

CITY OF FLORENCE TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 23, 2014 ** MEETING MINUTES **

CALL TO ORDER –

Chairperson Rose called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members: L.A. Rose, Chair; Mary Stephens, Vice Chair; Jane Ashley; Don Patton; Bill Craig; and Nola Xavier, Mayor were present.

Ex-Officio Members: Clara Kuhn, River Cities Taxi (RCT). Susan Hekimoglu, Lane Transit District (LTD) and Kristine Sirmans, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) were not present.

Support Staff: Glen Southerland, Planning.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Craig moved to approve the Agenda.

Ashley seconded to approve.

By Voice All Ayes, Agenda approved.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

*This is an opportunity for members of the audience to bring to the Transit Advisory Committee's attention any items **NOT** otherwise listed on the agenda. Comments will be limited to **3 minutes per person**, with a maximum time of 15 minutes for all items.*

There was one member of the public present. Ms. Susan Hastings identified herself as a regular rider of the Rhody Express and wished to voice a complaint about the operation of the Rhody Express. Ms. Hastings stated that the drivers were not stopping to allow people to cross the street to board the bus. She said that when she asked the driver at Safeway why he did not stop, he said that he was not allowed to stop because of new rules. Craig asked at what stop Ms. Hastings was waiting. Kuhn clarified that this was on Spruce Street, where she was waiting at the northbound stop and the driver had stopped at the southbound.

Kuhn stated that Ms. Hastings should be able to wait at the shelter under cover, but unfortunately that bus stop is also used by people other than transit riders. Kuhn stated that the Rhody Express stops often for riders across the street, but she would have to speak to him. Ms. Hastings stated that this has been an issue for other riders as well. Stephens suggested that perhaps a way for the drivers to pause and check that there was not someone waiting. Ms. Hastings said that this has also happened at the hospital bus stop. Kuhn stated that at the hospital, there was a bench for people waiting for the bus. She added that it is sometimes possible for the bus to come back to get people it has missed because of the extra time afforded by the 70-minute route, but that this was not always possible.

VC Stephens suggested that as the Rhody Express grows, more shelters be purchased in order to increase ridership. Mayor Xavier stated that all of the shelters that the Rhody Express had were obtained from LTD as they replaced their shelters in Eugene. Mayor Xavier suggested that a priority list of stops without shelters be made so that they can be installed where they are needed as they are obtained.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Patton moved to approve the Minutes of March 19, 2014.

Rose seconded to approve.

By Voice All Ayes, Minutes approved.

4. PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

Route Metrics

- **PT Southerland** passed around March 2014 Route Metric information and stated that there was an increase in the ridership in many of the stops. He stated that the busier stops as well as many of the smaller stops as well. The Committee discussed the weather as possibly being the cause of the increased ridership.
- **PT Southerland** presented the new Route Metric format that he developed with input from Kuhn and Hekimoglu. He stated that the new format included all boardings including ADA and companion riders for a total ridership count.
- **Kuhn** stated that a concern before extending the route to the Three Rivers Casino was that additional ADA riders would be acquired that would be an additional strain on the budget, but the ADA ridership has not yet increased. VC Stephens asked if Kuhn was concerned that more ADA riders would want to go to the Casino. Kuhn stated that it was not the destination that was the concern, but the increased number of ADA riders resulting from the larger service area. Mayor Xavier stated that the increased number of ADA riders would come from the newly eligible qualifying people within a half-mile of the route. Kuhn explained that the ADA Ridesource service costs much more to provide per rider than the Rhody Express.
- **PT Southerland** stated that the ADA ridership for March 2014 did increase to 79 and the average cost per trip went up to \$10.10. Mayor Xavier stated that she believed that Hekimoglu had previously stated that the average cost per trip for LTD was almost \$30. VC Stephens asked if there was a way that this lower cost could be used to benefit funding. CP Rose stated that the funding that was available was available because of the offered ADA service.
- **Patton** asked if the scaling could be made the same on each chart so that they could be compared.

