

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM
ACCESSIBLE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1255 Imperial Avenue, Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

MINUTES

June 17, 2021

[Clerk's note: Except where noted, public, staff and board member comments are paraphrased. Note that the meeting was conducted via webinar to comply with public health orders].

2. Approval of the December 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)

The meeting minutes from December 10, 2020 could not be approved due to not having a quorum.

3. Public Comment

There were no Public Comments.

4. Helpful Tips When Riding the Trolley (Sharon Osorno)

Ms. Sharon Osorno, Customer Service Representative for MTS Transportation (Rail), provided a presentation regarding helpful tips when riding the trolley. Ms. Osorno introduced the different trolley models, where to locate signage throughout stations and on the trains, the location and importance of ADA compliant truncated domes. She also provided audio of prerecorded public announcements heard internally and externally for visually impaired riders. She then pointed out how to identify the location of ramp doors on older and newer train models, push to open buttons for ADA passengers, and video footage on the usage of manual lifts and low floor ramps. Ms. Osorno further explained how to identify priority seating, defective doors and ramps, the light rail vehicle (LRV) number when reporting an issue, and sound clips including the proper usage of passenger intercoms and emergency buttons. Lastly, she described the different challenges train operators face when boarding in certain stations and provided a list of the stations affected.

Chair Sotelo-Solis thanked Ms. Osorno for providing in great detail which sounds to be aware of when boarding the trolleys and requested for the clips presented to be provided via social media in order for the committee to have access to use as a tool to help leverage and maximize.

Ms. Callie Anderson, MTM Project Manager, thanked Ms. Osorno for her informative presentation and mentioned how it is very helpful to see the videos and hear audio clips in different formats, she also complimented on the access information that was provided.

Ms. Marissa Lucero, an Orientation Mobility Specialist at the San Diego Center for the Blind, also thanked Ms. Osorno and stated that she is frequently on the trolleys training clients who are visually impaired on how to travel safely. She mentioned how the presentation was great for herself to review and asked if there is capability of increasing

the volume or changing the functions of the public announcements to make the sound clearer since she's had trouble in the past not being able to hear the announcements clearly due to echo in the background. Ms. Osorno specified that they do not have control over the volume for the trolleys, given that they are preset functions and have to meet a certain standard for decibel levels. Ms. Lucero mentioned in this case, her clients would then have to rely on other riders for help, making it not fully accessible to them. Ms. Samantha Leslie, MTS Staff Attorney, informed Ms. Lucero that she will reach out to the Rail maintenance staff to see what actions they can take and will get back to her on it.

Secondly, Ms. Lucero asked if there was a plan in place to make the color-coded on-board train signage larger or have them re-located to the side of the trolley instead of in the train operator's front window. She noted that the current placement of the signs is not logical if riders have to check staring straight on to the trolley and is inaccessible for people who are visually disabled. Ms. Osorno stated that she will look further into this. Lastly, Ms. Lucero noted that sometimes the internal announcements for approaching stops are not always functioning properly or at all, making her clients rely on other riders for help and at times get directed to push the emergency call button. She asked how often are these functions checked before starting a route. Ms. Osorno stated that she did not have the exact answers to provide to Ms. Lucero, but will get back to her on this as well. Chair Sotelo-Solis also agreed with Ms. Lucero's concern for the color-coded on-board train signage placement and asked staff to follow with updates on this at the next quarterly ASAC meeting in order for Ms. Lucero and her colleagues to provide these updates to their clients.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

5. Access Reopens to In-Person Assessments (Callie Anderson)

Ms. Callie Anderson, Project Manager at MTM, introduced the reopening of in-person assessments for MTS Access beginning July 1st, 2021 after over a year of solely virtual in-person assessments due to the pandemic. Ms. Anderson provided a presentation including updates on the transition from VIP's to in-person assessments at the MTS Access Eligibility office and their plan to keep applicants safe while visiting. These safety measures include mandatory face coverings for employees and applicants, social distancing, temperature/health screening upon checking in, and the placement of plexiglass barriers in the lobby and assessment rooms. MTM staff will also be disinfecting all areas frequently throughout the day and have made changes implementing a staggered assessment schedule intended for fewer people waiting for their rides, maximizing the space in the lobby between appointments. She also stated that applicants will receive an automated message the day before their appointments reminding them of which COVID symptoms to look out for and to call back if they need to reschedule. Lastly, Ms. Anderson stated that MTM has been pushing online applications after seeing a rise during COVID, lowering the transmission of germs and assembles a more paperless and instantaneous application process.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only

