



Transit Advisory Committee Minutes for Thursday, February 3, 2022

NOTE: IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROVISIONS OF THE ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES THE SUMMARIZED MINUTES OF NAIPTA TAC MEETINGS ARE NOT VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS. ONLY THE ACTIONS TAKEN AND DISCUSSION APPEARING WITHIN QUOTATION MARKS ARE VERBATIM. AUDIO RECORDINGS OF NAIPTA TAC MEETINGS ARE ON FILE IN THE NAIPTA CLERK'S OFFICE.

The Transit Advisory Committee met in Regular Session on Thursday, February 3, 2022, at 10:00am in a WEB BASED meeting. Members of the TAC and Mountain Line staff attended by telephone or internet conferencing. Some staff were present in the Mountain Line Training Room, 3773 N. Kaspar Dr., Flagstaff, AZ 86004. The public was invited to observe by online streaming.

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dave Wessel, (Vice Chair, Acting Chair), Planning Manager, MetroPlan, (Zoom);
Erin Stam, Director of Parking and Shuttle Services, NAU, designee, (Zoom);
Gillian Thomas, Citizen Representative, Coconino County, (Zoom);
Kurt Stull, Executive Director of Facilities and Security, CCC, designee, (Zoom);
Gail Jackson, Economic Development Representative, (ECoNA), (Zoom), joined at approximately 10:04am;
Tiffany Kerr, Health Disparities Program Manager, Coconino County, designee, (Zoom);
Jeff Bauman, Traffic Engineer, City of Flagstaff, alternate, (Zoom)
**Five of our eight TAC member seats must be present to constitute a quorum.*

TAC MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Shane Dille, (Chair), Deputy City Manager, City of Flagstaff, designee;
Maylee Acosta, President, ASNAU
City of Flagstaff Citizen Representative and Alternate positions are vacant.

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager, (Zoom);
Kate Morley, Deputy General Manager, (Zoom);
James Wagner, Operations Director, (Zoom);
Jacki Lenner, Marketing and Communications Manager, (Zoom);
Samuel Short, Safety Manager, (Zoom);
Joshua Stone, Interim Management Services Director and Financial Analyst, (Zoom);
Jeremiah McVicker, Maintenance Manager, (Zoom);
Danelle Knight, Human Resources Manager, (Zoom);
Anne Dunno, Capital Project Manager, (Zoom), joined at approximately 10:04am;
Bizzy Collins, Transit Planner, (Zoom);
Estella Hollander, Mobility Planner, (Zoom);
Brody Smith, Associate Transit Planner, (Zoom);
Heather Higgins, Purchasing and Contracts Officer, (Zoom);
James Olson, IT Technician;





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Rhonda Cashman, Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board;
Kris Beecher, Mountain Line Legal Counsel, (Zoom)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Tyler Besch, AECOM, (Zoom);
Andrew Ittigson, AECOM, (Zoom);
Daksha Masurkar, AECOM, (Zoom);
Robert Peskin, AECOM, (Zoom)

1. CALL TO ORDER -Vice Chair Wessel called the meeting to order at approximately 10:01am.
2. ROLL CALL
3. SAFETY MINUTE
-Samuel Short, Safety Manager

Mr. Short reported on seatbelt safety.
4. APPROVE TAC MINUTES 1/6/2022

Advisor Stam moved to approve the minutes from January 6, 2022. Advisor Jackson seconded. There was no discussion. All approved, none opposed. Motion carried.

NAME	YES VOTE	NO VOTE
Dave Wessel	X	
Erin Stam	X	
Gillian Thomas	X	
Kurt Stull	X	
Gail Jackson	X	
Tiffany Kerr	X	
Jeff Bauman	X	

5. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT BOARD BUSINESS AGENDA

The TAC reviewed the draft Board Business Agenda and discussed staff reports, in order to provide recommendations to the Board. Specific comments and recommendations are noted in these minutes.

a. **DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS:**

i. APPOINTMENT TO THE METROPLAN EXECUTIVE BOARD

-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Staff recommends the Board of Directors appoint a Mountain Line Board member to fill the MetroPlan Executive Board seat vacancy.

