

CONNECT TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 17, 2019

**Connect Transit Board Room #135
351 Wylie Drive - Normal, Illinois 61761**

The Connect Transit Advisory Committee meeting was held at the Connect Transit Board Room #135, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois 61761 on July 17, 2019 at 4:15 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Corey
 Shirley Craig
 Evelyn Johnson
 Leon Kaeb

MEMBERS ABSENT: Emory Davis
 Elaina Von Qualen
 Linda Foster
 Noha Shawki

STAFF PRESENT: Martin Glaze - Interim Chief Operations Officer
 Jeff Holtke - Marketing Manager
 Shelly Perry – Operations Manager
 Brendan O'Neill – Outreach Coordinator

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, chaired the meeting in General Manager Thorne's absence. The meeting was called to order at 4:16 p.m. with rollcall. Members approved the *Minutes* of the last meeting held on May 15, 2019, by Motion of Member Johnson, seconded by Member Craig.

Brendan O'Neill, Connect Transit's Outreach Coordinator, updated the Members on the *ConnectU* Program by stating the Community Bus had recently visited the Discovery Museum; History Museum and two (2) autism camps with good feedback given at each event. Mr. O'Neill stated that Connect has been teaching youngsters how to ride and riding along with them to give them a real experience. With these recent trips out, attendance has been around 200 children with some adults. Connect attended two (2) Cornbelter's games with concourse tables and 4 more events at games have been planned with each being one of Cornbelter's big nights with good foot traffic and a lot of prizes given away. Connect continues to receive good feedback with the various outreach events. Currently, in anticipation of ISU students returning to school, Connect will be participating in Welcome Week and Festival ISU. Other than the ISU events, the average age range for the *ConnectU* events have been children anywhere from toddlers to middle-school ages.

Update on New Routes

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that on July 1 Connect began the RED EXPRESS and LIME Express, also changing the PINK route and discontinuing the OLIVE route. RED EX and LIME EX have been receiving positive reviews. Riders are adjusting to the changes (REDX and LIMEX) and recently have been asking if it runs all day and on Saturdays and Sundays. Mr. Glaze stated that this does not run on Saturdays and Sundays and those facts will be put on the informational signs. He stated that transfers are better as REDX helps mitigate transfers because they can get to Uptown Station early to catch the transfer connection. Feedback from drivers has been that REDX – at certain times of the day – proves to be tight which was expected due to the traffic at Walmart and crossing Veteran's Parkway. Connect could make it a "true express route" where we limit the number of stops, if possible, but the main reason for the RED EXPRESS is due to high demand in that area and the on-time performance of the RED. The RED EXPRESS supplements that route. Overall, receiving a positive response.

Mr. Glaze continued to state that for the LIME EXPRESS, the timepoint was changed so the regular LIME dwells longer at Walmart rather than dwelling longer Downtown. The RED, we kept it the way it was prior to the modifications. The RED EXPRESS info signs were confusing riders especially over by OSF – the route leg that goes over to OSF is 30-minute service, not 15-minute. The RED EXPRESS itself is 30-minute service. He explained that what Connect was trying to do was to highlight the 15-minute frequency between Uptown and Walmart and Downtown and Walmart. The printed new route books should eliminate any future confusion.

A Member stated that the RED EXPRESS schedule will help riders in Greenbriar.

Mr. Glaze stated that there has been no difficulty with the LIME efficiency. Veteran's Parkway causes issues with many of the routes due to the signal lights that can add 5-10 minutes.

Mr. Glaze continued to report the PINK ROUTE is doing well and receiving positive reviews. One PINK change – on its northbound trip the PINK will head over onto Orlando then over to Northbrook Estates; turns around and comes back only on its northbound trip as there is insufficient time in the route to run both ways. With that addition, plus the RED EX going to OSF/Ft Jesses – 93% of all ridership is totally covered by existing stops. Only 7% of ridership walks either .25 or .50 mile (which is in the Beech/Ft Jesse area).

A Member commented that a 6-block or more walk is a lot to ask of an elderly and/or handicapped individual. Another Member commented that it also makes a difference on the terrain and weather conditions.

Update on Medicaid

Mr. Glaze stated that in addition to the state Medicaid, Connect is adding a managed-care organization, Molina, which is one of the largest in the state. Connect believes that many individuals use this managed-care organization as an alternative. CPR training for the drivers was mandatory for qualification and approval with Molina and Connect believes by adding Molina that at least one-half of CM riders will be able to use Medicaid for approved trips. Connect has 137 active riders that are

currently utilizing Medicaid through the state but believes that will double going into the Molina plan, giving access to a lot more riders.

Update on Mobile Ticketing

(See attached Handout)

Mr. Glaze stated he had prepared a handout for the CTAC Members as there were several talking points to explain the mobile app. The Contract with *Genfare* is for a period of three (3) years and will start a roll-out, hopefully within the next two (2) months. The validation will be electronic. Riders can create an account or check-out as a guest and email and/or phone number can be used to set up the account. Group passes will be available for universal access accounts. Passes can be customized with discounts and special events. Connect accepts cash and a CSR can take cash at the window and load the cash amount onto the customer's mobile app. The app will provide a lot of flexibility to the riders in holding or using the cash amount loaded on each user's phone. Monthly fare capping can easily be implemented and credit card processing will be handled by a third party, allowing the ability to use the pass without incurring additional cellular data. By using this new process, Connect expects maintenance costs to decrease and the longevity of the fareboxes to increase.

Discussion

Members asked about reloading apps. Mr. Glaze stated that each user will still have to download the new Genfare app and cash can still be used on the bus. The apps will be a matter of personal preference depending on what each rider desires to use the app for; such as tracking. The new app will have tracking but it will be in a different/new format. Trip planner will also be available.

CTAC Member Comments/Suggestions

Members asked how the College Hills Mall transfer was doing and reminisced that at one time Eastland Mall transferred more people daily than Uptown Normal.

A Member discussed revising the ORANGE and asked for Staff to evaluate it as was done on the OLIVE. Members also asked how much State Farm actually contributes to the ORANGE route. Members also discussed the stop at Arcadia/Lincoln and driver skills and professionalism. A Member commented on the annual savings of the elimination of the OLIVE, and Members agreed there were great lessons to be learned, especially with the political involvement. Members agreed that passengers need to be more involved in attending the listening sessions. Members discussed that people do not like change but after using the new routes and schedules, people seem to have adjusted. Adding that local politicians seem to want to keep Connect, the Town and City, in upheaval and tumult.

Adjournment

Member Evelyn Johnson moved to adjourn, seconded by Member Shirley Craig.

The CTAC meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.


Jill Bower, Connect Transit Board Clerk



Date: July 17, 2019

To: CTAC

Re: Genfare Mobile Ticketing Introduction

- Roll out date TBD
- Google trip planner within the app
 - Cannot combine current app with new Genfare app
- Electronic validation
 - Farebox can read the mobile pass and validate
 - No driver interaction required
- Create an account or checkout as a guest
 - Email
 - Or phone number
- Group passes can be setup for Universal Access
 - ISU
 - Heartland
 - Wesleyan
- Customizable passes
- Connect can accept cash and add value to mobile account
 - Stored value on mobile account can be used at anytime to purchase passes
- Monthly fare capping can be implemented
- Credit card processing is handled by third party
- Cellular data is not required when using a pass