

**Transportation Services Advisory Committee Minutes
September 6, 2023**

This was an in-person meeting with a zoom option.

Present:

Mr. Andrew Applewhite
Ms. Mary Cearley
Mr. Ed Costello
Mr. Bill Cox
Mr. Evan Cox
Mr. Joe Dillard
Dr. Tracy Hammond
Dr. Angie Hill Price
Ms. Erin Jones
Ms. Katelyn Kellogg
Mr. Andrew Klein
Mr. James "Jim" Kovar
Mr. Peter Lange
Mr. Tim McLaughlin
Mr. Andrew Moore
Ms. Amanda Pelton
Mr. Tom Reber
Ms. Flora Reeves
Ms. Mikayla Slyadon
Ms. Deborah Wright
Mr. Evan Cox

Absent:

Ms. Ava Blackburn
Mr. Nick Farmer

Guests:

Called to Order 11:43 a.m. by Mr. Peter Lange

1. Review/Approve Minutes from May 3, 2023, Meeting – Mr. Peter Lange
 - 1.1. Approved by – Mr. Tom Reber
 - 1.2. Seconded by – Mr. Bill Cox
2. Welcome – Mr. Peter Lange
 - 2.1. Welcome everyone, and hello to all our new representatives. We will have quick around the table intros from everyone. Ms. Debbie Lollar - Executive Director Transportation Services, Mr. Tad Fifer - Marketing and Communications Transportation Services, Ms. Mary Cearley - Texas Engineering Experiment Station (TEES), Mr. Jim Kovar - Council of Principal Investigators, Mr. Andrew Moore - Residential Housing Association, Mr. Bryon Prestridge - Sustainable Transportation Services, Mr. Tom Reber - Vice President of Student Affairs, Mr. Kenny Kimball - Transportation Services, Ms. Julie Villarreal - Transportation Services, Ms. Deborah Wright - Division of Finance, Dr. Andrew Klein - Speaker of the Faculty Senate, Dr. Tracy Hammond – Speaker of Faculty Senate, Ms. Deb Albert - Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Mr. Bill Cox - Facilities & Energy Services, Mr. Tim McLaughlin - Council of Deans, Ms. Mikaya Slaydon – Graduate & Professional Student Government, Mr. Andrew Applewhite – Speaker of the Student Senate, Ms. Amanda Pelton – AgriLife, Ms. Katelynn Kellogg – University Staff Council,

Mr. Ed Costello – Designee for VP of Operations/Assistant Police Chief, Ms. Darla Guerra – Transportation Services, Ms. Lynn Wiggs - Transportation Services, Mr. Joe Dillard – Academic Business Operations Committee, Ms. Flora Reeves – Texas A&M Professional Support Staff (TAPPS), Ms. Erin Jones – Athletics, Dr. Angie Hill Price – Speaker-Elect of the Faculty Senate.

3. TSAC Presentation (PowerPoint) – Mr. Peter Lange
 - 3.1. When we began this discussion around parking and transit, due to necessity, back in the early 2000's we gathered some groups which resulted in some very positive feedback – how do we help mobility, how do we help campus. The mission from this group is feedback and discussion. We will talk about transit route changes, football, financial, just about anything. This is a great group with some representative longevity.
 - 3.2. Goals – Please talk to your constituents as well. We will get the meeting notes out to the group quickly so you can share information. Communication is a big part. We love to hear “did you think about this or that”. If we are discussing something, such as a new fine structure, we try to come to a consensus and agree.
 - 3.3. Conversation standpoint – Discussions are extremely collegial, no shouting matches, we have great and thoughtful discussions that build on other points and topics.
 - 3.4. Chair and Co-Chair – The lift of the Co-Chair is light; my staff handles it all. The Co-Chair will run the meeting in the event I am not here. This will ensure that we do what we are supposed to do. Please think about becoming a Co-Chair, no pressure.
 - 3.5. Participation – During COVID we held meetings online and we kept the option in addition to in person. We will always provide lunch for those attending in person.
4. Fall 2023 Updates – Mr. Peter Lange
 - 4.1. Things are holding well. We have had many faculty and staff new hires pouring in that we are working hard to accommodate. We are moving people on waitlists. We anticipate it will be about 5-6 weeks before things settle down.
 - 4.2. Transit Ridership – Enrollments is up 3% and ridership is up about 34% from last year – these are some very impactful numbers. We had about a quarter million rides in the first 7 days, pushing the year we did 7.5 million rides. Transit is doing well; we have a lot of drivers but still need more. We are in a better place than we were this time last year with drivers. We have a goal to hire 75 additional drivers this Fall semester. We are doing everything we can to hire and keep drivers. The new starting rate for drivers has been increased to \$14/hourly and \$11/hourly for Non-driving Students, to include an incentive plan for hours worked. COVID savings are how we are surviving in transit. We will discuss the bus replacement plan and increasing operational costs. Our oldest buses are from 2006, and we will need to replace 50 buses. We received a grant for 6 new electric buses.
 - Mr. Bill Cox – I am hearing from students regarding delays on bus arrival times, is this dropping yet?
 - Mr. Peter Lange – Not yet but should be in the next few weeks. Traffic and construction on 2818 continues to impact buses and route times.
 - Ms. Debbie Lollar – We are seeing fewer complaints about full buses and being left behind. We have more drivers. The construction is unavoidable.
 - Mr. Peter Lange – When we can, we are running more buses in the morning and during peak hours.

