

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT
BART ACCESSIBILITY TASK FORCE**

Minutes
February 27, 2020

1. Self-Introduction of Members, Staff, and Guests:

Members:

Alan Smith (2nd Vice-Chair)
Catherine Callahan - ABSENT
Chris Mullin
Clarence Fischer
Don Queen - ABSENT
Emily Witkin
Gerry Newell (Vice-Chair)
Herb Hastings
Janet Abelson - ABSENT
Janice Armigo Brown
Marjorie (Marji) McWee
Mussie Gebre
Randall Glock (Chair)
Roland Wong
Valerie Buell

BART Customer Access and Accessibility Department Staff:

Elena Van Loo
Jessica Kuo
Laura Timothy
Bob Franklin

Director (s), Speakers, Staff, and Guests of the Public:

Robert Rayburn (BART Board of Director)
Albert Alvarez (BART Chief of Police)
Lance Haight (BART Deputy Chief)
Mitra Moheb (Staff)
Steven Dietrich (Staff)
Greg Lombardi (Staff)
Hong Mei (Staff)
Kamala Parks (Staff)

Vince Bevilacqua (Staff)
Ernest Lee (BART Station Agent)
Kellie Buitrago (BART Station Agent)
Hannah Kanzell (ASL Interpreter)
Ric Owen (ASL Interpreters)
Marie Villarreal (Captioner/Stenographer)
Hale Zukas (Guest)
Arnold Brillinger (Guest)
Dennis Gassaway (Guest)
Anita Ortega (Guest)
Helen Welch (Guest)
Dennis Gassaway (Guest)
Christina Lasson (Guest)
Jerry Grace (Guest)

2. Public Comments

Helen Welch shared she would like to see more, better communication about accessibility with the public transit system. She also conveyed she would like to see better public outreach about accessibility within the BART system.

Dennis Gassaway heard there will be a new BART Station, Irvington in the South Bay. Randall Glock confirmed with Dennis Gassaway that there have been presentations and there will be future presentations.

Arnold Brillinger wanted to share that he really likes the new faregates at the platform level at Montgomery BART Station. He added that exiting and entering the Montgomery BART Station is easy and convenient.

Arnold Brillinger informed members and guests he witnessed a guy lighting up a cigar in the BART station and told him to stop lighting up at which the rider did. He expressed he was concerned if the BART station goes up in flames, how is he going to exit safely especially when he is in a wheelchair. His last comment was to have people speak up when they see things going on that should not be happening. Arnold Brillinger shared he saw on another day a guy vandalizing with a marker at a BART station and yelled at the guy to stop.

Helen Welch stated that she has a hidden disability and she sits at the “disabled,” seats in the BART trains. She commented riders sometimes gives her a hard time to not sit in the “disabled,” seats and there are times where she felt unsafe.

3. Approval of January 23, 2020 Draft Minutes

Herb Hastings moved approval of the January 23, 2020 meeting with the amended minutes. Gerry Newell seconded the motion.

- Motion passes with twelve (12) in favor, zero (0) against, zero (0) abstention

4. New Faregates at Richmond BART Station

Mitra Moheb and Steven Dietrich gave a PowerPoint presentation on the item. Members were allowed to ask questions and/or share any concerns they had after the presentation.

Mitra Moheb shared the new swinging-style faregate doors she is about to present has been approved by the BART Board of Directors in September.

Mitra Moheb described the new model faregates as two heavy duty plastic panels about four feet tall and they swing out, the direction of your travel. The doors will not swing doors back right away but, though it remains a two bi-directional swing gate to allow people to enter and exit both ways.

Steve Dietrich stated that the new swing faregate doors are see-through to enable monitoring of activity behind the gates; and the bottom of the gate designed to have six inches of clearance from the ground to prevent people from sliding under it.

Mitra Moheb informed members that deployment of the new swing faregates at the Richmond BART Station is estimated to occur the weekend of March 8th or 9th.

Greg Lombardi clarified that only the Accessibility Fare Gate (AFG) will have the new swing gate model installed for testing purposes, to assess any difficulties or challenges that can be addressed and fixed moving forward.

Mitra Moheb offered to have an “Open House” once the new swing gates have been installed at the Richmond BART Station.

Randall Glock shared two possible dates for the “Open House,” for either March 11, 2020 or March 18, 2020, but stated that these dates may change if the new swing faregates are not installed at the Richmond BART Station as planned. He mentioned he will work with staff to have an “Open House.”

