

CONNECT TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 15, 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 May 15, 2019 at 4:15 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Emory Davis
 John Corey
 Linda Foster (arrived at 4:25 p.m.)
 Shirley Craig
 Noha Shawki
 Evelyn Johnson
 Leon Kaeb (arrived at 4:23 p.m.)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Elaina Von Qualen

STAFF PRESENT: Interim Chief Operations Officer - Martin Glaze
 Marketing Manager - Jeff Holtke
 Finance Director - Patrick Kuebrich
 Community Outreach Coordinator - Brendan O'Neill

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, chaired the meeting as General Manager Isaac Thorne was out of town to attend a legislative business meeting. The meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m. with rollcall. Members approved the *Minutes* of the last meeting held on March 20, 2019, by Motion of Member John Corey, seconded by Member Emory Davis.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, asked Staff member Brendan O'Neill, Connect's Community Outreach Coordinator, for an update on current marketing efforts. Mr. O'Neil stated that Connect took a bus to the Museum last month for the Labor Fair. Looking forward, Connect took a small field trip with a couple of students and will start setting up the same kind of field trip for younger students over the Summer to include tours of the Connect-Transit facility. We have begun to plan speaking engagements with some of the business groups in the community such as Kiwanis, Lion's Club and Rotary Club and will give updates on those meetings at a later date.

CTAC Appointments Discussion

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, introduced the newest CTAC Member, Leon Kaeb, and welcomed him to the group.

Connect to the Future Working Group Overview

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that a casual community meeting of the *Connect to the Future* Working Group was held on Saturday May 11, 2019. He explained this group is different from CTAC but will be more of a discussion of the members of the Group of what the community desires from public transit now and in the future, giving a basic and broad direction to Connect Transit by adding another layer of community involvement in transit. The Group will be organized and facilitated by two (2) Members of the Board. There will be more to share with CTAC once these meetings are in process.

Discussion

Member Noha Shawki stated that it is hard to talk about Connect to the Future without talking about the recent controversy that seemed to prompt the formation of the new Working Group. She stated that following media and social media, her understanding is that *Connect to the Future* is not going to discuss the Board's recent vote.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze stated the new Working Group is not directly related to any past decisions. The meetings will be more talking about the future of transit as a community and how transit can serve Bloomington-Normal more effectively.

Member Shawki stated that following the recent vote, there is a perception in the community the process was flawed. She believes that Connect Transit faces a crisis of confidence and trust and has lost the public's trust. Her concern for Connect as an organization is public trust and is at a low point now. There is a perception that the Board vote was a foregone conclusion and the public hearings were window-dressings. She asked what other CTAC members think about this?

Member Evelyn Johnson stated she questions the "intent" going through the process. If you are going to open it up to the public for comment, there were a lot of people who believed Connect would listen – but going back behind closed doors and then come back and vote painted an ugly picture.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, responded that sometimes it comes down to a yes or no and he believed it to be unfair to the Board, Staff Members and CTAC to state that the public was not listened to by the Board. If the Board does not go in the direction the public wants – does not mean the decision is automatically wrong and that the public has no say. Every decision Connect makes is the same way. Decisions for any route or stop, it is either a yes or no for one person or another and it is impossible to satisfy everyone.

Member Johnson stated that explanation and communication would help. If Connect would have said, if we do this, it will affect this, and if we don't do this, it will affect this or that. Folks need to understand what you are up against versus a flat no. Connect may know it won't work because it has more information than community members have.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that Connect has talked internally and is trying to develop plans to address that. Anytime we sit down with anyone, the biggest take-away we come away with is that the public needs to be more informed as the public does not fully understand the operations

of Connect Transit. Many elected or potentially-elected officials are communicating a lot of misinformation which is unfortunate and many of Connect's partners in the community are deciding to continue misinformation. This is where we all need to step-up and find the first mile/last mile options. The problem is not a localized one, it is a national problem as America was not built for transit, but for automobiles, and the City and Town, together with transit are working together to get to that type of infrastructure. Connect has lots of hurdles and we are all trying to accomplish the same thing but we are going about it in different ways. Mr. Glaze suggested that if access to a computer is possible, google "*First Mile Last Mile*", to find out that every transit in the country is dealing with this same issue. How do you get those people to a transit line? No one has come up with a perfect solution. Uber and Lyft hit the streets but now the public is seeing even their services are not perfect.

