

Transit Paratransit Coordinating Committee

MEETING AGENDA

January 21, 2013 1:00-2:30 PM

Sonoma County Transportation Authority
SCTA Large Conference Room
490 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 206
Santa Rosa, California 95401

ITEM

1. Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Minutes: November 19, 2013 – **DISCUSSION / ACTION***
4. TPCC Elections for 2014 – **ACTION***
5. Review of Membership Roster – **DISCUSSION***
6. Roundtable Updates
 - 6.1. Transit / Paratransit Operators
 - 6.2. Other Entities
7. Golden Gate Transit - *Strategic Vision for Golden Gate Transit Regional Bus Service* – **DISCUSSION***
 - 7.1. <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20131226/articles/131229674>
8. Sonoma Access - <http://www.sonomaaccess.org/> - **DISCUSSION**
9. Other Business / Comments / Announcements
10. Adjourn – **ACTION**

*Materials attached.

The next **SCTA** meeting will be held February 10, 2014
The next **TPCC** meeting will be held March 18, 2014

Copies of the full Agenda Packet are available at www.sctainfo.org

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TRANSIT-PARATRANSIT COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2013

ITEM

1. Introductions

Meeting called to order by Diane Dohm at 1:06 p.m. in Chair Dennis Battenberg and Vice Chair Vaughn Held's absence.

TPCC Member Attendees: Bob Cuneo, Citizen Representative over 60; Jodi Curtis, Sonoma County Transit; Larry Hall, Earle Baum Center of the Blind; Michael Ivory, City of Santa Rosa; Rabon Saip, Area Agency on Aging; Terry Scussel, Whistlestop.

Guest Attendees: Steve Birdlebough, Friends of SMART; Dubii, citizen; Patricia Kearns, Citizen; Linda Picton, Occupy Transit.

Staff: Diane Dohm, Nina Donofrio

2. Public Comment

Linda Picton addressed the issue of smoking at the Transit Mall, noting that the only visible signage prohibiting smoking is inside the alcove between the theater and the Transit Mall; as a result people are smoking between the alcove and where the buses stop. She noted a person wearing a t-shirt advertising e-cigarettes walking back and forth smoking an e-cigarette in this area, and observed that the sign would likely be more effective if it were in a better location.

Michael Ivory explained that the City is responding to this issue by moving the sign further south and that additional signage will be posted prohibiting smoking in the Transit Mall. He noted that this will have to be socially enforced.

Discussion followed regarding prohibition of e-cigarette smoking, and including this in the signage. Jodi Curtis noted that Sonoma County Transit signage will specify "no e-cigarettes." The issue of serious adverse reactions to secondhand smoke was also discussed.

3. Approval of Minutes: September 17, 2013 – **DISCUSSION / ACTION***

The minutes were approved as submitted.

4. Roundtable Updates

4.1. Transit / Paratransit Operators

Sonoma County Transit:

Jodi Curtis reported the purchase of nine 40 ft. CNG El Dorado buses to replace aging vehicles. These are being delivered ahead of schedule, possibly in January, and were originally projected to be delivered in March or April.

Fixed route ridership remains flat; however, data does not yet include all the information for November.

Ms. Curtis addressed traffic/service issues at the Graton Casino. The parking lot and driveways for the casino are not designed for easy bus access. Service includes Redwood Drive. Staff will be examining the possible need for extra service to the casino in the future.

Ms. Curtis next reported record ridership for paratransit service on November 13, with 219 rides.

In response to inquiries from Mr. Hall, Ms. Curtis dispelled rumors of a possible bus driver strike. She also reported that construction is ongoing on Adrian between East Cotati Avenue and Southwest Drive and that there are times when the road is closed; this is continuing to disrupt the regular bus route, but staff has not been given a completion date as of yet for the construction. Ms. Curtis said staff has been checking with the contractor at the site periodically and would look at other options for making service more convenient during this construction period.

