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Macy Neshati

March 04, 2019

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 2016/17 TDA Article 8 Unmet Needs Hearings

Dear Ms. Saint:

At the 2018 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 recommendations that are addressed in this letter. As a result of a continued focus during the last 12 months on enhancements in technology, capital improvements, and service reliability, the AVTA has had several accomplishments in these areas.

**Responses to Public Testimony and Written Comments**  
**Item # 1, General increase in service, including longer hours, higher frequency, and/or more days of operation.**

**Item # 1.2, Morning/evening commuter bus with limited stops to/from Lancaster/Palmdale to East San Fernando Valley:** In 2018, Antelope Valley Transit Authority initiated a Regional Transit Plan project that is studying the recommendation to add increased service to the East San Fernando Valley. This project will be a part of AVTA addressing every route within its service area, both local and commuter, to ensure we are providing the services our customers need within our limited operating budget and resources.

**Item # 1.3, Develop Stronger TOD districts adjacent to regional rail stations with comprehensive bus network connecting station downtowns with outlying communities:** AVTA is very active in working and coordinating with our jurisdiction partners Palmdale, Lancaster, and the County of Los Angeles in developing new and improved transit hubs adjacent to Metrolink stations. AVTA has made dramatic capital improvements in its bus charging infrastructure at Palmdale Regional Transportation Center (PTC) and is working with the City of Lancaster to develop a new transit hub/charging stations at the North Metrolink station. These improvements will provide for increased interconnectivity with the Metrolink stations and efficient transfers to bus routes.

**Item # 8, Metrolink issues**

**Item #8.1 Disability train section needs more space:** AVTA has relayed the information to the leadership of Metrolink. The rail service is not under the oversight of AVTA and can only communicate the request of the passengers.

**Item # 8. 2, Electrical Outlets to charge electric wheelchairs:** AVTA has relayed the information to the leadership of Metrolink. The rail service is not under the oversight of AVTA and can only communicate the request of the passengers.

**Item # 9, Other issues: better public information needed, bus improvements, upgrades, increased fleet, bus tokens, transit center.**

**Item # 9.1, Not enough room for wheelchairs on bus:** AVTA is consistently working to ensure all of its vehicles and services are in compliance with the American with Disabilities act. AVTA is currently reviewing its bus routes and analyzing the need to place more ADA compliant vehicles in the areas of high ridership and needs. This is being accomplished as a part of the previously mentioned Regional Transit Plan.

**Item # 9.2, More chairs:** AVTA is current reviewing its bus routes and analyzing the need to allocate higher capacity vehicles in the areas of high ridership and needs. This is being accomplished as a part of the previously mentioned Regional Transit Plan.

**Capital Improvements:**

Over the past year, AVTA made significant progress towards reaching our goal of electrifying our entire fleet of 79 buses. AVTA is now utilizing its 60' articulated electric buses on the heaviest ridership routes allowing for more seating capacity. The buses, which have the ability to accommodate an

additional 30 passengers, have been assigned to Route 1, the backbone of the AVTA system, in anticipation of a future improvement in service to 15 minute headways at peak service intervals. The buses have already proven to provide an improved customer experience by decreasing overcrowding along that busy corridor.

Enroute charging infrastructure is another component of the 100% battery-electric fleet transformation, utilizing wireless inductive chargers to help extend the range of the new zero-emission buses. These chargers allow the electric buses to charge wirelessly simply by driving the vehicles over charging pads embedded into the ground. During 2018, the first of the new 250KW wireless inductive charging stations have been installed and made operational at Sgt. Steve Owen Memorial Park (OMP) and the Palmdale Transportation Center (PTC). In anticipation of the delivery of additional electric buses this year, plans for three more wireless inductive charging stations at each of these locations is now underway. AVTA continues to expand the scope and locations of new charging centers. In the coming year, AVTA will be installing chargers at the Antelope Valley South Valley Clinic, located at the intersection of Palmdale Blvd. and 40<sup>th</sup> East, and at Boeing Plaza adjacent to and just north of the Lancaster Metrolink Station. These two new stations will support AVTA in increasing vehicle range, and provide enhanced and connectivity of routes.

#### **Service Improvements:**

AVTA management has initiated a new service to Edwards Air Force Base. The route 747 was created to service the contractor and military members of our community that work and live on the base. In addition, the planning for service to the Mojave Air & Space Port continues with an anticipate mid-2019 date to begin. The agency is working towards the implementation of enhanced commuter service to Santa Clarita region, specifically the key employments centers, which would greatly benefit the estimated 1,200 employees currently commuting to those locations from Lancaster and Palmdale.

Additional bus stop improvements were made this year on both commuter and local service. AVTA re-aligned commuter Route 786 to provide service to the VA Medical Center located on Wilshire Boulevard, giving veteran residents of the Antelope Valley a new option of travel to their medical appointments. In the local service, Route 3 was re-aligned and a bus stop was created on Avenue O-8 and Sierra Highway providing safe and closer access to the County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services offices, a family counseling center, and private businesses.

**Service Reliability:**

In spring 2018, staff continued its aggressive monitoring of local service performance of the agency's contract with Transdev. Improved coordination and communication with the contractor and operators has dramatically improved On-Time-performance to 80+%. This focus on customer satisfaction has improved OTP, addresses concerns regarding appropriate driver/operator layover times, addresses changing needs associated with the electric bus fleet, and has provided improved intra-service connectivity.

