

**Unitrans Advisory Committee
City Council Community Chambers
Monday, October 22, 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
Alicia Hacker, 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
Matt Dulcich, UC Davis Campus Planning & Sustainability

Meeting called to order at 4:00pm.

1. Roll Call

Seven committee members were in attendance, constituting a quorum.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Committee and Staff Announcements

Ms. Allen reported that the Area 4 Agency on Aging is conducting a community assessment of needs for older adults which includes transportation among other issues of concern to older adults.

Mr. Flynn reminded the group that Proposition 6 is on the upcoming Nov ballot. If approved by voters, Proposition 6 would repeal gas and vehicle registration tax increases recently enacted by the State Legislature, which would result in a significant decrease in funding for a variety of transportation projects, including public transit.

4. Public Comment

There were no public communications.

Regular Items

5. **Draft Minutes: July 26, 2018 Meeting**

Motion to approve the draft minutes from the July 26, 2018 meeting was moved (Lasensky/Reyes) and was approved.

6. **General Manager's Report & Annual Report Including Unitrans Financial Task Force Update**

Mr. Flynn reported that the Unitrans General Manager's Report for Fiscal Year 2017-18 has been completed and included in the committee's agenda packet.

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 ridership for the first quarter of FY 2019 is down slightly compared to the same time period last year. The fare increase that went into effect in August 2018 may have contributed to the ridership decrease. Mr. Flynn also reported that Unitrans started Fall Quarter with temporary reductions in midday service on five bus routes (D, G, J, V, and W) due to driver availability issues.

Mr. Flynn reported on Unitrans' driver recruitment and training efforts. Currently, Unitrans loses 50 percent of its drivers each year due to graduation, so there is a new emphasis on recruiting younger drivers (including first and second year students) to reduce the attrition rate to an initial goal of 40 percent, then to 33 percent in future years.

Ms. Allen asked if only students are recruited to be Unitrans drivers. Ms. Sheets responded that Unitrans student employees are hired under a University-wide "Student Assistant" job classification, for which only registered students are eligible.

Mr. Flynn reported that bus collisions are down compared to the prior year, and that Unitrans staff continues to emphasize safety measures to keep the number of accidents down. The primary "hot spot" location for bus collisions is the intersection of 3rd and H Street near the Amtrak Station, which is the entrance to a narrow two-lane alley with heavy traffic and high curbs that limit maneuverability for bus drivers. Unitrans and City Public Works staff are working together to identify potential solutions, which may include rerouting bus service away from the intersection. Unitrans is also working with city and campus tree crews to cut back trees at key locations to avoid bus-tree collisions.

Mr. Flynn reported on Unitrans' on-time performance has been negatively affected by construction activities throughout the city and by increasingly heavy traffic in various corridors, including Mace Blvd, Arlington Blvd, and 14th Street between Oak Ave and F Street.

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. Longer term financial projections show that Unitrans is expected to operate at a deficit approaching \$1 million in FY 2020 and increases through FY 2022 when the statewide minimum wage tops out at \$15.00/hour.

Mr. Flynn reported that the first Unitrans financial task force meeting will take place soon and is comprised of a variety of campus staff and representatives from the City of Davis and Yolo County. Mr. Flynn also reported that a student fee referendum is underway to propose that undergraduate student fees be increased by \$20 per quarter to provide additional operating revenue for Unitrans.

Ms. Allen inquired about efforts to request financial support from the University for Unitrans operations. Mr. Flynn responded that discussions about direct financial support from the University will take place within the Unitrans task force.

Mr. Flynn provided a brief update on capital equipment replacement projects underway. Two new double deck buses are expected to be delivered in December. In addition, Unitrans is in the process of purchasing two small cutaway buses to replace existing buses acquired nearly 15 years ago. Also, Unitrans is starting the procurement process for five new CNG-fueled buses to replace older buses that will need to be removed from service by the end of calendar year 2019.

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 grant applications to SACOG to purchase 12 electric buses and related charging equipment.

