

Public Transit Advisory Board  
April 13, 2017, 5:30pm-7:00pm  
ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE ROOM, SUITE #155

**PTAB PRESENT:**

Jedediah Smith  
Carlette Mack  
David Levy  
Felix Rivera  
Kevin Jackson  
Samuel Moore  
Britta Hamre

**PTAB ABSENT:**

Andrew Ooms (excused)

**STAFF:**

Abul Hassan  
Bart Rudolph  
Whitney Tillman  
Collin Hodges  
Andrew Watts

**CITIZENS PRESENT:**

Kenneth Brannem  
GZ Jones  
Nicole Brown  
Guy J. Hughes  
Shirley Smith  
Maggie Penix  
Graciela Paz  
C <illegible> Tagu

Kathy Luttio

Frank Baines

Joseph Pichler  
Renee <illegible>  
Allen Johnson  
Persuasias Moore  
Au'brey Strange  
Alexander Ellerbe  
Paula C. Newman  
Karen Carson  
Miranda Monet

Alice Hjellen  
Karyn Kronz  
Kim Ansaknok  
Carl Kancir  
Danielle Delie  
Dannalynn G. Delie  
Debra Rose  
Geo Criddell  
Paul Nicoli Jr.  
Richard-Lee Riley  
Chris Langdon  
Flora Avessuk  
Curtis Nicholai  
J.T. Brodie  
Greggorie Gahan  
Amanda Rae  
David Lofquist  
Wendy Williams  
Samuel Williams

Ezekiel Williams  
Nehemiah Williams  
Ishmael Prado  
Jonelle Johnson  
Linda Larson  
Rebecca <illegible>  
Silas Ross  
Bev Wilkie  
Wiyual Nguot  
Paula James-Jack  
Isaiah James-Jack  
Ariana James-Jack  
Hailey James-Jack  
Chris Byrnes  
Clifford Hunter  
Pete Changsak  
Renee E. Lacy  
Patti Boyce

*I. CALL TO ORDER*

The meeting was called to order at 5:33pm by Chair Jed Smith.

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

After roll call a quorum was present. Mr. Ooms's absence was noted as excused.

*III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT*

An announcement was made to those attending by Chair 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. Moore made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Hamre seconded the motion. Without objection, the agenda was approved.

*V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES*

Mr. Levy made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 9 meeting. Ms. Hamre seconded the motion. Chair Smith noted that the minutes were incredibly thorough and helpful. Without objection, the minutes were approved as submitted.

## *VI. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY*

- a. Kenneth Brannem - Mr. Brannem expressed concerns about the buses not being in the neighborhoods and how that would work for the elderly.
- b. Carl Kancir - Mr. Kancir expressed concern about the elimination of route 60 on Old Seward due to the businesses along the road, especially south of Tudor. He also expressed concerns about people not being ready with their money when making connections slowing the bus down and people not covering their mouth when they cough on the bus.
- c. Kathy Luttio - Ms. Luttio expressed concerns about losing bus service on McCarrey. Also, there are disabled veterans who use her stop. She stated that she never heard anything about this, and she rides the bus every day. She stated that she moved where she did because of the bus access. She also expressed concerns about winter sidewalk maintenance.
- d. Paula James-Jack - Ms. James-Jack is here with her children Isaiah and Ariana, and they expressed concerns about a driver speaking to them rudely when they brought food on the bus (but didn't eat it). She stated that a lot of people do eat on the bus, play loud music, and curse on the bus, which are all against the rules, and it's not fair for her kids to be spoken to that way when they aren't doing anything wrong.
- e. Shirley Smith - Ms. Smith expressed her continuing concerns about drivers not lowering the ramp for her when she has her walker and taking people who were in line behind her like she doesn't exist. She said it happened again right when she left the March 9 meeting and again on April 3 on route 15. She stated that she's sick and tired of this. She also mentioned that her bus pass was stolen, and it hasn't gotten returned because none of the drivers actually check the pictures to make sure they match.
- f. Debra Rose - Ms. Rose spoke in opposition to the elimination of route 36 on Aero Drive. She is disabled and currently rides the bus to the grocery store and doctor appointments. If route 36 is removed, she may need AnchorRIDES.
- g. Richard Riley - Mr. Riley expressed his concerns about the elimination of route 36 on 36th Ave. He stated that he lives in Spenard. He has been speaking to people on the buses, and they all agree that there should be a bus running on 36th Ave. Most of the time when he needs to get to the library, doctor, or hospital, he takes route 36. He asked if he should call 911 for an ambulance just because he can't make it to the bus.
- h. Karyn Kronz - Ms. Kronz expressed her opposition to the elimination of route 36 because it is the only bus that goes everywhere she needs to go. She thinks that at least one of the neighborhood buses should be running down there.
- i. Frank Baines - Mr. Baines expressed concerns about operators being unprofessional and not uniformly enforcing the rules. He also has concerns about unruly passengers and operators not doing anything about drinking, cussing, and loud music. Some operators make a small attempt. He thinks operators need more training on treating people fairly.
- j. <inaudible> - The citizen expressed 3 concerns: 1) reinforcing what Mr. Kancir said about people having their fare ready when they get to the bus; 2) enforcing the rule at the front of the bus about not talking to the driver; 3) drunks on the bus, specifically the inconvenience of

