

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

MARCH 12, 2015, 5:30PM-7:00PM
MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM SUITE#830

PTAB PRESENT:

Kevin Jackson
Andrew Ooms
Tim Sullivan
Carlette Mack
Stephanie Cornwell-George

STAFF:

Sandy Hansen
Christine Sondej
Abul Hassan
Judy Tymick

Guests:

Joe Pichler Deb Stone
Lenora Morford Leigh Anne Kitch
Scott Meyer
Sam Moore
Don Swanson
Elinor Harrington

Absent:

Jay Dulany
Jed Smith

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Co-Chairperson Carlette Mack.

II. ROLL CALL, INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS, STAFF, AND GUESTS

After roll call and introduction of guests, quorum was present.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tim moved to approve the agenda and Andrew seconded. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tim moved to approve the minutes for February 12, 2015. Kevin seconded. Minutes for February 2015 were approved unanimously.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Scott Meyer stated that he rides the Route # 102 daily. He expressed frustration that the sign 'final scope' posted on the bus for June 2015 is unclear regarding the actual changes for Route # 102 and no mention of eliminating a trip was discussed prior to the new information. Scott feels that there is a lack of communication from the Transit department to provide definitive service times to the public and the lack of opportunity to comment about an eliminated trip.

Christine stated that the proposal went out to the public for comments the month of February and Community Councils were informed while PTAB was an active part of the process. She stated that compromises were discussed as public comments and public testimony steered conversation to alternative solutions. The PTAB voted in favor of support at the February meeting.

Joe Pichler mentioned that the businesses at the Downtown Transit Center are concerned about the amount of crime that goes on there and talk of closing their business because of it. He stated that the security service at the Transit Center is poor and he said that tourists won't ride the bus because they would be fearful to wait in the facility.

Sam Moore thanked Transit for providing service change proposals and public comment in multiple formats.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Update on the Downtown Transit Center

Judy Tymick, Customer Service Manager, talked about a meeting that was attended by Jed, Carlette, Judy and Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA) regarding poor behaviors at the Downtown Transit Center. Judy stated that she and Lance assured ACDA that transit would retain usage of the space in the long term future. She stated that all parties involved agreed that there were issues to be addressed for the facility to work for all.

Carlette stated that she invited someone that specializes in crime prevention based on facility makeup and usage. The specialist walked through the Transit Center and will provide recommendations to discourage unlawful activities based on the dynamics of the facility. Carlette observed that the Transit Center is a mixed use facility with retail space, social services and transit which is a unique mix of customer base and social interactions.

Kevin asked if security was discussed.

Judy affirmed that defining security duties and customer behavior boundaries were identified. She also discussed cleaning requirements at the facility.

Stephanie mentioned that she had contacted the Anchorage Police for reporting unlawful activities outside of the Transit Center facility.

Tim stated that the Transit Center patron activities are an ongoing issue and as security guards have defined boundaries, it can only get better.

VII. New Business

a. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Changes

Judy stated that Medicare and Medicaid regulation changes were released and reviewed by Transit staff. She accepts the changes and feels that Transit AnchorRIDES program is meeting the requirements without policy adjustments.

Stephanie inquired about the new regulations and proposal out for review about waivers and eligibility.

Judy said that the new regulations should not impact the current service at AnchorRIDES, but they could affect smaller systems that may need to adjust their program guidelines. She stated that if the waiver program allows more users, transit would be fine with it.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

a. June Service Changes Final Scope

Christine outlined the service change proposal, public comments received and discussions with PTAB to finalize the June 2015 service change. She stated that the final scope signs placed on buses describe the realignment to the route # 8 serving Glenn Square Mall on Mountain View Drive and the elimination of individual trips for Route # 13, Route # 36, Route #45, and Route #102. She stated that the proposed realignment of Route # 36 in the Northwood area and Route # 102 in Peters Creek would not be implemented. The Route 102's 4:33pm trip to Eagle River, however, would be eliminated (due to low ridership numbers) and the remainder of the Route 102 trips would be adjusted to arrive and depart closer to typical work hours as suggested by public comments received during the public comment period. Christine also stated that Route # 45 would lose two trips at 11:20am and 11:30am, creating 30 minute service to noon and then 20 minute intervals until 4 p.m., with an additional outbound trip at 6:45pm to ease full buses in the evening.

