

## MINUTES

### LINK TRANSIT PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMISSION

Tuesday April 14, 2020

5:30PM

Meeting held via WebEx

#### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mike Mills, Burlington (Chair)  
Howie Norwick, Burlington (Vice Chair)  
Moses Corbett, Burlington  
Steve Harrison, Gibsonville  
Roger Meisenbach, Burlington Alt  
Steve Carter, Alamance County

#### OTHERS PRESENT

Glen LaBar Jr., Transit Manager

#### MEMBERS ABSENT

N/A

#### Call to Order

Chairman Mills called the meeting to order and welcomed all members and guests.

Chairman Mills solicited public comments from the floor and requested comments to be limited to 3 minutes per speaker. No public comments. The meeting agenda was reviewed. No changes were made to the agenda.

#### Approval of March 10, 2020 meeting minutes

The March 10, 2020 meeting minutes were reviewed. Mr. Harrison made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Norwick seconded the motion. All PTAC members voted in approval of the March meeting minutes.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Fare Free Week

Mr. LaBar told the PTAC members that given the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic and the state of emergency that staff is changing the request for the PTAC to approve a fare free service week to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Link Transit System, but staff would determine the dates once the state of emergency was concluded. Mr. LaBar told the PTAC that the City would still celebrate the anniversary during the first week of June via social media but would not implement the fare free week since it could encourage passengers to utilize the system and go against the state of emergency declaration.

Mr. Harrison asked about the timing of printed materials, which Mr. LaBar replied that he believed a local company could turn the printed materials around within a week or two. Mr. Mills asked if the Burlington City Council was meeting and Mr. LaBar responded stating that the Burlington City Council cancelled all April meetings but it was unclear if they would start meeting again in May. Mr. LaBar did advise the PTAC that he had hoped to have the PTAC approve the recommendation in April and bring it before the Burlington City Council in early May to allow staff to have a few weeks to market the celebration plans within the community. Mr. LaBar did emphasize that his plan was prior to the state of emergency declaration and that is why he changed his request as stated earlier.

Mr. Norwick mentioned that there are too many unknowns to make a call about the proposed June dates, but made a motion to recommend an annual fare free week, similar to the Election Day fare free day recommendation that was made in late 2019, and allow City staff the flexibility to determine the dates each year. Mr. Meisenbach made a recommendation that maybe City staff have the fare free week start when the state of emergency is lifted and everything opens back up. Mr. Carter made a suggestion that maybe Link Transit coordinate these efforts with ACTA and PART if the fare free week was to start after the state of emergency was lifted. Mr. Norwick disagreed stating that this was not the same type of event that ACTA and PART would have, but something that is Link Transit specific since it is related to the system's anniversary. Mr. Norwick continued and stated that if ACTA and PART wanted to join that was up to those agencies. Chairman Mills asked Mr. Norwick to repeat his motion, which he stated that PTAC recommend to the Burlington City Council to adopt a resolution, similar to the Election Day resolution, to have a fare free week annually around the Link Transit System anniversary date, allowing City staff to determine the exact dates each year. Mr. Meisenbach seconded the motion. All PTAC members voted in approval of the March meeting minutes. Mr. LaBar stated that staff would determine the week once the pandemic/state of emergency was over and would share that information with the PTAC.

### **Link Transit Operations Report**

Mr. LaBar gave a brief overview of the Link Transit Operations report to PTAC for the third quarter of fiscal year 2020 (Jan-March 2020). Mr. LaBar stated that there was a decrease in ridership in this quarter compared to previous years due to extensive rain in the early part of the quarter and the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. LaBar did mention ridership remained around the normal daily ridership until the third week of March, but even with a slight decrease in ridership, the ridership number remained consistently steady. Mr. LaBar stated that in February there was a slight change in the hourly ridership, where there was a large increase in ridership mid-day (1200-1400 area) but in March there was a shift to the 1200-1400 area becoming the peak ridership time compared to previous trends where the 1500

timeframe was always the highest. Mr. LaBar also stated that he believed the steady ridership and hourly ridership changed was because more passengers were utilizing the Link Transit System to access essential services to prepare and respond to the current pandemic.

Mr. LaBar shared the quarterly bus stop data, which showed the consistent and steady use of passengers using Link Transit to reach essential services such as educational institutions, groceries store and healthcare facilities. Mr. LaBar also stated he added the bus stop data for the next fiscal year's proposed bus shelter locations, which he stated were locations with both high ridership and consistent passengers using Link on a daily basis. Mr. LaBar did state that there is currently one shelter installation still pending for this fiscal year and staff is working with the Town of Gibsonville staff to get the shelter located and installed in Gibsonville. Mr. Harrison stated that there were two proposed locations that would both serve the needs of the community in Gibsonville to utilize the transit system. Mr. LaBar stated he was continuing conversations with Gibsonville Town Manager Ben Baxley to get the necessary paperwork and related items finished to get the install completed. Mr. Mills stated that he had been in contact with Mr. Baxley and the town is working with NCDOT and the railroad to get the site approved. (Site location: E Main St & Burke St intersection).

Mr. LaBar provided a brief update on the recent service reduction and past/upcoming events. Mr. Harrison asked if the service reduction had any impacts and if it was temporary. Mr. LaBar stated that staff had been monitoring the hourly ridership over the start of the pandemic and after some conversations with drivers/supervisors, it was noted that there was minimal ridership after 5pm, but especially after the 6:30pm lap. Mr. LaBar also stated that the service reduction is temporary and would return back once the pandemic was over.

Mr. LaBar advised that since there was no known pending action items that the May 2020 meeting would be cancelled and the next meeting would be tentatively scheduled for June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Mr. LaBar stated that he would advise PTAC members if that meeting would be necessary or not once we got closer to the date.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Mills asked if any PTAC members had any reports or questions. No PTAC members had any reports, questions or requests of staff for the next upcoming meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Mills asked for any final comments, questions or requested for the next meeting, with no comments received. Mr. Mills did tell PTAC members to stay healthy and to continue to

follow the CDC guidelines of social distancing and proper handwashing. Chairman Mills adjourned the PTAC meeting at approximately 6:15 PM. Mr. Meisenbach made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Harrison seconded the motion. All PTAC members voted in approval.