

TSAC Minutes
September 4, 2019

Present:

Mr. Thomas Barrow
Dr. Fuller Bazer
Mr. Bill Cox
Mr. Andy Deuel
Mr. Joe Dillard
Mr. Purna Doddapaneni
Dr. Julie Harlin
Dr. Angie Hill Price
Ms. Erin Jones
Mr. James Kovar
Mr. Peter Lange (Ms. Debbie Hoffmann)

Ms. Regan McGuill
Ms. Lisa Pierce
Mr. Robert Pottberg
Mr. Tom Reber
Ms. Flora Reeves
Ms. Deborah Wright (Ms. Tracy Foster)

Absent:

Dr. Eleanor Green
Dr. Andrew Klein
Dr. John Stallone

1. On behalf of Mr. Peter Lange, who could not attend the meeting, Ms. Debbie Hoffmann opened the meeting at 11:47 a.m., and welcomed the new committee members. She highlighted that Transportation Services issues affect all groups represented, and we are interested in constituents' feedback and perspective as we bring up those issues. Ms. Hoffmann then asked everyone to introduce themselves and indicate whom they represent. She emphasized that the Transportation Services representatives present at meetings are non-voting participants (with the exception of Mr. Peter Lange, co-chair, and Ms. Flora Reeves, who represents another agency). They are there to gather input or give information. She encouraged members to send substitutes if necessary, and to feel free to suggest agenda items.

2. Ms. Hoffmann gave an overview presentation about the background, goals and responsibilities of the committee. See presentation:

<https://transport.tamu.edu/About/tsac.aspx#presentations>

3. After explaining the duties of the committee co-chair, Ms. Hoffmann asked the committee to nominate someone to fill that position. Dr. Angie Hill Price nominated Dr. Julie Harlin; Ms. Reeves motioned; Dr. Fuller Bazer seconded, motion carried. Dr. Harlin will be co-chair of the 2019-2020 TSAC Committee.

4. Ms. Hoffmann asked everyone who was on last year's committee to review the minutes from the May 1, 2019 meeting. Mr. Bill Cox motioned to approve the minutes; Dr. Harlin seconded; minutes approved.

5. Ms. Hoffmann went over some highlights of the past TSAC term:

- Transportation Services, in partnership with Brazos Transit District (BTD) won a BUILD grant, which is a national infrastructure grant. The grant will provide us with a total of 30 buses (some of which BTD will acquire and lease back to us); 27 diesel and 3 electric. We anticipate funding to be complete in late fall, with an arrival date of 12-18 months afterwards.
- Transportation Services continues to use and refine the permit-less, LPR-enforced parking at the RELLIS campus. We are testing it there on a small scale before bringing it to the main campus. We are still working out some issues, and continuing with our Task Force, headed by Kenny Kimball, to identify the concerns that still need to be addressed.
- Our Visitor Parking rates have increased for Fiscal Year 2020; the first increase since FY 2011-2012. Since the last rate increase, visitor transactions have steadily increased, as non-visitors (people with parking permits) opt to pay for visitor spaces. We are hoping the rate increase will free up visitor parking for guests and maintain visitor parking's share of funding our operating and capital expense, while at the same time relieving pressure on our regular permit rates.
- VeoRide has been a great success, with ridership up 20% from last year. VeoRide has been a good partner, and has employees co-located with ours. We are seeing a big change in ridership and compliance. Our VeoRide ambassadors are on campus, and we've increased signage to encourage proper parking. We've also used many compliance strategies to include VeoRide direct-messaging riders. If someone is not compliant, VeoRide will warn twice and then assess a fine. She shared the email address to report VeoRide non-compliance: bikeshare@tamu.edu.
 - Ms. Hoffmann's report generated some discussion about monitoring problem areas where bikes are overflowing, the extent of the geo fence, and the possibility of employing Parking Service Officers for reporting problems (Ms. Hoffmann mentioned that this may not be possible as they are already fully taxed, but we will look into it).
- Our Customer Service unit hosted the third annual "Donations for Citations," campaign benefitting the Brazos Valley Food Bank. We reduced 180 citations, and donated more than 1,970 pounds of food (equivalent to 1,640 meals).
 - Ms. Regan McGuill asked if the Donations for Citations program could be pushed back a couple of weeks so more students could participate. Ms. Kucera said they could look into that.
- Navya Shuttle Demonstration has commenced on campus, and will be providing shuttle service from now through November. The shuttle is an autonomous, self-driving, 11-passenger electric vehicle developed for use in public transportation service. It incorporates optimized navigation and safety features, using a variety of guidance and detection systems. The project is a collaboration between Texas

A&M University, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University Transportation Services, and Navya, and is funded by the Campus Technology Demonstration Initiative.