Santa Rosa CityBus:

Mr. Ivory reported that paratransit experienced a record breaking day for service November 6, carrying 248 passengers, and that ridership has been steadily increasing. Staff commissioned a paratransit efficiency study and a special meeting of the Paratransit Users Group was held to review the



draft recommendations and find solutions for accommodating the overwhelming demand for paratransit service. This will be presented to City Council January 7. Paratransit ridership for October was almost 4,658 people and in September was 4,118 people.

Fixed route ridership for fiscal year 2012/2013 was down approximately 5,000 rides from the previous year, but has steadily increased each month. Staff is attempting to utilize fixed route service wherever possible to alleviate some of the demand on paratransit service (e.g., travel training, etc.).

As noted previously, staff is working on improving and adding to no smoking signage for the Transit Mall.

Ms. Picton addressed the need to make Occidental Road safer and more accessible as a route to the Earle Baum Center. Discussion followed regarding encouraging the use of fixed route service to Earle Baum Center, utilizing a combination of fixed route to shuttle service; and scheduling of transit service to the Earle Baum Center. Issues of seniors who have to stop driving and the heavy volume of paratransit demands for dialysis patients were also addressed. One solution Mr. Ivory mentioned was the possibility of donating retired buses to service agencies as these are replaced by new vehicles for the CityBus fleet.

4.2. Other Entities

Whistlestop:

Terry Scussel reported that they have 14 new vehicles (four new intercounty buses) and that their ridership has also increased. He confirmed that this is due to expansion.

A major issue is that recently traffic has increased significantly, and that this cannot always be predicted.

5. Notice of Elections – DISCUSSION*

Ms. Dohm announced that this will be addressed at the January meeting. Dennis Battenberg has agreed to serve as Chair. Vaughn Held has stepped down as Vice Chair and Stan Gow has offered to serve in this position. Ms. Dohm invited any other committee members who are interested in serving in either of these positions to be put on the ballot.

6. Sonoma Access – Michael Ivory – DISCUSSION

Mr. Ivory presented a slide show of the various services provided by this new website/call center, which is the result of a collaboration of the SCTA, the Area Agency on Aging, Sonoma County Transit, and City of Santa Rosa Transit. 2-1-1 is handling the call center. The Area Agency on Aging will take over

administration of this service. Approximately 40 partners are on the website.

Comprehensive services include transportation planning (e.g., public transit); special needs (ADA compliance); health care facilities; for-profit agencies; and volunteer services. Outreach will include residential care facilities, clinics, senior centers, newspapers, and other agencies. This will be presented to City Council on this date.

Suggestions for outreach included the Earle Baum Center for their monthly Technology Club meeting and Santa Rosa Junior College.

Discussion followed regarding the use of technology in public transportation, including an automatic vehicle location application and coordination between City and County transit.

7. Clipper Update – DISCUSSION*

Ms. Dohm led a discussion regarding the timing of Clipper service and its coordination with SMART service, and the possibility of having a representative of MTC attend a future committee meeting to discuss issues related to Clipper implementation.

8. Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program – www.baaqmd.gov/commuterbenefits – DISCUSSION*

Ms. Dohm referred to additional information indicating that ABAG and BAAQMD are in the process of developing guidelines for this program, which is expected to be approved in January or February, 2014. Within six months of approval, employers with 50+ employees will be required to comply with program criteria.

9. Other Business / Comments / Announcements None

10. Adjourn – **ACTION** 2:40 p.m.

Staff Report

To: Transit Paratransit Coordinating Committee
From: Diane Dohm, Transportation Planner
Item: TPCC Officer Elections for 2014
Date: January 21, 2014

Issue:

Who shall be elected Chair and Vice Chair of the Transit Paratransit Coordinating Committee (TPCC) for 2014?

Background:

The committee's purpose is to advise the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) on the transit needs of communities of people with special needs, including elderly, disabled, and those of low income.

