



TRANSIT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

05/04/2022

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting was called to order by Greg Story at 4:31 PM

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Meeting was opened with an introduction of Yakima Transit staff in attendance. Members present from staff included: Alvie Maxey, Transit Manager; Greg Story, Transit Assistant Manager; and Jessica Bland, Office Assistant.

2. Ridership Statistics

- Total Ridership for January - March are as follows:
 - Fixed Route: 99,738 passenger trips
 - Dial-A-Ride: 9,319 passenger trips
 - Yakima – Ellensburg Commuter: 5,372 passenger trips

3. Fixed Route Bus Service Updates

- Holidays: There will be no Bus service on Memorial Day (May 30th), Juneteenth (observed June 20th), or Independence Day (July 4th).
- Winter / Spring Bus Book: The Spring / Summer Bus Book run through September 4th, 2022.
- Route Changes: The Winter/Spring bus book contains minor changes impacting routes 6 and 8. We do not anticipate any major route changes in the next 6 months. To provide input on bus routes please email transit@yakimawa.gov.

4. Dial-A-Ride Service updates

- New Vehicles: Newer vehicles are being put into service for Dial-A-Ride, mostly transferred from Yakima Transit's former Vanpool fleet. There are plans to purchase new vehicles. The wait time due to supply shortages are about two years so late 2024 is the anticipated delivery date for these vehicles.

6. Yakima-Ellensburg Commuter Service Updates

- Seasonal Run: The seasonal run will operate through June 10th. There will be no seasonal run between June 11th and September 20th for CWU's summer break. The seasonal run will resume September 21st.
- New buses: The new commuter buses have been put into service. They have the ability to seat 45 passengers and include conference tables in the back for rider convenience. They also have increased fuel efficiency.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Kids Ride Free Program: The state has passed a bill that includes funding for fare-free bus service to all individuals 18 and under. Yakima Transit plans to utilize this program if approved to do so by the Yakima City Council. The policy pertaining to this has been preliminarily drafted and Yakima Transit is preparing to present the program to the City Council. Once approved, individuals 18 and under will not have to pay a fare to utilize any of Yakima Transit's services including fixed route buses, Dial-A-Ride paratransit, or the Yakima-Ellensburg Commuter.

- **Youth IDs:** Yakima Transit is investigating options for verifying a passenger's age for the purpose of utilizing the free service. Options include state issued ID cards, student ID cards, and an in-house ID. Not all individuals 18 and under will have state issued ID cards or student ID cards which is where the in-house ID card would help. Individuals 18 and under could present proof of age and be issued a Yakima Transit youth photo ID card to allow free use of Yakima Transit services.
- **School Bus:** This program is not in any way intended to replace school bus service. All services provided by Yakima Transit will be open to the general public and not limited to those 18 and under.
- **Timeline:** The policy must be approved by City Council by October 1st, 2022 in order for Yakima Transit to receive full grant support.
- **Replacement amount:** Yakima Transit is unsure how much grant support will be made available and if it will completely replace lost fares. We are working with Washington State Department of Transportation to figure out funding and implementation details.
- **Seniors 65+:** This program does not include funding to offer fare-free service for those 65 and older. Yakima Transit offers reduced fare to seniors. Any changes in Yakima Transit's fare structure would need to be approved by the Yakima City Council.

Renewable Energy: At this time Yakima Transit does not have access to facilities or infrastructure capable of supporting buses fueled with renewable energy. We would need to relocate to a new facility. With current battery technology, we would need 3 electric buses to replace a single diesel bus due to the limited range of electric buses in Yakima's weather conditions. One electric bus costs about \$1 million and Yakima Transit's fleet currently consists of 25 buses, so replacement would be costly. We are hoping there will be improvements in battery technology that would reduce the number of electric buses needed to support our service. We do plan on pursuing renewable energy options if we are able to relocate to a new facility.

Infrastructure Bill Funds: Right now there is a lot of confusion at the federal level of how to allocate Infrastructure Bill funds down to individual agencies. Right now, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has not made funding available for grant applications. They have indicated that the funds may be used to increase the normal operating funds offered annually to transit agencies, which would benefit Yakima Transit. We are working closely with the FTA to take advantage of any funding opportunities. More information on the Infrastructure bill should be available in August.

Next meeting will be held on August 3rd, 2022.