CTAC's newest Member Leon Kaeb stated the *Connect to the Future* meeting on Saturday, someone pointed out they did not know about CTAC or that it even existed. He asked if CTAC will interface between the new Group and the Board?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, responded that it will. CTAC receives more information, more than the public receives.

Member Leon Kaeb stated that he read in the previous *Minutes* about the upcoming activities at the Zoo which would be an opportunity for CTAC Members to interface at the events.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, responded that so far Connect has asked CTAC to take it upon themselves to get involved and talk to the community and friends in your circle. If people are interested in getting out to the Connect Transit events, that is something we can coordinate for you.

Member Leon Kaeb stated that people are a little intimidated coming to a Board Meeting and expressing their opinions, some do and some don't, but as we walk in amongst the public, it might not be so bad.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated that the sentiment she received out of the meeting in March never occurred before. When the big re-do three (3) years ago, people were grumbling but, in the end, they accepted the changes because we added a lot of good things – new routes; 30-minute time span between buses; and Sunday service. The public saw what they were getting something but I was a little aggravated because she believed the Board did something that looked autocratic. This is the first time she has been aggravated with the Board's decisions. Connect called the meeting and told people to come to express their opinion and it sounded as if no matter what you say, case closed. Connect said they were getting rid of the Olive route and raising the fares. The time span was extended but people didn't like that. About 30 people expressed by comment and some Board Members were "hardline" with only one Member that was not. The public felt that Board Members were telling people, this is it, no matter what you say. You can't do that and I don't like that myself. She didn't like the way the Board handled the meeting.

Member Noha Shawki stated that undermined trust and is Connect Transit loses.

Member Johnson stated that not only trust was undermined, but it has undermined all the progress Connect Transit has made. She saw Connect Transit progressing until this incident. She wished that

many would go and tell the Board Members that yes, they have the final word, but what is CTAC here for? Member Johnson stated that she was here to put her two cents in and please do not make these decisions and tell her you do not care what she has to say.

Member Shirley Craig stated that more people are paying attention to transit. Board Members are voting but do any of them ride transit? In 2015 we had the same comment. Ms. Craig stated that a she and a friend would leave a meeting and we would look and watch the Board get into their cars, and the same thing happens with some of the politicians. When she walked into the Public Hearing, the room was full of politicians and most were not riding transit. Those types of people have found a platform that they are going to yell about. They get a couple of people who are not happy with the way things have gone and they use that and build on it.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated that a key route to her was the Olive as people are in love with ARC.

Member Shirley Craig stated nobody is using the Olive route to get to ARC and that is the problem from what we are hearing.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated somebody must be thinking about using it as Connect had a lot of handicapped people stating they can't walk three blocks to the bus stop if the Olive route is dropped.

Member Noha Shawki stated that there is also a disconnect about what we are hearing about the number of people who are riding the Olive and the level of outrage that it is being dropped and I don't know how to explain that because so many people are so upset because they are dependent upon the Olive route but then why do we get so few riders on the Olive route? This is something that I still do not understand.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated that she believes the way that the changes were presented which was the problem. She believes that when the Board wants to do something like this, the Board ought to throw it out to the public to talk about first and then come to the decision together.

Member Noha Shawki stated that at the public hearings, she understood why the Board just listened and did not engage with people, but people walked away feeling that they had not been heard.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that Connect changed that process many years ago and Connect responds often.

Member Noha Shawki stated the Board didn't respond at the Public Hearing in March.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, at a Public Hearing the Board does not usually respond.

Member Noha Shawki asked if at the listening sessions is there more engagement with the people who attend?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that in community engagement sessions Staff Members are usually talking and answering questions. When Board Members come, they listen and stand back and hear our responses and the comments of the community members who are there. At

Board meetings to respond, they may not have that type of information on the top of their heads but have all information in a report. Staff can respond quicker to the community's questions.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated the Board needs that information so a response to the public is coming from them.

