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Martin J. Tompkins

April 13, 2022

TDA Article 8 Hearing Board Chair  
c/o Armineh Saint, Program Manager  
Metropolitan Transit Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, California 90012

RE: Fiscal Year 2020/2021 TDA Article 8 Unmet Needs Hearings

Dear Ms. Saint:

At the 2021 TDA Article 8 Unmet Needs Hearing, the Board found that the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) had no unmet needs that could not be addressed through existing funding sources. The Hearing provided no new recommendations and there were no public comments received.

As mentioned at the previous hearing, AVTA was impacted profoundly by the onset of the COVID 19 Pandemic throughout most of 2020 and 2021. Numerous projects and system enhancements were postponed as a result. Now that the agency is experiencing some relief from the COVID mandates, we felt it would be worthwhile to provide updates on projects that were in progress at the time of last year's report.

**Item # 1, Develop Stronger TOD districts adjacent to regional rail stations with comprehensive bus network connecting station downtowns with outlying communities:** AVTA has maintained its continuity in working and coordinating with the jurisdiction partners City of Palmdale, City of Lancaster, and the County of Los Angeles, in developing new and improved transit hubs adjacent to the two Metrolink stations. The agency made dramatic capital improvements to its bus charging infrastructure and opened a new charging station at the North Metrolink station located at Lancaster Blvd. and Sierra Highway. It was completed in March 2021. These improvements provide for increased interconnectivity with the Metrolink stations and more efficient transfers to bus routes.

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**Item #2, Scheduling, Reliability, Transfer Coordination:** As discussed previously, AVTA commissioned a system-wide Regional Transit Study which has resulted in recommendations for system-wide improvements to routes, schedules, and overall service enhancements. Now that both ridership and operator workforce numbers are slowly recovering back up to pre-COVID levels, the agency will begin reviewing portions of the new Regional Transit Plan in 2022, with a focus on improving route connectivity and service efficiency.

**Item #3 Demand responsive service, Dial-a-ride availability:** AVTA provides an agency-funded complementary paratransit service (Dial-a-Ride) in parallel to a similar service provided by LA County Access Services. Throughout 2021, AVTA encouraged its customers to use an enhanced feature for the DAR system that enables them to schedule their rides, monitor the arrival of their rides, and receive schedule updates using their smartphones. Although the traditional call center appointment method is available to customers that prefer it, or who do not own a smartphone, we have already seen appointments booked in greater numbers and with improved efficiency. AVTA's new-demand response micro-transit service in the East Los Angeles County area of the high desert, including Lake Los Angeles and Sun Village, uses an "Uber-like" hailing software to provide faster, more convenient service, reducing wait times from the current 1 ½ hour headways on the fixed-route service down to 20 to 40 minutes. The response has been extremely favorable and ridership continues to grow on this service mode. Future plans for that system include adding additional micro-transit vehicles and creating an expanded service area.

**Item #4 Bus maintenance issues:** By the end of 2020, AVTA's local fleet included 65 all-electric zero-emission buses and micro-transit vehicles, which logged over 4 million all-electric miles that year. In August of 2021, AVTA christened the first of 24 battery-electric zero-emission MCI commuter coaches, launching into service the first electric commuter coach in North America. By December 2021, the entire fleet was close to the 7 million mile mark and the journey to being the first 100% all-electric zero-emission transit agency was near completion. That achievement was celebrated on March 16, 2022, 18 years earlier than the requirement identified in California's important Innovative Clean Transit regulation.

**Item #5 Service issues:** Throughout the duration of the global COVID-19 pandemic, AVTA ridership suffered as Antelope Valley residents sought the safety of their homes and obeyed state and local lockdowns. In response to the lagging ridership, the agency made the decision to temporarily adopt a reduced Saturday Schedule for both systems in April 2021. This action allowed the agency to continue to provide service in a limited capacity until the ridership numbers began to recover. Additionally, in August 2021, AVTA eliminated five commuter morning and afternoon trips on its commuter routes to compensate for the low ridership. All normal pre-COVID service schedules were restored in September 2021.

