

**Unitrans Advisory Committee
City Council Community Chambers
Thursday, January 24, 2019**

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members

Present: Sheila Allen, Chair, Member at Large
John Johnston, Natural Resources Commission
Elizabeth Lasensky, Senior Citizens Commission
Michael Gofman, ASUCD
Alisha Hacker, ASUCD
Noah Pearl, ASUCD

Council Liaison: Gloria Partida

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
Alan Hirsch

Meeting called to order at 4:07pm.

1. Roll Call

Six committee members were in attendance, constituting a quorum.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was moved (Lasensky/Hacker) and unanimously approved.

3. Committee and Staff Announcements

Ms. Allen reported that the Agency on Aging will continue to provide federal funding for an additional two years for bus vouchers that seniors can use on Davis Community Transit and Yolo bus Special services.

4. Public Communications

Alan Hirsch – Recommended that the City’s capital improvement program include prioritization of bus transit improvements, including bus shelters, strategic planning for future bus rapid transit, queue jumping lanes, and traffic signal pre-emption on major corridors, and bus queue jumping lanes for the future Yolo Causeway expansion to incentivize transit use.

Regular Items

5. Approve Minutes of the October 22, 2018 Meeting

Motion to approve the draft minutes from the October 22, 2018 meeting was made (Lasensky/Pearl) and was approved.

6. UAC Vice Chair Nomination and Selection

Motion to nominate Noah Pearl to be the Committee's Vice Chair was made (Gofman/Hacker) and was approved unanimously.

7. General Manager's Report & Quarterly Report Including Unitrans Financial Task Force Update

Mr. Flynn provided his quarterly report for September-December 2018, which included the following highlights:

- FY2019 ridership to date is down due to the campus closure during the Camp Fire, in addition to the minor midday service reductions
- There have been no major collisions year to date
- On-time performance system wide improved 2 percent, with some bus routes experiencing on-time performance issues due to traffic and construction activity
- Customer complaints are down; safe driving complaints made up 40 percent of the complaints we've received
- All preventive maintenance has been completed on time, and road calls have decreased by 10 percent compared to this time last year.

Service implementation

- Temporary reductions still in place on the D/G/J/V/W lines during the midday
- New S line launched this year, and T line improvements have resulted in higher ridership.
- Unitrans is looking to improve performance within budget resources, but will need to present service options assuming 1) a status quo budget that maintains existing service and 2) a 20 percent service reduction followed by a 10 percent service reduction the following year, on the presumption that no new revenues are identified to meet Unitrans' growing structural deficit.

Budget

- Currently projecting a \$500,000 deficit in FY 2019 due to continued minimum wage increases; Unitrans is tracking labor expenses closely
- Expenses in all other budget categories are lower than this time last year

ASUCD Fee Referendum - Feb 19-21

- Undergraduate students will be asked to increase fees for Unitrans to maintain service levels, expand extra capacity buses, provide additional career trainers, and hire an additional mechanic
- There must be a minimum of 20 percent voter participation, and the referendum must receive 60 percent approval to pass.
- The Graduate Student Association (GSA) may choose to join the student fee consortium; a vote is expected in Feb/Mar. However, if the ASUCD referendum fails, then there will be no GSA vote.

Ms. Allen asked why we need both ASUCD/GSA to approve fees. Mr. Flynn responded that should the GSA referendum pass but not the ASUCD referendum, there would not be sufficient revenue to add the capacity necessary to accommodate an influx of graduate students.

Capital Program Update

- Double Deck Bus Purchase: Unitrans has taken delivery on the first of two modern double deck buses, with the second bus expected to arrive within a few weeks.
- Cutaway Bus Purchase: Unitrans has ordered two small replacement cutaway buses that will be arriving within the next couple of months
- CNG Fuel Compressor: Equipment installation will be completed soon

- CNG Bus Purchase: Five new CNG buses will soon be ordered; delivery expected in 2020
- Electric Bus Project: Unitrans received \$2.3 million and expects another \$1.4 million to install electric charging infrastructure and to purchase electric buses starting in FY 2022/23
- Bus Stop Program: Unitrans will replace bus shelters starting in Spring 2019. Bus shelters will have mesh sides and solid roofs to provide some weather protection.

Mr. Gofman asked if using University labor for bus shelter installation is cost-effective. Mr. Flynn reported that Unitrans is using the construction crew from the University's Transportation & Parking Services department, and that they are offering competitive labor rates for this project.

- Unitrans Highlights:
 - Conducted a food drive that resulted in \$3,000 in food donations, including \$1000 from the Davis Food Coop, to benefit the ASUCD Pantry
 - Unitrans operated during the November 2018 campus closure and the January 2019 Officer Corona shooting with a highly dedicated student staff who understands the mission of getting people where they need to be.

Ms. Hacker asked about Unitrans' contingency plans if the ASUCD fee referendum fails. Mr. Flynn responded that Unitrans would need to implement a 15-20 percent service cut, which means that some bus routes would be cancelled and service on others cut back. These cuts would result in layoffs across the company, including student and career staff positions. Unitrans would work to minimize the impact, but the cuts would still be felt by the campus and community.

Ms. Hacker asked if any new sources of revenue have been identified. Mr. Flynn responded that Unitrans will continue to look to the University and City for additional funding to cover the deficit, and will evaluate the need for additional fares and increases in advertising revenue. However, additional revenue from these sources may generate only a 5 percent revenue increase.

Mr. Pearl inquired about the University's willingness to participate in Unitrans' funding. Mr. Flynn responded that a working group has been formed to look at funding options, with the first step being a fee referendum since students make up 90 percent of Unitrans' ridership.