Member Noha Shawki wondered if the process would be different if people thought they had more of a voice, they would be more inclined to accept the outcome. She believes this is an issue that must be addressed. Otherwise, it hurts Connect Transit's standing in the community.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated that hurts Connect's the progress. Gaining 10 steps forward and an incident like this will bring you 11 steps back and she believed this happened.

Staff Member Jeff Holtke stated that the engagement sessions work by a one-on-one conversation and comment cards are provided for everyone to fill out. By a one-on-one conversation you talk with a Staff Member. There were only one or two instances where there was a general audience which is never good as everyone feeds off one another and if you come in and have your one question answered, others may not. One-on-one conversations were how Connect Staff handled the community engagement sessions with only a couple of exceptions. Connect Staff held 12 different sessions at 12 different locations.

Member Evelyn Johnson asked Staff Member Holtke if when Staff discussed the Olive route were there a lot of one-on-ones and did you get enough feedback from some of those people?

Staff Member Holtke stated that 12 sessions were held in different areas of the community talking about the Olive route change and fare increases. He was uncertain without checking the number of comment cards but stated that at one of the community engagement sessions, no one came.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated that those sorts of things should have been made known to the public

Staff Member Holtke stated that we had 12 public sessions and 2 private meetings with two different groups in town who were directly affected by the proposed changes.

Member Johnson stated that she would like to ask for a report or recap be given to CTAC about the results of community listening sessions so that CTAC can know what the results of those sessions were and we as CTAC Members can know what went down, good, bad or indifferent.

Member Shirley Craig stated that she attended the private session held at ARC. While that meeting had several very passionate people who gave some good ideas, there was only one person who said they rode the bus to ARC. Several at the meeting were saying that this will change in the future as the population ages but you cannot make decisions for Connect based on only one rider right now.

Member Johnson stated that as CTAC Members we should have known the Olive route elimination was based on low ridership in advance of the vote and knowing the attendance at the listening sessions and, knowing the consensus of the sessions would have been very helpful to CTAC.

Member Shirley Craig asked if the level of opposition of the fare increase was lower at the listening sessions than opposition of the elimination of the Olive route?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated yes, by far.

Staff Member Jeff Holtke stated that the fixed route fare increases also came up seldom at the community engagement sessions.

Member Johnson said that this information would have been very helpful to her as a CTAC Member and she have liked to have known the direction and the drift of the public who attended the engagement sessions.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that as the *Connect to the Future* Working Group evolves and Connect moves on in to find new funding ideas, those are things Connect and the Staff are always going to continue to look at. The Staff realizes that even moving a stop can have negative effect on people and we understand that. Unfortunately, that is what Connect is entrusted to do - to make those decisions. It is a difficult task because Connect has a finite budget and it is lower than even the state thinks we should have. Connect is leaving money from the Downstate Operating Funds on the table and the State of Illinois believes Connect is worth only so much based on the census, and we are not even putting that on the road. These are difficult decisions.

Member Leon Kaeb stated that one of the questions he asked Julie Hile at the Saturday meeting was that because these meetings are going to be held as open meetings, for the first few sessions there are going to be a lot of comments. Mr. Kaeb asked if it is alright if the CTAC Members make comments at these meetings?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that the CTAC meetings are open to the public as well and anyone can come to our CTAC meetings and comment and you can comment publicly at the *Connect to the Future* meetings.

Ridership Presentation / Discussion

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, began an update on Connect ridership and with the climate that is in the public arena. Ridership is very relative and is something that we need to look at and understand. Current ridership does continue to rise. Year-to-date, Connect is seeing an increase of over 9% through March. April's numbers are currently in calculation. On average, national peers (similar size and similar demographic that have a college or university similar to the size of ISU), are down 4.86% and regional peers (transits here in Illinois) are down 5.42%. Connect is up almost 14% more than all of its peers. Connect is currently on target to have the third highest ridership year ever. FY 2014 holds a second and FY 2015, being the highest year in ridership. FY 2015 had high gas prices and was the year that Uber and Lyft came onto the scene. This was a part of the reason Connect performed the route re-structure as it foresaw that it would have to adjust keep up with the changing environment. Cumulatively, Connect has seen an increase of 66.5% since 2007. National peers saw a cumulative increase of .5% and regional a cumulative increase of 17.5%. This is year two of our increase and no other transit on average has seen an increase since 2015. Connect is in the second year straight in showing an increase. Overall, the ridership change since FY 2007 is an 80% increase for Connect,

national peers are down 2%, regional peers are up almost 21%. Connect is running four times higher than its peers in Illinois. All of this information can be found on the public FTA website as NTD data.

