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# HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

City and County of San Francisco

## *Regular Meeting Minutes*

October 24, 2019

5:30 pm

City Hall Room #416

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

### ROSTER OF COMMISSIONERS

Susan Belinda Christian, *Chair*

Michael Sweet, *Vice-Chair*

Melanie Ampon, Commissioner

Karen Clopton, Commissioner

Hala Hijazi, Commissioner

Maya Karwande, Commissioner

Mark Kelleher, Commissioner

Jason Pellegrini, Commissioner

Abigail Porth, Commissioner

Joseph Sweiss, Commissioner

Sheryl Evans Davis, *Executive Director*

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 24, 2019

Present:

Michael Sweet  
Melanie Ampon  
Karen Clopton  
Hala Hijazi  
Mark Kelleher  
James Loduca  
Jason Pellegrini  
Joseph Sweiss  
Brittini Chicuata

Absent:

Susan Christian  
Maya Karwande  
Abigail Porth

00:00:24

Michael Sweet

Good evening. It's October 24, 5:34 p.m. My name is Michael Sweet. I'm the vice-chair of the Human Rights Commission. Commission chair, Susan Christian, is coming this evening, but she was tied up at another meeting, so I'll be chairing at least this part of the meeting. If--this is our second regular meeting in the month of October 2019. If the Commission Secretary would, please read the roll.

00:00:53

Commission Secretary

Item number 1, call to order and roll call of commissioners. Commission chair, Susan Christian? Melanie Ampon?

00:01:04

Melanie Ampon

Present.

00:01:05

Commission Secretary

Karen Clopton?

00:01:07

Karen Clopton

Here.

00:01:08

Commission Secretary

Hala Hijazi? Maya Karwande? Mark Kelleher?

00:01:16

Mark Kelleher

Here.

00:01:17

Commission Secretary

James Loduca?

00:01:18

James Loduca

Here.

00:01:19

Commission Secretary

Jason Pellegrini?

00:01:21

Jason Pellegrini

Present.

00:01:22

Commission Secretary

Abigail Porth? Joseph Sweiss? We have quorum.

00:01:33

Michael Sweet

If we could, let the record reflect that, although his name was not called, Vice-chair Michael Sweet is also present. And we'll note that Director Davis is not here, but Brittini Chicuata, policy director, will be here in her absence. The first item on the agenda is public comment on items not on the agenda. This is an opportunity for members of the public who wish to speak on issues within the purview of the Human Rights Commission, but not specifically on the evening's agenda, to do so. There are yellow speaker cards on the table by the door. You are welcome to, though not required, to fill out a speaker's card, if you wish, and bring that forward. Is there anyone who wishes to address the commission at this time? Mr. Washington.

00:02:21

Ace Washington

Oh, you can call me Ace. Glad to be back in a familiar place. This is my first appearance in four months. I've been in Baltimore with my daughter, and real close to Washington, D.C. I made a couple of visits there. But I'm happy to announce I thought San Francisco was the most racist city. Boy, you ain't been back east to Baltimore, you--whew. Anyway, but I'm here, and I'm thankful that we have a Human Rights Commission on--they don't even have one in that city.

But I am here also to rekindle and to try to embrace this commission. I mean, I haven't seen any of your agenda items, but I do know one hot topic that's on your agenda now, and that is the new Office of Racial Equity, is it called? Yes. So that would fit in right in my toolbox with the outmigration. What I mean by the toolbox, when we resume that road to Sacramento for the reunion of the outmigration, we have new tools. We have that office. We have legislation of closing down Justin Herman. So we have a lot of things that we could put together. I don't have time to speak. Now, I do plan to stay to speak on the public comments, but if I could have someone sidebar to say, "Ace, well, we are gonna put you on the agenda," I wouldn't have to stay the whole day, and you wouldn't have to hear my rhetoric. But you will notice it's much calmer than it was four months ago.

But anyway, I'm here basically to talk about the outmigration, to try to rekindle and get that reunion together, and try to get some staff from this agency to help me on the road to Sacramento to talk to Newsom, Governor Newsom, about outmigration. But anyway, I've got four seconds left. I'll resume at the next pub--

00:04:25

Michael Sweet

Thank you, Mr. Washington. It's a pleasure to have you back. I hope that you find this evening's meeting to be interesting, and I hope you'll stay. The--if the commission secretary would, please read the next item on the agenda.

00:04:37

Commission Secretary

Item number 2, adoption of minutes meeting, discussion item, action item, September 9, 2019, Joint Immigrant Rights and Human Rights Commission meeting.

00:04:52

Michael Sweet

So we have two sets of minutes. We'll take them up separately. The first is the September 9 minutes, in your binders under tab two. These were circulated via email. And I'll let the record reflect that Commissioner Hijazi has joined us. Is there any discussion on the minutes? I would entertain a motion. Commissioner Clopton?

00:05:36

Karen Clopton

I move that we approve the minutes from September 9, 2019, the Joint Immigrant Rights and Human Rights Commission meeting.

00:05:49

Michael Sweet

There's a motion to approve the minutes. Is there a second? We have a s--Commissioner Pellegrini, is that a second?

00:05:56

Jason Pellegrini

Second.

00:05:56

Michael Sweet

We have a second from Commissioner Pellegrini. Is there discussion on the item? Is there public comment on this item? This is just on the minutes of September 9. Very good. That will close public comment. And we'll go ahead and read the roll on that item, please.

00:06:26

Commission Secretary

Commissioner Ampon?

00:06:29

Melanie Ampon

Yes. Yes.

00:06:31

Commission Secretary

Commissioner Clopton?

00:06:33

Karen Clopton

Aye.

00:06:34

Commission Secretary

Commissioner Hijazi?

00:06:36

Hala Hijazi

Aye.

00:06:37  
Commissioner Kelleher?

Commission Secretary

00:06:38  
Aye.

Mark Kelleher

00:06:39  
Commissioner Loduca?

Commission Secretary

00:06:41  
Aye.

James Loduca

00:06:41  
Commissioner Pellegrini?

Commission Secretary

00:06:43  
Aye.

Jason Pellegrini

00:06:44  
Chair--Vice-chair Sweet?

Commission Secretary

00:06:46  
Aye.

Michael Sweet

00:06:48  
The motion passes.

Commission Secretary

00:06:51  
We'll note that Commissioner Sweiss is here, and I think entitled to vote on that motion, since he was in the room when the motion was made.

Michael Sweet

00:07:00  
Yes.

Joseph Sweiss

00:07:04  
Does the motion still pass?

Michael Sweet

00:07:05  
The motion carries. Thank you.

Commission Secretary

00:07:08  
Thank you. If you would, please, read the next item.

Michael Sweet

00:07:13  
Approval of minutes, October 10, 2019, regularly scheduled Human Rights Commission meeting.

Commission Secretary

00:07:24

Michael Sweet

These are also in your commission binders under tab two, the minutes our October 10, 2019 meeting. There--commissioner comments or questions, corrections on the minutes? Commissioner Clopton?

00:07:45

Karen Clopton

I move that we approve the minutes from October 10, 2019, our regularly scheduled HRC meeting.

00:07:54

Michael Sweet

Okay. There's a motion. Is there a second?

00:07:59

Joseph Sweiss

Second.