having to wait for the ambulance when one passed out and fell out of his seat the previous week.

- k. Joe Pichler - Mr. Pichler stated that he's been riding People Mover since it started. It's going to take people a while to learn this new system. Also, people don't abide by the signs on the bus. He also expressed concerns about drivers letting people ride without paying when we need to make money.
- l. Kimberly Ansaknok - Ms. Ansaknok expressed that between trips the drivers could spray down the bus with Lysol. She stated that the bus stop she's going to have to change to at Tudor and Checkmate is not well-lit and it's cold with the cars zooming past. She asked for lighting to be added to dark bus stops.
- m. Patricia Olson - Ms. Olson asked whether these changes were definitely going to happen. (Director Hassan replied that this is a go, no matter what.) Ms. Olson expressed her concern for the people who will be losing route 36. She suggested that taking out some parts would be ok, but if the Department can do 15 minute service in some places, why can't there be 1 or 2 buses in the morning and evening on route 36?
- n. P. C. Newman - Ms. Newman stated that today a lady was hit by a car in front of the transit center. A man was also hit by a garbage truck once in front of City Hall, and there was an unconscious lady in the intersection out front. When she drives, she doesn't turn on red because of pedestrians. She stated that she was walking by Barnes and Noble over winter, and there was someone in the snow and she wasn't sure if he was ok. As for the new system, she will have to ride in October to understand how it will impact her life. She suggested different service levels for summer and winter. She's concerned about the construction at the Downtown Transit Center, and she also suggested steam cleaning the inside of the buses.
- o. Karen Carson - Ms. Carson stated that she lives off Latouche, closer to 36th than to Benson, and she will be left without a connection once route 36 goes away. She also stated that some of the people who ride without paying are inebriated and can barely stand to get on the bus, so drivers seem to have a tendency to pass them off.
- p. Chris Langdon - Mr. Langdon expressed his appreciation for the innovation taken to make public transportation more mainstream in Anchorage. He suggested trying to stop inebriates before they even get on the bus. He noticed 2 people with open containers that they sneaked past the driver just on the way to the meeting. He has been riding for 30 years and is more than happy to try out the new changes. He mentioned that if there is going to be a fare increase, it should be put out before October. Chair Smith mentioned that if a person has a comment about a specific incident, they should contact customer service because it's easier to get details.
- q. Miranda Monet - Ms. Monet stated that one time her hearing aid battery went dead, and she asked the driver to speak up. He yelled, and half the bus was laughing at her. She was very upset.
- r. GZ Jones - Ms. Jones is a business owner and a student. She asked what the point of the Downtown Transit Center was. It doesn't have Wifi, isn't modern, isn't sanitary, and is an eyesore. Also there is no Wifi on the bus. If you could eliminate that space and sell fares online and put ticket machines at stores, that would be more convenient, instead of having to come all the way downtown.
- s. Greggorie Gahan - Mr. Gahan expressed his concern about the elimination of the 7A. Now he'll

have to take 2 buses to get to work, and it'll be more like what he had in Charleston. Their transit system sucks. His concern is that now he'll have to walk a mile and pay more. Another citizen pointed out that he could get a day pass for \$5.

