



**Municipality of Anchorage
Public Transit Advisory Board
Meeting Agenda
October 8, 2020; 5:30-7:00 P.M.
<http://bit.ly/PTAB-October-08-2020>**

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of the Agenda

4. Public Involvement Announcement:

For those watching live online, comments and questions can be submitted via Teams Live Q&A by clicking on the Q&A button on the right side of the screen. Public comments for this meeting have also been collected via email and people have had the opportunity to sign up for a phone call. When the Board reaches your agenda item, your comment will be addressed, first by written comment, then by Teams Live Q&A, and finally via outbound phone call. If you have elected to be contacted by phone, the meeting moderator will attempt to call you after the agenda item has been discussed by the Board. You will have 2 minutes to speak on each item you wish to comment on. Written comments will be read aloud by the meeting moderator after the items have been discussed by the Board. Teams Live Q&A comments will be addressed when appropriate. A recording is being made of this meeting and will be posted on the Municipal website.

5. Action / Information Items

- a. Welcoming New PTAB Board Members (INFORMATION)
- b. Minutes of the July 9, 2020 & August 13, 2020 Meetings (ACTION)
- c. Director's Update (INFORMATION)
- d. Service Change Update (INFORMATION)
- e. Fare-free Update (INFORMATION)
- f. Public Transportation Department - 2021 Operating Budget; Resolution (ACTION)
- g. AnchorRIDES - Alaska Mental Health Trust Grant; Resolution (ACTION)
- h. Ridership Update (INFORMATION)

6. Member Comments

7. Adjournment

Next PTAB Meeting Date:

PTAB regular meeting – November 12, 2020, 5:30 - 7:00pm (Location TBD)



**PTAB
Meeting Minutes
July 9, 2020; 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Andrew Ooms called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2. Roll Call

PTAB Present:

Andrew Ooms
Doug Miller
Jennifer Ham
Genevieve Mina
Chelsea Ward-Waller

PTAB Absent:

Dawn Groth

Citizens Present:

4 unique logins were recorded for this meeting.

After roll call, a quorum was present.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Genevieve Mina moved, _____ to approve the July 9, 2020 Agenda.

Mr. Doug Miller seconded,

and the motion passed without objection.

4. Public Involvement Announcement

Mr. Andrew Ooms read the public involvement announcement.

5. Action / Information Items

a) Minutes of the June 11, 2020 Meeting (ACTION)

Mr. Doug Miller moved, to approve the minutes of the PTAB meeting of June 11, 2020

Ms. Genevieve Mina seconded,

and the motion passed without objection.

b) Director's Update (INFORMATION)

Information provided by Ms. Jamie Acton and Mr. Felix Rivera

c) ACDA Update re: Transit Center Redevelopment Project (INFORMATION)

Information provided by Mr. Andrew Halcro

d) Service Change Update (INFORMATION)

Information provided by Ms. Christine Schuette

e) Public Transportation Department (PTD) Budget Update (INFORMATION)

Information provided by Ms. Jamie Acton

f) Ridership Update

Information provided by Mr. Nicholas Abugel

6. Public Comments

Stephen A. Welch

DISCUSSION POINTS/QUESTIONS

- **Five LOCAL businesses** (Tent City Taphouse, Circular Boutique, Akela Space, Madmen Studios, Bottoms Boutique) are located on the north side of 6th Avenue between C and D Streets and their customers utilize the parking meters on the south side of 6th Avenue. Locating two transit stops at this location **removes 5 of the 8 spaces available**. At the direction of Acton, these were moved on 6/25/20 to the sidewalk across from JCP.
- Issues arose on the first day that transit stops were located at the Nordstrom building:
 - Fighting resulting in one person entering oncoming traffic three times; Mall security was called
 - A gentleman not allowing others to pass on the sidewalk
 - Break-in at Tent City Taphouse that evening
 - Vandalism of port-a-potty outside of Tent City Taphouse, including drug paraphernalia left inside
 - Dust and exhaust in the air from busses stopping and departing
 - Transit riders asking to use bathrooms in adjacent shops
- On 8/24/20 transit stops will be relocated from the Downtown Transit Center to the area on 6th adjacent to Nordstrom **AND** across from JCP because those locations were deemed to have the

least impact to transit operations. The projected length of time they will be there is **12-18 months**.