Survey Final Review

- **PT Southerland** presented the final survey format that was decided at the previous meeting for TAC's approval. He stated that SP FarleyCampbell had questions about how the Committee would like to survey ADA riders or if they should be surveyed. CP Rose asked for clarification how the survey would be distributed. PT Southerland stated that this survey would be passed out on the bus, but that if a respondent wanted to fill it out at home, return envelopes could be provided. Kuhn stated that ADA riders could be surveyed through mailing since addresses for those riders were likely on file. VC Stephens asked if Kuhn saw any benefit in surveying those riders. Kuhn stated that she did not see a benefit in surveying those riders.
- **Mayor Xavier** asked if there was a reason that Question 3 asked for only one answer for purposes for riding the Rhody Express. Patton stated that originally it asked for "reasons" and not a single reason. PT Southerland suggested that a "Check all that apply" statement be added. CP Rose asked if TAC was looking to gain information about the primary purpose for riding or all purposes of riding the Rhody Express. Kuhn stated that she recalled that SP FarleyCampbell wanted to keep the questions similar to previous versions of the survey in order to compare the answers. Craig stated that "Shopping" was a generic answer and that the question should ask about multiple reasons. CP Rose said that the question was somewhat irrelevant unless you were only asking for the main reason for riding. Patton stated that previous questions had asked for only one answer. The Committee agreed that the question should ask about only the main purpose. Stephens added that she also agreed that only Rhody Express riders should be surveyed.

- **Craig** stated that he thought that shopping was too generic and asked if that could be narrowed down. He said that other answers were very specific. Mayor Xavier asked if “To get to or from school” should be added. Patton said that he thought that “To get to or from school” was an answer on the previous draft. PT Southerland confirmed that it was on the previous draft from the minutes, but had not been transferred over to the new survey.
- **VC Stephens** stated that a more specific answer for shopping could help when applying for grants. CP Rose and Patton believed that the generic answer was good for this survey, though an expanded answer could be asked in the future. PT Southerland mentioned that the Committee should keep in mind that the respondents will have a limited amount of time to answer the survey while on the bus.
- **Patton** stated that they may want to survey riders of the Rhody Express that were not on the bus during the period of the survey. CP Rose asked if he meant non-riders. Patton clarified that he meant only riders, but those who may not ride during the survey period.
- **Stephens** asked Kuhn, from her experience, how important it was to receive a large number of responses. Kuhn stated that it was a good tool.
- **CP Rose** asked the Committee to confirm that they approved of the format. PT Southerland asked the Committee if they approved of each question, with the addition of “main purpose” and “To get to or from school” for Question 3. Kuhn stated that if the Committee wanted to encourage more comments on Question 4, they could free up a line by removing a line from Question 5. Craig asked how someone would answer Question 5. PT Southerland suggested that the answers for Question 5 be check boxes. VC Stephens said that she agreed with Kuhn about moving the line and said that “Other” in Question 5 should be followed by two lines for explanation. CP Rose asked if the Committee approved of Question 6. The Committee agreed that they approved of the survey.
- **CP Rose** stated that the survey was the final draft. He asked if the final product with the changes and feedback would be emailed to them. Kuhn stated that the bulk of the riders could be reached in the first 15 days of the survey. PT Southerland stated that the survey results could be ready by May 28th or for the June meeting. Kuhn said that if staff was not going to look at the results until May 22nd, the survey should be on the bus until May 21st.
- **PT Southerland** asked Kuhn how many survey respondents she thought she would have. Kuhn stated that she thought that there would be about 40. CP Rose suggested that the survey be conducted from May 1-16. Patton suggested that the survey period be three full weeks.
- **PT Southerland** asked what the best distribution method would be. Kuhn stated that they could re-look at the distribution method if the driver indicated that they were having problems. PT Southerland stated that he did not want to add an additional distraction for the driver. Kuhn stated that the survey would be self-service. She stated that she could count the surveys at the beginning of each day and make sure that all of the surveys that were being passed out were being returned for accountability.
- **VC Stephens** asked how much it would cost to print an ad for the back of the bus that encouraged people to ride the bus and take the survey. PT Southerland stated that it was probably too close to the survey start date to print a sign.
- **CP Rose** confirmed with the Committee that the distribution method for the survey would be a box on the Rhody Express.
- **Patton** stated that he had mentioned that the form should have an indication of which form it was. PT Southerland stated that the form number was on the bottom. Patton stated that the form number should be identified by either TAC or City of Florence. The Committee stated that the form should state TAC.
- **CP Rose** stated that the form should say “TAC Draft Form 14-01.” VC Stephens stated that the month should be included as well, and asked Patton’s opinion. Patton stated that the form should include month and year as well as the revision number. VC Stephens stated that the form designations would help at a later date when sorting through old surveys.
- **PT Southerland** asked if the survey collection method should just be a box on the bus. Kuhn stated that she would take care of the survey collection.