Mr. Flynn reported that bus shelter work has started by installing a new bus shelter at Anderson and Russell NB to replace a shelter that was destroyed in an auto accident several months ago. Additional shelters will be installed using UC Davis staff labor forces.

Ms. Htoo inquired about Unitrans' efforts to increase advertising opportunities on the bus fleet. Ms. Sheets reported that ad space has been made available on the single-deck New Flyer buses and that it has been a popular addition to the menu of ad space packages.

Mr. Gudz inquired about Unitrans' efforts to pursue grant funding for Unitrans' capital and operating programs. Ms. Sheets responded that Unitrans staff pursues all grant opportunities for which there are projects that would meet grant eligibility requirements.

Mr. Gudz inquired about the Unitrans working group scope of work and timelines and if the working group's discussion will be timely enough to inform upcoming budget processes. Mr. Flynn responded affirmatively to Mr. Gudz's question.

Mr. Gudz asked about the composition of the working group and if transportation professionals are included in the working group. Mr. Flynn responded that the majority of the working group members have finance backgrounds, and that he and Mr. Dulcich would represent and articulate public transit operating needs. Mr. Flynn noted that he would send a list of the working group members to the Committee for its information.

7. Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Davis, Yolo County, and University of California-Davis Discussion

At the request of Mr. Abbanat, Mr. Dulcich presented an overview of the recently approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Davis, Yolo County, and UC Davis regarding ongoing coordination and collaboration needs for the implementation of the campus Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). The Committee's focus for the presentation was on the MOU elements related to transportation issues. Through the MOU, the University has committed to contributing funding for several major transportation projects, including the Richards/I-80 interchange, bike/pedestrian improvements along the Russell Blvd corridor and at Oxford Park, and improvements to County Road 98 at Hutchison Drive to include the installation of bus lanes and a traffic circle to reduce traffic collisions at that location. Mr. Dulcich also noted that the MOU provides for the development of a joint transportation plan to identify key transportation priorities and potential funding.

Mr. Johnston asked if there is a time frame for development of the transportation plan, to which Mr. Dulcich responded that there is not. The process for initiating a joint transportation plan will be established by a separate working group to be formed for the purpose of implementing the MOU, which is separate from the Unitrans financial task force/working group.

Mr. Gudz asked if announcements for the various MOU working groups will be sent to all relevant City commissions and committees. Mr. Abbanat responded that City staff will follow existing City procedures for announcing meetings and events through the City Manager's Office.

Ms. Allen asked if the Committee can be involved in the joint transportation planning process at appropriate times, and if the Committee could spend time at the next meeting to discuss ideas for the scope of the transportation plan. There was consensus among Committee members for the proposal.

Ms. Allen distributed a draft opinion piece for the Davis Enterprise and The Aggie advocating that the University provide direct financial assistance to Unitrans to meet its operating needs, and she asked the Committee for input on the proposed draft. Mr. Flynn offered to fact-check the article.

Mr. Gudz asked if the article could be formalized as official correspondence from the Committee to be presented to the Unitrans working group. Mr. Johnston recommended that the opinion piece move ahead without the Committee's endorsement so that it can start to inform upcoming discussions.

Mr. Abbanat noted that the timing may not be right for the opinion piece given progress that has been made on formalizing collaboration efforts between the City and the University. Several Committee members expressed a desire to communicate to the University that the Committee takes issues regarding Unitrans' financial stability seriously.

Mr. Dulcich suggested that the Committee check in with City Council members on the tone of the proposed opinion piece to align the language to current City policy, and to acknowledge existing contributions that the University makes for various transportation-related needs.

Mr. Gudz suggested that the language be reviewed and revised based on initial discussions carried out by the Unitrans working group and then brought back to the Committee as a formal action item in January 2019. The Committee agreed with this approach.

8. Adjournment

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 4:00pm. Motion to adjourn the meeting was made (Gudz/Johnston) and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:25pm.