

CITY OF FLORENCE TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March 19, 2014 ** MEETING MINUTES **

CALL TO ORDER –

Vice Chairperson Stephens called the meeting to order at 1:37 PM.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members: Mary Stephens, Vice Chair; Jane Ashley; Don Patton; Bill Craig. L.A. Rose, Chair; and Nola Xavier, Mayor were not present.

Ex-Officio Members: Clara Kuhn, River Cities Taxi (RCT). Susan Hekimoglu, Lane Transit District (LTD) and Kristine Sirmans, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) were not present.

Support Staff: Mike Miller, Public Works; Wendy FarleyCampbell, Planning; and Glen Southerland, Planning.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Craig moved to approve the Agenda.

Ashley seconded to approve.

By Voice All Ayes, except Rose, who was absent.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

*This is an opportunity for members of the audience to bring to the Transit Advisory Committee's attention any items **NOT** otherwise listed on the agenda. Comments will be limited to **3 minutes per person**, with a maximum time of 15 minutes for all items.*

There were no members of the public present.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Craig moved to approve the Minutes of February 26, 2014.

Ashley seconded to approve.

By Voice All Ayes

4. ADA TRANSITION PLAN DISCUSSION

- **PWD Miller** stated that all public agencies with 50 or more employees must have a Sidewalk Transition Plan. He said that the City of Florence has 58 employees. PWD Miller stated that he would like the TAC's help in inventorying along the Rhody Express route. PWD Miller stated that he would like a list of issues and a count of curb ramps, shelter locations, and ADA access. He said that he would like a list and a written report to address any issues. PWD Miller stated that the report would help get problems solved with the limited amount of money available and that sidewalk trip hazards could be addressed, which would involve contacting property owners.
- **PWD Miller** stated that he would like the TAC trained in order to understand cross slopes and other things that the Sidewalk Transition Plan would need to address. PWD Miller stated that the community does not currently have any major issues with accessibility complaints related to curb ramps and sidewalks. He said that there were some communities that were struggling with the issue, and he wanted to avoid any problems.
- **Ashley** asked if PWD Miller would like to know about any issues now. PWD Miller stated that he would. Ashley said that the north side of 8th Street posed a problem. She said that a parking spot on the site blocks accessible access from the Kozy Kitchen ramps. PWD Miller stated that he would look into it, but was likely because the right-of-way was not donated to the public correctly. He said that it was something that needed to be addressed.

- **Kuhn** stated that some discussions about where to place the north Safeway stop took place, and that the Dollar Tree parking lot was discussed, but would end up blocking traffic.
- **Stephens** stated that she was on the bus the day prior with Ashley at that stop and thought it was a problem as well. She said that she did think of one option and asked if it was an option to get property owners to agree to moving bus stops, in this case moving into the parking lot. PWD Miller stated that the issue with that was time. Kuhn said that they had previously gone through the parking lot, but the bus in the parking lot was a safety issue. She said that Fred Meyer was a good example of the issue, where it was unsafe and it slowed the route down. Stephens said that she thought that re-routing the bus behind the Fred Meyer building was the best option for that stop. She asked Kuhn what she thought would be the best way to solve the stop. Kuhn said that the stop was a pilot project stop and was being tested now. PWD Miller said that they could look at relocating after the pilot project.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** asked PWD Miller when he would like to begin. PWD Miller stated that he would like to start working on the project in April or May.

5. PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

Route Metrics

- **PT Southerland** stated that after discussion with Kuhn and Hekimoglu, the route metrics were redone for greater clarity and comprehensiveness.
- **Stephens** stated that she took two women on the bus with her to Old Town to see how well it would work riding the bus to Old Town, staying for a couple hours, and then coming back on the bus. She said that if the project ever got to the advertising phase, she would like to promote trips to Old Town. Stephens stated that her friends enjoyed the ride.
- **Kuhn** asked if the Kozy Kitchen and Safeway numbers are split. She wondered if the drop off appeared because of the inclusion of Kozy Kitchen. PT Southerland said that the Kozy Kitchen was just retitled from the previous Safeway stop, which was counted as its own stop.
- **Kuhn** stated that the Committee should keep in mind that after November, the bus was making one less round a day, which affected ridership. Stephens asked if this was a consequence of changing the route. Kuhn said that when TAC went to the City Council to approve picking up the Casino stop. She said that she thought that they could make sixty-minute rounds, but City Council agreed to seventy-minute rounds in the pilot program. Stephens asked if Kuhn thought they could make the sixty-minute route. Kuhn said that LTD reported that they could accomplish a sixty-minute route, but the pilot program is seven rounds a day.
- **Stephens** said that she thought when the bus went to a seventy-minute route from a sixty-minute route, the change may have thrown off the public. Kuhn agreed and stated that the calls to dispatch they received reflected that.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that there was definitely a drop off in some stops. Kuhn stated that the bus drivers would have to provide input on the number of new riders. She also said that the drivers are only counting when people are boarding the bus, so even regular riders have less time to board the bus.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that Rose had asked at the previous meeting for elderly/disabled/companion ridership, which was provided with the March Route Metrics. She mentioned that she had thought about compiling historic ridership information. Kuhn stated that she had all of the information available should the Committee need it. SP FarleyCampbell stated that Hekimoglu would probably find the information helpful.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** pointed out that ADA Ridesource numbers were also included. Kuhn stated that she expected the number of ADA riders to go up because of the bus not deviating from the route. She said that River Cities Taxi was not aware of the need to strictly stay on the route prior to the start of the pilot project. Kuhn stated that because of this, it was likely that some ADA riders who lived near the

route that were able to ride prior to this would begin to get rides from Ridesource, but it takes a while to get the information from the County.

- **Stephens** asked Kuhn what the Ridesource program was. Kuhn stated that it was a companion program to the fixed route Rhody Express service for people who could not ride the Rhody Express. She said that applicants must qualify through Kristine Sirmans at LCOG. Kuhn stated that the ADA riders are able to qualify for a taxi ride at twice the cost of bus fare, but the taxi takes them from their door to their destination. She also said that the program operates during the same hours as the Rhody Express, Monday-Friday 10am-6pm. Kuhn stated that there were some riders prior to the pilot program that would have to walk to other stops that may be too far for them to walk. Stephens asked if the riders were now being counted as part of the population receiving transportation services. Kuhn stated that Hekimoglu has always counted ADA riders as part of the service for her grant-writing.
- **Stephens** asked how Kuhn was paid for providing the ADA rides program. Kuhn stated that RCT works for Ridesource and the service was paid for by Ridesource. Kuhn clarified that the ADA program was required as a companion program to the Rhody Express as per federal law and the grant for the service. She said that the operations budget is shared by the two programs, so any major increase in ADA service would begin to leave less money available for the Rhody Express.
- **Stephens** asked if it would be better if the Rhody Express was able to deviate from the route to provide service to potential ADA Riders. Kuhn responded that the Rhody Express could not deviate from the route and previous deviations were because they were out of compliance.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that it was probably better that the service was provided, but may be able to refer friends to the Rhody Express service who do not qualify for the Ridesource. Kuhn stated that the ADA users contribute, but there is a higher cost to providing the ADA rides.

