

**Unitrans Advisory Committee
City Council Community Chambers
Thursday, July 26, 2018**

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members

Present: Sheila Allen, Chair, Member at Large
Ko Ser Htoo, Vice-Chair, ASUCD
John Johnston, Natural Resources Commission
Elizabeth Lasensky, Senior Citizens Commission
Frank Reyes, Member at Large
Jacob Sedgley, ASUCD
Helen Sutton, Member at Large

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

Meeting called to order at 4:00pm.

1. Roll Call

Eight committee members were in attendance, constituting a quorum.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was moved (Sedgley/Reyes) and unanimously approved.

3. Committee and Staff Announcements

None

4. Public Comment

There were no public communications.

Regular Items

5. Draft Minutes: April 19, 2018 Meetings

Motion to approve the draft minutes from the April 19, 2018 meeting was moved (Reyes/Sedgley) and was approved.

6. General Manager's Report

Mr. Flynn provided an update on Unitrans' activities and performance for the prior quarter. Unitrans exceeded four million boarding for Fiscal Year 2018, which represents a 2.1 percent increase in ridership compared to FY 2017. Ridership increases are primarily attributed to better service delivery and higher University enrollment. Mr. Flynn provided highlights of specific performance indicators for the system and for various routes.

Mr. Flynn reported that customer complaints are down by 14 percent compared to FY 2017, indicating that better service delivery is likely the primary reason for the decrease in complaints. Mr. Flynn also reported that Unitrans had two major preventable collisions and no major non-preventable collisions in FY 2018. In addition, Unitrans has no major security incidents in the prior quarter.

Mr. Flynn reported on Unitrans fiscal year expenditures compared to budget. Unaudited financial data is showing that Unitrans experienced a \$300,000 deficit, which is lower than what was originally budgeted for the fiscal year (\$430,000). For FY 2019, Unitrans' approved budget includes a \$480,000 anticipated deficit, which would result in a reduction in cash reserves to approximately \$1.2 million. The ASUCD Senate's approval of the FY 2019 budget allows Unitrans to reinstate service that the Committee voted to cut in April 2018.

Mr. Johnston asked for clarification on what it means for Unitrans to be a "non-core" customer for compressed natural gas. Mr. Flynn explained that as a "non-core" customer, Unitrans may occasionally be subject to supply disruptions during peak demand with 24-hours advance notice, whereas "core" customers are generally not subject to such disruptions. However, Unitrans' research on this issue shows that supply disruptions for non-core customers are rare. In addition, Unitrans has access to PG&E's fuel facility in Davis and to the Yolo bus fuel facility in Woodland as back-ups.

Mr. Flynn reported on the implementation of the Unitrans and DCT fare increase in July and August 2018. Ticket and pass prices increased by approximately 20 percent on July 1, which the basic fare for Unitrans increased to \$1.25 on August 6. At the same time, the one-way fare for DCT increased to \$2.50. The FY 2019 budget includes assumptions for the fare increase.

Mr. Flynn reported on the results of the University-led audit of Unitrans, which presented that Unitrans' financial projections are sound and confirmed Unitrans' efficiency and financial management capabilities. Audit recommendations include the following:

- Convene a working group involving City and University stakeholders to come up with a plan for security additional financial resources for Unitrans. The plan will be presented to the UC Davis Chief Financial Officer.
- Develop strategies to reduce collisions and address high driver attrition and shortages, both of which are underway.

Ms. Allen inquired about efforts to request financial support from the University for Unitrans operations, and whether or not the discussions will include the Committee. Mr. Flynn responded that participation in the working group discussions is currently under discussion.

Mr. Flynn reported on Unitrans' driver recruitment and training efforts. Unitrans' goal is to hire and train 175 drivers by September 2018. To reach this goal, Unitrans needs to recruit and train an additional 80 people.

Mr. Flynn provided a brief update on capital equipment replacement projects underway. Two new double deck buses are expected to be delivered by late October and will be placed into service during Winter Quarter. In addition, Unitrans is in the process of purchasing two small cutaway buses to replace existing buses acquired nearly 15 years ago.

Mr. Flynn reported on Unitrans' efforts to secure funding for a \$2.5 million bus rehabilitation project, which would result in engine & cooling system replacement, improved seating configuration, and a fresh coat of paint for 12-13 of the single-deck New Flyer buses purchased back in 2009. This rehabilitation project will extend the service life of these buses by another six years at about 40 percent of the cost to purchase a new bus, while decreasing Unitrans' maintenance costs.

Mr. Flynn also reported on Unitrans' electric bus program and maintenance facility improvements, which include repaving, storm water mitigation, and expansion parking. The UC Davis Design & Construction Management (DCM) office has completed conceptual design and are starting an electrical load study to determine the impact of electric bus charging on the University's power grid. Unitrans' goal is to introduce electric propulsion buses by 2022-2023. Unitrans submitted a grant application to SACOG to purchase 12 electric buses and related charging equipment.

Ms. Partida inquired about the availability of a funding from the Yolo Solano Air Quality Management District for Unitrans' bus purchases. Mr. Flynn reported that we coordinate with YSAQMD to obtain letters of support for grant applications and for assistance in taking advantage of available tax credits for alternative fuel vehicles.

Mr. Flynn reported that bus shelter work has started by removing some of the old and faded panes of plexiglass from the older bus shelters to improve visibility from inside and outside the shelters. These shelters will be the first to be replaced once Unitrans establishes a labor contract for shelter installation.

Ms. Sheets reported on Unitrans' effort to enhance revenue from advertising on the bus fleet. Unitrans is conducting a pilot program to allow for limited exterior advertising on the single-deck New Flyer buses. This pilot program will allow Unitrans to generate additional revenue while seeking feedback from the community on the amount and type of advertising on Unitrans' bus fleet.

Ms. Allen inquired about which entity has the decision-making authority for advertising on the bus fleet. Mr. Flynn reported that Unitrans has its own advertising program and guidelines, and that the University is looking to consolidate all advertising on University property and assets under one umbrella program. Mr. Flynn also reported that all net revenue generated by advertising on Unitrans buses must come back to Unitrans under any scenario per federal statutory requirements.

Mr. Johnston inquired about the reduction in cash revenue that Mr. Flynn cited in his report and whether or not the City's effort to emphasize bicycle travel is affecting Unitrans' ridership. Mr. Flynn reported that there is a synergy between use of bicycles and Unitrans in the City whereby bicycles can accommodate shorter trips while Unitrans focuses on longer trips throughout the City, and that this could be an effective strategy should the need to cut Unitrans service in the future.

Mr. Johnston also inquired about Unitrans' participation in the City's Downtown Davis core area planning discussions. Mr. Flynn replied that Unitrans has been invited to participate in meetings focused on transportation and transit issues.

Ms. Allen inquired about the possibility to locating more bike-share equipment adjacent to bus stops to facilitate travel between the two modes. Mr. Abbanat reported that as the bike

share program expands and establishes a stable foundation, co-location of equipment can be better planned.

Mr. Abbanat reported on the City's Civic Lab project, in coordination with Unitrans, Yolobus, Cool Davis, and Capitol Corridor, to pilot a shared-ride micro-transit program to the Amtrak Stations during times when Unitrans doesn't operate. The goal is to initiate the program at the beginning of the calendar year. Mr. Abbanat offered to bring a report back to the Committee at a future meeting.

7. Low Income Bus Pass Program Update

Mr. Flynn reported that the City Council requested a report back on how to implement a low-cost pass program. Mr. Flynn reported current free or discounted fare opportunities which were outlined in his written report. He also reported that Unitrans has the lowest cost for fare and passes of any transit operator in the greater Sacramento area.

Mr. Flynn reported that Unitrans would be unable to take on the administration of an income verification and eligibility process, but could instead rely on existing City or school district programs involving eligibility verification. Mr. Flynn also reported that lost revenue from a low-cost bus pass program could be eligible for reimbursement from a very limited set of grant programs.

Mr. Reyes inquired about the use of the ten-ride tickets donated to the Davis Joint Unified School District. Mr. Flynn reported that we do not have specific usage data, but that the District informs us that they have distributed all of the donated tickets to eligible students.

Mr. Reyes inquired about the potential use of automated fare and related equipment such as the ConnectCard. Ms. Sheets reported that implementation of the ConnectCard system on the Unitrans bus fleet would have cost Unitrans approximately \$30,000-\$60,000 per bus to install not only the electronic fare equipment bus also the electrical conduit and technology components necessary to operate the system. A "lower tech" solution of installing only an electronic card reader would cost approximately \$15,000-\$20,000 per bus for the power/communication infrastructure that would need to be installed. Because Unitrans receives a very small percentage of revenues through the fare boxes, the implementation cost far exceeds the benefits received.

Ms. Partida noted that the City Council wanted to find out if the fare increase could somehow be offset through a low-cost bus pass program. Mr. Flynn reported that fares increased by 20-25 percent depending on the fare media. The basic fare increased by 25 percent, while pass prices increased by about 20 percent.

Mr. Johnston asked about the criteria used for providing free or discounted fares. Mr. Flynn reported that there are a variety of factors that inform current Unitrans fare collection policies, such as staff cost to collect fare at the two bus terminals on campus, and advantages/disadvantages to charging half-fares to seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Allen suggested that not enough is known by the community about the various free and discounted tickets and passes offered by Unitrans, and that such information could be helpful to the City Council. She also suggested that Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) could be used for a fare subsidy program.

The Committee's recommendation was to report back to the City Council on existing free and discounted tickets and passes offered by Unitrans, and to advertise these opportunities to the community, seek potential grant opportunities for subsidizing bus tickets and passes, and develop a data collection process to identify the potential demand for low-cost bus passes and from which sectors of the community. Mr. Flynn indicated that Unitrans staff will provide an update at the next Committee meeting.

8. Public Hearing: Modification of Unitrans T Line Routing for FY 2019 School Year

Mr. Flynn reported that Unitrans needs to revise the T line route that the Committee approved in April 2018. In the process of implementing the committee's approved route, Unitrans staff discovered that the left turn from Monarch Ln. to Covell Blvd. westbound, at an uncontrolled intersection, presents a significant safety and operational issue for the T line. Consequently, Unitrans staff recommends that the T line route revert back to Alhambra Dr. northbound to Covell Blvd. westbound, where this is a signal-controlled intersection. The T line would continue to serve the Wildhorse area before traveling southbound on Pole Line Road to return to Covell Blvd. westbound.

A motion was made and seconded (Johnston/Lasensky) to accept the staff recommendation to approve the revised T line route. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25pm.