

**ASHEVILLE TRANSIT COMMISSION
PLANNING RETREAT
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 16, 2012**

Attending: Kevin Jenkins, Dave Erb, Georgia Shannon, Paul Van Heden, Julie Mayfield, Ken O'Connor, Tom Tomlin, Gordon Smith, Martha McGlohon, Mariate Echeverry, Yuri Koslen, Norman Schenck, LaShawn Meadows, Charlene Valentine
Community Members: John Spitzberg, Olufemi Lewis, Noah Habin, Bruce Emory, Kristina Giles

1. **Introductions** by commission members and staff included what each participant believes/values about public transit.

2. **Community Comments**

John Spitzberg spoke about the need for good public transit service for the homeless as a representative of the Asheville Homeless Network and requested the Commission's participation in a survey of riders that they are interested in conducting. These requests were echoed by Olufemi Lewis and Noah Habin, who also spoke.

3. **Review of Last Year's Goals**

Commission Members presented on the progress of last year's goals. (Attached) Discussion resulted in the following:

What Worked

- Tracked progress of goals by reporting on them in regular meetings
- Prioritized outreach allowed the staff to support those efforts
- Closed the gap in communication with the drivers resulting in a better link to customers
- Sought input from the community
- Increased funding for holiday service and new buses
- Developed a Power Point presentation which was presented once
- Good volunteer participation for the roll-out

What Did Not Work/ What We Can Learn

- Some goals were too general
- Need concrete tasks
- Need deadlines/timelines
- Commission members should help identify areas for outreach and advocacy
- Simplify communications with the public
- Provide different times and locations for meetings and repeat
- Mailings would be ideal

What We Need to Explore

- What is the commission's role in informing the public of change and advocacy? (Prioritization of resources)
- How do we increase communication with Planning & Zoning, affordable housing and Bike/Ped?
- How to fund PR
- Continue to strengthen communication with drivers
- Continue tweaking the routes
- How to distribute the White Paper

