Interurban Transit Partnership

MINUTES OF

PRESENT PERFORMANCE & SERVICE COMMITTEE

MAY 7, 2019

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members:	☒ David Bilardello	☒ Charis Austin
☒ Tracie Coffman	☒ Steven Gilbert	☒ Andy Guy
Staff Members:	☒ Robin Crothers	☒ Andrew Johnson
☒ Brian Pouget	☒ Shannon Radke	☒ Dina Reed

Max Dillivan, Bill Kirk, Asher Lockwood (intern), Andy Prokopy, Marie Tubergen, Conrad Venema, Mike Wieringa

Others: Watchdog Miller

Mr. Bilardello called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Watchdog Miller commented on several bus routes. He mentioned that 15 routes are down 9% or more in one year. Mr. Miller submitted a packet of complaints that he says were not adequately addressed, claiming that the 4th complaint in the packet was a FOIA request. Mr. Miller mentioned that he has filed a suit because there are no dedicated bus lanes. He has asked that the board committee review the packet he submitted.

1. MINUTES – March 5, 2019 Committee Meeting

Mr. Bilardello noticed that Andy Guy's name is misspelled in the attendance.

Mr. Guy commented on the 1st sentence at the top of page 6 of the minutes. He emphasized that we need to be concerned about the upcoming construction season, and that we need to focus on what happens when things are being built and the congestion it will bring. He further emphasized that it is more of a long-term issue that he was encouraging the committee to think about proactively. He would like the committee to focus on how the congestion that is going to "crush Michigan Street" will be managed.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Wave Update

Ms. Tubergen mentioned that Speedway & Mobile gas stations currently have Wave Cards for sale in stock. She detailed that as of March 2019, 20% of ridership is using Wave Cards. She noted that the cards are being distributed to retail stores. Spartan will begin merchandizing on 5/17 and Walgreens on 5/10. Current Wave Card partners are Spectrum Health, GRPS, Kendall, Lighthouse Academy and Ferris.

Mr. Bilardello made comment that he has personally noticed increased usage of the Wave Card on Route 6.

b) Ridership & On-Time Performance Review

Mr. Dillivan gave an overview explaining that ridership follows a seasonal cycle, dipping during construction season, comes back up in Sep-Nov and tends to dip during winter weather. There was a 3% decline in Jan-Feb due to severely inclement weather. He further explained that they are starting to see an increase in March, but a slightly lower increase compared to previous years in March. On-time performance by route shows no significant change. General overview of ridership over last three years shows the general sense of the seasonal cycle.

Mr. Guy asked what effect construction may have in the next quarter and if anything was learned in the last month or two.

Mr. Dillivan explained that starting April 1st the I-196 west bound was shut down, so we sent out an extra Route 19 bus, which was able to be done since GRPS was on spring break. He further elaborated that they try to anticipate where "pinch points" may be and try to allocate resources accordingly.

Mr. Bilardello asked if the schedules for Routes 1, 28 and Silver Line are consistently unable to be met, whether it would be possible to change the schedule. He went on to ask what the causes of the delays are and what may be able to be done, and if the delays are due to length of the line, overall number of stops and/or traffic.

Mr. Dillivan clarified that all three noted issues are factors and that Division Ave. has some of the highest non-highway traffic, adding to the congestion.

Mr. Bilardello asked about the logistics of changing the schedule due to the trend seen over the past three years.

Mr. Dillivan clarified that he does not believe we are unable to meet the schedule, but when there are "pinch points" it affects the Division corridor more significantly.

Mr. Pouget addressed the question of changing schedules, explaining that there are two basic ways to address this, 1) to shorten the route, reducing stops and 2) to add another vehicle. In reference to the Division Route, if the route were cut off at 54th St., it would likely get back on time, but then Cutlerville would no longer have service. He is looking forward to seeing what the COA will show us in reference to these issues.

In response to Ms. Coffman's question as to whether or not they see an uptick in ridership after doing community outreach events, Mr. Dillivan responded that it is hard to tell if the increase is specifically due to events or to the seasonal rise.

c) Fare Evasion Update

In response to previous concern regarding fare evasion on the Silver Line, Mr. Johnson noted that there is typically 1.4% fare evasion on a regular basis, as tracked by Fare Enforcement Officers. He went on to explain that we are getting a 3rd party in place to help assess true fare evasion numbers. This information will help develop what to do for future fare enforcement initiatives. Given that equity issues, demographic issues, and concerns about driver assault tie into fare evasion issues, with this study, we want to ascertain whether or not what we are seeing is typical of any transit service. We have a Request for Proposal (RFP) to get a 3rd party in to do the study and will award that RFP at the end of the month. The study will start at the end of the summer when school is back in session to get a gauge of regular ridership.

To Mr. Bilardello's question as to how long the study will take place, Mr. Johnson replied that it will be whatever the consultant suggests. Mr. Johnson went on to explain that we provided a 95% confidence rate and that they need to analyze the data themselves and decide how long they want to observe. The study will only take place on the Silver Line.