- t. Patti Boyce - Ms. Boyce stated that she doesn't usually ride the bus, but she recently had surgery and has been riding to therapy, the bank, etc. She noted changes to 60 and that she will have to walk to either Arctic or Lake Otis to get a bus, which doubles her walk. She noted issues with snow berms on the sidewalks this winter.
- u. Wendy Williams - Ms. Williams expressed her concerns about the increased walking distance to the bus. She is also concerned about route 1 being discontinued between Muldoon and Dimond because that is how her husband goes to work. She does support the plan to have the buses run later.
- v. Danielle Delie - Ms. Delie spoke in opposition to the new bus system, particularly expecting people to walk longer distances with poor sidewalk maintenance.
- w. Guy Hughes - Mr. Hughes asked why they were even there.
- x. Maggie Penix - Ms. Penix stated that the new system is going to hurt hundreds of people who ride the bus every day.
- y. Kenneth Brannem - Mr. Brannem asked whether another hub in midtown would help.

## *VII. BUSINESS / INFORMATION ITEMS*

### *a. Item 7a – New Bus System - Update*

Chair Smith invited staff to discuss the new bus system. Director Hassan started by discussing a few items. The Department has been robustly working on solutions for getting complaints to us quickly. First, the Department's phone tree has been redesigned to help leverage all three brands (People Mover, AnchorRIDES, and RideShare) and make it easier for customers to reach the right people. Also, on the AncWorks page, there will be a way to submit complaints with pictures by the end of the month. The more the Department hears from the public, the easier it becomes to do something.

Director Hassan also discussed the policy regarding inebriates on buses. Open containers are a violation of the municipal code. Sometimes people try to sneak things on, and if the driver doesn't notice, they can't do anything, but this shouldn't prevent you from notifying the driver of what's going on. We're obviously not going to do a search of the bus. If an individual is physically able to get on the bus, we let them, because if we let operators decide who's drunk, what prohibits them from starting to discriminate against individuals with disabilities that may give a similar impression. There are stickers notifying of surveillance and also ones that say "No fare, no ride." The issue is that in the past two years, four drivers have been assaulted. There is no money for transit police, so the Department has to make a judgment call.

Director Hassan went on to discuss the Anchorage Talks Transit process that has taken place over the last 16 months or so and discussed how the Department recognizes the limitations of the process. He asked the public to recognize that this is an attempt to save a sinking ship because the current system is broken, as evidenced by the two-hour trips.

Mr. Rudolph then discussed the new bus system maps. He described how staff arrived at the final concept through the public process and working within the existing budget while addressing concerns with the concepts. He discussed the ease of transferring onto and among the frequent

routes on the new system. Director Hassan mentioned the public's concerns about the sidewalks. He noted that the Department doesn't control the roads or the sidewalks, but it is doing all it can to improve sidewalk maintenance. He has impressed upon the state and Muni road maintenance people that you can't comply with the ADA only 6 months of the year. It has to be all year. Nothing precludes the public from calling their Assembly members or state legislators. He also encouraged the public to contact Jillanne Inglis, the ADA coordinator for the municipality. Her phone number is 343-4480, and her email is ada@muni.org. Mr. Moore interjected that what Director Hassan couldn't say due to his position is that if the public wants clear sidewalks, they need to complain to their Assembly members and Mayor louder.

Mr. Rudolph also noted that only the Assembly can change the fares, and we are not anticipating a fare change at this time. He emphasized the availability of the day pass.

*b. Item 7b – New Bus System – Marketing Plan*

Chair Smith invited staff to discuss the marketing plan. Mr. Rudolph noted that we get dedicated funds for marketing. They can only be used for marketing, and nothing else. We can't buy equipment or pay bus operators or anything. We either use the money for marketing or give it back to the federal government and the state. There is no local match.

