

Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee
Minutes
May 20, 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.
Jessica Walls-Lavelle	Jennifer Liptak
Ann Ogoreuc	Senator Jim Brewster
	Representative Lori Mizgorski
	Michelle Zmijanac

Opening Remarks

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

Approval of Minutes from the March 18.2021 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.

General Planning Updates (David Huffaker and Amy Silbermann)

Mr. Huffaker and Ms. Silberman provided some general Planning updates.

1. Quarterly service changes are scheduled for Sunday, June 20, 2021.
There are a few significant changes:

- Port Authority is no longer permitted to layover in Trafford, so we are shortening the bus route 69. We will continue to look for an alternate layover location, but in the meantime, we will end at Wilksburg station so it can layover there. That also removes direct service to Downtown for Trafford, Pitcairn, Wilmerding, Turtle Creek and Forest Hills.

Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee

Minutes

May 20, 2021

- We are adding Sunday service to route 4, Troy Hill., if you were to recall last year, we added weekend service as a new service standard for our local routes, but that route had some ongoing construction issues that made weekend service difficult
- We have some Downtown Central Business District routing changes in response to on-going outdoor dining accommodations on Penn Avenue, there are several routes involved, but should not be a major change to any of our riders, because these routes have already been on a temporarily detour due to the Pandemic and outdoor dining accommodations.
- We are removing the Downtown loop routing from the P2 which operates on the East Busway, so it will come inbound as far as Penn Station, which is the last station on the Busway and then it will turn around there. The reason for this is because it is by far and away the most challenging route with regard to bunching and overcrowding. We are piloting this change as a way to understand several things: one is having to do with running times, the ability for on-time performance and rider behavior on how they respond to choose P1 or if they hop off the P2 and hop on another route into Downtown or whether they just walk from Penn Station. So, that route does not have a lot of trips but there is a lot of P services in the mornings for folks to hop on to something else including the P1, if they want to get all the way to Stanwix and Smithfield Street.
- One minor routing change in Oakland that also been on-going but making permanent with this schedule changes the 81 and 83 routes, which are routed off Bigelow Boulevard in the middle of Oakland during the reconstruction project, that has been on-going there. That project is now complete, we are permanently moving those two routes over to Bellefield Avenue to align with our other transit routes that use Bellefield.
- Several trips have been added on about seven bus trips or so to continue to address crowding issues that were related to capacity constraints, one note here of course our scheduling takes place and work behind scheduling takes place months in advance of

Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee

Minutes

May 20, 2021

doing actual service changes, so at the time of these trips were added we did not know if and our capacity restrictions would be lifted. Now that those restrictions are being lifted, we will continue to monitor these trips that we are adding in June to see if there are still needed

or if we need to pull them back out and how riders respond to using those added trips.

- Finally, minor schedule adjustment to continue to update things like running times, on-time performance on ten or so routes. One last piece from the scheduling in-service planning side of things is that as I am sure everyone can imagine we have been spending a lot of time stop effort focusing on ridership changes as a result of the Pandemic we anticipate that need to be even greater through the Fall and Winter of this upcoming year as people return to some sense of normalcy and so we are devoting all of our scheduling and service planning time to continuing to watch ridership and continuing to plan trips that are resulting post Pandemic. For that reason, we are not going to significant amount of staff time, spend the time this fall to do our formal service request evaluation process, we will pick back up in the future it does take a lot of time and we need to devote staff time over the next six months making sure we are responding to ridership changes as people return to work, for those of you that have not physically been at their work locations for the last year. Finally, just a few upcoming dates on the next slide or Planning projects, we just recently had a kick-off meeting for our South Hills Junction Station area planning process. So, anyone who was not able to make that meeting the project information is on our website now and you can learn how to get involved so that you can be sure to make it to our next meeting. Next week our long-range plan NEXTransit has public meetings to start looking at the priority project and program list that are coming out of that process and encourage everyone to tune in to one of our three public meetings, they will be on-line.

2. New Bus stop Data Tool

Ellie Newman presented a new bus stop data that we will be releasing within the next week or so. It will be improving our internal processes for

Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee

Minutes

May 20, 2021

responding to data requests and make it a lot easier for internal people and external people to look at bus stop usage in areas that they are interested in.

