACCIOCCO AUDITORIUM, 2ND FLOOR**

MINUTES OF APRIL 1, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: B. Arietta, J. Bigelow, P. Dixon (Chair), R. Hees, R. Hedges, S. Krause, A. Mader-Clark, D. Maez, L. Shaine, P. Young (Vice-Chair), A. Vargas, G. Zimmerman

MEMBERS ABSENT: R Gomez, N. Stern

STAFF PRESENT: R. Doty, C. Dunn, J. Hurley, R. Lake

Chair Pat Dixon called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 4, 2008 meeting were approved by the committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, distributed a flyer from the Peninsula Committee of the Silicon Valley Coalition North/South Commuter Bikeway on a Signage Proposal. The proposal lays the groundwork for providing 37 miles of way-finding signage necessary to navigate an alternate route to El Camino Real. The plan requests that the County of San Mateo, under the direction of the TA and City/County Association of Bay Area Governments (C/CAG), provide a plan for route signage.

Randy Hees said the new Measure A has substantially higher funding for bicycles and this signage project may be an appropriate project for the second generation Measure A.

TA Program Director Joe Hurley said it would be a candidate project. He said the TA is still in the process of developing and evaluating criteria for bike and pedestrian projects and suggested using the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) as a sounding board for their support for this type of project. Mr. Hurley said the new Measure A includes \$45 million funding for bicycles over the next 25 years.

Rich Hedges said city downtown associations may be allies in signage programs due to the number of people who bicycle to downtown jobs. Jim Bigelow recommended Ms. Giorni work with C/CAG bicycle group on this signage recommendation.

PRESENTATION – CALTRAIN 2025

Rail Transformation Chief Robert Doty said Caltrain is a 140-year old railroad in transition with an infrastructure program that was basically completed about four years ago that built four quadrants and brought the railroad up to a state of good repair. Caltrain has put in a new operating plan and operates the railroad differently today.

- Caltrain faced a huge deficit a couple of years ago and with a new business model has increased ridership by 104 percent with the Baby Bullet express program and with essentially the same equipment and staff.

- Ridership continues to increase despite increased fuel prices and fare increases.
- Passengers want more stops and reduced runtime, newer vehicles, greater ease of access at stations and station area economic development.
- Future service requirements include improved system performance, ability to run express trains 57 minutes end-to-end, stopping at every station every 30 minutes and minimizing equipment and crew requirements.
- Electrification of the railroad will meet future requirements including expanded access at the 4th and King station in San Francisco, enhanced boarding, and safety improvements at grade crossings with completion scheduled in 2014.
- Train technology options include electric locomotives with one motor unit/eight trailers or electric multiple units (EMUs) with each unit being self-propelled, ability to carry more passengers, ability to earn more revenue, and reduction in operating costs.
- Caltrain staff is involved in discussions with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to allow use of non-compliant EMUs on the same rail as heavy freight trains.
- Next steps include approval from the FRA and California Public Utilities Commission, broadening outreach to stakeholders and development of funding strategies.
- Unconstrained operations by 2014 will allow rapid transit services on a commuter rail infrastructure compatible with High Speed Rail.

Comments/Questions

Mr. Hees asked if Caltrain was expecting FRA approval of EMUs and freight trains on the line at the same time or if there would be temporal separation in some places. Mr. Doty said the FRA wants a signal system and grade crossing improvements in order to run mixed traffic provided Caltrain preclude freight. Restrictions would be in San Jose where the tracks come close together during revenue hours with additional restriction to nighttime hours.

Mr. Hees asked if new additional trains could be purchased in small orders with off the shelf European technology adapted to the United States market or will there be the need to have all equipment. Mr. Doty said some equipment will always need to be purchased in normal recycle mode. Caltrain is too small to build a new piece of rolling stock but there is vendor interest to build cars in California. Two pieces of rolling stock will meet Caltrain's needs and have been tested for crashworthiness. Results of these tests will be presented to the FRA on April 9.

Steve Krause asked about the private money concept for a funding strategy. Mr. Doty said private/public partnerships are the buzz word now. Because the dollar has weakened so much there are European organizations that want to invest in the United States. Caltrain might be trading the right to operate the railroad with a private money concept.

April Vargas asked how soon public outreach would begin to promote financing for the 2014 deadline. Mr. Doty said it takes five years to procure equipment and it is important to development momentum now.

Mr. Bigelow asked what the passage of High Speed Rail (HSR) would mean to track configuration. Mr. Doty said it depends on how many trains will be run, which is an unknown. Caltrain and HSR are working together to make sure there is compatibility.

Larry Shaine asked if there is a trend in ~~increased~~ commute reverse ridership. Mr. Doty said Caltrain is turning seats about one-an-a-half times during the peak.

Mr. Shaine asked for an explanation on grade crossing improvements. Mr. Doty said the FRA uses a rate to rate grade crossing safety and Caltrain meets all rules today. All grade crossings were rated and safety modifications made to all, which resulted in the scale of our rating going from three to 12.5 times better by completing fundamental changes to the grade crossings. Improvements included such things as separators between lanes and multiple gates.

Doris Maez asked how access improvements made at the 4th and King station would impact an extension to the downtown terminal. Mr. Doty said there needs to be a solution to decouple the off boarding and boarding process at the 4th and King station. Currently only 50 percent of Caltrain traffic can go to the Transbay Terminal but 4th and King station improvements must happen now.

Ms. Maez said she is concerned about train equipment mix on tracks. Mr. Doty said it is about crash energy management. This means, that in an accident, does something enter the train's occupied space. New crash energy management equipment can absorb a greater amount of impact before the occupied space is ever violated.