- The transit stop relocation date of 8/24/20 related to a May 2020 start for the Downtown Transit Center redevelopment, which is **now delayed to 4/1/21**. It seems that a move of transit operations in August 2020 is premature, at best, and that the projected 12-18 month time period mentioned above would be **further extended by a minimum of this 7-month delay**.
- There has been **NO public involvement whatsoever** in the decision to relocate the transit stops (not a Transit project, so not their responsibility; ACDA has no steps to notify the public or provide outreach).
- There were 550 calls to APD and AFD regarding the Downtown Transit Center last year and approximately 100 this year. **THIS PROBLEM WOULD BE MOVED TO THE BUSINESSES SURROUNDING THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND TO THE 5th AVENUE MALL.**
- Why were businesses being impacted by the relocation of transit stops not consulted?
- What criteria are typically used in a site selection? What is the public involvement process?
- What facilities typically accompany a transit stop with this level of traffic?
- Why does the relocation of transit stops seem to exclude investment by the MOA/ACDA/EasyPark to ensure the location has the least impact, i.e. not removing parking used by local business patrons, providing bathroom facilities for a stop of this scale, increasing clean-up of the surrounding area, etc.?
- What is the schedule for the redevelopment of the Downtown Transit Center, including the anticipated location of the Transit Center when that redevelopment is complete?

Roberta Jamestown

I ride weekdays OB 31 @ 648 duben & oklahoma and debarr to transfer to IB 25 @ 715 to ANMC, when i get off the 31 @Muldoon & debarr to wait on the 25 transfer it is a 25 minute wait which is a long wait in the winter. Maybe the 25 bus at this time slot can run every 15 for people going to work early weekday, or the 31 bus can leave Northway later in the mornings to have a better connection time to catch the 25. And the return after work isn't a good connection either as far as wait time between these two buses.

Kim Stalder

I'm available for questions, should the board have any, regarding the relocation of stops to Nordstrom/JCP, as it is my understanding it may be possible to move them.

7. Member Comments

Doug Miller stated that he was interested in further information regarding the transit center relocation.

Genevieve Mina stated that she was excited about discussing People Mover going fare free. She is also excited about more people joining the board; she also enjoyed the story map and the explanation it provided. She also stated that she was glad that People Mover went through the Transit on The Move process. She was also happy that People Mover was handing out masks and suggested more social media posts that they were available.

Jennifer Ham stated that she was excited about some of the developments going on at People Mover. She also asked if security would move with the transit center should it move in the future. Ms. Jamie Acton replied that the ACDA security that is currently at the transit center will move with the transit center.

Chelsea Ward-Waller stated that she was interested in the comments received from local businesses in regard to the transit center moving. She agreed that the story map was super helpful and looks forward to further decision about the transit center move.

Andrew Ooms thanked People Mover for their efforts to keep everyone safe with regards to COVID-19. He also looks forward to new members. He shared that he will be in Anchorage a little bit longer than he expected.

8. Adjournment **Time: 6:46pm**

Ms. Chelsea Ward-Waller moved,

to adjourn the PTAB meeting of
July 9, 2020

Mr. Jennifer Ham seconded,

and the motion passed without objection.

Mr. Andrew Ooms adjourned the meeting at 6:46pm.

