

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

March 16, 2021

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 County Museum, Lecture Hall, 3331 Tamiami Trail East, Naples FL 34112, with the following members present:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman: Mr. John DiMarco - Zoom

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Arthur Dobberstein - Zoom

Mr. James Bennett – In person

Mr. Peter Berry - Zoom

Mr. Devon Browne – In person

Excused:

Mr. James Caton

Ms. Sonja Lee Samek

ALSO PRESENT:

Mr. Omar DeLeon, Public Transit Manager, Collier Area Transit

Ms. Tamarin Kirby, Planning Technician, MV Transportation

I. Call to Order

The meeting could not be called to order due to the absence of a quorum.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, without a quorum established.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was noted by Mr. Dobberstein that a zoning update was to be provided regarding the use of the Radio Road transfer facility by the Big Red Bus now that conditional use has been approved, however this topic of discussion was not included as an agenda item. Mr. DeLeon stated an agreement has not been finalized for discussion. LeeTran has provided a copy of their agreement with Big Red Bus for reference, with Legal review pending of modifications made by Collier Area Transit.

IV. Approval of Minutes – February 16, 2021

Approval of the minutes could not be voted upon due to the absence of a quorum.

V. Committee Action

a. Membership Renewal – Sonja Samek

Committee action could not be taken due to the absence of a quorum.

VI. Reports and Presentations

a. COVID Effect on Route Performance:

+**Route 13** was noted to have a significant decrease in ridership related to Covid-19, with an approximate 77% loss, perhaps due to more recreational / “non-essential” stops on this route. Ridership has been steadily increasing, now 35% reduced from last year.

+**Route 26** also sustained a large drop in ridership, down approximately 65% in May 2020; however, has also been steadily increasing in ridership, now down 26%.

+**Route 121**, which runs from Immokalee to Marco Island experienced the largest decrease in ridership, down 81% in April 2020, perhaps due to individuals living in Immokalee who are employed on Marco Island, where a large drop in tourism was experienced. Ridership has been steadily increasing on this route as well, now down 8%.

+**Route 19** did not suffer significantly due to Covid-19, perhaps as it transports riders from the City of Immokalee to the Naples Government Center Transfer Station. A distinction was noted that while routes 121 and 19 are “essential worker routes,” route 19 ridership remained stronger throughout the pandemic, as the Transfer Center allows the opportunity to travel on to other destinations.

Additional buses were added to the route to accommodate appropriate social distancing.

+**Route 27** was also not greatly impacted due to Covid-19, attributed to essential worker ridership between Collier and Lee Counties. Route 27 travels from the Golden Gate Community Center, north on 951, capturing ridership from Golden Gate Estates and Immokalee Road, eventually connecting with LeeTran at the Creekside Transfer Center. Opportunities are being explored for riders to transfer between routes in North Naples, without having to travel south to the Government Center.

+**Route 28**, which travels from the City of Immokalee, with stops in Ave Maria and on to the Naples Government Center was also not significantly impacted due to Covid-19, again attributed to essential worker ridership. Additional buses were also added to this route to accommodate appropriate social distancing.

+**Route 21**, the circulator on Marco Island has not significantly recovered in ridership, down 45% compared to February 2020, thought due to the reduction in tourist travel to Marco Island in the pandemic environment. Service levels remained the same due to an opportunity for appropriate social distancing due to reduced ridership.

+**Route 24**, which travels south along US 41 was heavily impacted during Covid-19 and has yet to significantly recover. Mr. Dobberstein inquired whether Habitat for Humanity has been consulted for ways to increase ridership for individuals located at those properties. Mr. DeLeon stated that the route is being evaluated for ways to improve and maintain overall ridership, either with greater promotion or to streamline the route. It was noted that the Habitat for Humanity group could be included in public workshops for input. Mr. DiMarco identified an opportunity to increase ridership with promotion of bus travel to a vaccination site along the route.

Fixed route ridership was down 33% in February 2021, compared to last year, with 46,514 total riders. Paratransit ridership was down 35% in February 2021, with 5,935 riders.

Mr. Bennett inquired whether riders are tracked based upon their initial purchase or whether transfers are counted as well. Further, whether riders coming in from Lee County are counted at the Creekside Transfer station. Mr. DeLeon clarified that every ride on the bus is counted, regardless of whether it is a transfer or not. It was further noted that data is not able to be captured at this time regarding riders from Lee County as there is currently not a shared pass between counties.

This opportunity is being explored in the Comprehensive Operating Analysis (COA) by evaluating the opportunity to share a pass for greater data gathering, as well as for greater ease for passengers who would only need one pass. This concept is currently under discussion with LeeTran.

Mr. Dobberstein inquired whether the Department of Health had been offered the use of the Radio Road and Government Center Transfer stations as alternative vaccination sites, which would be useful to the public and may increase ridership. Mr. DeLeon noted having discussed transportation opportunities with the Health Department; not

specifically offering transfer sites as alternative vaccination sites, however, acknowledged the opportunity. Buses were previously used as cooling stations in the City of Immokalee at covid testing sites.

b. COA Update

Staff provided an update on the COA project, commencing with a summary of what the COA is comprised of and difference between the study and the Transit Development Plan. The schedule was discussed identify key dates for public input, the drafts and final documents.

Kimberly Horn developed Route Profiles for each route, the profiles were reviewed with the committee highlighting key performance measures.

c. FDOT's Commute Connector Program

Commute Connector and Enterprise Van Pool provided a presentation to the committee discuss the new agreement between FDOT and Enterprise. The Presentation described the key elements of the program and opportunities for large employers if they take advantage of the program. Commute Connector discussed the mobile application that is available for existing commuters and the incentives provided to the users. Enterprise representative explained that geographic mapping is used to identify where a van pool might be viable and how potential user are identified to participate in the van pool.

VII. Member Comments

Committee request information on the progress of the FDDC grant. Staff advised that they were the process of negotiating an agreement with Uber, which unfortunately has created delays in the implementation of the project.

VIII. Public Comments

No Public comment.

IX. Next Meeting Date – April 20th, 2021 (Location TBD)

X. 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___.