The TPCC facilitates communications between transit and paratransit users and the operators of such services. The TPCC reviews transit proposals involving Transportation Development Act (TDA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310, and other funds. TDA funds are available for various types of transportation projects including the provision of transit and paratransit services. The TPCC is charged with approving the annual Coordinated Claim for Sonoma County.

The TPCC is also involved in raising awareness of the many issues faced in both using and providing transit and paratransit services. The committee has an interest in both paratransit and fixed route transit issues.

Officers:

SCTA's Ordinance No.3 requires that a Chair and Vice Chair be elected at the first meeting of the year to lead the TPCC during the calendar year. Dennis Battenberg has served as Chair and Vaughn Held as Vice-Chair during 2013. Dennis consented to be Chair again in 2014. Vaughn Held decided to allow others on the committee an opportunity to be Vice Chair for 2014. Stan Gow is interested in being the Vice Chair for the TPCC in 2014. Any additional nominations for Chair and Vice Chair are now invited. Nominations for Chair shall be limited to members having attended six (6) or more meetings in the preceding three (3) years.

Meetings:

The TPCC normally meets the 3rd Tuesday of every other month at 1 p.m. Meetings are held in SCTA's conference room.

Actions Requested

1. Additional candidates may be nominated at the January meeting.
2. TPCC Members are requested to elect a Chair and Vice Chair for service in 2014.
3. Attendance on January 21, 2014 is requested. A quorum of voting members is required for the election to take place.

**TRANSIT PARATRANSIT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MEMBERSHIP ROSTER**

	CATEGORY	FILLED BY	ENTITY
1	Chair	<i>Dennis Battenberg</i>	Public
2	Vice-Chair	<i>Stan Gow</i>	Public
3	One Potential Transit User Who is Disabled	<i>Vaughn Held</i>	Disability Services & Legal Center (DSLCL)
4	One Potential Transit User 60 or Older	<i>Bob Cuneo</i>	Public
5	One Representative of Hispanic/Latino Community	<i>Alberto Vega</i>	Public
6	Local Social Service Provider for <u>Disabled</u>	<i>Debby Fries</i>	Earle Baum Center of the Blind
7	Local Social Service Provider for <u>Disabled</u> (one is to be a Social Service Transportation Provider)	<i>Tyler Hewitt</i>	Becoming Independent (BI)
8	Local Social Service Provider for <u>Seniors</u>	<i>Tracy Repp</i>	Area Agency on Aging
9	Local Social Service Provider for <u>Seniors</u> (one is to be Social Service Transportation Provider)	<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>(members are checking in to Sebastopol Senior Center or Vintage House to fill this spot)</i>
10	Local Social Service Provider for <u>Persons of Limited Means</u>	<i>Gabriel Arevalo</i>	Vets Connect
11	Sonoma County Fixed Route Public Transit	<i>Jodi Curtis</i>	Sonoma County Transit
12	Sonoma County Paratransit Operator	<i>Tony Senese</i>	Volunteer Wheels
13	Santa Rosa Fixed Route Public Transit	<i>Michael Ivory</i>	Santa Rosa CityBus
14	Santa Rosa Paratransit Operator	<i>Peter Edwards</i>	MV Transportation
15	Healdsburg Fixed Route Transit & Paratransit Operator	<i>Sonja Drown</i>	Healdsburg Transit
16	Petaluma Fixed Route Public Transit	<i>Joe Rye</i>	Petaluma Transit
17	Petaluma Paratransit Operator	<i>Dawne Ivory</i>	MV Transportation
18	Regional Fixed Route Public Transit	<i>Joanne Leone*</i>	Golden Gate Transit
19	Regional Paratransit Operator	<i>Terry Scussel*</i>	Whistlestop
20	Regional Train Operator	<i>Joanne Parker</i>	Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)
21+	Jurisdictions in County/Sonoma (Each allow 1+ Alternate)		

*Filled vacancies for Whistlestop and Golden Gate Transit representation on committee (April 2013)



Agenda Item No. (4)