Judy added that there was a meeting in Eagle River March 10th regarding Eagle River Connect service and schedules. The proposal is to add a trip and possibly adjust a few of the departure times. She said she is looking into more usage for the general public and including the service in the Google trip planner.

Andrew asked if the cuts to Route # 45 were specifically to continue to serve the route #36 Northwood area. Christine stated that service was considered as a whole, and that to stay in budget with the proposed changes this was identified as an option.

Andrew stated that it was unfortunate that the most used route was cut to support inefficiencies in the lowest performing route. Christine cautioned that if future marketing and promotion of route # 36 does not increase productivity, it would likely be on the list for realignment next year.

b. Operations Division Update

Abul Hassan, Operations Superintendent, provided handouts of a draft memorandum to bus operators clarifying specific customer encounters and expectations. He provided a sample of schedule adherence expectations for operators on probation that were increased from 65% on time to 75% on time and with the goal of all operators to be above 80% on time. Abul stated that drivers are required to attend safety meetings as part of their ongoing training. He provided an outline of an eight hour training class he is evaluating for all drivers as a refresher to cover many subjects.

Carlette asked about the memo which recommends the drivers ask passengers that appear inebriated; 'where are they trying to go?'

Abul stated that drivers asked for a defined clarity of communications between passenger and bus operator. He suggests that passengers boarding at the transit centers should be able to identify a destination as opposed to just riding the bus.

c. Title VI Program Update

Christine provided a copy of the draft 'Title VI Report for Capital and Operating Assistance 2015' to PTAB members for review. She stated that FTA requires a report every three years detailing how we meet the requirements of the Civil Rights Act which provides that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Christine stated that People Mover posts these rights on every bus, at the transit center, and on the website, as well as how to file a discrimination complaint and the investigation process. She stated that public transit is also required to adhere to service standards to ensure that individuals are not discriminated against in the provision of bus service, vehicles, facility location and transit amenities.

Christine stated that the draft Title VI report will be posted on the website and open to public comments until April 2 at 5PM. The opportunity for comment was also posted on the buses and on social media.

Andrew asked if People Mover is required to offer announcements on board buses be spoken in other languages.

Christine stated that she did not believe there was a specific requirement to provide translated announcements on board buses, and that part of the LEP plan is for a transit agency to analyze the exposure and importance of transit to LEP individuals in the community, and then to identify the best and most efficient methods of communicating with LEP individuals in that community. Christine stated using the survey revealed 1.4% of population communicated in Tagalog and 1.2% communicated in Spanish as part of our customer base.

d. Ridership Report YTD February 2015

Judy reminded PTAB members about the Anchorage School District (ASD) U-Pass East High Pilot program. She stated that since the start of the program in August 2014, ridership has exceeded their expectations and a proposal for more schools to join the program is under consideration by ASD.

Elinor Harrington, Deb Stone and Leigh Ann Kitch, representatives of VRide, the contractor of the Van Pool program, were available to answer questions about the program.

Tim asked about the current numbers of van pools and where they serve.

Elinor stated that they currently have 66 van pools serving 841 people with 90% of van pools traveling into Anchorage for commuters. She stated that three groups travel to Girdwood and many groups travel onto JBER military installation. The wait list is at 200 individuals due to limited vehicles and matching.

BOARD COMMENT

Andrew thanked Public Transportation for providing a bus during the Library event. He said that his daughter liked sitting in the bus.

Carlette thanked Transit for including Covenant House in the video promoting 'Bus Driver Appreciation' day.

Kevin is hopeful for solutions to resolve Downtown Transit Center issues.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35PM

Next Meeting Date:

Next Tentative Meeting items:

- a. PTAB regular meeting: April 9, 2015 Joint meeting in Eagle River
- b. PTAB regular meeting: May 14, 2015 (TBD location)
- c. Summer off – no scheduled meeting until August 13, 2015