

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL
Wednesday, November 19, 2014, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
Regents Room, Suite 1140, J.C. Kellam Administration Building

Attendance: Ms. Nancy Nusbaum, Dr. Margaret Menninger, Dr. Roque Mendez, Dr. Jaymeen Shah, Mr. Anthony Galo, Mr. Eric Johnson, Ms. Judy Herington, Ms. Ashley Cantu, Ms. Caitlyn Koebler, Captain Rickey Lattie, Mr. Stephen Prentice, Ms. Stephanie Daniels, Mr. Alex Vogt (guest), Ms. Linda Sterling (Scribe)

Absent: Dr. Joanne Smith, Chief Ralph Meyer

Introductions

Introductions were made for the new members present; Ms. Caitlyn Koebler, Residence Hall Administration, and Mr. Eric Johnson, Student Government.

End of Year Profit/Loss for Shuttle and Parking Services (FY14)

Ms. Nusbaum reviewed the financial handouts with the council and noted the following:

Shuttle - reserve funds were used for the DoubleMap GPS contract, and to complete the First Transit contract since the bus fee at \$78 was not enough to cover the remainder of that contract; this semester the student bus fee is \$95/semester credit hour to cover the higher hourly rate for the new shuttle contract. It is not anticipated that reserves will need to be used for the first year of the Transdev contract. Transportation staff had hoped to present a bill to the legislature renaming the student bus fee to a student transportation fee, but that has been tabled for now.

Bike Cave – New fund has been created for Bike Cave reserves as this is the first year there have been reserve funds from advertising on buses, sales, donations, and license fees to apartment complexes to bring buses to campus. This is the second and last year of using ESC grant funds for salaries. Going forward the Bike Cave must cover its own expenses.

A member asked if jobs were added to shuttle services since student wages went over budget. Ms. Nusbaum advised that Mr. Alex Vogt was hired over the summer to work with Mr. Herrera on data analysis and mapping for the shuttle service. The member asked if that is a permanent appointment.

Introduction of New Coordinator, Alternative Transportation – Alex Vogt (Agenda item out of order)

Ms. Nusbaum introduced Mr. Alex Vogt and explained that Mr. Vogt was hired in the newly created position of Coordinator, Alternative Transportation. Mr. Vogt will spend 1/3 of his time supervising student workers in the Bike Cave, and 2/3 of his time helping with mapping, routing, and data analysis for the shuttle service.

Parking (return to prior agenda item) - Parking services ended last year (FY13) with \$222,000 in reserves and was able to add another \$500,000 this year (FY14) so the reserve fund balance is now \$802,000. It is hoped that more will be reserved at the end of fiscal year 2015. Fiscal year 2015 is the last year for bond payments on the LBJ Student Center Garage; this should free up \$400,000 annually, and help to start building the reserve fund to a point where any large repair issues in garages, or purchase of available land to add commuter parking can be managed.

Park and Pay Income as of 10/31/14

There are six machines in Round Rock and six in San Marcos. Looking at income from September 1, 2014 through October 30, 2014, they are being used well. Pleasant Street Garage has two machines, and has brought in approximately \$4,200. The machine at Speck Garage is bringing in the most, then Pleasant St. Garage second, Meadows Center third, followed by Coliseum and Bobcat Village Lots. President's Cabinet provided money to buy the machine at Meadows Center and Parking Services hasn't quite recouped what was paid for the others, but they are performing well and serving a purpose for students.

A member asked if the station at Bobcat Village was paid for by Student Recreation. Ms. Nusbaum advised that Parking Services paid for it, and anyone who parks in that parking lot should be using the intramural fields.

Edward Gary Garage Income as of 10/30/14

Ms. Nusbaum advised there has been \$90,000 of income collected in two months. Usage of this garage is increasing. The two upper floors are for residential student parking and that revenue is not reflected in the amount. Some are using this garage for theatrical events under an agreement to pay a \$5 flat rate for events. Parking Services staff is tracking the usage/income numbers and since Parking Services must staff the events and pay overtime, Parking is losing money at that rate. At the end of the semester a recommendation may go to President's Cabinet to eliminate the flat rate. A member commented that the Long Center charges \$7 for event parking.

