

GRTC Transit Advisory Group.

5:30-7:30, Thursday, October 20, 2016

GRTC Eldridge F. Coles Boardroom

Minutes

In Attendance.

Nicholas Smith, Michael Wilson, Jessica Reveley, Samuel Davies, Danny Plaugher, Kathryn Merritt Marks, Celia Yette, Kayla Diggs- Brody,

Tim Barham, Katie Schwing, Juan Shackelford, Jonathan Owens

Start Time

5:36 PM

Introductions

- New Members introduced themselves.

Public Comment

- One member of the public was present. Purpose of visit was to learn about the group and its purpose.

Approval of Minutes for April 21, 2016 and July 21, 2016

TAG Purpose and Guidelines Review-Tim Barham

- To collaborate with GRTC leaders to advance and improve public transit, identify problems and recommend solutions. There was a discussion about the process for new tag member. An explanation about the tenure of each member of the group and the voting process for officers (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary). Members who are absent for more than three meetings will potentially lose their appointment on the Transit Advisory Group. A brief discussion about the implementation of the new Rapid Transit System and potential deadlines.

Appointment of New TAG Members-Tim Barham

Appointment of Officers-Kayla Diggs-Brody

Nominations were conducted and Robert's Rules of Order was the method used for the group's decision. The results, approved unanimously, are as follows:

- Chair-Kayla Diggs-Brody
- Vice Chair-Celia Yette
- Secretary-Nicholas Smith

Open Discussion

Ideas on how to get more participation from the public. One suggestion was to change the place of the meetings. Meetings should be at a place more accessible for individuals to utilize public transportation. One of the members suggested City Hall downtown Richmond and the group agreed this was a good place to have the next meeting. The room in City Hall will be determined at a later date. Future TAG meeting dates were decided as well.

When making changes to bus routes, Ms. Yette suggested that a GRTC bus operator should be in attendance to provide some input.

Mr. Barham discussed a new project for their CARE Transit, "Go on Demand". Individual service for persons with disabilities that can make same day reservations. The service will be available 24 hours a day seven days a week, and will go in front of the Gen. Assembly.

A TAG member thanked the member of the public for coming.

Ms. Reveley noted difficulty accessing the website at all or downloading pdfs from the website from desktop computers, expressing concern that similar difficulties might occur on library computers or other devices for users that depend on those. The issue will be looked into.

Discussion of 10-day reduced fare program

Mr. Barham discussed the program, of which there are two. Paratransit, or ADARide, certifies people for 2 months to 5 years. It's an original-destination service. The second program is the reduced fare program, in which seniors, children and medicare users get half fare. They submit an application, which is processed in house, and requires re-application every so often to update address.

Mr. Davies was looking to do this for his children, but he needs ID for them. He would also like if this was integrated with the new smart card system.

Mr. Davies mentioned that he has an unlimited card through his employer, VCU Health, that is \$60/month pretax but max 40 trips per month. Kayla, who works at VCU, gets a \$40/month pass that is unlimited. They both refill automatically. With GRTC now offering an unlimited pass for everyone, there is an expectation that some of these may be standardized in the future.

Disability program

Ms. Reveley brought up disability, and how it is hard to apply for. The form has boxes for certain cases, but it may not line up for all cases, as doctors' notes may not work. Mr. Barham responded that they will review options. Mr. Davies discussed how VCU Health could try to automate this into their system so

that the doctor can tick a box in their system that the person is eligible under a certain condition and then GRTC's form will automatically be printed with information inputted, ready to be signed. Ms. Reveley said the form seemed rather large and so didn't load sometimes.

Ms. Reveley noted that most states' reduced fare disability programs are coordinated with the DMV standards such that those who cannot drive due to a given disability have access to reduced fare. She inquired as to why the disability reduced fare form seems diagnosis-based and not coordinated with the current DMV policies in Virginia. Mr. Barham responded that the disability form was based on FTA standards but that he would look into when it was last updated.

Ms. Yette had a question about CARE staffing: whether staff were reduced by half previously. Mr. Barham said the CARE advisory board reviews this. MV Transportation, the provider, was required to have 77 Full-Time and 36 Part-Time drivers. GRTC allows MVT to hire more staff if needed, and they are looking for more drivers.

New Title VI Policy was approved by board as draft. It is now at the Federal Transit Administration, where it will be reviewed. Katie Schwing, GRTC's Title VI officer, is coordinating this.

Review of Richmond Transit Network Plan

The two days prior to this meeting were the design charrette, where the draft final plan was designed. Council will see the policy in November, comment in December, with public review in January and a council vote following, hopefully January or February. Mr. Barham stated that "The Plan is to have the RTNP start in conjunction with BRT service."

Mr. Davies said he heard grumbling from riders on the 6 about construction on Broad. There was lots of misconception about GRTC not providing enough service, but it's the locality that chooses how much service to offer.

Ms. Yette wanted to make sure bus drivers were giving input on proposed changes. Mr. Barham said they have union and safety meetings to bring up general issues. Operators do respond to surveys, and there are open staff feedback meetings from which there is lots of feedback.

There was a suggestion to do on-bus advertising for RTNP including audio announcements and "Jane" maps (isochromes that show how far you can travel from a certain point in 15, 30, 45, 60 min). Also a suggestion to announce current and later future transfers at each stop (e.g. "Laburnum, transfer here for the 91").

It was stressed that these are big changes, and that us and many others will need to help people understand the new system.

Kayla mentioned the letter the TAG sent to council endorsing BRT, and how we could brainstorm to help it succeed. Ideas included advertising in the courts and with groups that support people with disabilities. The Travel Training program, which helps people with disabilities or who are on or eligible for CARE use the regular fixed route system, has funding for 2 years and funding will continue at least for a bit after, depending on the success of the program.

The Group talked about how the Belt Boulevard HQ was not the most accessible location and how it might be nice to rotate the location to various other places.

Ms. Reveley, seconded by Ms. Yette, **moved**:

That the TAG To consider holding the TAG at a more central location accessible by transit, such s city hall, the main public library and the DMV.

This motion was approved unanimously.

Doug suggested adding a note in the mission statements about rider advocacy.

Kayla noted that the next meeting times would be Jan 19, Apr 20 and Jul 20. She also hoped that lots of emails about this meeting would be sent out on various lists.

There being no further business, Ms. Diggs-Brody, seconded by Mr. Plaugher, **moved**:

That the TAG do now adjourn.

The motion was approved unanimously at 7:17.

Next meeting is Jan 19.