

GRTC Transit Advisory Group

5:30-7:30, Thursday, July 19, 2018

GRTC Headquarters, 301 E Belt Blvd, Richmond, Virginia

Final Minutes as approved on October 18, 2018

In Attendance.

Members: Kayla Diggs Brody (Chair), Celia Yette (Vice Chair), Nicholas Smith (Secretary), Paul Jez, Jessica Reveley, Michael Zeevi;

GRTC Staff: Carrie Rose Pace, Tim Barham, Monica Carter, Kendra Norrell, Isaac Wright;

Public: There were about 20 members of the public present.

Call to Order

*The meeting was called to order at 5:44 PM.*

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Jez, **moved**:

*That the agenda be adopted.*

This motion was approved unanimously.

Introductions

*Each person introduced themselves.*

Public Comment

*The chair called for public comment.*

Fifteen people addressed the TAG, generally speaking, mostly negatively, about the changes to the GRTC network implemented by the Richmond Transit Network Plan that went into effect last month. There was general concern that the new system disparately impacts and adversely affects black communities, particularly in Randolph and Church Hill. People expressed confusion with the new system and how it was difficult to navigate. There was concern with service levels, particularly in Randolph and Church Hill, especially the housing courts and Oakwood. There was concern with operator behavior, as well as them not being willing to talk to their supervisors. One commenter was disappointed that bus stops are not cleared of snow. Some said they had not learned of the changes until much later than they should have, including route and numbering changes. There was concern that staff, both operators and customer service representatives, the latter often being difficult to reach, did not know which side of the street to tell customers to wait on: St. Mary's, bus stop #3 and the bus stop for the 14 in front of city hall were

mentioned specifically. There was concern with lighting at the 23<sup>rd</sup> and Franklin transfer point. There was concern about stop spacing being too wide, especially for seniors and those with disabilities. There was concern about lack of service on Broad between Robinson and Lombardy. There was concern about the lack of service in Chesterfield. There was concern about lack of service after 7 p.m. There was concern about an operator not being able to deploy the ramp at Southside Plaza. There was concern that bus signs listed bus numbers that don't arrive some hours of the day, and it wasn't clear. There was appreciation for Carrie Rose Pace, specifically for going into the Randolph community. There was concern the Pulse doesn't stop in the places it needed to stop, specifically Lombardy and the Hamilton/Malvern area. There was concern about a stop with a cracked sidewalk that didn't allow deployment of the ramp, which leads to it being deployed in the street. There was concern about the location, accessibility and knowledge of the TAG meetings.

The Chair thanked the public for their comments.

*The Chair closed public comment.*

#### Approval of Minutes for April 19, 2018

Mr. Jez, seconded by Mr. Zeevi, **moved**:

*That the minutes of the April 19, 2018 meeting be adopted.*

This motion was approved unanimously.

#### Update on the BRT and RTNP

Mr. Barham said GRTC was very pleased with the ridership of the Pulse, exceeding expectations even after the free week. He showed the boardings and alightings at each stop and the run times.

Mr. Smith asked about the bunching on the Pulse. Mr. Barham said they have been worried about East Main congestion since before the system opened. He said that GRTC asked for a dedicated left-turn from 14<sup>th</sup> to Main St, but the city has not honored that. He said Dock St reopening helped, and the CSX work caused issues.

Ms. Rose Pace said there were 226,000 riders in the first week of the new system. The busiest day was June 29, which was 18,000 more riders than the usual day.

#### GRTC Program Administrator – Pass Program for RPS

Mr. Barham said starting this fall all Richmond Public Schools students will be able to ride GRTC city routes for free at any time of the day or week. Kendra Norrell will be working on this. She will go to the high schools and students who get parental permission should get a pass in October. Mr. Barham said this is a pilot and will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. He said there will be procedures to ensure there is no negative behavior among students towards operators or other passengers.

Mr. Jez suggested studying the peak demand issue as many new students may fill up buses. Mr. Barham said they would be looking at that. He said that federal law requires that any system that takes federal money cannot run school bus service, but can allow students on buses open to everyone.