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Ms. Dalmolin noted that a Mountain Line Board member has been serving on the MetroPlan Executive Board for the last year and a half. She stated Steve Peru, then representing Coconino Community College (CCC), was the first to hold the seat until his departure; Dan Okoli, then representing Northern Arizona University (NAU), took over until October 2021. She explained staff are hoping NAU will appoint a new member soon; until then, Josh Maher is the alternate/acting member, but he is not eligible for the position. She stated she has talked with Director Tony Williams. She said he is willing to take on this commitment, but he is checking to see if his schedule will allow for it. If not, Ms. Dalmolin concluded that Mountain Line representation on the MetroPlan Executive Board will have to wait until the NAU member appointment is made, due to quorum issues that would occur if another councilmember or county supervisor were appointed. There were no questions.

ii. FY2023 WORKFORCE BUDGET AND STRATEGIES

-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Ms. Dalmolin thanked Mr. Stone, Interim Management Services Director, and Ms. Knight, Human Resources Manager, for the information they provided for this presentation and staff report. She reviewed in detail the FY2023 workforce strategies, benefits, leave programs, and rewards, including the pay plan approved in FY2022 in an effort to recruit and retain staff in a competitive labor market. She explained the FY2023 workforce budget breakdown charts by direct and indirect salaries and benefits, and she noted the effort to keep employees whole due to increased benefit costs. She communicated a six percent increase is expected overall for the FY2023 workforce budget. Ms. Dalmolin stated a closer look at the financials will be taken in May, but everything outlined in this report is sustainable through 2030. Vice Chair Wessel commented that staff seem to be on top of the budget and financials. There were no questions.

iii. REOPENING PLAN UPDATE

-Samuel Short, Safety Manager

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Mr. Short stated this plan was developed based on CDC guidance. We are currently in Phase 3 of our plan which mirrors the City of Flagstaff's Plan – Phase 3. He noted one exception is the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) mask mandate for public transportation which has been in effect since February 21, 2021 and is set to expire on March 18, 2022. He communicated that staff continue to monitor the situation and apply guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, federal, state, and local agencies. He explained a route prioritization plan is also part of the Reopening Plan in case we are short staffed. Mr. Short stated there has been an uptick in COVID cases among employees recently. He mentioned the lobby is open for customer service, most staff have returned to the office, but may occasionally work from home. He reported staff were prepared to enact the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Emergency Temporary Standard, but the Supreme Court issued a stay on the mandate and now OSHA has pulled it. There were no questions.

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iv. ANNUAL UPDATE ON THE BUS STOP PROGRAM

-Anne Dunno, Capital Project Manager and Jeremiah McVicker, Maintenance Manager
The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Ms. Dunno introduced Mr. McVicker, our Maintenance Manager. He reported all stops are evaluated based on condition and a list of priorities is developed regarding replacement or rehabilitation of shelters each year; staff will continue to follow the established guidelines. He stated all bus stops are cleaned each week in order to keep them in a state of good repair. He noted no horizontal construction would be done this year. He reviewed maps of shelters slated for replacement and rehabilitation within a typical annual budget between \$103,000 and \$140,000. Ms. Dunno reported on projects in the pipeline for Mountain Line in FY2023 and FY2024 included in the draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and pending future grants: Route 8 Extension – Bus Stops, Beulah Road Extension – Bus Only Lanes and Bus Stops, Route 66 – Tacos Los Altos Bus Stop Improvement, and then Northern Arizona Healthcare – New Bus Stops and Bus Pullouts, and Route 4 Lake Mary/Mohawk – Bus Stop Improvements. As the Board of Directors has previously expressed concern about equity of bus stop improvements and amenities, Ms. Dunno shared a Bus Stop Amenity Location map which we have used to evaluate the equitable distribution of bus stop amenities across our system. Although the map is from 2019, there have been no significant stop updates since 2019 that would alter the previously presented map and analysis. She stated unimproved stops are mainly due to two factors: limited right-of-way and budget constraints. She further noted that we use the adopted Transit Guidelines for determining appropriate bus stop amenities through ridership, land use, and scoring criteria. Ms. Dunno went on to state that the current Mountain Line easement acquisition approach has been successful in using good will with property owners adjacent to routes and stops but that staff are now considering purchase of the land at a fair market value for bus stops in order to move forward with current and future improvements. She is drafting an Easement Policy to identify the process for consideration by the Board of Directors. There was a question about increased attorney fees for easement agreements. Ms. Dunno replied there would be increased costs due to attorney fees. Ms. Dalmolin also responded that a standard easement agreement has been previously developed and it did require one time legal fees; staff would anticipate a new agreement and potential negotiation will increase our legal costs. Ms. Dunno noted, once implemented, it should be a smooth process. There was a question about the City's Carbon Neutrality Plan leading to eminent domain becoming part of the Mountain Line Easement Policy. Ms. Dunno stated Mountain Line does not currently have eminent domain capability and it would depend on the will of staff, City staff, and other partners; then evaluate if it could be added to the policy. Ms. Dalmolin stated good will would always be first choice and eminent domain would only be used as a last resort; transit is a community solution. There was a question about anticipated costs being incorporated into the CIP and budget. Ms. Dunno responded that she will need to get some estimates to build into the budget. TAC members were pleased to receive this information.

