

MEETING NOTES

Pursuant to written notice sent to Committee Members and pursuant to notice posted at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting, copies of said notice having been sent to the FRTA's 41-member towns, the meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority was held on November 9, 2017 at the John W. Olver Transit Center, 12 Olive St., Greenfield, MA 01301.

1. INTRODUCTIONS:

Present were the following TAC Members:

Chairman George Touloumtzis and Deb Wilson.

Also present were:

Jasper Lapienski, Linda Gralenski, Donna Suskawicz, Megan Rhodes, Jenna Henning, Molly Morin; FTM General Manager, Rauley Caine; FTM Assistant General Manager, Ron Andronaco; FTM Safety and Training Manager, and Michael Perreault; FRTA Assistant Administrator.

Chairman George Touloumtzis called the meeting to order at 1:00pm and it was noted that a quorum **was not** present to hold a meeting. If anyone is interested in becoming a committee member, or knows someone that may be interested, please email Michael Perreault at michael@frta.org.

2. REVIEW MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 9, 2017 AND MEETING NOTES FROM SEPTEMBER 14, 2017:

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FY18:

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

4. REGIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL TOPICS:

Jenna Henning stated that on September 13th and 14th MassMobility and MassDOT held a Design Thinking Workshop geared toward giving people creative tools for solving transportation issues through a person-centered approach. Megan Rhodes also attended the workshop and indicated that it was helpful in getting people to think about different

strategies for looking at transportation problems and finding solutions. One of the big take-aways from the workshop was getting people to ask questions that drill down to exactly what the issues really are. Asking not just where people need to travel but also asking why is helpful in gaining context to the issue to find an appropriate solution. Jenna added that the workshop shared some interview techniques to help with this process and she will email some information about the workshop to Michael Perreault to share with the TAC. Discussion concluded that using these Design Thinking techniques could prove useful when the FRTA is conducting public hearings or community conversations to collect comments and feedback on route changes or other projects.

There was some discussion about the use of ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lift as possible transportation solutions. Megan Rhodes commented that Uber is starting to make some headway into the western part of the state but as of now ride-hailing companies and services are concentrated in the eastern part of the state.

Linda Gralenski stated that many transit authorities in MA are beginning to allow MRC consumers to qualify for reduced fare on the fixed route and asked if FRTA is considering that as well. Michael Perreault stated that the request from MRC is scheduled to be discussed at the next FRTA Advisory Board meeting on Thursday November 16th at 4:00pm.

5. DISCUSSION ON NEXT STEPS FOR WEEKEND SERVICE PROPOSAL:

Michael Perreault updated that since the last meeting he had reached out to Representative Paul Mark by email inviting him to attend an upcoming TAC meeting to discuss the need for weekend service and in addition to discuss the possibility of collaborating on a 'Ride the Bus' campaign similar to the 'Ride Around Town with Mayor Martin' event with the FRTA held in December 2016. Molly Morin suggested that if Representative Paul Mark agrees to do a ride the bus campaign we title it 'Ride with your Rep'.

6. FRTA UPDATES:

Michael Perreault discussed that FRTA has been monitoring ridership information since the route changes in September. After the route changes took effect, FRTA realized some inconsistencies in ridership data compared to fare collections. It discovered that some of the fareboxes were not capturing and recording ridership data. This issue has since been corrected and moving forward from October on FRTA will continue to collect and track ridership information on the new route changes. Megan Rhodes asked if there has been any ridership to the Turners Falls Industrial Park. Molly Morin stated that there has been some ridership activity to the Industrial Park and even though it is still very early on from the launch of the route changes, at a glance, FRTA has seen positive results from the route changes. Deb Wilson asked how FRTA measures the success of the route changes and Molly Morin clarified that she was speaking in terms of ridership figures. Jasper Lapienski suggested that having ridership information broken down by route might be helpful in looking at trends by individual routes over time. Michael Perreault

stated that FRTA provides information on its website on quarterly ridership data, and other statistics, but that he can bring some ridership information broken out by routes to the next TAC meeting. George Touloumtzis suggested that getting information such as this out into the public through different mediums like the Greenfield Recorder may help to ‘normalize’ public transit and spur more people thinking about and hopefully riding the bus. Molly Morin stated that FRTA would be working over the next several months to issue and collect surveys and collect anecdotal feedback from riders on the route changes. Jasper Lapienski recommended that FRTA put the business phone number on bus stop signs for riders to contact in case of questions. Deb Wilson asked about bus stops that are not accessible in the wintertime and what riders should do or plan for when trying to catch the bus at those locations. Rauley Caine stated that bus stop accessibility during the wintertime is an issue that is common with many transit agencies. Molly Morin stated that FRTA has a reasonable modification policy that allows for drivers find suitable locations near bus stops so that passengers can embark and disembark from the bus that is clear from snow. Jasper Lapienski suggested even having notices on the buses with that information would be helpful for riders. George Touloumtzis also added that Greenfield homeowners and business owners are responsible for keeping sidewalks clear of snow.

Michael Perreault updated that since the last TAC meeting Google maps has been updated with all FRTA’s new fixed route information and the bus tracker link and the systemwide map on the FRTA website has been updated to reflect all the new fixed routes. If anyone finds information incorrect or out of date on the FRTA website, please contact Michael Perreault.

Michael Perreault announced that FRTA launched a new ‘Freedoms Shuttle’ pilot program on September 6th. Molly Morin stated that FRTA received a New Freedoms Grant for a pilot program to provide transportation access for people with disabilities. Working with the Opioid Task Force it was determined that there was an unmet need for people in recovery living in the Hilltowns, west of Greenfield, without transportation. FRTA created a shuttle operating in Ashfield, Buckland, and Conway bringing them into Greenfield to access services as well as offer bus passes to those in recovery that reside near the current fixed route system. Some of the grant funds will also go towards travel training for individuals and human service agencies.

Lastly, Michael Perreault announced that FRTA recently finalized a contract with an Architectural and Engineering firm, STV Incorporated, to design a new maintenance and operations facility.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS, TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS, OR SUGGESTIONS FOR AGENDA TOPICS:

Michael Perreault announced that the Friday after Thanksgiving FRTA will offer free transportation on all the fixed routes. Flyers are being finalized and will start to go up shortly. Jasper Lapienski asked if FRTA has ridership figures from last year to be able to

compare to this year. Molly Morin stated that FRTA could bring ridership figures to the next TAC meeting.

Megan Rhodes asked what the status of the bus shelter that was destroyed in the car accident last winter. Michael Perreault stated that the process to replace the bus shelter has been very long due to insurance claims not covering the whole amount which then required additional unplanned capital funds. FRTA ordered the shelter in the summer and, with long lead times, is still waiting for the shelter to be built and shipped from the manufacturer. A contractor has already been secured for the installation so the shelter should be installed soon after it is delivered.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2018. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.