

**Unitrans Advisory Committee
City Council Community Chambers
Thursday, October 5, 2017**

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members

Present: Sheila Allen, Member at Large
Josh Dalavai (ASUCD)
Michael Gofman (ASUCD)
Eric Gudz (BTSSC)
Frank Reyes (Member at Large)
Marcos Rodriguez (ASUCD)
Helen Sutton (Member at Large)
Margot Loschke (SCC)

Council Liaison: Lucas Frerichs

Staff: Brian Abbanat, Senior Transportation Planner
Jeff Flynn, Unitrans General Manager
Teri Sheets, Unitrans Assistant General Manager, Administration

Others in Attendance: Lisa Brackney, Unitrans Assistant General Manager-Operations
Martin Marquez, Unitrans Operations Manager

Meeting called to order at 4:01pm.

1. Roll Call

Eight committee members were in attendance, constituting a quorum.

2. Approval of Agenda

No comments were received on items not on the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda was moved (Allen/Gudz) and unanimously approved.

3. Committee and Staff Announcements

There were no announcements from committee members or staff.

4. Public Comment

There were no public communications.

5. Consent Calendar

A. Draft Minutes: May 17, 2017

Motion to approve the draft minutes from the May 17, 2017 meeting was moved (Allen/Gudz) and was unanimously approved.

6. Regular Items

A. General Manager's Report

Mr. Flynn introduced himself as the newly hired Unitrans General Manager. He then summarized Unitrans' operating and financial performance for FY 2016/17 and service changes implemented for FY 2017/18. Mr. Flynn highlighted upcoming challenges with workforce stability and salary increases due to general statewide minimum wage increases. Unitrans strives to maintain a competitive wage for transit operators, supervisors, and driver trainers at approximately 20 percent above the minimum wage.

Mr. Flynn and Chair Dalavai described current discussions underway with UC Davis administrators to establish a University financial contribution to Unitrans' annual operating budget to avoid or mitigate potential future service cuts.

Mr. Flynn summarized Unitrans' focus for FY 2017/18 to include the identification of stable revenue sources to meet future projected budget deficits, implementation of a general fare increase in FY 2018/19, and additional emphasis on workforce stability to meet transit service targets. In addition, Unitrans will need to focus on bus fleet replacement/rehabilitation over the next 2-5 years and the start of planning efforts for the infrastructure needed to introduce electric propulsion buses to the fleet.

Ms. Sutton asked if bus drivers are allowed to stay on and work after graduation. Mr. Flynn responded that student employees are allowed to work for one quarter after graduation, at which time they become ineligible to work as student employees for the University. Unitrans has very limited ability to keep employees on board through temporary employment contract arrangements.

Mr. Reyes inquired on the number of drivers employed by Unitrans and statistics on the number of safe driving hours they've accumulated. Mr. Flynn reported that this information would be provided as a follow up after the meeting.

Ms. Sutton emphasized the important of focusing on the maturity levels and professionalism of student drivers and other staff.

Ms. Allen inquired on the ability to recruit work study students. Unitrans staff responded that work study students are eligible to work for Unitrans to meet their financial aid commitment. Mr. Flynn indicated that he would provide data on the number of work study students employed by Unitrans at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Allen asked for information on the utilization rate of senior and disabled passes by these respective customers.

Mr. Gofman asked if there is a difference in safe driving statistics depending on the age/experience of student bus drivers. Mr. Flynn responded that data would be compiled and presented at a future Committee meeting.

Ms. Sutton asked if Unitrans should consider implementing a fare for seniors and disabled customers, who currently ride for free on Unitrans. Mr. Flynn responded that this is a policy discussion that the City will need to carry out as part of the upcoming fare increase proposal.

Mr. Reyes requested information showing the temporal distribution of crush loads on various routes.

Mr. Gudz requested additional detail on driver stability and the number of drivers needed now and in the future. Mr. Flynn reported that Unitrans will lose approximately 80 employees in Spring 2018, for which Unitrans is recruiting now to replace.

Mr. Gudz inquired on the projected fare increase percentage that might be needed to augment revenues. Mr. Flynn responded that staff is currently evaluating a 25 percent fare increase, with indexing of future fare increases to inflation.

Mr. Gudz commented on Unitrans' upcoming 50th anniversary celebration and the potential for building momentum for developing significant support for Unitrans. Mr. Flynn responded that planning is underway to develop a celebration program with costs defrayed to the degree possible by donations and/or sponsorships. Committee members provided various ideas for events, features, and promotions for Unitrans staff to review and evaluate.

