

# **SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA TRANSIT DISTRICT ACCESSIBILITY TASK FORCE**

## **Draft Minutes**

January 23, 2014

### **1. Self-Introductions of Members**

**Members present:** Randall Glock; Janice Armigo Brown; Peter Crockwell; Don Queen; Hale Zukas; Clarence Fischer; Gerry Newell; Herb Hastings; David Jackson; Katrina McCurdy; Alan Smith; Marina Villena; Megan O'Brien

**Members not present:** Janet Abelson; Jane Lewis; Larry Bunn

**Staff:** Ike Nnaji; Bob Franklin

**Directors, Speaker(s), Guest Staff, and Guests of the Public:** Director Robert Raburn; Mark Smith; Aaron Weinstein; Jill Colby Buschini; Isaac Lim; Brent Pearce; Jerry Grace; Denise Jacobson; Andrea Gorman; Shira Leeder; Peter Mendoza; Roger Acuna; Michelle Rousy; Chris Mullins; Renee Whitmore; Ramiro Montoya; Leslie Simon; Grace Wright; Dolores Tejada

### **2. Public Comments**

Mark Smith of the Office of the Independent Police Auditor thanked the BATF, and Gerry Newell in particular, for their help in putting together a braille version of the complaint form.

Denise Jacobsen shared her concerns regarding the new BART cars. She feels that the new design will present many difficulties for people with disabilities.

Andrea Gorman's concern is that people do not adhere to the priority seating signs. She suggested having more BART police presence in the trains. She asked that BART consider accessibility when configuring the placement of the disabled seating.

Shira Leeder would like for the new BART cars to be more accessible to people in wheelchairs.

Jerry Grace announced that a Town Hall Meeting ("Let's All Get to Work") is being held on Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014, from 9:30am to 12:00pm at the State Building Auditorium, 1515 Clay Street in Oakland. It involves increasing employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of September 26, 2013 and December 11, 2013 Meetings**

No opposition to David Jackson's motion to approve minutes of the September 26, 2013 and December 11, 2013 meetings, (second by Gerry Newell). Motion carries unanimously.

#### 4. San Jose Extension

After the presentation given by Brent Pearse, members were allowed to ask questions and/or share any concerns they had.

Members are invited to attend a future Committee for Transit Accessibility (CTA) meeting. The next meeting date is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 1:00pm. Future meeting dates are scheduled for June 11<sup>th</sup> and October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014. He also suggested including BATF members in a station tour.

More information can be found at <http://www.vta.org/bart/suscribe>

#### 5. Fleet of the Future Final Model

A report containing information about accessible features on new BART trains was passed around. A number of these features are based on the input received from the BATF.

After the update given by Aaron Weinstein and Jill Buschini, the floor was opened up to allow people to ask questions and/or share any concerns they had.

BATF Members:

- Megan O'Brien's question related to the window height, as she currently leans on the ledge to get up from her seat.  
**The window will be located at the same height.**
- Gerry Newell asked about handholds, as he currently uses handholds to get up from his seat.  
**The middle armrest between the seats is being removed, but there will be a variety of handholds placed throughout the car. BART is also considering putting armrests on the side-facing seats adjacent to the door**
- David Jackson asked about deflecting the glare on the pole so that people with low-vision do not walk into it.  
**Decals will be placed on the pole at eye-level.**
- Marina Villena feels that the pole will be a challenge to maneuver around in her wheelchair.  
**Aaron encouraged her to attend the mock-up in April to test moving around the pole and welcomed any feedback.**
- Since it can be challenging for people with disabilities to get up out of their seat, Clarence Fischer suggested having a movable armrest or a foldable handhold so that people can use it, when needed, and it can be out of the way when not in use or when people need the space. He feels yellow and black may be a better contrast for people with low-vision. He praised the different-colored disabled seat.

Members of the Public:

- Peter Mendoza with the Independent Living Resource Center of San Francisco is concerned that with the mock-up being scheduled for April 2014, there will be no time for any substantive changes to be made, if any are needed. He feels that people tend to gravitate towards the pole when the train is crowded, which can then create accessibility problems for wheelchair users. He added that a true test of the design can only be done by staging an actual commuting experience.

**Aaron would like to set up a meeting to follow-up on Peter's thoughts on how to design that experience and to begin a dialogue regarding his concerns.**

- Andrea Gorman asked if the materials used were being purchased in America.  
**Two-thirds of the materials in the new cars will be bought in America, surpassing the 60 percent requirement in the Buy America provisions.**
- Michelle Rousy's concern also has to do with the placement of the pole, especially when the train is crowded.
- 
- Ramiro Montoya with the California Disability Community Action Network suggests having a car just for persons in wheelchairs, and he also suggests moving the pole a few inches.  
**Aaron replied that in the new cars, bike space will be limited to the middle of the car, while there will be wheelchair spaces at each of the end doors.**
- Leslie Simon, a travel trainer with the Center of Independent Living, would prefer four wheelchair spaces per car, instead of just two.  
**Aaron replied that the seats are designed to be modular, and can be reconfigured easily to open up more spots, but in the current design, there will only be two wheelchair spaces.**
- Renee Whitmore is also concerned with the placement of the pole and getting around it in her scooter.  
**Aaron encouraged her to attend the mock-up with her scooter in order to try it out and provide feedback.**
- Grace Wright, with the Center of Independent Living and with the Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities Access Compliance Advisory Committee, seconded Peter Mendoza's concern regarding the time line and shared an interest in being a part of the special meeting.