Ms. Maez asked if lighter weight equipment has a greater likelihood of jumping tracks. Mr. Doty said it is rare. The goal is to create a safer transportation environment and the equipment is designed to stay in line.

Ms. Maez asked about delays in boarding because of disabled riders and bike passengers and hanging bicycles to alleviate space issues. Mr. Doty said Caltrain has one of the highest percentages of bicycle ridership in the United States. He said a bicycle represents three people and the design for the space it takes. He said hanging bicycles could break loose and would act like a missile. He said each station stop costs four minutes today, which could be reduced with a longer platform.

George Zimmerman said it is absolutely crucial for the key players to provide incentives for greater intensification at activity modes, mainly around Caltrain stations, in terms of activity and housing, which was missing in the presentation. He said another crucial element for the ultimate success would be a plan for effective interface with other public transit systems. He urged Caltrain and the TA to consider both actions.

Mr. Zimmerman asked why you seldom see electrified lines at grade crossings in other electrified systems in the United States. Mr. Doty said it is basically because of clearances and the density of traffic.

Mr. Zimmerman asked, given that Caltrain is in a seismically active zone, whether electrified or diesel trains would provide a quicker return to service after an earthquake, assuming the tracks were in place. Mr. Doty said the failure would more likely be structural than power. All things being equal, diesel would start quicker because, more than likely, there would be a loss of the electric grid.

Barbara Arietta asked if Caltrain rail stock is up in every place for all the expected transitions. Mr. Doty said we are in a state of good repair, which is the fundamental standard of infrastructure.

Ms. Arietta asked how the current challenges, including boarding issues at the 4th and King station, would affect express trains. Mr. Doty said it would not be safe and Caltrain could not express trains to the station because it would be mandated to have all platforms level at floor height with a three-and-one-half inch gap.

Ms. Arietta asked how many stations have level boarding for express trains. Mr. Doty said stopping isn't the problem. If there is a three-and-one-half inch gap the car must have a very rigid suspension system to go with a two-tier car that Caltrain needs. This would create motion of the car and going at speed would compromise the three-and-one-half inch gap.

Mr. Hedges asked if trains could stop within a certain window to enhance boarding or if signs could be put on each side of the train door noting where to board or off-board. Mr. Doty said spotting a train that can accurately stop every time is difficult to do. He said door boarding signs are being considered for bicycles. Mr. Doty said Caltrain is an open access system and passengers tend to gravitate towards the center of the station.

Mr. Shaine asked if and Caltrain power changes relate to push-pull. Mr. Doty said Caltrain will maintain current push-pull, which is acceptable to the FRA as a safe mode and the cost and benefit are incredible.

Chair Dixon asked Amtrak audience members to introduce themselves. In attendance were Steve Shelton, District Superintendent for the Bay District, Jay Commer, General Manager for Caltrain and Mark Collins, Assistant General Manager for Caltrain. Mr. Doty also recognized the work of Michelle Bouchard, Deputy Director of Rail Transportation.

Mr. Doty thanked the CAC for what they have done over the years to enable Caltrain 2025 by supporting the District and contributing to the effort.

Public Comment

Pat Giorni, Burlingame, said she understands the limitation of a bicycle equaling three people, and asked that new equipment at least maintain the current bicycle capacity. Mr. Doty said bicycle capacity will increase as the number of trains increase.

A motion (Hees/Hedges) to applaud and endorse the Caltrain 2025 concept was passed unanimously.

ITEMS FOR REVIEW – TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING AGENDA OF APRIL 3, 2008

Item 6a) Acceptance of Statement of Revenues and Expenses for February 2008

No discussion

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Dixon said CAC applications are due April 7 for any members seeking re-election.

REPORT FROM STAFF

Mr. Hurley said he attended a Joint Powers Board budget meeting for FY2009. He said the budget will support a number of projects and programs referenced in Mr. Doty's Caltrain 2025 presentation.

MEMBER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Ms. Arietta said the Calera Parkway project is not listed in the new Measure A project summary and the current earmarked funds are only for completion of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). She asked what will happen to the project after completion of the EIR. Mr. Hurley said there can be allocations or earmarks of funds that were garnered under the current Measure.

Ms. Maez said San Bruno was able to get a grant from C/CAG to extend bike lanes between El Camino Real and Huntington on Sneath Lane, which goes to the BART station. She said San Bruno is completing a pedestrian study along El Camino Real and around the Tanforan Shopping Center with Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) funding.

Mr. Shaine suggested a presentation on electrification be presented as a follow up to the Caltrain 2025 presentation.

Mr. Bigelow reported on the Citizens Advisory Panel Policy Committee meeting for Dumbarton Rail and said Menlo Park has been encouraging a bus way between Newark on the Dumbarton Rail right-of-way be included in the EIR and Environmental Impact Study (EIS). This idea was deleted at the last meeting with the recommendation to have a four-bus feeder system from the East Bay that would travel across the highway bridge to the West Bay and go into work sites in southern San Mateo County and northern Santa Clara County. This means there is no project bus alternative on the rail right-of-way.

Mr. Bigelow said the latest polls of the statewide electorate on HSR are well over the 50 percent +1 voter threshold needed to get the HSR bond passed.

Chair Dixon said she hoped the committee could schedule a Devil's Slide tour when conditions are safe. Ms. Vargas said she could probably get a report on the tunnel progress from Caltrans to share with the committee.

Mr. Hedges said everyone is welcome to attend the April 5 Transportation and Land Use Coalition meeting at the Oakland Unitarian Church, which is near the Civic Center BART station.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the TA CAC will be held on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, at 4:30 p.m. at 1250 San Carlos Avenue, Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor, San Carlos, CA 94070.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.