The next PTAB meeting will be held on August 13, 2020, 5:30 - 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicholas Abugel, Transit Planning Technician

For detailed Board discussion, please refer to the recording of this meeting located on the Municipal Website at <http://www.muni.org/Departments/transit/Pages/PublicTransitAdvisoryBoard.aspx>



**PTAB
MEETING MINUTES
August 13, 2020; 5:30 – 7:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Andrew Ooms called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2. ROLL CALL

PTAB PRESENT:

Doug Miller
Jennifer Ham
Genevieve Mina
Chelsea Ward-Waller

CITIZENS PRESENT:

3 unique logins were recorded for this meeting.

PTAB ABSENT:

Andrew Ooms
Dawn Groth

After roll call, a quorum was not present.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Without a quorum, the agenda could not be approved; the meeting continued as an information session.

4. Public Involvement Announcement

Mr. Doug Miller stated that since this meeting was without a quorum, it would continue as an information session.

5. Action / Information Items

- a) Minutes of the July 9, 2020 Meeting (ACTION)
Without a quorum, the July 9, 2020 minutes could not be approved.
- b) Director's Update (INFORMATION)
Information provided by Ms. Jamie Acton
- c) 2021 Budget and CIP/CIB (ACTION)
Information provided by Ms. Jamie Acton

- d) CARES Act Funding Plan (ACTION)
Information provided by Ms. Jamie Acton
- e) Fare Free Discussion/Proposal from Assembly Chair Felix Rivera (ACTION)
Information provided by Mr. Bart Rudolph
- f) Service Change Update (INFORMATION)
Information provided by Mr. Bart Rudolph
- g) Ridership Update (INFORMATION)
Information provided by Mr. Nicholas Abugel
- h) Public Comments

I sold my truck and have been riding the People Mover bus #35 for a couple of months. I want to give my compliments to the bus drivers. Timely service and dependable. I have time to relax to and from work downtown with them doing the driving. Just wanted to say thank you and well done to the drivers.

Sincerely,

Steve Pence, CPA, CGMA

6. MEMBER COMMENTS

Chelsea Ward-Waller stated that she continues to be impressed with how People Mover has been operating during the current pandemic.

Genevieve Mina echoed Chelsea Ward-Weller's comment. She also was happy to see the ridership graph which helped visualize the current state of ridership. She also stated that she's looking forward to additional conversation about the CARES Act funding. She is happy to see funding allocated towards transit security.

Jennifer Ham was not available to comment.

Doug Miller stated that he is very excited about the CARES Act funding. He is also happy that the board now has two new members starting next month. He also stated that he is concerned about the state of the transit center, especially with winter coming.

7. Adjournment

Without a quorum, this informational meeting ended at 6:25pm.

The next PTAB meeting will be held on September 10, 2020, 5:30 - 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicholas Abugel, Transit Planning Technician

For detailed Board discussion, please refer to the recording of this meeting located on the Municipal Website at <http://www.muni.org/Departments/transit/Pages/PublicTransitAdvisoryBoard.aspx>



Municipality of Anchorage
Public Transportation Department
Memorandum

DATE: October 7, 2020
TO: Public Transit Advisory Board
THRU: Jamie Acton | *Director*
FROM: Christine Schuette | *Transit Planner* and
FROM: Bart Rudolph | *Planning & Communications Manager*
SUBJECT: **Fare-Free Public Transport**

Background

Anchorage Assembly Member Felix Rivera requested to the Public Transit Advisory Board (PTAB) that the Public Transportation Department (PTD) look into going fare-free. There are four different types of Free-Fare Public Transport (FFPT):

- **Spatially limited** FFPT (limited to a specific section of the network or a particular mode);
- **Temporarily limited** FFPT (limited to a specific, yet regularly occurring periods of time);
- **Socially limited** FFPT (limited to certain groups of users); and
- **Full** FFPT (available to the vast majority of routes and services available).

PTD currently offers socially limited and temporarily limited FFPT. Seniors ride free every Wednesday and youth ride free on Thursdays during the summer.

