

STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 28, 2026
TO: Sacramento Regional Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Blanca Araujo, Senior VP, Operations
SUBJ: MOBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 20, 2026

RECOMMENDATION

No Recommendation - For Information Only.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The in-person/Zoom meeting was called to order at **2:30 p.m.**

Introduction of Council Members and Staff: Charles Johnson, Jeff Thom, Frank Trujillo, Gene Lozano, Helen O'Connell, Pam Flohr, German Ayon, Melissa Bachrach, Joseph Wilson, Dyanne Olafson, Rick Hodgkins, Doris Hernandez-Morales

Absent: None.

SacRT Staff: Priscilla Vargas, Henry Li, Austin Greiner, Blanca Araujo, Jamie Poole-Canevari, Holly Martinez, Natasha Liu, Shelly Valenton, Casey Courtright, Lisa Hinz, Sam Feigelman, George Kirbyson, Vincent Beatty, Charity Oakley, Alberta DeAnda, Brian Griggs, Adam Green,

Guests: Caleb Hart, Jack Nordman, Dustin Johnson, Miguel Pena, Teresa McDonald, Mike Cisneros, Jeffrey Tardaguila, Barbara Stanton, Austin Benavidez, Leslie Thom, Daniele Bourne, Lea Swanson, Lea Poquerusse, Lisa Hooks

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

ACTION: Chair Johnson called for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2026, meeting. Mr. Lozano moved; Ms. Flohr seconded; Mr. Thom abstained; the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Pena expressed concern about funding for SacRT GO.

CHAIR REPORT

A. GM Update (Henry Li, SacRT General Manager)

Mr. Li thanked the MAC for facilitating public feedback. He stated that he met with Board Chair Singh-Allen and the MAC Executive Committee the day prior. He addressed the challenges and progress made in implementing the QRyde scheduling system and said staff continue to meet with QRyde to make improvements. SacRT also improves service through staff training. Last fiscal year, SacRT GO provided over 402,000 trips, exceeding pre-pandemic ridership, and growth continues. On-Time Performance has been nearly 88% overall. There have been challenges in obtaining local funding for SacRT GO, with a recent citizen initiative to receive \$18 million not getting enough signatures, though SacRT has successfully raised \$1.5 billion in the last six years, which has supported light rail and SacRT GO. Staff continually work to improve On-Time Performance, technology usage, public communication, and accountability. Staff continue to incorporate feedback from the MAC and public.

Mr. Hodgkins asked if SacRT could advertise for funding on buses. Mr. Li said staff will consider advertisement. Ms. O'Connell discussed funding and compensation for SacRT GO operators. Mr. Li said SacRT negotiates with unions and pays GO operators 20% better than in other cities adjusted for cost of living. He also discussed pensions and compensation. Mr. Pena asked how many signatures were needed for the local initiative, and suggested advertising to promote acceptance of buses by car drivers. Mr. Li said this is a good idea and highlighted SacRT's free student ridership and said 30,000 signatures for the initiative were needed and SacRT was short by 3,000 to 4,000.

OLD BUSINESS

A. SacRT Budget Update (Casey Courtright, Director, Management & Budget)

Mr. Courtright reported that SacRT's Board approved a balanced FY27 operating budget of about \$278 million, reflecting a roughly 4% increase in both revenues and expenses compared to FY26. He noted that SacRT maintained full pre-pandemic service without reductions, supported strategic priorities, and relied on one-time state funding and flexible federal funds while avoiding fare or staffing changes. Mr. Courtright explained that about 77% of the budget supports operations, with major cost for drivers including bus operations, insurance and liability, security, fuel, and vehicle parts, and that nearly 70% of total spending goes to salaries and benefits. He also outlined the year-round budget development process, from Fall priority setting through Spring public review and final board adoption. Mr. Thom asked for a comparison of the SacRT GO budgets in FY26 and FY27. Mr. Courtright will find the numbers but stated that GO expenses have increased at a slightly higher rate than other services. Mr. Lozano requested another budget presentation before budget adoption so the MAC can give feedback. Mr. Courtright said this will be in December or January. Mr. Hodgkins asked about the ridership decrease for college students. Mr. Courtright said he will get the numbers before the next MAC

meeting, but that K-12 ridership has increased rather than college student ridership decreasing.

B. Supplemental Services Transition Update and Via Presentation (Blanca Araujo, Senior VP, Operations, Charity Oakley, Director, Bus Operations, Daniele Bourne, Via)

Ms. Araujo reported that the contract for Via was adopted at the last Board meeting and that a contract to purchase more 40-foot buses will be reviewed at the next Board meeting. There will be an opportunity for the MAC to view the bus and provide feedback before the final production meeting for Gillig. Ms. Bourne introduced Via staff. Ms. Poquerusse provided an overview on driver recruitment, describing Via's comprehensive onboarding process, including background checks and in-person evaluations of English proficiency and extensive training before any driver is approved for SacRT GO service. Driver training and evaluation are refreshed annually, and drivers track their performance on individual dashboards. Ms. Swanson explained Via's SacRT GO Overflow Certification Program, highlighting its emphasis on customer service, disability awareness, ADA compliance, door-to-door support, and specialized communication techniques such as the "WALL" method (watch, ask, listen, learn). She described the hands-on components of driver training, including wheelchair and mobility-device securement, safe boarding and alignment, and exercises that help drivers understand how vehicle movements feel to passengers seated in wheelchairs. She also reviewed service-animal protocols, communication guidance for riders with different disabilities, and statistically supported safety considerations for proper securement and careful driving.

Ms. O'Connell asked if securement addresses gurneys, shopping carts, and walkers. Mr. Hart said yes. Mr. Hodgkins asked about training for ASL and service animals. Ms. Poquerusse said drivers are not taught ASL, and Ms. Bourne explained communication protocols. Mr. Lozano asked if riders could participate in driver training, raised concerns about securement, and suggested training on Sacramento State's campus. Ms. Swanson explained Via's current organizational partnerships for training. Mr. Lozano said this should be discussed further.

C. S700 LRV Post Launch Update (Vincent Beatty, AVP, Operations, George Kirbyson, Director, Light Rail Maintenance)

The item was tabled.

D. Proposed Policy for Cart and Wagon use on SacRT vehicles (Priscilla Vargas, ADA Compliance Officer)

The item was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Mystery Rider RFQ Update (Jamie Poole Canevari, Director, Customer Satisfaction, Priscilla Vargas, ADA Compliance Officer)

The item was tabled.

**OTHER BUSINESS
ANNOUNCEMENTS
ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.