

Article I. PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

OCTOBER 8, 2015, 5:30PM-7:00PM
ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE ROOM SUITE#155

PTAB PRESENT:

Jay Dulany
Stephanie Cornwell-George
Tim Sullivan
Carlette Mack
David Levy
Jed Smith

Absent:

Kevin Jackson (excused)
Andrew Ooms (excused)

STAFF:

Jody Karcz
Christine Sondej
Michelle Felix
Will Brown
Abul Hassan
Ryan Yelle

Citizens Present:

Debi Stone
Jeff Manfull
Graciela Paz
Joe Pichler
Sam Moore
Gene Michael Kowchu

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:32pm 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

Mr. Levy made a motion to add item 8.c, recognition of Tim Sullivan's service in the Public Transit Advisory Board to the agenda. Mr. Dulany seconded the motion. Chairman Smith moved to approve the October 2015 agenda with the addition of item 8.c. Mr. Dulany seconded the motion. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Sullivan moved to approve the minutes from September 10, 2015. Mr. Levy seconded. The minutes from the September 10th meeting were approved unanimously.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Gene Michael Kowchu – Mr. Kowchu has been using the People Mover system since 1985 and has noticed several changes through the years. He purchases half-fare annual passes each year and really enjoys the ease of use of the new passes, as compared to tokens or coins. Mr. Kowchu also commended People Mover bus operators for their professionalism and kindness.

Joe Pichler – Mr. Pichler is a frequent user of both People Mover fixed route service and AnchorRIDES. He would like to see increased service along Route 45 to help alleviate the issue of overcrowding and the resulting potential for security issues that go along with a crowded

bus. Security at the Downtown Transit Center was also another issue Mr. Pichler expressed concern about. He felt security was not adequately patrolling the premises as needed.

Graciela Paz – Ms. Paz addressed her concern about the lack of enforcement of the no-smoking ban within 25 feet of a municipal building. She would like to see designated areas set aside for smokers at each transit hub.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Google Transit Real Time – Ms. Sondej provided a brief overview of the topics covered during the September 10th PTAB meeting regarding Google Transit Real Time and the desire of “Code for Anchorage” to develop this application. As a follow-up, Ms. Sondej described some of the issues and a justification for implementing a General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) in real-time. The main difference between People Mover’s current “Bustracker” tool and having GTFS real-time, is the accessibility of data to the public for the production of additional apps and tools for trip planning via transit by outside sources. By developing a GTFS real-time app, we would then be able to share schedule and schedule adherence information publicly. Ms. Sondej pointed out that the Municipal Information Technology department has been responsive to requests from “Code for Anchorage” in sharing data and assisting in the development of GTFS real-time.

Chairman Smith and Mr. Levy expressed their interest in developing this tool and they would like to see a timeline put in place for its implementation.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. 2016 Operating Budget – Ms. Karcz provided an overview of the 2016 Operating Budget, pointing out that there would not be any cuts to service due to budget constraints. Instead there would be a reduction of approximately \$165,000 in fuel expenditures for 2016. Ms. Karcz stated unless fuel prices dramatically increase for the next fiscal year, service would not be negatively impacted.
- b. 2016 Capital Budget – Ms. Karcz provided an overview of the 2016 Capital Budget, stating that the Dept of Public Transportation is currently asking for a \$600,000 Municipal Bond for fiscal year 2016. This request has been passed on to the assembly and is to be voted on November 23rd. Ms. Karcz addressed the issue of establishing “transit cops” to handle transit related disturbances. She expressed her hesitation with establishing “transit cops” within the Dept of Public Transportation and would like to see any of the intended funds go to the Anchorage Police Dept instead.

Ms. Mack was pleased that there were not any planned cuts to the 2016 budget despite talk of doing so in previous months.

Chairman Smith would like to see solid data on transit related disturbances that occur in or around transit facilities, as well as on vehicles. This data would assist in further addressing the issue of transit security rather than relying solely on anecdotal evidence based public perception.

Ms. Cornwell-George asked Ms. Karcz if we currently had data on when and where security issues arise. Ms. Karcz called upon Abul Hassan to explain how the Operations division would be handling security issues going forward.

Mr. Hassan gave an overview of the challenges to collecting usable data and an appropriate methodology for it. Mr. Hassan would like to see data which compares the percentage of issues which happen at or near the Downtown Transit Center, and the percentage of issues that occur mid-route involving passengers headed to the Downtown Transit Center.