Member Shirley Craig stated that as ridership increases, there is still a problem with able-bodied people sitting in the front seats forcing people with disabilities to sit further back in the bus. The signs on the buses are not very effective.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that unfortunately Connect is required by law to not ask people to move. The law basically states that anyone can utilize any seating area. The driver can ask someone to move but if they refuse, they can remain in their seat. Every seat is available to anyone and we are not allowed to remove someone from a seat.

Member Kaeb stated that the drivers are more interested in engaging the bus again than waiting for a passenger to sit down all the way, especially further to the back of the bus.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that this issue has been discussed with the drivers and they have been reminded of standard operating procedure. Many of the routes have enough time to allot the safe seating of the riders getting on and finding a seat before it engages on its route.

Member Shirley Craig stated before I got seated I had to grab while I was going up one of the steps. My physical problems are on opposite sides of the body as I have an ankle that doesn't always support me and I'm grabbing with an arm that doesn't always hold.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that he would pass this along as a problem we will keep addressing.

Staff Member Jeff Holtke stated that he would add additional priority seating signs above that section.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that Connect monitors other ridership trends around the country and what they are doing. When we have a significant decrease or a significant increase, we look at national and/or local influence, asking if it is because of a decision we made or is it just a force that is coming upon the transit industry.

The new routes were designed to serve well-defined markets meaning that each area end-point has an anchor – a dense and well-traveled location. It serves a path and understands who it is serving and frequency mirrors how many people are utilizing that. Since there are strong anchors at each end, people along the route have two very popular places to go, at minimum. In the case of Connect Transit, we have seen a decrease in the amount of transfers used as a percentage of ridership. This was an issue when the COA (*Comprehensive Operational Analysis*) was performed. Shorter routes meant more transfers. What really happens is that people travel within their livable area as opposed to traveling across town all the time. People adapt to where they are at and they want to go to these really dense areas so we are not seeing a lot of transfers. Overall, in FY 2013, 8.28% of all Connect's rides were transfers and it is down to 5.65%, decreasing almost every year. This is one of the misinformational statements that is out in the public that we want to make sure is corrected in the eyes of the public and to our riders. This is the straight data. Just because a long route goes to many places, doesn't mean it goes to the place you want it to go to. Many of those took the old Orange - Lincoln Square all the way

down to State Farm. Many people living in Lincoln Square worked at State Farm so why did that route connect the two? It was not a well-defined route so we took the routes where the dense areas of where riders were trying to get to. Another reason the routes are well coordinated is because when you do have to transfer, it is much quicker and to get to places around town, it takes a less amount of time. Again, this is another misconception in the public and with our riders.