6. Mr. Kenny Kimball discussed Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT) and implications for our campus. UBIT is legislation that was created for universities offering prepaid benefits on parking fees. Because of the resulting increased liability incurred by the Texas A&M University System, the System leadership decided to end the pretax option for all system agencies. However, after receiving feedback from faculty and staff, President Young decided to offer the pretax benefit for FY 2020, but will review the policy at the end of the FY. The intention is to use existing net operating loss carry-forward to cover the current tax liability. If the pretax benefit is continued beyond this FY, other funding will need to be identified to cover it. However, it has been determined that our Reserved Numbered Spaces (RNS) generate tax liability regardless of the pretax option. A tax calculation will be performed for the entire Brazos Valley area, including all system components that have parking facilities located in the area. System officials will then calculate the university's tax liability. Whatever liability is assigned to Texas A&M University will need to be covered by an increase in RNS fees. We are estimating this increase will need to be 5-7%, and will likely be spread over multiple years.

6.1. Dr. Harlin mentioned that she, Dr. Andrew Klein and another faculty member approached system officials to discuss the tax code and what other universities are doing across the nation. They mentioned that if the tax is collected, university employers would also be required to provide Social Security and Medicaid for that increased amount. They are hoping the IRS gives some clarity to the problem.

6.1.1. Mr. Kimball mentioned that we are also looking into the issue as are some industry-wide parking organizations. He offered that if anyone has questions they can email him: kkimball@tamu.edu.

7. Ms. Madeline Dillard gave a Transit update.

7.1. She said bus ridership has been down 6% from last year's first week of school. We have been averaging 50,000 passengers per day. We've been looking into some reasons for the decline in ridership, and have concluded that the increase in close-in apartment complexes, the availability of VeoRide bicycles, and online courses are likely contributors.

7.2. We have combined Routes 9 and 3 to come up with a new Route 3. This has resulted in more efficient and frequent service.

7.3. We added The Barracks neighborhood to Route 34 instead of Route 40, which used to be full and often late. It was a good decision, as 34 had low ridership and is now balanced with the addition of The Barracks, and Route 40 is less stressed.

7.4. We created Route 7, the Airport Shuttle, which started in mid-August. It covers the Texas A&M Hotel & Conference Center, Wisenbaker-East, Easterwood Airport, and the Turbo Lab.

7.5. She reiterated the information about the BUILD Grant, and said we are hoping to order the buses in December.

7.6. Ms. Dillard mentioned that the MSC streets project has now completed phase II, and the much wider sidewalks, expanded bus lanes, and pedestrian waiting areas have been very helpful. The next phase of renovation will not affect Transit service.

8. After soliciting for questions concerning the Transit update, Ms. Debbie Hoffmann thanked the student, faculty, and staff members represented, and closed the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

- Some post-meeting discussion ensued concerning adding crosswalks at Lot 27 and South Side residence halls. Ms. Hoffmann said one of our members mentioned that last year. She will find that information and report what was done.
- The safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers at Olsen and Kimbrough was discussed, and some recommended a traffic light be placed there. Ms. Hoffmann mentioned that we had traffic studies done there, and the engineers recommended against a traffic light. We may need to re-visit the issue.
- It was mentioned that as the campus grows west, traffic and safety need to be addressed.
- Similarly, safety issues and crosswalks along University drive were mentioned, particularly in the area of Century Square. Ms. Hoffmann said some of this will be relieved after Polo Road Garage comes online.

The next meeting will be October 2, 2019, Rudder 301
Please visit our website: transport.tamu.edu