

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD
SEPTEMBER 11, 2014, 5:30PM-7:00PM
CITY HALL ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE ROOM SUITE#155

PTAB PRESENT:

Patrick Reinhart
Andrew Ooms
Sally Spieker
Carlette Mack
Jed Smith

Absent:

Tim Sullivan
Jay Dulany
Kevin Jackson

STAFF:

Sandy Hansen
Christine Sondej
Abul Hassan

Guests:

George Nagel	Henry Wojtusik
David Levy	Gracieta Paz
Susan Donovan	
Kevin Brickley	
Sam Moore	
Jeff Manfull	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm by Chairman Jed Smith.

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

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

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Patrick moved to approve the minutes for August 14, 2014. Carlette seconded. Minutes for August 14, 2014 were approved unanimously.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

David Levy, Alaska Mobility Coalition, reminded members about the Annual Transit Conference being held at the Millennium Hotel on September 30-October 1, 2014 with a bus tour scheduled on October 2nd from 3-4:30PM focusing on transit providers. He encouraged PTAB members to join the tour. David stated that George Vakalis will be the welcoming speaker and Senator Murkowski is scheduled to speak on the first day at 8:00am.

George Nagel, former PTAB member (2003-2004), expressed disappointment that passengers were playing video games and using their cell phone loudly without driver intervention. He stated that he informs the driver however nothing changes. George also asked that drivers display their route number prior to arrival at the Transit Center so that customers can prepare to board the bus. He stated that he asked drivers if there was a reason why they arrive as "out of service" and the response is that drivers are required to place "out of service" on the bus.

Christine affirmed that drivers are to place 'out of service' on the headsign before changing route numbers as they allow customers to exit. She explained that there is a boarding time given to drivers for the transition however if drivers are late, it can delay the process.

George requested that drivers refrain from opening the back door while boarding at the front door as it lets in cold air in the back of the bus.

Christine acknowledged that a reminder to drivers as we enter fall may reduce rear door usage unless required.

Sam Moore asked if the time displayed on the real time signs at the Transit Center are departure times or arrival times.

Christine confirmed that they are estimated departure times.

Kevin Brickley stated that he rides Route #45 in Mt. View. He asked that more trips be added during the rush hours for Route # 45 due to full buses.

Christine stated that Planning is in the process of evaluating trips that exceed the 85% capacity threshold to determine the routes that may benefit from added service.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Fare and Service Change Public Comment Policy & Procedure

Christine talked about the previous service change policy as it was created 3 years prior as a requirement to AMATS for grant funding as part of the 5303. Recently, AMATS updated their Public Participation policy which allowed Public Transit to redefine our policy which includes PTAB comments. Service change definitions determine the level of the public comment process.

Jed acknowledged that the policy is defined based on distance and percent of route changes however he asked if it is defined by ridership changes. He clarified his question by asking if several bus stops were removed, and many riders were displaced, the distance would be minimal so would that be a consideration?

Christine agreed that a measure of ridership is not included in the policy however Planning would not recommend a service cut that would impact a significant amount of riders.

Andrew expressed that a 25% reduction would be a lot.

Christine provided an example; changes made to the Route # 8 reroute from Staedem Hill in 2013 was an 18% change which is just below the definition of a major change at 25%. She reminded PTAB that Transit chose to extend the public comment period even though it did not meet the minimum however, the change impacted a neighborhood.

Carlette asked about the advanced time frame required for the public to comment.

Christine stated that details of time advancements are detailed in the AMATS policy.

Patrick moved to approve the policy with discussion. Carlette seconded.

There was no further discussion and Patrick moved to accept the policy as written. No objections. Motion was approved as written unanimously.

b. Service Adjustment Options

Christine recapped the work session discussion held on August 22, 2014 regarding the 1% budget saving required by the MOA Administration for the 2015 Transit budget. She referred to the handout of reduction options and the handout of expansion options for PTAB discussion and guidance. Christine informed the board that the MOA Administration may not provide budget updates as late as November. She encouraged the PTAB board to look over the information and provide feedback in October.

Jed acknowledged that he is in the process of riding bus routes that he is less familiar to gain insight to the efficiencies of the current routes. He expressed that the process introduced by Planning has given him a glimpse as to the complexities involved when deciding any changes of the system.

Christine clarified the terminology “load factor 0.85” for the ‘expansion options worksheet’ as meets 85% of seating capacity (39 seats) and how often each trip meets or exceeds those criteria. She stated that Planning has noted the trips that could benefit in added service as guest Kevin Brickley mentioned on Route # 45.

Discussion focused on buses that meet capacity and exactly how many people are allowed on each bus. Christine stated that People Mover’s policy of a full bus at 85% capacity is 33 people. She acknowledged that a bus capacity of less than that can appear to be full. Abul Hassan, Operations Superintendant, stated that individuals can stand after seats are utilized to the white line (near the bus driver) which may double the seating capacity at 78 persons. At this capacity, drivers must bypass customers which Planning monitors.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

a. None

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

a. Transit On-Board Survey and Regional Household Travel Survey

Christine stated that the on-board bus transit survey will begin September 19-29 as individuals wearing blue vests will interview People Mover passengers to determine their travel needs. The goal is to capture 10% of riders’ bus trips data. She is hopeful that the data captured from the survey would serve as a tool for future route adjustments that will meet customer’s needs.

The van pool survey has already started and AnchorRIDES survey will begin soon. She stated that the household survey invites individuals to complete a diary of all travel for each family member for one day including the Mat-Su. Christine encouraged those invited to participant to take the time to fill out the survey’s date given.

b. Ridership Report, January-August 2014

Sandy Hansen, Planning Tech, mentioned that the Sunday ridership has a sharp increase of 22% from ridership of August 2013. She stated that she has noticed an increase in weekend ridership lately although she is not sure why however, it will be monitored for trend changes.

IX. BOARD COMMENT

Andrew asked about the downtown construction progress. Christine stated that staff was available to assist for the first week to make sure customers knew where to catch their bus. She said she is hopeful that it will be finished on time.

Sally stated that she rides the bus and bikes.

Carlette stated that she was thankful for the advanced information about the construction.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm

Next Meeting Date:

Next Tentative Meeting items:

- a. PTAB regular meeting: October 9, 2014
- b. PTAB regular meeting: November 13, 2014