Mr. Glaze stated that he had put together two (2) comparisons of Uptown and Downtown showing Uptown this summer as compared to Uptown in summer of 2015. The colors represent how long it takes to get to these areas; the color white is 15 minutes; dark blue is 30 minutes; the lighter blue is 45 minutes; and the red is 60 minutes. If you look at the ones on the right, you can actually see quite a lot of our routes are in the 60-minute area and some are not even covered. Looking at the ones on the left, the new routes – almost nearly all of them are within 45 minutes. If you are going to drive someone to Uptown and Downtown, they can actually travel, even with transfers, further and faster than they could on the old route structure. Connect hears a lot of people say that the new routes take too long. We need to know what path the rider is taking. Overall, the route should be faster, quicker and more coordinated. The routes were also designed for frequency, on-time performance and safety. Just this last year, Connect completed over 1,000 surveys and the top issues cited as the most important to our riders were reliability, frequency and safety. With the new routes we have tried to address all three (3) of those. Currently, 11 of the 15 routes have a frequency of at least 30 minutes or less during peak times. On-time performance increased nearly 10% from FY2016 to FY2019. Part of that was because of “dwell time”. What we hear as well is that the buses are sitting. That was designed on purpose because different times of day, traffic is heavier and it takes longer. So, on off-peak times the bus may be sitting for 5 minutes but on-peak times the bus may only sit for 1 minute. As accidents occur, railroad crossing with trains coming through, things that make the bus fall off its time schedule, so we add a buffer time. This also allows our drivers to utilize the restroom and gives them a break from driving for 8-10 hours needing a little time to get out of the seat and walk around which is a very healthy thing. This also gives the driver more time to focus on customer service so they can take an extra 30 seconds to a minute talking to a customer that is boarding or answer a rider’s question, whereas the old routes you could not do that. There are all these little things that went into this planning that are not highlighted and put out to the public; however, we want to start highlighting these things to show why these are good for our passengers and our employees. The dwell time allows our drivers to drive safely, take their turns slower, and not having to keep such a tight schedule. Anyone who rode the old system knows it was go-go-go because transfers would be missed and then passengers would call in and ask for an additional 5 minutes, then the next pick-up rider is late. We added fixed stops to speed up the route which are also on straight paths. For buses it is much safer to stay on a straight path, with less turns, as making a turn in big buses is difficult so we want to keep them on as straight a path as possible. If they are on a straight path, that usually means they are on a bigger road. Bigger roads are better maintained and have a better infrastructure than smaller roads. We also wanted to give our passengers more flexibility with their schedules and with increased frequency, that means more buses come by and people can time it better. If a bus comes once an hour but it gets you to your destination 45 minutes early, that’s not considered great. Going to your place of work you must be there 45 minutes early because that is the only time the bus comes and when leaving work, the rider must wait 45 minutes after work because that is when the bus comes. That just added 1.5 hours to your day and it is not quality service. What we are trying to do with the route structure and some of the changes is to make the quality as good as we can but still serve the most amount of people. If you serve everyone, your

quality goes down. If you place your quality too high, then you do not serve enough people. Balance is what we strive to achieve on structuring a route.

To demonstrate the effects of frequency and streamlining, look at the Green A and the current Green and Yellow. They serve basically the same path – from Downtown to Uptown to Heartland. The Yellow has the same frequency – 30-minute service that the Green A has and peak service during the school year to Heartland. Downtown to Uptown, we added 15-minute service. For streamlined service we kept it on Main Street and is now on-time more often with only adding 15-minute service on half of it and we have seen a 24% ridership increase on that path. It's quicker, better infrastructure, etc. What we see is that people are willing to walk to frequency. Bromenn is an example: Gold drives directly in front of Bromenn with 30-minute service and the Green has 15-minute service and we see more ridership on the Green than on the Gold. People are willing to walk down to Virginia to the Green if the frequency is faster.

Member Leon Kaeb asked about the Green by stating that he discovered the way the coordination is from Downtown to Uptown, especially with the Red, the top and bottom are very busy and the 15 and 45 minutes are not. He didn't know if there will ever be any kind of change for that because one of his problems was the driver sped along very rapidly, making the route hot and then having to sit Downtown for 12 minutes, because there are no transfers on either end. He believed something should be changed with connecting on the 15-minute.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated Connect would take a look at it but because it is a 15-minute service, every half hour it will connect with everyone and then other half hour or 15 minutes it isn't.

Para-transit ridership (Connect Mobility), Mr. Glaze stated is also increasing year over year. One year and a day it is currently up 2.4% which is a lower percentage that we have seen in recent years. Through March, we have seen 76,000 rides. Unlike fixed route, para-transit - each ride increases the operational cost to Connect Transit and is something that we always struggle with. Fixed route – whether you have 10 riders or 100 riders, stays the same and you can plan for it. Right now, we know how much the fixed route is going to cost but what we don't know is how much CM will cost because it depends on how many people use it. That is something we must monitor and continually watch but every year we have seen an increase so that is where we need to find funding and make funding para-transit a priority. Because again, every year it is going to increase so we need to continually increase its funding. That is one of the reasons the fare increase was proposed because expenses continue to go up, having to continually find a local match for the funds. If we do not find the funding, Connect's capital funding will slowly deplete.