Ongoing work is being done with service to Antelope Valley College to improve students' access to both the Lancaster and Palmdale campuses. AVTA implemented a new route 8 which is now servicing the students, faculty and general public that need to ride between the Lancaster College campus and the new center in Palmdale. The express route has been very successful and well received within the community. Ridership information has been compiled and is under analysis to study the daily and monthly activity at the stops near the Lancaster campus to determine future improvements

**Technology:**

AVTA recently completed the development and the integration of our new customer focused web site. The new web site has been designed to allow better readability and functionality on smart phones. The new site provides better access to the AVTA Trip planner, which is powered by "Google Transit", to enhance trip planning information to all of our customers. The new site also provides for greater access to "rider alerts", and information to improve the customer experience with AVTA. The new site provides the customer more transit options and be connected to all information for AVTA routes, stops, schedules, and fares.

**Future Capital Improvements:**

AVTA has undertaken the coordination with the new Antelope Valley Mall management to create a new bus stop at the facility. The proposed new stop would be coordinated with the planned redesign of the Mall and be adjacent to one of the main entrances, allowing for improved customer accessibility and rider safety than the current stops which are located in the far Southwest parking area along the outer-ring road. The proposed stops, being much closer to one of the main entrances is only possible due to the AVTA commitment to utilize zero-emission buses for all of its fleet. AVTA anticipates the relocation of this bus stop will enhance ridership for the routes that service the Mall location, and more importantly, positively impact rider experience with the AVTA system. The schedule to implement this

relocation of the stop will be made in conjunction with the Mall construction time frame.

In a longer planning horizon, AVTA is exploring the possibility of partnering with Local bus manufacture to connect the two downtown civic-center areas of the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster with the development of a monorail system. The above ground battery-electric monorail system, called BYD "Sky Rail" would be aimed at substantially easing traffic congestion and enhancing connectivity between the two cities. The system would be constructed with a very small footprint along major road arterials and done so with far superior cost efficiencies than current light-rail systems. The system would have the capacity to carry 10,000 to 30,000 passengers per hour. This type of modern Sky Rail would replace the need for planning and development of a BRT system, and could connect the fairgrounds to the AV Mall and eventually the Palmdale Regional Airport.

**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.

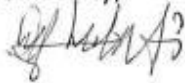
- As previously noted, AVTA has begun a year-long Regional Transit Plan (RTP) development project that will be the strategic plan for the authority for the next 5 to 10 years in the future. The development of the plan will analyze the current legacy route system that has existed for the past 25 years and make recommendations for action items that need to be implemented to improve access to residents, increase mobility options, serve new employment centers, and health care facilities. A key focus of the planning process is the outreach to a community advisory group, consisting of key stakeholders within the community.
- Our Travel Training program allows us to reach out to those who may not feel comfortable using the bus, and we have conducted sessions with many groups this year including veterans, seniors, those with disabilities and students.
- AVTA reduced the age requirement for a reduced senior citizen fare to 62 years old, joining several other agencies and opening the doors to more constituents to take advantage of its free Senior Annual Pass Program.
- AVTA implemented "free transfers" on its local transit routes. The program allows for customer to pay one fare and receive a free transfer to another route within the AVTA system within a two-hour window of time. This is intended to increase options for customers and help improve ridership.

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- AVTA continues its participation in numerous community events such as the annual Senior Expo and the Veterans Stand Down, increasing awareness of AVTA's services and processing applications at the events to help riders avoid the additional trip to the office.

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

Sincerely,



Macy Neshati, CEO/Executive Director





City of  
**SANTA CLARITA**  
**TRANSIT**

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Santa Clarita Valley Area  
TDA Article 8 Hearings  
March 4, 2019  
Presented by Adrian Aguilar, City of Santa Clarita Transit Manager

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 2018 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.

- Began the update of the City's Transit Development Plan. As part of this effort, the City conducted extensive community outreach, worked with a number of stakeholder throughout the Santa Clarita Valley, and surveyed transit riders and community members. The final plan should be completed this spring.
- Kicked off the College of the Canyons Student semester pass. In the first semester we provided nearly 14,000 rides to COC students, significantly reducing the number of automobile trips going to and from the two campuses.
- Completed 90 percent design of the Vista Canyon Metrolink Station. The 100 percent design and bid documents are on schedule to be completed within the next three months.
- Secured approximately \$5.2 million for the construction of the Vista Canyon Metrolink Station.
- Taken delivery of three CNG powered commuter buses and four CNG powered transit buses. The City is scheduled to receive four additional CNG powered buses by the end of March.
- Awarded contracts for the purchase of two commuter and four transit buses.
- Completed our bus stop improvement project which improved access to, and customer amenities at 28 locations throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

These are a few of the many accomplishment over the past 12 months. In the coming year, Santa Clarita Transit will be working toward:

- Implementing the recommendations outlined in the new Transit Development Plan
- Undertake the next phase of our bus stop improvement project designed to improve access and amenities at bus stops throughout the Santa Clarita Valley
- Take delivery of new local, commuter and dial-a-ride buses
- Award contract for the construction of the Vista Canyon Bus Transfer Station

The City of Santa Clarita prides itself in taking a proactive approach to addressing the transit needs of our residents and is committed to providing effective and efficient service that improves the quality of life for all residents within the Santa Clarita Valley.

Thank you.