B. Bus Stop Passenger Amenities & Improvement Program

Ms. Sheets reported on Unitrans' plans to complete a comprehensive review of existing bus stops throughout the City to determine their current condition, need for various improvements, identify the space needed to implement various improvements, and prioritize the most critical needs. In the short term, Unitrans staff has identified a short term need to replace very old shelters with new equipment and very old, faded bus stop signs throughout the City. Longer term needs include the installation of new bus shelters and benches in high-use areas, new/better signage, digital displays, and other amenities that may be appropriate at various locations. In addition, Unitrans will need to work closely with City Public Works staff where there are structural deficiencies such as poor curb, gutter, and sidewalk around bus stops and the need to address potential ADA access limitations.

Mr. Gudz and Mr. Gofman suggested that advertising at bus stops could be a valuable source of outreach for local businesses, particular oriented toward new students who are not as familiar with the City. Mr. Gudz emphasized that the implementation of advertising should involve coordination with City Public Works and Police to address potential safety/visibility concerns.

Mr. Reyes inquired about old passenger amenities at bus stops such as LED lights to signal to bus drivers that a customer is waiting at a bus stop. Ms. Sheets responded that some of the older equipment has not been maintained over time, but that the evaluation process can include an assessment of any type of passenger amenity that is desired and feasible at various locations.

Ms. Allen reported that she can access to and can provide information on the concentration of elderly residents throughout the City to compare with existing bus stop locations to determine where bus benches could be installed.

C. Future Electric Bus Deployment Update

Mr. Flynn reported Unitrans staff is working with UCD's Design & Construction Management (DCM) group to study the infrastructure needs of our facilities to support electric buses. Unitrans has set aside \$150,000 to fund this initial planning and design work; a grant application containing these funds was approved by FTA in mid-September. After initial planning and design work, Unitrans will work with the University to finalize design,

prepare technical specifications, and conduct a competitive procurement for construction and installation activities, and work with the City to pursue additional grants for this work.

With DCM starting to kick off the infrastructure review this year, staff anticipates the replacement of 12 buses in FY 2021 to move us toward electric propulsion. Twenty four buses will be at their useful life in FY 2021, but we do not project having sufficient funds to replace all 24 buses at the same time. Consequently, staff is developing a plan to rehabilitate 12 of the 24 buses to extend their useful lives, likely with ultra-low emission CNG engines if a viable electric propulsion retrofit alternative is not available.

Mr. Gofman asked if there are any incentives available for making purchases locally or in-state. Mr. Flynn reported that Federal procurement regulations prohibit Unitrans from stating geographic preferences for any goods, supplies, or equipment purchased with Federal funds. Mr. Gofman also asked if there is information available on the difference in operating cost between CNG-fueled vs. electric buses. Mr. Flynn reported that there is some information available indicating that electric buses could be as much as \$35,000 less per year to maintain compared to other buses. However, the capital cost to purchase a bus can be as much as \$150,000 higher than a standard transit bus.

Mr. Gudz asked if the UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS) will be involved in efforts to study and design for electric bus deployment. Mr. Flynn reported that DCM will reach out to ITS to solicit involvement in the project.

7. Committee and Staff Communications

A. Long Range Calendar

- Proposed cash fare increase, including potential for senior/disabled fare implementation
- Unitrans 50th anniversary celebration
- BTSSC Transit Sub-Committee update
- Bus Stop Passenger Amenities & Improvement Program update
- Unitrans workforce development update

B. Subcommittee Reports / Reports on Meetings Attended / Inter-jurisdictional Bodies / Inter-Commission Liaisons / etc.

Ms. Allen requested that the notice for the November 2018 Unmet Transit Needs hearing be sent to all UAC members.

Mr. Abbanat and Mr. Flynn will be traveling to Yale University to make a presentation on “town/gown partnerships,” which are coordinated efforts between universities and cities to address various planning and municipal service challenges. The Davis/Unitrans presentation will focus on the transportation partnership as it has been established and the mutual benefits achieved on both sides.

Mr. Gudz reported on current discussions underway with the Bicycle & Transportation System Safety Commission (BTSSC), including the upcoming implementation of bike share programs within the City.

Mr. Abbanat reported that the City of Davis was selected to participate in SACOG’s Civic Lab program to develop innovative solutions to transportation

problems. The City's focus is on improving access to the Amtrak Station for people who would like to take the train for their transportation needs when transit service is not typically available.

11. Adjournment

Mr. Gudz moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Rodriguez and was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45pm.