

# **BUS PASSENGERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)**

*Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, March 16, 2022*



**Committee Members Present:** Brian Bailey-Gates, Dan Bell, Mike Combs, Scott Kempf, Dave Troup, Fredi Bloom

**Committee Member Absent:** Jon Horinek

**District Staff Present:** Mike Abegg, Acting Director of Scheduling and Service Development; Mona Babauta, Deputy General Manager, Bus Division; David Davenport, Senior Planner; Carlena Natouf, Customer Relations Supervisor; Francis Tremblay, Marketing and Communications Specialist

**Guests Present:** Director Bert Hill; Director James Mastin; Director Michael Theriault; Mohamed Osman, Marin Transit; Dean Ignacio; David Pilpel

1. **Roll Call:** Scott Kempf opened the meeting at 5:38 p.m. Six members were present, representing a quorum.
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** BPAC members approved the January 19, 2022, meeting minutes.
3. **Bus Stoppers:** Two topics were presented:
  - a. Dave Troup observed that some real-time predictions in the Transit app appear to be scheduled times. David Davenport explained how Transit shows real-time and scheduled data. Mr. Troup reported that real-time data seems to be missing for Marin Transit buses starting at Marin City Hub. Mohamed Osman stated that Marin Transit released an update that should make it visible for all routes. Mr. Davenport requested that any specific real-time issues be shared with him or Ms. Natouf so staff can follow up.
  - b. Mike Combs asked if Golden Gate Transit signage would be included at the new bus stops along Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco, and if Muni's real-time signs would display GGT data. Mr. Davenport confirmed that GGT signage will be posted, and GGT data will be displayed on Muni's real-time signs once Muni updates its system. Mr. Combs also inquired about adjusting trip times so GGT buses are better spaced in San Francisco. Mike Abegg noted that the suspension of Route 150 weekend service presented last-minute challenges, and indicated that schedule changes would be made in June to improve trip spacing.
4. **Ongoing Business:**
  - a. COVID-19 Update: Mr. Davenport reported that the face mask requirement for all public transit has been extended through April 18. He also reported that bridge traffic and transit ridership has begun to increase. However, bridge traffic remains down 18% overall and down 34% during the weekday morning peak, and bus and ferry ridership remain down 67% and 71% respectively, compared to pre-pandemic levels. Committee members

shared their employer's return-to-work plans, which were generally twice or three times a week. Fredi Bloom asked if social distancing measures were still in place, and Mr. Davenport noted that the only remaining restriction was the closure of the seats nearest drivers on MCI buses.

**5. New Business:**

- a. American Rescue Plan Funding Plan Update: Mr. Davenport reported that the District will receive \$75 million in additional funding based on a nationwide competitive program. The funding should make the District's transit expenses whole through 2023. Mr. Combs asked about fares, and Mr. Davenport indicated that the District's 25% farebox recovery rate for buses was not being met.
- b. March 2022 Changes and Existing Service Snapshot: Mr. Davenport reported that Route 150 weekend service was suspended effective March 13, and Routes 101 and 172 were realigned in downtown Petaluma. He reported that GGT currently has seven routes, and that an eighth route, Route 114, would be implemented between Mill Valley, Marin City, and the San Francisco Financial District. Mr. Abegg announced that the new route would begin March 21. Mr. Davenport reported that further service expansion is limited by bus driver availability. Dan Bell asked where drivers are, and Mona Babauta said some are absent due to the omicron surge and others have retired or otherwise left. She indicated that the District began recruiting a few months ago and those efforts will continue, and added that the new pre-apprenticeship program as well as training staffing changes should help boost ranks later this year.
- c. Bus Stop Information Sign Redesign: Francis Tremblay presented on the District's efforts to redesign bus stop information signs. More visually appealing and understandable information would be provided, and real-time information resources would be better explained. Mr. Combs and Mr. Troup supported the addition of maps, and Mr. Combs suggested that connecting transit information be added. Mr. Troup asked if Marin Transit information would be included, and Mr. Tremblay said they would continue to have their own signs due to space limitations. Mr. Bell suggested including schedules if possible. Mr. Tremblay said schedules would be excluded for now due to space limitations and the frequency of schedule changes. Carlena Natouf added that staffing limitations prevent frequent maintenance of the signs. Mr. Bell noted that real-time signage at San Rafael Transit Center is not working, and Ms. Natouf said the displays are being repaired. Mr. Bell reiterated support for real-time signage at the Toll Plaza, and Mr. Davenport said he would direct the committee's request to staff and provide an update in the future.

**6. Announcements:**

- a. Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit Grand Opening: Mr. Davenport announced that the Van Ness Improvement Project ribbon cutting is scheduled for Friday, April 1. Bus service is slated to begin using the new bus lanes after the ceremony concludes. Mr. Troup asked if GGT and Muni will share stops, and Mr. Davenport confirmed all stops would be shared. Mr. Kempf asked how bus breakdowns would be handled, and Mr. Davenport report that a joint GGT-SFMTA plan is in development. Mr. Bell asked if PresidiGo plans to use the bus lanes, and Mr. Davenport said SFMTA expects them to remain in mixed traffic.

**7. Members' Forum:** None.

**8. Public Comment:** David Pilpel expressed support for the bus stop information sign redesign, and recommended adding notes that not all stops are shown and maps are not to scale. He acknowledged that posting schedules increases maintenance requirements, and suggested that a list of major facilities be defined so enhanced signage could be put in place at those locations.

**9. Adjournment:** Mr. Kempf adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Members were advised that the next meeting is scheduled to take place Wednesday, May 18, 2022, via Zoom.