



CAPITAL METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC HEARING
2910 East Fifth Street Austin, TX 78702

~ MINUTES ~

Executive Assistant/Board Liaison Gina Estrada
512-389-7458

Wednesday, November 1, 2017
12:00 PM

12:05 PM Meeting Called To Order
2:39 PM Meeting Adjourned

I. Presentations:

1. Proposed June 2018 Service Changes.

Lawrence Deeter, Planning Department, provided background information on Connections 2025 and noted Connections 2025 is Capital Metro's Board approved transit plan for a more reliable, more frequent and better connected transportation network. The plan, which is designed to address declining ridership and better meet community needs was adopted in February after more than a year of public input and board direction. Connections 2025 also guides three times per year service changes. Deeter noted the Board is scheduled to vote on the Proposed June 2018 service changes at the November 15 Board of Directors meeting. If approved the changes will take effect June 3, 2018.

Deeter next presented highlights of the proposed June 2018 service changes, with the most significant change being that half of the Capital Metro routes would be changing. The plan is designed to create a high frequency network, expanding from six routes to 14 routes, operating seven times a week, with service every 15 minutes. Lawrence concluded with the public outreach process, comments, and recommended changes based on comments and requests received. The potential impact on MetroAccess customers was also discussed, with Board member Kitchen requesting additional information on the total number (home and work addresses) of MetroAccess customers that will be impacted by the proposed service changes.

II. Public Comment:

Judge Susan Steeg, Justice of the Peace from Precinct 3, Travis County, stated if proposed service changes are enacted they will lose their part time fixed route and will become the only precinct office not served by Capital Metro. The Travis County campus includes the County Health and Human Services, Tax Office, and the Community Care FQHC Clinic. They must have MetroAccess continue to provide means for those with transportation needs to access the campus.

Min Liu, University of Texas professor, lives in Oak Hill and has been a MetroAccess door-to-door customer for the past 19 years. She communicated if changes are approved she will be one of the 36 customers who will lose MetroAccess. Ms. Liu stated she relies on MetroAccess to get to get to work and her rehab appointments and without MetroAccess she does not have other alternatives. She urged the board to consider protecting the existing MetroAccess customers and services.

Heidi Ross asked the Board to keep Route 21/22. She explained students from O. Henry Middle School ride this bus to and from school and to afterschool activities. Ms. Ross indicated she supported the approval of Connections 2025 based on the resolution that fixed route service would continue for those areas where service would be eliminated until mobility innovation zones were developed. She added the proposed changes do not address the north-south corridor west of Mopac and losing service west of Mopac is not a good idea. Board Member Kitchen announced she stands by the Resolution referenced by Ms. Ross and stated we need to have discussions with the public about the mobility innovation zones before we change or eliminate routes.

Gram Mueller, student, O. Henry Middle School, commented he has been riding Route 21/22 for the past 2 years. He stated it takes him 20 minutes to get home from school. He likes that the bus operators are friendly and have good knowledge of the route and can safely maneuver through the neighborhoods. He

asked the Board to keep this route.

Owen Murphy, student, O. Henry Middle School, is concerned about losing bus service to O. Henry Middle School. He takes bus 21/22 to return home from school and to after school activities, such as church youth group activities. He's learned how to use public transportation and appreciates the service. Many adults including his parents are impressed that students are riding the city bus, as they themselves don't know how to use public transportation. To conclude, he asked the Board to keep this route.

Charlie Ross, student, O. Henry Middle School spoke in favor of Route 21/22.

Harry Ross, student, O. Henry Middle School, advocated for Route 21/22. He takes this bus to and from school every day. He also rides this bus to after school soccer practice and said this would not be possible if he had to ride the regular school bus.

Sparti Locklin, student, O. Henry Middle School, does not want Route 21/22 eliminated. He stated it's a safe and easy way to get home for middle school students as well as Austin High school students. He also takes this bus to afterschool activities.

Samir Kassim, student, O. Henry Middle School, asked the Board not to eliminate Route 21/22 as he uses this bus to get home from school as well as to afterschool activities.

Charlotte Pounds, student, O. Henry Middle School, supports Route 21/22 because it gets her home from school in less time than the regular school bus. Getting home an hour before the regular school bus allows her time for homework, chores, and volleyball practice.

Ryan Teague, student, O. Henry Middle School, does not want Route 21/22 eliminated. She's takes this bus to gymnastics practice after school. She said she's learning how to use public transportation by riding this bus to school and to after school activities.

Marissa Davila, student, O. Henry Middle School, spoke in favor of Route 21/22 and stated it allows her to be home in 20 minutes as opposed to one hour on the regular school bus. Arriving home early allows her to complete chores, do homework, and cheerleading practice.

Patrick Wallace, student, O. Henry Middle School, advocated for Route 21/22. Like other students, he uses this bus to get home from school and appreciates getting home early to do his homework and chores around the house.