Mr. Rivera raised a point of personal privilege. He remarked that it has been a pleasure working with the Board over the past year. He looks forward to continuing to work with everyone as the Board advises not only the Mayor, but also the Assembly. He stated that he was just elected to the Assembly and will be sworn in next Tuesday. He encouraged the public to attend hearings on the 2018 budget that will be held in October, as he has heard from other Assembly members that very few people come to advocate on People Mover's behalf when the budget is being considered. He suspects that there will be a cut considered again this year, and he encourages people to attend hearings if they want to prevent that. Chair Smith congratulated Mr. Rivera. Mr. Rivera departed at 6:37pm.

Ms. Tillman discussed the marketing plan for the new bus system. She discussed the planned activities for each month, the tagline, and the activities that have been completed and those that are ongoing. She went through the plan month by month and explained highlights. Mr. Moore asked whether the planned open house in September would be too late. Ms. Tillman replied that it was chosen because it is close enough to implementation to be relevant but not too far away. Mr. Levy noted that it's tough to do anything in summer, particularly June through August. Chair Smith asked at what point there would be notification at the bus stops. Mr. Rudolph replied that the ones that are going away will be getting special signage in July. Stops remaining will have new signs indicating the new routes. Mr. Levy asked what the goal was in terms of market saturation. Ms. Tillman stated that we want all of Anchorage and Eagle River to know, and she noted the membership with Coastal Television and the number of commercials that will be shown. Mr. Rudolph also noted that the Department aims to increase Facebook clicks by 10% annually, there will be 225 commercials a week, and there will also be mailers to people who are losing service, as well as people on the South Anchorage and Eagle River commuter routes. Mr. Levy also asked whether there would be advertising on the municipal channel, and Mr. Rudolph replied that there would. Mr. Moore noted that all of his coworkers and friends he talks to wants to know what's going on, so they're aware changes are happening. He also noted that the new signage in the Downtown Transit Center is obvious and it's intuitive that something's changing. He complimented the marketing department on their work.

- c. Item 7c – Board Resolution – Requesting that the Assembly maintain current funding levels to the Public Transportation Department through the end of 2017

On a motion by Mr. Moore seconded by Ms. Hamre, the motion of Ms. Mack seconded by Mr. Levy at the March 9 meeting was taken up from the table.

Mr. Levy asked whether the Board wanted to discuss 2018 funding as part of this resolution. Chair Smith stated that he would be open to that. He initially drafted the resolution, which Mr. Moore and Mr. Jackson made some suggestions on. His intention was to get this to the Assembly during quarterly budget revisions, so that was the first concern. He expects that the Board will draft another resolution around October to talk about the 2018 budget proposals. If the Board wants to do it now, they can certainly do that, but right now the primary concern is maintaining the 2017 funding. Mr. Moore noted that the Board can pass tons of resolutions every month, but actually showing up at meetings relating to the budget is far more important than any resolution. His second point is that from a technical standpoint, he put unanimously in the text of the resolution, which would obviously need to be removed if the Board doesn't pass the resolution unanimously. Mr. Levy stated that given the investment staff has made, it seems short-sighted for the Board to look only at 2017. Something should be done over the summer or in September looking at 2018, but given the investment the Department has made, it would be appropriate to support 2018 funding now. Chair Smith noted that the resolution's second "be it resolved" paragraph recommends "a steady funding level throughout the period of transition". He stated that he doesn't want to cloud the issue. He doesn't see the Board not supporting a resolution for 2018 funding, but it may be a little early to be asking for next year's money when right now we're fighting for this year's. Ms. Mack noted that she agrees with Mr. Levy because early on in the process, Mr. Rudolph mentioned that it would take time to transition and evaluate whether it was effective. She thinks it's important to communicate that this is not just a system change, but also a community transition.

Mr. Moore called the question, and the resolution was adopted by unanimous voice vote. The text of the resolution as adopted is attached.

Chair Smith encouraged the public to contact their Assembly members and let them know how important People Mover is.

- d. Item 7d – March 2017 Ridership Report

Mr. Watts presented the March 2017 Ridership Report. He noted that average weekend ridership was down only about 2% this March compared to last March. He noted that the total weekday ridership was approximately 295,000, compared to 318,000 last March, a 7.5% decrease, but there was also 1 fewer weekday of service (4.3% less) than last year, so this is a smaller decline than it seems.