Alan Smith asked if the see-through swinging gates will have some kind of visual aid or attachment to indicate it is a door for people who are visually impaired, to ensure

they do not run into them. Mitra Moheb answered by stating the swing gates does have a black bar in the middle, and they can easily modify to be visible, if needed.

Roland Wong asked about the materials and durability of the new swing faregate panels and also expressed concern that people may run into the see-through doors. Steve Dietrich answered that the swing panels are burglar-rated plexiglass that are very difficult to break, though all materials are susceptible to dents, scratches and graffiti.

Valerie Buell asked about the noises made by the new swing faregates, since she finds the current faregates to be loud. Steve Dietrich commented the new swing gates will be very quiet—almost no noise at all.

Randall Glock discussed a possible visit to the BART administration building to view the new faregates with a small group and asked who are interested in going:

- Valerie Buell
- Marjorie (Marji) McWee
- Clarence Fischer
- Herb Hastings
- Randall Glock

Laura Timothy reminded members about the Brown Act Law to make sure to spread it out and not coming in as a committee; they are coming in as individuals. She added that BART cannot accommodate more than a quorum, and while observation can only occur at the lab, discussion and questions can only be tabled for the next BATF meeting as an agenda item.

5. Introduction of BART Chief of Police, Ed Alvarez

Ed Alvarez introduced himself as the newly appointed BART Chief of Police and introduced Lance Haight, the BART Deputy Chief of Police. Members were allowed to ask questions and/or share any concerns they had after the presentation.

Chief Ed Alvarez highlighted work the department is currently undergoing:

- Increased police presence at BART stations, on both weekends and weekday evenings, seven dates a week
- In January, BART PD put out twelve officers on the trains known as “Train Team”
- Department rolled out unarmed civilian employees that were formally service officers for BART and had been trained by BART PD. The unarmed civilians

ride the trains from 2:00 pm to 12:00am seven days a week to the end of the lines

- BART riders will see more officers and ambassadors for additional eyes and ears riding the trains
- Crime on BART property has dropped 18% just in January alone
- Theft of electronic devices has gone down from 74% to 46%; almost a 50% drop in the theft of electronic devices; however, cell phones are still being stolen
- Police Department are doing fare inspections in the mornings at the Embarcadero BART Station to avoid fare evaders

Emily Witkin stated that fare evaders have followed behind her when she enters BART and asked Chief Alvarez if she should report the incident. Chief Alvarez commented that reporting the incident would not help at this time, since BART PD officers need to witness fare evasion happening before issuing citations.

Janice Armingo Brown commented she had a great ride on the Fleet of the Future (FOF) from Castro Valley and she suggested having therapy dogs ride the trains to ease the riders stress level.

Gerry Newell asked how he can identify a criminal when he is blind. Chief Alvarez responded that having witnesses report the incident is really important. Chief Alvarez also suggested checking for any surrounding video recordings that may have captured any criminal acts.

Clarence Fischer asked about video cameras being recorded in the trains to see what the turn is the around if a crime has happened. Officer Alvarez answered they can get the video within hours or up to twenty-four hours.

Randall Glock thanked both Chief Alvarez and Deputy Chief Height for their many years of service with BART. He commented he has been seeing more officers on and off the trains in the past few months, which helps the rider experience by having more eyeballs out on the system.

Randall Glock asked Chief Alvarez if General Disability Awareness (GDA) pamphlets are being used by the BART police and Chief Alvarez responded back the GDA pamphlets are being handed out to officers and they carry it in their citation book.

6. Walnut Creek BART Station Modernization

Before presentation was presented, Elena Van Loo informed members of a presentation scheduled for March 26, 2020 to discuss in detail Walnut Creek BART Station accessible pathways, as requested by BATF members from this and January's meeting.

Hong Mei and Kamala Parks gave a PowerPoint presentation on the item. Members were allowed to ask questions and/or share any concerns they had after the presentation.

Hong Mei went into details the first phase of the changes on the northern end at Walnut Creek BART Station by widening the platforms and install new stairs.

Marjorie (Marji) McWee asked why the new stairs being installed will not be covered, especially if it is raining or icy. Hong Mei responded on the South side of Walnut Creek BART Station are not covered over the stairs, and this won't satisfy the cultural heritage of the current layout. Kamala Parks added covering the stairs on the North end is a cost issue.

