**TRAC Minutes**

**January, 2021**

HRT’s Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) met on January 6, 2021 at 3400 Victoria Boulevard in Hampton. The meeting was convened at 6 P.M.

TRAC members in attendance were Chairperson Denise Johnson, Robert Neely, Tondalaya Thomas, Alyson Swett, and Melissa Osborne. HRT staff present were Rodney Davis, Gene Cavasos, Sherry Scott, Robert Smith, John Powell, Ashley Goodrich, and Henry Ryto. Commissioner Amy Inman of the City of Norfolk also attended. General public attendees included Betty Allen, Wilbert Bell, and Sheera Knight.

The September and November minutes were approved as submitted. Motions to approve were made by Robert Neely and seconded by Tondalaya Thomas.

Director of Marketing and Communications Gene Cavasos spoke on the “Stash the Trash”, campaign – an upcoming campaign to encourage customers to help with the cleanup of bus stops and facilities. He said it costs $1,000 annually to clean a bus stop and $100 to make a special trip to a stop. TRAC members were asked to email in their suggestions for the campaign.

Mr. Rodney Davis, Director, Customer Relations, briefed the committee on the protective face covering requirement medical exemption initiative. He said that effective February 1, protective face coverings would be required onboard all modes of transit and that only those with a medical exemption card would be authorized an exemption. The committee was provided a presentation on the latest version of the proposed Norfolk Redesign by Mr. Scudder Wagg of Jarrett, Walker & Associates on behalf of the City of Norfolk. Mr. Wagg said the proposal would improve job access for passengers by 39% and for people of color by 32%. Commissioner Amy Inman provided summary remarks on the proposed. She also said the intent was to have the replacement for the Evelyn Butts transfer center in place by October. Ms. Alyson Swett, Norfolk representative, said she liked the increased frequency and extended routes as outlined in the proposed redesign. Mr. Robert Neely questioned the plan’s impact on service along Lafayette Blvd. Ms. Sherry Scott asked what would be the point of origin for the MAX route 962? Ms. Inman responded that the point of origin would be determined in the future by HRT staff.

During his “Director’s Remarks”, Mr. Davis briefed the service alert for the MLK holiday as well as TRAC CAFs since the last meeting. He also distributed copies of the “Link” with an article on Ms. Johnson to committee members. Ms. Johnson thanked the committee members for their assistance with the passenger survey effort.

During the roundtable, Ms. Sherry Scott, Manager of Bus Transportation, discussed the recent challenges with bus service on the northside including COVID’s impact on the availability of repair parts and operator availability. She said any operator who is exposed to the virus must be quarantined for 14 days and that this is necessary, but it of course impacts operator availability. She said new buses were scheduled for delivery to the northside in February and March. Ms. Tondalaya Thomas said she had heard the onboard announcements informing passengers that masks were required and that that was a good thing, but she said she had also observed an HRT employee who was not masked while briefly onboard a Route 103 bus while talking to an operator. Mr. Davis reminded all TRAC members to contact him as soon as possible if they observe such a problem. Ms. Alyson Swett, Norfolk representative, asked if HRT was planning to provide COVID-19 vaccinations for operators. Mr. Davis responded that HRT is in the process of planning the offering of vaccinations to employees. Melissa Osborne, Hampton representative, asked if buses are being cleaned to prevent the spread of COVID. Mr. Davis responded that all buses are cleaned every night.

During the public comment period, Ms. Betty Allen, a Norfolk resident, said that she had observed some people who were loitering inside of the Downtown Norfolk Transit Center (DNTC). She also said that she had observed that some operators were not requiring passengers with discounted tickets to present their IDs when boarding. Mr. Davis said some of the security officers do a very good job of ensuring passengers do not stay too long in the transit centers and that of course some need to do a better job. He said he would pass on her comments about loitering and ID checks to Operations and Security.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01.