

**Advisory Committee on Accessibility
Minutes of May 25, 2023**



Members Present: Patti Mangles, Marcela Vargas,
Terry Scussel, Craig Yates

Staff: Jon Gaffney, ACA Compliance and Program Manager
Roberta Regan, Administrative Assistant, Planning Department
Michael Hoffman, Deputy General Manager, Ferry Division
John Gray, Director of Engineering and Maintenance, Ferry Division

Ex-Officio Members: Joanna Huitt, Senior Mobility Planner, Marin Transit
Jhashe Holloway, General Manager, Transdev

Visitors: Director Elbert Hill
Christian Stark, Sr. Project Manager, Aurora Marine Design

Chair Patti Mangles started the meeting at 1:34 pm. The meeting was held in person at Vivalon, 930 Tamalpais Ave, San Rafael.

1. Roll Call and Introductions

2. Minutes / Agenda – The October 20, 2022 minutes were approved.

3. Ongoing Business

- a) ACA Recruitment – Jon Gaffney explained that recruitment is ongoing for the group. He stated that he and Ms. Mangles had posted flyers at libraries, senior centers and assisted living facilities throughout Marin.
- b) Alternative Service: Larkspur Ferry – Mr. Gaffney announced that repairs to the inner berth in San Francisco had been completed. Main deck boarding and disembarking is now possible, which has returned the Larkspur Ferry service to full accessibility and back-up bus service had been discontinued.
- c) Marin Local Bus and Mobility Management – Joanna Huitt discussed upcoming changes going into effect on Marin Transit Fixed Route on June 11, 2023. She then discussed a free ride for youth program that Marin Transit would be participating in throughout the summer. Ms. Huitt then

explained that Marin Access Services would be changing July 1, 2023. She stated that the Connect program was being discontinued and the Catch-A-Ride program was transitioning to a voucher program that could be used with North Bay Taxi and Uber.

Mr. Gaffney discussed the paratransit service statistics. He pointed out that the service had been experiencing problems with low on-time performance and contributed this to a staffing shortage that is being experienced by transit agencies nationwide. Jhashe Holloway then announced to the group that several drivers have been hired and, due to those hires, Marin Access was seeing a dramatic increase in on-time performance in the month of May.

4. New Business

- a) Review of Proposed Ferry Design – John Gray gave an overview of the New Ferry Design Project. He explained that the goal was to have one new vessel built in 2025. He stated that the last time the District underwent a new vessel build was approximately 2003.

Mr. Gray handed out proposed vessel diagrams to the committee. Christian Stark described the design to the group. He stated that the new vessel will be a high-speed catamaran that will hold approximately 500 passengers. This ferry is planned to be primarily used for commute service between Larkspur and San Francisco, though it will be being designed so that it can be used on any of the District's ferry services. He said the new vessel will be longer and wider than the current vessels operated by the district.

Mr. Stark went on to explain that this vessel would comply with the new emissions regulations set forth by the State of California, which are significantly more stringent than those set forth by the federal government.

Mr. Stark then described the accessibility features of the vessel including two accessible restrooms, a lift that will allow individuals to move from one deck to another, accessible seating areas inside and outside on the vessel, as well as visual and auditory emergency briefings.

Marcella Vargas asked about seating designation for seniors and individuals with disabilities. She expressed that she feels the current signage is not adequate and more can be done to ensure these seats are reserved for individuals that need them. Mr. Gray and Mr. Stark said they would work to determine the number of ambulatory accessible seats that are needed and investigate ways to ensure the message is clear that those seats are reserved. Mr. Gaffney also discussed how deckhands are trained to assist individuals with disabilities, including the requirement to ask individuals without disabilities to vacate these seats should an individual with a disability want to use one.

Craig Yates asked if the District had considered electric ferry vessels for this project. Mr. Stark replied that electric vessels had been considered, but the technology currently available was not able to provide the service level that Golden Gate Ferry currently provides. He stated that the current available electric vessels are significantly slower than what is needed for District service. He also stated that the District would continue to look at that technology in the future as it evolves.

Patti Mangles asked what the current usage is of the lifts on the current vessels. Mr. Stark replied that the current high-speed vessels do not have lifts. Ms. Mangles asked how many individuals using mobility devices are currently using the vessels. Matt Hoffman stated that that information is not currently available. Roberta Regan mentioned that the Planning Department is currently working on a survey of ferry passengers and that usage by individuals with disabilities could be part of that effort.

Director Hill asked if the Americans with Disabilities Act had any section that applied to vessels. Mr. Stark explained that there are Proposed Vessel Accessibility Guidelines, but that those guidelines had yet to be finalized and have remained in draft form since 2014. He also stated that those proposed guidelines are being considered for this vessel design project.

Mr. Stark explained that plans needed to be finalized later this year. Terry Scussel asked that Ferry staff come back to the group, once design had progressed, to revisit changes and further details that will be incorporated into the project.

b) Strategic Planning Discussion – Mr. Gaffney stated that the Committee was asked to provide information to the District’s Board of Directors for Strategic Planning. The committee discussed several items that they would like the Board of Directors to consider during their planning process. These topics included the following:

- Increase service satisfaction and adherence to on-time performance and ADA compliance in the provision of the District’s Regional ADA Paratransit Program.
- Increase awareness of accessibility in the planning of bus stops, routes and facilities including accessible path of travel to and from stops and facilities.
- Increased focus on outreach and education to individuals with disabilities including travel training for District transit services.
- Continued collaboration with local transit providers to provide feeder service to existing regional service.
- Continue research into the reduction of the District’s carbon footprint by exploring electrification and alternative fuel technologies for feasibility on District transit services as they evolve and as new technologies become available.
- Promote transit careers through internships, training programs and awareness of the transit industry in high schools and colleges to ensure a vibrant workforce in the transit industry for years to come.
- Research best practices and innovative approaches across the country and internationally and determine applicability to the District’s services.

5. Member Announcements – No member announcements were presented.

6. Public Comments – No members of the public were in attendance.

7. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 3:03 pm. The next meeting was announced to take place on July 20, 2023.



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