

Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee
July 13, 2021 **DRAFT V1.1** Minutes

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Members in Attendance

Staff

Vice Chair Chris Jones

Planning and Outreach Supervisor Brad Windler

Special Projects Assistant Joe A. Kunzler

Marketing & Public Affairs Specialist Cheryl Willis

Louise Edens

Valerie Rose

Guests

Dick Phillips

None

Doris Brevoort

Robyn Gosney

The meeting began at 4:44 PM with a quorum.

Roll was called by Cheryl Willis.

Doris Brevoort entered into the record a public comment for a citizen worried about how to connect to Marysville from Mount Vernon. “Just another call for interconnectivity”.

Minutes were then approved with no changes. Valerie Rose moved to approve, Vice Chair Chris Jones seconded and unanimously approved.

There was a discussion about paper passes. Skagit Transit’s traditional vendor for paper passes withdrew tech support and Skagit Transit had to have one dedicated mechanic to work on paper passes. Four or five maintenance runs in a day were needed to fix the old fareboxes, costing \$200,000 a year to hand out paper passes. Due to this, on June 28 Skagit Transit did away with paper passes for 1-day or 31-days or transfers *permanently*. Riders are now asked to use the Umo App or get a Umo card.

Joe was shocked at the \$200,000/year cost and suggested operators initial & date passes. But staff wanted to encourage riders to go electronic anyway. In response

to a question from Vice Chair Chris, Brad explained the different ways to load fare into the Umo products via the internet or the phone – both services Skagit Transit did not have before.

Doris then asked about brochures. Brad then explained there is English and Spanish pages explaining Umo in the rider's guide.

Joe did chime in the timing was right to prevent something “humongous disruptive” but was concerned about how going electronic could exclude some unbanked/low income Skagitonians. Staff then explained that outreach with bulk passes has been made to human resources agencies. Plus that cash would still be accepted on the buses for one-way rides.

Cheryl then pivoted to presenting that Skagit Transit won an award for supporting the food banks during the pandemic. CAC members were happy to see Skagit Transit recognized.

Then Brad led the staff report. Skagit Transit discussed getting braille signs for all the bus stops from Signs of Seattle. An example of the sign was handed out:



The new braille signs will be 36 inches off the ground facing away from the street with the bus stop # and Skagit Transit phone #. The idea is to provide more accessibility to Skagitonians as bus stop signs are also upgraded at the same time.

The next item discussed was the September rider guide. Rider guides were almost proofed and ready to go.

Then bus stop signs. Early part of August new bigger and more informative bus stop signs would be installed. The signs would show what routes stop and the stop identification number.

To finish up Skagit Transit staff update, but first the Sedro-Woolley restroom was another topic, and Skagit Transit got bids. Second, the Transit Development Plan will become a big discussion item at the August meeting. Third, the Skagit Transit Board decided to remain online.

Joe did request the CAC recommend the Board stay in Zoom. Joe brought up the four-five hour commitments he had to make using Skagit Transit fixed route to attend the Board paratransit debates. Joe noted the discomfort of both citizens and staff of folks wandering. Vice Chair Chris considered the idea and made a motion that the CAC supports the Board having a Zoom [remote testimony] option at all meetings. Joe seconded.

Brad then briefed about the Skagit Transit service changes. Sedro-Woolley will have a Route 300 and Route 301. Burlington will also gain a route. Route 207 will have a timing adjustment that will allow it to serve new housing in Mount Vernon. Brad and Doris then discussed how Route 207 would better reach into Mount Vernon.

There was then a regional roundtable. Doris wondered what Skagit Transit would do to serve Northgate Link which would start on October 2nd. Joe said that we needed to be patient until the 1st week of September. Joe then explained that Skagit Transit would not be able to stretch into King County but that Lynnwood Link which was closer to the current terminus of Skagit Transit's 90X at Everett Station is due in 2024. Joe did say that there is also a task force of Community Transit & Everett Transit merging. Also said was that it's hard to be patient with transit as its an acquired tasted. To close, Joe reassured folks about ST3 Realignment and referred concerned CAC members to the Transportation Choices Coalition for details.

The CAC kicked off Roundtable with Doris Brevoort asking about a stop at Marysville. Brad then explained there are regional conversations.

Joe then explained that Doris was welcome to whatever plans he has for the Northgate Link opening. Joe then pivoted to announce that this is probably the last year he is going to be the Special Projects Assistant with many personal projects in the works. As such, Joe suggested making the position a carrot to recruit a younger person to Skagit Transit CAC. Joe also noted delicately that he hadn't decided if he was going to serve next year or not as of the July meeting.

Brad then noted that he wanted a subcommittee to meet with staff to go over the upcoming service change over the fall. Joe said he was very excited and committed to serve the rest of 2021.

Brad then talked a bit about ridership recovery with the universities. Did not expect a 100% return to pre-Covid19 levels this year, but with gas prices rising was optimistic.

Doris moved adjournment, Dick seconded and the meeting adjourned at 5:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted and Approved on __ July 2021,

Joe A. Kunzler
Special Projects Manager