Mr. Watts also noted the continued popularity of the high volume routes that will be transitioning to frequent routes in October. Route 45 continues to serve an average of 40 people per hour, while Routes 15 and 75 serve an average of 33, and Routes 3 and 7 serve 26 and 27 per hour. All these routes serve at least 800 people per day. Routes 3, 7, and 75 serve over 1100, and Route 45 serves over 2000.

Mr. Levy asked whether the ridership numbers were for all the Department's brands or only for fixed route. Mr. Watts replied that they were only fixed route. Mr. Levy requested a report on the ridership of AnchorRIDES and RideShare as well.

Mr. Moore asked how the ridership from February to March 2017 compared to the same period

last year. Mr. Rudolph replied that we have consistently been losing 5 to 10 percent of ridership when you compare to the month of the previous year. Mr. Moore noted that consistency was half the battle.

#### *VIII. BOARD COMMENTS*

Mr. Jackson wanted to echo what has been said. The most important thing the public can do is show up and make their voices heard at budget hearings.

Mr. Moore noted that the Board has heard a lot tonight about loss of specific routes. He stated that he, personally, as a daily commuter on People Mover, will see a drastic change in his life negatively. He currently rides route 60 directly from his apartment building to his work, and that's going away. He's going to have to walk at least a quarter- to a half-mile more daily, and that impacts him. He's disabled, and he's impacted by snow berms all the time. He calls his Assemblyman and his legislators, and they're tired of hearing from him, but if all come together and complain just a little bit more, maybe that snow will get cleared. However, as negatively as this change impacts his life, he believes in the philosophy and that in the aggregate it will make all of Anchorage transit riders' lives better. He will be able to get to some places a little bit faster, and transferring can make our lives better. It may seem like an inconvenience, but hopefully we can improve the understanding of how the system works in the aggregate. Mr. Moore also asked staff what the policy is about the driver waiting for people to take a seat or just taking off. Director Hassan replied that from a safety standpoint, they are advised that passengers should be seated before the bus starts moving. Mr. Moore stated that as a young, spry man, he doesn't need them to wait for him to sit, but he understands the philosophy behind that. He also asked whether, even though fares can't be changed without the Assembly, fare media or structure could be changed. He's heard a lot of people complain tonight about cash and change, and he has been lamenting that fact for years. Cash is expensive, and it takes time. Director Hassan replied that the Department can't forgo cash, and there are a few limitations. Code is one, but the bigger one is antiquated technology. It becomes increasingly cumbersome to modify the fare structure within that technology. However, the Department is modifying it's overall products, and 20-ride tickets will go away soon.

Ms. Mack had no further comments.

Mr. Levy thanked the public for coming and noted that the Board appreciates their feedback during this long process. Ultimately, the goal of the Department is moving people as efficiently as possible. This is one model. It's an opportunity, but it's going to impact him as a rider as well, possibly negatively. He also thanked staff and noted the effort that has gone into the process. He also noted that the public should be yelling at their state legislators as well, because a lot of the roads with snow problems are state roads.

Ms. Hamre thanked the public for coming tonight, especially the youngest People Mover riders and their parents. She also thanked staff for their work and is looking forward to what the Board can do to take some of the pain out of this transition.

Chair Smith thanked everyone for coming, staying engaged, and keeping the Board honest. He asked the public to understand that the Board is trying to do the best it can for this system, and they know that some people will be hurt and a lot of people will be impacted. He stated that he

walks at least a quarter-mile to his bus stop, and he used it almost exclusively all winter. He and his wife share one car between them, and he's privileged enough to be able to make that choice, and he chooses to ride the bus. He recognizes the challenges. He has to walk along Tudor Rd., which gets plowed onto the sidewalk, and that's unacceptable. The Board all recognize this, and they're working to fix it. They hear what the public is saying, they see what they're saying, and they live what they're saying as well.

*IX. NEXT PTAB MEETING DATE*

Next Meeting Date: May 11, 2017 – Assembly Conference Room, #155 City Hall

*X. ADJOURNMENT*

Mr. Moore made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Jackson seconded the motion. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:04pm.

DRAFT