

Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee  
Minutes  
July 15, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am in Port Authority's Neal H. Holmes Board Room at 345 Sixth Avenue, Fifth Floor, Pittsburgh, with the following in attendance:

Roll Call

<u>Via WebEx Board Committee Members</u>	<u>Board Members and Solicitor</u>
John Tague, Jr., Chairman	Jeffrey Letwin, Esq.
Ann Ogoreuc	Jennifer Liptak
Stephanie Turman	Representative Austin Davis
	Gerald Delon
	Michelle Zmijanac
	Representative Lori Mizgorski

Opening Remarks

Mr. Tague, Committee Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes from the June 17, 2021 Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Tague asked Committee members if there were any corrections to the minutes. There were none and members approved the minutes.

Presentation of the NEXTransit Long-Range Transportation Draft Plan (David Huffaker and Amy Silbermann)

Ms. Silbermann, Director of Planning & Service Development, provided an update on the draft version of our Long-Range Transportation plan which is called NEXTransit.

The plan document is on our website We do have a bunch of upcoming public meetings over the next couple of weeks and those where we will be getting more into project details.

## Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee

### Minutes

July 15, 2021

We have spent the last twelve plus months working through five phases of public input, barriers, and benefits to transit; where do they want to go; where were they traveling before the pandemic and how are those travel patterns changing now with the pandemic and potentially in the future.

We put out a draft priority list in May for the public to review and comment on. We will be doing public engagement for the plan throughout the summer and hope to bring the final plan back to the board in September for adoption.

Last month, we finished our last phase of public input. We have a project website with 16,000 visits to it. We have put out two surveys with 1700 respondents, we had six rounds of 45 virtual public meetings, with 1300 participants. We also held 37 pop-up tents events or micro engagement events for those who may not have internet access.

I will not go through all the projects, but I do want to highlight a few items:

We do need to make sure that we start planning for a **new bus operating facility**. We have four bus divisions right now pre-pandemic they were pretty much at their peak. As we move into the future, we need to make sure that we are starting to look to where we might be able to build a fifth bus division along with a lot of other operational and maintenance facility needs.

We heard from the public that they wanted to **the East Busway extensions project (Project E)** move forward as quickly as possible to help with revitalization in the Mon-Valley. This is a project that has been talked about for quite some time both here at PAAC and externally. The East Busway Extension was originally proposed as the ninth project on the list but has been moved up to number five.

We heard from our riders that people don't feel like our **sidewalk network** always supports their ability to safely get on and off the bus. We are thinking about how we might be able to support people better through partnering with Municipalities or other creative and innovative solutions.

We Continue to look at **affordable fares and at ADA access** throughout the system to make sure that our system is accessible to all users.

**Wayfinding**, and making sure people know how to use the system, how to get to and from your bus stop or your rail station, making sure you know what different types of signage and information means and your able to navigate.

We are looking at our **sustainability** and continuing to move toward alternative fuel vehicles. We are trying to get to zero-emissions by the end of this long-range plan in 2045.

If, we lived in a perfect world where all our assets are in a state of good repair, replaced when they needed to be, we need approximately \$185 million dollars a year to support that. Currently we get somewhere between \$90 to \$125 million dollars a year from a variety of sources, most notably the state to support our capital budget. So, we already have a gap just in what we have today with what we need to fund today's transit system. The gap is somewhere between \$60 and \$90 million dollars. Before we can really dream big and start to build out the future, we need to make sure that today's system is supported and taking care of.

If over the next 25 years we were able to start the top ten projects on that list we would be looking at something around \$1.2 to \$1.6 Billion dollars. Transit agencies do not usually pay the full price tag to support capital build-out projects, so we would be responsible for something more like \$70 to \$95 million dollars annually to support that 25 year out system.

So, what we are looking at total in 25 years if those ten corridors were build out is something like \$235 to \$290 million dollars more annually or about 50 percent growth over our current total budget. Twenty-Five years from now if this long-range plan was exactly what we all want 25 years from now and nothing else changed we would be looking at a PAAC that is about 50% bigger than it is today.

What are we doing now until we get to this finish line and adopt this plan? We will have several opportunities for public engagement and for folks to review the plan documents itself and let us know what they think about it. We will be hosting two on-line meetings and two in person open houses, we are excited to be back in person. The website has all of the meeting information, all of the details, with sign-ups if you are going to participate with an on-line meeting, we do ask that you register and the project website is [www.NEXTransit.network/events](http://www.NEXTransit.network/events),

Downtown-Oakland Bus Transit Project Briefing (David Huffaker)

We are still in a middle of working with the FTA and the project management oversight consultant regarding the project. It's not to be unexpected, it's a very complex project, we are working with them on the scope and the schedule, and mitigating all the risks that we identified and they agree with us on.

We continue to meet with the city, to review some of those scope elements and make sure we have the mitigation procedures in place. We're also talking about projects sequencing, so that we can ensure that we have a coordinated plan to work with utilities and other developments in Downtown and in Uptown.

We have circulated the letters to the utilities, requesting their relocation of their utilities in advance of the construction of the project and we are waiting to hear responses from the utilities on those letters.

We're working with the smart signal's team, Smart Signals is the adaptive signal technology that will be installed throughout several corridors in the city, one of which is the BRT corridor. That is a city and PennDOT project and so we are coordinating with the project team to ensure that the two projects move in sync and coordinated.

We are continuing to expand our battery electric bus fleet and the battery electric buses are a key core component of this BRT project. So, we have two 40-foot battery electric buses on hand, six more will be delivered later this year. We are preparing for the advancement with Downtown BRT loop to meet a delivery date of late 2023. I do expect we made a good progress on assessing some of the risk elements so I suspect that I will have a more complete update in September.

Proposed Resolution:

- a) Authorization to Enter into Agreements with a Pool of Firms for General Planning Services (David Huffaker)
  - a. Mr. Tague asked Committee members if approved and members approved the Resolution to be brought to the board for approval in September.

Questions from Board Members and Others

1. Mr. Tague suggests to all board members to get involved with these final public meetings, I believe this would be important and show your support to staff and there is a lot of information we need to know as a board to make final decisions on the NEXTransit plan.
2. Mr. Tague asked on the battery-operated buses I thought they were all going to be all 60-foot articulated buses
  - a) Mr. Huffaker answered yes that is correct for the BRT project all buses will be 60-footers. We have 40-footers on hand today and are in the process of being manufactured and delivered. Those 40-footers give us a chance to test out the technology, train our maintenance staff on the battery-electric technology itself. Also give us a good pilot project to gain some knowledge, so when we do order the 60-foot buses for the BRT project will be prepared.