v. MOUNTAIN LINE GO! QUARTERLY UPDATE

-Estella Hollander, Mobility Planner

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

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Ms. Hollander reported that Mountain Line Go! Service, a Microtransit lot, launched on November 1, 2021, and is grant-funded through June 2022. She stated the pilot serves the Huntington and Industrial Corridor as shown on the map. She reviewed some data from the first three months of operations; boardings are increasing month over month. She shared that while trips are typically booked through the app, for equity purposes there is a call-in option for those who do not have a smart phone or don't have a data plan. She shared a positive comment from a local rider and noted most comments are positive, but two negative comments have been received and staff are following our process to address them. She explained outreach and marketing efforts are ongoing via events, flyers, email, staff trainings, social media posts, and promotional codes for free rides. She communicated next steps are continuing outreach efforts to organizations in the corridor, boost app usage, and expand the pilot program to provide airport service starting March 1st; connecting Flagstaff Pulliam Airport with anywhere in the Flagstaff city limits, 4:30am-9:30pm, for \$2 per trip. She noted a satisfaction survey will be done in March. There were a couple questions about how the service works and Ms. Hollander was able to provide answers. Advisor Jackson stated Uber and Lyft are really not available at the airport most of the time; this service is much needed. There was no further discussion.

vi. FY2022 2ND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

-Brody Smith, Associate Transit Planner

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Mr. Smith reviewed a series of ridership graphs for Mountain Line programs: Fixed route ridership is on an upward trend, Paratransit shows a similar trend, but some decline due to other options available, the City and County Tax Programs are consistent with 2021 levels, and the Vanpool program has remained steady and mostly serves healthcare workers. The Microtransit pilot is new, but ridership is picking up, and more data will be shared in the future. There was a recommendation to improve the legend in the first slide for fixed route ridership and update the microtransit data as per Ms. Hollander's report. Vice Chair Wessel commented that the ridership projections in the staff report seem extremely conservative. Ms. Dalmolin replied that due to the COVID decline that was an anomaly the traditionally used ratio for projecting ridership changes is flawed in projecting the recovery of ridership and future year ridership; staff will need to take a closer look, plan to update the report, and send the revision to TAC members.

vii. FLAGSTAFF IN MOTION, A COMMUNITY TRANSIT PLAN

-Bizzy Collins, Transit Planner

The Board may provide direction, but there is no recommendation from staff at this time.

Ms. Collins reviewed the summary of prioritized needs, then shared the needs assessment by route, and then by neighborhood. She shared the needs assessment of combined routes and neighborhoods as one prioritized list for transit service and screened to arrive at needs. She reported improvements were identified to address each issue via categories that include new routes, frequency and service hours, microtransit zones, and capital improvements. She explained the improvements were packaged into three scenarios; staff will be refining the scenarios and bringing them back in March. The three scenarios are reviewed: 1) Fixed





