

GRTC Transit Advisory Group.

5:30-7:30, Thursday, Jul 20, 2017

Main Street Station

Minutes

In Attendance.

Members: Kayla Diggs Brody (Chair), Celia Yette (Vice Chair), Nicholas Smith (Secretary), Samuel Davies, Jessica Reveley;

GRTC Staff: Carrie Rose Pace, Tim Barham, Erica Dent;

Public: Dustin Shuman.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 PM.

Approval of the Agenda

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

That the agenda be adopted, with the addition of an item for Ms. Rose Pace and Ms. Dent to speak immediately after the approval of the minutes.

This motion was approved unanimously.

Introductions

Each person introduced themselves.

Public Comment

The chair called for public comment. There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes for October 20, 2016 and January 19, 2017

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

That the minutes of the October 20, 2016 and January 19, 2017 be adopted.

This motion was approved unanimously.

Information Technology

Ms. Dent spoke about GTFS data. She explained that the data is not public except for Google Maps. She explained that this is because someone made an app but was not updating the data, and was non-

responsive, so customers were confused. There is a trial now with Apple and will give the information to educational organizations such as VCU.

Mr. Davies spoke about what many other cities have done, namely putting GTFS data online, allowing a multitude of apps.

Ms. Dent said that given everyone is focusing on the BRT and new bus system, and that maybe after that they may reconsider that option.

Mr. Davies asked about a server upgrade. Ms. Dent said that is an internal system thing which is moving forward.

Ms. Reveley asked about what happens when bus stops are discontinued, either for a very short or multi-week period. Ms. Rose Pace said some of that makes it online on the website, and there are signs posted at each of the stops. Customer service also gets all that information as well and can help people. Ms. Reveley said she often had issues, when arriving at a stop and seeing it was out of service, to find out where the nearest stop is. Mr. Smith added that having a sign when a stop is temporarily closed that either had a small map with a walking route or arrows that listed the closest intersection that each bus can be reached at. Mr. Davies agreed, and Ms. Diggs Brody said often that information does not make it to the app.

Mr. Smith asked about how if the app that had incorrect information by scraping pdfs and those pdfs are still online today how the GTFS data being online would affect whether or not inaccurate data was online. Mr. Smith added that other apps grab the GTFS data daily or even more often, which should solve most issues. Ms. Dent said she wanted to ensure that updates happened quickly, and that once things calm down after the new system and BRT they will look at that more closely.

Ms. Dent spoke about the GPS data in the app and how it works. She explained that the two systems are separate. The estimated arrival times are predictions generated based on the previous 30 days arrival times at each stop, so are not live, but because drivers try to line up their times at various time points it will usually get closer to that day's actual routing. On the other hand, the bus tracker on the map does show live GPS bus coordinates, though sometimes the connection is a little choppy and may jump from block to block.

There was discussion about very specific issues related to how this works. There was general agreement that this helped clear up some of the confusion about the app.

Ms. Dent mentioned that there were going to be some updates to the app, hopefully integrating some user experience. Ms. Reveley suggested noting that the estimated arrival times are based on 30-day averages. Mr. Davies suggested listing the stops in geographic order, as opposed to alphabetical order. Ms. Diggs Brody suggested linking the pdfs in the app. There was overwhelming agreement among committee members and Ms. Dent about some of these user-friendly changes, and Ms. Dent suggested sending suggestions to Erica.Dent@ridegrtc.com.

New Fare Cards

Ms. Rose Pace said they have been testing the new tap cards. They will be testing this with VUU and VCU for their "U Pass" program. They also will have swipe cards if the system is not ready in time, as they want it ready for the start of the semester next month, and they need a firmware update from GFI. U of R provides it for free, while VCU charges. This will be for staff as well as students, and be just for semester passes. Once this has been fully tested, they hope to roll it out this year, and hope to eventually make it a reloadable pass, like SmarTrip in DC.

The 30-day Petersburg unlimited ride pass is being discontinued on Aug 1, because only one person was buying it each month.

Mr. Davies said his children went through the youth pass situation and it worked really easily.

Ms. Rose Pace mentioned the Mayor's Youth Academy, which is providing free transit in a multi library/transit/YMCA pass for some students in the summer. She said GRTC hopes to expand this pilot project in the future. She mentioned that Mayor Stoney said that no student should have to pay to use transit to get to and from school.