Currently we have our system map where you can click on individual stops to see how many people use it in the most recent year but we really needed a tool that was more flexible for users and all the stops in that particular street or neighborhood and being able to allow some people to choose what time period they interested in, what service day they interested in, what route they interested in and really just beef up what was available on-line. We often receive requests for what is the total amount of ridership on Carson Street for September 2019, for example. How is that compared to Pandemic level ridership and each time we got one of those they were always different, think about 30 minutes to gather what stop they wanted and be able to summarize the data that they wanted to, it was such a time-consuming process. It is sort of like a system map and it is paired with a table on the right and what this allows people to do is draw a lasso around the stops that their interested in. As soon as they close the loop the table updates for them, so they can zoom to wherever their interested in, they can select one plus stops and then it will populate the table those stops that they care about. The other thing that is really cool about this tool is that we have kind of pre-loaded it with data from different time periods. So, if somebody wanted to see Pandemic ridership or pre-Pandemic, if they want to see Winter ridership, summer ridership, we will be updating the data every month. So, the next piece of this they can get summarized data, the public version can select stops for you, so here we are looking at Ellsworth Avenue and you can see there is a bold total on the table that tells you what the totals were at that time period. Our internal users will be able to export this table directly to Excel. This will be a huge time saver for us this will now take us five minutes to these types of requests now and normally it would take 20 to 30 minutes. We demo for our friends at the City and SPC and they have been very excited about the possibility to do this. We plan to build out some other additions to it and add Light Rail Ridership currently it is just bus and be able to show trip counts by route so that you can quickly find out how often does a certain route come to this street or what is the total number of trips that serve Oakland. Will be posted to our Open Data Page: <https://portauthority.org/opendata>.

Questions from Board Members and Others

1. Mr. Ogoreuc asked Ms. Silbermann, so the route will still go from Trafford to Wilkinsburg, so if they go that route, they will have to transfer at Wilkinsburg Station.
 - a) Ms. Silbermann responded yes, they will have to transfer to the P1 or P3 if they are headed to Oakland or another route at Wilkinsburg Station.
2. Ms. Ogoreuc asked Ms. Silbermann on the downtown loop ones that you moved off Penn Avenue where are they operating now, I don't use those routes and is it working.
 - a) Ms. Silbermann stated there are three groups, so going over each of them in detail probably a bit too complicated to do in this moment but generally some of them been using Ft. Duquesne and some of them have been using Stanwix and having a shorter Downtown loop. It doesn't come all the way down Liberty Avenue. All of these are on the website for folks to view.
3. Mr. Tague asked Ms. Silbermann but the P1 is not changing
 - a) Ms. Silbermann responded correct, the P1 is not changing at all the P2 changed it is sort of the version of the P1.
4. Mr. Tague asked we are increasing capacity on our vehicles and what is the time frame, are we looking at September.
 - a) Ms. Silbermann said we are not sure we are watching and guessing what, we are about 94% of our pre-Pandemic service levels right now. We are hoping to bring that back up in September. We do not have exact answers.
 - b) Mr. Huffaker stated that we will be returning much of our service in September, one of the key messages of the Pandemic is we are not going to be running exactly what we ran two years ago. This gives us an opportunity to allocate resources to those areas where there most needed and to provide those essential connections. We are closely watching what's happening in the Downtown business environment, I get information regularly from Allegheny Conference, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, they reach out to them constitutes to hear what is happening, one thing that is very clear is not everyone will be going back to the office five days a week in Downtown Pittsburgh. We are anticipating a nice spike in the fall and we will be restoring quite a

Planning and Stakeholder Relations Committee

Minutes

May 20, 2021

bit of commuter service to the extent that the specifics of which routes and which times we don't have that information yet. We are watching data and we will continue to monitor transit as we hear of development then hopefully, we will be flexible as possible to add service. One of the things we are trying to do I believe will be trying to maintain a few extra buses available for surges as they are identified, so we may not have every single trip planned but will have on our extra board can respond there will be individual spikes in ridership that we haven't anticipated so we can address that.

5. Mr. Tague asked Ms. Silbermann with the NEXTransit is there going to be additional meetings beyond the three already scheduled.
 - a) Ms. Silbermann responded, yes tentatively we are anticipating putting out the draft plan in July and having a round of public meetings both on-line, like an open house type of meeting or hopefully in person, potentially outside events, where folks can learn and have more information and assuming that everyone is on forward with the plan our hope is to present the plan formally to the Port Authority of Allegheny County Board in September. We will plan do a presentation here at Planning & Stakeholder Relations Committee in either June and/or July to give you a bit more information about what this map is showing. We want to make sure before we do a formal presentation this current round of public meetings sort of a list of what projects are most important for us to start next and we want to make sure the list is in the right order before we formally present a draft plan.
6. Mr. Tague asked about the conversation on accessibility of the stops, weren't you doing some work on that.
 - a) Ms. Newman responded yes so; I recently presented a tool that were working on to crowd source accessibility information. It is a different tool; we are hoping to release that soon. That will allow people to talk to us about their concerns with stops if they feel that the sidewalk is not wide enough or some obstruction at the bus-stop.
7. Ms. Ogoreuc stated this will be a great tool for the County planning for all our municipal partners when they are going to work on a transportation plan.