

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 19, 2015

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on May 19, 2015 at 12:00 pm in the airport's Eastern Conference Room. The following were present:

Attendees:

Wade Key, Chairman	Ken Larking, Deputy City Manager
Alexis Ehrhardt	Jason Quan, KFH Group
Larry Campbell	Nick Britton, VDRPT
Ralph Price	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Joe King, City Manager	Lisa Bivens, Administrative Assistant

Approval of Minutes

Larry Campbell moved that the minutes of the January 29, 2015 meeting be accepted as presented and Ralph Price seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Transit Development Plan Update 2015

Jason Quan of the KFH Group completed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the status of the Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update. He indicated that his firm is presently evaluating alternatives to improve service based on the findings and analysis completed to date. He believes several items need to be addressed to develop service and improve on time performance especially from midday to late afternoon for the fixed-route operation, which should be the top priority. Another item of concern that he believes should be addressed is finding a way to mitigate the growth of the demand response service including the Reserve A Ride and Senior Transportation operations so they will be sustainable for the long run. Other suggestions provided by the consultant firm included the following; modify the Glenwood route so it could be extended to industrial parks located on the east side of the city, implement scheduled evening service and continue to install bus shelters and amenities at high activity locations. Quan also mentioned that the route and schedule guide could be modified to make it easier for customers to read and understand. Discussion continued.

Jason Quan discussed several possible options to modify run times and/or certain routes to provide for additional time to complete runs. Adelman commented that the ability to provide reliable service is challenged regularly during the afternoon and also commented that when Wal-Mart opens at NorDan Shopping center it will be even more difficult for the buses to remain on time. Quan commented that even if additional development did not occur, the fixed-route system would still have a hard time staying on schedule and is not reliable many times during the day. Discussion continued.

Marc Adelman reviewed arrival time data and the different options for modifying run times with the Committee. He said that the Mass Transit staff recommends implementing option #2 to revise the fixed-route service schedule which only causes the loss of one run after additional time is added to afternoon bus runs. This option also limits the number of run times that would be significantly different compared to the existing schedule. Option 2 is identified on the following page.

Option 2 – Proposed Fixed-Route Schedule Changes

CURRENT SCHEDULE	PROPOSED SCHEDULE
6:00 AM	NO CHANGE
6:40 AM	NO CHANGE
7:20 AM	NO CHANGE
8:00 AM	NO CHANGE
8:40 AM	NO CHANGE
9:20 AM	NO CHANGE
10:10 AM	NO CHANGE
10:50 AM	NO CHANGE
11:30 AM	NO CHANGE
12:10 PM	12:15 PM
12:50 PM	1:00 PM
1:30 PM	1:50 PM
2:10 PM	2:40 PM
3:00 PM	LOSS OF ONE RUN
3:40 PM	3:40 PM
4:20 PM	4:25 PM
5:00 PM	5:05 PM
5:40 PM	5:45 PM

Alexis Ehrhardt asked would other service schedule changes be required if Option 2 is implemented and vehicular traffic and bus ridership increases when Wal-Mart opens at NorDan Shopping Center. Adelman said that currently during the first week of the month extra buses are placed in service to keep the buses on schedule. He added that if it becomes challenging to keep the buses on schedule after changes are made that an additional bus or buses could be used in a similar manner to assist with the operation. Discussion continued.

KFG Group Recommendations/Proposals:

Sale of Bus Tokens – Sell bus tokens at the Transfer Center instead of on the buses to reduce time constraints associated with meeting the fixed-route service schedule.

Reserve A Ride Service – Limit passenger use of the Reserve A Ride service by requiring ambulatory passengers to use the fixed-route service who live within a quarter of a mile of a fixed-route. Discussion continued

Senior Transportation – Senior transportation trips should be reduced by different means to ensure the operation can be sustained for the long term. One option for accomplishing this goal could involve limiting the number of medical trips that can be completed weekly.

Glenwood Route - Extend the Glenwood route to the Airside Industrial Park and Cane Creek Industrial Park based on the existing service schedule. Relative to demand additional mid-day trips could be added at a later time.

KFG Group Recommendations/Proposals (continued):

Scheduled Evening Service – Add scheduled trips to different high demand locations across the city. Some locations to consider would be Telvista, Danville Community College and the Danville Mall. These scheduled trips would be built in to the current demand response service.

Bus Stop Amenities – Install additional passenger benches and shelters at locations where there is higher activity.

Route and Schedule Guide - Consolidate schedule information identified for routes that serve the same locations. This would involve the North Main and Edgewood/Stokesland routes.

