Parking and Transportation Advisory Board (PTAB)

Meeting Minutes for September 20, 2022

Members in Attendance: Lawrence Snyder, Jonathan King, Niels la Cour, Robert Hendry, Jennifer Bennett, Sigrid Schmalzer, Marwa Atef Mohamed Amer, Derek Pires, Gregory Wheeler

Previous Minutes (from 4/19/2022) approved by Rob, seconded by Niels

Transit Services Update- Derek Pires

- Emergency temporary service reductions due to ongoing driver shortage
  - Route 34
    - Ending service at 12:15pm
    - Bus continues running every 22 minutes in the morning for AM classes
    - Reduces weekday coverage strain to provide coverage for other shifts throughout the day
    - Route 35 still exists, and services the same parts of campus- still bus every 22 minutes all day
  - Route 33: Puffer's Pond/Shopper Shuttle
    - Operates Saturdays using Sunday schedule
    - One bus every 80 minutes
    - 33 has lowest ridership compared to other routes (30/31)
    - Helps reduce weekend coverage strain
- Rob-What was the public process you had to go through to alter/cut routes?
- Derek-I can't speak too much to that because there was not much of a public process, this was purely internal. The public process was insofar as having the contingencies laid out, but unfortunately this is a short term curtailment with a very tight turnaround. If we continued this way even into this week, we would be sitting buses and it would be a greater detriment to the public. That was our manner on that, which we communicated with UMass and PVTA to coordinate.
- Sigrid- I would like to bring up a point about communication. I'm finding out from B43 riders that construction outside of Haigis Mall can prevent the bus from turning in, and there are no postings at the shelter to warn us that we have to hightail it to the street. Just to emphasize the ways in which changes on campus can impact the buses coming in from other communities, and we can end up missing our buses because the communication isn’t there.
- Derek-You bring up a very valid point and it's something that we continue to strive towards. It's indeed a challenge to make sure that there is communication up there, because we can't devote a person to staff Haigis to guide people, and that’s one of the tradeoffs of having a workforce shortage. We're trying to lean more on digital communications, between our apps and social medias, and that continues to be a point for us. We understand the struggles if we have to make a change in the routing of a bus and we can't get the word out there.
• Sigrid- even a sign would be helpful, I know that's happened in the past.
• Derek- certainly. And even getting a person to put the sign up there when we're struggling to get things covered can be difficult.
• Marwa- Thank you Sigrid for mentioning the communication aspect. I have some concerns about cutting the 33 and how it affects graduate students and outside community members who need to do grocery shopping on weekends, as well as how it might be related to food insecurity. If there’s a way to get the word out outside of the app, maybe flyers to Grad Student Senate that we can email out to people, in English as well as other languages. It’s been my experience that I’ve showed up to bus stops and not been aware of changes until that particular moment. There are ways that we can communicate this, and I’ve seen that the bus can get very crowded, especially on weekends.
• Derek- We do try to get communications up at least two weeks before a service change, such as for holidays. The nature of the last minute part of this is of course a continuing struggle. One thing about the 33, not that it makes it better that we need to curtail service, is that the span of service is still the same. We are not ending service earlier, it will just be the Sunday schedule. We did make sure to have postings up at stops about the Saturday service change, but I will work with Wendy to get flyers to you.

Parking Services Update- Jonathan King
• Lot 28
  o 412 parking spaces in a purple lot primarily dedicated to Honors College students
  o Rehabbed dirt lot off Mullins Way
  o Will get 2 double head level 2 EV chargers. One has been ordered and will be installed this year. If demand is good for EV charging we will install another next year.
  o First use of permeable pavement on campus. Water drains through the pavement with no water run-off diversion.
    ■ Cost effective and environmentally friendly
    ■ Does require yearly vacuuming to remove any salt or sand
    ■ Pricing on that still keeps us cost competitive as compared to putting in a large underground run-off storage facility.
  o Niels- How did the idea of permeable pavement come up? In know it’s been talked about for a long time. Is it just because drainage on that site is so terrible?
  o Jon- Those were a couple of factors, there also wasn’t easy access to our existing story water storage facilities. It was going to be a million+ dollars to install a large facility, and the person who designed the project thought it would be a good chance to try permeable pavement. University of New Hampshire also uses this design, and they use it almost exclusively.
• Lot 65
  o Rehabbed section just west of Holdsworth
  o Will get 3 double head level 2 EV chargers with the ability to expand if needed.
  o Chargers have been ordered and should be installed by the end of the year. Due to supply chain issues we’re not exactly sure when we’ll be getting them.
  o Ordered 2 level 3 fast chargers, one to replace over at Visitor’s Center, and one new installation over at the garage. Those are 6-8 months out.
  o Made sidewalk improvements, repaved entrance, and HP access improvements.
• EV Charging Master Plan
We need to find out how to move forward in order to get ready for Electric Vehicles on campus.

- How will increase in electric vehicles coming to campus and possibly looking for a charge impact the campus grid, parking policy, pricing, etc.