Moving to the last page, Mr. Glaze stated that the graph shows you a direction and projection that para-transit has shown. One of the misconceptions of the public and the ridership is that when the route change was made, we saw a huge increase in CM usage. We have seen the same increase we did year over year. From 2011 to 2016, we are seeing straight path and once we got past the route re-structure, we are seeing a very similar path.

Member Evelyn Johnson stated that makes sense because a lot of folks at Woodhill where she resides had to replace the fact that they couldn't get the bus to stop regularly in front of the building where

they used to stop. The stop used to be directly in front of St. Joseph Hospital but due to insurance factors being unsafe, we do not do that anymore so those riders switched over to CM to bring them directly to where they want to go.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated what this is basically showing is that – as the public believes – a lot of people were pushed onto CM but the actual ridership numbers do not support that fact. They show that the same number of people are still using CM that were in the past with increases in the same amount. What we found mostly is that those people who are using para-transit are using it because they simply cannot use the fixed route so moving the fixed route had little to no affect to most of those riders.

Member Shirley Craig stated that para-transit looks like it is reflecting the aging of the population which means it's going to go up every year. Winter will be higher than in good weather because some people can do 3 blocks on a good day.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that is why it is imperative that we collectively find funding solutions – simply making the fares cheaper or going everywhere and providing more service is not going to fix that problem. This is what we have tried to tell many of our partnered services in the community. We need support rather than conflict to find a solution for this. Right now, to not raise the current fares will not fix anything and will place Connect in a worse spot financially.

Member Leon Kaeb stated that it seemed like there is really some convulsion going on with the fares, especially for premium mobility. With the Olive route potentially being removed, what is the distance to get a reduced rate?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile is the normal para-transit area and then we added two (2) premiums which brings us to 1 mile-1 $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. That is not a requirement of the ADA guidelines, but we have gone above and beyond to add those two.

Member Leon Kaeb then stated that with the Olive, will that put some of the customers into the second or third tier?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated there is a very small circle in Ironwood that would move in just a little bit but OSF is still going to be covered by the Red Express and the whole east side is already covered by the Yellow and the Pink. Literally, there is a small dot that would move in just a little bit.

In moving on to the *Better Bus Stops Campaign*, Mr. Glaze stated that Connect has made a commitment to improving its bus stops system-wide. In March of last year, the Board approved a *3-year Bus Stop Improvement Plan*. FY2019 which is about to come to a close (year 1), we had 21 stops on that proposal at a budgeted cost of \$212,000. FY2020 will begin in July and includes nearly 60 stops and FY2021 includes nearly 60 stops as well. Of those stops the funding to improve those does come from our capital funds – the same funds that we are slowly depleting. There is no grant for the bus stop improvements and are using regular capital funds that we use on anything else. So far in FY2019, Connect installed 7 shelters, 6 semme-seat benches, and 5 ADA assessible concrete pads connecting the curb to the sidewalk. Currently, site design work for next year is being done and was awarded to

Lewis Yockey Brown, Inc. in April. They do have our list and they are going to locate and define the stops. Once they are determined, they will draw up the site designs, give us an opportunity to review them, we'll put our notes on it and once they are approved, Connect must then submit a proposal to have the concrete work performed. People will bid for that work which takes about 3 weeks. Once we have a winning bid, it is taken to the Board to approve the contract amount. Finally, then the work can start. It is a long process. Being a public right-of-way, a lot of the beginning work is obtaining *Easement Agreements*, which means it is private property. We must talk to the owner of the property, either residence or business, into allowing us to build on their property which requires a lot of paperwork. It is not that easy to just throw concrete anywhere. It takes a lot of time and is very involved.

Member Leon Kaeb asked if this makes all of the bus stops more permanent as far as modifications to a route? That is what bothers him about the Bus Stop Improvement Plan. I've talked to you about the Orange quite a bit. I know there were some shelters built out on State Farm, but there is one particular stop that is a nag which is the one on Lincoln Street/Arcadia. I don't understand why that stop cannot be moved almost 1/8th of a mile toward the east and the driver can still make that turn to get to that. There is no one from where the bus stop is going towards Veterans, no one ever comes down that hill to get to that bus stop. Everyone has to walk up the hill to get to the bus stop. Are there stops in the community that are permanent?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze stated that if you have any individual stop requests and things of that nature, please email that to us and we will be happy to look at them for you and would probably speak on a one-on-one basis rather than at the CTAC meetings. Speaking to your question, I would say yes and no. The intent is to make the stops ADA assessable. Certain shelters are being placed at more heavily used stops. I would assume in the future that those stops are going to continue to be heavily used and we wouldn't move away from them. Other stops as you get lower and lower ridership you are getting less infrastructure. A concrete pad costs \$400-\$600. We would be willing to relocate from those. There is nothing that permanently puts a bus stop in place.

