

Central Contra Costa Transit Authority Advisory Committee Report to Board of Directors, December 2023

The ongoing purpose of the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority Advisory Committee (“Advisory Committee”) is to bring feedback to the County Connection Board of Directors reflecting the voices and needs of the communities, riders, and other stakeholders represented by our Advisory Committee members.

The Advisory Committee currently consists of five members, with six seats vacant after the term of the representative from the Moraga district expired in November

November 2023 Advisory Committee Meeting

At the November 14 meeting the Advisory Committee was joined by the new Director of ADA and Specialized Services, John Sanderson, who introduced himself and his role to the committee.

As has been the case in most meetings of the Advisory Committee to date, at the November meeting the Advisory Committee received several informational reports from staff, both embedded within the consent calendar and as separate agenda items. Pranjal Dixit, Manager of Planning, provided a fiscal year 23 performance report for the fixed route system, and Rosa Noya, Manager of Accessible Services, provided a paratransit performance report; both reports were for informational purposes and required no committee action. Director of Marketing Ryan Jones updated the committee on the “one seat regional ride” program and shared the excellent marketing video that Board members had seen at a previous meeting. Committee member Birdwell then provided an update on the travel training program that she directs to facilitate use of the system, particularly among our community of seniors. These informational reports typically do not require any committee action but serve as useful tools to provide context and background information for committee members.

Review of Bylaws/Reporting to Board

At its November meeting the Advisory Committee also held an agendaized discussion about the committee’s role as an advisory body to the Board, using the Advisory Committee bylaws as a guide in the absence of historical precedent. Pursuant to the bylaws, the Advisory Committee has both an advisory role and an information dissemination role, and the bylaws list specific projects on which the Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the Board. Working with staff, we will try to ensure that these projects come before the Advisory Committee for input when appropriate. The bylaws also provide some limited specific responsibilities for the Advisory Committee in carrying out its mandate, including appointing a member to represent the Advisory Committee on the Contra Costa Paratransit Coordinating Council (PCC). Staff is researching the requirements for appointment to the PCC, and the Advisory Committee will appoint its representative as soon as it is feasible to do so.

Advisory Committee Vacancies

As noted above, with the appointments to the Advisory Committee so far this year we currently have six vacancies after the term of Committee member Yu from Moraga expired in November. This creates another open seat to join the ongoing vacancies for the districts of Danville, Orinda, Clayton, Lafayette and San Ramon; Filling these vacancies would bring our Advisory Committee to a full roster of eleven members, and we respectfully request that the Board help facilitate appointments of members from those jurisdictions.

When recruiting new members, please consider constituents who are potential or actual local riders, closely connected with their communities, and who can bring diverse perspectives and viewpoints to the advisory committee, particularly viewpoints from underrepresented and marginalized populations. The recent appointees bring a valuable new perspective and a breadth of practical and professional experience to the Advisory Committee, and we hope that future appointees will do the same. We also encourage each Board member to connect directly with the advisory committee member serving the same jurisdiction.

Joint Meeting With Board/Role of Advisory Committee

Even in our current composition with numerous vacancies, this year's appointments have brought valuable new energy and experience to the Advisory Committee, which is well positioned to assume a more impactful role in County Connection governance. As noted above, we respectfully seek guidance from the Board about how the Advisory Committee can be most useful in the process and whether we can establish more systematized avenues for feedback and collaboration. Earlier this year General Manager Churchill suggested a joint Board/Advisory Committee meeting in the future, and this issue was raised for discussion during the July 11 Advisory Committee meeting. All committee members in attendance supported the idea, and a joint meeting could provide Advisory Committee members with valuable insight into the type of work done by the Board, and would also be a natural opportunity for the Board to provide Advisory Committee members with guidance about how we can best inform the governance process.

Finally, on a holiday note, the undersigned attended the Walnut Creek holiday "parade of lights" with County Connection staff participating in the parade in a festively decorated trolley. It was a wonderful community event to showcase County Connection's services to the community.

Our next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Ian McLaughlin, Chair