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**Community Outreach Efforts:**

AVTA is dedicated to the community and to providing excellent customer service. Community outreach is a high-priority goal and we continually seek to improve our efforts.

- In 2022, AVTA will return to reviewing and implementing the year-long Regional Transit Plan (RTP) development project that was completed in 2020. This plan will be the strategic plan for the authority for the next 5 to 10 years in the future.
- In March 2021, AVTA worked with community partners to host a Spring Food Distribution, giving away groceries, fresh produce, and Easter swag bags for kids, and included on-site health professionals to answer questions related to COVID and administer vaccinations.
- In December 2021, AVTA worked with community partners to host a Holiday Food Drive and Toy Distribution, which benefitted thousands of local families in need. The toys and gifts were collected through donations to the AVTA annual Stuff-a-Bus Holiday Toy Drive.
- AVTA provided a special trip service to the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds COVID-19 vaccination center in 2021, to assist local residents in their efforts to get vaccinated and help stem the tide of the pandemic.
- In partnership with the Small Business Development Center, AVTA hosted quarterly DBE Certification Workshops (via Zoom) to help the woman and minority-owned small business owners learn how to expand their business opportunities and compete for government contracts by becoming a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise.

AVTA values the input of our customers and stakeholders and continues to take a proactive approach to addressing the transit needs in the Antelope Valley. If you have any questions, you can contact me at (661) 729-2206.

Sincerely,



Martin J. Tompkins  
Executive Director/CEO



City of  
**SANTA CLARITA**

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March 13, 2022

Santa Clarita Valley Area  
TDA Article 8 Hearing

The City of Santa Clarita continues its efforts to promote public transportation as a viable alternative to the automobile. Because of this continued effort, the only recommendation that resulted from the 2021 TDA Article 8 hearings was for the City to continue to evaluate funding opportunities for transit services.

In the twelve months since the last hearing, the City of Santa Clarita has accomplished a number of key milestones such as:

- Completed construction on the Vista Canyon Transit Center. Despite some COVID related delays, construction was completed in late 2021.
- Continued construction of the Vista Canyon Metrolink Station. Construction began in late 2020 and is scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of 2023.
- Reintroduced the City's on-demand transit service and expanded the service area to the City boundaries. This pilot program was suspended a second time from August 2021 to November 2021 due to a second wave of COVID and staffing shortages.
- Took delivery of four CNG powered transit buses and two CNG powered Dial-A-Ride buses.
- Secured funding for the construction for Phase 1 of the hydrogen fueling infrastructure.
- Awarded a contract for the design and construction management of the hydrogen production infrastructure at the City's Transit Maintenance Facility.
- Issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Phase 6 of the City's bus stop improvement program. This phase included the replacement and installation of new solar powered bus arrive displays at 57 high traffic stops with the Santa Clarita Transit service area.



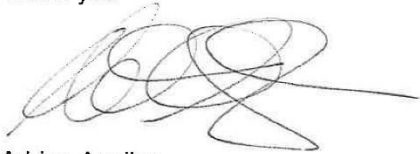
These are just a few of the accomplishments achieved by Santa Clarita Transit despite the challenges related to COVID over the past 12 months.

In the coming year, Santa Clarita Transit will be working toward:

- Awarding a contract for the construction of a hydrogen production plant and supporting hydrogen fueling infrastructure.
- Awarding a contract for two fuel cell buses.
- Assessing the effectiveness of the City's on demand pilot program.
- Assessing the overall demand for transit services to determine how to best meet the needs of the community in a post pandemic environment.

The City of Santa Clarita will continue to take a proactive approach to addressing the transit needs of our residents while working closely with our transportation partners. Our goal is to provide effective and efficient service that improves the quality of life for all residents within the Santa Clarita Valley.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Aguilar', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Adrian Aguilar  
Transit Manager