

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 19, 2013**

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on November 19, 2013 at 12:00 p.m. in the airport's Eastern Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Wade Key, Chairman	Ken Larking, Deputy City Manager
Ralph Price	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Judy Keesee	Lisa Bivens, Administrative Assistant
Joe King, City Manager	

Approval of Minutes

Judy Keesee moved that the minutes of the August 1, 2013 meeting be accepted as presented and Ralph Price seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Senior Transportation Ridership Activities

Marc Adelman highlighted marketing activities that were completed over the past six months to increase ridership for the Senior Transportation program which is financially supported through federal and state New Freedom operating grants. Once mass transit was made aware last May that the FY14 New Freedom grant was recommended for funding by the state it was decided that it would be good to initiate some marketing activities since a majority of the seniors were only using the service to complete medical trips. It was decided that the best approach to market the service would be to call the seniors directly to remind them of service options. Business cards were also mailed out to seniors that listed multiple phone numbers that they could use to reserve and cancel service. In addition, seniors were informed of service opportunities through outreach activities at many senior residential facilities.

Adelman reviewed a table with the Committee that showed a significant increase in senior ridership that has occurred over the past year for both disabled and ambulatory passengers. Trips completed for senior disabled passengers are invoiced to Parks and Recreation at \$2 per trip and senior ambulatory trips are invoiced at \$4 per trip. Parks and Recreation uses Office on Aging funds to pay for trips that are completed by seniors. This table also showed ridership data related to a different grant which finances trips completed by persons under 60 years old who travel to the dialysis clinic for treatment. Ridership activity for that service increased as well during the spring and fall of 2013. However, at the end September 2013 the dialysis transportation grant was exhausted and only a few trips were completed in October. Parks and Recreation has applied for another grant to continue this program.

Adelman said that since mass transit grant applications are due to the state on February 1st it was necessary to use limited ridership data and operating costs for the period October 2012 through January 2013 to develop a budget for the FY14 New Freedom grant application. However, ridership and related operating costs increased greatly during 2013 and the data used to develop the operating budget for the FY14 New Freedom grant did not account for the increased service levels.

Senior Transportation Ridership Activities (continued)

Also, due to the ridership increase and vehicle maintenance issues the transit system has relied on a loaner bus from Sonny Merryman Inc. to meet passenger demand. Adelman commented that it is possible to submit a mid-year grant application for an additional vehicle that would be subsidized with federal and state capital funds. He requested approval from the Committee to make application that would allow a bus to be received this fiscal year. Adelman said that he was made aware of this possibility during a recent meeting with a state official while discussing passenger demand issues and vehicle maintenance challenges. Discussion continued.

A motion was made by Judy Keesee and seconded by Ralph Price to move forward to submit the mid-year grant application to request additional state and federal funds to acquire one twenty passenger expansion bus for the transit fleet. All were in favor and the motion passed. Adelman said that he would seek City Council's approval in December to appropriate federal, state and local funds to purchase the expansion bus. Federal and state funding would finance 91% of the total cost of the vehicle.

Update on New Freedom Grants

Marc Adelman identified several differences that exist between the FY13 and FY14 New Freedom grants including the budget amounts, staffing levels and cost allocation procedures. He noted that the FY13 New Freedom budget was based on allocated expenses for all invoiced senior trips (ambulatory and disabled) and disabled Handivan trips but the FY14 New Freedom budget does not take into account allocated expenses for ambulatory trips. This change was made because the primary mission of the New Freedom grant is to provide funding to improve access for persons with disabilities. Also, due to the increase in ridership activity that occurred after the FY14 grant application was submitted in February 2013 it is not anticipated that the FY14 budget of \$151,279 could support allocated expenses for all senior trips completed. Likewise, revenue budgeted for the FY14 New Freedom grant in the amount of \$30,000 will pertain to only disabled trips completed by seniors whose trips are invoiced and disabled Handivan riders who pay cash for service.

Adelman also pointed out that the operating budget for the FY13 New Freedom grant (October 1 – September 30, 2013) only supported operating expenses incurred for the first eleven months of the fiscal year due to increased senior ridership activity that was not anticipated. Likewise, the budgeted cash fare revenue amount for the FY13 New Freedom grant was also exceeded in eleven months. As a result, expenses incurred and revenue realized for the service during September 2013 were allocated to the FY14 base operating budget. However, as identified in the financial statement report the transit system is currently under budget for the base service. Discussion continued.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership and financial status report highlights for all transit operations with the Committee.

FY14 Service Planning Activities

Marc Adelman reviewed service planning activities with the Committee and stated that he recently met with persons representing the Middle Border Forward group who suggested that one of the ways the transit system could possibly improve the operation would be to modify the transit guide to make it easier to use. Adelman said that one of his goals this year is to seek out marketing information from other transit systems to accomplish this objective.

During November 2013 drivers are documenting arrival time information for each route when they reach the hub as they did last year in November. This information will be compared with the November 2012 arrival time data that was collected and analyzed to determine whether the new service adjustments that were implemented in August 2013 have improved on-time performance. Adelman also mentioned that staff is currently evaluating possible software enhancements that are available for the existing automated scheduling software program to assist with managing the reservation based operations. Discussion continued.

Other planning activities discussed included examining possible fixed-route service modifications that would be implemented next fiscal year such as establishing a bus stop and a service schedule that would provide more convenient access for passengers traveling to American National University located on Old Riverside Drive. Adelman said that at a recent meeting in Richmond he learned that Danville Pittsylvania Community Services (DPCS) is planning to transport all of their clients beginning the spring of 2014. If this were to occur and fixed-route ridership activity decreases along Hairston Street then the #5 Piedmont Mall Riverside Route which currently serves DPCS could be modified to accommodate a bus stop on Old Riverside Drive. In addition, other possible route modifications discussed included opportunities to better serve the new YMCA when it opens next summer. Discussion continued.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:56 pm.