Ms. Rose Pace said the budget for the Pulse is fixed and on-budget, and any overruns would be borne by the contractors. If, of course, a locality wanted an enhancement, they could ask for that.

Ms. Rose Pace said the contractor for the Pulse is hoping to achieve their full incentive payments, which would be in October, with the latest possible incentive payment going out if the system is done by Dec 31. The first steel frame of a station went up day prior, with the next in the two weeks, probably Cleveland. Fourteen platforms now under construction.

Ms. Rose Pace said there are five public information meetings in August on the Richmond Transit Network Plan. She noted the changes to a few routes since our last meeting: the loop into Mosby on the 5; the 13 that goes into Oakwood; the 4a/4b going to 24th St; 4a deeper into Montrose and directly to 24th not via Orleans; the 87 now going onto 2nd St and 22nd; more service to the VA hospital and Southside Plaza (though the latter may not have enough space for all buses, so work will need to be done there); the 20 goes to the VA hospital and the City Stadium area; the 78 goes farther south into Maymont; the 77, 75 and (almost) the 79 going to St. Mary's; the 88 going all the way to Southside Plaza; the 14 on Westbrook. News on the 64x will hopefully come soon.

Ms. Rose Pace spoke about Henrico changes Route 7 to hourly clockface and will change the 19 to 30-minute service clockface but run only Pemberton to Willow Lawn, with a connection to Willow Lawn.

Mr. Smith asked about possibly running the 14 as it does today, from Hermitage, Bellevue, Crestwood, Westbrook, Brook, similar to what it is today but further extended to Azalea area as planned.

Ms. Reveley said that the developer working on the Publix at Three Chopt and Patterson is sympathetic to putting a shelter in front of the store. Ms. Rose Pace said there are lots of options there, and that Henrico will soon be fully funding the 2 (old)/79 (new).

Ms. Rose Pace said the first week of the new system (RTNP/BRT) will be free within the City, though Henrico may choose to join in. Mr. Smith said he hoped the free week would be during a time of high usage and not over the holidays (Thanksgiving or Christmas/New Years) or when students are not in exams or away (mid-December to mid-January).

Mr. Barham said the new pilot CARE UZURV/Uber/Lyft Paratransit system will start on Aug 1, operating M-F 7 a.m.-6 p.m., with fares to customers being \$6, with a subsidy given by GRTC. Ms. Diggs Brody asked about whether Senior Connections or another group could help setup such trips, but Mr. Barham said in the pilot it will come directly from the customer. He also said that since this is an additional service beyond CARE and CARE Plus, it is subject to availability, so if there are too many users at once the trip can be refused, but the hope is that is low. Ms. Yette said she wanted to ensure it was clear that this is not part of FTA required ADA service.

Mr. Barham said Henrico's route update has started with Henrico having a meeting with Jarrett Walker, with public meetings not yet set.

Mr. Shuman said he appreciated the work of the committee and was very encouraged at the direction GRTC was going. It was suggested that he consider applying for the TAG in the future.

Ms. Diggs Brody spoke about wanting service on Thompson in the Museum District, and Mr. Barham spoke about the importance of last mile service. He added that GRTC is purchasing some 30-foot buses.

Mr. Davies asked about whether the bus lane on Broad St eastbound between 9th and 10th St. would be removed during the reconstruction of the General Assembly Building. Mr. Smith added that the City still does control the other lanes, and could make another lane the bus lane or put in a priority for buses to start moving before the green (a queue jump). Mr. Barham said that a queue jump is planned. Ms. Diggs Brody noted that for that block there are only two buses, the BRT and the 1, that use that segment. Ms. Reveley added that the system would benefit many state workers who have to walk in the area to bus service.

Ms. Diggs Brody asked if with fewer stops with the new plans means there may be better amenities at each stop, such as shelters. Mr. Smith mentioned how the city is now trying to prioritize this based on highest usage. Ms. Reveley said Henrico is responsive but requires a specific request for such an amenity.

Mr. Davies, seconded by Mr. Diggs Brody, **moved:**

That the Committee be adjourned.

This motion was approved unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 7:22.

The next meeting is Oct 19.