

Public Transit Advisory Board
April 11, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
MAYORS CONFERENCE ROOM (#830), CITY HALL

PTAB PRESENT:

Andrew Ooms
Jennifer Ham
Genevieve Mina
Elijah Haines
Chelsea Ward-Waller
Dawn Groth

CITIZENS PRESENT:

W. Ludden
Jayrelle Rosset
Alberta Lippit
Betty Sanchez
Danel D.
Donna Reief
Sydella Reidi

Albert Edenshaw
Patricia Olsen
Linda Larson
C. Kamie
Kristian Erickson
Gretchen Wehmhoff
S. Bart

Phillip Nalikak
Tammy Tanape
Paula C. Newman

STAFF:

Jamie Acton
Bart Rudolph
Nicholas Abugel
Wes Renfrew
Christine Schuette
Allison Gutacker
Whitney Tillman
Jesse Ferman
Paris Butler

Hakako Thompson
Barabara Roberts
Karen Carson
Kim Ansaksuk
Alan Rice
Jim Bell
Georgine B.
B. Wilke
Shanon Moore
Antonia Evan

Sean P. Ryan
Kim M.
Ephim Kanluck
Joshua Williams
Wendy Williams
Samuel Williams
Ezhiel Williams
Nehemian Williams
Ushmael Prado
Joseph Prado

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Andrew Ooms called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

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

Mr. Andrew Ooms, Ms. Jennifer Ham, Ms. Genevieve Mina, Mr. Elijah Haines, Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller and **Ms. Dawn Groth** were present. **Mr. Doug Miller** had an excused absence. After roll call, a quorum was present.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

An announcement was made by **Mr. Andrew Ooms** to those in attendance that there would be a public comment period in which those wishing to make comments would be allowed two minutes each. Comments would also be accepted after any informational item. Comments would be accepted both during the public comment period and during the informational item period so long as the comment made during the informational period related to that item.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Andrew Ooms moved to strike introductions from the agenda. **Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller** seconded. Introductions were struck from the April 11, 2019 Agenda. **Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller** moved to approve the April 11, 2019 agenda. **Ms. Genevieve Mina** seconded. The agenda was then unanimously approved.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Jennifer Ham moved to add Ms. Gretchen Wehmhoff as a citizen present to the March 14 minutes. It was noted that Ms. Gretchen Wehmhoff was present at the March 14, 2019 PTAB meeting. The March 14, 2019 minutes were unanimously approved.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Lucy – Stated that she is an advocate for people with disabilities regarding transportation. She added that people with disabilities have trouble getting home from work at night. She stated that if a disabled person works late, a caregiver would have to pick them up from work. She asked why People Mover buses don't run 24 hours a day.

Hakako Thompson – Stated that she wanted a bus route to go on base (Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson). Specifically, to the PX (Post Exchange). She stated that there were a lot of older veterans who live off base and they would benefit from a fixed route to this location.

Kristian Erickson – Stated that he wanted to compliment the drivers. He noted that they almost always pull up to the curb and kneel the bus to make boarding easier. He uses a cane and appreciates the act. He also stated that he does not think senior citizens need free rides on Wednesdays.

Allen Rice – Stated that he agreed with everything Mr. Erickson stated except that he supports free senior citizen rides on Wednesdays. He explained that the program helps low income seniors get around Anchorage and probably helps with increasing ridership in general.

Karen Carson – Stated that she generally uses the bus on Wednesdays for errands and appreciates the program. She asked about the pending July 1, 2019 service change. Specifically, that if she took route 40 to the airport, would she then be able to transfer to the 65 to get to Dimond Center. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** replied that she would be able to.

Sean Ryan – Stated that he is currently doing volunteer work. He stated that he noticed that there is a sign on the bus that states “no fare no ride.”

Linda Larson – Stated that there seems to be a lot of new bus drivers. She also stated that she would appreciate it if more drivers would look in their rear-view mirror to see if there are any additional people approaching the bus from behind looking to board.

Carl Kancir – Stated that he wanted to know the purpose/function of the PTAB board. **Mr. Andrew Ooams** explained that the PTAB is an advisory board which advises the Assembly and the Mayor on transit related topics. Mr. Kancir also stated that he was disturbed by the 2017 service change. Specifically, he is frustrated that some areas received more service while others had service completely removed.

