

Transportation Services Advisory Council
Minutes of January 21, 2022 Meeting
Via Web Ex

Members/Ex-Officio Present: Tim Davis, Christina Forbes, Joe Conny, Thomas Davy, Tiffany Fossett, Joshua Bokee, Councilman Steve McKay, Alderman Kelly Russell, David Edmondson, Carol Sepe, Wilfred Plumley, Roman Steichen, Mark Mishler, and Luke Benson.

Staff and Guests: Joel Eisenfeld, Morgan Berry, Shradda Praharaj, Monica Bearden, Darren Bean, Shayne Boucher, Jaime McKay, Kendall Tiffany, and Sandy Ruark.

Call to Order: Tim Davis called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves in the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the October meeting were approved as presented.

Tim Davis took the opportunity to acknowledge TransIT Services for the excellent communication it provides the public regarding changes in service, i.e., route changes due to weather conditions and holidays as well as how COVID-19 may affect service.

Elected Officials Report: Councilman McKay reported that the Frederick County Council will be presented with the County's Annual Transportation Priorities letter at its workshop next Tuesday. The document will be forwarded to TSAC once approved.

Councilman McKay reported that he will be bringing forward legislation in the near future which will include a variety of amendments to the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. The amendments will be focused on traffic and traffic mitigation standards and are geared toward tightening up those standards as they apply to new development. Once formally introduced, the amendments will be presented to the Planning Commission and municipalities for comment.

Alderman Russell reported that the City of Frederick is currently working on developing a mobility fee schedule for traffic improvements in new developments. Under this plan a traffic study would be conducted to determine where it is most feasible for developers to spend money on mobility efforts. They are working on the fee schedule and when complete it will be presented to the Board of Alderman for approval.

Alderman Russell reported there was an issue with a traffic change at Christophers Crossing and Timber Grove Road in North Crossing. The City of Frederick has been installing a traffic signal which is operating in flash mode. Additionally, the City of Frederick approved a few change orders which included changes that had not been presented to the public and caused concerns, i.e., the four way stop at Timber Grove would be removed, the speed limit would be raised to 30 mph, and left turns from Timber Grove Road onto Christophers Crossing would have been restricted. Those actions have been put on hold until a workshop on February 23, 2022 at 3:00 pm is held to provide for public discussion.

Old Business:

Transportation Development Plan: Joel Eisenfeld stated that the draft Transportation Development Plan (TDP) is nearly complete. The draft document will be finalized and forwarded to TRANSIT for its final review and approval. The final document will be sent to TSAC for their review and comments as well.

Transportation Survey Update: Jaime McKay reported that the public has been participating in the Ausherman Family Foundation's Transportation Study which incorporated surveys and listening sessions which are still in progress. The study will include a series of subject areas that will summarize all the transportation needs throughout the County. The results of the study are anticipated to be released in the next few months for public review and comment. If anyone is interested in reviewing any of the information or participating in any of the public meetings, please contact Jaime.

Legislative Agenda Items/TSAC Suggestions: Tim Davis reported that at a previous TSAC meeting, TSAC had developed correspondence outlining items for Frederick County's legislative agenda. All items suggested by TSAC were incorporated into County Executive Gardner's request to the legislature. If anyone is interested in reviewing the letter, it can be provided.

New Business:

TSAC Funding Request Letter: Tim Davis thanked Josh Bokee for assisting in the development of a funding request letter outlining suggestions for use of Federal COVID relief funding received by the Counties and municipalities. TSAC's letter requested that consideration be given to adding additional funding to its transit agency. That letter was approved by TSAC and forwarded to County Executive Gardner. A response has not been received to date.

Community Agency Vacancy Confirmation: A vote of members was taken, and a motion was made by Christina Forbes to recommend approval of Hongwei Xu as a Community Agency representative of TSAC, Thomas Davy seconded the motion. TSAC voted unanimously to recommend the appointment of Hongwei Xu as a Community Agency Representative.