Survey Questions Review and Methodology

- **SP FarleyCampbell** passed around sample questions. Stephens also passed out additional information that she found about surveys.
- **Stephens** stated that she would like to use the survey as a marketing tool to get people interested in the bus. SP FarleyCampbell stated that the number one question was determining who the survey was directed at and the reason for it. She said that the Transportation System Plan directed TAC to survey once a year. She said that the first thing to answer, which would guide further questions and the creation of the survey, was who should be surveyed: ridership or the general public.
- **Stephens** stated that she was hoping to survey both the ridership and the general public. She also said that since the Siuslaw News may be interested in providing a Ride Free Day, she would like the newspaper to survey the general public. SP FarleyCampbell said it might be possible to trade for the Free Ride Day. Stephens said that she thought that the newspaper might provide the survey for free as a public service.
- **Kuhn** stated that TAC attempted to target employers with the last survey, but received no response. Stephens said that people she talked to were interested in seeing expanded service. Kuhn said that a TAC member might be able to call employers.
- **Patton** asked how the surveys were distributed to employers. SP FarleyCampbell stated that someone took surveys to Safeway, Grocery Outlet, and Goodwill. Kuhn stated that she thought it went to St. Vincent's because Goodwill had not opened yet. Patton asked if the employers then gave the surveys to their employees. SP FarleyCampbell confirmed and said that there were quite a few respondents. She said that for many respondents, the bus did not prove convenient for a variety of reasons. Kuhn stated that she believed that the Rhody Express would best serve the residents of senior living facilities and other similar apartments.
- **Stephens** stated that she would like to see the newspaper survey in order to find out what people would like to see from their public transit in the future.

- **Patton** stated that he knew that TAC would have to survey ridership in order to evaluate the pilot program. He said that he was interested in finding out if the same data would be obtained from this survey as with previous surveys. Patton said that he would like to see the survey as simple as possible, but to keep this survey separate from any long-range surveys.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that the Ridership Survey would be evaluating the program and what Patton had proposed sounded like what was called for in the Transportation System Plan. She said that a Marketing Survey was what Stephens was talking about and did not have to be done in the same month. Kuhn said that they should not be done in the same month. SP FarleyCampbell agreed that they should not be distributed in the same month so that people were not confused.
- **Stephens** said that she thought a short term Ridership Survey should be done and a long-range marketing survey completed. Patton agreed, stating that he would like some base data to be established for the pilot program.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that the Ridership Survey would be time sensitive, distributed in April or May. She stated that she was still trying to get the Ride Free Day sponsorships going.
- **Kuhn** stated that two weeks of the survey on the bus would get the bulk of the possible responses and still leave two weeks to process them.
- **Stephens** asked if Patton had something in mind that he wanted to see on the survey. Patton stated that he thought the questions asked the first time on the Ridership Survey were probably good. He said that he would like to see not expanded questions, but expanded answers for those questions and not necessarily restrict respondents to one answer.
- **Stephens** asked if River Cities Taxi would want more business if TAC could figure out how to create it. Kuhn stated that the bus could be chartered, but there was a format for that because it was a publicly subsidized bus. Patton asked if the bus could be chartered. Kuhn said that previously, the art tour was accomplished with the bus and other tours had been done several times. Stephens asked how people were charged for the chartering of the bus. Kuhn stated that the cost per hour was already established. Stephens asked if chartering was something RCT wanted to pursue. Kuhn said that she was in the transportation business, but she did not get many inquiries about chartering the bus. She said that she was just an operator, but the bus was public. Kuhn said that they were recently approached to do home tours by a real estate company every other weekend. She said that the procedure was that the applicant fills out a form on the LTD website, and then anyone in the area can bid for the job. Stephens asked if other buses could compete for these bids. Kuhn said that these questions were best directed to Hekimoglu, but the hourly rate is fixed.
- **Stephens** asked if the bus could leave the city limits. Patton said that the Casino is outside the city limits. SP FarleyCampbell said that the bus is provided by public funds, but if the revenue is going towards supporting the public bus system. She said that these questions were best directed to Hekimoglu.
- **Craig** asked if the survey should be multiple choice. SP FarleyCampbell stated that there would be boxes for each answer.
- **The Committee** decided that the questions on the Ridership Survey should be (followed by answers in parenthesis):
 1. How often do you ride the Rhody Express? (Rarely, About once a week, More than once a week, One or two times a month, More than two times a month)
 2. When did you start riding the Rhody Express? (Years to circle)
 3. What is your main purpose for riding the Rhody Express? (Shopping, Medical appointments, Social events or gatherings, To get to or from work, To get to or from school, To get to the Casino, Other. Explain: _____)
 4. What changes to the Rhody Express would make riding more convenient for you? (Expanded hours in the morning, More frequent service, Expanded hours in the evening, Weekend service, More destinations/expanded route: Where would you like the bus to go? Other _____)
 5. How did you learn about the Rhody Express? (_____)
 6. How would you rate the quality of the current Rhody Express service? (Numbers 1 to 10)