The Benefits of a Fare-Free Network

The potential benefits of FFPT deal primarily with income disparity and the environment. FFPT can enhance mobility opportunities for everyone and increased ridership can divert more single occupancy vehicles off the road. Eliminating fares removes affordability barriers and helps make the system more equitable for all users, especially for short trips. The elimination of the fare box can speed up passenger loading, reducing total trip times and making the system more reliable. Reducing trip times also makes transit more competitive with the automobile when riders have a choice between the two. This can also have a positive effect from the bus operator's perspective if they have to engage in fare disputes with customers not having correct change or boarding without fares in hand. The elimination of the fare box can also reduce the administrative expenses related to fare collection and processing and the maintenance costs associated with the farebox in general. Another big benefit is that the elimination of fares would eliminate transfer fees.

The Risks of a Fare-Free Network

The potential risks of FFPT deal primarily with over-crowding and the potential to attract non-destination riders. If ridership increases significantly, quality of service could decline if the department is not able to add more buses to increase service levels to match demand. Expenses and staff time associated with maintenance could also increase as more customers use the system. Additional operators, operations supervisors and mechanics may need to be hired. Over-crowding could drive away existing customers or weigh on their perception of safety while riding the bus. Enforcing "origin to destination" policies to prevent continuous riding may also create additional conflict. Transit security (if in place before FFPT) could help with this potential risk. Additionally, FFPT would affect more than just People Mover

operations. AnchorRIDES paratransit would be required to also go fare-free, thus increasing demand and operating costs for that service.

It will also be important to get community buy-in. Without a sales tax to mitigate the loss revenue, there could be competing city initiatives in the annual municipal operating budget and areas of town that do not have transit service could be a force of opposition.

Brief Experience

The PTD went fare-free between March 18 and April 9, 2020 in response to a global pandemic. This indirectly gave PTD a sneak peek into what a fare-free system could look like, although rider limits were in place that prevented over-crowding. During that time, there were reports that some riders were allegedly taking “non-destination” trips inflating the increased ridership numbers. The reports further claimed that some non-destination riders refused to get off the bus at the end of the route, not complying with the rider rules set in place.

Detailed Analysis

In order to better understand what a fare-free system would look like in Anchorage, there are several questions that would need to be answered and research that would need to be done.

- Analyze the 2019 APTA Fares database to compare PTD’s fare structure to similar sized networks. Research should include fully fledged FFPT transit networks that are not university systems or based on tourism.
- Determine PTD’s potential for lost revenue. What is PTD’s fare box recovery ratio? What percent of riders have fare-exempt or half-fare status already? What is the financial impact of ending employer/university agreements? What new revenue source would offset FFPT and how sustainable is it?
- What are the current costs associated with fare collection? (i.e. staff time processing the cash, maintenance time fixing malfunctioning fareboxes, operations time delayed due to faulty fareboxes or fare disputes).
- How much would ridership increase? In the literature, fare elasticity is reported to be -.03, meaning that with a decrease of 100% in fares, demand should increase by 30%. However, many transit systems have reported increases closer to 50%. Demand will vary depending on; the type of passenger, the time of day, the type of route and the length of time since the fare structure change took place.
- Will PTD be able to handle the increased support needed to customer service, maintenance, operations, and the increased need of bus stop amenities?
- Will fare-free change how PTD reports to FTA and/or change PTD’s eligibility for grant funding?
- What do the bus operators think? Bus operator satisfaction could improve by not having to deal with rider disputes at the fare box or it could be hindered by the potential of over-crowding and non-destination riders.
- Is there community buy-in and how will the community relationship to transit change with a fare-free policy?
- How will an increase in ridership affect Anchorage’s goals of mobility? For current riders that want more service (frequency, span and coverage), how does the messaging for FFPT work and not conflict with those goals?