Alan Smith asked what kind the stripes will be put in place for the new stairways. Hong Mei stated as Carl Orman commented in the past, it will be only installed at the top and the bottom of each stair flight and not at every stair. The color of nosing will stay yellow or a contrasting color.

Alan Smith asked the PowerPoint presentation to emailed to BATF members. Elena Van Loo will follow through on the request.

7. A Day in the Life of a BART Station Agent

Ernest Lee and Kellie Buitrago introduced themselves as the BART Station Agents and expressed they were excited to meet the BATF members. After introductions, members were allowed to ask questions and/or share any concerns they had after the presentation.

Herb Hasting asked when you witnessed fare evasion happening, I was told you are not authorized to do anything. Kellie Buitrago answered by stating we can observe, we can report, and I have limited ways to address any fare evaders. She continued by saying as a station agent, there is little I can do but call BART police and by then the fare evaders are long gone before an officer can respond.

Valerie Buell expressed there are times when she uses the accessible gates at different stations, and they are not working. She continued saying she tags her transit card at

the smaller faregates and walks to the faregate that is used as emergency exit. Valerie Buell added she talked with different agents and some are accommodating, and some are not. She asked what is the best to approach when the accessible faregate are not working? Kellie Buitrago stated to let her know and she would be as accommodating to the rider as much as she can.

Randall Glock asked the station agents when you get an agent who is not as friendly as you two, what can you do to help other agents? Kellie Buitrago stated the station agent trainers are trying to train the new and existing station agents to be more sensitive. We are there for customer services and number one is safety getting people in and out of the station safely and seeing them happy.

Katie Buitrago asked about the General Disabled Pamphlet she heard earlier and expressed she would like a copy to share with her supervisor.

Alan Smith asked if station agents have had enough support from staff. Ernest Lee stated he felt he had great training and training materials as a station agent.

Dennis Gassaway asked what if a station agent is not in the booth and a disabled person needs assistance? Ernest Lee responded back stating to go the elevator area and there is a call box, press the red button and you will be connected to a station agent or after thirty seconds, you will be connected to Operations Call Center (OCR) who will further assist you.

8. El Cerrito del Norte BART Station – Pedestrian Walkways, Bus Terminals – Updates

Presenter (s) rescheduled presentation for a future month.

9. Approve BATF Holiday Reception – December 09, 2020

Randall Glock led agenda item.

Randall Glock asked who would like to make the first motion to approve the Holiday Reception on December 09, 2020.

Alan Smith moved the first motion and Clarence Fischer second the motion.

- Motion passes with twelve (12) in favor, zero (0) abstention, zero (0) against

10. Member Announcements

Herb Hastings commented e-BART stations announcements could be improved.

Janice Armigo Brown shared she was in three different cars and the hearing loops are working great.

11. Staff Announcements

Elena Van Loo had these announcements to share:

- Confirmed room #1950 for the BATF Holiday Reception at the BART Administration building, December 9, 2020
- Travel reimbursements guidelines:
 - Travel reimbursements must be pre-approved by a Customer Access and Accessibility Department staff member
 - Proof of documentation of travel to be provided to follow BART Accounting Department protocols
- Walnut Creek BART Station accessible pathway will be presented on March 26, 2020 BATF meeting

Bob Franklin introduced the new Access Coordinator, Jessica Kuo and stated our department is complete. In order coordinating the BATF meetings will be is Elena Van Loo, Jessica Kuo, Laura Timothy, Bob Franklin, and above us is Val Menotti.

Jessica Kuo introduced herself as the newest Access Coordinator and is looking forward to working in the Customer Access and Accessibility Department, along with getting to know the members of the BATF.

12. Chairperson Announcements

Randall Glock had a few announcements to share:

- Attended with Alan Smith BART Board of Directors workshop on February 13th and 14th
- Alan Smith and I will be attending the next BART Board of Directors meeting on March 12th to present a letter of support for the 19th Street BART Station elevator
- Staff will email members if the lab is available for a viewing by a limited number of members due to the small space
- Staff will work with members to have an “Open House,” at the Richmond BART Station where the new swing faregates will be tested

13. Future Agenda Topics – Members Suggest Topics

- BART Watch App – How accessible is it?
- Three door marking updates

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned to the next regularly scheduled meeting for **March 26, 2020, at 2:00 pm at, 1750 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612.**

[Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm]