



Agenda

July 13, 2020

**Valley Metro RPTA
And
Valley Metro Rail
Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, July 15, 2020
Via Webex/Phone
1:30 p.m.**

	<u>Action Recommended</u>
<p>1. <u>COVID-19 Update</u></p> <p>Staff will provide an update on transit operation impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>1. For information</p>
<p>2. <u>Minutes</u></p> <p>Minutes from the June 3, 2020 Valley Metro Board Executive Committee meetings are presented for approval.</p>	<p>2. For action</p>
<p>3. <u>Possible Executive Session</u></p> <p>The Boards of Directors may vote to enter Executive Session for discussion or consultation and for legal advice with the attorney or attorneys of the public body and to consider its position and instruct its attorneys regarding the public body's position concerning matters listed on the agenda, personnel matters and contracts that are the subject of negotiations, in pending or contemplated litigation or in settlement discussions conducted in order to avoid or resolve litigation; all as authorized by A.R.S. Sections 38-431.03 A.1, A.3., and A.4.</p> <p>The agenda for Executive Session involves discussion and consultation regarding contractual compliance related to the COVID-19 pandemic and potential impacts on transit operations and transportation-related workforce.</p>	<p>3. For action</p>



4. Executive Session Action Items

4. For action

The Board Executive Committee may take action related to items discussed as part of Agenda Item 3.

5. Next Meeting

5. For information

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled **for Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at 1:30 p.m.**

Qualified sign language interpreters are available with 72 hours notice. Materials in alternative formats (large print or flash drive) are available upon request. For further information, please call Valley Metro at 602-262-7433 or TTY at 602-251-2039. To attend this meeting via teleconference, contact the receptionist at 602-262-7433 for the dial-in-information. The supporting information for this agenda can be found on our web site at www.valleymetro.org.



Executive Committee Minutes

July 13, 2020

AGENDA ITEM 2

**Valley Metro Board
Executive Committee**
Wednesday, June 3, 2020
Via Webex/Phone
1:30 p.m.

Members Present

Mayor Kevin Hartke, City of Chandler
Jesus Sapien for Mayor Kate Gallego, City of Phoenix
Councilmember Robin Arredondo-Savage, City of Tempe
Vice Mayor Bill Stipp, City of Goodyear
Councilmember Lauren Tolmachoff, City of Glendale
Councilmember Francisco Heredia, City of Mesa

Mayor Hartke called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m.

1. COVID-19 Update

Mr. Hillyard said okay. Thanks everyone for joining us. We have just a few updates to share with you today and as usual they're highlighted in blue in the deck.

So first over the last a couple of weeks, we've been experimenting with different ways of incorporating hand sanitizer into bus and rail service. Last week Ray's team installed two hand sanitizer dispensers at four different rail platforms across the Valley. Unfortunately, as you can see from the pictures to the right, we had I'd say fairly mixed results with that experiment. Within a day, six of the eight dispensers that we had placed had been stolen so I think we're going to reevaluate that strategy and try making sanitizer available on the trains instead of on the platforms and so we'll keep you abreast on that.

Bus operations, the first thing to note, you see local service for the last week was 21 percent down from last year. Now, that includes the Monday holiday, if you net the holiday out, it's probably more like 27-28 percent down year-over-year. Nonetheless, that's a fairly significant bounce back. We were down as much as 45 percent in recent weeks so we're starting to see that ridership come back.

And then result of that, Valley Metro plans on restoring 50 percent of the reduced Express bus service in the month to come. We have having our providers -- operators



bid on that service so it won't be effective until 7/27 but we're trying to lead that target a bit to ensure that as riders come back, you know, we have the capacity to serve them and to continue appropriate social distancing.

The other thing I'll mention here is, as you know, we're also empowering operators to ensure that they have a level of capacity that allows social distancing on our buses. When they aren't able to board passengers because of capacity issues, they call in, dispatch has vehicles and drivers on standby because in many cases, we're running 20-minute headways and we'll then dispatch one of those standby buses to pick up those additional passengers.

That's been working just fine at the levels of ridership that we've been at in recent months, but should ridership continue to come back, that's a strategy that just won't scale beyond a certain point. So we're watching that very closely and we'll update you if we have to revisit our current capacity guidelines.

Our buses contingencies haven't changed and we haven't yet needed to implement any of the three levels.

With respect to rail, you'll see at the top, rail ridership has come back a little bit. It's been down as much as about 55 to 60 percent, but not back as much as local bus service.

And then lastly, paratransit ridership continues to bounce back. It's been down as much as 75 percent as of the end of last week. It was at 64 percent below normal and for the first two days of this week, the team has reported an additional probably 10 percent increase in ridership.

As a result, we're having to revisit the occupancy guidelines that we established early in the pandemic. Initially, we were only allowing one passenger and the driver on all of our vehicles. We've talked to other jurisdictions to see what they're doing. We've looked at the spacing of the seats within our two types of current vehicles: the Dodge Caravans and the larger Cutaways. And we've identified that we can safely have two passengers and a driver on the Caravans, three passengers and a driver on the Cutaways and still maintain six feet of distance between those passengers. So on June 8th, we'll be implementing those revisions to the capacity limits to allow us to deal with ridership coming back.

And lastly, I think at our last meeting I highlighted for you the way that we are thinking through our recovery planning efforts and on the left the phases that we are considering from containment through initial return steps and then a full return with precautions. And so starting June 1st, we implemented our phased return for Valley Metro staff so we've had small numbers of staff gradually coming back into the office. The intent of this phase is to give us an opportunity, you know, to work through the issues associated



with bringing folks back to ensure that we're able to provide a safe environment for our staff and, at the same time, return to sort of normal levels of operation and productivity for those folks for whom operations were impacted. As you know, a very large selection of our staff, you know, has continued to work day-to-day to keep, you know, our buses and trains serving the public.

So we've got folks just trickling in this week on the division by division basis. We see that continuing to increase incrementally through the month of June allowing us to both re-acclimate staff and to work through any issues and really helping us to sort of learn how to operate safely in anticipation of that full return where there may be, for example, floor plan or some other operational changes needed for, you know, what we expect to be the new normal for many months to come.

So that phased return is in progress and, you know, so far off to a good start. And with that we'd be happy to answer questions.

Mr. Smith said if I could also, Jim, I don't know. Do we have any questions for Jim?

Okay. I'll just update a couple of things though also because they came up just recently. Over the last few nights, the Phoenix PD has asked us to not go into the downtown after a certain hour. We've been closely coordinating service with them and so we have, basically, created a dual system or a bifurcated system where we're running trains from Mesa into 24th Street and then turning around and going back. And from Dunlap and 19th to McDowell or Thomas and turning around and coming back. That is created some push back from people who think that we've left people in the downtown area without a way out, abandoned. We take, you know, our service very seriously.

We coordinated with PD. The PD just did not think it was safe for our equipment or our operators or anyone to be operating through that downtown area. And as we look and see the route that some of the protesters took they certainly overlapped with our tracks and our stations so that's the reason why we've done it. And we will defer to police department requests and directives in situations like this as much as we can.

Also that's led to some questions and I was asked -- I was on Horizon last night and was asked specifically or challenged because the rumor had it that we were not providing service after the curfew and that is not the case. I know both Valley Metro and City of Phoenix transit continued to provide service after the 8 o'clock curfew. We are an exempted activity and we are continuing as normal unless asked or directed to do something different by whatever police department we're working with. And most recently it's just been the Phoenix PD because of the activities downtown so I just wanted to give you that little bit of update also.



Mr. Sapien said Scott, this is Jesus. The only thing I would point out is I think that's partly the inaccurate message that the media puts out. You know, they don't know who does what so when they hear light rail is not operating their headline is "Valley Metro not operating downtown." So everyone thinks everyone's shutdown so they -- we got to train them on that.

Mr. Smith said yeah. And, you know, we recognize that it creates some weird situations like I think yesterday or the day before because the protest started much earlier PD had us asked us to cease operations at, like, 4:30 in the afternoon. Well, that creates a real problem because you have people who went to downtown to work and now they don't have a light rail to get out. We recognize that that creates a challenge and we're doing the best we can to get that message out, but we don't know when PD asks us. We don't know the timing. They give us as much notice in advance as they possibly can, but we have to -- on that case, I'm going to take the PD's request and suggestions because we have to do things that keep our operators, employees, riders, and assets safe.

And so, yeah, we're trying to update that, but I agree with you Jesus. The messaging doesn't get out. And part of that is driven by some people who have taken it upon themselves on social media to accuse us of all sorts of conspiracies being part of things. So yeah, we can't control that other than to get the information out as best we can.

Councilmember Tolmachoff said I do. I have a question. So how do we get the message out? I mean, I don't know social media, but do we have any kind of a, like, where writers can subscribe to where you would do sort of like a reverse 911? Where they would say get a text message saying, you know, like they could be alerted literally, like, without having to go to social media to try to find it or?

Mr. Smith said I'm glad you asked that and I'll start and let Hillary take over. As far as that last part, we do have Alert VM. And anyone who has the Alert VM app will get a notice to them, but Hillary, why don't you take over and talk about our other communication strategies in situations like that.

Ms. Foose said yes. Thank you, Scott, Councilmember Tolmachoff. Scott's right. We're primarily using, with how fast information is moving, we're primary using to Twitter and our Alert VM app which you know continues to grow in downloads and we're able to do active push notifications. And our team is very good about providing information. Obviously, at the beginning and the end, but also throughout because things are very dynamic.

And we're also being very responsive as we can on those channels. People asking about specific times, specific trips. And so we're trying to be as responsive as we can. And also customer service. Our customer service team at 253-5000 is getting a number



of calls. And so we're making sure that they're equipped with the information to be able to respond.

Mr. Smith said and if I could add one thing on those social media just so you know. Phoenix Public Transit also runs a very active social media and Valley Metro and the Phoenix Public Transit, basically, piggyback off each other and re-tweet each other's messages so that we get as full of coverage as we possibly can.

Councilmember Tolmachoff said okay. Thank you.

Mr. Hillyard said we also added a couple of slides just to update you on a revenue situation. Hopefully, you're seeing a slide on the Prop 400 revenues right now. Just to walk through that real quick.

So for the first nine months of the year, July through March, our actuals in fiscal '19 were just under \$115 million. Our budget for this year was just over \$120 million and our actuals are \$124 million so we were about, almost \$3.7 million ahead of budget \$9.5 million compared to last year. Our April revenues which just as a reminder lag a month so it really represents the March activity which had almost half a month of bar and restaurant closures, the stay-at-home order didn't take effect until at the end of March so it's not a full month of the impact, but we can see that our actual revenues for fiscal '20 of \$13.7 million were just about \$1.4 million under budget and over \$700,000 under last year so there's definite impact on the revenues for Prop 400. In the next couple of weeks, we should get our May revenues which reflect April activity. We anticipate that will be significantly lower because that's the first full month of the full stay-at-home and closures.

The next slide is just a quick update on fare revenues and this is for Valley Metro operated service only. For our bus year-to date through April just about \$8.2 million in fare revenue and our budget was about \$8.9 million so we're at a little under there. For light rail, year-to -date actuals about \$8 million with \$10 million so for light rail we're about \$2 million under budget for the year. So definite impact to fare revenues that we're seeing and, again, these numbers are through April for the fare revenues so as we get more information, we'll keep you updated. That's just kind of a -- I wanted to highlight the revenue situation for you.

2. Minutes

Ms. Dillon said minutes from the April 2, April 22, April 29, and May 13 meetings presented for approval.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER TOLMACHOFF, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR STIPP AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM APRIL 2, APRIL 22, APRIL 29 AND MAY 13, 2020.



3. Possible Executive Session

No need for executive session today.

Mr. Smith said yeah. Before we go on since we don't have an Exec Session, I just want to give you an update as to where we are on a presentation that we gave to your managers this morning in the TMC/RMC meetings. But you'll have in the Board meeting, Paul will introduce the budget, but I what wanted to talk to you about was some activities we're undertaking to plan what I call the post-COVID-19, post-CARES Act transit realities.

We have already started with your staff, management in transit, and otherwise through the service planning group to start the process of talking about what transit will look like and what our system might look like not in the immediate future, but after the CARES money runs out and we are dealing with whatever the financial realities that we'll be dealing with come to -- into play.