00:08:00

Michael Sweet

Commissioner Sweiss second. Before we take a vote, is there public comment on the October 10, 2019 minutes? Seeing none, we will move to a vote. The question is the approval of the minutes of October 10, 2019. If the commission secretary would, please read the roll.

00:08:17

Commission Secretary

Vice-chair Sweet?

00:08:18

Michael Sweet

Aye.

00:08:20

Commission Secretary

Commissioner Ampon?

00:08:21

Melanie Ampon

Aye.

00:08:22

Commission Secretary

Commissioner Clopton?

00:08:24

Karen Clopton

Aye.

00:08:25

Commission Secretary

Commissioner Hijazi?

00:08:26

Hala Hijazi

Aye.

00:08:27

Commission Secretary

Commissioner Kelleher?

00:08:28

Aye.

Mark Kelleher

00:08:29

Commissioner Loduca?

Commission Secretary

00:08:31

Aye.

James Loduca

00:08:32

Commissioner Pellegrini?

Commission Secretary

00:08:33

Aye.

Jason Pellegrini

00:08:34

Commissioner Sweiss?

Commission Secretary

00:08:35

Yes.

Joseph Sweiss

00:08:37

Motion passes.

Commission Secretary

00:08:39

Thank you. If you could, please read the next item.

Michael Sweet

00:08:43

Regular business item number 3, transit equity. Discussion item, action item. Presentation, Julie Kirschbaum, director of transit for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority.

Commission Secretary

00:09:00

And I'll just ask either Ms. Chicuata or the commission secretary, is this listed as an action item because it needs to be to confirm the meeting in December?

Michael Sweet

00:09:14

Confirm December 10, 2019, Human Rights Commission meeting in District 10 location. That is an action item, item B.

Commission Secretary

00:09:24

All right. Okay. So we're getting arranged. We're getting a handout up here, and I assume there are also copies that--additional copies that will be put on the table. And before we start, there's a number of folks in the room for the next item, and I want to specifically acknowledge MTA director, Cristina Rubke, who also joined us for our last meeting. Good to see you here, commissioner, and all the members of the MTA staff and interested parties who are here. And

Michael Sweet

with that, I see Julie Kirschbaum at the podium, and that's the first thing we'll do is have a presentation from Ms. Kirschbaum.

00:10:20

Julie Kirschbaum

Hello. Thank you for having me back. I am the director of transit at SFMTA, but I did have a tremendous amount of help pulling together all of the information and questions that came up in our last discussion. So I do want to acknowledge the staff that got us here today, as well as to let you know I may be, during the question portion, turning some of the questions over to the specific subject matter experts.

The SFMTA's mission is to connect San Francisco through a safe, equitable and sustainable transportation system, and we're working to build equity into all aspects of our work. We recognize that there is still a lot to do in this area, and we are really looking forward to taking on disparities in the transportation system head on. And we appreciate the partnership that you all offered at the last meeting, and we very much intend to take you up on that offer to work in partnership in these areas.

For the presentation today we did struggle a little bit with the kind of best practice of brevity versus trying to answer a lot of the really thoughtful questions that you all raised. So I am--I think brevity did not carry the day, but I will do my best to go through slides. If I go through anything too quickly, please let me know. And certainly, as this will be an ongoing conversation, we're happy to come back and take a deeper dive into any other issues. But what we do want to cover today is the MUNI equity strategy, which is framing a lot of our work, particularly around equity planning in MUNI service, to talk a little bit about service performance, to address how we approach stop changes, because that was definitely a theme that came up, as well as some of our fare programs. I also included some information about accessibility, and particularly about our paratransit services. And then some of the customer information questions that you all raised at the last meeting, plus an update on operator hiring, both some of the demographic questions that you raised, as well as where we are in hiring, as the operator shortage continues to be our most challenging system-wide problem, and it's certainly impacting communities of concern.

This map here shows all of the coverage that we have in San Francisco. There's a quarter mile bubble around every stop in the city, and I think what it shows is that we do have a very rich amount of access in our system. Most residents can walk to a stop within about a quarter mile. And we have a system that's structured so that most people can get to where they're going without having to make more than one transfer. The MUNI service equity strategy is focused on eight neighborhoods that are identified in this map. The Oceanview Ingleside is highlighted, because that was something that we added between budget cycles, based on community feedback. The intent is to improve safety, enhance connectivity to key destinations, improve reliability, increase frequency, and also reduce crowding. I should also point out that accessibility needs are also evaluated in our equity strategy, but they often take a city-wide approach.

The equity strategy was adopted--

00:14:25

Michael Sweet

Can I--I want to go back to that prior slide for just a second. Wh--you said that--you said you added an area through the last budget cycle. Can you talk a little bit about how that happened and why and what it was? What thinking was there?

00:14:42

Julie Kirschbaum

Yeah, the thinking was that the Oceanview Ingleside matched a lot of the demographics of our other neighborhoods, and was having concerns related to transit connectivity and transit (inaudible). That's why we added it.

00:15:05

Michael Sweet

And then what does it mean to be included in one of those bubbles?

00:15:09

Julie Kirschbaum

Thank you for asking. That's a good transition into my next slide. So what we do in our equity strategy is twofold. I'll just skip one slide ahead. The first is that we identify routes that are key to serving each neighborhood, and then we track performance in those neighborhoods. We track them at all times of day, and this is specific feedback. Because people, for example, coming from low-income households might not necessarily have a traditional 9:00 to 5:00 job, so we look at performance at five time periods. And in addition, we look at the condition along the overall route, but we also look at conditions in the neighborhood itself. You know, some of these routes are very long, serving a lot of areas. And so, you know, it might be great if it has good performance on average, but we also want to know how it's doing where people actually get on it and board. So the first aspect is focused on transparency and understanding performance, with the goal that performance will be better or on par than our non-equity lines.

And then the second thing that we do is that we identify opportunities to improve service, based on what we're seeing in that performance data, as well as based on customer complaints and community feedback. And the reason that we take a neighborhood approach is that it allows us to be very tailored in our solutions. So for example, the needs in Chinatown, which often revolve around crowding, are very different than the needs, say, in the Bayview, where we hear concerns about travel time and reliability and connectivity. So it's intended to be a flexible plan. It's also not one size fits all. Not every problem the answer is service. Not every problem the answer is more transit priority engineering. Not every problem the answer is better line management service delivery. So it allows us to identify a tailored set of approaches. This is a very nuts and bolts plan. It is tied to our budget process, so it isn't the universe of things that could be done. It's things that we specifically believe are urgent and deliverable in about a one- to two-year time period. And the adoption of an equity strategy is specifically linked to our budget process, so our board formally adopts an equity strategy prior to adopting our budget. I'm not gonna go into this, but in your packet are some examples of the type of strategies that we include in the equity strategy, and are fully funded through the budget process.

