

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD
FEBRUARY 12, 2015, 5:30PM-7:00PM
CITY HALL ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE ROOM SUITE#155

PTAB PRESENT:

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

Absent:

Stephanie Cornwell-George

STAFF:

Sandy Hansen
Christine Sondej
Abul Hassan
Lance Wilber

Guests:

David Freeman	Donald Swanson
David Levy	Gracieta Paz
Aaron Crowell	Joseph Pichler
Almeda Downing	Karen
Robert Auth	
Peggy Auth	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:34pm 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 Jay seconded. The Agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jay moved to approve the minutes for January 8, 2015. Carlette seconded. Minutes for January 2015 were approved unanimously.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Patty Collander asked if People Mover planned to increase the fare in 2015.

Lance replied that there were no plans to increase the fares.

David Levy stated that he accepted a new job with the Municipality of Anchorage as a Senior Services Coordinator and will no longer be the director of the Alaska Mobility Coalition.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Proposed Service Change (effective June 1, 2015)

Christine provided an overview of the 2015 Service Change proposal to date. She stated that the official comment period (Jan 9-February 5, 2015) ended which included presentations at Community Councils, Public Meetings and participation at the Transportation Fair. Christine

presented at Spenard, Mountain View, Birchwood, and Chugiak Community Councils. Christine acknowledged that she received resolutions of support for Route # 45 and Route # 8 from Mountain View Community Council and Anchorage Community Land Trust, whereas Spenard Community Council and Alaska Center for the Blind were opposed to the Route # 36 proposed changes. She stated that Birchwood Community Council also sent a resolution opposed to the proposed change to the Route # 102. Christine provided maps of the proposed route alignments and copies of public comments received during the comment period. She expressed that a compromise to the Route # 102 by eliminating the outbound 4:33pm trip, which averages 9 riders, and continuing to serve the bus stop at Voyles and Bill Stephens could meet the savings needed.

Guests Comments:

Don Swanson stated that he has lived in the Northwood area for 20 years. He expressed that he worked for People Mover as a bus operator for those 20 years and while he understands the need to make changes in bus service he feels that his neighborhood would be tarnished based on the needed transportation to facilities in the area. Don stated that elders and children will be required to walk to Spenard which is a distance too far to walk for most that live in the neighborhood.

Aaron Crowell stated that he currently walks ½ mile to a bus stop in the area slated for elimination for Route # 102 and the proposed change increases his walk to 2 miles one way. He stated that he doesn't have a car and prefers not to purchase one. Aaron inquired about a compromise of serving the eliminated area twice in each direction instead of four times as it currently does. He feels that the Chugiak /Peters Creek and Eagle River area has been cut too many times. Aaron asked about the actual savings for the trips on Route #102 proposed.

Lance stated that the reduction to the Route #102 service would provide a savings of \$60,000 - \$70,000 per year however the costs are not the only consideration. He stated that the productivity based on resources is a long range outlook for People Mover and there are no easy decisions.

Tim Sullivan suggested that individuals contact their Assembly Representatives as they are the ones that allocate the money for each department and dictate the budget. He asked about first quarter budget revisions.

Lance stated that generally Municipal Departments are not involved in any revisions directly unless it is a new overwhelming or unexpected cost.

Patty Collander expressed that she is disabled and when using People Mover takes three buses.

Peggy Auth stated that she has lived in Alaska for 33 years. She remembers using Route # 9 on Arctic Boulevard which didn't run on Sundays. She stated that she uses People Mover Route # 36 once in a while to travel to midtown whereas her husband uses Route # 36 daily. Peggy feels that asking riders to walk to Spenard is dangerous for pedestrians due to the faster speeds and snow buildup in the winter. She expressed the need for Route # 36 in the neighborhood as people travel to the Recreation Center, Multi Cultural Center and nearby School.

Karen stated that she lives in the Northwood neighborhood and takes the bus several times a day and if bus service is removed from her area, she would be forced to walk to Spenard which would be a burden to her for as many times that she uses People Mover. She said that she has talked with

neighbors and they all do not like losing bus service. Karen inquired about the possibility of traveling into the neighborhood on every other trip similar to Route # 3N and Route # 3C.

Joe Pichler stated that he uses People Mover route # 7 and he expressed the importance of bus service for teens for school, adults for work and everyone to travel to appointments. He stated that he has used bus systems in other cities and he feels that we should be as good as or better than their bus systems.

David Levy asked about feedback from the Spenard Recreation Center and Boys & Girls Club.

Christine stated that MOA Recreation Staff stated that most users walk from the neighborhood, ride their bike or get a ride via car to the center and that few are bus riders.

Robert Auth stated that he has been riding People Mover since 1994 which he takes daily. He stated that the Spenard Community Council meeting showed that the need is there and it would hurt the neighborhood to remove the bus and the required walk to Spenard is not favorable. Robert feels that the street crossings at Spenard put people at risk and elder folks are disadvantaged.

Almeda Downing stated that she moved here from Chicago recently. She used the Route # 36 from her sister's house to travel to nursing school and job searches in the Providence Hospital area. She stated that she likes the option to stay active with the bus in her neighborhood. Almeda expressed that she stayed in Wasilla for a week but she didn't like it because she did not have access to bus service and independence. She asks that the Route # 36 stay.

