

Unitrans Advisory Committee
Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members

Present: Francois Kaepelin, Chair, ASUCD
Sheila Allen, Member at Large
John Johnston, Natural Resources Commission
Janet Regnell, Senior Citizens Commission
Frank Reyes, Vice Chair, Member at Large
Forrest Pasturel, ASUCD
Ayush Patel, Bicycling, Transportation, & Street Safety Commission
Helen Sutton, Member at Large
Tenzin Youedon, 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
Linda Alemania, Davis Community Transit
James Haven, Davis Community Transit
Emilio Romo, Davis Community Transit
One member of the public

Meeting called to order at 4:08pm.

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Five committee members were in attendance, constituting a quorum.

2. Approval of Agenda

Approved as prepared. Lasensky/Patel. Unanimous approval vote.

3. Committee and Staff Announcements

Chair Kaepelin announced meeting with City Manager Mike Webb and Public Works Director Bob Clarke to discuss Unitrans bus signal priority on Russell Boulevard and a transit/emergency vehicle access road between West Village/West Davis to improve Unitrans efficiency and reduce costs. Chair Kaepelin also mentioned the ASUCD fee referendum on week 7 of winter quarter.

Sheila Allen announced completion of Yolo County Agency on Aging survey and identification of transportation needs.

Elizabeth Lasensky mentioned that the Rancho Yolo travel training workshop will be postponed until Fall 2020.

4. Public Communications

Two members of the public commented. Alan Hirsch asked the committee to review plans for the Aggie Research Center on Mace Boulevard, mentioned the need for more focus on transit investment, and importance of Measure Q. Joe Bolte introduced himself to the committee as a regional transit advocate.

Chair Kaepelin clarified that the ASUCD fee referendum is different than Measure Q.

Regular Items

5. Draft Minutes: October 24, 2019 Meeting

Sheila Allen requested the date of the next meeting to be included at the end of the agenda.

Minutes unanimously approved. Allen/Patel

6. General Manager's Report

Jeff Flynn, Unitrans General Manager, presented the General Manager's report as attached in the meeting packet. Key points:

- FY 2020 service changes implemented with some minor changes introduced in January.
- FY 2020 ridership up 10 percent. Possible reasons:
 - parking price increase on campus
 - reintroduced service reductions from two years ago
 - more student awareness through Unitrans fee referendum
- Zero major accidents to date
- On time performance continues to decline
- All maintenance checks and services completed on time
- Budget on target thus far; small deficit for FY2020 built into budget
- Capital program update: New buses being delivered to replace old high-floor buses (2 of 5 arrived); fleet rehab project underway on half the 2009 New Flyer fleet; electric fleet infrastructure project ongoing with design underway; joint procurement opportunities open to Unitrans for purchasing electric buses, need additional funding to pay for up to 14 buses in the near term; bus shelter replacement underway
- Senior travel training workshop is April 25 at Senior Center

Sheila Allen asked about how declining performance is addressed. Jeff said that proposals will be brought to the UAC in April to address declining performance however Unitrans does not have enough resources to address all impacts and trade offs will need to be made.

Elizabeth Lasensky asked how Unitrans responds to potential developments like Aggie Research Park? Jeff responded that the City leads efforts in short and long range transit planning but that Unitrans revenues are projected to be relatively flat and resources for significant service increases will need to come from external resources based on City & University priorities. Brian responded that he will engage the Community Development department on the Aggie Research Center

proposal for the UAC. Community Development and City Planning staff are responsible for negotiating terms and conditions included in development agreements; City coordinates with Unitrans in developing cost estimates associated with transit improvements.

Councilwoman Gloria Partida stated no routes currently connect West Davis to downtown without going through campus, can something be done about that? Jeff said this can be reviewed before April with other service requests/comments/issues. Buses from West Davis go through the two terminals and the stop can take up to 10 minutes before going downtown.

Sheila Allen requested an update on Aggie Research Campus for April 2020 meeting. Ayush Patel stated that the item will go to the BTSSC on February 13.

Francois Kaepelin asked if Unitrans is pursuing bus funding and Jeff responded that Teri and he are continuously applying for grant funding but we have not been successful recently.

Ayush Patel asked what driver recruitment targets were and why buses go “Not in Service”. Jeff responded that Unitrans hires about 30 people per quarter to meet annual driver needs. Regarding Not in Service buses, drivers accommodate as many passengers as possible before leaving people but must ask for permission from dispatch. Unitrans also deploys trippers to ensure that all stops are served at least once. If a stop is served once though per scheduled trip, a subsequent bus may not serve that stop a second time.

Francois Kaepelin requested an update on installing a rooftop garden on a bus shelter. Jeff said he would research and get back to the committee.

Public Comments from one person: Recommended reinforcing that front seats are for seniors and people with disabilities, emphasized need for transit investment, and for UAC to advocate for transit improvements and investments.

7. 2020-21 Service Change Concepts and Challenges Discussion

Jeff Flynn presented the materials from the agenda packet showing challenges facing Unitrans currently and in the future and possible remedies including reducing frequencies, increasing travel times, changing/shortening routes, and methods to make the buses operate faster.

Committee Member Sheila Allen asked who prepares route changes and proposals. Jeff responded that Unitrans staff in conjunction with city staff prepare proposals and then take to the public for comment prior to bringing to the UAC for review. Sheila also suggested a Downtown Business Association shuttle around downtown as earlier suggested by Councilwoman Partida. Brian Abbanat responded that shuttles in the past have been unsuccessful however if paired with other changes to downtown parking such as paid parking, a shuttle could be more successful.

Public comments included questions on whether Unitrans tracks delay by stop or by travel segment, if new, faster, more direct routing is looked at, and the need to focus on transit investment and preparing shovel ready projects that improve transit performance.

Jeff responded that we review alternative routing to speed up the bus however operations are often constrained by street width and design issues that preclude bus service.

8. Long Range Calendar

A presentation on the Aggie Research Campus was requested.

9. Adjourn

Adjourned at 5:45pm. Lasensky/Patel Unanimous