I--we did talk last time about performance. You all had a lot of questions about on-time performance. I didn't bring a lot of that data. It is available on our website by route and by system. But on average, we have a lot of work to do as it relates to on-time performance. We measure it two ways. On our infrequent routes we focus on schedule adherence. So if the bus is supposed to arrive at 8:05, is it arriving at 8:05? And we measure within a five-minute window

how on time it is. And none of our service is very on time right now, 55% on our equity lines, 54.5% system wide. So there is a lot of work to do there, and we are working through those problems through things like the operator hiring and some of the other initiatives. On our more frequent routes, in addition to looking at schedule adherence, we also look at how often there is a gap in service. Because when somebody walks out to the 5 Fulton, for example, because it comes so frequently, rarely is somebody looking at the schedule. They're not waiting for the 8:04 bus. They know that this bus comes about every 8 to 10 minutes. If somebody's waiting 15 minutes, there's a real problem on that route. And so for that we track how often there's a gap of more than five minutes of the scheduled headway. And then the last thing we're tracking is crowding on our lines. And while on average, if you look throughout the day, we're not seeing a lot of crowding, in our specific line-by-line data, particularly during the commute period, we do have some very significant areas of crowding that we're working through.

00:20:47

Michael Sweet

How do you measure crowding?

00:20:49

Julie Kirschbaum

We measure crowding by looking at the number--percent of trips that are over what we would consider a very packed vehicle. So we calculate how many people are on board, every bus. And then, for example, on a 60-foot bus I think we would consider more than 80 people on board to be a crowded bus.

00:21:15

Michael Sweet

And then if the crowding leads to skipping of stops, do you measure--does that get built into the gaps for on-time performance? I mean, if someone's waiting for the 5 Fulton, and it's crowded and goes by, and they have to wait 20 minutes, they're waiting 20 minutes, right?

00:21:30

Julie Kirschbaum

They're--the two measures are very related, absolutely. Some of the themes we're currently working on in equity strategy, it will go in front of our board this spring, but some of the themes that we've been hearing have to do with travel time and connectivity, particularly from the Bayview to the Mission and the Bayview to downtown. We've also, from a whole host of neighborhoods, heard concerns about the 29 Sunset, particularly as it relates to school connectivity, and crowding, and passups on routes like the 29, the 43 and the 44. And then we have also heard about concerns, and the data bears this out, gaps in service or too long wait time on routes like the 8 Bayshore, the 23 Monterey, the 19 Polk, and the T Third. So again, this isn't every concern we're tracking, but it gives you a sample of the kind of information that we're currently evaluating.

Some of the things that we are working to put into the next equity strategy are additional service. I will preface that this is--we are very much at the beginning of a budget conversation, so a lot of these ideas are really contingent on resources. But we do know that the 29 is our longest bus route. It serves dozens of elementary, middle and high schools. It is from a kind of a transit nerd perspective it's very successful. There's a lot of people getting on and off of it all day. It's very efficient and well used, but it's also, you know, has challenges. It has crowding, even with a recent adding of some strategic trips at the most crowded points. It's a very long travel time. That's one of the things we're hearing most from students is, you know, for

example, if I want to get from Bayview to Lowell, how much time a high schooler is spending on the vehicle. And what we've heard is--what's exciting is what we're hearing, is a call for a rapid alternative, so that in addition to having the slower local service, we would have something that hits the key destinations, gets kids to school more quickly, and would give people that do want to walk a little bit further another option.

So what we're doing now is we are developing a plan to invest in that route. We are going to be starting a lot of different community conversations, as well as analyzing our trip patterns. If we do have a shared meeting in the Bayview, this would be one of the things that we would like to get input on. What are they key locations that people really want to make sure is served? Because of our operator situation we actually do not think, regardless of funding, that we're gonna be in a position to add more service until 2021, because we are not delivering on what we have, and we really need to make sure that we close our current shortage. But we are looking to possibly implement this, contingent on new funding as part of our budget discussion.

Kind of a similar example of that is we have been conducting a community survey and a community-based planning process in the Bayview. And one of the things that has emerged is an interest in, again, quicker connections, more choices in how people get downtown. So we're also looking at some sort of an express route that could serve to connect people along Hunters Point to the downtown area. So again, you know, this isn't the full extent of our planning, but I wanted to share it as sort of an example of the work that we're doing to try to digest the feedback that we're getting and then move forward.

The next thing that came up at the last meeting was about stop spacing, so I wanted to talk a little bit about how we approach stop spacing. And I--but I do want to preface that there's always gonna be a contingency--a constituency for every stop, so while I'm sharing what our kind of overall approach is, we are very sensitive to the fact that any stop change is gonna be an impact on some people. To give you a scale, we have about 3500 stops in the transit system. That's part of that really amazing coverage that I talked about. About 1200 of them have shelters. 800 of those have NextBus at them. We would have more, but it's typically there's no power available. When I get to the customer information section though, I will talk about our movement toward solar powered shelters, which we believe will help with a broader distribution of NextBus. We have 1300 of our stops are in zones, which means, you know, the bus pulls all the way into the curb, but we do have a lot of stops where we just--we stop in the street. Those tend to be some of our hilltop routes where we stop less frequently, but there is a customer trade-off there for sure.

Our stop spacing really varies by block, by neighborhood, 'cause the neighborhoods have very different block structures. The blocks, for example, in the Sunset North/South are much longer than, say, a downtown block, which is only about 300 feet. But our stop spacing policy is that we want stops to be between 800 and 1360 feet, which I believe is about  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a mile, with the caveat that we have actually a much closer stop spacing on hills, and you probably see that as you go on routes like the 24 Divisadero where the spacing is much closer. And we do in general have spacing that's a lot closer than this policy. Our transit system, it emerged very organically, and stops were added over 100 years for a whole variety of reasons. When we go to change a stop we look at a whole host of factors. The first thing we look at is, you know, how close is it to the stop next to it. How does it relate to our stop spacing standards? Are there any accessibility

concerns at the adjacent stop? So for example, we wouldn't eliminate a stop if the next closest stop were not accessible for some reason. We also look at land uses. You know, what's within a 650 foot radius? You know, are there hospitals, medical facilities, etcetera? We also, as I said, look at the steepness, particularly grades that are over 6%. We also look at amenities. So for example, if we're taking out a stop with a shelter, does the next stop have a shelter? We look at the ridership and how well used the stop is. Is it at a transfer point or a connection? And then finally we look at, you know, what the intersection control is. We have a lot of--we had a lot of stops, and I think we're getting better at addressing this, where there would be a stop sign, and then there would be a bus stop across the street. So you would essentially be asking passengers to stop twice on that block. Or we would have signal priority, so we'd have the ability to--for the bus to clear the intersection and not have delay, but then the stop would be at the beginning of the intersection, so the bus would have to stop. So that's another thing that we look at in terms of stop spacing. And then we have a lot of community dialogues, you know? We do collect a lot of feedback as well when we go to make stop changes.

The next thing that I wanted to cover is our fare policy. Our fare policy goals are absolutely to promote equity, to incentivize people to ride our system, to make it easy to pay, and also really to incentivize people to prepay. We have a very, very crowded system, and some of our routes where, I'm sure you've all experienced it, where everybody's paying cash at the front door, can really slow down and contribute to those overall reliability problems that I was talking about. We do have, I believe, the most progressive fare policy in the country. Yeah?

00:30:57

Michael Sweet

Commissioner Loduca has a question. And wha--if it's topical now, you want to ask?

00:31:03

James Loduca

Yeah, it's in the context of the stop change considerations, I think there was a very specific conversation that we were having around a homeless prenatal clinic, and the--what seemed like very robust community engagement and input. And I think we asked for more detail around what happened in that specific case.