Board Member Comments regarding proposal:

Tim Sullivan asked about the Assembly Reps. in Spenard, Ernie Hall and Mr. Steele? He expressed sorrow to see trip reductions and suggested that another option is to cut entire routes to show Assembly members how extreme it has become and that Public Transit should be increasing service and not decreasing it.

Carlette Mack expressed dismay that Public Transportation is not a priority for the city of Anchorage and its representatives.

Kevin Jackson stated that concerned citizens should become involved with choosing elected officials and Assembly members that understand bus rider's needs.

Jay Dulany expressed that the reduction of service is a catch-22 as it reduces but ridership is expected to increase and in time it just gets worse. He stated that he is not in favor of the proposed changes to Route # 36 or Route # 102.

Andrew Ooms stated that based on ridership, route # 102 is a good option however he is undecided on Route # 36. Andrew stated that AnchorRIDES would be available for those that require the service. He stated that he uses the Route # 8 and the proposal would add a few minutes but he was in support.

Andrew motioned to adopt the staff recommendations for Route # 36, Route # 8 and with a compromise on Route # 102 as discussed. Tim seconded.

Discussions regarding future plans to evaluate and consolidate other less productive routes were shared. Lance reminded PTAB that trips from other routes could be hand picked to eliminate as less productive however in the long term, evaluation of all routes with low usage is slated for adjustment.

Jed Smith stated that he is a transit advocate and he would prefer not to reduce service. He acknowledged that the changes proposed will impact someone which makes it difficult to decide. Jed stated that he looked at the changes proposed and checked numbers and on the surface it seems like it is a reduction however it's more like a reallocation. Jed said he reached out to Assembly members however he received no response from some of them which concerns him. He urged all to contact Anchorage Assembly Representatives to voice their preferences to city services.

The final vote was in favor of the motion; five yes votes (Jed, Carlette, Tim, Andrew and Kevin) and one opposed, Jay.

i. Public Comments Summary

Christine provided a 12 page summary of all comments taken during the Public comment period for all to review. She stated that some of the comments were suggestions for new service and that general comments received are considered during future service changes.

VII. New Business

a. Board Leadership – Elect Chair & Vice-Chair

Jed Smith asked that he read a resolution statement to recognize David Levy's accomplishments as a leader of the Alaska Mobility Coalition. Jed praised David's efforts from the Transit Advisory Board to recognize the work he has achieved to provide Transit Agencies with Alaska State funding.

Tim moved to approve and adopt the resolution as an official document, Jay seconded. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Nominations were open for Chair and Co-Chair.

Tim nominated Jed as Chair, Jay seconded the nomination. Jed accepted and was approved. Jay nominated Carlette as Co-Chair, Tim seconded. Carlette accepted and was approved.

b. AMATS Air Quality Advisory Group Representative

Jed stated that he formally served on the AMATS Air Quality Advisory Group as a representative however he can no longer be the representative. He suggested that Andrew replace him and Andrew expressed that he agreed to the position however he provides work to AMATS in his job duties which may be a conflict of interest at times. Discussion determined that the position was advisory only.

Tim moved to approve Andrew as the AMATS Air Quality member, Kevin seconded. All were in favor and none apposed.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

a. 2014 Department Performance

Christine provided copies of the 2014 Transit Department Performance measures determined by MOA Administration. She provided an overview of on-time performance, AnchorRIDES, productivity and preventable accidents.

b. 2015 Major Tasks

Christine provided a handout of major tasks scheduled for the Transit Department in 2015.

She talked about the new proposed changes in the Vanpool program to move to a stipend based program. She stated there are plans to purchase 10 new AnchorRIDES vehicles in 2015.

Jed asked if a representative for Vanpool could be invited to the joint meeting in April.

Carlette inquired about the inebriates on board buses and what actions are being planned. Carlette also requested information on the Downtown Transit Center.

Major Tasks include:

Midtown Transit Facility; still in the planning stages

Muldoon Hub; DOT in support, currently working on a study of alternatives

Dimond Transit Center; Design stages

C Street and 7th Avenue; Draft design study report complete and easement acquisition

U-Med phase IV ; expand at Providence & Alumni

Bus Storage Barn; Replace heater and air exchange unit

People Mover Software; Technology updates

TSA Report; Safety and Security Improvements

Staff Changes; Judy Tymick retiring, hiring a new Marketing & Customer Service Supervisor
And Communications Division Manager

c. Ridership Report, January 2015

No questions.

BOARD COMMENT

Tim and Jay thanked David for his work with the AMC.

Andrew stated that he will support the AMATS Air Quality appointment and he acknowledged the difficult decisions here today.

Carlette appreciates the staff work and to be part of the process. She suggested that the Transit Advisory Board host a forum for the candidates in the Assembly.

Kevin thanked Jed and Carlette for being the Chair and Co-Chair.

Jed expressed that the new elections this spring can give the opportunity to hold elected officials accountable to the decisions they make as a representative for the public.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35PM

Next Meeting Date:

Next Tentative Meeting items:

a. PTAB regular meeting: March 12, 2015 (room 800 City Hall)

b. PTAB regular meeting: April 12, 2015 Joint meeting in Eagle River