

CAC MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Chair Judy Jones.

Members Present: Doris Brevoort, Louise Edens, Robin Gosney, Chris and Judy Jones, John Norman, Monette Partin, Dick Phillips, Valerie Rose, David Stevens, and Brad Windler.

Guest: Ray Bock, brought by Dave Stevens. Ray had a chance to introduce himself, and announced he is applying for CAC membership.

Public Comments: Joe Kunzler stated his concerns about the route frequency reduction that is occurring, and how a micro transit option would be so beneficial. Brad states that the reductions are temporary, and that the agency is taking measures to eliminate them as much as possible.

The August minutes were approved as submitted, with the motion from Chris, and seconded by Valerie and Dave.

With further discussion and questions on the troubling route frequency reductions currently being experienced, Brad explained that, rather than permanently cutting a route altogether, they are making frequency reductions to the routes with the most assigned buses, so no routes have to be totally cut from service. Another class of drivers will be starting October 9 and finishing near the end of the year, helping to resolve the situation.

Robin mentioned community concerns, that ridership who are not online has no way of getting information of route deviation or reduction. Dick suggested alerting the newspaper and radio stations. The possibility of actually posting a staff member at the various park and rides was discussed. Brad states that, at times, supervisors who could perform this task have been out driving buses, and not available. In summary, general consensus, is that the concern should be brought forward to the appropriate personnel, since we are getting community feedback from more than one source and at different times.

At Skagit Station, a new staff break room will be located where the former coffee shops have been in the past. The former Greyhound area will be allocated to supervisors. This will allow transit staff to be available and accessible to ridership coming through the Skagit Station.

The station's north side doors were restricted and secured during the pandemic, but hopefully should soon be available during station hours, as Brad has sent a message into Security. Doris suggested a surveillance camera be placed in the back area where the doors are located, and possibly an alarm for after hours.

Another community concern brought to the CAC membership is the need for ridership bathroom facilities at the park and rides. Brad states that many times the various facilities at these locations are either misused, clogged, or vandalized, so are out of use until the contracting company can come in to remedy the issue. This is something that will continue to be addressed, as the agency moves forward in its overall plans.

Under the staff report, Brad says ridership has increased 20% over August of last year, 17% of last month's ridership being that of youth ridership, increasing from not quite 700 last year to 6765 this year.

Both Stuff The Bus diaper drive and food drives were a resounding success with large donations in goods and dollars. Approximately 6300 diapers and over \$2,200.00 were received, amounting to 13,900 diapers.

For the food drive, in partnership with Marathon Refinery, with Skagit Transit providing the bus, over 2,000 pounds of food was donated, with \$34,800 received, equaling 87,000 pounds of food altogether.

Valerie states that, as prominent a role the bus plays in these events, the Skagit Transit lettering on the signage should also be prominent, standing out for the public to see.

Skagit Transit is having to readvertise for the new Community Engagement Coordinator position, and interviews will be coming up next week.

Brad reports Skagit Transit saw a good turnout for the Senior Day In The Park event, with Doris also having attended.

Under Region Awareness, Valerie asked if the passes received by CAC members is valid on the connector routes, and Brad confirmed that they are.

Under the round table section, Louise and Craig Edens are commended for their active role and contributions to their community, highlighted in local author Robert Skeel's new book, *Stealing Home*, now available in area book stores.

Judy is developing a table staffing kit, that will contain member ID tags, an acrylic table sign, and literature provided to the public, such as rider guides, UMO card flyers, paratransit information, and CAC recruitment information. The kit will be restocked after each table staffing, ready to go for the next table date, and will be made accessible to CAC members.

October 2 – 8 is the 2023 Week Without Driving Challenge, now nationwide, sponsored by America Walks. Non-driving community members are asked to contact their elected officials, asking them to participate in the challenge. They may either ride transit, or outsource their driving needs during that week. They can choose to volunteer the entire week or certain days. They are then encouraged to report their experience, as this national challenge brings awareness to choices non-drivers have, and how they solve any transportation problems, accomplishing community participation in work, school, and leisure.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting, October 10.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Jones

CAC Chair