

BUS PASSENGERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)

Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, January 19, 2022



Committee Members Present: Brian Bailey-Gates, Dan Bell, Jon Horinek, Scott Kempf, Dave Troup, Fredi Bloom

District Staff Present: David Davenport, Senior Planner; Hitham Hamdon, Acting Superintendent of Transportation Operations; Carlena Natouf, Customer Relations Supervisor

Guests Present: Director James Mastin; Mohamed Osman, Marin Transit; Mike Combs; David Pilpel

1. **Roll Call:** Scott Kempf opened the meeting at 5:39 p.m. Five members were present, representing a quorum, and a sixth member joined later.
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** BPAC members approved the November 17, 2021, meeting minutes.
3. **Bus Stoppers:** Dave Troup asked why all schedules list “yes” for the Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza timepoint. Mr. Troup noted that times would help since he transfers to/from Muni at this location, and Dan Bell agreed. David Davenport indicated that buses are required to move as additional buses arrive at this location, which makes it difficult for buses to hold for time. He added that times used to be included on northbound trips on some routes, but those times were removed because of the variability in travel times in this area. Mr. Bell asked if real-time displays could be installed at these bus stops, and Mr. Davenport agreed to follow up on the status of such signage, which was previously proposed.
4. **Ongoing Business:**
 - a. COVID-19 Update: Hi Hamdon reported that 23 bus operators tested positive for COVID over the past month, which is defined as a major outbreak by CalOSHA. Mr. Davenport noted that Route 101 was reduced to hourly service as of December 20 due to limited driver availability. In addition, starting March 13, weekend service on Route 150 would be suspended.
5. **New Business:**
 - a. PEPRA Funding Issue Update: Mr. Davenport gave an update on the issue, which was discussed as part of Mr. Troup’s bus stopper at the previous meeting. U.S. District Court granted the state’s motion to stay on December 20, which stopped the U.S. Department of Labor from blocking FTA grants to affected transit agencies. Therefore, the District will receive \$44 million in American Rescue Plan funding as well as additional funding from the recently signed infrastructure bill. Mr. Kempf asked if funding would have to be returned if the final decision differed, and Mr. Davenport said no.
 - b. Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit Update: Mr. Davenport reported that substantial completion of the Van Ness Improvement Project occurred at the end of 2021, and initial testing

began January 12. More testing and finishing touches are required to make the busway ready for service, and the estimated opening will be in March or April.

- c. Downtown Petaluma Service Realignment: Mr. Davenport informed the committee of routing changes set to take effect March 13. Routes 101 and 172 will no longer serve the stops at 4th & C due to the difficulty larger buses have accessing them. Alternate bus stops are located on Petaluma Blvd at F and G Streets, on East Washington Street at Grey Street for southbound buses, and at Copeland Street Transit Mall for northbound buses. It was noted that GGT requested bus stops on the south edge of downtown about a year ago, but the city has not yet granted the request.
- d. Bus Driver Pre-Apprenticeship Program: Mr. Hamdon gave a presentation on the District's new pre-apprenticeship program for bus operators. The program was developed in consultation with local community colleges and is intended to improve the ability of people to apply for and be hired for driver positions. Fredi Bloom mentioned that probation could be another source of workers. Mr. Hamdon added that employment requirements, such as the minimum years of driving experience needed to apply, are likely to be adjusted for participants of the pre-apprenticeship program.

6. Announcements: Two topics were covered:

- a. The committee voted to admit Mike Combs as a new member of the committee.
- b. Mohamed Osman reported that Marin Transit is also experiencing a driver shortage, and service has been temporarily adjusted accordingly. He added that some service on Route 66 has operated from Marin City rather than Pohono Street due to king tides.

7. Members' Forum: Two topics were presented:

- a. Mr. Bell asked for a summary of the process the District plans to undertake when reintroducing bus routes. Mr. Davenport said the District is kicking off a Strategic Plan effort, which will be followed by a Short-Range Transit Plan update and related Board actions. Mr. Bell asked if the San Rafael Transit Center replacement project is still needed, and Mr. Davenport noted that Marin Transit ridership has bounced back more quickly than GGT ridership and the overall number of buses using the facility has not significantly changed. Brian Bailey-Gates shared his office's return-to-work plan, stating that only about 100 of 800 people have made it back into the office so far and not with any regularity. However, he expects that to change over time.
- b. Mr. Combs observed that bus stop signs have not yet been updated with new route numbers that took effect in December. Mr. Davenport stated that the District's work crew is backlogged but hopes to complete the work soon.

8. Public Comment: David Pilpel wondered how Lombard Street's new HOV lanes are working for GGT, and asked if Mr. Hamdon or Mona Babauta could comment on the Bus Division's recently approved staff restructuring. Mr. Hamdon said he would pass on the request to Ms. Babauta.

9. Adjournment: Mr. Kempf adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Members were advised that the next meeting is scheduled to take place Wednesday, March 16, 2022, via Zoom.