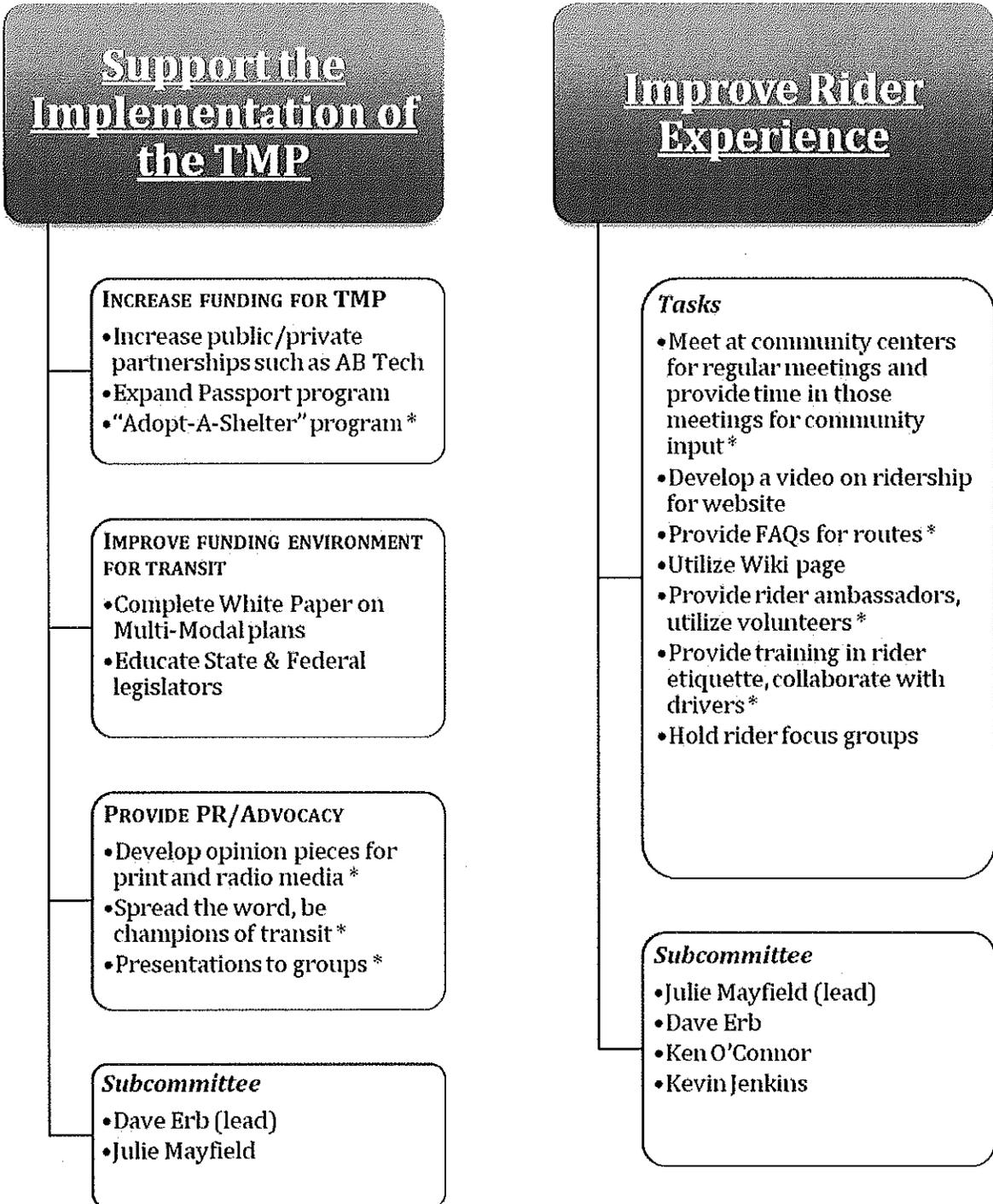
4. Prioritize Master Plan

- Mariate presented the Implementation Update of the TMP (attached) which shows impact of the changes in ridership, improvements already made, and improvements to come in November 2012 and January 2013.
- Mariate presented staff recommendations for the Capital Improvement Projects (attached).
- Commission agreed to support staff's recommendations as follows:
 - First priority: ADA and other improvements to bus stops. Second priority: fill sidewalk gaps to transit corridors.
 - Request was made that a conversation with the bike/ped planning team be held to ensure that they prioritize transit corridors
 - It was noted that the funding for new buses has already been completed and that funding for strategic facilities planning may also come from another budget.

5. Develop New Goals for 2012-2013

The following four goals were developed for the next year:

- Support the implementation of the TMP
- Improve rider experience
- Improve communication with drivers
- Improve coordination with county transit



*Note: items with an asterisk were of particular interest to the commission

Improve Communication with Drivers

Tasks

- Continue to hold regular meetings with the drivers
- Ask drivers to attend the regular TC meetings
- Hold social events with drivers
- Ensure all commission members attend at least one regular meeting with drivers

Subcommittee

- Georgia Shannon (lead)
- Ken O'Connor
- Kevin Jenkins
- Tom Tomlin

Improve Communication with County Transit System

Tasks

- Review consolidation study for steps to improve coordination
- Provide education to new County Commissioners
- Develop a summary
- Highlight opportunities for coordination
- Facilitate a planning group with various stakeholders*
 - NCDOT
 - City
 - County
 - Apple Transit?

Subcommittee

- Ken O'Connor (lead)
- Gordon Smith

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6. Next Steps

- Continue discussion about how to increase coordination with land use and Planning & Zoning by putting it on the agenda for upcoming meetings
- Leaders of the subcommittees will plan the meetings of subgroups
- Subgroups will develop their goal plan by December 4 meeting. This will include:
 - Prioritized tasks that committee will focus on this year
 - Timelines for completion of the tasks
 - Who is responsible for each aspect

7. Transition Commission Monthly Meeting

1. Approval of 8/7/12 Minutes: Tom motioned to approve the minutes, Ken seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously.
2. Letter to Mountain Xpress: The commission read Dave's draft letter to the editor and made the following suggestions:
 - delete the term "non-drivers"
 - add the current improvements and upcoming changes to the routes as listed on the TMP Implementation Update for the Retreat
 - add mention of the public meeting on Nov. 1, 4-7 p.m.
 - add mention of the AVL system
3. Monthly reports: Norm provided the driver report. The post office fence is being improved and will be made permanent. He will provide a report about the suggestions from the Suggestion Box at an upcoming meeting.
4. Survey of Riders: The Asheville Homeless Network would like to conduct a survey of riders regarding their satisfaction with service and the new routes. It was decided that Julie will explain the following to the AHN:
 - more changes are coming to the routes
 - we would like to do a survey later, after customers have adjusted to the new routes
 - the TC will work with the AHN on a future survey
 - in the meantime, the TC will work with them to help them help their constituents.
5. New Member Election: The TC will develop a short list (3-4) recommendations for the City Council for new member applicants.

8. Meeting was adjourned at 3:35