00:31:25

Julie Kirschbaum

Yeah, so in that specific case it was--we were making some very nuance stop changes to try to accommodate all of the needs on Potrero, including people taking transit, people walking, as well as the bicycle routing. We did move the stop. We moved it about 100 feet in one direction and about 300 feet in the other direction. So we did ultimately make the change, but we tried to keep as close to the center as possible. So I know it was reported clients walking up to two blocks, but the actual stop changes did not--were not modified to quite that extent.

00:32:19

James Loduca

And specifically, how do you weigh community engagement and community input in the context of an extremely marginalized very vulnerable population? And does that--is that weighed separately than, you know, you know, ma--

00:32:35

Julie Kirschbaum

It is, and we do have dozens of examples where we have either added a stop back in or made a stop adjustment based on that type of feedback. In this case just the geometry of Potrero was

particularly challenging, and we did to the extent possible accommodate the feedback, but we couldn't entirely leave the stop right where it was.

00:33:06

James Loduca

Yeah, it sounds like based on their account of it that they were--the feedback wasn't accommodated. That there was a very specific request of the reliability of that center on the stop that was at their corner, and they reported instances on having to spend money on taxis for pregnant or expecting mothers who later, because they couldn't access the clinic on the bus line, needed separate modes of transportation.

00:33:34

Julie Kirschbaum

I'm happy to follow up with them.

00:33:35

James Loduca

That'd be great.

00:33:40

Julie Kirschbaum

And I'm not taking notes, but these guys are taking notes. On a--and I'm taking my coat off, not 'cause you guys are making me sweat, as you did last time, but because we are enjoying some hot weather. So anyway, on the fare policy I--this is an area where there is always more to do, and it's really great to hear folks like yourselves pushing the envelope. I also do want to acknowledge that the advocacy that you're building on has been quite tremendous, and we do have, I think, a pretty exciting set of options for our passengers who are low income.

We have a number of options. We have a Lifeline monthly pass that is at a 50% discount. We have currently about 17,000 users that benefit from that. We also have a free MUNI program for youth, seniors, and people with disabilities who are low or moderate income. That program is an honor-based program, so while you do need to provide documentation of age, there's actually no additional income documentation requirements. And then we are excited to be part of a regional pilot that's gonna be implemented in the spring that does an adult single ride discount, 'cause we know that people who are low income, even though they may benefit from a monthly pass, may not necessarily have the upfront cash to purchase one.

The free MUNI application, I know there were some questions about it. Right now the--if you already have a Clipper card, you can fill out an application online or submit it by mail, and just provide us the Clipper serial number. It takes about two weeks to get back. If you are a new Clipper holder, and you send in an application, we do need, as I said, the proof of age, but we provide you with your first Clipper card for free. That information is included in all of the new student enrollment packets, so kids do get those forms. And we do coordinate with the school sites to help enroll youth who are homeless, or people who may not be able for whatever reason to provide the documentation. But we're also, you know, always looking to kind of push this program, and so we are looking also to see if there's an opportunity to just include it as part of the application people are already filling out for free and reduced lunch.

00:36:37

Michael Sweet

Can you roll back one slide for a sec? Why two to three weeks to process? What's involved in processing an application, especially if someone is just submitting it online and already has a Clipper card?

00:36:49

Julie Kirschbaum

I'm gonna ask Diana. I don't know.

00:36:55

Diana Hammons

Good evening. Diana Hammons, SFMTA revenue manager.

00:36:58

Michael Sweet

Can you say your first name, please, for the rec--

00:36:59

Diana Hammons

Diana Hammons.

00:37:00

Michael Sweet

Diana Hammons. Thank you, Ms. Hammons.

00:37:03

Diana Hammons

So because this program is on Clipper, it is subject to sort of the limitations of that 20-plus year old system. And so when it's submitted online, it's reviewed, and we have to send that information to Clipper to load the pass, Cubic, who is the vendor for that. That information then gets sent out, what we call an action, and that information then has to get back to every single vehicle, piece of equipment in the system. So that process in and of itself takes about a week. There's time for Clipper that they have to process that information as well. So it's the same thing that some of you might've experienced if you try to load a--if you go online to Clipper right now and try to load a pass, like say tonight, that might not show up on your card for five, six days. And it's kind of a complicated technical explanation. Every vehicle has to connect in the yard to the network, and because the system is so aged, it is a problem. But we are in the process of working with the region to design a new system that is gonna eliminate all of that. Everything will be in real time. You'll be able to load your pass and have it available immediately. But again, this program is subject to the same limitations of the Clipper program.

00:38:15

Michael Sweet

Thank you. Before you sit down, Commissioner Loduca has a question. I'm not sure if it's for you or for Ms. Kirschbaum.

00:38:20

James Loduca

Yeah, so we heard at our last discussion on this topic some really great suggestions from child advocates who are social workers who are working with underserved children in the school district about the possibility of providing preloaded Clipper cards to various pilot schools. Is that something that you've explored?

00:38:41

Diana Hammons

So in terms of providing preloaded Clipper cards, one, for a youth fare it has to be registered. This is part of a regional program, and we have to be subject to the same requirements. So we

could not issue youth car--it wouldn't be a youth card. It would be an adult card loaded with that fare. And also, that \$20 has to be funded by something, someone, because that money actually can be used, if it is a cash fare, it can be used on any system. So there's no way to send those out without somebody actually paying and transferring funds into the Clipper program. So it would be a matter of funding. I'm sorry.

00:39:29

James Loduca

So under no circumstances does the department ever provide preloaded Clipper cards to anyone?

00:39:36

Diana Hammons

If the funding is provided for those cards, yes.

00:39:40

James Loduca

And so give an example of when that's happened.

00:39:43

Diana Hammons

If we--well, a good example of it would be our agency. You know, we have a lot of meetings that we go maybe at BART across the bay, and so we have to transfer funds to the Clipper program. So it's--the money comes out of our account, and goes to the Clipper program, to then be distributed across the operators. So it--there is--it's not--an example of something different would be if it's a monthly pass. There is no money that we had to pay for that, because it's our product. But when it's a cash value, that has to be funded in some part by someone before that value can be loaded onto the card.

00:40:27

Julie Kirschbaum

(Inaudible).

00:40:30

Michael Sweet

Ms. Kirschbaum, can I--'cause the transcription is to recording. Can you speak into a microphone, please?

00:40:36

Julie Kirschbaum

My understanding of the question is could the for youth pass be preloaded and provided to the school district.

00:40:43

Diana Hammons

I'm sorry. I actually listened to the tra--meeting last month, and there was a specific request for \$20 value, so I had that in my head. I apologize for that. So the answer, it's the first part of that answer, that youth cards must be registered, and that product can't be loaded on any other card. So we would have to have a name and a birth date. Because that card, even though it is a free MUNI pass that's loaded onto it, that card can actually also be used to load value and then be used on BART and get the youth discount on BART. And so we're required--

00:41:17

James Loduca

So just as a thought exercise, if you had a very engaged youth student advocate at a school, who said, "I'm willing to do this if you provide the cards," is that something that could be done

remotely at a school site, in terms of I've got a student in front of me, they've demonstrated this need, I'm gonna register them in the program so there's fewer barriers.

00:41:41

Diana Hammons

Oh, absolutely. And we work closely, I think as Julie mentioned, for some of--an example is with foster youth it's very challenging for them to get documentation and a signature for those applications. And we have connections across the school district where we accept the validation of age from the school district representative, and then we--they will send us names and birth dates, and we will actually send the cards to the school district. So we have across the system a lot of different relationships that we've formed to address these special cases.