Next Steps

The path to a fare-free system should not happen overnight. Further literature review would be needed on the benefits and risks of a fare-free system highlighting some of the case studies and lessons learned. The research outlined above needs to happen first and if a path forward is

deemed in the best interest of the community, PTD should consider incremental steps to getting there. For instance, PTD could pursue socially limited FFPT avenues first by implementing an all youth ride free program seven days a week. The same could be done with seniors and veterans. PTD could also consider making a temporally limited FFPT with certain days of the week or times of the day that transit is free for all to ride. This could be done during off-peak times to help prevent overcrowding. Furthermore, PTD could consider a pilot program to see what works and what does not, looking for opportunities and obstacles before a complete fare structure change. If there is community and political support for a fare-free system, it is recommended that a consulting firm be hired to provide an independent analysis of the questions raised in this memo.

Fare Free Memo Resources

- Casale, M. (2020, May). Zero Fare Transit Kansas City: A case study in free public transportation. *U.S. PIRG*. Retrieved from <https://uspirg.org/blogs/blog/usp/zero-fare-transit-kansas-city-case-study-free-public-transportation>
- Cats, O., Susilo, Y. O., & Reimal, T. (2017). The prospects of fare-free public transport : evidence from Tallinn. *Transportation*, 44(5), 1083–1104. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-016-9695-5>
- Cohen, J. (2018, May). Who's Afraid of Fare-Free Public Transit? *Next City*. Retrieved from <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/whos-afraid-of-fare-free-public-transit>
- Dellheim, J., & Prince, J. (2018). *Free Public Transit And Why We Don't Pay To Ride Elevators*. (J. Dellheim, Judith, Prince, Ed.). Black Rose Books. Retrieved from www.blackrosebooks.com
- Huffer, M., & Kopp, C. (2020, February). When considering free-fare transit, conduct a thorough analysis. *Metro*. Retrieved from <https://www.metro-magazine.com/10111877/when-considering-free-fare-transit-conduct-a-thorough-analysis>
- Kębłowski, W. (2019). Why (not) abolish fares? Exploring the global geography of fare-free public transport. *Transportation*, (0123456789). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11116-019-09986-6>
- Perone, J. S. . (2002). Advantages and Disadvantages of Fare-Free Transit Policy. *Center for Urban Transportation Research*, (October 2002).
- Perone, J. S., & Volinski, J. M. (2002). Fare, Free, or Something In Between? *Center for Urban Transportation Research*, 473–132.
- Starcic, J. (2019, October). Transit can no longer ignore the benefits linked to offering free fares. *Metro*. Retrieved from <https://www.metro-magazine.com/10002865/transit-can-no-longer-ignore-the-benefits-linked-to-offering-free-fares>
- Volinski, J. (2012). *TCRP Synthesis 101: Implementation and Outcomes of Fare-Free Transit Systems*.

**Municipality of Anchorage
Public Transit Advisory Board Resolution #2020-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED
2021 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPERATING BUDGET.

WHEREAS, the Public Transit Advisory Board (Board) was established to advise the Assembly and the Mayor on matters related to public transportation, and

WHEREAS, the Board is charged with making recommendations to the Assembly and Mayor on municipal policy with respect to budget review, capital improvement programs and funding of the public owned and operated transit system, and

WHEREAS, the Board supports the proposed 2021 Operating Budget for the Public Transportation Department which contains no changes or increases from the current (2020) operating budget.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Public Transit Advisory Board strongly recommends the Administration and the Assembly support the proposed 2021 Operating Budget for the Public Transportation Department.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Public Transit Advisory Board
this 8th day of October 2020.

Andrew Ooms
Chair

Municipality of Anchorage
Public Transit Advisory Board Resolution #2020-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORTING AN APPLICATION
FOR THE SFY2022 ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST GRANT

WHEREAS, the Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHT) has provided funding to the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) to support AMHT activities in the Region; and

WHEREAS, the Board is charged with making recommendations to the Assembly and Mayor on municipal policy with respect to budget review, capital improvement programs and funding of the public owned and operated transit system, and