- Received $165k in ARPA funds
  - $50k used to replace the level 3 charger at visitors lot, $65k for level 3 charger in CC parking garage, $50k for a study to help develop an EV Charging Master Plan.

- 6 level 2 chargers have been ordered
  - 1 for lot 28, 1 for University Village
  - 1 in front of the Regional Transportation Information Center
  - 3 for lot 65 (demand is high in this area)

- Start of the semester review
  - Last year was bad for us, we had many students waitlisted for parking permits
  - Demand for full year parking permits less than last year.
  - Student lots close to selling out prior to start of the semester but still have limited number of spaces in all residential student areas
  - Only on-campus wait list lot is Lot 22, but the vast majority of students already have permits but want proximity to their dorms. Lot 11, 12, and 13 are open and available
  - Things are going very smoothly for us this year
  - Completely new staff in Campus Center parking garage, started last month and are getting up to speed on things.
  - Tuesday/Thursday still substantially busier on campus than Monday/Wednesday/Friday

**UMass Carpool Permits - Rob Hendry**

- Carpool permit is one component of our commuter options program (Transportation Demand Management Program)
  - Trying to use our existing capacity more efficiently rather than needing to build more parking constantly
  - Designed to meet Mass DEP mandate to reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) traffic
  - We’ve had this program since 1999, it was originally called the Rideshare Program
  - Gives campus credits/points on LEED projects and STARS reporting

- I am hoping to get an open dialogue on how we can tweak/improve the program- we reach the same number every year, usually with the same people
  - What is keeping people from making a full commitment to the carpool program

- Carpool Permit Guidelines
  - Defined as two or more employees and/or off campus students commuting together to UMass
  - Incentives
    - Matching service- find other people who are commuting to the same place at the same time.
    - Pricing discount
    - Lot combinations
    - Free one day passes- limited for when both vehicles need to be here at the same time
    - Preferred parking spaces- we won’t necessarily get you into a closed lot, but we do have certain spots in nice places reserved for carpool permits
Free hangtag-no upcharge on regular permits
- Goal was to free up space from near-capacity lots
- It’s gotten stagnant in terms of who’s doing it right now. Not a lot of students at the moment, mostly because they live on Transit lines, and that has worked well for them
- Loose definition has allowed a number of different interpretation of the program
- Need to make sure the program is fair and equitable to everyone on campus
- Compared UMass program to other regional programs
  - UVM- much more restrictive
  - URI and UMaryland- need 3 people to be considered a carpool
  - Hoping to take a little bit of each program to modernize our own program
- Sigrid-A couple of our members who are spouses thought they might not be able to be part of the program since they only own one vehicle. Two employees sharing one vehicle is better than two employees with two vehicles sharing one permit. I’m just wondering if you all had thoughts about formalizing the provision that two people sharing one vehicle qualify for the incentives.
- Rob- we didn’t really have thoughts on it, we wanted to see what you all think works for your constituents, union workers, and coworkers. I’ve seen it written both ways, and while it did cause some strife I think we worked it all out for this year. What do you think? Do you think it makes more sense for it to be people based or vehicle based?
- Jennifer-Out of pure curiosity-you said that the program had sort of stagnated a bit, and I just wonder if it wasn’t because of the added layer of the work from home options, and if there’s any way for you to track that.
- Rob- that definitely adds a level of complexity, especially for the employees who are working from home. I’ve been on hold with it because of the Modern Workplace Initiative. We haven’t necessarily figured a way to make the annual permit more flexible.
- Jon- It would be easier with more defined days at home vs coming to campus.
- Marwa- I would agree that thinking of it in terms of not cars but people splitting the permits might make it more useful for grad student workers who might be rooming with other grad students.
- Jon- The biggest advantage for a carpooler, the reason that they generally get a carpool permit, is because two [people with] cars have come together into one car. We wanted to allow that second car to still come in a couple of times a year. For me, if someone has just one car and is parking in one lot, we’re giving them these extra free parking passes for another lot which I’m keeping track of, and denying someone else access to that lot for a full year permit based on a set of carpool permits that are never going to be used. I think we need to come up with a definition for multiple cars, and a definition for a single car.
- Sigrid- I think the other incentives could still be enticing, and you could take out the other pieces with the passes while still offering other benefits.
- Rob-That seems to make sense, if it were based on “if there is one vehicle there are no free one-day passes” that would enable Jon to keep better metrics on lot counts. Would that keep your members happy in terms of updates?
- Sigrid- in terms of the members that contacted us I think that makes them happy. I’ll keep asking around.
- Rob- I just want to make sure the program works for everybody.
- Jon- A question for Derek or Larry- what level of hiring do you need to have to restart that campus shuttle to a normal schedule?
• Derek- based on our anticipated numbers, we needed 5-10 additional drivers. Safely 10 more drivers.
• Jon- Do you think you’ll have those numbers for the spring semester?
• Derek- for the spring semester, based on our training numbers I have very good confidence that we should be able to restore service on the 34.
• Jon- Would you bring back the Shoppers Shuttle first? Or the 34?
• Derek- On a whim I would say the Shoppers Shuttle, since that’s a community route.