

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

CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members: Nola Xavier, Mayor, Bill Craig, Don Patton, and Jane Ashley were present. L.A. Rose, Chair and Mary Stephens, Vice Chair, were not present.

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

Support Staff: Glen Southerland, Planning, was present.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Patton moved to approve the Agenda.

Ashley seconded to approve.

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, but that person had no comments.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Minutes of June 25, 2014

Craig moved to approve the minutes.

Ashley seconded to approve.

4. PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

Route Metrics

- **PT Southerland** presented the route metric information for June and the previous 6 months. He stated that the total number of riders was down for the month. Hekimoglu stated that school got out, which may have an effect on the ridership. Haring stated that there have also been several days of nice weather, which could have an effect. Patton stated that the Old Town stop was up by quite a bit. Haring stated that Greentrees was very busy that month. PT Southerland stated that nothing was too out of the ordinary for the stops despite the lower ridership.
- **PT Southerland** stated that he had a conversation with Kuhn regarding the counting of companion riders and whether that category of rider was needed anymore. Hekimoglu stated that she thought the information was probably still needed. Kuhn said that the person is still being counted, but the driver cannot make a tally and count companions. She used the example of Elderberry, stating that there was no way of telling who was a companion and a paying fare at that stop. Hekimoglu said again that it would be good to know that number. PT Southerland asked if there was a way to reconcile the number from the number of riders and the amount of fares collected. Kuhn stated that they could do that and figures showed that they were averaging about six companions a month.

- **Hekimoglu** asked if they were counting wheelchair passengers. Kuhn stated that they were collecting that information for her. Mayor Xavier stated that it would be a good idea to collect that information to report in the future. Kuhn stated that they had started collecting that information.
- **Hekimoglu** stated that the information is needed when there are two wheelchair or mobility device riders on board and the driver needs to call a taxi for the next rider in a wheelchair or mobility device. She stated that this was called white-lining and could be when the bus is full of able-bodied standing in aisles or riders in wheelchairs beyond the capacity of the bus.
- **Kuhn** stated that they keep track of those numbers because the Rhody Express is charged for those services provided by the taxi. Hekimoglu added that the information is useful for when the next vehicle is ordered.

ADA Ridesource Metrics

- **PT Southerland** summarized the number of riders and cost of the ADA Ridesource program as well as thanking Hekimoglu for the information she provided.

Kozy Kitchen Stop Relocation

- **PT Southerland** stated that Mike Miller, Public Works Dir. expressed approval of TAC's suggestion that the Kozy Kitchen stop be relocated slightly to the east for safety reasons. Haring stated that the stop had already been moved. He also said that the new location is working well for loading and unloading of passengers. PT Southerland asked if that location was better for allowing people to cross the street safely. Haring replied that it was.

Stop Discussion

- **Hekimoglu** stated that TAC should begin thinking about setting a threshold for minimum ridership for some of the stops where the route is deviating. She said that the Senior Center, the stop behind City Hall, and Laurelwood Housing all had low ridership. Kuhn stated that there were monies connected to the stop behind City Hall. Hekimoglu and Haring said that it is also the stop that connects with Porter Stage Lines.
- **Mayor Xavier** stated that TAC should also consider that there may be a political aspect to attempting to remove a stop from the route. She stated that the reason for this is that it is possible that while currently there are few riders, there may be more in the future, and TAC should keep an open mind.
- **Kuhn** stated that the Senior Center moved locations away from the previous route and they were added to the current route even though they were not close to other stops.
- **Hekimoglu** stated that there were some stops that may be considered lifeline stops, which would stay on the route regardless, and the Senior Center may be one of them.
- **Mayor Xavier** mentioned that one of the people who preferred to ride the bus to the Senior Center was a volunteer and the new timetable did not allow adequate time for the volunteer to get to the Senior Center in time to set up the senior lunch event.
- **Kuhn** said that the Senior Center could operate well as a park and ride facility.
- **PT Southerland** stated that there could be other efficiencies which do not eliminate major stops, but allow the bus to complete the route in 60 minutes. He suggested eliminating Rhododendron Drive south of 9th Street. Hekimoglu stated that she had brought maps for TAC to suggest other options as well. She added that she would like to suggest another change which routed the bus through the Peace Harbor property rather than down Rhododendron south of 9th so that riders from Greentrees did not have to ride the entire route before getting to the hospital.
- **Mayor Xavier** stated that she wanted to point out that it may be difficult to negotiate a stop at the Fred Meyer. Hekimoglu said that at the last meeting she had heard that the Tribes were building housing

north of Fred Meyer which would allow for a bus stop. Mayor Xavier stated that her understanding was that if the Tribes were to receive the grant they are applying for, they will be building. She said that it may be a considerable distance from the Fred Meyer to the stop that may be proposed.

