

TRANSCRIPT OF
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING
THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2021
10:00 A.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA WEBEX EVENTS

TRANSCRIBED BY: Angelica Withall

TRANSCRIPTION DATE: May 6, 2021

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APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING VIRTUALLY:

John McBeth, Chair

Jim Cline, Vice Chair

Marc Whyte

Dietrich von Biedefeld

J. R. Salazar

Ken Fickes

TxDOT PRESENT AND PARTICIPATING VIRTUALLY:

Eric Gleason, PTN Director

Josh Ribakove, PTN Communications Manager

Fred Fravel, KFH Group, Consultant

MEETING AGENDA

- 1
- 2 ITEM
- 3 1 Call to Order
- 4 2 Guidance on virtual meeting participation
- 5 3 Approval of minutes from January 29, 2021
- 6 meeting (Action)
- 7 4 TxDOT Public Transportation Division
- 8 Director's report to the Public
- 9 Transportation Advisory Committee regarding
- 10 public transportation matters.
- 11 5 Overview of current Texas Administrative Code
- 12 state funding allocation formula and federal
- 13 Section 5311 funding allocation formula.
- 14 6 Update on Intercity Bus study.
- 15 7 Public Comment - Public comment will only be
- 16 accepted during the meeting. Link and
- 17 details are below. The meeting transcript
- 18 will be posted on the internet following the
- 19 meeting.
- 20 8 Propose and discuss agenda items for next
- 21 meeting; confirm dates of next meeting.
- 22 (Action)
- 23 9 Adjourn (Action)
- 24
- 25

1 PROCEEDINGS

2 JOHN MCBETH: It is 10:05 so with that I will
3 bring the meeting -- the April meeting of the Public
4 Transportation Advisory Committee to order. And if you
5 would Josh, if you would call the roll.

6 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Sure, I would. Well, John
7 McBeth we know you're here.

8 JOHN MCBETH: I'm here.

9 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Jim Cline?

10 JIM CLINE: Here.

11 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Ken Fickes.

12 KEN FICKES: Here.

13 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Dietrich von Biedenfeld?

14 DIETRICH VON BIEDENFELD: Here.

15 JOSH RIBAKOVE: J.R. Salazar?

16 MR. SALAZAR: Here.

17 JOSH RIBAKOVE: And March Whyte is not with
18 us yet, but we do have quorum.

19 JOHN MCBETH: Great. We can go ahead and
20 convene the meeting. If you would Josh, go ahead and
21 provide us with a briefing on the virtual protocols for
22 the meeting.

23 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Sure. Welcome everybody.
24 This is the PTAC meeting, Public Transportation
25 Advisory Committee for April 22, 2021. Your line has

1 been muted automatically when you joined the meeting.
2 If you did not enter your name when you joined, please
3 exit and join again and do enter your name. That's how
4 I'll know you are and be able to take your comments, et
5 cetera.

6 If you wish to comment on an Agenda item,
7 just use the meetings chat feature. I'll be monitoring
8 that as well as the Q&A and I'll respond, and we will
9 read your comment out to the Committee and if
10 necessary, your line can be unmuted. Please remember,
11 don't place the meeting on hold. We all get to hear
12 your hold tone and that's no fun for anyone.

13 Let me just very briefly go through the
14 process for committee motions in the virtual world.
15 When we have a standard motion like approving the
16 minutes, adjourning the meeting, et cetera, the Chair,
17 John McBeth, will select a couple of Committee members,
18 ask one if they want to make a motion. Ask another one
19 for a second and that's how that process will go. If
20 there are motions on action items, specifically on
21 today's Agenda and I don't believe we have any that are
22 actionable, but if so then the Chair will ask the
23 Committee members if they wish to make a motion and
24 we'll go from there. Thanks John. That's all.

25 JOHN MCBETH: Thank you, Josh. We'll move to

1 Item Number 3, approval of minutes from the January 29,
2 2021 meeting. James, would you like to make a motion
3 on those?

4 JIM CLINE: Yeah, this is Jim Cline. Move
5 approval on the minutes.

6 JOHN MCBETH: And Dietrich, would you like to
7 make a second?

8 DIETRICH VON BIEDENFELD: I -- this is
9 Dietrich von Biedenfeld, I'll second.

10 JOHN MCBETH: We have a motion and a second.
11 All in favor signify by saying aye.

12 (Aye stated in unison.)