WHEREAS, DOT&PF has issued a call for grant application for SFY2022; and

WHEREAS, provision of AMHT funding to the Municipality of Anchorage Public Transportation Department (PTD) would support the AnchorRIDES paratransit program and the service it provides to the target populations of elderly, disabled and AMHT beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, PTD provides a program of AnchorRIDES services as part of the SFY2022 AMHT grant application; and

WHEREAS, DOT&PF is to staff, support, and administer the AMHT grant program requiring a 20% match of local funds; and

WHEREAS, a resolution of the Board is required as part of the AMHT grant application by PTD.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Anchorage Public Transit Advisory Board strongly supports the AnchorRIDES program and the services it provides to the target populations of elderly, disabled, and AMHT beneficiaries in the Anchorage area; and

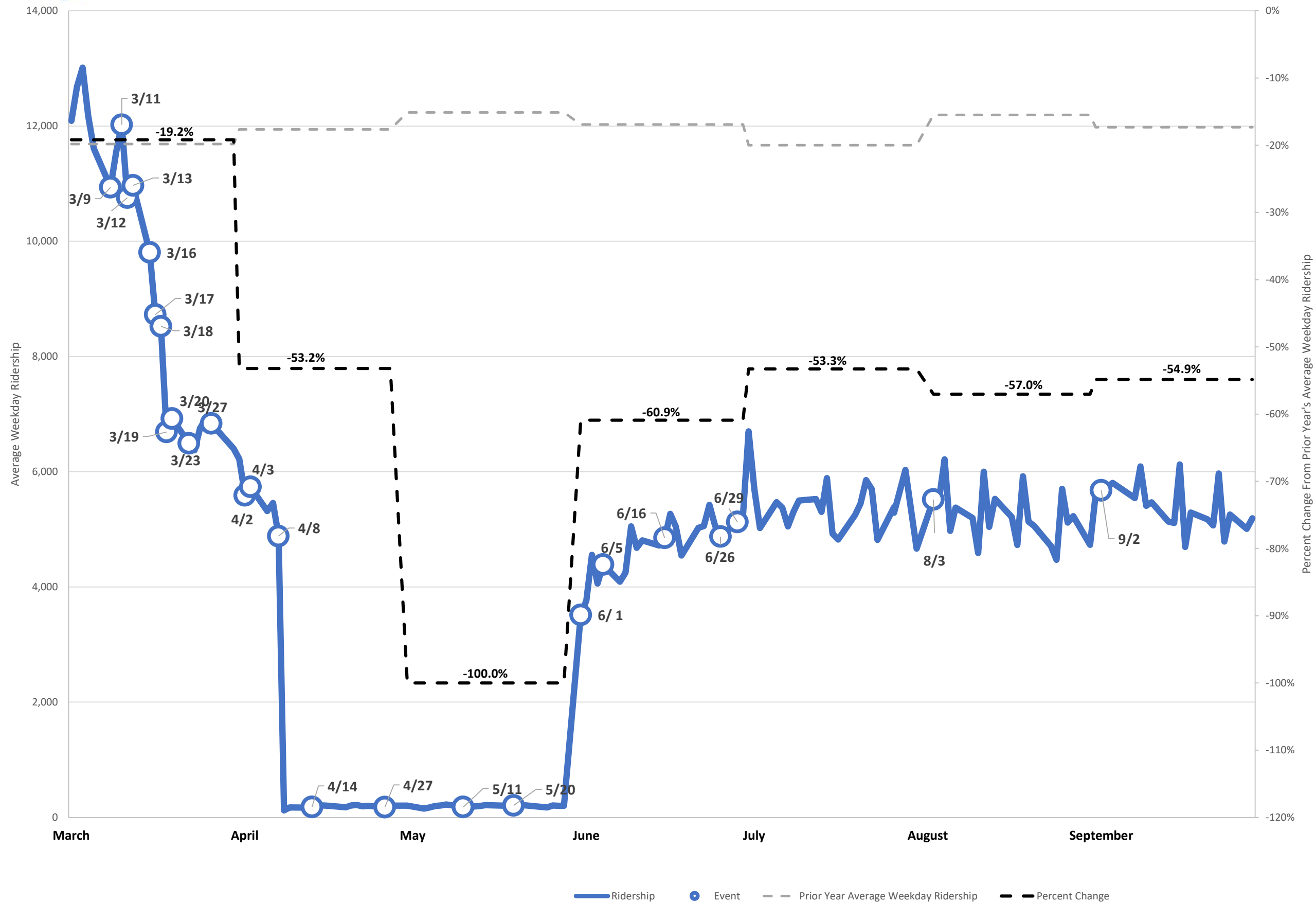
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Anchorage Public Advisory Board supports the application by PTD for SFY2022 funding under the AMHT grant program.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Public Transit Advisory Board
this 8th day of October 2020.