Update on Accessible Parking

Ms. Nusbaum discussed this agenda item as follows:

There was a recent University Star article regarding parking at the football game against Navy. A lot of attendees had accessible parking needs. The Coliseum lot is not "accessible" to the stadium. Accessible parking is located closer to the Coliseum and accessible needs attendees were referred to the Stadium lots because no railroad tracks interfere with access to the stadium. Unfortunately, the contractor operating those parking lots turned all non-Bobcat Club members away creating some very upset people. Parking Services had parked RVs in the accessible spaces in the Coliseum lot and received much criticism. Parking Services has now changed the procedures so accessible parking spots will not be used for any other purpose. This situation resulted in a review to ensure there are a proper number of accessible spaces in all parking lots. There were also issues with the Springtown parking lot for those parking outside the roped area where Transportation Services leases spaces. Some cars were towed, so Parking Services staff are putting up more signs and discouraging people from parking outside the leased area.

Report from Cabinet Review – Changes for FY16 and FY17

Ms. Nusbaum provided the following update on the handout:

Recommendations to Cabinet were presented to this Council at the August meeting. The following action was taken for FY2015/2016:

- The first item was not reviewed by the council but staff felt it important for it to be addressed by President's Cabinet: Academic departments were giving incorrect information regarding who is eligible to purchase semester permits. Staff recommended the rules be clarified and they will now read: "faculty appointed on an FTE basis for one semester be eligible for the semester

restricted permit.” Before, it was only per course and extension faculty who were eligible.

- Speck Street Garage to be Commuter (purple) only – Approved
- Gold Permit increase to \$265 – Rejected
- Academy Street Garage first level and surface lot will remain Residential (green) unless it appears that residential students are not using it – Approved. There is a new lit walking path from Falls/Sayers Halls to Academy Street Garage, so students can walk safely back to their residence hall.
- Permit free will be reduced from two weeks to one week – Approved.

The following action was taken for FY2016/2017:

- Implement lottery by zone for residential permits (green only) – Approved
Parking Services staff will work with DHRL staff either right before or after the winter break, to iron out the details.
- If a student does not receive a green permit by lottery, they will automatically be eligible for a gold permit.
- An alternate parking location may be needed for gold permits.

Proposed Shuttle Changes for Spring Semester

Mr. Herrera provided the report as follows:

Staff is actively monitoring the fall service. Transportation Services has Twitter, Facebook, and e-mail accounts where staff is hearing from students. Staff is monitoring complaints that have come in, but there have not been a lot. A shuttle survey was sent out to the University student community. There was also a survey last year where 62% of respondents were happy with the service being provided by First Transit. The percentage of satisfied respondents with the Transdev service went up to 71%, so that is an improvement. Routes and days of service will remain the same for spring semester, but all services will now begin at 7:00 a.m. instead of the staggered start times in the current schedules. All Monday through Thursday day service will be extended by one additional lap to end at 5:30 p.m. This change responds to complaints that have been received. Student Government requested extended service hours on Friday, and service will now end at 5:30 p.m. instead of 5:00 p.m. to assist people working until 5:00 p.m. to get to their buses.

Staff monitored the service midday and observed a large drop in ridership. To enable us to extend the service, one bus will be shifted from midday to late afternoon on several routes. This will also provide the opportunity to shift to later operations on Friday afternoon.

Staff received feedback from customers about confusion regarding how buses go out of service. This was identified as an opportunity to make adjustments and end all the routes on campus and then go out of service.

Ms. Nusbaum advised that on Tuesday, an e-mail will go out to campus announcing the spring adjustments and reminding people that there is no bus service between fall and spring semesters. Bus service will run for commencement and won't start up again until the first day of classes for the spring.