Mr. Hassan explained that starting on October 12th, the operations division of public transportation will be recording who, what, when, where, and how each security disturbance happens aboard a transit vehicle or at a transit facility. This information will be forward to the Customer Service Manager for People Mover on a weekly basis, so it can be compared to pass/ride ticket customers. Repeat offenders may be denied passes in the future based upon the severity of the violations.

Ms. Cornwell-George would like to see data which shows how much productivity is lost due to security issues on vehicles and at transit facilities. Better coordination between transit, the downtown district, various community councils, and Anchorage Police Department was also suggested by Ms. Cornwell-George.

Mr. Levy brought up the issue of a negative public perception of transit in Anchorage due to the problems noticed at the Downtown Transit Center. Mr. Levy feels a stronger partnership with the Anchorage Police Department would be helpful in correcting the issues at the Downtown Transit Center.

*Public Comment: Joe Pichler – Mr. Pichler believes that the security at the Downtown Transit Center is not doing an adequate job and agrees with Mr. Levy that more involvement with the Anchorage Police Department would benefit the public image of the Downtown Transit Center.

Chairman Smith commented that the issues seen at the Downtown Transit Center are not unique to just that facility, but are issues seen throughout the Municipality. Transit centers however, coincidentally serve as a gathering point for those wishing to engage in criminal or vagrant behavior. Chairman Smith would like to keep up the pressure on the Anchorage Community Development Authority (ACDA) to find a solution to problems seen at the Downtown Transit Center. However, he would also like to see a more comprehensive approach to confronting the issue of transit security for the long term, rather than just additional security at the Downtown Transit Center.

Mr. Levy commented that he would like to see an addition to the agenda for the November meeting to discuss progress with ACDA and the assembly on issues of the budget and security at the Downtown Transit Center.

Mr. Levy made a motion to endorse the 2016 operating and capital budget recommendations. Mr. Sullivan seconded the motion, but shortly withdrew his second. This item has been tabled until the November 12th meeting.

Ms. Cornwell-George would like a resolution to be passed which suggests no further cuts be made to Transit's budget so Transit can focus on fixing the issues of security and poor public perception.

- c. Recognition of Tim Sullivan's Service on the Public Transportation Advisory Board – Special recognition of service was given by Chairman Jed Smith, with special words from David Levy and Jody Karcz.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

- a. 2014 System Performance Review – Ms. Sondej provided an overview of the 2014 System Performance Review and key findings of the report. Most notably are the issues of on-time performance on routes 3, 7, 9, and also route 45 on Saturdays. Moving forward Ms. Sondej would like to see an increase in service frequency on routes with high productivity such as the route 9, 75, and 7. Ms. Sondej also noted that many of the issues noticed in the 2014 System Performance Review were addressed in the 2015 service change, and PTD staff will continue to monitor progress.

Ms. Mack was concerned about the on-time performance on weekends for all routes, as she noticed it was typically lower than on weekdays. Ms. Sondej responded by saying that historically, more attention has been placed on improving on-time performance for weekday service, but that public transportation staff would examine weekend service for next year's service change.

Mr. Sullivan was curious about the cost associated with eliminating Route 102 and replacing it with regular vanpool service. Ms. Karcz replied saying there have been numerous marketing attempts to reach out to the Eagle River/Chugiak area encouraging vanpool use, but those attempts haven't resulted in the vanpool usage as the PTD had hoped for.

Mr. Levy noticed the decrease in use of AnchorRIDES and was curious if public transportation had any data to see which method of transportation those customers were using as an alternative. Ms. Sondej replied by noting the complexities of data reporting for the AnchorRIDES program due to its funding sources and privacy rights of its users.

Chairman Smith was pleased with the 2014 System Performance Review and would like to see the report continued on an annual basis.

- b. Ridership Report, January-September 2015

The ridership report was provided for PTAB review. No comments.

X. BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Levy would like to see more involvement from the Public Transportation marketing staff to help improve the image of transit in Anchorage.

Chairman Smith commented on the presentation he gave to the Federation of Community Councils and his call to communities to help define what they would like their transit system to look like.

Mr. Sullivan commented that he was pleased with the progress that has been made over the years with the increasing use of vanpools. He also noted that the problems at the Downtown Transit Center have seen progress when compared to the issues that were seen years prior.

Mr. Sullivan made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Levy. The meeting adjourned at 6:54PM.

Next Meeting Date:

- a. PTAB regular meeting: November 12, 2015
- b. PTAB regular meeting: December 10, 2015