



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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TRANSIT RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 17, 2017

Committee Chair Gloria Lepik-Corrigan called the October 17, 2017 TRAC meeting to order at 4:05 PM. Members present: C. David Schneider, John Estok, Teresa Dunphy, Elisabeth Olden, Richard McDaniel, Mark O'Hara, Portia Smith, and Gloria Lepik-Corrigan. Members absent: Louis Romero, Jr., Dave Kovar, and Dave Stanton. Also present: Brad Miller, CEO; Joshua Shulman and Bill Jonson, PSTA Board Members, PSTA Staff and members of the public.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CHAIR REPORT

Committee Chair Lepik-Corrigan gave an overview of the PSTA Board meeting held September 27th. She shared the transit initiatives that are on the list of Federal priorities for funding, including the Small Starts Projects, the development of a new national infrastructure program and general support for the need for funding the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) programs. Mr. Miller announced the \$1 million that PSTA was awarded for the Low/No Grant, Doug Bevis' departure from the PSTA Board due to term limits and the incoming Board member David Banther, Vice-Mayor of Tarpon Springs.

FORWARD PINELLAS REPORT

In Mr. Kovar's absence, Mr. Estok gave a brief summary of the Forward Pinellas Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, which included a session of the development of their mission and vision, the SR60 multimodal project, and the Tampa Bay NEXT program.

ACTION ITEMS

September 19, 2017 Meeting Minutes – Mr. Schneider made a motion, seconded by Mr. McDaniel, to approve the September 19th minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

2018 TRAC Committee Meeting Schedule – Mr. McDaniel made a motion, seconded by Mr. O’Hara, to approve the 2018 TRAC meeting schedule. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Ridership Trend Analysis - Mr. Miller shared the latest PSTA ridership statistics comparing FY2017 to FY2016, showing a 7.5% loss in total rides. He explained the downturn in ridership is a transit agency trend across the nation, due to lower gas prices, a rise in car sales, and more affordable transit alternatives such as Uber and Lyft. Mr. Miller stressed that PSTA may have to consider lowering fares and investing in service adjustments to support core routes to raise revenue in the future. Despite the downturn, the following two segments, the Demand Response Service (DART) and TD programs showed an increase in ridership.

2018 Service Adjustment Process – Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, described the service adjustment process that the Planning department goes through three times a year to fine-tune routes, increase ridership and improve on-time efficiencies. Ms. Borchers shared research and statistics on two routes, the 444 and the 58, which are currently under scrutiny for recommended adjustments. The 444 is historically the least productive and most expensive route and will likely be eliminated in February 2018. Through surveys, town hall meetings and on-board notices, the few riders of the 444 will be offered an alternative such as Direct Connect for their commute. On the other hand, Ms. Borchers presented the case for tweaking route 58, by possibly adding one more trip at the end of the route. This extra trip would accommodate a substantial number of working class riders who need the extra route to be able to ride PSTA home from their workplace. The Committee was encouraged to hear of the future adjustments, although for the most part these changes do not affect their current routes or issues that they encounter in their daily commute.

TD Late Shift Update – Heather Sobush, Manager of Planning, reported on the continued success of the TD Late Shift pilot program. The pilot started in July 2016 with a mobility enhancement grant from the state of Florida. The program provides TD riders with up to 23 free rides on Uber, United Taxi, or Care Ride from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

to and from work. The pilot has been a huge success and PSTA was awarded a second grant. Ms. Sobush explained in order to sustain the program, a new price structure of \$20 for a TD monthly bus pass, 25 free Late Shift rides and 1 urgent TD trip will be introduced in January.

PRESENTATIONS

Regional Transportation Planning – Whit Blanton, Executive Director of Forward Pinellas, presented a broad overview of the state of regional transit planning in the Tampa Bay area. He thanked the Committee for their statement of concern letters regarding the themes of “regionalism” and “safety to and from bus stops” that were received by their organization. He hopes to continue the dialogue encouraging future regional transit projects that connect our counties and cities. Mr. Blanton stressed the challenges involved in keeping up with the planning, decision-making, and funding for transit projects when there are so many organizations involved. Transportation decisions are under the authority of many different organizations including Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough counties, the Transportation Management Leadership (TMA) Group, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the Federal Government. Mr. Blanton discussed the many ongoing regional planning efforts underway here in the Tampa Bay area including Tampa Bay NEXT, and the Regional Transit Feasibility Study. Mr. Blanton stated his case that Tampa Bay would benefit from a regional express bus service, a light rail initiative to connect Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, and a strategy to make our counties “walk” friendly.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM. The next TRAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14th at 4:00 PM.