6. ADA Paratransit Reports

MTS Access and MTM monthly reports attached. Mr. Jay Washburn, Manager of Paratransit and Minibus, stated that ridership has started to increase with 25% of their previous volume but are up 150% above the lowest volume during the peak of COVID. Mr. Washburn noted that ridership is starting to come back in hopes of people getting vaccinated and feeling safer while MTS Access does their part taking all precautions necessary.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

9. Fixed-Route Reports

Fixed route monthly reports attached. Mr. Washburn stated that there has been a slow and steady increase in ridership and is hopeful to see a rise as the state re-opens.

Chair Sotelo-Solis noted for staff to have the most up to date information regarding “free rides” during the month of September for those that purchase the new PRONTO card. She stated that it is important to incentivize this as much as possible for the disabled community to engage in receiving a free ride as well during that month and asked staff if they had scheduled a presentation providing updates on this or if they can provide one at the next meeting. Mr. Washburn stated they do not have a presentation but can share out the PRONTO link to the website and have that information included in the ASAC packet after the meeting. He also noted that PRONTO is not accessible for the Access paratransit program, but are in the process of installing a separate cashless fare system. Mr. Washburn stated they are working with the marketing department on this and will launch before the end of the year, allowing for online fare payments through Access and following the PRONTO rollout, they will have more information regarding this throughout the next quarterly meeting.

Chair Sotelo-Solis stated how as a service that is being provided, she has to address the needs of the ASAC members and is curious to see what will happen with the outreach and utilization of its members to amplify this message and would like to discuss further with Mr. Washburn.

10. Committee Member Communications/Comments

Ms. Debbie Marshall, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, commented that she was a few minutes late to the meeting and wasn't sure if any updates were given on the joint meeting that had occurred in March. Ms. Marshall stated that she had assisted someone to express a safety concern in regards to bags belonging to the bus drivers left nearby the entree way of the bus. She mentioned that staff was going to follow up with the MTS rider and wanted to know if there was any outcome as a result of it.

Chair Sotelo-Solis stated they are receiving the informational items and did not approve the minutes, nor see to any official business because of the lack of quorum, however, Ms. Marshall's question was directed to Mr. Washburn and Ms. Anderson to answer.

Mr. Washburn stated that he did address this as a general concern to the Bus Operations and training department to share the information given and apologized as he and Ms. Vassilena Lerinska do not recall getting any specific feedback on the rider's incident. He mentioned that there was no direct contact made with the MTS rider and asked Ms. Marshall to send the rider's contact information as they would be glad to reach out to her specifically. Ms. Marshall thanked Mr. Washburn and noted that this incident could often be looked over but is a safety concern to people when boarding the bus.

Ms. Nancy Vera from Access to Independence commented on how she has been receiving more specific questions not generally found on the PRONTO website, relating to the Pacific Surfliner, Coaster, and having updated doctorate documentation. She questioned if the direct line of contact listed on the website for questions and inquiries is often monitored, directed to a voicemail system or will riders have to enquire in-person. Ms. Vera stated that she thinks it would be helpful to look into this since so many specific questions have been brought to her attention and would like to be able to redirect clients in the right direction. Mr. Washburn stated that he is pulling up the web address on where to locate the questions and answers for PRONTO as well as the contact information to share to the staff and then directed for the clerk to call roll as it was taken out of order.