Patricia Olson – stated that she has been riding the bus for 3 years. She asked how much time a person has to report an injury. **Mr. Will Brown** replied that it would be prudent to report an injury as soon as possible given that video recordings on the buses are retained on average between 3–5 days. However, an individual can always report an injury later. Ms. Olson also asked if there were a lot of complaints about the new plastic 30-day passes. **Mr. Will Brown** replied that there was a lot of fraud. Specifically, people would wash the back of a pass and then try to sell them. The passes now turn yellow if they get wet to indicate fraud.

Gretchen Wehmhoff – Stated that she wanted to give a report on the Assembly. **Mr. Ooams** agreed that she could give a report. Ms. Wehmhoff stated that the Assembly had postponed the deregulation of the cab industry in Anchorage. She then asked if the PTAB meeting minutes were online. **Mr. Nicholas Abugel** replied that the meeting minutes and agendas are available on the PTAB webpage. Ms. Wehmhoff also stated that there is a possibility that the Transit Center will be moved or reconstructed.

Public comment was closed at 5:45 p.m.

VII. BUSINESS / INFORMATION ITEMS

a. Service Change Proposal with Public Comment Opportunity

Mr. Bart Rudolph stated that every year People Mover does a service change, and this year is no different. Every service change, People Mover looks for efficiencies in the system. Changes could include adjustments to route timetables, or possibly route running times, in order to make better connections, or other minor adjustments. Basically, anything that does not require a capital improvement or major investment. People Mover is currently proposing five things, all of which are based on public comment People Mover received from Transit on the Move (TOTM) efforts:

1. People Mover is bringing the neighborhood route drivers in-house. These drivers are currently employed by a contractor. In order to bring all these drivers in-house, the schedule has been reworked.
2. Route 40 currently goes to the airport and has service until 2am. People Mover is proposing to trim that service to midnight, reason being that all other routes end at midnight and there is very low ridership past midnight on route 40.
3. Route 55 currently operates every hour to every half hour; People Mover is proposing to change route 55's frequency to every half hour. In addition, route 55 currently has very high productivity which indicates that it can sometimes overcrowd. All this all means that route 55 could benefit from a higher frequency of service. Finally, People Mover is proposing that it goes to Alaska Native Medical Center.
4. Route 65 currently ends at Spenard and Wisconsin. People Mover is proposing to route it to the airport and make it a loop.
5. The other proposal is route 91. Specifically, adding more trips in the morning and evening. Currently, there are two trips in the morning and two trips in the evening. People Mover is proposing widening that out to six trips in the morning and six trips in the evening to give riders more flexibility when planning their trips.

Finally, People Mover is proposing to match Saturday and Sunday service, meaning that they would have the same schedule.

Those are the proposed changes that People Mover would like comments for. **Ms. Jamie Acton** added that this is all happening without additional funding. Any additional service would require Assembly action which would happen after TOTM is complete and has Assembly approval. **Mr. Andrew Ooms** opened this topic for public comment.

Kimberly – Stated that she had a question: “Lots of comments have been about bringing back a route to go to the Loussac Library. Was that not considered in this service change?” **Mr. Bart Rudolph** replied that this service change was limited to working within People Mover’s current budget; any additional routes would be considered during the TOTM process and future funding.

Unknown – Stated the following question: “In terms of adding new trips to this route, how many additional riders are expected to use these additional trips and how does it compare to the same sort of investment on an additional route?” **Mr. Rudolph** replied that People Mover never projects riders for a service change because it is very hard to do. He continued that route 91 is a small bus and can’t interline with another route at the Dimond Center. So People Mover can afford one driver on the route 91 given that it fits with a driver work schedule and adding another employee would push the route over budget.

Sean Ryan – Stated that transferability has been a problem for him. He also stated that he’d rather see the frequent routes arrive every 20 minutes rather than 15. He stated that perhaps there could be more service later into the day if this is done. He is also concerned about extending route 55 to ANMC because it is already a long route.

Jim Bell – Stated that he would like route 55 to have extended hours and more frequent service and that it connect to route 10 in a better way in the morning and evening.

Allen Rice – Stated that he hopes that People Mover staff consider sustainability in respect to its affordability, considering cuts going on to other services in the state.

Mr. Andrew Ooms closed public comment and opened for board comment.

Ms. Dawn Groth stated that she thinks everything is looking pretty good.

Ms. Jennifer Ham asked for clarification about the trip time changing. **Mr. Rudolph** replied that People Mover typically looks at transfers and running times. Some routes will also dwell or sit at a stop for a period of time because it may be running ahead of schedule. If that’s the case for a route, some time may be cut to reduce any dwell time.

