

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM ACCESSIBLE SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ASAC)

December 8, 2022

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Sotelo-Solis called the Accessible Services Advisory Committee meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. A roll call sheet listing the Accessible Services Advisory Committee member attendance is attached. Chair Sotelo-Solis shared with the committee the announcement of the MTS Committee reopening of in-person meetings in 2023.

3. Public Comments (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)

There were no Public Comments.

4. See Me Cane Presentation (Kelvin Crosby)

Mr. Kelvin Crosby, SDSU Alumni and Founder/CEO, presented information on the See Me Cane, an internally lighted blind cane that provides a new level in self-navigation for visually impaired people. The See Me Cane allows for visually impaired people to be more easily visible, especially at night, and to also travel safely. Mr. Crosby explained that is estimated 1 in 3 people who are visually impaired will be hit by a car in their lifetime. He also explained the functions of the See Me Cane which include; fully lighted and visible from one hundred yards away, on and off switch, a vibration button indicating the light is on or off, and a USB C rechargeable battery that allows for 2 hours of continuous use. Mr. Crosby provided market research and explained how there are 253 million people worldwide that are visually impaired, 21 million who are visually impaired are currently living in the United States, 105,000 visually impaired people live in the San Diego County, ten percent use a blind cane, and most people have more than one cane.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Sotelo-Solis stated that the presentation was beautifully done and believed that the See Me Cane will keep people safe and visible on the street. She also commented that it is important to continue to share this information and asked if it was non-profit or for profit. Mr. Kelvin Crosby stated that during COVID, he was going to receive a 1.5-million-dollar investment for the See Me Cane that later fell through with the investors, then launched a new business called Deaf Blind Potter after making his first viral TikTok video on social media. He explained that with the growth of his new business, he was able to fund the See Me Cane development, hire engineers to build the canes, and fundraised over \$20,000 within 30 days. He also mentioned that his business will be launching their first half million-dollar kick starter campaign in March 2023 that will fund the giveaway of over 25,000 See Me Canes to visually impaired people.

Ms. Betsy Knight commented that she had viewed the video provided by Mr. Crosby during the meeting beforehand, and stated she appreciated the information being brought to her attention as a driver and pedestrian and will be extra cautious of her surroundings, especially for pedestrians that are visually impaired.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only

5. ADA Paratransit Reports

MTS Access and MTM monthly reports attached.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

6. Fixed Route Reports

Fixed route monthly reports attached.

Action Taken

No action taken. Informational item only.

7. Committee Member Communications/Comments

Chair Sotelo-Solis shared that it was her last meeting as Chair of the Accessible Services Advisory Committee and thanked the committee for guiding her throughout the last few years as an MTS Board member and the ASAC chair. She also thanked MTS staff for helping to bring issues to the forefront and making the transportation system accessible to all.

Jay Washburn, Manager of Paratransit and Minibus, provided updates regarding Access and stated that there was a record number of transports post COVID in October 2022. Mr. Washburn mentioned that Access is currently running a promotion for November and December inviting any ASAC member and non-members not enrolled in the EZ Access Online Portal to enroll into the program in order to receive 4 free trips before December 31st. He also stated that the new transfer point for MTS and NCTD now has a bench installed for riders at the location and will also soon have a bus shelter installed sometime during the first quarter of the new year. Mr. Washburn mentioned that it has been determined that there are restroom facilities located at the trolley station less than half a block away from the transfer point. He also stated that Access continues to struggle with staffing in their reservation center and with drivers but the new wage increases have been put into place to help with the current drivers and the recruiting of additional drivers. Mr. Washburn explained that Access has also been struggling with their on-time performance and noted that the rides have been longer than usual but they are using every resource they can to help minimize the issue such as, the possibility of bringing in another sub-contractor specialized in disability transportation to help assist and improve service levels. He also reported that SANDAG awarded the Access for All Grant (AFA) to FACT which is a tax placing 10 cents per trip on all transit network

companies such as Uber and Lyft. He explained that the grant will initiate and put together an on-demand transportation program for the disabled community in the County in order to give them comparable service to Uber and Lyft. Mr. Washburn also recognized Chair Sotelo-Solis for her dedicated service to the MTS Board of Directors, the Accessible Services Advisory Committee, and the disability community as a whole. He commented that the committee will miss Chair Sotelo-Solis' commitment and insight and wished Chair Sotelo-Solis the best of luck on her future endeavors.

2. Approval of the September 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)

Chair Sotelo Solis motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Debbie Marshall seconded the motion, and the vote was 10 to 0 in favor with Ms. Casey Myers, Mr. Arun Prem, Ms. Kasey Markoski, Ms. Ashley Wiley, Ms. Sharlene Ornelas, Mr. Jorge Rivas, and Ms. Monique Ball absent at time of vote. Chair Sotelo-Solis motioned a second roll call vote for the 10 committee members present in order to pass the September 15, 2022 meeting minutes. The motion passed with 8 members in favor and 1 abstention.

8. Next Meeting Date

The next Accessible Services Advisory Committee meeting schedule TBD.

9. Adjourn

Chair Sotelo-Solis adjourned the meeting at 1:46 pm.

/s/ George Gastil
Chairperson
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

/s/ Carla Perez
Committee Clerk
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

Attachment: Roll Call Sheet