

1. Approval of meeting minutes for the November 16, 2021 Transportation and Mobility Council Committee Meeting.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 16, 2021
1:30 PM
CITY HALL

Members Present:	Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair, <i>District 6</i> Councilmember Mario Bravo, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Teri Castillo, <i>District 5</i> Councilmember Sandoval, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Clayton Perry, <i>District 10</i>
Members Absent:	None

Chairwoman Cabello Havrda opened the meeting at 1:31 PM.

1. Approval of the Minutes for the October 19, 2021 Transportation and Mobility Committee Meeting.

Councilmember Perry moved to approve the minutes from the October 19, 2021 meeting of the Transportation and Mobility Council Committee. Councilmember Bravo seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by those present. (Absent: Councilmember Bravo)

Public Comment

None.

Written Testimony

There were no written comments submitted.

Live Testimony

There were no citizens registered to speak.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Consideration of At-Large Applicants to the Airport Advisory Committee (19 Slots)
[Debbie Racca-Sittre, Interim City Clerk]

Chair Cabello Havrda stated that the Committee would enter into executive session in order to discuss the proposed slate of candidates to the Airport Advisory Committee and recessed the meeting at 1:36 PM to enter into Executive Session.

Councilmember Bravo entered the meeting at this time.

Chair Cabello Havrda reconvened the meeting at 1:48 PM and stated that no action was taken during Executive Session.

Councilmember Perry moved to approve the recommended slate of individuals to the Airport Advisory Committee as read. Deputy City Clerk Racca-Sittre read the slate of individuals to be forwarded to the full City Council for consideration. Councilmember Bravo seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority Update and Discussion. [Tomika Monterville, Director of Transportation]

Tamika Monterville introduced the VIA Transit Authority update. Jeffrey Arndt, President and CEO, VIA Transit (VIA), introduced Fernando Reyes, Chair, VIA Board of Trustees. Reyes provided a brief overview of the Board dedication for the services provided by VIA.

Jeffrey Arndt introduced members of the Board of Trustees to the Committee. Arndt reviewed how transit entities were funded. Arndt stated that funding was derived from 1/8 cent from Sales Taxes which was \$39 million per year (2020). Arndt provided a comparison of sales tax transit funding received by other Texas cities noting that VIA was the most underfunded transit system in the State. Arndt provided an overview of transit investment per square mile and individuals interested in using transit transportation.

Arndt discussed the challenges of the lack of funding to provide a more expansive area of service for VIA usage. Arndt noted that ridership had been rebounding in 2019 from a several year decline but then COVID hit the Nation and caused ridership to decrease greatly. Arndt reviewed 2019 VIA Survey statistics which identified 72% of VIA riders were employed and needed transit transportation to get to their place of employment. Arndt noted that 61% of riders were Hispanic and 20% of riders were Black/African American. Arndt reviewed customer comments which noted that the ridership was very satisfied with the services provided. Arndt provided an overview of performance data, ridership recovery from COVID-19 impacts and personnel hiring. Arndt introduced a video highlighting ridership access for students at the Young Women's Academy.

Arndt reviewed the plan to connect riders to VIA services identified as VIA: Keep SA Moving (KSAM) and outlined the services provided under the program. Arndt provided an overview of improvements to the VIA System, expanded mobility options and investment in capital and technology. He reviewed the impact of the November 3, 2020 Proposition A -Transportation District passage. Arndt noted that the approved funding would not be received until 2026. He added that VIA received Federal Relief Funds totaling \$92.3 million in 2020 from the CARES Act, \$61.2 million from Corona Virus Relief Funds in 2021 and \$116.9 million from the American Relief Plan. He reviewed the KSAM accelerated plan for funding for Fiscal Years 2022 through 2026.

Chair Cabello Havrda thanked the VIA staff and Board for the work conducted in the plan. Chair asked how constituents could be made aware of closures and changes in services due to weather events or other factors. Arndt stated that it was important to address the needs of the riders and personnel during these events and explained that during Winter Storm Uri, VIA paid for lodging to assure that they were available for rider routes. Reyes stressed that VIA needed to be involved in emergency response coordination and requested Transportation Committee assistance in

promoting that dialogue. Chair Cabello Havrda stated that she would commit to having that conversation.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked what tools were used to hire VIA personnel such as drivers and mechanics. Arndt stated that mechanics were being recruited from technical schools but there were more challenges in filling driver positions especially in gaining CDL licenses. Chair Cabello Havrda asked what was being done to improve rider experience. Arndt stated that service accessibility was continuously being addressed for individuals with accessibility issues and that VIA was continuously looking at alternative solutions for those individuals.

Councilmember Perry asked when VIA started receiving the ADT funding of one cent. Arndt stated that VIA received the funding from 1979 to 2004.

Councilmember Perry asked what the utilization rate for ridership. Arndt stated that VIA was working on identifying the total number of riders at one time. Councilmember Perry stressed the importance of obtaining rider utilization data and asked that it be provided when identified. Councilmember Perry asked what the plan was set for the Stone Oak Multimodal Facility. Arndt stated that the facility was closed during COVID-19 Pandemic and had just reopened in August 2021. Arndt stated that it was working with the State to increase the level of service at the facility which had doubled since reopening. Arndt also stated that San Antonio was not a commuter corridor as other cities were to include Houston. Councilmember Perry expressed concern that the facility not being utilized to its capacity.

Councilmember Sandoval exited the meeting at this time.

Councilmember Perry noted that the June 2021 ridership survey identified high ridership satisfaction but he asked if there were improvements that could be made to some of the ridership categories. Arndt stated that the complete survey report would be provided to the Committee for their review.

Councilmember Perry asked for clarification on the proposed improved services. Arndt stated that much of the improved expansion was provided by the VIA Link System and not the larger commuter bus services. Councilmember Perry stated that he was pleased that it was done by VIA Link and not the commuter bus component.

Councilmember Perry asked if VIA was intending to return \$10M back to the City since they received a large portion of CARES and ARPA funding. Arndt stated that VIA had an agreement with the City for that funding and there had not been any request for returned funding from the City.

Councilmember Castillo asked how an increase in real estate development and improved ridership was prioritized. Arndt stated that VIA was not in the real estate development arena but worked with developers on providing services in newly developed or proposed areas. Councilmember Castillo stated that she understood the importance of VIA availability and asked if conversations with Public Works had been conducted to provide services to individuals from their homes which was made difficult due to poor streets and sidewalks. Arndt stated that conversations were constant with the Public Works Department on issues of accessibility.

Councilmember Castillo asked how much of the ridership routes had bus shelters and asked that the information be provided. Councilmember Castillo stressed that it was very important that routes had shorter waits and sheltered sites were needed for riders especially during harsh summer weather.

Councilmember Castillo requested the design components of the South and West routes sites. Arndt stated that the sites had not been designed yet and it would be provided when approved and available.

Councilmember Bravo stated that he was pleased with the proposed North/South routes but wanted to see more improvements to the East/West routes and asked how those routes could be accelerated. Arndt stated that \$100-\$120 million in funding was needed to provide those routes. Bravo asked if there was opportunity for VIA to request for additional ARPA funding. Arndt stated that VIA needed to build on their reserve funds in order to have matching funds available in order to qualify for the ARPA funding.

Adjourned

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:24 PM.

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Racca-Sittre, Interim City Clerk