Mr. Washburn provided a reminder to MTS riders following the state issued lift on the mask mandate. He stated that MTS is under the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA), which mandates mandatory mask wearing on all public transportations. Mr. Washburn noted that MTS wanted to remind everyone that it is still mandatory for passengers to wear masks and will continue to be in effect until further noticed. He also followed with an update on the adult day care centers re-opening and re-certifications for eligibility. Mr. Washburn then referred to a question that was brought up at the previous ASAC meeting regarding wheel chair accessible transportation possibly utilizing transportation network companies, such as Uber and Lyft, and decided that it would best for the riders to utilize the taxi programs since they are administered and regulated by MTS. Mr. Washburn also provided updates on a law that was passed several years prior in California requiring the Transportation Network Companies (TNC) to collect a ten cent taxer fee per trip provided, designated to deliver on demand wheelchair transportation services in which the TNC were not providing prior to this law. He stated that this program is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission and are in the process of appointing San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) as the regulating agency for San Diego and administrators of funds to programs. Mr. Washburn followed with more updates on the re-opening of the Access Eligibility Center, the return of multi-loading on Access vehicles, vaccinated employee percentages within MTS service provider First Transit, and the announcement of the eight new MTS Access minivans that will soon provide another level of transportation. Lastly, he announced the sister committee handled by SANDAG, the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), are looking for new members to join their committee with quite a few openings coming up and anyone interested can enroll on the website at www.sandag.org/sstac.

Chair Sotelo-Solis encouraged staff to sign up for the SSTAC committee to represent ASAC and work alongside Mr. Jay Washburn, Vice Chair of SSTAC.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)

Chair Sotelo-Solis called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. A roll call sheet listing the committee members in attendance is attached.

11. Adjourn

Chair Sotelo-Solis adjourned the meeting at 2:12 pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'ASR', is written over a horizontal line.

Chairperson
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Filed by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CR', is written over a horizontal line.

Clerk of ASAC
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Attachments:
Roll Call Sheet

SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM
ACCESSIBLE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC) MEETING
ROLL CALL

MEETING OF (DATE): 6/17/2021

CALL TO ORDER (TIME): 1:02pm

ADJOURN (TIME): 2:12pm

COMMITTEE MEMBER (Alternate)	ORGANIZATION	PRESENT (TIME ARRIVED)	ABSENT (TIME LEFT)
Alejandra Sotelo-Solis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	ASAC Chair	1:02pm	2:12pm
Nancy Vera <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Access to Independence	1:02pm	2:12pm
Arun Prem <input type="checkbox"/> Jonathan Albarran <input type="checkbox"/>	FACT (CTSA)		
Debbie Marshall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	State Council on Developmental Disabilities	1:10pm	2:12pm
Bill Lewis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Juan Lopez <input type="checkbox"/>	Transdev - Contracted Bus Routes	1:02pm	2:12pm
Callie Anderson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heriberto Gaytan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MTM, Inc	1:02pm	2:12pm
Anthony Ferguson <input type="checkbox"/> Jorge Malone <input type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Regional Center		
Marissa Lucero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elsa Caballero <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	San Diego Center for the Blind	1:02pm	1:52pm
Bill Hipp <input type="checkbox"/> Kevin Marques <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	First Transit, Inc. (MTS Access)	1:02pm	2:12pm
Lisa Madsen <input type="checkbox"/> Zachary Rivera <input type="checkbox"/>	SANDAG		
Vacant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	County of San Diego AIS		
Vacant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Caltrans		
Sharlene Ornelas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tanya Azevedo <input type="checkbox"/>	Paratransit Consumer		
Jorge Rivas <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Fixed Route Consumer		
Tom Doogan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	MTS Trolley	1:06pm	2:12pm
Belinda Kelly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amanda Denham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MTS Bus	1:02pm	2:12pm
Allie Rice <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Deaf Community Services		
Betsy Knight <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services		
Vassy Lerinska <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> non-voting	MTS Contracted Services	1:02pm	2:12pm
Jay Washburn <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> non-voting	MTS Contracted Services	1:02pm	2:12pm
Samantha Leslie <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> non-voting	MTS Legal	1:02pm	2:12pm

CLERK OF ASAC:



PARATRANSIT AND MINIBUS MANAGER:

