

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

July 21, 2020

LET IT BE REMEMBERED, the Public Transit Advisory Committee in and for the County of Collier, having conducted business herein, met on this date at 3:00 P.M. in REGULAR SESSION via hybrid video/teleconference/in-person at the Collier Area Transit Office, 8300 Radio Road, Naples FL 34104, with the following members present:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman: Mr. John DiMarco
Vice-Chairman: Mr. Arthur Dobberstein
Mr. James Bennett
Mr. Peter Berry
Mr. Devon Browne
Mr. James Caton

ABSENT:

Ms. Sonja Lee Samek (Excused)

ALSO PRESENT:

Ms. Michelle Edwards-Arnold, Director, Public Transit and Neighborhood Enhancement
Mr. Omar DeLeon, Public Transit Manager, Collier Area Transit
Mr. Randall Farwell, Project Manager, Tindale Oliver
Mr. Zachary Karto, Senior Planner, Collier Area Transit
Ms. Tamarin Kirby, Planner, MV Transportation, Inc.
Mr. Braian Morales, General Manager, MV Transportation, Inc.
Ms. Elena Ortiz-Rosado, Events, Sales, and Marketing Coordinator, Collier Area Transit

I. Call to Order

Mr. DiMarco called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, and a quorum established.

III. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Berry entered a motion to approve the July 21, 2020 meeting agenda. Mr. DiMarco seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

a. June 16, 2020

Mr. DiMarco entered a motion to approve the June 16, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Caton seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was carried.

V. Reports and Presentations

a. Everglades City – Vanpool service – Mr. Zachary Karto

In response to a request for transportation service to and from Everglades City, simulations and models were run of a potential fixed route service, which were ultimately found to be unfavorable. Discussions ensued with Enterprise Rent-A-Car, who offered the option of providing a vanpool service. While specific details have yet to be determined, the vanpool service would originate from a location in Everglades City, potentially to connect to the Government Center in Naples.

The vanpool, like a carpool concept, could accommodate up to 15 passengers who would share a single vehicle from point A to point B, however with appropriate timing and operations, could affect 20 to 40 individuals each day. A designated Coordinator would work directly with Enterprise to assist with identification of the pickup point, as well as the creation of the schedule. While the Coordinator would be uncompensated, a potential benefit of 200 personal miles would be allowable. All potential drivers would be required to undergo an evaluation and qualification process by Enterprise, and each driver would retain a key to the vehicle. The cost for the service is approximately \$1100 per vehicle, with cost coverage negotiable; partially or fully funded by CAT, percentage split via partnerships with participating employers, or by the passengers themselves. Each vehicle would include a fuel card, full insurance coverage, preventative maintenance, free replacement in the event of a vehicle malfunction, and 24/7 roadside assistance. The vans would be in brand new condition, with a CAT branding wrap allowable. Mileage and maintenance would be monitored by Enterprise, with mileage data shared with CAT.

While the service may be coordinated and operational within two weeks, the current challenge is in the identification of passengers to utilize the service due to loss of employment for many individuals as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

It was further noted that as Enterprise is working with the State of Florida to offer a vanpool service through the Department of Transportation, clarification is needed as to the ability to work directly with Enterprise or if a vendor solicitation process must be pursued. The Department of Transportation offers commuter services throughout the State of Florida to promote ride sharing options, which is currently in use in Lee County.

Mr. Dobberstein inquired as to the capability of transporting wheelchairs for individuals who may wish to utilize the service for healthcare related purposes. It was noted that while no specific requests have been made to accommodate wheelchairs, there is the likelihood of the availability of vehicles which could accommodate this need, as well as vehicles with bike racks. Mr. Dobberstein inquired as to how the 200 personal miles may be utilized by the Coordinator, i.e., charging a fee to individuals for rides and/or utilize mileage for rides for family members. Mr. DeLeon clarified that the Coordinator will have clear guidelines with which they must abide. While the vanpool service is “hands off” for CAT, oversight of the program will be done by the County to ensure contract compliance.

CAT branding via vehicle wraps, in coordination with Everglades City would be considered. Mr. Bennet expressed concern for possible negative repercussions to the County which may result from a driver’s indiscretion. Mr. DeLeon clarified that discussion with Enterprise would be necessary to ensure driver awareness of all protocols, as well as clearly defined procedures to follow in response to complaints made against drivers. Mr. Dobberstein further recommended CAT Staff review the driver background checks which are conducted by Enterprise.

Mr. Caton and Mr. Dobberstein noted the potential for greater flexibility, as well as potential cost savings in implementation of a vanpool service in lieu of some fixed routes, for example in Immokalee and Marco Island. Mr. DiMarco inquired as to whether tourists who wish to visit Everglades City would be allowed to participate in the vanpool service. This was noted to be unlikely by Mr. Karto, due to scheduling, the requirement for users to be preregistered with the vanpool service, as well as a potential conflict with private charter business.

b. Transit Development Plan Update: - Mr. Randall Farwell

Mr. Farwell addressed the PTAC to provide a preview of the Transit Development Plan update (TDP). The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requires a major update of the TDP every ten years for allocation of Federal and State funding to local Transit agencies. The intent of the TDP is to create a vision for mobility for the community, while identifying service needs, evaluation of services, identification of gaps between community needs for service and the services supplied, and creation of a prioritized list of projects and services which will be funded over the next ten years. This ten-year window is split into two five-year periods, with the first five years typically cost feasible and the second five years unconstrained by the budget.

Work is currently being done on the draft TDP, required by law to be submitted to FDOT by September 1. The public engagement process is nearly complete, with an online survey due to end on August 2, 2020. Small group meetings and steering committee presentations have been completed. The situation appraisal is complete, which examines the context within which services are being delivered and needs are being assessed, aiming to create a holistic network by linking different services and service delivery strategies together across the service area. An analysis of alternatives has been conducted, with development of the ten-year implementation plan and financial framework for the TDP in process.

Transit network changes were examined; productivity, operating characteristics, and performance measures of all routes, which included:

- +Eliminating extensive loops.
- +Creating direct and bidirectional routing.
- +Enhanced and added service along key corridors.
- +Enhanced service to transit hubs at activity centers.
- +Structural improvements to the network to economize on service hours to improve frequency.
- +Mobility on demand in downtown Naples and Marco Island, to better match service supplied with demand over the course of the day.

Expected Impacts:

- +Increase in network understandability and ease of use.
- +Increase in service frequencies.
- +More direct travel and reduced travel times.

Proposed Changes:

- +Mobility on demand on Marco Island.
- +Increased frequency on US 1/Tamiami Trail from the Government Center, concentrating services on routes 17 and 18 to create a bidirectional service, running from the Government Center, down Rattlesnake-Hammock to Collier Boulevard, to Walmart.
- +Adjustment of routes 13 and 14 to increase frequency.
- +Maintain the east-west portion of route 25, however extend the north-south service corridor up Immokalee Road, for connection at the Super Walmart.
- +Adjustment of route 27 east to west, running from Walmart at Tamiami Trail/Immokalee Road, east to Randall Road, with an opportunity for future extension as demand increases with growth in Golden Gate Estates. Route 27 would also run from Immokalee Road/Tamiami Trail, south to the Walmart at Collier Boulevard, providing a one-seat ride running north to south along a major corridor.
- +Improvements to routes 20 and 26, combining them into one service, adding service hours together.
- +Combine service hours from routes 19 and 28, providing more trips on the higher frequency route 28.

- +Adjusting routes 22 and 23, rerouting to decrease loop redundancy and increase efficiency while still covering the same general service area.
- +Community outreach has revealed a desire for service connection between Immokalee and Lehigh Acres. There is currently no funding in the 10-year TDP for this, however there is a recommendation for study.
- +Shuttle circulator services, to include the Bayshore area to the Botanical Gardens, Naples Pier circulator, and a downtown circulator, each with one vehicle operating every 15 minutes.
- +Premium express service, proposed to be developed between CAT and LeeTran, operating from the Government Center to travel to I-75, ending in the Florida Gulf Coast Town Center/University/Airport area.
- +Mobility on demand services in North Naples, Downtown, and Golden Gate Estates. Ms. Arnold stated that Transit Staff will present this concept to the City of Marco Island and the City of Naples. It was noted that smaller, lower cost electric vehicles are under consideration for this specialized service. The location of charging stations would be determined in discussions with participating local municipalities.

The impact of proposed improvements in ridership, vehicles, and revenue hours through 2030 was shown, with the assumption of an unconstrained budget. The ability to make the proposed improvements is subject to available funding.

A phased approach of improvements is proposed, with examples given of improved connections, route adjustments, combined routes, and express service for the first five years of the plan. The estimated cost for suggested service improvements in the first five years, including inflation, is approximately \$6.2M above the current CAT budget, with \$25M in new capital for the replacement of aging vehicles. Phase 2 plans include costlier improvements which require additional vehicles and increased service hours. The estimated cost for proposed phase 2 improvements, including inflation, is \$63M, for the period between 2026 through 2030. An additional \$28M in capital would be necessary as well, primarily for replacement of fixed route buses, which is a required line item to be included in the TDP to ensure adequate resources and capacity have been covered.

Prioritization of projects within phase one was based upon routes with the highest productivity at the current time, with the highest probability of achieving an immediate response in terms of ridership. If a proposed change in phase two may be rebalanced or adjusted without the requirement of additional resources, that may be shifted into phase one.

Community outreach remains ongoing, with an online survey running through the end of July, virtual public meetings scheduled for July and August, meetings scheduled with the TAC and the CAC, and finally, presentation of the completed TDP to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

The draft TDP will be available for public review online on the CAT and MPO websites around August 7, 2020.

c. Covid-19 Response Update: - Mr. Omar DeLeon

Continued operational changes in response to COVID-19 include:

- +Sanitization and cleaning of each bus after each loop.
- +All Operators have been provided with Personal Protective Equipment, including gloves, masks, face shields, sanitizer, etc.
- +Operator barriers have been installed as a safety protocol.
- +Increased frequency of cleaning of each vehicle, with misters/foggers purchased for thorough sanitization.
- +Buses have been wrapped with CDC recommendations for public education.
- +Bus fares have been suspended since March 20, 2020.
- +Passengers are asked to enter and exit through the rear door. Riders with assistive devices in need of a ramp may enter via the front door, with operator assistance.
- +In response to the BCC emergency order requiring the immediate use of face coverings indoors, masks will be now required when riding onboard the bus.
- +Fares will be reinstated on August 2, 2020, with this update posted via physical signs, social media, and the Transit website.
- +Implementation of the mobile app is on schedule for implementation.

d. Implementation of the Park and Ride Study: - Ms. Tamarin Kirby

Ms. Kirby provided an overview of the progression of the Park and Ride study being conducted by Jacobs. Park and Ride is a system whereby drivers leave their car at an origin point and travel to their destination via Transit. Ideal park and ride locations would serve congested roadways and target commuter trips, such as work, shopping, beaches, and the airport. The purpose of the study is to develop a standardized methodology for locating, operating, and maintaining possible Park and Ride sites within Collier County. Benefits of the Park and Ride program include a positive environmental impact, less traffic congestion, convenience for riders, and improved mobility throughout the county.

The study will reevaluate the 12 sites identified in a 2005 study, as well as consider each site's proximity to existing and planned Transit routes, major employment locations, educational facilities, tourist destinations, and conservation lands. The results of the 2005 study indicated that there were favorable conditions for locations where a Park and Ride would be successful. The study will include portions of Marco Island and the City of Immokalee.

Jacobs is launching a public participation plan, having contacted large employers and municipal entities to discern mobility needs. An online survey has also been launched, offered in English, Spanish, and Creole, which is posted on the CAT and MPO websites, and distributed through electronic notifications and social media. The final report is anticipated to be completed in October 2020.

Findings from the study will provide locational Park and Ride information, to be included in ongoing updates of the Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as the CAT TDP. The final report will be posted on the MPO and CAT websites.

It was clarified that both existing parking lots, such as at a Walmart, Target, Library, etc., as well as vacant properties are under consideration for potential Park and Ride locations. Shared use of existing parking lots will require further coordination with local businesses. Mr. DiMarco suggested the possible use of a window sticker identifying a vehicle as a Park and Ride participant while in the parking lot.

Mr. Dobberstein requested that a list of the 12 previously identified Park and Ride locations be shared with PTAC.

VI. Member Comments

+Mr. Dobberstein requested that information on consultants chosen to conduct Transit related studies be shared with PTAC. It was noted by Ms. Arnold that information on Tindale Oliver will be shared with PTAC, as well as the consultant ultimately chosen to work on the Comprehensive Operational Analysis which will begin in the Fall.

VII. Public Comments

There were no comments from members of the public.

VIII. Next Meeting Date – August 18, 2020

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned.

Public Transit Advisory Committee

John DiMarco, Chairman

These minutes approved by the Committee on _____ as presented ___ or as amended___.