00:42:16

James Loduca

Yeah, I'm just trying to find a way to remove barriers and expedite it, 'cause what you've described sounds great, but it also sounds like there's still a significant amount that the child advocate needs to validate and then you send the card out, and then by then the child's no longer in front of them, and maybe lost a follow-up, and maybe not able to get to school 'cause he doesn't have the card. Whereas if I was a chi--a student advocate, I had a stack of cards here, I could register and validate, hand the card while the student is in front of me, and solve what their most pressing issue of the day is. Is that something that is feasible?

00:42:53

Diana Hammons

Yeah, under the current system, unfortunately, it isn't. But as we move forward with the design of the new Clipper system, we can certainly look into some ways that we can do short term passes.

00:43:04

James Loduca

Thank you. What if we just pretended like they were employees trying to get to a meeting across the bay?

00:43:10

Diana Hammons

I'm sorry, those were two sep--we're--youth cards must be registered to an individual before they can be distributed. That can only be done--the hardware that's located in our customer service center, so it's a limitation.

00:43:25

Michael Sweet

Is--but is there a way to Commissioner Loduca's point? It would--certainly there ought to be a way you--a family moves to San Francisco. You've got to stand in line at--I think you go to the SFUSD office, and then you go out to sign up, you go out to the schools. There's a check of a birth certificate or something along the way, so you valid--so the district validates that child's age, I think, right at the beginning. So you've got SFUSD knowing that this child was born, you know, May 1, 2007. You can't give the child a card at that moment, because it needs to be processed through the old hardware, right?

00:44:05

Diana Hammons

Yes.

00:44:06

Michael Sweet

Can you give the child the card and say, "We're gonna put this through the hardware. It should work in three to four days."

00:44:12

Diana Hammons

It still would--it would still take the same time to have that action sent over to Cubic and then downloaded back.

00:44:18

Michael Sweet

But the child has a card in hand.

00:44:22

Diana Hammons

We can certainly--

00:44:24

Michael Sweet

Well, which is half of, you know, "Well, your card isn't gonna work for a few days, but you're here. I got your birth certificate. I got, you know, I got the number at MUNI. I'll call or I'll type it in. Your Clipper card should work in five days. Call this number if it doesn't."

00:44:39

Diana Hammons

We can certainly work with the school district to see if they would be willing to partner with us in that kind of model, absolutely.

00:44:44

Michael Sweet

So I think you'd--every new student will have to pass through that gate, right? They have to--the birth certificate to the district in front of a person to--it just--it happens. Thank you.

00:44:58

Diana Hammons

Yes.

00:44:59

Michael Sweet

Report to this school. Here's your card. It will work in four days, five days, seven days, whatever it is.

00:45:04

Diana Hammons

Absolutely. It certainly would take a lot of time off the schedule. One of the things we do also, just to make sure with the new cards, we wait. We like to wait to test them, to make sure that everything is working before we send it out to the customer. So that would be a tradeoff, 'cause sometimes there are problems. But certainly we are, as Julie mentioned, we're in talks with the school district all the time on how to remove barriers. The school board is very interested in this as well. So I will certainly bring this up to them to see if it's something that they would be interested in working with us on.

00:45:37

Michael Sweet

Thank you. Commissioner Loduca, you have another one?

00:45:40

James Loduca

And this is perhaps for the director, I think, and not to speak for you, but I think what you're seeing a reaction to is not specifically this incident, but it sounds like repeatedly our most vulnerable students are on the losing end of a broken system. And so between hearing that the 29 Sunset that has problems with connectivity of getting marginalized kids to school on time, and they're getting passed up because it's over crowded, and there's just consistent problems there, and we've got a system that in many ways is just failing our youngest and most vulnerable San Franciscans who are trying to get an education, and the solutions that are being presented here feel like explanations of why things are impossible. And what I'd love to hear is you--let me start by saying you have the hardest job in the city in my opinion. I am grateful for your work. But I would love to have your department come back with creative thinking about here are some of the things we can do. It's a really terrible situation. There's no easy solutions. But here's some creative hard choices we can make to have our students' backs a little more.

00:46:58

Julie Kirschbaum

I'm happy to do that. I also--I am often a glass--I do a really hard job, because I am a glass half full person. And I would also encourage you to look at the flip side of that, which is part of why we have crowding on the 29 is because we have 71,000 people who have access to free service. And we very much did see an increase in crowding on our routes that serve schools when this program became available, and that's a tremendous success. And we need to now take the next step of keeping up with that success by solving some of the tough system problems around operator shortages, which we'll talk about, as well as being able to grow with that demand. So we're hearing this feedback. The dialogue is really very helpful. And we do have a strong partnership on the school district, and we will get with them on new ideas.

I think I'm gonna move on. One of the other things, and I'm not gonna spend a lot of time on it, but we did get some questions last time about our fare enforcement program. I do want to flag a couple of things. One is that less than 1% of our citations are on youth. That's not the target audience that we're focusing on. And we do try to focus on having a very distributed fare enforcement program, so they'll typically go as a team on three routes a day. We do not ask for demographic information when we do citations. So I know there was some questions on the racial breakdown of our citations. We do not have that information. But I did want to talk a little bit about the program, and particularly let you know that this is a group that does get a lot of training in particular on deescalation on things like implicit bias. They do have the discretion to issue warnings, and often do so. They do check everyone. That is kind of a principle of the program.

The reason that we have fare enforcement officers is because we do have a proof of payment program. And proof of payment is something that in it--at its very core is an equity program, because what it does is it allows people to enter any door on the system if they have a pass or if they have paid in a different way. And what that does is it allows us to have less crowded vehicles, because not everybody is crammed into the front, and it also allows us to have space up front for our most vulnerable customers, seniors, people with disabilities. And when we went to proof of payment on the bus system within the last 10 years, we did see kind of an immediate easing of crowding at the front of the vehicle.

Our--the next thing I wanted to talk about was our paratransit program.

00:50:36

Michael Sweet

Can--I didn't ask this at the beginning. I thought maybe you would cover it. But on the compliance, do you track proof of payment to make sure that the inspectors are equally distributed across all lines and across all parts of the city?

00:50:56

Julie Kirschbaum

We track the location, but in preparation for this presentation I asked if we had it mapped, and we do not. So that's an area that we're gonna take and review, just as part of this very discussion.

00:51:11

Michael Sweet

You--so you track the area. So you could--somewhere there's a list of the--each team's three routes they did every day for the last month, but no one's actually mapped that to see is this, you know, in (inaudible)?

00:51:24

Julie Kirschbaum

The actual citations have not been mapped, although we do have address location.

00:51:28

Michael Sweet

For the citations issued. And the citations issued, if they're like, I mean, they get on, they get off different lines, so, I mean, do you--I guess the question is are there certain lines that are getting more attention than others? Can you tell that? Do you know it--do they pick randomly? Are they told what lines to go to?

00:51:44

Julie Kirschbaum

No, they're assigned.

00:51:45

Michael Sweet

And they're assigned off a list, so that there's a distribution across the system?

00:51:49

Julie Kirschbaum

Yeah.

00:51:50

Michael Sweet

Okay. Commissioner Loduca?