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Route and Microtransit-Frequency and Coverage, 2) Microtransit, and 3) Fixed Route and Capital Improvements. She commented that a hospital route is included in all three scenarios. There were some suggestions: note which routes are new in the scenarios, make sure the color codes align with the descriptions, coordinate with Ms. Hollander on microtransit results, and also a comment of surprise that microtransit wasn't included in all scenarios. Ms. Collins responded that the scenarios are based on the evaluation criteria, and it is hard to say some things are not as important. Ms. Masurkar clarified that staff made sure evaluation criteria aligned with the Board priorities and the scoring aligns with the goals. Baseline evaluation of existing transit service criteria scores were reviewed by Ms. Collins. Advisor Thomas asked that the known fact of increased frequency equals increased ridership be noted. Ms. Masurkar stated the evaluation is not just on ridership, but more data points are considered. She reviewed the scoring of components for each of the three scenarios, as well as Microtransit Zone scoring. Then she reviewed a chart with a comparison of scenarios. Mr. Ittigson noted they are working with Spare Labs evaluation tool for microtransit and looking at key criteria: Pool Percentage, Passenger per Hour, Median Wait Time, Cost per Trip, and Population. He said ridership is not a good indicator as it is more about coverage. He communicated that microtransit is designed to coordinate with fixed route stops or connection centers. Ms. Masurkar stated they looked at improvements in each scenario, not just the ones which scored highest. There were no questions. Ms. Collins concluded by reviewing the next steps for public involvement, cost estimation of scenarios, implementation priorities, and recommended scenarios for TAC and Board members to consider. Vice Chair Wessel commented on the good work being done.

b. PROGRESS REPORTS:

- i. LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2022-2023
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager
- ii. UPDATE ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager
- iii. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS
-Heather Dalmolin, CEO and General Manager

Ms. Dalmolin spoke to some current event items:

- Staff presented the Mountain Line Annual Report to the Flagstaff City Council on January 25th. This is part of an ongoing education effort to share transit information with our partners and the community.
- Several recruitments are in process. Mr. Biles, Operations Manager, left in late December after more than 18 years with Mountain Line to be closer to family; Ms. Battice left her position as Management Services Director in early November and Mr. Stone was appointed the Interim Management Services Director during this time. The Operations Department continues to recruit for Operators to have back up coverage as needed. Five new operators graduated from the training program recently and the next class will begin on February 14th.

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- The Kaspar Headquarters Master Plan grant funded project is underway and it will evaluate how we use our current facilities and maximize storage and maintenance space as administrative and planning staff prepare to move downtown in the future.
- Staff participated in a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Urban Transit Roundtable to discuss transition to zero emissions buses. She said it was interesting to hear the challenges that small agencies with small teams face in this transition encouraged by FTA.
- Mountain Line has a bill pending with the State of Arizona. Representative Blackman has dropped the bill; it is a \$6 million one-time funding ask for our Downtown Connection Center and it has been assigned to the House Banking and Appropriations Committee. The date of the hearing is unknown at this time. Senator Rogers has agreed to carry this bill through the Senate side of that process.
- We welcome Sheldon Yazzie, part time Human Resources Technician and Sophia Quick, Human Resources Intern, a student at Northern Arizona University.
- Ms. Dalmolin shared many staff anniversaries that were celebrated in January.

ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE AND STAFF:

Vice Chair Wessel thanked staff for their excellent presentations and noted the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3rd.

6. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATE AND IDENTIFY AGENDA ITEMS March/April Working Agenda

The next TAC meeting will be March 3, 2022, and it will be a Zoom meeting based in Flagstaff in the Mountain Line Training Room, 3773 N. Kaspar Dr., Flagstaff, AZ 86004 at 10am. The public is invited to attend. March agenda items may include but not be limited to the FY2021 Financial Audit, Downtown Connection Center (DCC) Construction Manager At Risk (CMAR) Procurement, FY2023 Budget – Operating, Kaspar Headquarters Master Plan, Service Changes/Planning, Flagstaff in Motion, Operations Status Report, and Delegation of Authority Updates. The March agenda will be available for review on Mountain Line’s website and at Mountain Line’s public posting places (listed on the Mountain Line website) at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and should be consulted for a list of items that will come before the TAC.

7. ADJOURNMENT -Vice Chair Wessel adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:55am.

Dave Wessel, Acting Chair of the Mountain Line Transit Advisory Committee

ATTEST:

Rhonda Cashman, Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board

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