

Minutes

RTA External & Stakeholder Relations & Advocacy Committee

10:30 a.m. April 12, 2022

Committee Members: McCall (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Duarte, Pellot

Other Board Members: Joyce, Lucas, Weiss **Not present:** Koomar

Staff: Becker, Benford, Birdsong, Burney, Caver, Coppock, Dangelo, Davidson, Feke, Fields, Fleig, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Hale, Johnson, Kirkland, Lively, Manning, Marotta, Miller, Mothes, Schipper, Talley, Tarka, Walker-Minor

Public: Braddock, Gibbons, Loh, Marguart, Wright

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. There were five (5) committee members present.

In accordance with the Ohio Open Meetings Act and House Bill 51, signed into law on February 17, 2022 and effective immediately through June 30, 2022, this meeting will be live-streamed on RTA's Board Page www.RideRTA.com/board via the meeting date for staff and members of the public. House Bill 51 allows Board members to participate by telephone or video and be considered present as if in person. It also allows Board members to vote and be counted for determining a quorum while attending by telephone or video.

Bus Route Suggestions

Joel Freilich, Director of Service Management, made the presentation. Ms. McCall said there have been public comments around NextGen bus routes in Ward 1 (48 and 15). At the last meeting, she requested this issue be addressed. This presentation will provide a response to the community. She had a follow up meeting with DGM Natoya Walker-Minor and Joel Freilich's team to understand the efforts. The update may not satisfy everyone, but we will know that staff recognized the concerns. Staff can also review the routes during their quarterly changes. This is her last time chairing this committee. Mr. Joyce will be the new chair. Ms. Birdsong agrees that perception is reality and that it is important to explain the efforts that have been made to address the community concerns. Ms. Walker-Minor said she grew up riding the 48A. Her team and Operations spent a lot of time talking to Mr. Stewart about his concerns. She took the route for understanding and to validate today is presentation.

Two questions were raised:

1. Should all #48 trips serve Marymount prior to the NexGen process?
 - Pre-NEXT GEN half of all #48 trips split off the main route and ended at S. Miles Rd instead of Marymount Hospital (these trips labeled #48A)
 - NEXT GEN Route #48 provides 30-minute service to Marymount Hospital
 - Operations recommends maintaining the NEXT GEN alignment
 - Prioritizing access to health care and jobs at Marymount – per community request
 - All stops on the former #48A branch are now served by the #50
 - Riders still have one-seat access to UH, Cleveland Clinic, CWRU, University Circle, and 12 connecting RTA routes (incl. all rail & HL) –
 - It does not get to UC via Shaker Square but they can transfer where the route crosses the 48 or stay on the bus to the E.116 Street Station to Shaker Square.

- NEXT GEN improved the service at the affected stops, despite their low ridership, from 5-day to 7-day service. (prior to NextGen there was no service bus at those stops on weekends)

#48/50 Proposal from Mr. Stewart:

Proposal was analyzed in 2021:

- #48 to branch with hourly service to Marymount Hospital and S Miles.
- #50 to serve Marymount Hospital hourly instead of S. Miles
- 2 trips per hour to/from Marymount (one #48 trip and one #50 trip)

Assessment:

- When transferring from East-West routes (#14, #15, Blue/Green Line), no transfer point would provide half-hourly service to Marymount
 - Riders said they want to stand at one place and get two trips per hour
- Apt. buildings on N/S Moreland, Kemper lose half of Marymount service – have hourly service to Marymount under Stewart proposal
- Each #48A trip missed stops on the main #48 route to Marymount
- The missed stops had **almost twice** as many riders as the #48A branch

Conclusion: NEXT GEN serves the community better

2. Should any RTA trips run on Walden Ave?

- More than 20 years ago, nearly all #15A service on Walden was removed due to low ridership – this is not uncommon when routes serve residential-only areas
 - Only a few rush-hour #15A trips on Walden Ave were retained
 - More than 10 years ago, RTA renamed #15A as “#15 via Walden”
 - NEXT GEN discontinued **lightly used** trips (3 per direction!)
 - In Cleveland Ward 1: 8 WB boardings AM, 4 EB alightings PM
 - Discontinued stops are 0.1 to 0.6 miles from improved #15 service
- NEXT GEN Features:
 - Provides 15-minute service on Harvard at the Lee-Harvard Plaza
 - Plaza has Dental, Pharmacy, Banks, Library, Dave’s Market
 - Important for shopping and jobs
 - Walden has only residences
- Operations recommends retaining the NEXT GEN service as is, due to:
 - Consistently low ridership on Walden
 - Need for frequent service on #15 to jobs, education and health care

#15A Proposal from Mr. Stewart:

Proposed route was analyzed in 2021

- It would serve lightly used stops on residential streets (Walden Ave, etc.)
- It would serve other places (incl. CSU, Shaker Sq., Tri-C East, Pinecrest)

Assessment

- NEXT GEN already serves all those other places
- “Via Walden” stops have been proven to have low ridership
- Each “via Walden” trip misses stops on the main #15 route
- In Cleveland Ward 1, the missed stops had **more than 3 times** as many riders as the “via Walden” stops during the periods that both operated

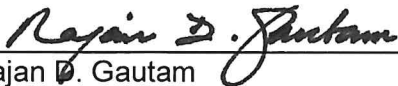
Conclusion: NEXT GEN serves the community better – the community requested service not be spread too thin and put it on every street, eliminating convenient service.

Ms. Moss asked if there is push back from residential areas about bus service noise levels. Mr. Freilich said there is push back, but when there is strong ridership and community need, they resist it.

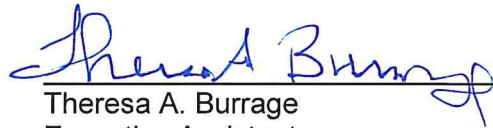
They did not get complaints about this route. If ridership were high, he would defend against those complaints.

Dr. Caver said NextGen would continue to take input and review request from the community. He thanked her leadership in ensuring the community was engaged. She complimented the Board's effort to ensure we have an equitable plan. Ms. McCall said the presentation is to her satisfaction. Rev. Lucas thanked the chair and staff on their report.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.



Rajan D. Gautam
Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage
Executive Assistant

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