Andrew Ooms
Chair



Average Weekday Ridership During COVID-19



- 3/ 9** - Municipality of Anchorage increases Emergency Operations Center to Level Two (2).
- 3/11** - Governor issues Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration for COVID-19. Seniors ride free.
- 3/12** - Muni declares a civil emergency in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. ASD closes all schools for an extra week.
- 3/13** - National emergency declared. State of Alaska issues Health Mandate 001. Visitation at State Institutes, Non-Contact Student Days at Schools. Muni closes all municipal libraries and civic, cultural, and recreational facilities to the public until March 30.
- 3/16** - State of Alaska issues Health Mandate 002. All Libraries, Archives and Museums, Residential Schools closed to the public. Muni to close all Libraries and civic, cultural, and recreational Facilities.
- 3/17** - State of Alaska issues Health Mandate 003 & 004. Statewide Closure of Restaurants & Bars. Travel Advisory issued to those who have recently traveled to the state of Alaska.
- 3/18** - At 3 PM People Mover bus capacity limited to nine riders. People Mover and AnchorRIDES provided free of charge. Downtown Transit Center lobby and Customer Service closed.
- 3/19** - Mayor announces move to remote work for MOA staff.
- 3/20** - Mayor announces Emergency Order to "Hunker Down."
- 3/23** - State of Alaska issues Health Mandate 009 & 010. Personal Care Services & Gatherings Statewide. International and Interstate Travel, Order for Self Quarantine.
- 3/27** - Mayor extends Hunker Down Order. State of Alaska issues Health Mandate 011 & 012. Social Distancing. Intrastate Travel - Limiting travel between communities to critical infrastructure or critical personal needs.
- 4/2** - 4-passenger limit takes effect for Routes 11, 21, 31, 41, & 91 to allow for additional space for social distancing. These routes are operated with a smaller bus compared to the other routes.
- 4/3** - People Mover announces that they will transition to Demand-Based Service transportation on 4/8 at midnight until further notice.
- 4/8** - People Mover transitions to Demand-Based service at midnight.
- 4/14** - Mayor updates and extends Emergency Orders.
- 4/27** - Mayor issues Emergency Orders EO-07 and EO-08.
- 5/11** - Mayor issues Emergency Order EO-09.
- 5/20** - Mayor issues statement about the Municipality's transition to Phase 3.
- 6/1** - People Mover resumes regular bus service, with rider limits in place. 9 riders per 40' bus, and 4 riders per 22' bus. Cloth face masks recommended.
- 6/5** - Mayor signs EO-11 establishing updated quarantine protocols for interstate travelers.
- 6/16** - Mayor issues Emergency Order EO-12.
- 6/ 26** - Mayor issues Emergency Order EO-13.
- 6/29** - In accordance with the emergency order EO-13, cloth face masks will be required to ride People Mover starting today. Rider limits are also increased to 18 riders per 40' bus, and 6 riders per 22' bus.
- 8/3** - Per EO-15, current rider limits are set at 14 riders on 40-foot People Mover buses, and 4 riders on the 22-foot buses.
- 9/2** - The rider limit for the 22' bus increases to six riders. The 40' buses remain at a 14 rider limit.