00:51:52

James Loduca

When you return could you bring with you demographic breakdown of those who are issued citation by gender, race and age?

00:51:59

Julie Kirschbaum

No. That's what I said is we do not collect any demographic information on the citations.

00:52:12

Michael Sweet

Acting Director Chicuata?

00:52:14

Brittini Chicuata

Thank you. Thank you so much, Julie. Just a clarifying question on that, because I know that Assemblymember Shirley Weber passed a piece of legislation around police encounters and police stops, as did then **Supervisor** Malia Cohen, which required all law enforcement to collect that data around racial identity. So I just want clarity around who's enforcing, and just a clarifying question on why it doesn't apply to the folks who are giving the citations.

00:52:46

Julie Kirschbaum

The proof of payment program is a decriminalized program. It is not law enforcement. It is tantamount to like a parking ticket. That is in part to facilitate ease of payment to keep it out of the court system, but also one of the changes we made was that it used to be criminalized for youth, which really was completely out of alignment with our intent of the program.

00:53:31

Brittni Chicuata

Thank you. And just final clarifying question. So is there some type of bias training, or how are we to trust that, you know, officers are not profiling people who they presume didn't pay a fare? And I think that that would get to Commissioner Loduca's question around understanding if there might be some, you know, over citations based on race or gender.

00:53:56

Julie Kirschbaum

Part of that is captured in the practice of asking everybody on board and not leaving it up to the judgment of do I--do you look like you paid your fare. They also do, built into the training program, receive both deescalation and implicit bias training.

Shifting to our paratransit program, this is, again, a critical program. We strive to have as many people as possible be able to use our fixed route MUNI service. It's more convenient. You don't--it's very low cost. You don't have to make a reservation. But we also recognize that that doesn't work for everybody, and it doesn't work for every type of trip. So for example, we have some people that might use the fixed route bus system for a lot of trips, but, you know, coming home from dialysis would take a paratransit trip. Paratransit is a contracted service. It's provided by Transdev. And we carry over 700,000 trips a year. Just to give you an order of magnitude, the MUNI system carries about 215 million trips per year.

We have three types of service. We have our traditional ADA service. It is prescheduled. The priority is given to people that make reservations 24 hours in advance, but as you heard last time, we do also have "day of" options, and we put a priority on medical access. We also have group vans that may go to, like, a single location, like a senior center, and then we do have the taxi scrip program, which does have a cost, but provides the most flexibility. So if somebody would--I think you spend 36--

00:56:16

Unknown

Thirty dollars (inaudible).

00:56:19

Julie Kirschbaum

If you spend \$6 you get \$30 in taxi vouchers. I also wanted to point out in terms of performance, we evaluate a paratransit trip on whether or not it is on time within about a 20-minute schedule. And we were, kind of in the end of 2018 early 2019, having some on-time performance issues. That was operator related. We're very fortunate that as part of the Office

of Economic and Workforce Development working with folks who were gonna lose their jobs from Chariot. In addition to many of those folks working to transition over to MUNI, we also saw a lot of those folks transition over to working in paratransit, where they're helping us now to deliver much better on-time performance.

And then the last thing I wanted to cover, and Annette can answer any questions you have, is on the pilot program, the pilot choice program. That did come out of specific feedback and partnership from our partners in public health, indicating that there are some people that don't meet the qualifications for paratransit, but still struggle with an access issue, either because of where their specific medical clinic is or perhaps because of a short-term medical challenge that they're facing. So we are--we have not launched this program, but we are working towards it. It will be something that the clinic itself will make the referral. They know their clients the best. And we will pilot it to see if it is a good option to provide an additional choice for people who fall into that gray area.

And then the last thing I want to cover on accessibility is we do also work very hard to make sure that our fixed route MUNI service can accommodate as many people with disabilities as possible. We have a three-hour training that our operators go through. We--they practice. They interact with people who use wheelchairs and have other mobility or visual disabilities. And kind of throughout the training process there's the expectation to work with customers with disabilities. We enjoy very high ridership relative to other cities of people with disabilities, and it's in part because of strong advocacy, the fact that we are also set up to make sure that accessibility is factored into all aspects of our work, including specifically the design of our vehicles, as well as our stops and our routes. Do you have any questions in this area before I shift to customer information?

00:59:41

Michael Sweet

On the paratransit?

00:59:42

Julie Kirschbaum

Yes. Okay.

00:59:46

Michael Sweet

Well, let me ask, 'cause I know we had a conversation kind of on the way out the door, and I got to meet your--the representative that you--the company you contract out with for paratransit, and was impressed by the commitment and the wealth of information and the commitment to the city. Can you talk a little bit about where you are in that contract process, and, you know, what--I mean, I was im--I--you showed that the curve and the down and the back up, which was--it's, you know, it was identified. It was very sh--those are very narrow, right? That was a six-month period. There was a problem, and it was fixed immediately, or, you know, people who were waiting for the van would not say that, but it was, given the amount of time it's taken to get the Chinatown subway running. I would say that's immediate. But talk a little bit more about the contractor, and the process, and how y'all work together.

01:00:40

Julie Kirschbaum

I'm gonna introduce Annette Williams, who is our accessibility coordinator, to answer that.

01:00:44

Michael Sweet

Thank you. Good evening, Ms. Williams.

01:00:46

Annette Williams

Thank you. I would say probably the most important thing is that it's a partnership, and it's a very long-term partnership that we've had with Transdev, what, since 2000 now, right? It's--and we work very closely, and we both take it very seriously in terms of our customer satisfaction. And if--I'm sure you're probably aware that we have a very active paratransit coordinating council that meets monthly, so we have a lot of interaction with people with disabilities and our riders, so we hear from them. And, you know, one of the things that we did in terms of that shift in the SF Access was that one of the issues that they were having, our contractor, was recruiting and retaining drivers, which Julie mentioned. And we did look at raising salaries, because that was a big part of that, you know, which we all know is--it's difficult to live here. So that's one of the things that I think has had a big impact.

In terms of the contract, we have a five-year contract, and then a five-year option. So I believe we're in year three of a five-year contract right now. But it's been--I would say it's a very important partnership, and it's really a three-way partnership, because we also work very closely, as I mentioned, with the disability community and our riders.

01:02:05

Michael Sweet

Does anyone else have questions on paratransit before we move on? Okay. Ms. Kirschbaum?

01:02:18

Julie Kirschbaum

At our last meeting we also talked quite a bit about customer information, and particularly how people get information in real time, both on about when a vehicle is coming, as well as when there's a service disruption. What we currently do is we do communicate through our NextBus signs and alerts, we do provide information by Twitter, and we do provide email and text alerts for people who don't have or don't prefer to get their information from social media. So somebody could sign up just for a specific route. Like I take the 14 Mission, for example. I could get alerts only on the 14 Mission, or I could select a broader set of information if I'm traveling city-wide and I want to get information.

We are in the process of expanding and enhancing our stationary digital signage. We are in the process of a new updated contract. And one of the things that that contract will allow us to do is to get a better algorithm so that predictions are better, particularly for folks that are living at the outer end of the line where the terminal departures have a really big impact on predictions. We're also--the new contract will include solar powered signs, because there are some areas where access to power is a limiting factor for our ability to get NextBus information. So those are some of the things that we're currently doing, and some of the things that are underway.