Ms. Lasensky asked if the University provides a direct contribution to Unitrans' budget. Mr. Flynn responded that the University does not provide a direct contribution but provides a number of in-kind services free of charge to Unitrans and to students.

Ms. Allen brought up the Committee's prior discussions on this issue and the idea of submitting a letter from the UAC to the University to recommend that they contribute directly to Unitrans' budget. However, the Committee decided that the timing wasn't right. Ms. Allen asked if the time is now right to proceed with a letter. Mr. Flynn asked the Committee to wait to see the results of the ASUCD fee referendum and the University's task force discussions by the end of March to determine if Committee action is warranted.

Mr. Gofman reported that based on his discussions with the University, the Chancellor would likely be willing to provide stop-gap funding if the ASUCD fee referendum fails twice, but then could unilaterally impose a student fee to pay for Unitrans service on a long-term basis.

Ms. Allen requested that this item be brought up again at the April 2019 UAC meeting to determine if follow-up action on the part of the Committee is warranted.

Mr. Abbanat reported that the City may attempt another property tax measure for transportation within the next couple of years. A measure put to City voters in November 2018 to fund transportation infrastructure failed.

Ms. Partida reported that the City is waiting for discussions with the newly formed 2x2x2 (City/County/University) committee to determine the way to proceed in the future.

Mr. Johnston asked if a draft letter could be brought to the next UAC meeting as an agenda item. Mr. Flynn responded that the agenda for the April 2019 UAC meeting will include an action item so that the Committee can take whatever action it deems appropriate at that time.

Ms. Allen asked about the implementation of “Spare the Air” fare-free days and if they affected Unitrans’ revenue receipts. Mr. Flynn reported that there was a significant increase in the number of Spare the Air days due to wildfire-related incidents, and that Unitrans was forced to stop implementing the program in late Summer 2018 due to their impact. However, Unitrans did run fare-free during the November 2018 Camp Fire. Going forward, Unitrans plans to limit the number of days on which we operate fare free, and will look for potential grant programs that could subsidize lost fare revenue.

Ms. Allen asked about Unitrans’ plans for electric bus infrastructure and how we might coordinate with Yolobus to share resources. Mr. Flynn responded that Unitrans is working with the campus to determine if the electric charging infrastructure ultimately installed at the Unitrans Maintenance Facility can be shared with outside transit agencies to help defray the cost.

Ms. Allen inquired about the region-wide Connect Card and whether or not Unitrans accepts it. Mr. Flynn responded that we do not accept the Connect Card, as the cost to install the required equipment on all Unitrans buses would be very high compared to the relatively small amount of transit pass revenue received.

Mr. Hirsch inquired about driver safety during Camp Fire and whether or not appropriate personal safety equipment was distributed to the drivers. He also commented on the variations in Unitrans year-to-date budget-to-actual revenues that make the information difficult to understand. Mr. Flynn offered to go through the data with Mr. Hirsch after the meeting.

8. Program of Projects for Federal Transit Administration Funding

Ms. Sheets reported that a public hearing was not scheduled for this item, but that publication of the draft Program of Projects in a newspaper of general circulation (Davis Enterprise) would be sufficient to meeting public participation requirements.

Ms. Sheets reported that Unitrans has prepared a draft Program of Projects to show how we plan to spend Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds apportioned in Fiscal Year 2018. She reported that FY 2019 apportionments are not yet available due to protracted negotiations on the FY 2019 budget between the Trump Administration and Congress. However, Unitrans may bring back a revised Program of Projects should FY 2019 funds become available within the next few weeks.

Ms. Sheets reported that the proposed Program of Projects includes full funding for the following projects:

- Bus rehabilitation/overhaul project
- Electric bus charging infrastructure

The Program of Projects also includes funding for Unitrans and Yolobus to reimburse a portion of FY 2018 operating expenses, and funding for Davis Community Transit to replace old paratransit buses that have outlived their useful lives.

Ms. Hacker asked if Unitrans intends to substitute ASUCD student fee revenues in the Program of Projects with other sources of grant revenue. Ms. Sheets responded that Unitrans continually seeks out other grant sources that can be used as the required local match for projects so that we

can save ASUCD student fee capital funds for future projects. ASUCD student fee capital-only funds are flexible and can be used for a variety of purposes.

Ms. Lasensky inquired about the availability of transportation funds approved through Senate Bill 1 and ratified by statewide voter referendum via Proposition 6 in November 2018. Ms. Sheets reported that SB1 does include set-asides for transit rehabilitation and construction projects that Unitrans uses for various capital needs.

Mr. Hirsch suggested that Table 5 of the General Manager's report be revised to separate capital vs. "flexible" funding. (Note: Table 5 of the General Manager's report reflects only Unitrans' operating expenses and revenues and not capital assets or expenditures/revenues.)

Mr. Hirsch recommended that a more detailed financial analysis of not only operating but capital assets and expenditures be prepared for the Committee to be able to make capital priority decisions. He suggested that there is insufficient information presented by staff for the Committee to make decisions on the Program of Projects.

Mr. Hirsch suggested that the City should explore a community financing district to provide funding for Unitrans capital investments.

Mr. Hirsch requested that future UAC agendas include a long range calendar.

Mr. Flynn responded that Unitrans can provide an updated fleet roster at the next meeting. He then proceeded to briefly describe Unitrans' and DCT's capital replacement needs.

Ms. Allen requested that staff add a long range calendar to future meeting agendas. Further, she suggested the following items for the next meeting agenda:

- Task Force/2x2x2 meeting results
- Proposed service changes

9. Adjournment

At 5:20pm, a motion was made (Hacker/Lasensky) and approved unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2019 at 4:00pm.