TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 8, 2021

The Transportation Advisory Committee met on December 8, 2021 at 12:00 pm in the Mass Transit Training Facility. The following were present:

Attendees:

James Buckner	Marc Adelman, Transportation Services Director
Anna Kautzman	Eric Wright, Div. Director of Transportation Services
Judy Keesee	Lisa Bivens, Senior Admin. Asst.
John Moody	Steven Hennessee, State Project Mgr., participated in the meeting via Zoom
Ralph Price	
Earl Reynolds, Deputy City Manager	Lib Rood, Senior Transportation Planner, KFH Group, Inc. participated in the meeting via Zoom

The Transportation Committee meeting, held on December 8, 2021 was called to order at 12:04 pm by Chairperson, John Moody.

Public Comment
No public comments were received.

Approval of Minutes
Judy Keesee moved that the minutes of the September 23, 2021 Transportation Committee meeting be approved as presented. Ralph Price seconded the motion, all members were in favor and the motion passed.

Title VI Plan and Procedures Approval
Marc Adelman provided copies of Danville Transit's Title VI Plan and Procedures Update for review and discussion. This document was also sent to the Committee in advance of the meeting by email for review. He informed the Committee that the KFH Group is under contract with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to review all Title VI Updates.

Marc Adelman indicated that there is a section in the document that will reflect that the Transportation Advisory Committee has reviewed and approved the Title VI Update. ***Anna Kautzman made a motion to approve the Title VI Plan Update as presented. James Buckner seconded the motion; all Committee members were in favor and the motion passed.***

FY2022 Transit Development Plan Update

Marc Adelman introduced Lib Rood, Senior Transportation Planner for the KFH Group, Inc., who will serve as the project manager for Danville's Transit Development Plan Update (TDP). He indicated that he had an opportunity to recently discuss with her some of the significant changes that have occurred since the last study was completed six years ago, which including the following:

- Berry Hill Mega Park Development
- Opening of the Caesars Casino Resort
- New Stakeholder – Institute for Advanced Learning and Research
- Passenger Demand for the Reserve A Ride service continues to increase
- Interest to replace and upgrade the Automated Scheduling Software system
- Local Match Requirement to support future operations

Marc Adelman mentioned that economic development prospect activity related to the development of the Berry Hill Mega Park continues to progress that may eventually spur interest to initiate regional bus service. In addition, the Caesars Casino Resort could have a major impact on the transit system as passenger demand is expected to increase with respect to work trip and leisure trip activity. He also indicated that recently bus service was initiated to support a training program that is administered by the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research. The transit system invoices the Institute for Reserve A Ride trips completed by students.

It was mentioned that the transportation planning study should address passenger demand issues related to the Reserve A Ride service. In addition, there is interest by the transit staff to upgrade and replace the current automated scheduling system that should be evaluated as a capital project that may be completed over the next six years. Marc Adelman said that the local match requirement to support transit operations could be impacted by certain capital projects. Lib Rood with KFH Group discussed the TDP update process with the Committee and indicated that the plan is now considered a 10-year plan. She asked the Committee to let her know if there are any items that they would like for KFH Group to explore during the update process. The outline of the project was reviewed.

Marc Adelman said that he requested KFH Group to complete a detailed analysis of the current Reserve A Ride ridership activity to identify if there are opportunities for passengers to be referred to the fixed route service. In addition, he would like for the KFH Group to evaluate opportunities to possibly establish procedures to restrict use of the Reserve A Ride service due to existing driver availability issues that challenge the transit system's ability to provide reliable service levels. Discussion continued.

Review of Monthly Ridership Reports

Marc Adelman reviewed the monthly ridership reports for the period July 2021 through October 2021 with the Committee. Fixed route ridership slightly increased by 1% for the period compared to the previous fiscal year for paid rides. Total Fixed Route ridership including transfer activity increased 3% for the period. Reserve A Ride ridership increased 6.9% year to date compared to last year. Handivan ridership decreased by 1.6% and Senior Transportation ridership decreased by 14.1% compared to the same timeframe last fiscal year. Marc Adelman also provided information for average weekday ridership activity that reflected a significant decrease for all routes since the pandemic began.

Review of Financial Status Report

Marc Adelman reviewed the FY2022 financial status report through October 2021 with the Committee. He indicated that realized passenger revenue is under budget by 13% for the period. Token sales have increased by 16% ($30,176 compared to $25,914 for FY21). Salary and wage expense is 12% under budget primarily due to the job vacancies related to full-time driving and account clerk positions. Fuel charges are 56% over budget ($103,331 actual compared to $66,327 FY22 budgeted). This operating expense line item will need to be significantly increased for next year's operating budget due to current fuel prices.