You know, Paul with these last two slides has told you just, I guess, an inkling of what we're looking at and I know you're dealing with this with your cities budgets. We're starting the process starting define as best we can what it will look like both on the bus side and on the light rail side. We're working through the service planning group to have that discussion. It is already started this last week with the meeting of the service planning group. We'll continue that into the next few months. We'll also -- when we have something, we'll come -- bring it to the Board for discussion because these are -- involve significant policy decisions.

On the rail side, we're planning on getting the rail cities together in the next week few weeks to really talk about the rail system. And, in all those cases, the reason why we need these in-depth discussions is simply providing service is and running routes doesn't tell the whole story. Offering these services is a very complex activity when we get into -- especially on the rail side. We get into maintenance of equipment, maintenance of the way, you know, our rails and everything, switches, electrical and all those things factor into the overall cost of delivering services.

So we're going to be having these discussion on a more detailed basis in the next few weeks and months and we -- I just want to make you aware of that that that's going on and we'll be coming back probably after the July break sometime either in August or September with some reports to the Board about some ideas that have come up. If, you know, depending on when those things -- when we're ready to report to you because we're going to start shaping what we see is happening and what I would call fiscal '22. Right after we finish the fiscal '21 budget which we're immediately looking forward to fiscal '22.



This also will obviously play into discussions about long term situations regarding Prop 400 and it's extension. We're now down to -- it used to be so nice to say, gee we're ten years away. We're now literally less than four years away of the expiration of Prop 400 and a little bit, you know, about 4, 4 1/2 years away and that's not a whole lot of time. So we need to start having these discussions about the kind of system we're going to create and I was in a managers meeting with Eric Anderson just a couple of days ago. And I was pleasantly surprised about the passion that Eric showed to the managers about Prop 400 extension talking about transit. And talking about how the one real risk area we have and the point that we need to discuss further is the future of transit considering that we -- Prop 400 has not generated money that we need to develop the kind of system we wanted. Well, what does that mean for going forward and Prop 400 extension?

So those kind of discussions are starting to get more serious at the staff level and the manager's level and they will percolate up and I just wanted to make you aware that they are going on. If they haven't started, they are going to be starting in the near future so thank you.

Ms. Dillon said right now, we are scheduled to meet on Wednesday, June 10, but if there are no items we will surely cancel that meeting and free up your time. If there's nothing from anybody else, we are finished for today.

Councilmember Arredondo-Savage said I just wonder maybe at our next one. I would just be kind of curious what kind of feedback we're getting from riders overall. If there's even any. You know, via emails. If they're okay with, you know, the, you know, them feeling safe when they ride or if they're okay with the 15-minute intervals. Just -- it would just be good to know what riders are thinking out there, in general. If there is an opportunity to bring that information together.

Mr. Smith said we can tell you just briefly because we do monitor that. We monitor it closely. Recognizing that social media and others don't represent all the voices, but they are a voice.

What I will tell you is that, generally, other than the incident that I've told you about the interruption of service in downtown. Our feedback has been generally positive. We have not heard -- people understand. They're grateful that we -- our staff has shown up and has provided service. And I would say that overall the feedback has been generally positive because people recognize the difficult circumstances under which our staffs are operating, both us and Phoenix. And I don't know, Jesus if you've had a different experience, but people seem to be understanding and they seem to be supportive.

Jesus, I don't know if you want to add to that or confirm that. That's been my general, but I don't have the detailed information. Every once in a while, we did get at flurry of



negativity with the interruption of service in downtown, but that's the first one I've really seen.

Councilmember Arredondo-Savage said I think that's just good information. It's something that we should just make sure we keep our pulse on.

Mr. Smith said okay. We do monitor. Yeah. We monitor activity and feedback not only directly, but we monitor what I would call the social media world. We look at that to see what the chatter is like out there. Make sure that we can, you know, if there's something that's going on that isn't directed towards us, but is out there in the social media universe that we're aware of it. And I can -- for one of our upcoming meetings I'll have Hillary actually come up with some really data and show you what we've -- what we're experiencing.

With no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.