

Public Transit Advisory Board
February 11, 2016, 5:30pm-7:00pm
MAYOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM SUITE#830

PTAB PRESENT:

Carlette Mack
David Levy
Jed Smith
Andrew Ooms
Samuel Moore
Felix Rivera
Kevin Jackson

STAFF:

Ryan Yelle
Michelle Felix
Bart Rudolph
Will Brown
Mike Lowery
Collin Hodges

Excused:

Jay Dulany

Citizens Present:

Mark Hill
Debi Stone
Shirley Smith

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:31pm by Chairman Jed Smith.

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

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

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

An announcement was made to those attending by Chairman Smith that there will be a public comment period in which those wishing to make comments will be allowed two minutes.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Planning Manager Bart Rudolph made a request to amend the agenda by moving "Anchorage Talks Transit" from Information Item 8d. to Business Item 7c. This was done in case board action was needed on the item. Mr. Moore moved to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Mack seconded the motion. The agenda was passed unanimously.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Levy moved to approve the minutes from January 14, 2016. Mr. Moore seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Shirley Smith – Ms. Smith is a frequent user of the People Mover system and expressed some concern for the unaccommodating demeanor that some bus operators have shown her. Ms. Smith uses the assistance of a walker, and needs the loading ramp to be lowered each time she boards and alights the bus. She feels that the drivers tend to think of her requests as a nuisance and would like operators to be more welcoming to her.

Hans Thompson – Mr. Thompson from Code for Anchorage provided a brief update on an app they are working on that will provide real-time route information to users. Mr. Thompson

also stated that there are currently around 300 unique users of the SMS texting tool Code for Anchorage released in December of 2015. That number has been steadily increasing.

Mr. Levy asked Mr. Thompson about how this app was developed and what their relationship is with the municipality's IT department. Mr. Thompson stated that there is a representative from the MUNI IT department that is attending the Code for Anchorage meetings on a regular basis, and that Code for Anchorage is also currently working with PTD marketing staff to promote the SMS app.

VII. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Board Subcommittee Creation & Assignments – Mr. Rudolph provided a brief overview behind the creation of three different board subcommittees that would handle issues on Planning, Marketing, and Finance/Administration at the PTD. The goal of these committees would be for them to convene in between the monthly meetings and to provide status reports to all board members as needed.

Chairman Smith stated that he had contacted board members to survey interest in the three separate committees. Afterwards, Chairman Smith assigned members to committees as follows: Planning – Chairman Smith, Andrew Ooms, and Kevin Jackson; Marketing – Carlette Mack, Sam Moore, and TBD; Finance/Administration – Jay Dulany, Felix Rivera, and David Levy. Chairman Smith would like each of these committees to meet once before the March 10th meeting, so they can determine their meeting frequency and outline their responsibilities and interests.

- b. Muldoon Transit Hub Alternatives Study – Mr. Rudolph gave a presentation on the background and findings of the Muldoon Transit Hub Alternatives Study that was done by Kinney Engineering. The short term changes to this transit hub that have already been completed include decommissioning stop #1995 and moving its operations to stops #1084 and #355. This was done in an effort to reduce the amount of illegal street crossings that were occurring on Muldoon Rd. and to place a signaled cross walk in between the three major transit stops that make up this hub.

Mr. Rudolph provided brief overviews to the board of the four major considerations for alternatives at the Muldoon Transit Hub; as well as the pros and cons to each alternative. Mr. Rudolph is seeking comments on each alternative from the board within two weeks.

Mr. Levy asked Mr. Rudolph about any alternatives that would include moving the Muldoon Transit Hub away from its current location to a location that could be obtained at a lower cost. Mr. Rudolph responded by going over the downsides of relocating a transit hub away from the major destinations that are present near the current transit hub.

Mr. Rudolph stated that this study will be released to other departments in the MUNI for review, but currently there is no additional funding for this project to move into a design study.

- c. Anchorage Talks Transit – Mr. Hodges gave some background of Anchorage Talks Transit to the board and the direction the project is taking. A community stakeholder meeting will be taking place on May 5th to seek feedback from community members on what changes can be made to the People Mover system that will best serve the

Municipality. Mr. Hodges stated the first goal of this project is to obtain as much public feedback as possible. Mr. Hodges strongly encouraged board members to promote this project.

Ms. Mack wanted some clarification on when the meeting on May 5th would be taking place. Mr. Moore stressed the importance of ensuring the venue for this meeting would be transit accessible. Mr. Hodges responded by stating that the meeting would take place in the evening, and would be held at a location that was accessible from multiple transit routes.