13 JOHN MCBETH: All opposed by saying nay.
14 There are no nays. It's all ayes therefore the minutes
15 are adopted, and Josh I will sign those, scan them and
16 send them to you this afternoon.

17 JOSH RIBAKOVE: All right.

18 JOHN MCBETH: We'll move on to Item Number 4,
19 the TxDOT Public Transportation Division Director's
20 report to the PTAC regarding public transportation
21 matters. Eric?

22 ERIC GLEASON: Good morning. This is Eric.
23 Josh, if you'll go to the next slide if we could. So,
24 I thought what I would do today for the Committee is
25 for my report I would focus on providing an update on

1 what we know about the Covid-19 response as well as a
2 brief overview of the funding that we've received to
3 date from -- federal funding that we've received to
4 date for relief purposes. And I think the Committee
5 could expect this topic -- we'll probably touch on this
6 at each of our next two or three meetings just to keep
7 you up to speed on what we know. And today's report is
8 sort of a preliminary look at some data that we had
9 readily available. I'm anticipating that for your July
10 meeting we will have a more inclusive and conclusive
11 picture for you. So, Josh, let's go to the next slide.

12 So, in general, given what we were able to
13 look at from the recent federal reporting that everyone
14 began doing in earlier this month. When we look at the
15 transit districts, the rural transit districts that
16 TxDOT was responsible for entering information on with
17 this required FTA reporting. It gave us a glimpse at
18 what I think is probably a representative picture of
19 what most everyone has experienced and is experiencing
20 out there. And so, what you have here are -- for
21 overarching summary points from a look at that first
22 segment of data that we are now reporting to the
23 Federal Transit Administration through the National
24 Transit Database. So, not surprisingly, most rural
25 transit districts throughout the pandemic reduced

1 service. Some did suspend it all together. Although I
2 would say the majority looked at only service
3 reductions and not suspension. Most are back now to
4 normal operations. Some are continuing to operate
5 reduced service levels and at least with the data we
6 had none of the transit districts we reported for
7 reported that they had suspend -- that they had
8 suspended service all together. So gradually coming
9 back online I think is the picture there. In terms of
10 the employees and positive tests for Covid, again a
11 somewhat limited sample but of the 1,000 employees
12 associated with the districts we reported for, only 20
13 positive tests were reported, and all had recovered
14 from that. And that also over 85% of the employees
15 with those districts have been vaccinated. So that
16 just gives you a sense of as we are hopefully coming
17 out of the -- the most extreme times or impacts from
18 the pandemic, where at least our rural program
19 districts are at in terms of levels of service, how
20 it's impacted their employee base and they're ability
21 to continue operating and then where they are in terms
22 of getting vaccinations.

23 The other thing that we took a quick look at,
24 and let's go to the next slide Josh, was a look at the
25 some of the performance data that we collect throughout

1 each fiscal year. We collect this on a quarterly
2 basis, and we actually collected for all transit
3 systems in Texas including metropolitan systems. What
4 I have for you today are two -- two slides. This first
5 slide is for rural performance data and the second one
6 will be for urban transit district performance data.
7 So, looking at five key indicators of where service is
8 at and impacts and then ridership, you can -- as you
9 might expect looking -- comparing where folks were in
10 2019, which was the last fiscal year where folks
11 operated for the entire year, a full-service program.
12 FY20 of course was interrupted halfway through with a
13 pandemic, so using FY19 as a baseline and then looking
14 at the first two quarters for both '19 and then this
15 fiscal year, '21, just tracking consistent with
16 reductions in service levels. Vehicle miles are down.
17 If you go across to the right revenue hours are down,
18 not surprising. Operating expenses over in the left-
19 hand side are up, most likely associated with increase
20 cleaning protocols and those kinds of things. Cost per
21 hour, when you put, you know, the decline in revenue
22 hours and then the -- the increase and expenses
23 together, the cost per hour has gone up significantly
24 and we'll have to track that. And then ridership
25 almost a mirror reflection of the increase in cost per

1 hour. Ridership has dropped almost 50%.

2 So, we will -- so that's the rural picture.
3 The urban picture is similar, not quite as extreme. I
4 think, Josh let's go to the next slide. Again, you'll
5 see the reductions in revenue miles and revenue hours.
6 Only a very small change in operating expense and then
7 a similarly, I mean still significant 25% increase in
8 cost per hour but not nearly the same magnitude as the
9 rural program is reporting. However, the ridership
10 decline is much more pronounced. And I suspect that is
11 has more to do with the nature of the urban area
12 ridership, including in some cases students who may not
13 have been in class, and in other cases, perhaps more of
14 a choice ridership base as part of their ongoing
15 ridership profile as opposed to a transit dependent
16 profile. So, that's the urban picture. You know, I
17 think it's -- we're not drawing conclusions with this.
18 I think everything is tracking where we thought it
19 might. My largest concern in both cases is the
20 increase in the cost per hour. Because obviously over
21 time if that doesn't settle back down then that is a,
22 you know, a significant impact on overall levels of
23 service assuming that financial support for these
24 systems remains the same.

25 So, that's a quick look at the pandemic --

1 between now and your meeting in July we're also talking
2 about fielding a quick survey of urban transit
3 districts and rural transit districts, state funded
4 districts to allow us to have a more complete picture
5 of where folks are at and the ongoing impacts of the
6 pandemic. Any questions on that before I jump into the
7 relief funding.

8 JOHN MCBETH: Eric, this is -- this is John.
9 I will make one comment on the urban ridership. Our
10 urban ridership dropped mainly because of the number of
11 businesses or entities like Texas A&M University that
12 basically shuttered.

13 ERIC GLEASON: Yeah.

14 JOHN MCBETH: We weren't carrying people as -
15 - we weren't carrying custodians. We weren't carrying
16 food service people and we weren't carrying service
17 industry people because all the restaurants were
18 closed. So, that's -- we've identified that's where
19 the majority of our ridership -- our reduction in
20 ridership went was all of the businesses. So, that's
21 also got a fairly severe economic impact on the local
22 economy. So, I just make that comment.

23 ERIC GLEASON: Yeah, that makes a lot of
24 sense John. Particularly for your area for sure.

25 JOHN MCBETH: We didn't see it in our rural

1 program. We just didn't see it there but boy we -- we
2 sure saw it in the Bryan/College Station program. And
3 everywhere in the Bryan/College Station program, even
4 in the demand response, the ADA side. We saw a major
5 reduction.

6 ERIC GLEASON: Interesting.

7 JOHN MCBETH: Yeah, very. We don't know -- I
8 know the hospitals were open and I know the doctor's
9 offices were open. I don't know -- I don't know how
10 our ADA went down.

11 ERIC GLEASON: J.R., you got any observations
12 on this? I don't mean to put you on the spot but --

13 MR. SALAZAR: No. I don't -- I don't mind.
14 You know I think we're similar to John that, you know,
15 we saw a drop obviously. I think where some of the
16 biggest drops that we had was with contracts. For
17 example, the local Image Mar Centers that we
18 transported to worksites and obviously as those places
19 just shut down -- so, we had to thin routes and, you
20 know, and do away with a lot of those but our general
21 public trips went down as well. And also, our Medicaid
22 trips went down as well.

23 ERIC GLEASON: Ken, (indiscernible) Harris
24 County?

25 KEN FICKES: Well, yeah, we -- our demand

1 response program RIDES, which has been a great program
2 for almost 20 years now, they experienced quite a drop
3 and it's building back up but it's building back up
4 slowly. Our fixed routes have done incredibly well the
5 past 12 months. We were up probably over 20% but
6 having said that we started five new routes in November
7 or December of '19 and they took off like a rocket and
8 then when the pandemic hit, they dropped. It was kind
9 of the same thing what John's seeing. Some of the
10 government buildings and businesses, a lot of those
11 routes which are destinations are closed and they're
12 not open. So that's effected the ridership on those
13 routes. But here in the last three months,
14 everything's rocking along pretty well and looking back
15 to kind of like back to better than normal. So that's
16 our experience. Oh yeah and our Park and Ride is -- is
17 crashed. We don't get a lot business out at the Park
18 and Ride right now because a lot of the downtown
19 buildings I guess are still -- still closed.

20 ERIC GLEASON: Yeah. Yeah. That's makes a
21 lot of sense. That's good to know that your other --
22 that your fixed route ridership is doing so well.

23 KEN FICKES: Well, I think people are getting
24 -- people are getting out more.

25 ERIC GLEASON: Yeah, yeah. That's good to

1 know. And so that's the kind of thing that we want to
2 try and track on a quarterly basis for you over the
3 next I would say, you know 6 to 12 months. Because I
4 think, you know, it remains an unanswered to question
5 to see to what extent we will return over time to
6 traditional level or whether we're actually going to
7 see some sort of a significant permanent change in
8 things.