To: Transportation Committee/Committee of the Whole
Meeting of December 19, 2013

From: Ron Downing, Director of Planning
Teri Mantony, Deputy General Manager, Bus Division
Denis J. Mulligan, General Manager

Subject: **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RELATIVE TO THE
ADOPTION OF A STRATEGIC VISION FOR GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT
REGIONAL BUS SERVICE**

Recommendation

The Transportation Committee recommends that the Board of Directors adopt a “Strategic Vision” for Golden Gate Transit Regional Bus Service with the understanding that specific elements of the plan will be further developed and analyzed by staff and subsequently presented to the Board for approval.

Summary

This report identifies the key elements of a strategic vision for Golden Gate Transit (GGT) bus service, as well as recommended short-term and long-term strategies. Short-term strategies would be considered for implementation in the immediate to three-year horizon, while long-term strategies would be appropriate for the next three to seven years. If adopted, the Strategic Vision sets the stage for staff to analyze and bring forward specific recommendations that would support the Strategic Vision in each of the areas outlined below.

Discussion

Golden Gate Transit regional bus service provides an important link between communities in Marin and Sonoma Counties and San Francisco and the East Bay. The primary goal in the District’s provision of bus service is to reduce traffic congestion on the Golden Gate Bridge, and secondarily in the U. S. Hwy 101 corridor. These two goals have been successfully achieved through the combination of the District’s Golden Gate Transit bus and Golden Gate Ferry services. Approximately 7,000 cars are removed each weekday from the Golden Gate Bridge and the streets of San Francisco because of the availability of these services. With improvements in the economy, most of the GGT regional bus system has experienced ridership growth. Presentations to the Transportation Committee in August 2012 and August 2013 highlighted growth trends and improvements to bus service. The farebox recovery rate is now achieving the Board adopted goal of 25% due to these improvements in ridership levels. Nonetheless, while

overall the system is doing very well, there are still some specific routes that continue to lag, while others are experiencing higher levels of growth and warrant additional service.

Golden Gate Transit service continues to adapt to changing markets. The most significant service change occurred in 2003 when, in response to negative economic conditions, service was reduced by 22% through route eliminations, service restructure, and conversion of regional (Transbay) service to local routes that stayed within Marin County. These shorter routes, while still operated by GGT, became the responsibility of Marin Transit. In 2009, additional streamlining of underperforming commute routes took place and Regional Basic Route 80 was reconfigured on weekdays to create Route 101 Express service. The Route 101 service has shown consistent increases in ridership since its inception, and service has been added on weekdays and weekends to meet that growth. Also in 2009, service along Geary Boulevard in San Francisco was reduced from seven day a week to weekdays only during commute periods in response to very low ridership and the availability of alternative service on Muni.

Upcoming changes to the location of the GGT midday bus storage lot in March 2014 will require modifications to the routing of GGT buses within San Francisco. This could create opportunities for new reverse-commute and midday service to better utilize deadhead (non-revenue) bus movements and available midday bus and driver resources.

Internal roundtable discussions were conducted this fall with several employee groups to gather input on potential redesign concepts and new markets that might be served. These groups included key personnel who would have direct knowledge of the system including bus drivers, road supervisors, customer service representatives, and Marketing Department staff. All of this input was collected and evaluated for common themes. Preliminary guiding principles and draft goals were also developed as part of this process. The draft goals were refined through further discussions with key District staff and represent the cornerstone of this Strategic Vision.

Staff recommends that a Strategic Vision for GGT Regional Bus Service be adopted to provide a means to improve efficiency and foster continued growth. This Strategic Vision would include a plan for more effectively using available resources, expanding service where warranted, restructuring or eliminating inefficient service, and retaining and attracting new riders in both existing and emerging travel markets.

These strategies are addressed individually:

1. Improve the Effective Use of Available Golden Gate Transit Resources

Golden Gate Transit regional bus ridership grew between 3 and 6% between 2012 and 2013, and that growth appears to be continuing at a rate of 3% each month compared to the same month in the previous year.