Mr. Levy expressed concern that improving the image of People Mover will start at the Downtown Transit Center, and may be dependent upon the facility's timeline for remodel.

Mr. Moore expressed concern that the stakeholders that will be invited to the May 5th meeting will not use the system regardless of what changes are going to be made. Mr. Hodges responding by stating PTD staff will be approaching this meeting with the stance that everyone is a potential transit user, and PTD staff will be looking at growing our user base and not simply focusing on the needs of current riders. Mr. Hodges goals include communicating the benefits of transit for both users and non-users.

Mr. Levy agreed with Mr. Moore; stating that there is a large base of support for transit as a concept in Anchorage, but few actually use the system.

Mr. Hodges also provided an overview of PTD staff efforts at the Anchorage Transportation Fair and the results of public comments that were submitted.

VIII. STAFF INFORMATION & UPDATES

- a. January 2016 Ridership Report – Mr. Yelle provided each board member with a copy of the January 2016 Ridership Report. He drew attention to the fact that even though overall ridership is still down when compared to previous years, the rate of ridership decline is the lowest it has been in three years.

Mr. Levy asked if there was a way to track our regular riders to see which stops and routes they are using on a daily basis. Mr. Yelle responded by stating that that type of analysis is only possible if a rider uses a smartcard because each smartcard has a unique ID number that is tied to the user. Also, that type of analysis would be time intensive because data would need to be individually pulled for each active smartcard. PTD staff are hoping that with improvements to our onboard technology, these types of analyses will be easier to accomplish in the future.

- b. Downtown Transit Center – Ms. Felix provided details on the design status of the Downtown Transit Center remodel. PTD staff have been attending weekly meetings with RIM Architects and ACDA staff to finalize a footprint for the Customer Service Office at the Downtown Transit Center.

Ms. Felix stated that both APD and transit center security staff have increased their patrols of the facility and it appears that the number of negative incidents has decreased as a result. Ms. Mack was concerned that with the increase in security at the facility, that the issues seen at the transit center may be pushed to local businesses. Ms. Felix stated that ACDA has established a subcommittee that will be addressing this issue.

Mr. Rivera stated that there has been an increase in the presence of vagrants in front of City Hall as a result of increased security at the transit center and there have been almost daily talks with the Mayor and his staff on how to address this issue.

- c. Bus Security Camera Status – Mr. Rudolph provided a background overview of how the cameras are operated and the hurdles that are faced to maintain them. Ensuring proper maintenance of on-board surveillance systems requires an individual with an IT background in addition to being able to service the bus. The PTD does not currently have staff available that can fill this role in a full-time capacity, but are pursuing the hire of staff to fulfill this role. Also, PTD staff have added camera maintenance to the preventative maintenance schedule.

Mr. Levy asked for clarification on how data is recorded from the cameras and what timeframe the cameras record. Mr. Lowery provided details on the hard-drives that the cameras are connected to and that they are recording when the bus is running.

- d. Board Vacancy Appointment Status – Mr. Rudolph said that the mayor’s office is in the process of selecting a candidate to fill the current vacancy on the board. They are looking into utilizing someone from the youth commission.
- e. Staff Reports – Mr. Rudolph presented each board member with the “Status of the System” report from AMATS for their review.

IX. BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Rivera would like to help with outreach efforts to help increase ridership from Alaska Pacific University.

Mr. Moore encouraged board members to attend the AMATS Pedestrian & Bike Safety Committee meeting.

Mr. Levy expressed gratitude to the Chairman for his leadership and commended him for his hard work.

Mr. Ooms informed the board on his recent travel to Minneapolis for a conference regarding Transportation options. While at the conference he spoke with a number of employees from various transit agencies who were struggling to collect data on bike usage and also providing bike racks for every bus. Mr. Ooms was pleased to be able to say that the People Mover system both collects data on bike usage, and also has bike racks on every bus.

Ms. Mack commented on the importance of not disconnecting the issues seen at the transit center with the community. She volunteered herself to help with the conversation to find a solution to the homeless issue in Anchorage and how it relates to the transit system.

Mr. Jackson echoed Mr. Levy’s earlier comments and expressed gratitude to Chairman Smith and PTD staff for their hard work.

Chairman Smith briefed the board on his meeting with the Eagle River Valley Community Council and the public opinions expressed at the meeting.

Chairman Smith made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mack seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:54pm.

Next Meeting Date: PTAB regular meeting: March 10, 2016