4.3. Parking numbers – There were over 40,700 permits issued this is more than we have ever had, about 2,000 more than last year. As you know we lost Lot 61 to the Aplin Center (850 parking spots – 1600 permits). This puts some strain on the system. We are trying to push initial assignments harder. Sold out of lot 100 and WCG, we are only selling Fan Field at this time. We stopped selling visitor permits and allowing customers to park in garages and PBS.

- Dr. Andrew Kline – What is our capacity to sell permits on campus?
- Ms. Debbie Lollar – Fan Field allows us 4,000 additional permits, and the smaller lots along Agronomy and Discovery that have capacity but aren't being utilized as much.
- Mr. Peter Lange - If Fan Field were to go away, we could be close to our practical limitations and will change our processes and how/what we can allow.

5. Future Agenda Items – Mr. Peter Lange

5.1. I would like to have discussions and presentations around the following items:

- Long Range Permit Pricing Plan
- Bus Replacement
- Upcoming Road Construction Projects
- Bush/Welborn Project
- Highway 6 Project
- I-14 Project
- I-214 Project
- Campus Growth – What to Expect With Parking
- Planning Updates
- University Drive Grade Separation Concepts

5.2. Bus Replacement – Awarded a grant for 6 new electric buses – 20/80 shared cost

5.3. Upcoming Road Construction Projects – The Bush/Wellborn Project is now fully funded. It will be going out for bid December 2025. This will include a full closure for 9 months. Highway 6 project expansion to 3 lanes is also fully funded and will go out for bid in late 2024. The 2818 project should be completed next summer 2024. We will have full presentations on each of these projects.

- Dr. Angie Hill Price – What is the process for bid?
- Ms. Deb Albert – Bid process usually takes about 90 days with advertising, receiving bids, and then signing contracts to construct.
- Mr. Peter Lange – there will be incentives, disincentives, milestones to avoid what's happening now at 2818.
- Ms. Erin Jones – The Bush/Wellborn project would start in 2025?
- Ms. Deb Albert – there is potential for TXDOT to issue contracts sooner to begin utility relocations.
- Mr. Peter Lange – There is potential for lane closures on Wellborn for utility locates during the Fall.
- Ms. Deb Albert – our relationships with TXDOT will have us at the table when deciding on big impacts

5.4. I-14 Project – this is a long-range project – 20-year horizon. There are 3 working groups starting to place a mile wide corridor on the map to begin conversations.

- Mr. James Kovar – Are they building Highway 6 to integrate in the loops or to redo it?

