

**TSAC Minutes
September 3, 2014**

Present:

Dr. Deb Banerjee
Dr. Fuller Bazer
Mr. Mike Caruso
Ms. Courtney Charanza
Mr. Joe Dillard
Mr. David Glockzin
Dr. Angie Hill Price
Dr. Margaret Hobson
Mr. Collin Kruger
Mr. Peter Lange
Mr. Chris Lyons
Dr. Beth McNeill

Dr. Joe Newton
Mr. Robert Pottberg
Ms. Flora Reeves
Ms. Veronica Sprayberry
Dr. Bob Strawser
Mr. Travis Walters
Dr. CJ Woods

Absent:

Ms. Hannah Weger
Mr. Rod Weis

1. Mr. Peter Lange opened the meeting by welcoming the new and returning members and giving a brief overview of the purpose of the Transportation Services Advisory Committee and its seven year history.
 - 1.1 He stressed the importance of everyone's contribution, whether you are a student, faculty or staff member and no matter what part of campus you frequent. He encouraged everyone to stay involved in discussions, because even if it doesn't directly affect your area, your opinion and feedback is still needed.
 - 1.2 He said the group has always shared opinions and helped us to make informed decisions; it sends a positive message to administrators when we are able to say that students, faculty and staff have been consulted in decision making.
 - 1.3 Dr. Angie Hill Price and Dr. Newton added that Transportation Services always listens to opinions and is respectful of differing viewpoints.
 - 1.4 Mr. Mike Caruso added that there is value in bringing topics to light that TS may not be aware of.
2. Members introduced themselves and stated which organization they are representing.
3. The minutes from the May meeting were presented for review and approval. Ms. Flora Reeves made a motion for the minutes to be accepted as written, Mr. Travis Walter seconded the motion and the members voted to approve the minutes.
 - 3.1 Mr. Lange stated that a co-chair would be chosen at the next meeting.

4. Mr. Kenny Kimball, Assistant Director of Fiscal Affairs and Compliance with Transportation Services, gave an update on Transit Funding with cost projections for the future. He explained that funding is no longer tied to the student population as a fee per student; instead, we receive funds from the University Advancement Fee. Last year, we asked for an increase to raise the funding to the previous level of about \$70 per student but were only given a slight increase that equals about \$65 per student. We now sell advertising on buses which supplements transit, but it is a small amount in relation to total costs.
 - 4.1 We are currently running about 75 out of the 80 buses we have at a given time. The industry standard is 10 buses extra to allow for maintenance and breakdowns; the normal life span of buses in the transit industry is around 12 years. Our fleet of buses is aging and 46 of 80 buses are 13-14 years old. We need more buses and we need to replace the older buses; the cost of a new bus is \$447,000.
 - 4.2 With current projections of student growth, we will run out of parking in 3 - 5 years and the demand for transit service will increase. We will request an additional \$1million from the University Advancement Fee to cover increases in costs in the transit operation. If we don't receive new funding, current levels of service hours will remain and no additional bus service will be possible.
 - 4.3 Mr. Kimball told members about a company located in Michigan that refurbishes buses provided to them for \$125,000 and also sells refurbished buses for \$200,000. We have already ordered 10 new buses that will start arriving next spring at a cost of \$4.7 million, but will ask to carry that amount as debt service and use reserves to start refurbishing our old buses.
 - 4.3.1 Does the cost projection include the possibility of being required to serve two Blinn locations? No. Mr. Lange stated that we currently don't have a written agreement with Blinn, but when they were considering opening a second campus, they contacted us about providing service. There is not a monetary arrangement or contract.
 - 4.4 Mr. Lange told members that we continue to work with Brazos Transit Authority (BTA) to request federal funding but the likelihood of getting the funding is akin to winning the lottery. We have currently requested funding (80% of the cost of 20 buses) in conjunction with BTA. One condition of the federal funding application is that BTA pass holders must be able to ride our buses and our students must be able to ride BTA buses. Our plan is to start discussions with student groups to get feedback on this topic.
 - 4.4.1 Students who currently ride the bus must adhere to university rules. How would that be enforced with public? Mr. Lange stated it would be similar to a game day situation when fans ride the shuttle; they must obey our rules.
 - 4.4.2 What about the growing student population and the fact that buses are already full without the extra BTA riders? Mr. Lange said that is his main concern but more buses will solve the problem.

- 4.4.3 Does BTA charge now? How many passes are issued at this time? Mr. Lange said BTA charges per ride but no season pass. We will request the number of rides they have sold.
 - 4.4.4 Is a model where city and university bus riders/service overlaps used anywhere else? In Austin, CAP Metro provides all transit for UT students. We would have to do some research to see if similar situations exist elsewhere and the benefits, issues, etc.
 - 4.4.5 How long do you maintain the public ridership agreement before you find out if the funding is awarded? Ms. Madeline Dillard responded that the agreement to begin ridesharing between BTA and A&M would start in about a month and would be ongoing since the grant application process occurs throughout the year and year after year.
 - 4.4.6 The concern was expressed that we will bear the entire cost of improving the ridership for BTA and they will benefit with no cost. It was suggested that a time is established annually to reevaluate.
 - 4.4.7 It was suggested that someone from BTA attend the next meeting to discuss the plan and address some concerns.
5. Mr. Ron Steedly discussed the bicycle district plan being developed by Alta. They got started at the end of the spring semester and weren't able to see our campus in full swing; they will be visiting October 8 - 11 as part of the ongoing evaluation. They would like feedback from faculty, staff and students and will be conducting workshops and a charette to gather information.
- 5.1 Mr. Steedly showed an example of the new standard for bike pads we are submitting for approval. The pads will have a paver border around the edge.
 - 5.2 Mr. Steedly said new bike pads and racks are installed at Rudder adjacent to the Military Sciences Building, adding 200 new bike spaces. In the past 3 ½ years, 6800 bike racks have been installed.
 - 5.3 Mr. Steedly showed a picture of the Gotcha Ride vehicles that are providing service on campus and asked members to stop on the Koldus Plaza to see one in person after the meeting. They make their revenue with advertising and provide no charge rides on campus and in the immediate area. There are currently 4 vehicles providing rides between 9 pm and 3 am. They were slow to get started because they had a hard time hiring drivers in the summer. They will provide their ridership numbers quarterly.
6. Dr. Angie Hill Price asked if it is possible to open the gates on Ross Street earlier? She said it could provide an alternate route for faculty and staff to exit the garage. Mr. Lange said we could allow access on a trial basis. Mr. Lange said he had already done this for someone in Traffic Engineering and will share the outcome of the travel time differences this customer clocked.