Total operating expenses for the period are under budget by 9.1% or $99,485. The transit system is eligible to receive 6.4% more in Federal Operating aid than budgeted ($34,102) during this period.

Hazard pay began during the first week of September 2021, which involves paying bus operators three additional dollars per hour when they drive a vehicle in service and is subsidized at 100% through CARES Act funds. Therefore, salary and wage expense will be incurred at greater expense for the remainder of the fiscal year than the period July through October 2021. Overtime expense is 15.6% over budget in part due to passenger demand for the Reserve A Ride service and limited staffing to meet demand.

Marc Adelman provided a financial forecast for the local match requirement to support transit operations for next fiscal year that suggested the city's cost will increase significantly. He indicated that the ability to contain the local cost to provide service over the last couple of years was possible because of increased federal operating aid that provided funding to cover 100% of the operating deficit. However, it is anticipated that federal operating assistance will decrease next fiscal year and return to normal levels that finance the operating deficit at 50%. The local cost is also expected to increase next fiscal year since fixed route passenger revenue has decreased greatly due to the pandemic.

Steven Hennessee of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation confirmed during the meeting that he anticipates federal operating assistance will return to previous funding levels and it is uncertain if additional Cares Act funds will be received to subsidize hazard pay for the drivers.

Marc Adelman identified that three (3) full-time drivers were hired during the period of July 2021-October 2021. However, four (4) employment separations occurred during that period, which is a net decrease of one (1) full-time driver through October 2021. Presently, twenty-two (22) of the thirty (30) full-time drivers' positions are filled.

Capital Projects for FY2023 funding consideration

Marc Adelman discussed various capital projects as identified below that are proposed for next fiscal year. It is anticipated that the capital funding levels for next fiscal year will involve 80% federal aid, 16% state aid and a projected 4% local match requirement.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	TOTAL COST ESTIMATE	SOURCE
TWO, 38 PASSENGER F-650 BI-FUEL PROPANE GAS POWERED BUSES	$400,000 – $200,000 PER BUS	SONNY MERRYMAN INC.
BUS STOP SIGN REPLACEMENT	$21,000 TO REPLACE 350 SIGNS	POWERS SIGNS
RENOVATE TRANSFER CENTER CONSTRUCT TWO NEW EMPLOYEE BATHROOMS	$98,000	QUALITY CONSTRUCTION
14 PASSENGER BUSES – 3	$333,234 – $111,078 PER BUS	SONNY MERRYMAN INC.
AUTOMATED VOICE ANNOUNCE UNITS - 9	$63,612 + $206 MONTHLY FEE	SONNY MERRYMAN INC.
MINIVAN FOR DIVISION DIRECTOR	$34,000	VIRGINIA STATE CONTRACT

CAPITAL ITEM	COST	FEDERAL	STATE	LOCAL
38 PASSENGER BUSES (2)	$400,000	$320,000	$64,000	$16,000
BUS STOP SIGN REPLACEMENT (350)	$21,000	$16,800	$3,360	$840
RENOVATE TRANSFER CENTER	$98,000	$78,400	$15,680	$3,920
14 PASSENGER BUSES (3)	$334,234	$266,587	$53,317	$13,329
AUTOMATED VOICE ANNOUNCE UNITS (9)	$63,612	$50,890	$10,178	$2,544
MINIVAN	$34,000	$27,200	$5,440	$1,360
TOTAL	$949,846	$759,877	$151,975	$37,994

A motion was made by James Buckner and seconded by Ralph Price to approve the discussed program of projects for FY2023. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

FY2023 Capital Projects Recommendations currently under review

During this past summer, transit staff worked with a company to accept electronic bill payments so passengers could use a credit or debit card to pay for a transit fare. No service fees were required under this arrangement, only a one-time hardware purchase was required but passengers would need to pay a $1 service fee when using a card. At that time, due to the $1 fee, it was felt the credit card payment option would work best for the Reserve A Ride service since it involves a $4 one-way trip fare. However, in September 2021, the company determined the arrangement was not a valuable solution for them and withdrew their support of the project and paid the city back for the hardware purchase.

Currently, other options are being explored to allow passengers to pay for service using a credit or debit card. Marc Adelman stated that another desirable option may be to make available a pre-paid farecard for customers, which will require transit staff to load the cards so passengers can use the card to pay for different trip allotments. Implementing use of a fare card payment option will also include service fees.

Other capital projects were discussed including the possibility of replacing the current automated scheduling software dispatch system. Multiple service issues exist with the current system and transit staff prefer to explore the possibility of making a change. To date, two product demonstrations were completed with transit staff and a Request for Proposals has been issued through the city's Purchasing Office to receive proposals from companies that provide automated scheduling software. Proposals are due on December 15th. Marc Adelman said that he intends to discuss both potential projects with the Committee in January.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 pm.