

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 19, 2021**

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on January 19, 2021 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit Training Facility. The following were present:

Attendees:

Alexis Ehrhardt, Chairperson	Ralph Price
Anna Kautzman	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Judy Keesee	Lisa Bivens, Senior Administrative Assistant
John Moody, Vice-Chairperson	

The Transportation Committee meeting, held on January 19, 2021 was called to order at 12:10 pm by Chairperson, Alexis Ehrhardt.

Public Comment

No public comments were received.

Approval of Minutes

John Moody made a motion to amend the minutes of the October 29, 2021 meeting to include the time the meeting was called to order. Alexis Ehrhardt seconded the motion, all members present were in favor and the motion passed to approve the minutes as amended.

Review of Monthly Ridership Report

Marc Adelman commented that the pandemic has influenced multiple transit operations. Fixed route ridership decreased 35% for the first six months of FY21 compared to last fiscal year for the period July 2019 through December 2019. However, Reserve A ride Ridership increased by 20% for the same timeframe. This situation helped to stabilize overall total operating revenue levels. Handivan ridership is down by 21% and senior ridership decreased by 8% compared to last fiscal year for this timeframe. Total ridership decreased by 29% compared to last fiscal year from 164,037 to 116,090 trips due to the pandemic.

Review of Financial Status Report

Marc Adelman reviewed the financial status report for the period July 2020 through November 2020 with the Committee. ***Please note that the passenger revenue amount reported during the January 2021 meeting indicated operating revenue was under budget by 1.7%. However, an error was detected regarding this financial data after the meeting concluded. The year to date passenger revenue amount identified cash fares realized through December 2020 instead of November 2020. As a result, passenger revenue through November 2020 was under budget by 22% not 1.7%.***

Review of Financial Status Report (Continued)

Token sales for July 2020 through November 2020 decreased by 13% and salary and wages are under budget by 9%. This is partially due to the Job vacancies related to the Division Director's position and full-time driving positions. In addition, the pay for performance increase was delayed until September 2020, which further contributed to decreased salary and wages for the period. Fuel charges for the first five months of FY21 are under budget by 22%. Total operating expenses for period are under budget by 6.4% or \$83,192.

Marc Adelman provided an update on the current employment status for transit drivers. Since July 2020, five part-time drivers and six full-time drivers were hired. However, eight employment separations occurred through December 2020 involving two part-time drivers and six full-time drivers, which is a net increase of three part-time drivers. Presently, twenty-six of the thirty full-time drivers' positions are filled. During the month of January 2021 provisional offers are expected for one full-time driver and one part-time driver expected, who would start work by February 1st. Marc Adelman indicated that due to the continued volatile employment situation with drivers, he could not recommend initiating a service expansion if requested.

Same Day Service Update and Recommendations to Expand Service Option

On December 1, 2020, the transit system initiated same day reservations for the Handivan, Reserve A Ride and Senior Transportation operations. Primary objectives for this service option include improving customer convenience and access as well as service efficiency levels by assigning trips relative to cancellations and no-shows. Currently, same day rides are offered eight hours per day and the service periods are based on when transit staff felt service could be provided more reliably.

During December 2020, 21% of the total *prior day* scheduled trips were not completed due to cancellations and no-shows, which further supports needed flexibility to offer same day service arrangements. Marc Adelman said the transit system has accommodated most of the same day trips requested to date and believes the system can effectively expand the same day service hours. Discussion continued regarding the differences between same day and prior day reservations.

Same Day service highlights and recommendations:

- Original service plan called for a soft rollout to initiate same day service
- Initial marketing activities completed to date – provided flyers to passengers
- Initial service hours were restricted from 9:00 am until 11:00 am and 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm (8 hours per day)
- Based on current activity, it is recommended to expand same day service hours from 8:00 am until 12:30 am, Monday through Saturday (16.5 hours per day)
- Same day evening service requests must be received by 6:00 pm due to staffing levels
- Complete mailing to all reservation-based passengers who used the Reserve A Ride, Handivan and senior operations over the past six months (784 persons)
- Market same day service to the public

Same Day Service Update and Recommendations to Expand Service Option (Continued)

Marc Adelman stated that if the same day service expansion is approved by the Committee, he would like to wait and complete the mailing to promote this reservation option in early February based on driver availability issues. He added that he does not want to create a situation that could possibly overwhelm staff when expanded hours are made available to the public. He commented that he believes the same day service arrangement would also better support passengers frequenting the casino and airport over the next several years.

A motion was made by Ralph Price and seconded by John Moody to expand the same day service hours and complete a mailing to promote the service. All members in attendance were in favor of the motion.

FY22 Proposed Operating Budget

The proposed detailed operating budget for FY2022 was provided for the Committee's review. Per the suggestion of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, senior transportation expenses have been merged with other operating expenses. As a result, there will no longer be a need to allocate expenses for this service. Total operating expenses are expected to increase by \$130,060 compared to the FY2021 budget. Most of the projected increase is relative to salary and wages and overtime expense. The budget amount for administrative expense allocation charges increased \$54,040 compared to the budgeted amount for FY21. Cash fares are expected to remain constant for next year. However, Marc Adelman indicated the cash fare estimate for FY22 is conservative and it could be much higher if conditions related to the pandemic improve and fixed route seating limitations are eliminated. Currently, the state operating aid funding level is uncertain for next fiscal year. Federal operating aid is expected to increase based on the projected operating deficit and the ability to carry forward surplus Cares Act operating funds.

FY22 Proposed Capital Budget

During FY2022, plans call for replacing four, 14-passenger vehicles at \$109,023 for a total of \$432,092 and two 20-passenger vehicles at \$130,911 totaling \$261,822. A new capital funding request for FY22 includes installing automated voice announcement systems in seven buses. Adelman said automated voice announcement systems are typically used in larger transit systems to inform disabled passengers of bus stop locations based on certain locations along individual bus routes. Other announcements can also be downloaded and inserted in this system. For example, an announcement could promote the new same day Reserve a Ride service option. The announcement systems are estimated to cost \$54,199 and would also include an LED display. If approved, this project could potentially be completed in the fall of 2021. Discussion continued.

A motion was made by John Moody and seconded by Judy Keesee to approve the proposed FY2022 operating and capital budgets. All members in attendance were in favor and the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:04 pm.