

## **Santa Barbara County Transit Advisory Council (SBCTAC)**

### **MINUTES**

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

Buellton City Council Chambers  
140 West Highway 246  
Buellton, CA

#### **SBCTAC Members Present**

Polly Bleavins  
David Damiano (Vice-Chair)  
Matt Dobberteen (Chair)  
Cathy Farrar  
Richard Fernbaugh  
Rick Hummel  
Howard Kraus  
Austin O'Dell  
Dean Palius  
Ernesto Paredes  
Barry Stotts  
Victor Suhr  
Jim Talbott  
Matt Van Der Linden  
Ed Zoost

Children & Families Commission  
SBMTD  
County of SB Transit Agency  
Transit User  
COLT  
LOVARC  
R&D Transportation  
SMAT  
SYVPHP  
Easy Lift – CTSA  
Community Access Network  
Transit User – South Coast  
SMOOTH – CTSA  
SYVT  
Transit User – SMAT

#### **Others Present**

Nicole Campos  
Rosemary Luque  
Ashley Payne  
Andrew Vail

Easy Lift  
CalVans  
Community Partners in Caring  
PathPoint

#### **SBCAG Staff**

Peter Imhof  
Aubrey Spilde

### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

In the absence of both the Chair and the Vice Chair, recent past Chair Jim Talbott called the meeting to order.

### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jim Talbott called for public comment and there was none.

### **3. MINUTES**

Member Agencies

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

Following a motion by Richard Fernbaugh, seconded by Cathy Farrar, with Polly Bleavins, Austin O'Dell, and Dean Palius abstaining, the committee approved the SBCTAC minutes of July 12, 2011.

#### **4. CALVANS**

Aubrey Spilde presented the staff report and then invited Rosemary Luque to speak. Rosemary brought a wide selection of informational and promotional items for the committee. She announced she is getting ready to start a new vanpool after working with the County of Santa Barbara through Matt Dobberteen. She is also working with Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), and has contacted the Chumash. She said she's trying to get the word out. She noted that CalVans accepts driver licenses from all states. Drivers of 15-passenger vans need to get physicals, but drivers of 7-passenger vans do not. There is no criminal background check, and the turnaround time to start a vanpool can be as little as 24-48 hours. Austin O'Dell asked if the vanpools to VAFB will be able to drive on the Base, and Rosemary said she is working on that. Jim Talbott suggested that city employees help Rosemary make contact with their HR departments. Ernesto Paredes asked how old passengers and drivers must be. Rosemary said passengers can be any age, but drivers must be 23. *[Update: Rosemary found out drivers can be as young as 21 if their driving records are perfectly clean.]* Ernesto asked if drivers must have a class B license and Rosemary said no. Jim explained that State law provides an exemption for vanpools such that drivers may operate with a class C license as long as they can provide evidence of the medical exam required for a class B license. Matt Dobberteen initiated a discussion about pre-tax commuter benefits. David Damiano suggested googling TranBen to learn more. Matt pointed out that Rosemary and Jim's good work on the AgVan program positioned Santa Barbara County to have a CalVans field office. He added that he believes the CalVans program is a game changer. It is very different from what the private sector offers.

#### **5. SERVICE ANIMAL POLICIES**

Aubrey Spilde presented the staff report. Matt Dobberteen inquired about miniature horses as service animals and Barry Stotts pointed out that horses live much longer than dogs do. Aubrey noted a correction to the last full paragraph on the third page of the staff report: the requirement to "ensure the dog is on a leash and tagged as a guide dog, signal dog, or service dog by an identification tag" applies only to dogs in training.

Aubrey provided additional information regarding licensing requirements in response to an inquiry from Barry. State law requires that all dogs be licensed, whether they are service animals or pets. The impetus for this requirement is to ensure that the animals are vaccinated against rabies. In Santa Barbara County, Animal Services issues dog licenses for all the unincorporated areas of the County and all the cities except Santa Barbara and Carpinteria. County Animal Services charges the same fee for pets and services animals. The County also offers an additional, free service tag for service dogs. Service dog owners must provide certain paperwork if they want to get the service tag, but are not required to get the service tag. The cities of Santa Barbara and Carpinteria waive the licensing fee for service dogs, if service dog owners provide certain paperwork; however, at least in Carpinteria, a service dog owner is not required to provide the paperwork and could instead simply license his/her dog the same way a pet owner would. There is no requirement to identify a dog as a service dog. Barry suggested transit operators note on their websites that service tags are available.

Barry also pointed out that HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) has

their own policies regarding service animals and companion animals.

David Damiano said the recent clarification that emotional support animals are not services animals has been helpful. Austin O'Dell agreed, and added it is good to know about the service tag option. He said although the recent clarification has been beneficial, it would be helpful for transit providers if service animal identification were required. Ernesto Paredes asked David if MTD allows people to bring pets on the bus in carriers and David said yes. Polly Bleavins pointed out that not allowing carriers would discriminate against, for example, elderly people who don't drive but need to take their pets to the vet. David offered that people could call Steve Maas at MTD with any service animal questions.

## **6. TRANSIT SCHEDULES**

- B. Richard Fernbaugh explained that, starting August 1, COLT cut one hour of service in the evening and eliminated Route 2A. COLT is still working on retiming routes and re-routing one route. COLT will likely have new brochures in October, and Richard will bring copies to SBCTAC when they are ready. David Damiano asked what percentage reduction in service the changes represent and Richard said 16. Richard said the COLT Short Range Transit Plan will likely be finalized in September, and there will be more service changes in the future. Matt Dobberteen confirmed that the changes do not affect the Wine Country Express. Matt also asked about the transit center and Richard said it will go back before the Council in September.
- A. Austin O'Dell explained that SMAT's recently-adopted Short Range Transit Plan contained short-, mid-, and long-term recommendations. SMAT implemented the short- and mid-term recommendations with the service changes that coincided with the opening of the new transit center on June 19. The changes were the first service changes in eight years. Austin brought copies of the new service map. David Damiano asked Austin the same question he asked Richard about changes to revenue hours. Austin said there was actually a small decrease; removing the interlining made service more efficient. Matt Dobberteen said that if there is an opportunity for express service from Orcutt in the next round of service refinements, the County is ready to make that happen. David asked if the dedicated bus bays at the new transit center are working well and Austin said yes. SMAT has not yet dedicated them to certain buses or routes, which Ed Zoost said has caused some confusion, but Austin said he will be addressing that issue by dedicating the bays.

## **7. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Aubrey Spilde reminded COLT, SMAT, and the County to schedule the COLT and SMAT unmet transit needs workshops for the fall, and to let SBCTAC know once the dates are set. Austin O'Dell said SMAT plans to hold workshops in December and asked if they would be sufficient; Aubrey said they would talk about it.
- Aubrey Spilde announced that the State released the draft prioritized project list for the FTA 5310 Elderly and Disabled Transit Program. The projects from the two Santa Barbara County applicants, Easy Lift and SMOOTH, scored well enough to make it on the short list of projects that will most likely receive funding. The list has to go through a few more steps before it is adopted in September. Jim Talbott thanked SBCAG staff for the help with the application process.

- Barry Stotts thanked staff for the report on service animals.
- David Damiano offered to provide a demonstration of Google Transit at the next meeting.
- Ashley Payne announced that Community Partners in Caring has a new database, Assisted Rides, that has been extremely helpful. She added that Community Partners has seen a 15% increase in clients over the past year. Ernesto Paredes asked her when her FTA 5317 funding expires and Ashley said 2014.

**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next regularly scheduled meeting date is Tuesday, September 13, 2011 (second Tuesday of the month).

**9. ADJOURN**