

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

August 17, 2021 Naples, Florida,

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 at Collier County Museum Lecture Hall, 3331 Tamiami Trail E, Naples, Florida with the following members present:

Chairman: John DiMarco, III
Vice-Chairman: Arthur Dobberstein
James Bennett (Excused)
Peter Berry (ZOOM)
Devon Browne (ZOOM)
James Caton (Excused)
Sonja Lee Samek (ZOOM)

ALSO PRESENT: Michelle Arnold, Director, Public Transit and Neighborhood Enhancement
Omar DeLeon, Public Transit Manager, Collier Area Transit
Tamarin Kirby, MV Transit Planner
Marrika Maldonado, ParaTransit Manager, MV Transit (ZOOM)
Brandy Otero, Principal Planner, Collier County Museums (ZOOM)

1. Call to Order

Chairman DiMarco called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was not established.

3. Approval of Agenda

Chair DiMarco requested the Agenda be modified as follows:

Move Item 6. b. - Reports and Presentations: Study Recommendations to Item 6.a. – Reports and Presentations.

Move Item 6. a. - Reports and Presentations: Route Reduction due to Driver Shortage to Item 6. b. – Reports and Presentations.

Committee consensus to change the Agenda was noted.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. June 15, 2021 Minutes

The minutes of the June 15, 2021 Public Transit Advisory Committee meeting will be added to the September 21, 2021 Agenda.

5. Committee Action

None

6. Reports and Presentations

a. Study Recommendations – Item 6b

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) staff advised the Public Transport & Neighborhood Enhancement Division (PTNE) funding is allocated for Transit Studies.

Mr. DeLeon presented an Executive Summary, “*Transit Study Recommendations*” with areas identified for inclusion in the Transit Development Program (TDP) study. The long-term projects require identification of the scope of work and cost and incorporation into the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) documents for the Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to enable TDP to move forward and retain consultants, etc.

TDP study ideas include:

- Development of marketing strategies for Collier Area Transit (CAT) to increase market share.
- Downtown Autonomous Circulator
 - The urban circulator project would include development and establishment of a pilot program.
 - Coordination with the City of Naples would be required.
 - A definitive route has not been identified.
- Electric Naples Pier Shuttle
 - The study would outline components consistent with the Autonomous Circulator project.

- Mobility on Demand
 - A specific area would be evaluated and ways to implement future service in other areas.
 - Specific carriers provide the App for Mobility on Demand.
- A Fare Study.

The Committee discussed the following:

- CAT is working with the Collier Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) on options for electric transportation vehicle/urban circulator system for the Bayshore Gateway Triangle.
- Should the funds be utilized to increase transit employee wages in lieu of studies?
- A wage analysis study is not within the scope of the TDP and cannot be incorporated in one of the proposed projects.

Ms. Arnold will reach out to determine if a wage level/cost of living analysis for Collier versus Lee County is available.

Next Step

The Committee recommended the TDP projects identified be pursued.

Staff will:

- Prepare a Scope of Work for each project.
- Identify costs related to the projects.
- Determine the projects the MPO is willing to support.
- Report back to the Committee at a future meeting.

b. Route Reduction due to Driver Shortage – Item 6a

Ms. Arnold presented Executive Summary “*Temporary Route Reduction*” stating the objective to temporarily suspend select routes to improve the reliability of Fixed Route service that has been affected by the driver shortage.

The Pandemic has significantly impacted the labor force creating a national driver shortage for the Transportation Industry. The CAT system has struggled to engage drivers to cover the service area. Efforts taken by the vendor, MV Transportation Inc., to recruit new drivers include:

- Fixed Route Operators wage and sign-on bonus increases.
- Retaining a Recruiter and placing “Now Hiring” banners on the property.
- Elimination of a training wage.
- Establishment of a new work schedule for the drivers, reducing the number of operators required.

Staff recommends routes 18, 20, 25 and 26 be suspended. Route 18 was selected as it is already slated to be eliminated through the Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) process. Route 17 will continue to service the areas Route 18 was servicing. Routes 20, 25 and 26 have low ridership.

The Committee discussed the following:

Paratransit Transportation

- Paratransit has been affected by driver shortage.
- Rules are set to qualify for disability ridership.

- The fare rate for paratransit service, different from traditional ridership, is not based on income.
- Third party transportation sources such as Uber must meet the full background check requirement and comply with all regulations to operate in Collier County.

Driver Recruitment and Compensation

- Job Fairs and “CareerSource” are being utilized to recruit drivers.
- Drivers are working the maximum number of hours allowed.
- The contractor is absorbing the hourly pay increase.

Recommendation

Committee members agreed to endorse closure of Routes 18, 20, 25 and 26.

7. Member Comments

In response to a member’s inquiry, Ms. Arnold noted the County is planning to operate beach Trolleys this season.

8. Public Comments

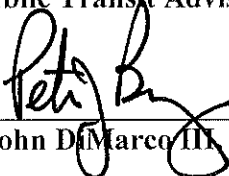
None

9. Next Meeting Date

September 21, 2021 - Collier County Museum, Lecture Hall, 3331 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL.

There being no further business for the good of the County, the meeting was adjourned by order of the chair at 3:58 P.M.

Public Transit Advisory Committee

 *for*

John DiMarco III, Chairman

These minutes approved by the Board/Committee on _____ as presented _____ or as amended _____.