MARC Ridership Advisory Council: Under New Business, Joe Conny added that recently there was a meeting of the MARC Ridership Advisory Council and a Transportation Environmental Subcommittee of the State Legislature has been formed which may be of interest to TSAC. Joe reported that a meeting was held earlier in the week and was attended by MTA Administrator, Holly Arnold. Ms. Arnold reviewed all transportation modes of MTA with a particular focus on MARC. The Subcommittee Chair, Steve Chan, reported on the Penn Line and Joe provided his perspective on the Brunswick line which provided for a good balance of services provided. Joe stated that he wanted to make the legislators aware of what services are provided by MARC to which areas, particularly what service is provided to Frederick County. Discussion continued on ridership and fares.

Planning Commission Update: Carol Sepe reported:

- The Planning Commission is currently working on the draft of the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Plan. The Planning Commission extended the boundary of the study area to west of I-270. Additional future plans for I-270 will be addressed as the plan is developed.

- The Planning Commission approved a major industrial subdivision on the Eastalco site in Adamstown for a proposed data center which is over 1000 acres. The site is bisected by New Design Road and Ballenger Creek Pike on the east and west. The letter of understanding that was approved notes dedication and construction of a section MD 80 which will connect I-270 to Ballenger Creek Pike and this section is within this property and has been approved. The dedication and construction of that section of MD 85 will be required in Phase 3 of this subdivision. There are planned roundabouts at the intersection of Manor Woods Road and Cap Stine Road and also at Ballenger Creek Pike and Mountville Road. Work will include quite a bit of traffic signal and road widening improvements. Mark Mishler added that project is phased out over 14 years and many years of road work will be required.

Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Update: Luke Benson reported:

- TransIT facility is nearing completion.
- MTA is in the process of ordering buses but they are facing supply chain issues.

SHA Update: Darren Bean presented an update on the following SHA projects:

- Mt. Zion Park & Ride - Crews are currently working on storm water management facilities. Project is 65% complete.
- MD 85 and I-270 Interchange – Traffic currently coming off northbound I-170 onto MD 85 was shifted to old ramp along Francis Scott Key Mall. This shift will allow crews to work on the installation and activation of a new traffic signal at the end of the new exit ramp on MD 85. Crews also completed paving on a temporary turn lane at Crestwood Boulevard at MD 85. Project 85% complete.

At October's TSAC Meeting, Joe Conny asked for an update on the temporary work occurring at the northbound I-270 off ramp to MD 85. Carol Sepe added that current conditions at the ramp are very dangerous.

Carol also questioned the why paving at the Mt. Zion Park and Ride project was underway prior to storm water management work being completed. David Schlie has responded to their concerns as follows:

1. Regarding the I-270 northbound at MD 85 ramp, work is expected to complete by the end of the year. In the meantime, the signal phasing along MD 85 northbound to the south of I-270 has been adjusted in an effort to create more gaps for drivers trying to merge onto MD 85 north. There is also a detour for those who those who would like to go south on MD 85.
2. Regarding stormwater management at new Mt. Zion Road Park and Ride lot, piping was installed underneath of the new pavement that is designed to control the output of water into the adjacent stormwater pond.

FCPS Update: Fred Punturiero not present; no report.

Ft. Detrick Update: Wilfred Plumley not present; no report.

At October's TSAC Meeting, David Edmondson reported that the City of Frederick is planning for a protected bicycle lane on the south side of 7th Street which may impact access to Veterans Gate. David stated that the City of Frederick will work with the Garrison to integrate the bicycle

infrastructure with their traffic flow. Wilfred requested that the City of Frederick provide the Garrison with the draft plan so they can determine if it will impact access to the base or not.

As follow-up, David Edmondson reported at January's TSAC Meeting that the plan is still being developed, and once complete, will be forwarded to the Garrison, TransIT Services, and other stakeholders involved with 7th Street.

MML Update: Councilman Ripley not present; no report.