9 So, okay, now let's shift gears. Josh, let's
10 go to the next slide. So, shifting gears to the
11 funding side of the equation and looking at the funds
12 that TxDOT has received for the programs that we
13 administered, which is (indiscernible) largely rural.
14 So, there've been three pieces of relief legislation
15 with funding for transit in them. The first one of
16 course was CARESS and that's the first column. And you
17 can see the -- the programs that CARES funded. It was
18 a 5311 and 5311(f) or Intercity Bus funding stream that
19 we got through CARES, \$143.2 million for Texas.
20 CRRSAA, the second relief legislation only included a
21 relatively small money for the 5310 program, 1.3
22 million. And then the recently passed Rescue Plan, the
23 American Rescue Plan, with funding for all three
24 programs plus for the first time some funding for RTAP.
25 And you can see how it splits down there. If you add

1 everything together, Texas has gotten \$156.4 million of
2 Covid relief funding across those programs.

3 The other thing we've got for you on this
4 chart is we've color coded when we anticipate
5 Commission action on those funds. So, the Commission
6 has approved, and we have obligated in the Federal
7 Grant system all of the CARES funding. So that is all
8 out under project grant agreement with rural transit
9 districts and intercity bus carriers in Texas and is
10 being spent down and we'll take a look at that in just
11 a moment, more specifically.

12 The CRRSAA and ARP funding is -- has not yet
13 been approved by the Commission and the first step then
14 will be next week at their meeting when they will look
15 at 5310 funding for both CRRSAA and ARP. And those
16 funds, it's a relatively small amount of money, 2.6
17 million total, it is to be used on only the operating
18 grant element of the 5310 program. And so, in our case
19 it's a relatively small amount of the overall 5310
20 funding is actually program for operating. So, we will
21 be adding these funds to those current grants --
22 current 5310 grants still operating. And we'll be
23 adding these funds to them in a way that'll allow the
24 current contracts to continue through the end of this
25 calendar year.

1 For June then, we are for certain moving
2 ahead with the 5311 element of the Rescue Plan funding,
3 3.3 million at the top there. And then hopefully, and
4 I would think more than likely the intercity bus
5 element of it -- the reason that you see the 6.9
6 million there in yellow with a to be determined on it,
7 is the Commission has expressed a greater degree in
8 interest in how the intercity bus funds are allocated
9 out than those funds which are more directly related to
10 a formula allocation on the rural side. So, we're just
11 not -- I'm having a conversation with the Key
12 Commissioner next week and hopeful that they will be
13 fine with just allowing us to move ahead with the
14 (indiscernible) distribution of those funds looking at
15 current ICB funding recipients to support those
16 programs.

17 So that's where this stands. You know, there
18 have been -- and John, I know you're familiar with
19 this, there's been some approaches to determining who
20 gets what amount of funding for both CRRSAA and ARP
21 which were different than those used in CARES and that
22 has had a profound impact I think on the amount of
23 funding that Texas might normally expect to receive.
24 On the other hand, \$156.4 million is a significant
25 amount of money and we will try and make sure that we

1 stretch those dollars as best we can against -- across
2 needed services programs.

3 So, let's go to the next slide, Josh, I think
4 it's the last slide that I have. Which give the
5 Committee a sense when it comes to CARES, all \$143.2
6 million are under contract for expenditure. This shows
7 you the breakdown between the funding that went to
8 rural transit districts, which is the first set of
9 columns there on the left. The funding that went to
10 ICB services and that's a straight required 15% set
11 aside of the total amount, so 15% of 143.2 million is
12 \$21,480,000. So, you can see the breakdown there and
13 then you can see the overall expenditure history where
14 we are getting close to that 50% mark of having spent
15 down the CARES allocation. The intercity bus
16 expenditures are tracking a whole lot more closely to
17 the total than the rural program is, but the rural
18 program is tracking at about the rate where we expected
19 it too to begin with. So, this is looking good. You
20 know, of the 160 -- of the 156 million we've gotten 143
21 million of it is obligated and under contract for
22 expenditure that's over 90% of the total. So, I think
23 in general Texas is performing well with these federal
24 funds.

