

**Transit Plus Advisory Council
November 16, 2021 Minutes**

PLACE: Microsoft Teams Meeting

PRESENT: David Buck, Grace Graves, Laurel Henschel, Danita Jackson, Nilima Mehra, Marcia Perkins, Jeanette Williams, Mae Wingo

ABSENT: James Bahneman, Gerald Balezentis, Annie Johnson, Arlene Washington

GUESTS: Kevin Meyers – guest, Alena DeGrado – Milwaukee County Department on Aging, Nick Arizola – American United; Morgan Mc Clelland - First Transit; Tracy Harrington – Transit Express; Fran Musci, Chris Fox, Paula Schultz, and Lisa Walters - Transit Plus, Isabel Sanchez – AmeriCorps Public Ally

CALL TO ORDER:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the October 19, 2021 meeting were approved.

COMMITTEES:

Driver/Reservationist Recognition Committee: no report.

Membership Committee:

Public Relations Committee: David Buck reported that a MCTS bus driver was recently recognized for helping to save the life of a disabled boy. The federal mask mandate continues to be in place through January 18, 2022. David encouraged First Transit and Transit Express to keep doing what they are doing to address hiring issues.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Transit Plus Office Remodeling Project: Fran Musci reported that the office is now almost empty. Clerks have been relocated in the building. Everyone else is working virtually. There is not yet a date set for the remodeling but once started is expected to take 4 to 6 weeks to complete. We hope to be back in the office by the end of January or early February.

TPAC Member Expiration of Terms: Nilima Mehra stated she would like to continue serving on the Council in 2022.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fixed Route Stop Announcements: Fran Musci explained that when a stop on fixed route is requested a chime plays and a check mark appears on a screen. It is now possible to replace the check mark with either an announcement with the audio phrase “stop requested” or

a chime plus the phrase “stop requested”. Fran asked the Council what they thought would be best. Council members preferred the use of both together.

Transit Plus Pick Up and Drop Off Area at Bayshore: Chris Fox explained that the former Transit Plus pick up and drop off spot used to be located at the Rotunda near Bar Louie. The sign has now disappeared. Chris has worked with Bayshore Management to find a new location which is on the east side of the old mall, north of the new Target store. There is a hallway at this location where riders can wait inside. The door to this hallway will have the same hours as Target. Chris is trying to get a bench. Vans will pull in where the Cheesecake Factory is located and proceed through the roundabout to the new pick up and drop off area. Vans will exit past Total Wine.

Nick Arizola advised that American United will pick up and drop off riders at whatever Bayshore location they desire.

MOBILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT: Chris Fox introduced Paula Schultz who is the new Mobility Manager. Paula was formerly an Eligibility Assessor. Her position as Mobility Manager is effective November 22, 2021. A search for another Assessor to replace Paula has begun. Paula stated that she was excited to be here and that she has a lot to learn. Chris stated they are working to get Paula up to speed.

Chris advised that the team has been busy with many presentations. They have seven more presentations scheduled before the end of the year. They recently conducted ADA Training for 17 new drivers. Travel training is still busy. ADA boardings on fixed route are up from 2020. Transit Plus riders on fixed route are down from last year. We are trying to bring that up.

CARRIER REPORTS:

American United: Nick Arizola reported that American United provided 900 Transit Plus trips this month. Average wait time is 22 minutes. They are short on drivers as are other companies. American United is providing rides for Veyo which is the non-emergency medical transportation program for the State of Wisconsin. MTM was the previous contractor for this NEMT program. Nilima Mehra and Mae Wingo complained about long waits getting picked up from Pick N Save. They ended up having to get rides home from someone else. Nilima stated that this has also happened to her in the past. Nick promised to investigate.

Transit Express: Tracy Harrington reported that staffing changes are continuing. They are down two CSR's, one dispatcher, and many drivers. This results in longer waits on the phone and for vehicles. They keep trying to hire and are holding training classes every week. It takes a bit longer to hire because the quality of applicants is not high enough. Tracy apologized for rider's inconvenience.

First Transit: Morgan McClelland reported that the situation is the same for First Transit and all transportation companies around the country. Many applicants don't finish the classes. First Transit is struggling to cover routes. It may take a while before things get better.

TRANSIT PLUS: Fran Musci reported that we have been working with Trapeze to implement

the new module "Service Infractions" to track no-shows, cancellations at the door and late cancellations. It is expected that the reinstatement of the No Show Policy will be in place after the first of the year. We hope to reduce unproductive trips. Ridership is going up. It is at 70% of pre-COVID levels. Our providers are still having trouble hiring staff. We do not expect to see a turn around in the short term. Transit Plus is considering shortening the reservation window from 14 to 7 days to reduce cancellations. A large majority of riders make their reservations 3 days in advance, so this will not have a negative effect on most customers. Every little bit to free up a few minutes here and there helps to streamline service and save the providers an employee. Fran stated she would be bringing more ideas to the Council next month. The document management project has accomplished getting all client files online. Electronic applications are coming next. This will cut down on paper and printing.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

ADJOURNMENT