- **Patton** added that the survey form designation should be “TAC Form 1” and then the date. He said that each new form would have a new form number.

5. LONG RANGE PROMOTION & MARKETING

Bus Buddy Program

- **PT Southerland** stated that draft materials were passed out at the last meeting. Craig stated that he thought they looked great and were very comprehensive.
- **PT Southerland** stated that the Police Department would conduct background checks on Bus Buddy applicants. He stated that Hekimoglu needed the names of any possible participants after that meeting, after which she could set up a training session. PT Southerland asked if anyone knew of anyone interested in participating.
- **VC Stephens** asked if the trainer would come to Florence or if participants would have to travel to Eugene. PT Southerland stated that from what he remembered the trainer would be coming to Florence. CP Rose stated that that was his understanding as well.
- **VC Stephens** asked if there would be future opportunities for training or if this was likely the only chance. PT Southerland said that this was likely the only chance. VC Stephens stated that she was interested in participating if there was a need for participants.
- **Kuhn** asked if the training would be conducted in the next 30 – 45 days. PT Southerland said that he did not know, but could find out. Kuhn stated that she wanted to keep volunteers separate from operations of the Rhody Express for insurance reasons.
- **VC Stephens** suggested that Ashley be a trainer as well as a Bus Buddy. Ashley stated that she would be willing to attend any training that was accessible to her.
- **PT Southerland** asked what distribution method TAC would like to use in order to spread Bus Buddy information after the training has been completed. VC Stephens suggested doctor’s offices where staff could give patients information. Kuhn suggested that the information be distributed at facilities such as Tanglewood and Windsong. PT Southerland stated that Sirmans would likely be able to give the information to people who could use it. CP Rose suggested the Senior Center. He said that he thought we should give the information to community centers, but not distribute the information on radio or in the newspaper unless it was free. PT Southerland said that TAC should keep in mind that for the foreseeable future, the only Bus Buddy was Ashley, and we did not want to overwhelm her.

Ride Free Days Sponsorship Program Update

- **PT Southerland** stated that SP FarleyCampbell spoke with Todd from Siuslaw Signs and he indicated that he would be able to print on Rite in the Rain paper. He said that a 250-foot long and 30” wide roll cost \$118.75, the cost would be around \$30 per sign with no art, and any art that needed to be created would be done at Todd’s rate.
- **PT Southerland** stated that staff had decided to provide the program as a service that is applied for, rather than as a contractual service. He said that the cost of the program would be the number of days multiplied by the average fare box income.
- **VC Stephens** asked if a potential sponsor would have to pay to print their own logos. She asked if the charge would be \$30 plus an ink charge. PT Southerland said that he would get that information.
- **VC Stephens** asked if anyone had experience with the Rite-in-the-Rain paper. PT Southerland said that he had some experience with the paper. He said that it would deal with moisture well. Kuhn said that she would visit with Todd to see about care of the signs.
- **PT Southerland** stated that SP FarleyCampbell has spoken to Jenna Bartlett from the Siuslaw News about obtaining a special rate for advertising.