A 3% increase in weekday ridership represents approximately 330 new weekday passenger trips each day or an additional 84,000 new riders each year. Should economic conditions improve further, ridership growth could exceed 3%.

Near-Term Strategy: Bring forward strategies to provide additional midday or weekend service where resources are readily available, and develop service restructuring or redeployment plans to eliminate unproductive routes and reinvest resources in more productive ones. Opportunities may exist to add reverse-commute service that is converted from deadhead bus movements. Also, consideration would be given to reorganize and simplify route designations and route variations to make routes easier to understand.

Long-Term Strategy: Consider increases in service levels and capacity to sustain a 3% or greater increase in ridership each year.

2. ***Restructure San Francisco Routings to Target Existing and Emerging Ridership Growth Opportunities***

Near-Term Strategy: Develop existing and emerging travel markets in the city, relative to the move to the new San Francisco bus storage lot. One such market includes visitors to the Golden Gate Bridge who travel not only from existing service corridors along Mission Street, Van Ness Avenue, and Lombard Street, but other corridors such as in the Fisherman's Wharf area that are presently served only during commute hours. A companion report will be presented at the December 19, 2013, Transportation Committee to recommend an initial demonstration program that will address this potential opportunity for new midday and reverse commute service on some existing routes. Also with the move to the new storage lot, GGT buses will be closer to the Caltrain Station and emerging job markets in SOMA. Opportunities to revise routes or expand service with available resources to meet these new market opportunities should be explored.

Long-Term Strategy: Work with San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (Muni) to explore opportunities to serve customers within San Francisco who could benefit from direct service across the city. Monitor developing employment clusters in San Francisco that are easily accessible along existing GGT service corridors and provide service to them as demand warrants.

3. ***Retain Existing Riders and Attract New Customers by Providing More Direct Service between Marin County Communities and San Francisco Where Demand Warrants, Particularly During Midday and Weekend Periods***

Near-Term Strategy: Identify opportunities to better utilize resources dedicated to providing service in corridors with limited growth opportunities. Opportunities may exist to extend existing routes to connect additional communities to San Francisco without intermediate transfers, or to provide faster travel times between busy regional activity centers.

Long-Term Strategy: Monitor changes in travel behavior so service can be tailored to meet customer demand, including the times and locations of trips and whether those trips are better served by GGT regional buses, Golden Gate Ferry, Marin Transit, or SMART.

4. *Develop New Travel Markets for Regional Service to San Francisco from Areas not Presently Served by GGT, Particularly from Sonoma County, as Warranted by Potential Demand*

Near-Term Strategy: Consider the feasibility of providing new or additional service to Sonoma County communities that are growing, especially those with a high proportion of residents who travel to San Francisco for work. Opportunities may include new or restructured service to Windsor and areas of Santa Rosa not immediately along Highway 101, as well as additional express service.

Long-Term Strategy: Monitor changes in travel behavior once SMART is operational, and adjust routes and service levels to meet customer demand for regional service along the Highway 101 corridor.

5. *Attract New Regional Riders to the Entire Golden Gate Transit/Golden Gate Ferry System by Developing and Implementing New Shuttle Bus Routes to Regional Ferry and Rail Services When Demand Warrants*

Near-Term Strategy: Build upon the Golden Gate Ferry Strategic Vision by reviewing the success of the “Wave” Larkspur Ferry Shuttle, which connects the Ross Valley to Golden Gate Ferry service, and analyzing changes in travel behavior that accompany the introduction of paid parking at Larkspur Ferry Terminal to determine opportunities for additional ferry shuttle routes.

Long-Term Strategy: Work with SMART to develop a comprehensive transit network that takes customers from home to work, school, and recreational destinations without the need to rely on automobile trips.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with adopting this Strategic Vision. The fiscal impact and other potential impacts of individual projects identified in this vision will be determined at the time each project is brought forward for Board review and approval.