Bike Racks – Install bike racks on buses so that more passengers can use the fixed-route service. It is proposed to start this activity on one route such as the Edgewood/Stokesland routes.

Rehabilitate Parking Lot – Reconstruct the parking lot that is located on the east side of the mass transit administrative maintenance facility which is used by Danville Public Schools Transportation to park buses and Danville Transit to gain access to the rear of the mass transit garage.

Staffing Levels – Add staff to create a better working environment. Compared to five other similar systems evaluated by the consultant firm Danville Transit is the most efficient by far. However, existing staffing levels may not be adequate to meet current and future needs. It is proposed to add an additional administrative employee to facilitate phone access and assist in multiple roles.

Maintenance – Reduce vehicle downtime by revising maintenance activities. Sample data for a four month period shows up to eight vehicles were out of service at the same time several times during that timeframe. A very important issue that impacts the objective of reducing vehicle downtime is the shortage of mechanics. Adelman said that this is not only an issue for Public Works' Motor Pool but also for other maintenance shops in the area. One option to consider is to outsource some of the maintenance repairs. Another option identified is to purchase buses that use alternative fuels that burn cleaner and are more maintenance friendly. Propane buses are one option however they have advantages and disadvantages. Propane buses are more expensive to procure and the fuel economy is not as good as diesel. However, propane burns cleaner and there tends to be less maintenance issues than for diesel buses used in service.

Request to modify the FY2016 Grant Application to purchase propane buses

Marc Adelman passed out information and discussed options with the Committee regarding the possibility of purchasing propane buses. He mentioned that fuel cost could be reduced if propane vehicles were acquired relative to fuel economy. Historically, propane fuel cost can be up to fifty percent less expensive on average than diesel fuel cost. However, on average research shows propane vehicles are thirty-five percent less efficient with respect to the number of gallons needed to support the same miles as a diesel engine vehicle.

Adelman said he has been in contact with the executive director and fleet manager for Bay Transit regarding their use of propane buses. This transit system purchased propane buses that use a light F450 chassis vehicle that typically seat 14-16 passengers and use them for reservation based service. Bay Transit reported the propane buses are getting five to six miles per gallon.

Request to modify the FY2016 Grant Application to purchase propane buses (continued):

Adelman pointed out that propane buses used in fixed-route service would require a heavier chassis and that Danville Transit's small bus diesel fleet used for reservation based service is currently averaging ten miles per gallon, which is forty-five percent more fuel efficient than Bay Transit's propane buses. Therefore, fuel economy can also be very important with respect to realizing potential fuel savings when considering acquiring alternative fuel vehicles. Another issue impacting fuel savings is that the cost per gallon for propane can fluctuate greatly like gas and diesel. Discussion continued.

Adelman said that permission has been received from the State to modify the FY 2016 grant application to purchase propane vehicles. However, he recommended that propane buses should be incrementally placed in service and initially used only in the fixed-route fleet where the probability of cost savings is greater. Discussion continued. *A motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by Alexis Ehrhardt for the capital grant application be modified to purchase a propane bus for use in fixed-route service. All were in favor and the motion passed.*

A motion was made by Alexis Ehrhardt and seconded by Larry Campbell to amend the service schedule and make changes according to Option 2 as discussed. All were in favor and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Larry Campbell and seconded by Ralph Price to move forward with the other proposed route and service schedule changes as identified in slide 9 of the presentation that included the following; reduce service on one run to Seminole Drive, Spring Road, Seminole Trail and Freeze Road at 11:30 am, eliminate morning service to Riverside Centre and K-Mart and extend the Glenwood Route at existing times to Airside Industrial Park and Cane Creek Industrial Park. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Review of Financial and Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership and financial status reports with the Committee.

Proposed Recommendations to Operating Policy and Procedures

Adelman updated the Committee on his discussion with the drivers regarding the items discussed at the last meeting in reference to body odor, allowing liquids on the bus and sagging pants. Adelman informed members that according to drivers many passengers wear sagging pants and that the style was the norm. Therefore, drivers believe that required efforts to modify this situation would be very repetitive and further challenge their ability to remain on schedule. In addition, drivers were not in favor of requiring screw-on bottle tops because so many passengers board with drinks from fast food restaurants like Hardees and Burger King. However, they did feel that some type of top should be on the bottle or cup. In addition, Adelman stated that Danville Transit staff will follow the policy that Lynchburg Transit uses with respect to passenger body odor issues. Drivers will document the incident and seek documentation from another passenger that has complained about odor. This information would be given to the supervisor and the supervisor would discretely discuss the issue with the passenger.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 pm.