A member suggested taking two buses from the LBJ/Ranch Road routes and having them service the Quad Bus Hub while the remaining buses service the LBJ Student Center. Ms. Nusbaum advised staff would have to review that since it would be difficult to inform students which buses were taking that route, and that would also add a lot of extra time to those routes having to travel all the way around campus. The member suggested those buses be dedicated to always go to the Quad, and if you look at the numbers of riders, one-quarter to one-third of those students go to class on that side of campus.

A member advised that students are locking bicycles to the trees and stairwells in front of the Education Building, and asked what could be done to discourage that. Mr. Herrera advised that Transportation Services staff met with College of Education staff last week and intend to put an additional bike rack out this week.

A member advised that with all the Bobcat Trail accessible parking moved to the Pleasant Street Garage they are still receiving calls from faculty and staff about an accessible walking route between Pleasant Street Garage and the Education Building. Ms. Nusbaum advised that Transportation Services staff will provide that information to the member.

A member advised that students continue to park in the accessible parking spots in front of the Education Building. Mr. Prentice advised that is a challenge because many students claim they are transporting disabled relatives. A member suggested installing cameras, withholding the ability to graduate with unpaid fines, or alternatively, installing signage at accessible parking spots informing that the fine for misuse is \$300. Mr. Prentice advised that it is current practice to put holds on accounts with delinquent parking fines; he also advised staff had considered the additional signage but costs were prohibitive for over 350 signs.

Update on DoubleMap – Ridership

Mr. Herrera provided the update as follows:

- Main features/functions of the GPS system and the Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) have been installed and are operating on all 45 buses. Staff was unable to begin collecting ridership data until mid-September.
- System Information Kiosks – Staff have identified 3 areas at the main bus hubs to install large displays like at airports with routing and map information. The units have shipped after experiencing a delay at Customs. One unit was damaged in transit, but installation should be completed by the end of January.
- User features in the system, website, and smart apps have current versions up and running.
- The Texas State App was redesigned to incorporate a data feed from the GPS system. Users can access the native App from DoubleMap or the university Smart App.
- 71% of users are accessing DoubleMap through the Texas State App which is a switch from how users were accessing the NextBus App.

A member asked if this change is attributed to design. Ms. Daniels advised it was.

- Parking lot, bike rack, and information booth locations were also added as optional layers in the new design.

A member asked if Accessible parking spots were included. Mr. Herrera was unsure, but advised there is potential to add different information layers to the application; he also stated that staff is looking forward to implementing the bus load feature to the application, where users will have the ability to see the capacity remaining on the bus. Staff is hoping the contractor will deliver that ability in January.

Other features are available such as ETA, text message notification, route subscriptions with push notifications. Currently being tested is a text based site for non-smart phone devices to receive similar information.

A member stated that some of these features were supposed to be ready for the fall service roll out, and asked what was being done to recoup the loss. Ms. Nusbaum advised that monies had been withheld under the contract until all deliverables are met.

Mr. Herrera reviewed the ridership data contained in the handout.

CARTS Fare Increase and Amount Paid to CARTS in FY2014

Ms. Nusbaum advised that CARTS (Capital Area Rural Transportation Service) provides service to students, faculty, and staff who may ride without charge if they show their ID. CARTS then charges the university \$0.50 for each person. Each quarter the university pays them approximately \$2,000. CARTS is proposing to increase this amount to \$1.00 per ride. Transportation Services does not have that amount in the budget, and if ridership increases, will have to re-evaluate whether the university can continue funding that for the university community. CARTS is also eliminating stops, adding, and changing routes to follow university buses and pick up ridership, and adding a cross-town route that will go from the outlet malls to Wal-Mart.

Approval of August 27, 2014 Draft Meeting Minutes

Ms. Nusbaum advised councilmembers to relay any issues with the August minutes to Linda Sterling; if none, the minutes will be posted to the website.

Next Meeting

Ms. Nusbaum noted that staff will need to bring forward any parking rules and regulations changes to the council for consideration so they can be approved in time to be printed for freshman orientation, and suggested a meeting will be needed in January.

END OF MEETING.