

## **MARIN PARATRANSIT COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**Monday June 12, 2023, 1:30PM to 3:00PM**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

1. Meeting called to order at 1:35 PM by PCC Chair Patti Mangels.
  - a. In attendance
    - i. PCC Members: Michael Harris, Dario Santiago, Javier Miranda, Tammy Newcomb, Patti Mangels, Terry Scussel  
Members of the Public: Faith Durham-Sims, Kennishia Thompson, Linda Jackson, Noele Kostelic, Anna Khachatryan, Corey Fancher, Julie Jumisko-Stein
    - ii. Staff (MCTD + GGBHTD): Kate Burt, Joanna Huitt, Kyle French, Rodolfo Saldana, Robert Betts, Mohamed Osman, Jon Gaffney
    - iii. Contractors (Transdev): Jhashe Holloway, Claudia Tamayo
2. Review of Agenda
  - a. All present have reviewed agenda, no updates needed.
3. Review of Meeting Minutes for April 2023
  - a. All present have reviewed, due to lack of quorum the meeting minutes could not be approved.
  - b. Dario Santiago asked how many more PCC members would need to be in attendance for there to be a quorum.
  - c. Joanna Huitt clarified that they need one more PCC member for a quorum. Virtual attendees do not contribute to the quantity required for a quorum.
4. Open Time for Public Expression
  - a. Tammy Newcomb echoed a comment made by Suzanne Sadowsky at a previous meeting, where Ms. Sadowsky stated that there is not a lot of service offered in the San Geronimo Valley where 2,000 people live. The Stagecoach service that serves that area tends to offer vehicles that cannot kneel or lift a wheelchair. Ubers tend to not go to that area, and if a resident were to call a taxi, the taxi service will generally reject the trip. San Geronimo Valley residents don't live close enough to Point Reyes where there are other services available. There is a lack of paratransit and other services in that area, and a large population of older adults who are trapped as they cannot drive or take the bus.

- b. Joana Huitt thanked Ms. Newcomb for her comments. Ms. Huitt mentioned last year there was the Marin Access Innovation Incubator, where there was discussion of efforts to better serve West Marin, including the San Geronimo Valley and that these efforts would begin again in the Fall.

## 5. New Business

### a. New Member Applications

- i. Patti Mangels reported that they are unable to vote on this matter due to the lack of a quorum.
- ii. Joanna Huitt mentioned there are two new member applications that have been shared with the committee. They will vote at the next meeting.

### b. Marin Access Staffing Update

- i. Staff reported that there are currently 21 drivers, and 32 are required. Staff are currently recruiting six drivers, and there are five trainees. There are currently three road supervisors, and four are required. Staff are currently recruiting for the remaining road supervisor position. There are five reservationists, four dispatchers, and one open call center lead position. Staff are also currently recruiting for the Travel Navigator role.

### c. Marin Access Program Update

- i. Staff reported that at the last few meetings, changes to Marin Access programs have been discussed. The changes were approved by the Marin Transit Board of Directors in May of 2023, and will be in affect on July 1, 2023. Staff reviewed upcoming changes to paratransit, the Volunteer Driver program, Rural Dial-A-Ride, Low Income Fare Assistance, Novato Dial-A-Ride, Connect, and Catch-A-Ride. Staff described the status of all programs as of July 1, 2023. Staff reviewed the upcoming Catch-A-Ride voucher system.
- ii. Robert Betts requested that Joanna Huitt review the voucher selection process.
- iii. Ms. Huitt provided details on how riders can select their vouchers through several different methods.
- iv. Patti Mangels asked if Uber and taxi vouchers will be different.
- v. Ms. Huitt clarified that while the paper and digital vouchers are similar, digital vouchers will show up on a rider's Uber account, and the rider will be notified.

- vi. Ms. Mangels asked if the vouchers will be provided per month, or per use.
- vii. Ms. Huitt answered that the vouchers will be distributed quarterly. Riders will select their voucher type before each quarter. Staff have not finalized the process of switching voucher types, however riders can select paper vouchers, digital vouchers, or a mix of each.
- viii. Dario Santiago asked if there will be a price difference between Uber and North Bay Taxi.
- ix. Ms. Huitt answered that staff will learn as they go, and they will analyze the costs as time goes on. The taxis have meters and Uber has an algorithm. As of now, staff assume that Uber will be less expensive.
- x. Mr. Betts echoed that staff will learn a lot. Pricing for both programs is based on timing, distance, and more. Staff expect there will be differences in pricing, and riders will likely notice that as well.
- xi. Ms. Mangels commented that Uber riders are usually told how much their Uber will be before they take the ride. She asked how that will impact the vouchers and how the account will be charged.
- xii. Kyle French responded that if the vouchers apply to your trip, you will see only what you are being charged, which will be the total trip cost minus the voucher credit.
- xiii. Ms. Mangels asked if it will still cost four dollars per trip.
- xiv. Ms. Huitt answered that there is a five dollar base fare for those that are not eligible for fare assistance. For those who are eligible, there is no base fare.
- xv. Ms. Mangels noted that the process seems confusing.
- xvi. Terry Scussel asked how many vouchers a rider would receive per quarter.
- xvii. Ms. Huitt responded that fare assistance eligible riders will receive 30 one-way vouchers and ten additional long-distance vouchers. Riders who do not qualify for fare assistance will receive 30 vouchers per quarter.
- xviii. Tammy Newcomb listed examples of differences in Uber and taxi prices that she has observed.
- xix. Staff reported that the Catch-A-Ride program is a pilot, and it will be regularly evaluated in terms of ridership, trip completion rates, trip lengths, subsidy costs, rider experiences. The use of taxi companies and

Uber as partners will also be assessed over time. Staff will regularly reach out to riders. Staff reported on upcoming changes within the Marin Access call center phone tree. Staff listed key information for riders such as fare details and important upcoming dates for voucher selection and fare assistance.