Mr. Elijah Haines stated that he liked the transfer from 40 to 65, as it is lot safer to transfer at the airport. **Mr. Haines** asked if pedestrian safety concerns played into this route realignment. **Mr. Rudolph** replied that the added benefit of a safer transfer for pedestrians was a bonus. However, it was not the defining reason for the change.

Mr. Andrew Ooms stated that he was pretty enthusiastic about the pending changes. He stated that he is glad to hear the 55 needs more service. He also asked if it was feasible to make a new route on Old Seward. **Mr. Rudolph** replied that all the bus stops were removed on Old Seward. He added that a decision like that would be left to TOTM.

Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller stated that everything looked good.

- b. Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan
 - i. **Ms. Jamie Acton** stated that the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan is a document that was handed to her when she started at transit in 2009 and since then she has carried it with her through her carrier. Essentially, the document is a plan to help guide federal funding. It focuses on people with disabilities, seniors and low income populations as well as English as a second language individuals. Basically, it has a pot of money associated with it intended to enhance mobility for all these groups. It could also be considered a blueprint to help coordinate efforts outside of the public transportation department that may have transportation options available. The plan has gone through years long process and has developed a few focus areas: 1. Working together as a community. How can we better work together to enhance the mobility of these populations? 2. Planning and building an inclusive network. How do we provide better access to people with disabilities? 3. Growing and sharing funding for human services. There is very limited funding for agencies outside of People Mover and AnchorRIDES. This plan went before the Technical Advisory Board for comment in March and was moved forward to the policy committee and they recommended approval at the last meeting. So the next step is to wrap up the public comments. **Mr. Andrew Ooms** stated that on page 34 PTAB is referenced; he asked **Ms. Acton** what PTAB's role in this plan would be. **Ms. Acton** replied that they were looking for groups to spearhead this plan. Ms. Acton believes that the PTAB's role could be through resolutions supporting decisions made by TOTM.
- c. PTAB Summer Schedule
 - i. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** stated that unofficially this board has not met in the summer. He recommended meeting in the summer months. **Mr. Elijah Haines** moved to have the meetings in the summer. **Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller** seconded.
- d. PTAB Lunch & Learn Topics / Transit 101 Upcoming Meetings
 - i. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** asked if there was interest from the PTAB to attend a transit 101 class/session in-between the PTAB meeting to better inform them how transit operations work, where funding comes from, etc. The board unanimously agreed that a transit 101 class would be beneficial.
- e. TOTM Update / Upcoming May Public Meetings
 - i. **Mr. Bart Rudolph** stated that this would be a good time to go over why service was removed from West Anchorage/Turnagain. **Mr. Rudolph** continued that People Mover is developing a plan, TOTM, where it is looking at ways to bring back service or provide service in a different way in that area. **Ms. Christine Schuette** stated that the TOTM process started back in February 2019 where the public was asked for feedback about what's working and what's not in the system. Currently, TOTM is working on proposals to present in May. These proposals represent the feedback that was received from earlier information gathering sessions. This compiled list will be used to decide what to do in the future pending budget constraints.
- f. Ridership Update
 - i. **Mr. Nicholas Abugel** reported that average weekday ridership is up 3.3%, average Saturday ridership is up 9.3%, and average Sunday ridership is up 15.3%. This data is in comparison to March of last year (2018).

VIII. NEXT PTAB MEETING DATE

Next Meeting Date: May 9, 2019, 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. (Location TBD)

Comments:

Ms. Jennifer Ham – Stated that she is excited that the hours on Sundays are being expanded.

Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller – Stated that she wanted to compliment a bus driver. She stated that she was on an IB 30 on March 28th at 5:15 PM. Bus driver Andria handled a disturbance on the bus very well. Ms. Ward-Waller added that she is excited about all the changes going on.

Ms. Genevieve Mina – Stated that she is very happy with all the changes going on, especially with the expanded hours on the weekend. She also asked if TOTM was going to study the financial accessibility of the fares. **Mr. Rudolph** replied that People Mover should perform a study to better understand People Mover's fare structure. With that, any changes in People Mover's fare structure would require Assembly action.

Ms. Dawn Groth – Stated that the State of Alaska has no smoking signs available. She would be happy to provide People Mover with those signs upon request.

Mr. Elijah Haines – Stated that the public comment period is open until the 20th for the July 1, 2019 service change. He advised that if someone had a comment to leave it before the close.

Mr. Andrew Ooms – Noted that the UAA UPASS program is 20 years old. He also added that there are two places for people with disabilities on the PTAB.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.