- **PT Southerland** asked if anyone could crochet or knit a fare box cover. VC Stephens stated that she would be able to do that and would speak to Kuhn about that. PT Southerland stated that the City would provide supplies if she liked. VC Stephens declined.
- **PT Southerland** asked if TAC would like to review applications before they are finalized. CP Rose asked if there was anything with the applications that needed to be reviewed. Patton asked if PT Southerland meant the contracts. PT Southerland said that they were applications now, but they had previously reviewed the contract. Patton said that an application would need a lot of changes from the Bi-Mart-LTD example they saw previously. Patton and Stephens said that they would like to see the application. CP Rose stated that staff should email the application out when complete for TAC to review.
- **VC Stephens** re-stated that TAC needed to know what the exact ink charge for the Ride Free signs was.
- **VC Stephens** suggested that a sponsor should have two options: one where they pay for a sign and one where they provide their own sign.

Other Promotion Efforts

- **Patton** stated that KXCR radio went on the air. He said that he knew that Bob Sneddon from KCST was talking about how his radio station could help the Rhody Express, but he thought that KXCR could also help. He said that the radio station served the area from Big Creek south to Reedsport and east to the Petersen Tunnel on Oregon Route 126.

Rhody Days Service

- **PT Southerland** stated that 12 hours 45 minutes of Ride Free service was used from the provided 24 hours of Ride Free service leaving 11 hours 15 minutes. Kuhn stated that she and Hekimoglu went through the budget and were able to find enough time to provide Ride Free service for the hours of 9pm to 3 am both Friday and Saturday night. She said previously service was provided 6pm to 3am Friday and 10am to 3am Saturday and Sunday morning. Kuhn stated that the hours would not be an issue.
- **Mayor Xavier** asked if flyers would be distributed again. Kuhn said that nothing has been done because they were not sure of what could be said.
- **VC Stephens** asked if there were any other potential sources of funding to provide more service during Rhody weekend. Kuhn stated that the bulk of the service needs during the last Rhody Days was during the hours she stated.
- **Kuhn** stated that during the last couple of years, logistics with Saturday service have changed because of the closure of Maple Street and the Congestion associated with the event.
- **Kuhn** stated that the proposed hours of service for Friday and Saturday service would allow people who wish to leave the area to do so easily. She said that people who call the River Cities Taxi dispatch are informed that the the Rhody Express bus parked on Bay Street providing service for people travelling within the City Limits.
- **Kuhn** said that her concern was that because of the trip to Driftwood Shores, which is served because it is in the City Limits, there is a long period where people are not being picked up from Bay Street. She stated that her primary concern was serving the Casino and the City and taking riders to Driftwood Shores at some time during the night if the demand was there.
- **Mayor Xavier** asked if a large number of people last year went towards Driftwood Shores. Kuhn stated that they made four trips down Rhododendron Drive in 2013 and there was demand for the service.
- **VC Stephens** asked if coordinating with the Casino bus would help Kuhn schedule during Rhody Days. Kuhn said that she thought that the Casino bus went hotel to hotel. Mayor Xavier asked Kuhn if only one run to Driftwood Shores during the night would help the Rhody Days service. Kuhn agreed and said that she felt that serving areas already on the route was the priority.

- **Mayor Xavier** asked what promotional efforts would be made for the Rhody Days service. Kuhn said that in the past there was not printed material, but PSAs were given to KCST.
- The Committee decided that the PSAs should advertise “free transportation service from Bay Street to the City or to the Casino.”

CP Rose motioned that the remaining hours of service for free Rhody Express service be used on Friday, May 16, 2014, from 10pm to 3am, and Saturday, May 17, 2014, from 10pm to 3am. VC Stephens seconded the motion. By voice, all ayes, motion passed.

5. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE:

The next meeting will be on May 28, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNED AT 3:13 PM

APPROVED BY THE TAC ON THE _____ DAY OF _____, 2014.

Chairperson L.A. Rose

Date