Andrew Mosser, student, O. Henry Middle School, supports Route 21/22 and does not want it eliminated. He stated school ends at 3:30 and his parents get off work at 5:00 and would not be able to pick him up until later. This bus allows him to get home early and to attend after school activities such as football practice and church youth group functions.

Tenishia Jackson, Campus Director and Academic Dean, Altierus Career College, formerly Everest Institute, spoke in favor of route 323. Students rely on this route to attend classes at this campus to further their educational process. She asked the Board to reconsider continuing this bus route that allows access to the campus located at 9100 US Hwy 290 west.

Mary Bahari, resides in Pflugerville and relies on MetroAccess for transportation to medical appointments. CARTS is not an option as her address is urban and not rural. Ms. Bahari is concerned that fixed route 243 will be discontinued and this will impact her MetroAccess services. She asked the Board to keep this route and to keep MetroAccess as it stands.

Lanna Anosseva, asked the Board to reconsider eliminating bus 383, in particular the route in the Anderson Mill region. Ms. Anosseva was directed to speak to Lawrence Deeter, Planning Department, for further clarification.

Rebecca LaBanve, urged the Board to keep Routes 21/22 and 490 - RBJ bus stop. Residents depend on

these two routes to go to the grocery store, medical appointments and church services. Ms. LaBanve also shared a signed petition with the Board in favor of these routes.

Judi Rockman, complimented the bus drivers for their friendliness and great customer service. She offered the following suggestions: replace service to the North Medical Center - route 240 that is proposed to be eliminated. She suggested perhaps this route could be included in the circulator service to the Domain. She also suggested that we advertise our transportation services in parking lots and parking garages.

Patricia King, opposes changes to Route 271 due to safety reasons. The proposed changes have this route stopping at the Del Valley Correctional Institute and then coming to her neighborhood. She does not feel safe with this approach. She urged the Board to not make any changes to the route. She wants this route to continue as is and stated residents depend on this bus to go to the grocery store and ACC. This bus is their lifeline.

Patricia Crow, urged the Board to not make any changes to Route 300 and shared a petition stating the reasons why this route should not be eliminated.

Sandra Davis, expressed support for Routes 300, 7, 37 and 383. She stated she does not own a vehicle and Route 300 is her lifeline. Occasionally, she travels to North Lamar Transit Center to connect with the 383 to go to the Domain. The proposed changes will entail having to walk a mile to the nearest bus stop and will have several connections. She is concerned many residents currently served by Route 300 may not be able to walk the distance.

Elizabeth Stehl, supports the proposed changes to Routes 20, 22, 335 and 350. She is in favor of more frequent service.

Councilmember Alison Alter, District 10, stressed the importance of innovation zones in areas proposed to lose service due to service changes or elimination of routes. While she is sympathetic to budget constraints, the need to increase ridership, and increased frequency, she believes we have to make sure we are serving people that depend on transit, mainly the youth, disabled, seniors, and those coming to medical appointments or going to/from work. She supports Route 21/22 and indicated she is not opposed to changes but wants the opportunity to discuss innovation zones as promised.

Roberta Chitwood, is concerned about possible changes to Route 10 going to Greyhound and the proposed changes on Cameron Road. She has a disability and is unable to walk long distances. She would like a bus stop at Cameron and St. Johns. In addition, she wants to keep the number 7 at St. Johns.

Susan Pantell, agrees with the need for a more efficient, more frequent and better connected network. She believes staff has listened to the community and asked the board to move forward and approve the plan. Ms Pantell supports grandfathering existing MetroAccess customers. She also supports transportation innovation zones for areas that will completely lose service but does not support street segments that don't justify the ridership.

D'Ann Johnson, representing Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, said they bought the office building due to the bus stop next to the facility. Five other social services are in that area. The proposed changes to Routes 10, 37 and 320 will leave them with no bus service. The nearest bus stop would be on 52nd and Cameron - across I35 - with 5 lanes of traffic and two feeder roads. An alternative solution would be to make the 350 a rapid route and move the bus stop closer to 50th street.

Jo Staton, resident at RBJ Center advocated for Route 21/22. She stated residents at RBJ depend on this bus to go to the grocery store and to doctors' appointments. She said she can't walk and does not want this route eliminated.

Helen Varty, administrator at RBJ Center, representing the RBJ Board of Directors, stated the residents are concerned about the proposed changes to Route 21/22 and the elimination of the 490 shuttle. The

proposed changes to Route 21/22 involve several transfers which will be difficult for many seniors who take this bus to doctor's appointments. Elimination of the 490 shuttle will impact their ability to travel to the grocery store.

Brent Payne, Amalgamated Transit Union, feels the Board is not listening to the public's concerns regarding the proposed service changes. He asked the Board to hear and understand all concerns before making a decision on whether or not to approve the plan. Mr. Payne is also concerned the proposed frequency on certain routes do not offer proper recovery times for the bus operators and proper places to use the restroom. He is concerned they don't have adequate breaks to provide safe service.

Susana Almanza, from PODER, stated her concerns with the proposed elimination of bus 4 on Vargas Road. This route serves children at Allison Elementary, the youth at IDEA, Elementary at Vargas, and it also takes people from that community to the food bank at Southwest Key Center, among other places. Ms. Almanza suggested we look at the reality of the ridership and serve the true bus riders - those who are truly dependent on public transportation.

Gregory Watson, stated he would like to keep the portion of Route 333 that serves the Oak Hill Park & Ride (Route 171, the commuter express flyer). This will allow residents from the Maple Run neighborhood to maintain accessibility to the Oak Hill shopping center, in particular access to the HEB located in that area.

David Knoll, representing Ryan Companies and the Housing Authority COA, spoke about the Reserve at Springdale - an affordable housing community. He stated a big part of choosing to build at that location was the transit options, specifically route 300. He opposes changes to this route and asked the Board to reconsider keeping the route for the benefit of the residents, in particular the portion that runs by Rogge Lane and Springdale.

Shirley Eason would like to keep Route 323 & 6 combined. She wanted to know if Route 237 is going to be replaced by Route 323. It was suggested that she meet with Lawrence Deeter for further specifics. Lastly, she wanted to know what does the marketing slogan "Use it or Lose it" mean?

Bobby Rich, rides the Routes 1,7,10, and 320. He is concerned with Route 323 not going any further east and wanted to know the replacement route. Lawrence Deeter responded and said Route 323 will be replaced with Route 339.

David King, feels low income families and families of color are being displaced and moving out to the suburbs. He is concerned the proposed changes are going to leave these families without transportation options. He feels these are the people that need transit the most. He offered suggestions on how to restructure bus fare so it is equitable.

Carolina Baumanis is a student at UT and is a daily rider of the 465 bus that takes the redline commuters to the UT campus. She mentioned parking at UT is a challenge and she is currently on a 2 year waiting list for a parking permit. Route 465 is the only route that provides a direct connection from where she lives (a transit oriented development) to the UT Campus. Removing and replacing it with Route 18 is not a good decision.

David Wittie, member of Adapt of Texas, supports the proposed changes. Mr. Wittie has migrated from paratransit services to fixed route service. He does not agree with phasing out MetroAccess customers from the system. He shared that he lives near the Greyhound bus station and the proposed changes will have people walking one mile to catch the bus. He is concerned for their safety and losing connectivity at Greyhound station. Chair Cooper said he would like to have a later discussion with Mr. Wittie to see how we can more efficiently serve MetroAccess customers. It currently costs the agency \$25k per year/per person to provide service. We do not want to abandon the customers, but we need to create a safety net that works well.

Valora Porter, is 84 and lives at Crosspark and Exchange. She urged the Board to keep MetroAccess.

She still works seven days a week and this is her only mode of transportation.

Shana McGary, spoke on behalf of her 26 year old daughter, Karly Lay who lives with her and is autistic. Ms. McGary moved to her home in Maple Run because of the bus stop availability. She opposes changes to Route 333. It took her daughter a year to practice memorizing this bus route to take to Goodwill where she works. Buses serve people first. She asked the board to do the right thing and not make changes to this route.

John Vickers does not want Route 228 eliminated. He stated this route was developed to serves the veteran's clinic. It offers the veterans multiple transfers - they can go to 20 different places by taking this route. Ninety percent of the riders on this route are veterans. He asked the board to save Route 228.

Gene Brooks, a UT faculty member, would like future discussion regarding MetroAccess include all stakeholders.

Virginia Nailing is against elimination of Routes 21/22 and proposed changes to number 18, especially in west Austin. She lives in this area but does not own a vehicle. She enjoys going to the library but safety is a concern as there are no sidewalks leading to the library. She is also concerned with the number 18 running later more routinely.

Stacy Suits, Travis County Constable, spoke in favor of grandfathering MetroAccess customers for at least 5 years. He believes it is the right thing to do.

Zenobia Joseph, asked the board to look at routes 323, 300 and 350 for equitable distribution of resources. She also expressed gratitude for the uncoupling of route 383/392.

III. Items for Future Discussion:

IV. Adjournment

ADA Compliance

Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications are provided upon request. Please call (512)389-7458 or email gina.estrada@capmetro.org if you need more information.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: *Wade Cooper, chair; Delia Garza, vice chair; Juli Word, board secretary; Terry Mitchell Pio Renteria, Ann Kitchen, Rita Jonse and Jeffrey Travillion. Board Liaison: Gina Estrada (512)389-7458, email gina.estrada@capmetro.org if you need more information.*

The Board of Directors may go into closed session under the Texas Open Meetings Act. In accordance with Texas Government Code, Section 551.071, consultation with attorney for any legal issues, under Section 551.072 for real property issues; under Section 551.074 for personnel matters, or under Section 551.076, for deliberation regarding the deployment or implementation of security personnel or devices; arising regarding any item listed on this agenda.