- Roger Acuna presented with a letter written for BART staff requesting for an additional new car mock-up presentation. He is concerned that the mock-up is only being scheduled for April, although some cars will already be purchased in January. He would for the disabled community to be invited to the ten mock-up sessions, and not just the special session. He hopes that these continued demonstrations will help determine what the best access feature will be for the majority of passengers; i.e. the pole.
- Dolores Tejada, from the Community Resources for Independent Living, asked, of the 17,000 people who have provided input, how many are people with disabilities. She clarified that her organization is really interested in the reviewing the design in an actual mock-up and providing feedback. She asked for assurance that their feedback will be taken into consideration in case any changes need to be made.  
**Aaron replied that word will be put out to everyone regarding the time and location of the mock-ups, and everyone is welcome to attend. Even though cars are being purchased, that does not mean that they are being produced.**

Aaron expects to have a schedule for the Fleet of the Future Final Model by the end of February. Interested parties can also sign up for alerts on the BART website at <http://www.bart.gov/about/projects/cars>  
People without Internet access are welcome to leave their information with him as well in order to receive alerts.

## **6. General Disability Awareness**

The final draft of the tri-fold was passed around during the meeting. An electronic version of the draft has also been sent to members for their review. Gerry Newell encouraged members to share their feedback and input with Crystal Raine.

## **7. Station Entrance Cover Prototype**

After the presentation given by Isaac Lim, members were allowed to ask questions and/or share any concerns they had.

Alan Smith asked if the escalator can be set to move in the upward direction at all times during construction. He also asked for better signage throughout the station to advise passengers of construction and notifies them of any closures.

Megan O'Brien requested for announcements in addition to better signage.

Janice Armigo Brown and David Jackson feel it is important to have good lighting in the canopy.

## **8. Proposed Detectible Path of Travel Tour**

Ike Nnaji and Bob Franklin think that it may be better for members to take a self-tour and report back with their observations and input. They can either do so individually or in small groups or pairs.

## **9. December Reception Debrief**

Gerry Newell thinks that it will be beneficial to the BATF to hold another reception this year.

Janice Armigo Brown thought that the reception was wonderful and enjoyed the entertainment, although she felt that there should have been better lighting. Ike Nnaji clarified that the reason that that location was chosen was because of the need to accommodate the dancers.

No opposition to Clarence Fischer's recommendation to schedule the end-of-year meetings for Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014, (second by Gerry Newell). Motion carries unanimously.

## **10. Proposed Dog Policy**

After a short presentation given by Bob Franklin, members were allowed to ask questions and/or share any input they had.

Being a dog user himself, David Jackson suggested that BART refer to the federal regulations to confirm that only dogs are considered service animals. He said that on MUNI, it is not legal to ask what a person's disability is, but you are allowed to ask what their dog does.

He stated that the people are responsible for the behavior of their dogs, and if their dog were to misbehave and create problems, transit authorities have every right to ask them to leave.

He said that he would not be offended if someone were to ask him what his dog does.

He then suggested forming an ad hoc committee to discuss this topic further.

Megan O'Brien said that she has two dogs, one of which is her hearing dog and one of which is her pet. As she cannot drive, she uses public transportation to take them to places such as visits to the veterinarian.

## **11. Project Status Reports**

### Stair Tread Color Contrast Project

[No update at this time.]

### eBART Project

[No update at this time.]

### Richmond Intermodal Project

[No update at this time.]

Warm Springs Station  
[No update at this time.]

VTA - Berryessa/Milpitas Stations

## **12. Chairperson Announcements**

Alan Smith said that the date for the MacArthur garage tour will be determined by February or March.

He then shared that he was pleased to see an available priority seat next to him while passengers stood nearby.

Lastly, he stated that he has spoken to Paul Oversier and Robert Powers at BART regarding the poor condition of the elevator floor at Powell Street. (The duct tape that is being used to hold pieces of the floor together is peeling and has become a trip hazard.)

## **13. Staff Announcements**

Ike Nnaji has reached out to the appropriate staff to let them know that some members are not receiving their reimbursements. He will follow up and get back to members.

He then informed members of the passing of Larry Bunn's daughter. Gerry Newell added that anyone who is interested in making a donation towards funeral expenses should contact him at [gerry\\_newell@lbcenter.org](mailto:gerry_newell@lbcenter.org).

Director Raburn expressed his appreciation for the members' attention to the 19<sup>th</sup> Street Escalator Cover presentation. He reminded everyone that these covers protect passengers, and they will protect machinery from breaking down with the frequency that they do now. These covers will prevent homeless encampments from being set up late at night, which, in turn, will also help protect the safety of the station agents who have to open these stations early each morning. He encouraged everyone to share any input they have with him directly.

Director Raburn then said he was concerned that the new wheelchair stickers seem to be vulnerable to getting scratched off from the walls.

## **14. Member Announcements**

Clarence Fischer suggested that the placement of the blue handicap stickers in the cars be higher. He then asked about getting his suggestions agendized. Alan Smith suggested that Clarence meet with Ike Nnaji, Bob Franklin, and Alan where they can go through his list of suggestions and see which of those are reasonable to put on a future agenda.

## **15. Future Agenda Topics**

- Discussion of receiving an increase in travel reimbursement due to fare increase
- Further discussion on Proposed Dog Policy

## **16. Adjournment**

After a moment of silence was observed to honor fallen BART Police Sergeant Tom Smith, the meeting adjourned to the next regularly scheduled meeting of **Thursday, February 27, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.**