Hopefully by the end of summer you will be seeing more bus stop improvements. The first of this year we had a couple of big projects that we wanted to construct. We put a shelter at Market/Peggy by Arby's. By Connect Transit on Wylie, we placed one across the street from the building. A shelter was placed at Cottage/Linda and Walmart/Bloomington received two shelters. The Walmart/Normal shelter was just completed this week. We would need an *Easement Agreement* with Holiday Inn to place a shelter across the street from the new shelter at the Walmart/Normal stop so we are not looking to place a shelter there. The difficult issue with Walmart/Normal was the main headquarters which is located out of town, had to approve the *Agreement* with us and it was a lot of paperwork and negotiations with time lost in getting this project started.

Benches have been placed at Center/Virginia, Center/Union, Center/Market, Washington/Clinton, Fell/Locust, Main/Market. A lot of those up and down Main Street have good intersections, better sidewalks and the City is going to keep that infrastructure up-to-date.

A connection pad was placed at Cottage/Linda on the opposite side of the new shelter. Eastland Drive in front of LifeCIL we added a pad there. A connection pad was also placed at College/Kingsley, Adelaide/Heritage Health, and Vernon Avenue/Crestwood Apartments. These are just pads but a couple of these locations will also get benches.

Member Shirley Craig stated that these have been done just in time for the July changes that will have some 15-minute stops which is fantastic.

With the elimination of the Olive, those hours are being reallocated so the Red Express will run on the opposite times of the current Red. From Uptown to Walmart/OSF and back the bus will run every 15 minutes. The Lime will run from Downtown to Walmart and back every 15 minutes. Those two buses a day will take care of the 500/day riders that are currently using the 30-minute service. It will help with the Red with transfers because the Red is tight in Uptown. The stops at Market Street and Cottage Street get almost 500 rides a day just between Walmart/Uptown and Walmart/Downtown whereas the remainder of the route gets 500.

Member Shirley Craig stated that this will be so helpful for anyone who gets on a Red after the college students leave Uptown.

Member Leon Kaeb inquired if ARC has their own shuttle? If so, it is kind of a moot point about the Olive discontinuation for ARC.

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze responded that ARC has a shuttle van.

Member Shirley Craig stated that the ARC bus will only go so far and is very limited but for the most part, the people she sees using it are people that are in wheelchairs, people who would be needing para-transit anyway. Wintertime could be a different story.

Member Leon Kaeb asked if Connect thought there would ever be more talk about State Farm? They have their own shuttle, the few employees that use it, and there are two bus stops there with shelters. Why haven't they ever been able to use their own shuttles? Has that ever been discussed?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze confirmed this has been discussed several times with State Farm. The facility on Oakland (OAB Building), Connect moved the stops so that it was closer to the building so that people who ride the Purple could get off there and they could ride the State Farm shuttle south. I would need to look at those numbers as I have not looked at them in quite a while. You run into logistical and land use issues on the east side of town a lot. Connect uses a pulse system like a hub and spoke where everything comes to the center and goes outward. A grid system would not work because on the east side of town the roads are not straight and do not intersect.

CTAC Member Comments/Suggestions

Shirley Craig stated that she was thrilled as she had not taken the time to look at the later extensions of time that a couple of buses ran but she is working on signing up for an evening course at Heartland and someone had told her she could take transit to Heartland. Now she does not have to drive out there at night. She stated she can take her class, arrive safely, and then get home. She appreciates the couple of extra late buses that drove till 9:30 p.m.

There was no further discussion.

Adjournment

Member Shirley Craig moved to adjourn, seconded by Member John Corey.

The CTAC meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.


Jill Bower, Connect Transit Board Clerk