- **Hekimoglu** stated that Fred Meyer was a chokepoint for the bus and TAC would have to decide what would be the most efficient route around the building.
- **Mayor Xavier** stated that she would like TAC to consider the impacts of going to a 70-minute route and whether those changes were enough to warrant changing back to a 60-minute route. She said that the City Council members would have to justify going back to a 60-minute route and consider comments received. Haring stated that the route times were among the responses received from the Ridership Survey. Mayor Xavier said that if complaints were received, that is sufficient reason to look at the timing of the route, but that people would need to decide what they were willing to give up in order to get that.
- **Hekimoglu** stated that it has been the operator's experience that they could get back to 60 minutes without making many changes and just a few minor changes to the route. She suggested removing the jog in the route to the east of Miller Park.
- **Mayor Xavier** asked if the Casino was interested in continuing service. Hekimoglu stated that she had thought Jeff would be at the meeting, but she expected that the Tribes would want to continue the partnership. She said that she would like to see the Tribes contribute, through grant funds they receive, to Saturday service. Mayor Xavier said that she thought it would be beneficial to them. Hekimoglu stated that they could also provide expanded service hours. She stated that she has sent an email to Jeff to try to come to an agreement and would forward that email to TAC.
- **Hekimoglu** stated that there were still \$23,000 in funds to contribute to changing the route and signage. Mayor Xavier mentioned that a bus stop shelter at Fred Meyer would have to be provided as well. Hekimoglu said that if the Rhody Express will continue to route past the front of the store, a shelter was not needed. Mayor Xavier stated that the change may create some issues with people who have to walk around the building, especially with high winds in the area.
- **Hekimoglu** summarized the currently proposed changes to the route. PT Southerland stated that TAC could also elect to expand service and keep the route to 70 minutes. Kuhn said that she did not know where the route could expand to pick up more riders. Hekimoglu asked where there have been requests. Kuhn stated that they had received some inquiries from Siuslaw Village. Haring said that he was not sure how they could pick up that neighborhood on the route. Hekimoglu stated that the route would have to be reconfigured.
- **Mayor Xavier** asked if the bus stopped at Rite-Aid. Kuhn stated that when the route deviated, it did go into the Rite-Aid parking lot. Mayor Xavier said that if the route changes to avoid Highway 101, it would no longer pass the Rite-Aid. Haring said that the bus driver has received several flag stops at that location.

Porter Stage Lines

- **Patton** stated that there was only one stop of the day where the Rhody Express schedule arrived close to the departure time of the PSL bus. Ashley stated that she had seen the PSL bus driving down Maple Street. Kuhn stated that they had also noticed that previously, and imagined that the bus driver had not been planning to stop and had needed to turn around to pick up a passenger. Ashley mentioned that the bus had also been spotted on Laurel. Mayor Xavier stated that the Porter Stage Line was inconsistent and the City had no control over the route or operations of the Porter Stage Line. Hekimoglu stated that the state would have the ability to control the Porter Stage Lines as the operators receive 5311 funding.
- **Kuhn** stated that there have been times where the PSL bus has bypassed Florence completely and taken Highway 38. Hekimoglu stated that that situation should not happen at all.
- **Patton** asked if there was any way to open a dialogue with Porter Stage Lines. Hekimoglu stated that she would talk to LTD's ODOT representative. Kuhn stated that the River Cities Taxi dispatch advises all callers to call PSL to let them know that they will be riding. Mayor Xavier stated that there have been

instances where riders came into City Hall to use the restroom and returned to the stop and the bus had already come by and left. She said that attempts to contact the owners of PSL in the past and come to an agreement had not succeeded.

Pilot Project Report

- **PT Southerland** stated that the Pilot Project Report was TAC's report to City Council. He said that possible City Council meeting dates were September 15th and October 6th. PT Southerland recommended that TAC present at the October 6th meeting in order to have time to assemble the report and recommendations. He stated that earlier in the year TAC approved a preliminary outline of the report created by IPD FarleyCampbell. He said that he would email that document to everyone and committee members could choose the topic they felt most comfortable with.
- **Hekimoglu** listed some of the sections that Kuhn and she could work on. She said that she did not think many changes have been made to the route at all since the Rhody Express was established. Kuhn stated that most of the changes have been to the times of operation. Mayor Xavier said that some stops have been removed such as a stop in Old Town.
- **Hekimoglu** asked the committee if they could conclude at this point that they wanted to continue to service the Casino. Craig stated that he thought so. Ashley stated that the extension of service should bring money to the Rhody Express. Hekimoglu stated that she did not know what the intent of the Tribes was for paying for the service. Haring stated that the Casino is very easy to access for the bus. Kuhn said that even if the Casino could provide two more hours of service that it would be very beneficial for both the Rhody Express and the Casino.
- **Hekimoglu** stated that she would have to set up a meeting between herself, Jeff Stump, and IPD FarleyCampbell.
- **Hekimoglu** presented TAC with a spreadsheet (attached as TAC Minutes Supplemental 2) that she keeps track of mileage, income, expenses, maintenance and ridership. Kuhn mentioned that they had only had two ride refusals this year, one of which was a refusal based on rider safety concerns and another where a passenger had a full shopping cart which could not be brought aboard.