- xx. Noele Kostelic asked if the taxi and Uber service is just for central and east Marin, not West Marin.
- xxi. Ms. Huitt answered that riders can schedule trips anywhere where there is service available, including West Marin, although taxi and Uber service is limited there. Staff hope to evolve the program to serve West Marin more reliably. Residents of West Marin will be eligible for the program.
- xxii. Ms. Kostelic clarified that it difficult for residents to return home from the hospital, and asked if it would be possible for residents to utilize the service to get back from the hospital to their homes in West Marin.
- xxiii. Ms. Huitt answered that they could use the service for that purpose, however drivers cannot sign anyone out from the hospital.
- xxiv. Ms. Kostelic responded that if patents can sign themselves out, they would like to use the service to get home, as taxis from the hospital are generally about \$100.
- xxv. Ms. Huitt noted that the vouchers will only subsidize the cost to a certain extent.
- xxvi. Ms. Kostelic asked to what extent the vouchers can subsidize.
- xxvii. Ms. Huitt said that the long-distance coverage is \$40 or about nine miles. Ms. Huitt said she would be happy to discuss that with the residents.
- xxviii. Ms. Kostelic said that would be helpful.

d. Marin Access Paratransit Application

- i. Staff reported that they are working regionally with other paratransit agencies on the Transit Transformation Action Plan, to make transit work better for people in the region. The 25<sup>th</sup> action is to adopt standardized eligibility practices for programs like paratransit, that benefit people with disabilities. The goal is to standardize the application regionally, for ease of re-applying in different regions. There is not a final draft yet, but it will be brought to the PCC for review before it is implemented. Marin Access' application was used as the model. There may be some slight changes to

the Marin Access application in the future, but they will be minimal. The process will ultimately not be modified except for potentially the renewal period.

- ii. Tammy Newcomb wondered if the process of using paratransit in a different county will change, and if there will be any changes to the waiting period for eligibility.
- iii. Joanna Huitt answered that there will not be any delays in the eligibility process. It will not impact any current applicants. Ms. Huitt asked Ms. Newcomb to repeat her first question.
- iv. Ms. Newcomb asked about the process of transferring paratransit eligibility.
- v. Ms. Huitt explained the Regional Eligibility Database, which makes it easy for paratransit users to transfer their eligibility to different locations.
- vi. Jon Gaffney added that paratransit users are eligible nationwide. The Regional Eligibility Database is for the nine Bay Area counties. Beyond the Bay Area, agencies can fax information to different agencies.

## 6. Old Business

### a. Marin Access Staff Appreciation Event

- i. Staff reported that historically there have been annual staff appreciation events for Marin Access. It was initially focused on drivers, but it has since expanded to all staff. There has not been an event since the pandemic. The next event will tentatively be held on October 25<sup>th</sup>, pending monitoring of health concerns. It will be a drop-in event. The PCC has usually helped with planning the event, and they join the event as well. Staff reported on the different planning needs for the event and requested additional assistance.
- ii. Tammy Newcomb asked where the event will be held.
- iii. Joanna Huitt reported that the event will likely be at the main Operations facility, or at one of the two parking locations. She noted that serving boxed lunches will allow for additional flexibility. More information will be shared in the future.

## 7. Agency / Committee Reports

### a. Marin Access Performance Reports

- i. Staff reported on call center performance for Marin Access, highlighting the differences between 2022 and 2023. Staff noted that an increase of drivers has recently improved the call center data since the report was made. Staff also noted that last year there was an influx of calls due to the agency transition.
  - ii. Ms. Huitt clarified that the graphic represents all the different phone tree options.
  - iii. Kennishia Thompson asked if the graphic is color coordinated.
  - iv. Ms. Huitt noted there is a key on the graphic.
  - v. Ms. Thompson suggested an alternative way to represent the data.
  - vi. Staff reported further on Marin Access call center performance. Staff reported on Marin Access trip performance, ridership, and rider feedback. Staff anticipate the number of complaints to reduce in the future.
- b. GGBHTD Advisory Committee on Accessibility Report
  - i. Staff stated there was nothing to report.
- c. TAM Citizens Oversight Committee Report
  - i. Staff stated there was no TAM representative present to report.
- d. Noele Kostelic commented that the new Marin Access vehicles have a beeping system to monitor the vehicles alignment with the yellow and white lines painted onto the street. She asked if there is any way to turn that feature off, as it makes riders nervous. She noted that the system is sensitive.
- e. Jhashe Holloway responded that the feature cannot be turned off as it is a safety precaution. If the drivers are going under a certain speed, the feature will not beep. The feature is for safety and reporting.
- f. Joanna Huitt suggested staff could adjust the volume.
- g. Ms. Holloway confirmed staff can reduce the volume.
- h. Kyle French stated that the goal of the system is for drivers to not activate the beeping. Staff will look into adjusting the volume.
- i. Ms. Kostelic added that West Marin's roads can be narrow, which may activate the beeping easily.
- j. Ms. Holloway clarified that the system has different types of beeps for different circumstances, and the goal is to not activate the beeping. Staff will see if they can lower the volume.

- k. Ms. French thanked everyone and commended staff on the recent leap in on-time performance.
- 8. Next Meeting on August 21, 2023.
- 9. Meeting adjourned at 2:21 PM by PCC Chair Patti Mangels