I also took away from our conversation a need to--given that we rely on 311 as sort of a last resort for folks, to do better to strengthen our real-time communication with 311. It's a benefit to us that they are a multilingual center, but I'm working on strategies for our call center to be even more in touch with their managers when we're having service disruptions.

01:04:37

Michael Sweet

Can--is there a reason--I've called 311, and the first thing you hear is, "If this is for MUNI press one," other--or whatever, right? Is there a reason why you can't put the folks who are taking the MUNI calls in the same place where the other MUNI supervisor folks are sitting, the control center or whatever? I mean, what's this place called where--

01:05:00

Julie Kirschbaum

Transportation Management Center.

01:05:02

Michael Sweet

Okay. Is there a reason why you can't put 311 operators in that space?

01:05:05

Julie Kirschbaum

Yeah, it just--space. It's just not set up to have enough space to house the 311 call center.

01:05:12

Michael Sweet

Could it be made to put them in there? I mean, it strikes me that, I mean, I have--I watch TV, right? There's a big board, right, and there are lights, and people can see there was something blocked here or there's a fire there or--right? I mean, if you have the Twitter feed you can see that. Like two days ago there was a fire somewhere in the Castro, and all the service, all the buses--you saw that if you had Twitter. But you call 311, unless they're looking at the Twitter feed, they don't know that. But if they're sitting there in the control center they know that, you know, this hour's big MUNI deal is there was a fire in the Castro.

01:05:48

Julie Kirschbaum

I'd have to walk through their space, but I don't--the space that we have for the Transportation Management Center is quite built out. I don't think that there's space to absorb what you're recommending.

01:06:01

Michael Sweet

How many people--how many 311--the 311 operators who take a MUNI call are dedicated to MUNI calls, right?

01:06:11

Julie Kirschbaum

I don't know. And I don't know as far as the language assistance. Sometimes the language assistance may trump whether or not you're focused on a MUNI person or focused on litter or other kind of issues that come through 311.

01:06:26

Michael Sweet

I think Ms. Ramos is--do you want to elucidate this or take a pass?

01:06:33

Ms. Ramos

No, I mean, I think that the issue here is that there is a--what I'm hearing you say, Mr. Chair, is that you're trying to expedite the communication between 311 and the real-time transit information. And I think that what Ms. Kirschbaum is saying is that the access to that information to the 311 infrastructure is challenging in and of itself, and that's where the disconnect is.

01:06:56

Michael Sweet

I--so I think what I'm--we're--I think we're talking about the same thing. I'm not trying--you're trying to eliminate a step, not expedite. But it's a game of telephone, right? So you put the person who--someone--the only way they can get through is call, right? You put the person that's taking the phone call in the same room as the other people who are saying, "Oh, we're going to have to reroute this bus," or whatever, and that person is aware of what's going on, as opposed to that person is sitting in a, you know, in a cube in a call center somewhere else with soundproof tiles on the ceiling so no one, you know, so--

01:07:27

Ms. Ramos

Yeah, the infrastructure, I think what Director Kirschbaum is saying is that the 31--the infrastructure, the space limitations of the Transportation Management Center is constrained. It's kind of built out. And to accommodate 311 operators in, like, what kind of looks, you know, a space smaller than this might be complicated. But I think your point is very well taken, and what we can look into is trying to figure out how we can get the 311 operators to get more access to the information from where they're sitting. So, like, they might have a live screen or something to the effect that dials into the information that might be available through the Transportation Management Center.

01:08:07

Michael Sweet

Great.

01:08:09

Ms. Ramos

Well, point taken, and we'll get back to you on that for sure.

01:08:11

Michael Sweet

Thank you.

01:08:12

Ms. Ramos

Certainly.

01:08:18

Julie Kirschbaum

And then the last topic that I wanted to talk about is operators. And I know that you suggested that I have the hardest job, but I actually can assure you that it's really our operators that are doing the hardest job out there, and I'm very proud of the work that they do. This table here, I know there was a question about the demographics of our operators. They are very diverse. We do have more male operators than female operators, so as we're internally thinking about things like recruiting, we're always looking to tap into populations that might not have traditionally thought of themselves as MUNI operators. And so reaching out to more female candidates is an example of it. And when we're out in community, we often bring some of our female operators, 'cause they can speak to that experience.

This is a snapshot of the current service delivery. We did hit a low in the fiscal year 2019, which ended this June. We are starting to come back up and stabilize, but there is more work to do. And part of this is because it's a moving target. So we have a current deficit of about 230 operators, but every month we lose operators. We lose operators to attrition, although our attrition is relatively stable. We have about eight people, for example, retire from our bus ranks

each month. We also lose people to promotions. One of the things that we're very proud of at MTA is that you can begin as an operator, and go all the way up to be the director of transit, and we've had historically many people that have done that. And we also lose people on the bus side to rail. So they'll start as a bus operator, and then we'll train them on our rail service. We currently--

01:10:32 Michael Sweet

Can you go back to the--what--95.5% of what?

01:10:38 Julie Kirschbaum

Of service hours.

01:10:42 Michael Sweet

So 100% of service hours means that there's a bus driver in every seat for every scheduled run, and they run all day long?

01:10:47 Julie Kirschbaum

Yep.

01:10:48 Michael Sweet

So that's just missed runs. That does--'cause this is very divergent from the on-time numbers we saw earlier.

01:10:53 Julie Kirschbaum

Yes.

01:10:54 Michael Sweet

Okay.

01:10:54 Julie Kirschbaum

And one thing I do talk about is, you know, I--San Francisco is full of overachievers, and, you know, to an overachiever 95% sounds pretty good, you know? That's an A in a lot of cases. But in the case of service delivery, 95% is not an A. It means hundreds of trips are not out there. And what that creates is very lumpy service, so gaps where we wouldn't expect to have them, or crowding where we wouldn't expect to have them. So really what we're trying to get to is 100% of the service out every day, because there are so many other uncertainties that happen in this city. There's congestion. There's delays. We had a car get stuck on the T line at Armstrong this morning, and we couldn't get it off because it was, you know, stuck into the very fabric of the vehicle. So the--we have a lot of challenges in running the system. This is something that is largely under our control. And so getting this problem solved is our very first priority, and it at least levels all of the other challenges that we experience out in the system.

01:12:16 Michael Sweet

What--can you give us industry standard for a comparable system in terms of service delivery?

01:12:25 Julie Kirschbaum

I cannot. I can say that many, many systems in the country are struggling with not having enough operators. In some other places I think that they would be more inclined to reduce the service than perhaps we are in San Francisco, because we don't want to set a precedent for having less service out there. But I--we've been working on a MUNI working group sponsored by the Mayor's office, as well as Supervisor Mandelman and Supervisor Peskin. And we're very fortunate to have experts from around the country supporting that work, and they're all reporting operator challenges.

We do have a plan to address this. We began, as I said, by stopping the bleeding, by starting much larger classes. We went from a 30-person class every two months to a 60-person class every two months. We're now in the process of hiring more trainers, which would allow us to go to a monthly class of about 45 people. So we anticipate that even within the next year we're gonna be able to reduce that backlog by about 80, and then by the first half of 2021 really be at that 100% goal.

