

TSAC Minutes
October 7, 2020

This was a Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Dr. Fuller Bazer
Mr. Bill Cox
Mr. Andy Deuel
Mr. Joe Dillard
Dr. Angie Hill Price
Ms. Erin Jones
Dr. Andrew Klein
Mr. Jim Kovar
Mr. Peter Lange
Mr. Eric Mendoza (Ms. Oriana Koot)
Ms. Lisa Pierce (Ms. Tamra Young)
Mr. Robert Pottberg

Mr. Tom Reber
Dr. John Stallone
Dr. Jerry Strawser
Mr. Fawaz Syed
Mr. Uthej Vattipalli (Mr. Rio O'Neal)
Mr. Mark Welsh
Ms. Deborah Wright

Absent:

Ms. Flora Reeves
Mr. Dale Rice

1. Mr. Peter Lange opened the meeting at 3:00 p.m. He showed a picture of our new, pilot Gillig bus, being built in California. It will ship on October 19, and the remaining 34 buses will be shipped before the holiday break. Our three, Proterra electric buses also manufactured in California, will start production in January, with projected delivery in March 2021. We have most of the necessary charging infrastructure already in place at our Transit unit on Agronomy Road.

2. Mr. Lange asked the committee to review the minutes from the September 2, 2020 meeting. Mr. Bill Cox motioned for approval; Dr. Angie Hill Price seconded; minutes approved.

3. Ms. Julie Villarreal gave a brief presentation about the Transportation Services Mobility Master Plan. See presentation: <https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx> (scroll to the bottom of the minutes and find "Related Presentations"). We issued an RFP for a vendor to help us create the plan, and we awarded the contract to Walker Consultants. We will be reaching a wide range of campus and local community members, through a series of focus groups, to help develop the plan. This will include our TSAC members and their constituents. We will keep everyone apprised of engagement opportunities.

3.1. Dr. Hill Price mentioned that it is important to take the pulse of different age groups and levels of mobility, as it is sometimes challenging to get around campus. Ms. Villarreal assured her we would.

4. Mr. Lange gave a financial update. See presentation: <https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx>. This is a similar chart to the one we've shown since April. Our revenue projections continue to be a concern. Since spring semester is projected to be similar to the fall semester in terms of campus activity, our markers for our different units will remain the same. Transit ridership and special event/visitor revenue is at less than 20% of normal. We are tracking \$16 million in losses, and will run out of money this spring. We are therefore asking for a \$1.25 million loan this FY and \$1.25 million next FY. We will also look at what we can do with parking rates to shore up our losses. We will come back to the committee with ideas before the end of the year. Whatever is decided, we will announce as soon as possible so our customers can plan. We are hoping for a return to normal revenue streams in FY 2022.

4.1. Ms. Deborah Wright asked how we could communicate these issues to our customers, so they understand that we cannot afford to provide refunds for parking.

4.1.1. Mr. Lange said we are communicating through our website. He and Ms. Debbie Hoffmann attended a USC executive committee meeting and explained our permit refund policy. He said he explained that parts of campus have plenty of staff parking. For example, GSC employees can return their permits without fearing losing their ranking, because there are plenty of spaces in Lot 88. The same holds for West Campus by AG. If we can't get someone back into Lot 97, we can get them into another nearby lot. Where we do have problems is getting people back into lots at the front of campus in high-demand areas after they surrender their permits for refund.

4.1.2. Dr. Andrew Klein mentioned that on the academic side, they aren't sure what the new "normal" looks like. He asked what opportunities might be if there was less parking on campus (if we close small lots).

4.1.2.1. Mr. Lange said that the Campus Master Plan (CMP) already closes all small lots in the long term. Any parking lot renovation will be delayed, as our capital projects are on hold for two years. He did mention that our Transportation Mobility Plan/Study would look at the future of parking. Mr. Lange stressed that we do anticipate this tier-one research, land-grant university to return to normal in-person operations. Dr. Fuller Bazer agreed.

4.1.2.1.1 Mr. Fawaz Syed said they have seen a big drop in in-person classes. Ms. Oriana Koot said she observed the same thing. Students are finding it easier to go online to asynchronous lectures. Mr. Syed said it was easier to engage with professors through Zoom chat. Ms. Koot said the hybrid type class worked best when the professor has an assistant handle the Zoom chat. Dr. Jerry Strawser said his

experience is that it is hard to split attention during in-person classes to online audience. Mr. Mark Welsh said that since Bush School attendees are all graduate students, they are seeing 75-80% in class. Those who are online are mostly international students and cannot attend.

4.1.2.1.2. Mr. Tom Reber said they envision getting students back to campus, but also having virtual offerings. Students enjoy being on campus and want to be back in town. He thinks the current situation will push the university to offer more robust options. Mr. Bill Cox agreed. He thinks it will cause the university to provide enhanced services. Mr. Welsh remarked that in the future we will be able to define on campus vs. online attendance to a degree by how we provide options to the different student demographic groups.

4.1.2.1.3. Mr. Lange thanked the committee for its insight into these areas.

5. Ms. Debbie Hoffmann provided feedback from the first home football game, in which crowds were at 75% reduced capacity and tailgating was prohibited. We were able to adjust our staffing, equipment deployment, road closures, parking reservations, and transit options to fit the anticipated reductions. She provided some quick statistics:

- Bus ridership was at 15-20% of normal.
- 12th Man asked for about 50% its normal parking spaces.
- The ParkMobile app was successful in providing advanced parking reservations.
- Cash revenue was 18% of normal intake.
- We heard about potential tailgate protests, but none materialized.
- We saw good compliance with social distancing and mask usage, with only two transit riders not wearing masks.
- We made changes to traffic plans, with no contraflow on Discovery or Wellborn. However, because we saw some delays at George Bush and Wellborn due to community movement, we will probably tweak this for the next game.
- We had some trouble managing no-wheel zones.

5.1. Mr. Lange mentioned that the South Gate community was packed with private tailgate parties, which added to the congestion at George Bush and Wellborn. However, everything else on campus tracked at about 25% of normal, in line with the stadium attendance limitations.

5.2. Ms. Hoffmann said that for the upcoming home game we expect similar results to our first game. We will start road closures and open parking lots three hours pre-game (instead of the usual four) and expect customers to arrive at about 10 a.m.

5.3. Ms. Erin Jones said that no-wheel zones would be addressed in the pre-game agenda for the October 8 game. She appreciated the buses we provide for their gameday workers.

6. Mr. Lange provided some updates:

- We will provide complimentary voter parking at Stallings Blvd Garage, starting with early voting on October 13 and running through Election Day. We will also provide transit service, first to the MSC for early voting and then to Rudder Exhibit Hall.
- Polo Road Garage (PRG) has been open and operational since the beginning of fall semester. The final build-out is going well, with substantial completion in November. Transportation Services, the five restaurants, and Rec Sports will be moved in and operational by the beginning of the spring semester, and Lot 50 will be returned for regular parking.
- After one of our units moves out of Central Campus Garage (CCG) to PRG, we will remodel our CCG offices for the remaining unit. We are able to pay cash for the project by rolling it into an already-budgeted garage maintenance project. Also under that project is a series of elevator upgrades – four in University Center Garage and three at Northside Garage.
- We will not have many street or parking lot or rehab projects over the next couple of years because of our cost savings initiatives on capital projects.

7. Ms. Hoffmann said the Matthew Gaines bus route renaming initiative is in process with the various student groups with a deadline of October 19.

8. Mr. Lange concluded the meeting at 3:56 p.m.

*The next meeting will be November 4, 2020 (Zoom details in invitation)
Please visit our website: transport.tamu.edu*