

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

JANUARY 9, 2014, 5:30 PM

CITY HALL ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE ROOM, SUITE 155

PTAB PRESENT:

Jay Dulany
Andrew Ooms
Jed Smith
Tim Sullivan
Carlette Mack
Kevin Jackson

STAFF:

Sandy Hansen
Lance Wilber
Christine Sondej
Susan Shiffer

Absent:

Sally Spieker
Patrick Reinhart

Guests:

Karen Bretz
David Levy
Jim Kubitz

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:33pm by Vice-Chairperson Jed Smith.

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

After roll call and introduction, a quorum was present.

III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tim moved to approve the agenda. Carlette seconded. The January agenda was approved as submitted unanimously.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tim moved to approve minutes for December. Jay seconded. The minutes for December 12, 2013 were approved as submitted unanimously.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Board Leadership-Elect Chair and Vice Chair

Tim moved to open nominations for Chair. Jay seconded.

Tim moved to nominate Jed Smith as Chair. Jay seconded. Jed accepts the nomination.

Tim moved to close nominations for Chair. Jay seconded. No objections. Jed is voted as Chair.

Tim moved to nominate Carlette as Vice Chair. Jay seconded. Carlette accepts the nomination.

Jay moved to close nominations. Tim seconded. No objections. Carlette is voted as Vice Chair.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. None

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

a. Potential Commuter Rail Service –W/ Alaska Railroad Cooperation

Jim Kubitz, Alaska Railroad representative talked about the concept of the ARR to run a train service from the Mat-Su Valley to Anchorage on a seasonal schedule (September 15-April 15) due to limited equipment availability in summer months. He suggested that the idea is two trains would travel into Anchorage about 30 minutes apart and two trains would return about 30 minutes apart or at a time interval to meet riders needs which would have the capacity of 200-300 people. Jim expressed that A.R.R. would utilize a building as a hub near the tracks with parking to accommodate 50 cars and after construction of an ADA ramp, would meet the needs of an accessible park n ride. He said that he talked with Moakie with Valley Mover about coordination of bus service to meet the train. Jim stated that if approved by the ARR Board, the Railroad would commit to a three year trial to determine the operating costs and customer demand with options to increase equipment specific to the trips at a later date. He stated that the trips have been timed to take 66 minutes one-way however JBER might also be served with a stop on Base which would increase the timeline. Jim stated that coordination with People Mover, Van pool programs and potential shuttle service from the train depot in Anchorage to/from worksites would be required.

Andrew inquired about why the ARR preferred not to call it “commuter rail” service?

Jim stated that the federal money they receive is based on passenger miles and if it is labeled commuter service, they would not qualify for funding through the FTA.

Tim asked about the FTA and Federal DOT providing grants for a pilot program to fund the project. Jim indicated that the ARR was looking into additional funding opportunities.

Andrew mentioned that Valley Mover’s success would be an indication of the popularity of alternative transportation utilizing park and ride hubs however the seasonal operation would pose a challenge.

Lance reminded Jim that Anchorage Transit would coordinate with ARR however a six month timeline would be required to change People Mover schedules effectively.

Jim acknowledged that he would provide specifics as soon as it is set for startup.

b. AnchorRIDES Update- polices and service

Susan Shiffer, AnchorRIDES Contract Administrator, provided handouts of proposed policy changes for senior trip funding, no-shows, cancellations and reduced service due to weather conditions.

Susan stated that weather conditions and snow fall can cause safety issues for AnchorRIDES vehicles in neighborhoods, businesses and driveways due to the lack of private property maintenance. She stated that six to twelve inches of snow can be a challenge when AR drivers walk customers to/from the vehicle and uneven surfaces while utilizing the lift.

Kevin inquired about not operating in six inches of snow and how that would be an issue.

Lance explained that some buildings have inadequate snow removal if a snowfall accumulates overnight or driveways could be at an angle which increases the safety concern of utilizing the lift. Susan said that conditions are evaluated on a case to case basis.

Susan discussed the proposed changes to the no-show/cancellations policy based on a percentage of trips scheduled compared to cancellations and no-shows. She noted that they look for a pattern in the customers' scheduling habits and cancellations to reduce the waste of driver /vehicle resources.

Susan stated that the fare payment policy became a problem as customers would schedule trips knowing they did not have the fare however once the driver arrived, the contractor's driver would take the client for trip payment. The new policy requires that accounts be paid in full before additional trips could be scheduled, eliminating misunderstandings.

Susan discussed proposed option to require a senior fares based on trip function or seasonal (winter or summer) due to the reduced funding available. She stated that expanding the hours of senior service would encourage earlier or later hours to travel and eliminate demand hours of 2:00pm-6:00pm on weekdays. The new hours would mirror People Mover service, M-F 5:45am-11:30pm for core service and M-F 7:00am-6:30pm for premium service. Susan stated that Medicare is cutting back which impacts trips scheduled as such and expanded hours offers more trip possibilities.

c. PTAB Worksession

Lance affirmed the PTAB worksession on January 23, 2014 at Transit Administration at 11:30am with an agenda forthcoming. A poll of members confirmed the participation of all PTAB members for the worksession.

d. Ridership Report & Bikes on Buses

Lance provided a summary of 2013 January-December year-to-date ridership numbers and bike usage for 2013. He noted that ridership is down slightly overall from 2012 however hours of service is also down.

Carlette asked about such low numbers for Saturday.

Lance stated that there are many factors that could result in lower ridership.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a.* David Levy talked about the new legislative session starting soon. He stated that the mid-town transit center is a subject of interest actively discussed amongst legislators.
- b.* Karen Bretz, Mayors office on Boards and Commissions, announced she is looking for members to a new Anchorage Transportation Commission. She asked that PTAB contact colleagues

or co-workers willing to represent Seniors, Disabled or that reside in Girdwood or Chugiak-Eagle River area. She encouraged all that are interested to apply.

X. BOARD COMMENT

a. Tim stated that he would not be able to attend the meeting in February.

b. Jed reminded all about the tragic accident that occurred in west Anchorage involving a bike and car encounter resulting in the death of Eldridge Griffith. Jed stressed the importance of pedestrian safety as a whole and as it pertains to Public Transportation.

c. Jay asked about the mid-town transit center resolution. Lance said that he would e-mail a copy to him.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53pm

Next Meeting Date-

Worksession – January 23, 2014, 3600 Dr. Martin Luther King, Transit Admin. Rm 213

PTAB - February 13, 2014, City Hall, Training Room 700 (due to election conflict)

Tentative Meeting items:

- a.* PTAB regular meeting: March 13, 2014 (TBD)
- b.* PTAB regular meeting : April 10, 2014