TransIT Update: Roman Steichen reported:

- Facility is due to be complete some time in early February. Buy America issue has been resolved temporarily, but still a waiver from FTA is still pending. Staff is ready to move in as soon as facility is complete.
- Two new buses on order. A third one will be ordered shortly and will be paid for with CARES funding.
- TransIT is currently interviewing for a new Data Management Analyst and is also trying to get some positions reclassified in order to attract more qualified candidates.
- TransIT recently instituted a program for employee bonuses: a hiring bonus for new hires of \$3,000 paid in three increments; a referral bonus of \$1,000 for any existing employee who refers a new full-time employee; and a retention bonus for existing staff of \$2,500 and \$5,000, respectively for part-time who has worked enough hours and full-time employees who have been working for TransIT prior to December 2020.
- Our annual grant application is underway which will include a letter of support from TSAC.
- Fare collection is currently suspended until, at least, early summer.

Jaime McKay presented a slideshow demonstrating TransIT's ridership trends over the past six months for the period July 2021 to December 2021. Jaime noted that TransIT's ridership is continuing to climb back to pre-pandemic levels, however, perhaps not as much as other systems. She reviewed current ridership statistics on some Connector and shuttle routes as well as the Transit plus service.

Jaime reported on funding received through the County from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) project based on feedback from the community, advocates, TSAC, and TransIT staff advocacy efforts. Submitted and approved projects include:

- Updated technology on buses providing more accurate real time information.
- Route modifications as defined in the Transportation Development Plan (TDP).
- Enhance bus stop amenities and improve transfer facilities. Jaime requested that a series of meetings be held in order to discuss who is responsible for what portions of work and to get a better understanding of how the City of Frederick, Frederick County, advocates, developers, and the public can work together to be sure that bus stop improvements are accomplished without bureaucratic hurdles. Alderman Russell stated that the City of Frederick is ready to assist.

Tim asked if there was an existing model for a transfer facility. Jaime responded that in 2019, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) developed a Bus Stop Design Guide. Although initially intended for larger systems, the document can be scaled appropriately to reflect the conditions for smaller systems.

Kendall Tiffany reported on how TransIT was handling Employer Outreach during the pandemic. Normally TransIT would do a mixture of outreach events through community events and paid advertising. In FY21, TransIT only attended 10 community events than the normal 50-60 events annually prior to the pandemic. Outreach efforts are beginning to rise in FY22, however, there are still hybrid in-person and virtual events. During the past quarter, Kendall recently presented Employer Outreach at the Spring Ridge Senior Center on how to use the East Frederick Shuttle and Transit plus, attended the Frederick Health Fair, and also presented Employer Outreach to the Literacy Council of Frederick County.

Kendall also thanked Deputy Garrison Director Plumley for his assistance in scheduling Employer Outreach on the agenda of their monthly Orientation Meetings for new service members. New members will learn of all the services available to them in Frederick County.

Kendall reported one of her favorite outreach efforts is the LYNX program at Frederick High School where students are emerged into different fields in the community and are taught how to use TransIT to get to their jobs and school.

Kendall reported that TransIT markets all of its services through radio ads, ads on its website, social media, social mirror, and mobile ad scrolls which target different zip codes. Additionally, Transit utilizes press releases, ads on buses and shelters, and advertises in the Visit Frederick publication for new residents or tourists.

BTWD is May 20, 2022 with two pit stops -- Frederick Transit Center and the downtown Brunswick MARC Station. Tee shirts are pink in color.

Alderman Russell asked Kendall if she utilized recorded PSAs which provides free air time. Kendall responded that TransIT had in the past and is beginning to do so again now that the pandemic is slowing down.

Jaime McKay applauded Kendall's efforts during the pandemic and congratulated her for being recognized as a 2021 recipient of the Association for Commuter Transportations (ACT) 40 under 40 and Roman Steichen being named a recipient by the Frederick County Office of Economic Development as one of the Top 50 under 40 for 2022.

Next Meeting: The next TSAC Meeting will be April 15, 2022, via WebEx at 9:30 am.

Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Administrative Coordinator