In response to Mr. Bilardello's question as to whether they believe that the evasion is due to the No Fare Zone, Mr. Venema replied that he does not. Mr. Johnson went on to explain that he believes that it is more of an issue of people taking advantage of the on-the-platform ticketing system.

d) Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) Consultant

Mr. Venema explained that the Board issued a directive of going big, bold and innovative. The selection team received three proposals for the COA. One of the three did not meet standards, but two were competitive within that "bold" lens: Kinetics Transportation Group and Nelson-Nygaard.

After the interview process, the team highly recommends that we move forward with Nelson-Nygaard for multiple reasons. First, Sam Schwartz, who is a sub of Nelson-Nygaard, is an expert in developing new innovative mobility options. Secondly, Byron Fisk is a local PR firm which can put the pulse on the community and help gauge what the needs are and how to move forward. Lastly, Nelson-Nygaard has a lot of expertise, and really pushed the envelope of what we wanted from the COA, to help make us a regional mobility provider. Mr. Venema emphasized that part of the COA was to focus on engaging the Board in a variety of levels and Nelson-Nygaard put in their proposal a firm grasp on what the Board may want to have in terms of guiding principles and how to work with them moving forward.

Mr. Guy asked when the COA is to start, to which Mr. Pouget replied that the study will begin as soon as the Board approves the consultant contract.

In response to Ms. Coffman's question as to the time line, Mr. Venema responded that it would be 12 months. Max Dillivan went on to explain that Nelson-Nygaard has proposed 5 touchpoints with the Board specifically as well as regular memos. Mr. Pouget asserted that Nelson-Nygaard would like to have a full day with the Board if at all possible, to really get a good gauge of what the Board would like to see with the COA. Mr. Venema went on to explain that they would like to have a Board Workshop, from which they would ascertain what the Board wants to accomplish, as well as a second workshop for route planning.

Ms. Coffman enquired about community engagement sessions, to which Mr. Venema replied that there would be a significant amount of time allocated for this. Mr. Dillivan added that he believes there will be about 300 hours dedicated to public engagement. Mr. Pouget added that the selection team specifically asked for increased public engagement to be added to the final offer, most of which will be offered through Byron Fisk. Mr. Dillivan went on to explain that they will be drafting a public engagement plan.

Ms. Coffman enquired as to whether the issue of racial equity was addressed. Mr. Dillivan replied that they gave a specific example of conducting a conditions analysis, which they called an Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis, to compile data to use as a framework toward providing better service to EJ populations.

Mr. Bilardello asked if anyone on the team has experience working with Nelson-Nygaard and two people replied that they had. He went on to ask if anything of significance came out of the COA discussion at the Future Planning & Technology Committee Meeting, to which the reply was that there was nothing of significance.

Mr. Johnson elaborated that there were questions of next steps, and that these would be addressed at the Board Planning Meeting on the 15th before the Board Meeting.

Mr. Bilardello commented that it would be nice if the Board could commit to a whole day, to which Mr. Johnson and Mr. Venema replied that any consultant hired would be flexible to work within the needs of the Board.

Mr. Guy is supportive of the direction things are headed. He would like there to be a check-in with the Board vs landing a day on the calendar, asking for some Board give and take. He would like to see any existing guiding principles, if that information exists, to better understand where we've been as an organization and how that might evolve moving forward. He also wants the Board to be mindful of the significant work recently done within the community for the Align study, and to ensure that the data collected is being respected and used, so as not to duplicate work that has already been done.

Mr. Venema and Mr. Johnson agreed that people can get overwhelmed with surveys, and they need to be mindful of that. Mr. Dillivan added that the Align Study was addressed with Nelson-Nygaard, so it can be utilized as a continuation rather than

duplicating work already done. Mr. Venema reiterated that it is known that people want longer hours, more coverage and higher frequencies.

e) <u>Update on HR 1139 – Transit Worker and Pedestrian Protection Act</u>

Mr. Johnson explained that in the last Congress the Transit Worker, Pedestrian Safety Act died before Congress ended, but it has been resurrected. There is great concern for pedestrian safety and transit worker assaults. This bill is championed by the Amalgamated Transit Union. It requires a study of exposure and liability and then calls for the production of a plan of action toward increased safety. With the onus on driver and pedestrian safety, it is necessary to ensure that this does not come to a one-size-fits-all measure, but that what is adapted is what is best for our specific community needs.

In response to Ms. Austin's question, Mr. Johnson replied that it is his understanding that the bill will affect all modes of public transit, including bus and rail.

Mr. Bilardello asked if the cost is a concern, to which Mr. Johnson replied that cost is not an immediate concern. He went on to explain that if the language changed to require driver barriers, then that would send a message across the community regarding rider safety concerns. As previously mentioned, the focus is to make sure that this does not become a one-size-fits-all measure, but to be able to tailor the needs to those specific to this community. We do not want to send a message out that it is unsafe to ride the bus. We will also be providing further education in de-escalation techniques.

Mr. Guy mentioned that he presumed that there are a number of like-minded transit systems, and Mr. Johnson assured him that there are many. He elaborated that every transit system wants to reserve the right to tailor the needs to their specific system.

3. NEXT MEETING – July 9, 2019

Meeting adjourned: 4:48pm

Robin Crothers

Robin Crothers, Board Secretary

Shannon M. Radke

Shannon Radke, Board Secretary