6. LONG RANGE PROMOTION & MARKETING

Bus Buddy Program

- **SP FarleyCampbell** passed around the packet that would be given to the Bus Buddy. She asked for suggestions from the Committee.
- **Kuhn** suggested that the Release of Liability read “the City of Florence, LTD, and their provider.”
- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that she kept the “Under 18” section so TAC could eventually decide if they wanted to encourage Bus Buddies under 18.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** also pointed out the Code of Ethics and Hours Reporting Form. Stephens asked what the purpose of that was. SP FarleyCampbell stated that it was for Worker’s Compensation purposes.
- **Kuhn** asked that the RCT contact person and phone number included on the forms be the RCT Dispatcher at the “Rhody Express Dispatch” at (541) 902-2067 because she is not available as the contact person every day.
- **Patton** said that the City of Florence should be the program coordinator.
- **Stephens** asked if this form was designed specifically for the Bus Buddy. SP FarleyCampbell stated that it was only for Bus Buddies. She said that once a person was approved, there was a training checklist. Stephens suggested that all of the phone numbers be removed except for a main contact number and the dispatcher.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** passed around a sample ID badge for Ashley as a Bus Buddy.

Ride Free Day

- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that she and Kuhn took measurements for sign holder and the fare box. She said that On the Coast Printing did not do work of this size and referred them to Todd at Shipping Solutions. SP FarleyCampbell stated that Todd could not create a cover for the fare box, but he could print on Rite in the Rain paper that the City provided. Stephens asked if this was for the sign on the back of the bus. SP FarleyCampbell confirmed that it was for the sign.
- **Stephens** asked if the plan was that each time there was a sponsor, an ad could be printed by Todd to their specifications. SP FarleyCampbell said that yes, but different businesses have different needs, and might be able to provide their own signage.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** said that LTD was not aware of fare box covers. Kuhn said that those days she could just leave the fare box out so fares can be recovered if someone accidentally inserts fare.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** stated that there was a final ridership cost for Ride Free Day, which came out to \$33/day. She said the costs for signs would be added to that cost. Stephens said she wanted to be clear and asked if this was the cost to the sponsor. SP FarleyCampbell said it was the cost to recover the fare box for that day plus the signage. She said that she couldn’t get a final number until Shipping Solutions responded.
- **Stephens** asked if TAC could figure out a price at the local level. Kuhn said no, LTD had to make the price. SP FarleyCampbell stated that every contract would be different depending on what the sponsor’s needs were, but that there was a good range of prices.

Other Promotion Efforts

- **Kuhn** stated that Helping Hands had people who needed transportation to laundry services. She said that they were able to apply for a grant from the Lady of Elks group and used the grant money to purchase \$300 of bus script. Kuhn stated that people will only be bringing a few days’ worth of laundry at a time. She thanked Lady of Elks for supporting Helping Hands and Helping Hands for supporting their local public transportation.

- **SP FarleyCampbell** asked Patton if he saw anything in the Greentrees newsletter about the Rhody Express. Patton said that he was not sure, but saw something about ADA in one of the newsletters. He said he would collect what he sees because he didn't know what Greentrees sent SP FarleyCampbell.
- **Stephens** stated that she would like to see a poetry and art contest. She said maybe they could discuss the art contest after the sponsorship posters were worked out.
- **SP FarleyCampbell** asked if any members would like to be part of the Train the Trainer program for the Bus Buddy program.

5. SET FUTURE MEETING DATE:

The next meeting will be on April 23, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNED AT 3:35 PM

APPROVED BY THE TAC ON THE _____ DAY OF _____, 2014.

Vice-Chairperson, Mary Stephens

Date