This would not have been possible without our partnership with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. One of the things they have done is reduced barriers. I know that that's a big theme of the feedback that I'm hearing from you all, so that partnership has been very valuable. What they are doing is that they are offering a class B permit class, essentially to anybody who is on our eligible list. About a quarter of our new operators are taking advantage of this program, so we know it is filling a key need. And it's been so successful that there's actually now gonna be a City Drive Advisory Board, because other departments, as well as even the private sector, is very interested in tapping into this program.

We're also, because this program is not unique to us, and we are seeing a pattern of just kind of stealing operators from our partners, we are starting to work with our partner agencies, like BART and AC Transit, to try to elevate transit operators as an overall kind of regional recruiting, as well as talk about the kind of job ladders of opportunity that being an operator provides. We're fortunate today to have Roger Marengo here. He's the president of Local 250A, which is our operator union. He did work very hard as part of our contract negotiations to make sure that we have very competitive salaries among the region. But in addition to salaries, really making it easy to apply has been a big part of our success. The next step to that is getting to a point where instead of having a test every two months, we have a continuous test. So you could decide any day, "Hey, this seems like an exciting job opportunity," and come down and apply. And that's a little bit longer process, 'cause it's very different than how we've done any of our testing before, but it is what we're currently working on.

So you guys have been amazingly patient. This is a photo of our last big class. We were really fortunate to have Mayor Breed come and speak to the class. The enthusiasm and the pride that we have at this ceremony I think speaks to how overall at SFMTA we approach our customers. This is--the class is in front. But what you're not seeing behind them is everybody's family that comes to celebrate the fact that they've graduated this 10-week program, which is a rigorous program, as I said. It is, you know, a very difficult job, but one that we're very proud of. And it is not our only challenge, but certainly improving operator hiring is a fundamental piece to reach our equity goals.

01:17:38

Michael Sweet

Thank you. Commissioner Hijazi?

01:17:40

Hala Hijazi

Ms. Kirschbaum, this is an amazing presentation, very thoughtful, very detailed, very informative. If we can also get a copy via email, I think it'd be important to send it to our different stakeholders, including the interfaith community that has a lot of stakeholders, especially the ones that ride MUNI all the time throughout the city. So it'd be good for them to get this type of information on where some of the lines are and where the added services are, and especially as it relates to the equity affairs. Thank you.

01:18:10

Julie Kirschbaum

And we're happy to come and participate in meetings or--and very excited about the potential of a meeting in the Bayview, particularly if we have a chance to do it in an open house style, so that we can really interact with people, get people signed up maybe for some Clipper cards, and talk about in a very hands-on way some of the services that we're hoping to propose as part of our budget process.

01:18:41

Michael Sweet

Ms. Chicuata?

01:18:44

Brittni Chicuata

Chicuata. Thank you.

01:18:45

Michael Sweet

Chicuata.

01:18:46

Brittni Chicuata

I just want to echo the gratitude that Commissioner Hijazi just expressed, and say that, you know, we at the Human Rights Commission would love to help with the information sharing. We want to continue to move forward in partnership, so promoting things like Lifeline and free MUNI and the start pilot on our website, and other ways that we can engage the communities that we're able to reach. I just want to put it out there that we want to move forward in partnership with you on that. And then I wanted to also, well, in that vein, just to say, you know, the customer should never be on the hook for going above and beyond to get information. So even the example of like, "Oh, you can get the 14 if you give us your number first," like, we want to continue to move forward to have front facing information not sign up in order to get information. And also to request--I don't know if this is public information, but to Commissioner Loduca's point, the waiting system for how you determine the fare stop removals or shifting, just so that we understand how disenfranchised or underrepresented populations are considered differently than, say, a new X person in a neighborhood who requests, you know, a change. And then I just wanted to quickly go back to a slide. I don't see a number, but it's the southeast transit improvement slide. And I wanted to touch on this one, because I wanted to be sure that our commissioners are aware that Supervisor Walton earlier this month requested a study on bringing back the 15, which I feel like you kind of alluded to when you talked about this point, and just wanted to get some clarity on how, if at all, you're collaborating with the T.A. on that study, and again, what we might do to help ensure that it's a super public process as far as the feedback that's received about bringing back that bus.

01:20:43

Julie Kirschbaum

We have a meeting scheduled at the end of next week to meet with the T.A., so I think it would be premature for me to talk about that. I do think that there's a real tradeoff to be discussed between mirroring Third Street rather than providing new connectivity that we don't currently have. And I would encourage both the T.A. and Supervisor Walton to engage with us in that area.

01:21:20

Michael Sweet

Any other questions or comments from up here before we go to public comment? Ms. Kirschbaum, I want to thank you as well for you have now stood up twice in front of a tough crowd and answered questions. I will say it seems to me, and I didn't go through the minutes with an eye towards teasing out the questions, but there are certain questions that came up that I don't think were precisely answered, like about WiFi in the tunnel, like about where the next--where we'll--oh, yeah, the new contract on NextBus is, things like that. Were you going to--first of all, you have a copy of the transcript of the last meeting?

01:22:07

Julie Kirschbaum

Yeah, I'm happy to answer any specific questions that you think--

01:22:12

Michael Sweet

I don't remember off the top of my head. Those are--

01:22:13

Julie Kirschbaum

--were missed, but I'll--

01:22:14

Michael Sweet

--two that I remember asking. But I remember, you know, and I know that Commissioner Porth, who isn't here now, asked questions about the drivers and the classes. And I think you got--I'm not sure if you got to all her questions or not, but I guess to the extent that there are specific questions that weren't hit, were you gonna submit any responses or what was your plan?

01:22:41

Julie Kirschbaum

I'm happy to do that however you all see fit. We were--we really made a very broad effort to answer as many of the questions as possible, but some of the specific ones around NextBus and WiFi we can definitely communicate in writing.

01:23:02

Brittini Chicuata

Yeah, if there are additional questions, then Kathy, our commission secretary, can work between the commission and MTA to ensure that all specific questions are answered. Does that sound good?

01:23:13

Michael Sweet

Yeah, that's great. And I want to say not to say your presentation wasn't thorough, and it seems you got a lot in there, and more than, in some instances, more than we asked for. It's got the big picture. It just--it did seem to me like there might've been some things that had come up that didn't get filled in. So we'll--we can work through the commission secretary. And I'll--I'm

about to turn it over to public comment, but what I will say is my understanding that either you yourself, or on behalf of MTA, have expressed a willingness to join us in the community, which is fantastic. I've seen some emails around actually talking about making sure that it fits with your schedule, which we didn't do a great job of doing two weeks ago, and I appreciate your coming here instead of the bus convention or whatever it was. But we appreciate that, and we look forward to continuing to collaborate on this initiative. And with that, I've got two speaker cards. If there's anyone else that has public comment, grab a card over in the corner and you'll get a chance. First is David Pilpel.

01:24:22

David Pilpel

Great. David Pilpel. Nice to see you, Michael. How far back do we go, 40-plus years? Long time. Anyway, nice to see you here. I wanted to touch on two or three points. There was a lot in the presentation, and apparently there's been some good engaged dialogue between the commission and MTA on this. My two major points are about operator hiring and training, and the fact that 5% of service is being missed every day, some of which may be targeted, some of which may be random. I think that there are lots of ways to look at equity. I don't just look at it strictly with a Title VI lens, but I think having that type of service cut that's not planned impacts all communities, and impacts all communities in an unequal and imperfect and inappropriate--

[Audio ends abruptly]