Bus Stop Signage Update

- **PT Southerland** stated that the signs have not been affixed to the shelters yet because he had not gotten the chance to visit the shelters.
- **Haring** stated that he noticed that the glass at the Grocery Outlet stop was filthy. He asked if there was an agreement with Public Works to clean the shelters. Hekimoglu stated that she did not think there was a formal agreement. Haring asked if the new Building Maintenance position would be servicing the bus stop shelters. Mayor Xavier stated that the Building Maintenance position deals only with the City buildings. Kuhn said that the trash cans were removed from the shelters because there was no one to service them. Mayor Xavier said that if there were any future shelters, TAC should create an agreement with Public Works so that both could budget for and provide that service.
- **Hekimoglu** stated that LTD has transitioned to a new shelter design and will not have any available for a while. She suggested that a local option be pursued if TAC would like to invest in more shelters as the new LTD shelters do not have walls.

5. IGA DISCUSSION

Code Discussion

- **PT Southerland** stated that the City Code which created the Committee also allowed TAC to provide recommendations and advice regarding budgetary concerns during IGA negotiations for the Rhody Express.
- **Hekimoglu** asked if the IGAs that TAC can advise upon were between the City and LTD or the City and the Tribes. PT Southerland stated that it meant any agreements to do with transit. Mayor Xavier stated that TAC can research the agreement and advise.

Free Ride Hours

- **Hekimoglu** stated that she was told that 100 Free Ride Hours were probably too much. She said she was working with Kuhn to determine the amount of unused funds. Hekimoglu said that the hours would increase, but she did not think it would result in a blanket 100 hours. Haring stated that he thought that the discussion began with a reasonable increase in hours. PT Southerland said that he would like to see what could be achieved without increasing the City's contribution to the service.

6. LONG RANGE PROMOTION & MARKETING

Bus Buddy Program

- **Ashley** expressed concern about an issue that took place while she was performing her duties as a Bus Buddy. She stated that a gentleman and his wife, who had special needs, boarded the bus, the gentleman got off of the bus and she continued to ride for another cycle until he re-boarded the bus. She also stated that there were many passengers in wheelchairs that day. Hekimoglu asked if wheelchair counts were taken and that the driver should keep track if possible. Kuhn stated that they do keep record of when there is more than one wheelchair on-board because of the need for taxi support due to oversized wheelchairs bringing the bus to capacity. Hekimoglu stated that they should look at this when looking to purchase the next vehicle.
- **Hekimoglu** stated that the Train the Trainer training would be held on August 27th prior to the August meeting from 9 p.m.-12 p.m. PT Southerland stated that he would reserve a room for the training. Hekimoglu stated that the training would also involve riding the bus.
- **PT Southerland** stated that he was hoping that Sirmans could give TAC information on anyone else who needs the Bus Buddy program. Ashley asked if there were brochures for the Bus Buddy Program. PT Southerland stated that there were.
- **Kuhn** stated that Sirmans had contacted her about purchasing bus scripts to hand out. She said that she thought this was a good opportunity to acquaint people with the bus. Patton stated that there was a great deal of interest from Greentrees regarding purchasing bus scripts and the Bus Buddy Program. Hekimoglu stated that in Eugene, Bus Buddy trainees receive a one-month pass for the bus so that they can learn how to ride for free.
- **Hekimoglu** asked what TAC thought would happen if rides were always free. Craig and Haring stated that they thought ridership would go up, but many of those people would ride for the social aspect. Mayor Xavier added that she had seen similar effects between commuters on other bus systems.

Ride Free Days Sponsorship Program Update

- **PT Southerland** presented the sign he received from Todd Hennessee at Siuslaw Signs that day. He passed the sign around and said that there was some ink bleeding issues with the paper. He said that Hennessee had stated that he would attempt to refine the printing process to prevent the bleeding in the future. Kuhn asked if Hennessee had worked with this paper before. PT Southerland stated that he did not think that Hennessee had.

- **PT Southerland** presented a draft application for TAC's approval. He stated that there had already been some inquiries. He said that the Finance Department had suggested that one check be received by the City and then payment be distributed to River Cities Taxi and Siuslaw Signs.
- **Kuhn** stated that the sign is very small and unlikely to be visible. PT Southerland said that he was wondering how the sign was holding up.
- **Haring** suggested that TAC look into printing on plastic signs and whether or not the local printers would be able to print on that material.

6. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE:

The next meeting will be on August 27, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNED AT 3:35 PM

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

Chairperson L.A. Rose

Date