

**DRAFT
MINUTES OF PVTA'S
PARATRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING
January 23, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Paratransit Sub-Committee of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Advisory Board met on Monday, January 23, 2023 at 11:00 AM remotely in accordance with the Governor's State of Emergency Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, relieving from the requirement of section 20 of chapter 30A that it conduct its meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public, permitting a public body to allow remote participation by all members.

PRESENT:

Members: Mark Gold, Longmeadow; Brian O'Leary, Belchertown; Michael Squindo, Agawam; Steve Huntley, Chicopee;

NOT PRESENT:

Cindy Tarail, Easthampton; Paula Dubord, Wilbraham; Becky Moriarty, Hampden;

A quorum being present, Mark Gold called the meeting to order at 11:10 AM

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

Mark Gold asked for a motion from the Paratransit Committee to approve the meeting minutes of September 21, 2022.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Squindo) to approve the meeting minutes of September 21, 2022.

Mark Gold asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

Brian O'Leary: Yes
Michael Squindo: Yes
Steve Huntley: Yes
Mark Gold: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

4. PARATRANSIT UPDATES

Paul Burns, Director of Transit Operations, reported the following:

MV continues to perform well. On time performance (OTP) is consistently in the mid to high 90's with December OTP at 96.5%. Other performance indicators are also consistently within expectations.

MV is working with PVRTA in piloting same day service in the Westfield and Northampton areas to assess potential service impacts of same day service. Same day service is available within those communities only with limited hours of availability and requires two hours advance notice and is subject to driver availability.

MV reports that on average there are fewer than 5 same day trips each day and to date, there have been few issues in scheduling and performing same day trips.

Effective January 25th, PVRTA will resume operating Route 39, a Five College route connecting Smith and Hampshire Colleges. Prior to the pandemic, this route was operated by UMass Transit and ceased operations in the Spring of 2020. This route will be operated by MV in the Spring 2023 semester.

5. APPROVAL OF TITLE VI EQUITY ANALYSIS REPORT FOR DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Paul Burns stated that the full Equity Analysis Report is included in your Board packet. This analysis was required because the proposed change increases Dial-A-Ride service span by 53.7%, the impact far exceeds the 7.5% threshold to qualify as a Major Service Change.

Peter Kuusisto, PVRTA Transit Planner, gave a presentation on PVRTA's Title Equity Analysis and reported the following:

The purpose of an equity analysis is to determine whether or not the new extended span of service would have an adverse impact on PVRTA customers of color and/or low-income riders.

The analysis concludes that the expanded services will better meet the needs of the riders and meet the motivations PVRTA has set for this service.

PVRTA has expanded this service without detriment to low-income populations or populations of color. The motivations for expanding service include:

- Increasing travel opportunities by offering additional alternative times to peak service hours,
- Increasing service hour span to evenings and into weekends as requested by the riders,
- Increasing ridership in-line with PVRTA's mission and business practices.

This service expansion will add 53.7% service hours from initial service levels and appears to have contributed to expanded ridership by nearly 15% year over year, with gains continuing.

The success of the pilot program suggests that expansion to all communities based on fixed-route service hours will increase ridership further.

While this expansion has a disproportionate impact on low-income riders of 39.04% and a disparate burden on people of color of 23.08% it must be noted that disproportionate impact and disparate burden analysis does not consider the positivity of the change, but rather is the absolute difference. Mitigation is only considered in cases when the difference has a negative impact on a rider population. The increase in service will positively impact both people of color and low-income riders.

The pilot program displays the positive impact of expanded service. Demographics of the riders suggests the expansion will continue serving a larger proportion of low-income riders than that of residents within the service area. The expansion will also continue serving a similar proportion of people of color to that of residents within the service area.

Mark Gold: Why was the analysis done with those hours chosen.

Paul Burns: PVRTA chose to support ridership outside of peak hours. There does not seem to be much of a demand for service prior to 8am.

Mark Gold: Will PVRTA be hiring additional drivers for this expanded service?

Paul Burns: No additional drivers will need to be hired for this expansion of service. The drivers are already there. The expanded service allows trips that would have been denied, to be scheduled later in the day with the drivers already on staff.

Mark Gold asked for a motion from the Paratransit Committee to approve PVRTA's Title VI Equity Analysis Report for Dial-A-Ride Service Enhancements and recommend adoption to the Board.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Huntley) to approve PVRTA's Title VI Equity Analysis Report for Dial-A-Ride Service Enhancements and recommend adoption to the Board.

Mark Gold asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

Brian O'Leary: Yes

Michael Squindo: Yes

Steve Huntley: Yes

Mark Gold: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

6. APPROVAL OF DIAL-A-RIDE-SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Paul Burns reported the following:

After a total of nine months of piloting expanded Dial-A-Ride service, we are asking the Board to approve the expanded Dial-A-Ride service hours. The pilot has proven to be successful. No operational issues have been reported, and all Dial-A-Ride trip requests have been accommodated.

Saturday Dial-A-Ride trips have increased from an average of 8% of all Saturday trips in April to more than 31% of all Saturday trips in December reaching a high of 36% on December 17th.

Weekly Dial-A-Ride trips show consistent increases from April and continue to account for about 24% of weekly ridership since the beginning of the pilot, up from 19% prior to the implementation of the pilot.

In addition to the Title VI analysis mentioned above, we conducted two public hearings, one a hybrid that allowed for virtual participation which was held in the 3rd floor conference room at PVRTA's Administration Building and the other in person hearing was held at the Bangs Center in Amherst. Two people participated in the hearings and their comments were both positive in support of the expanded hours.

We also conducted a survey that was distributed online and to local Councils on Aging. We received a total of 19 responses to the survey, the results of which are included in your Committee Packet. While only 21% of survey respondents were current Dial A Ride user, 84% of respondents indicated that the new hours better met their need. When asked how likely they were to use the service during the expanded hours 73% indicated they were likely or very likely to use the expanded evening hours and 63% indicated they would be likely or very likely to use the service on Saturday. While limited, the overall public comment and survey results support the expansion of this service. Most importantly, the ridership trends demonstrate increasing usage of this option by eligible riders.

Mark Gold asked for a motion from the Paratransit Committee to approve PVRTA's Dial-A-Ride Service Enhancements.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Huntley/Squindo) to approve PVRTA's Dial-A-Ride Service Enhancements.

Mark Gold asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for a roll call vote.

- Brian O'Leary: Yes
- Michael Squindo: Yes
- Steve Huntley: Yes
- Mark Gold: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Mark Gold reported that there is no other business to discuss.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mark Gold asked for a motion from the Paratransit Committee to adjourn.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Huntley/O'Leary) to adjourn.

Mark Gold asked for a roll call vote.

- Brian O'Leary: Yes
- Michael Squindo: Yes
- Steve Huntley: Yes
- Mark Gold: Yes

Motion passed, 4-0 vote.

The meeting of the Paratransit Committee adjourned at 11:34 A.M.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST: _____
BRANDY PELLETIER

Documents filed with Paratransit Committee meeting packet:

- September 21, 2022 Paratransit Committee Minutes
- Title VI Equity Analysis Report for Dial-A-Ride Service Enhancements