Ms. Yette asked what would happen to disabled students on crowded buses. Mr. Barham said if a bus is full and such a person can't get on they must, by federal law, ensure another bus they can get on arrives within 30 minutes or the next bus, whichever is first.

Ms. Diggs Brody asked about what cards they would get and what routes they could use. Mr. Barham said they would get tap cards and that Ms. Norrell would talk to students to ensure which routes could be used.

Ms. Reveley asked if the cards could be done in such a way as to be used as voter ID. Mr. Barham said they would look into it.

#### Re-routing Davis and plans for 76/77

Mr. Davies, who suggested this agenda item, was not present. Mr. Barham said GRTC was looking into it. Mr. Smith asked if these changes would cost extra money. Mr. Barham said they very well could. Mr. Smith said that if money went into this route it would either need more money from council or would result in cuts in service elsewhere. He added City Council had made its views on how much money should be spent on coverage and ridership known and that spending more money here on coverage routes would alter that balance, and it was unclear if the patron of that paper understood the financial implications of these changes.

#### Henrico County Bus Routes

Mr. Barham said there would be expanded service in Henrico this September, on the 7, 19 and 91.

Ms. Diggs Brody and Ms. Reveley said there were issues at Willow Lawn with the amount of time needed to connect to buses, especially with running across the street in that short time. Mr. Barham and Ms. Rose Pace said this is a thing being looked at by the scheduling department.

#### Fare options

Ms. Rose Pace discussed fare options. The E-Pass is an employer-sponsored program tap pass. She said each tap is recorded and that is reported to the employer; each employer has its own cost structure (employer pays, 50/50, etc.). The Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) will give cash change, unlike fareboxes, because the TVMs have space for change while the fareboxes do not. She said the Mobile Pay online app pass has unlimited passes. She said they have already received requests to allow mobile pass purchases of one-ride and one-ride plus passes and that is in development.

Ms. Rose Pace said the new app has been introduced. She said she met with the developer today to suggest changes she had heard, and he will be working on that.

Mr. Smith asked about Transit App and if they needed anything more regarding GTFS data. Ms. Rose Pace said GRTC had a change in IT staff but they have picked up on that and Transit App should have everything they need.

Mr. Zeevi asked about fare situations on the Pulse and checking for fares. Mr. Barham said they were working on changing behaviors of drivers to remind them they don't have to check fares on the Pulse, that the inspectors were there for that.

Mr. Smith asked if the validators could read tap passes, and if so why people with an unlimited ride pass had to tap at a TVM before boarding the Pulse. Ms. Rose Pace said that that tap is to measure ridership in a more accurate way than Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs). She said that GRTC would be installing stand-alone validators at stations that are just to tap on, and they would be installed this summer.

### Open Discussion

Richmond City Council Member Ellen Robertson thanked the TAG and the members of the public for coming to the meeting. She added that a new system always has challenges and that we were all working to make public transit better and more accessible for everyone, and hoped we could understand while GRTC worked through some of the issues.

Mr. Barham thanked all the public for coming and gave a summary of the role and history of the TAG. He reminded those present that GRTC's budget is about \$48 million, while systems of similar size tend to have about double the funds. He said GRTC does the best it can with the funding it has, and described many of the challenges GRTC has had implementing the new system.

Ms. Reveley, seconded by Mr. Zeevi, **moved**:

*That the next meeting be at Richmond City Hall.*

This motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Reveley, seconded by Mr. Smith, **moved** the following resolution:

*That it is the sense of the Transit Advisory Group that the GRTC Board of Directors hold meetings at a location more accessible by transit or hold a public comment session in addition to the board meeting at a more accessible time and place as the board meeting.*

This motion was approved unanimously.

### Adjournment

Ms. Diggs Brody, seconded by Mr. Zeevi, **moved**:

*That the Committee be adjourned.*

This motion was approved unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 7:58.

The next meeting is Oct 18.