

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
August 21, 2018

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on August 21, 2018 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Ralph Price, Chairperson	Wade Key
Alexis Ehrhardt, Vice-Chairperson	Earl Reynolds, Deputy City Manager
Larry Campbell	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Judy Keesee	Brooks Jones, Mass Transit Division Director
John Moody	Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Assistant

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Larry Campbell moved that the minutes of the June 11, 2018 meeting be accepted as presented and John Moody seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Recognition Of Wade Key

Mr. Wade Key was present at the beginning of the meeting and said that he does not plan to renew his appointment with the Committee. He commented that he has been a member of the Committee for forty years and has always enjoyed serving.

Bus Wrap for Black History Month

Adelman informed the Committee that this year's operating budget includes additional funds for advertising, which will be used to develop a bus wrap to be installed on a bus during Black History month as well as promoting the Mainline Trolley service. He indicated that quotes for the design, installation and removal of the wrap have been received and the cost is dependent on the area of the bus wrapped. The bus wrap would be installed prior to February 2019 and the bus would be placed on different routes so that it could be seen throughout the city. Adelman provided different examples of bus wraps for the Committee's review. After discussion, the Committee expressed interest in using multiple images of different persons for the bus wrap. ***A motion was made by Alexis Ehrhardt and seconded by Larry Campbell to wrap both sides of the bus and to initiate a sub-committee to work together and then report back to the Committee. All were in favor and the motion passed.*** Alexis, Ehrhardt, John Moody and Ralph Price will serve on the sub-committee.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership and financial status report data for FY2018. The transit system's local match contribution was over budget for FY2018 by \$58,156. This is primarily due to the loss of anticipated state aid related to the senior transportation merger.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports (continued)

General liability insurance expense increased by 64% due to a change in how the city allocates insurance expense to the departments. In addition, realized passenger revenue is down by 11% year to date and fixed-route paid ridership has declined 9.6% from 218,057 trips to 197,123 trips. The operating revenue levels have been impacted by the decline in paid fixed route ridership and the cap placed on the Reserve A Ride service since January 2017. Salary and wages, fuel and vehicle maintenance expenses are all under budget for the year. Reserve A Ride ridership has decreased 2%, Handivan trips have increased by 9% and senior ridership has increased by 6.6% year to date.

The Mainline Trolley ridership continues to remain light after service modifications went into effect on August 3rd. Advertising efforts will continue to promote the service. Discussion continued.

Update on Reservation Based Operations

Adelman said he recently attended a meeting with representatives from the city's Parks and Recreation Department and the Southern Area Agency on Aging concerning the transit system's ability to meet service demand related to increased senior transportation ridership activity and capacity constraints. Service hours for the senior service have doubled since the merger with Parks and Recreation went into effect in FY2013. Adelman explained that the driver turnover rate over the last 3 years ranged between 28% and 43%. Part-time dispatcher vacancies continue to occur and overtime has increased greatly due to increased demand for all reservation-based operations including the Handivan and Reserve A Ride service. The total operating cost of the senior service has doubled over the last five years. In addition, state operating aid has been reduced significantly for the senior operation since FY13 and as a result, the city's local cost to provide the service has increased significantly. In addition, it is anticipated that reservation-based ridership is expected to increase approximately 6% to 8% each year moving forward. Furthermore, the consulting firm that completed the 2015 Transit Development Plan Update identified that it was not sustainable to meet the demand for senior transportation service over the long term and the firm indicated that measures should be implemented to make the service more manageable.

In addition, the cap placed on reservations for senior trips that went into effect in January 2018 has not contained total reservation based ridership activity. Since the cap was implemented, several disabled seniors have opted to use the Handivan service, which caused a spike in the Handivan ridership between January and June 2018 resulting in a 31% increase in trips completed. Adelman also reviewed in detail turnover data associated with drivers and administrative staff and related measures put in place to help mitigate the turnover activity. Adelman explained that the FY2019 Title IIIB grant that is used to finance senior trips was increased by \$13,105. However, if additional service were provided it would also cost the city approximately \$24,275 more in local funds since the \$2 and \$4 invoiced trips do not pay for the full cost of the service.

Update on Reservation Based Operations (continued)

Adelman said that during the recent meeting with representatives from Parks and Recreation and the Southern Area Agency on Aging recommendations were discussed to help control cost and the growth of the reservation based senior transportation service. Recommendations included the following;

- Maintain the cap of 300 daily reservations for all reservation based service
- Schedule Handivan trips when reservations are received based on open time slots for two buses from 6am to 6pm.
- Negotiate Handivan service requests based on federal paratransit regulations
- Deny Handivan service requests that exceed available time slots as permitted by federal regulations
- Provide senior shopping trips and other recurring trips on certain days
- Senior service requests could be approved weekly based on funds that were appropriated to pay for trips completed during FY18 - \$45,662
- Apply surplus Title III B funds to other eligible expenses
- Approval of senior service requests should factor in standing reservations
- Limit standing reservations

Regional Bus Service Update

Copies of a draft service schedule for the planned bus service to Pittsylvania County were distributed for review. Marc Adelman said he would attend a meeting with the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors to update them on the status of the project and gain input regarding the draft service schedule. Danville City Council recently approved the appropriation ordinance to move forward to order the three new regional transportation buses. The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center scheduled a meeting on August 29th at Presto in South Boston to talk to major employers about the Halifax County service and discuss a survey they would like to issue to prospective passengers.

Adelman said that he and Alexis Ehrhardt attended a meeting recently with the Healthcare Taskforce to discuss opportunities to facilitate transportation access related to Medicaid expansion that may be supported by the regional bus service. Adelman explained that planning efforts for the regional bus service over the next few months would be focused on finalizing a detailed service plan by December 2018. The proposed service schedule for the operation would be included in a Demonstration Grant Application that must be submitted to the state by February 1, 2019. Adelman mentioned that the timetable for the service must allow enough time to meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements to go off route up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to transport persons with disabilities and complement shift time requirements for businesses along the route path.

Update on FY18 and FY19 Capital Projects

Adelman said the FY2018 propane refueling station project that will be located at 522 Spring Street has been delayed due to Buy America requirements and tariff issues. Presently, a transformer is being installed to support North Union Street and to provide electric service to the refueling station.

The three, fourteen-passenger vehicles that will be used for the regional bus service have been ordered and quotes have been received to replace four, twenty-eight passenger buses in the fixed-route fleet. The twenty-eight passenger buses will also be equipped with propane tanks. Adelman indicated that Wal-Mart has approved the Deed of Easement to install the bus shelter on their property. The shelter should be delivered by the end of September. Public Works Engineering staff developed bid specifications to install a concrete pad for the shelter. In addition, proposals were received from engineering firms to design the new parking lot that will be located behind the Mass Transit garage. An invitation to bid has also been issued to purchase and install a mobile column lift. It is expected the lift will be installed within the next sixty days.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.