- Mr. Peter Lange – I don't think the community wants that interstate traffic going through town.
 - Dr. Hammond - have you talked to other campuses and thought about working on some kind of shuttle from Galveston to C/S etc. to protect faculty commuting.
 - Mr. Peter Lange – We have looked into it, but the expense has been prohibitive. However, we are willing to research it and present on it for this group.
- 5.5. Campus Growth – We have had continued growth of 2-3% annually. The parking system has not changed much – lose, lose, build to maintain capacity. As the community continues to change (i.e., Northgate high rise) that continues to change our dynamics.
- Dr. Hammond - have you looked at the potential of more income with solar panels on lots or garages to sell back energy to campus?
 - Mr. Peter Lange – We did look at it in depth for this garage, but the economics are not there. The upfront costs were astronomical, and payback would take decades.
 - Ms. Debbie Lollar – We are looking at funding models/legislative programs that we may become eligible for.
 - Mr. Tim McLaughlin - As we look for new housing on the academic side, is there a way that's best to consider for you?
 - Mr. Peter Lange - Park n rides, but we need to use resources that are already in existence. If we build off campus the cost is as much as building on campus. When it comes to campus growth expectation and what does campus want. Different options for better ways to get around campus easier. From the community standpoint, to solve mobility around town it would look more like Northgate.
 - Dr. Angie Hill Price – Other campuses are more compact than ours.
 - Dr. Hammond – At MIT they required office buildings to supply parking to all housed in that building.
 - Mr. Peter Lange - We run into issues with that here because of our soil conditions. Master Plan has it more like this with a garage and office space built around the perimeter.
 - Mr. Joe Dillard – Going through the future agenda items, is there a website that faculty/staff can view to see construction project updates, other than just in this meeting?
 - Mr. Peter Lange – Our parking map has construction locations with start and end dates. TXDot website does good about updates. We don't have anything consolidated but could possibly add some links to our pages.
 - Dr. Angie Hill Price – Could we possibly have long term bar charts for projects?
 - Mr. Peter Lange – Deb Albert has created these, we could share.
 - Mr. Andrew Klein – As we build more apartments, the age of housing has changed, have our bus routes adopted to serve these populations?
 - Mr. Peter Lange – We try hard to go where our students are, we take a hard look at that service.
 - Dr. Hammond – There is more biking and walking on campus. I would like to bike to work but need to drop my child off at the Becky Gates Childcare Center and would need to have an attachment on my bike. There is a rule that a bike with an attachment is not allowed to be parked on campus.

- Mr. Byron Prestridge – I don't recall this being a rule and will investigate it.
- Mr. Andrew Applewhite – I would like to ask about the rule of a trailer with BBQ pit not being allowed?
- Mr. Peter Lange – I answered this question to General Ramirez last week, the rule is do not drive on the grass, but you can hand push the trailer with grill to the location.
- Mr. Bill Cox – The offenders are usually not students. We want to make sure there is a balance on resources.
- Mr. Andrew Applewhite – I will communicate this on, thank you!

5.6. University Drive Grade Separation – We will have information to share publicly soon.

5.7. Other discussions –

- Mr. Bill Cox – There is greater usage of micro mobility.
- Ms. Debbie Lollar – There are new rules, and you can see those listed on the cards located on the table. There is also additional information on our website.
- Mr. Byron Prestridge – global predictions - by 2025 every household will have at least one electric device. Anything from an analog bike to a personal motorized device. The new rules address micro mobility devices, based on national recommendations. As we communicate the new rules, we will also be utilizing tags on impounds to inform users.
- Dr. Angie Hill Price – We have a problem with them being brought into buildings. They are stating there is no room on racks, or they don't want them to get wet in bad weather.
- Mr. Peter Lange – They are not allowed in buildings. There is plenty of parking/racks at Zachary.
- Mr. Byron Prestridge – We have 1700 racks that each hold 10 bikes. We have plenty of racks and will continue to add more.
- Dr. Angie Hill Price – Can we have QR codes/signs to display?
- Mr. Peter Lange – We will add more signage.
- Dr. Hammond – Is there possibility of shelving for smaller mobility devices?
- Mr. Byron Prestridge – The trouble with that expense and we don't want to be specific to a device. We are looking at other options.
- Dr. Angie Hill Price - asked that we include mobility devices on campus and devices in building on the agenda of a future meeting.

6. Voting on Co-Chair – All in favor for Mr. Andrew Klein elected as Co-Chair

Meeting adjourned – 1:02 PM