25 So, at that point I'm gonna stop. That's the

1 end of my Director's Report. Take any questions the
2 Committee might -- might have. All right. I'll turn
3 it back over to you John.

4 JOHN MCBETH: Okay. Thank you. It's a good
5 report, Eric. Interesting to -- most interesting is
6 the ICB. You know, everybody knows my opinion of that.
7 That's a gigantic waste of money but I'll get off that
8 soapbox.

9 We'll move on to Agenda Item Number 5, which
10 is the overview of current Texas Administrative Codes
11 state funding allocation formula and federal Section
12 5311 funding allocation formula. Just to introduce
13 this Item, this is something that myself and Eric have
14 been talking about for quite some time. This formula
15 has not been revisited for goodness gracious at least
16 15 years and it's just time to take a look at it. So,
17 I will turn this over to Eric.

18 ERIC GLEASON: Okay. Josh, let's go to the
19 next slide. So, I think we briefed the Committee in
20 January on the topic of looking at the Administrative
21 Code, needing to look at it over the next 12 to 18
22 months to prepare ourselves fundamentally to respond to
23 what we anticipate to be the impacts of the 2020 Census
24 and following the announcement by the Census Bureau of
25 the urbanized area designations. And we're thinking

1 that that, if it follows the 2010 schedule, we're
2 thinking that will happen in the Spring of 2022 and
3 that we need to be in a position shortly thereafter to
4 have a formula allocation in Administrative Code that
5 responds to those changes.

6 So, what we want to try and do today is to
7 bring the Committee up to speed on the current formula.
8 Why it is the way it is and how it works the way it
9 works. And to offer up a glimpse of what we think some
10 of the key issues will be that we will facilitate
11 discussions around for the Committee at your July and
12 October and possibly January 2022 meetings.

13 So why don't we -- let's go to the next slide
14 Josh. So why are we doing this and how big of a scope
15 might this effort entail? So, the primary reason we're
16 doing this and the focus for today's conversation is to
17 put ourselves in a position with a formula -- with the
18 allocation formula spoke for state funding to both
19 rural and urban transit districts and plural rural
20 program federal funding. And then secondarily, we do
21 expect that it's likely in this timeframe, this 12-to-
22 18-month timeframe that there will be a new
23 authorization -- there will be new authorization
24 legislation passed by Congress that will likely trigger
25 a need for us to go through the Administrative Code

1 perhaps more broadly across more programs. And if that
2 is the case then we will pick up those changes as well
3 as a part of effort looking at the Code. Those changes
4 typically don't generate or require the kind of back-
5 and-forth conversation that the formula changes do.
6 Which is why we want to and get a -- of a jump start on
7 that conversation today.

8 Next slide, Josh. So, let's talk schedule.
9 So, we are at the top here with our initial discussion
10 and then we've kind of laid out for you a road map
11 working with approximate dates for your meetings and
12 then some key milestone dates around other meetings to
13 give you a structure moving forward on when we will be
14 making decisions or bringing things to the Committee
15 for your review. So, after today we do anticipate, you
16 know, and at least the July and October and possibly
17 even the January 2022 meeting of the Committee, that we
18 will be brining sort of issue level discussions to you
19 and looking for the Committee to reach some agreement
20 amongst yourselves on -- on these issues and the advice
21 that you might give the Commission on how to approach
22 them. At the same time, we will be taking advantage of
23 our regularly scheduled twice yearly Operators Meeting,
24 we meet in July and January, to bring the entire group
25 of transit district riders, rural and urban, along with

1 this discussion. So, we're gonna try and -- and I
2 think merry up both of those meetings with PTAC
3 meetings immediately afterwards to allow the Committee
4 to have the benefit of the discussion from the entire
5 group in your deliberations. So, for example, one of
6 the things we'll talk about at the end of today's
7 meeting will be a, you know, a date for the July
8 meeting and right now we're looking at July 22nd which
9 is the day after the July semi-annual meeting. So,
10 we're gonna try -- we think it makes sense to have the
11 Committee meeting follow that meeting so you can have
12 the benefit of discussion from that meeting for your
13 consideration.

