

Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee
March 9, 2021 **DRAFT V1** Minutes

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Members in Attendance

Chair Judy Jones

Vice Chair Chris Jones

Special Projects Assistant Joe A. Kunzler

Doris Brevoort

Valerie Rose

Dick Phillips

Louise Edens

Robyn Gosney

Anthony Whitesides

Staff

Planning and Outreach Supervisor Brad Windler

Marketing & Public Affairs Specialist Cheryl Willis

Guests

No guests this meeting

The meeting began at 4:30 PM.

No public comment was offered after several prompts by the Chair.

Chair Jones then asked for Zoom discipline such as muting when not speaking – ALT-A or *6 to mute & un-mute.

Meeting minutes for February 2021 were discussed and a request by Joe Kunzler was made to correct Brad Windler's title in the draft minutes to Planning and Outreach Supervisor. Vice Chair Chris Jones moved to approve, Robyn Gosney seconded with unanimous approved.

Roll was called by Cheryl Willis.

Planning and Outreach Director Brad Windler then gave a demonstration of the MyRide app on the Skagit Transit website. MyRide will allow real-time tracking of Skagit Transit buses and trip planning. Brad showed how the

MyRide can plan a trip. As part of the demonstration, Brad pointed out how the bus stops have a unique identifying number.

Now with MyRide, you can get the next few arrival times of a Skagit Transit bus at a particular stop. There are real-time adjustments also. MyRide is also paired up with Umo so that fare payment is integrated.

After a bit of discussion on working with Zoom, the committee pivoted over to discussing bus stop signs. Brad noted the bus stop signs would be delayed due to a vendor's problem with obtaining sufficient material in their "supply chain". However, the signs were to be expected before the end of March.

The committee also received an update on the Sedro-Woolley Park & Ride operator restroom facility. The design for the facility is at 60% and permits from the City Government of Sedro-Woolley are being sought. Once permits are granted, then the designs can proceed to 90% with "engineering plans". Joe asked about completion time due to the fact new transit service for his Sedro-Woolley hinged on that. Brad said definitely by "end of April" with a "service change in September" the goal to provide new transit service to Sedro-Woolley with a safe restroom for transit operators.

Discussion then pivoted to Skagit Transit Route 750 – the suspended Skagit Transit route out to Marblemount via Concrete. The Route 750 had low pre-pandemic ridership, even after 2018 changes. The request to cancel the Route 750 was allocating resources during an upcoming difficult reactivation of Skagit Transit service and that Route 750 pre-pandemic was not meeting the Skagit Transit performance standards. Route 750's performance in 2019 was 0.7 boardings per revenue hour and 1.6 boardings per round trip for a 2.5-3 hour waiting trip. In March 2020, there were 16 round trips and eight passengers.

A question was asked by Valerie about the size of bus on the Route 750. Brad explained the buses used were the small Arbok buses based on a commercial van body. Brad then went on to say that with Skagit Transit consolidating bus types, the end result would be that a 30-foot Gillig bus would be making this trip post-pandemic.

What Skagit Transit wants to do instead is conserve the resources, and change the Route 717 that runs to Concrete to two routes. The first route would be the 70X that ran from Concrete out to Skagit Station at Mount Vernon via Lyman, Hamilton, Sedro-Woolley Park and Ride. Frequency would be about every three hours.

The other route would be a deviated fixed-route system with fixed time-points, but “deviate off of that and pick people up”. This way folks with a mobility issue can be picked up with a 30’ vehicle. Frequency will be hourly and timed to meet the 70X. Service area will include many points in Concrete such as the Red Apple grocery and the CMR Medical Clinic.

Brad then pivoted to how the first 70X of the day would become a 90X that would proceed all the way to Everett Station. In response to a Joe question, Brad said the arrival time to Everett Station was still up to discussion.

Then Dick Phillips brought up the concern of cutting off a part of the Public Transit Benefit Area (PTBA). Joe shared those concerns.

Doris Brevoort then suggested a chamber of commerce or other nonprofit replace the 717 service. Brad explained that the problem is finding volunteer drivers and insurance. Skagit Transit didn’t have much uptake with a community van program and the program got shuttered.

Judy Jones then explained how Twin Falls, Idaho handled their transit needs. A small vehicle with on-demand service and a lift worked just fine for their transit demand.

There was then a motion placed on the floor by Joe Kunzler, “That the CAC recommends that staff consult with legal counsel about any potential legal issues before board vote due to potential taxation without service”. Valerie Rose seconded, and then Kunzler explained the motion was to serve the CAC’s role to not be negative but “nudge staff to think of the potential impacts and consequences down the line”. Motion passed unanimous.

Then Doris brought up a request for future discussion on “a needs assessment” of the transit needs. Doris wanted opportunities for transit service to Rockport, Marblemount and the North Cascades explored.

Brad explained that the 2018 strategic plan included a lot of outreach out to Concrete. Also that the outreach received a request to change the service day to Tuesday plus four round trips that gave more time “in town”. Yet Brad explained the return was not matching with the investment, saying that Skagit Transit leaders were, “Scratching our heads for how to best serve that and do so economically” as, “It's frustrating to run an empty bus up and down.”

Discussion was then had about the Town of Concrete's transit future, including Brad explaining that the Town of Concrete trying to get grant funds for a trolley for in-town service. This then inspired some of Skagit Transit's service change proposals for Concrete.

The discussion then transferred to how TouchPass was being rebranded as Umo.

Cheryl Willis gave a food bank event update. The event at the Cascade Mall gathered 24,000 pounds of food and \$12,000 in donations for the Helping Hands Food Bank. Food deliveries on Fridays are continuing to the needy.

As to a guest speaker in Anna Zivarts of the Disability Mobility Institute – Brad and Chair Judy were excited for Anna coming in April. The date is mostly confirmed.

Brad then brought up the option of a hybrid meeting. Brad wanted to have a conversation with the CAC with some members attending in person at Skagit Station and others at home. Chair Judy wanted to make sure there were proper microphones and speakers. Chair Judy was worried about those calling in having the same benefits as those in person like an autophile.

Joe then chimed in saying he thought June was a good time, and was happy about testing the hybrid meetings throughout the summer. Joe brought up ESHB 1329 and the requirement “if feasible” allowing public testimony. Joe also called testing the hybrid meetings “a service” to those electeds who serve on the Skagit Transit Board.

Dick Phillips wanted to return to in person, with the microphones.

Chair Judy wanted to try in June. Robyn complimented the current audio.

Brad made clear facemasks will be required as will social distancing until differing public health guidance. But RSVPs will be taken for those who want in-person participation, “With the method they are most comfortable participating by.”

Joe then concluded by saying he was happy the Skagit Transit CAC would be, “test pilots for everybody else”. Joe explained he wanted to be a test pilot as a kid and was told no. But now here the Skagit Transit CAC was...

Chair Judy then moved the CAC over into the formal roundtable, even though she felt the meeting was more like an informal roundtable. Anthony wanted to meet Concrete Mayor Jason Miller.

There was a discussion on summer meetings with attendance voluntary, but a motion was made to table until April.

Joe Kunzler then raised the idea about posting online CAC and Board meetings. Brad wanted to check with Skagit Transit as to capabilities. Joe then added you can disabled comments on YouTube and easily upload to YouTube. Joe also said transparency breeds trust, trust breeds confidence and confidence breeds ridership. Chair Judy concurred.

With that, there was a motion by Vice Chair Chris to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Dick. The motion passed at 5:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted and Approved on ___ April 2021,

Joe A. Kunzler
Special Projects Manager