14 So, as I mentioned we do expect or anticipate
15 based on the 2010 schedule that there will be a --
16 information coming in the spring of '22, just about a
17 year from now, where the Census will release urbanized
18 area designations. Now, you know, I get that's
19 questionable. They're -- they're behind already in
20 releasing data needed for redistricting. So, it's --
21 it remains unknown as to whether or not they will stay
22 on a sort of a schedule or whether subsequent
23 downstream decisions will be delayed as well. But in
24 any event, working with our past experience we are then
25 in a position next Spring where the traditional June

1 State funding award for fiscal year '23
2 (indiscernible). What we're anticipating with this is
3 probably a partial award. And then we will go into a
4 formal rule making process based on the specifics of
5 the urbanized area designations and the impacts of
6 those on funding. We will go into a specific rule
7 making process that will put us in a position of having
8 final rules with changes to the formula that would then
9 impact a second partial distribution of state '23
10 funding and all of fiscal year '23 federal funding as
11 soon as January of 2023. So that's kind of the road
12 map that we see in front of us as we move forward. Any
13 questions on that?

14 Okay, let's go to the next slide Josh. So,
15 one of the first things we do with kind of a process
16 and, you know, John and J.R. have both been through it
17 several times, and so this should be familiar. We have
18 found that perhaps one of the most important steps when
19 we are looking at it, a rule making process around a
20 formula, is to up front get some consensus around what
21 kinds of overarching objectives or guiding principles
22 or outcomes if you will, independent of the specifics,
23 but what are we looking to accomplish with the formula
24 and these sets of changes? And what you have in front
25 of you here is what -- when the last time the formula

1 was -- was amended back in 2017. These are the guiding
2 principles or objectives that PTAC reached at the time
3 to help them understand what they were trying to
4 accomplish. And as a Committee, you can expect us to -
5 - this will be the -- probably the first conversation
6 we have with you in July is going to be around what do
7 these look like. Do these capture everything we're
8 trying to accomplish with the formula? Are there other
9 considerations that need to be a part of whatever the
10 solution is? So, we don't need -- I mean we can
11 certainly have a discussion around these today. We
12 don't need anything from the Committee today. This
13 though will be sort of the first topic we will have as
14 a Committee. This will be the first discussion we have
15 in July to try and come up with this page for this
16 process. That make sense.

17 MR. SALAZAR: Hey Eric, this is J.R. I just
18 have not necessarily a question but more of a comment.
19 While I understand, I agree with this and I was part of
20 that process, that was obviously before the pandemic
21 hit and I think we just need to keep that in mind when
22 we talk about performance efficiency and effectiveness,
23 that all rural transit districts and urbans too and we
24 talked about that a while ago, have seen a drastic cut
25 in ridership, all those things. So just -- just as

1 long as we keep that in mind, I'm good with it.

2 ERIC GLEASON: So, I think that, you know,
3 the whole unknown of how, yeah growing back from the
4 impacts of the pandemic and what that will mean clearly
5 is something to be considered. So, I think that's a --
6 yeah, that makes a lot of sense J.R.

7 JIM CLINE: Hey Eric, this is Jim.

8 ERIC GLEASON: Uh-huh.

9 JIM CLINE: And you guys have looked at this
10 before but there, you know, certainly likely that we're
11 gonna have some changes in designation. Some that grow
12 into or out of the urban transit district designation.
13 So that's gonna be an interesting piece on how to
14 soften that blow as -- or -- or ramp it up, right?
15 Depending on how it goes.

16 ERIC GLEASON: Right. So that was -- that
17 was a discussion we had with the Committee that
18 actually led to the Committee's recommendation last
19 year that the Department include in its appropriations
20 request additional funding, approximately \$3.7 million,
21 3.3 of which was associated with maintaining per capita
22 funding (indiscernible) in the State program. And that
23 the time when we looked what TTI and the state
24 demography's office was forecasting, the biggest impact
25 we had was we had three current small urban systems.

1 We have the Amarillo area, the McKinney area and then
2 the Bryan/College Station area that are both based on
3 the 2010 Census, low 200,000. All three of those are
4 anticipated to go over 200,000 which in state funding
5 moves them up to the large urban category. And as
6 you'll see here, another slide or two, right now the
7 way the state funds work, there are specific amounts
8 allocated to rural, small urban and large urban. And
9 at minimum this Committee identified the need to
10 address that issue with that kind of a movement
11 anticipated. So yeah, that easily gonna be, I think
12 the most challenging -- challenging issue for the
13 Committee and for the Commission resulting from the
14 Census. Absolutely.

15 JIM CLINE: Thank you.

16 ERIC GLEASON: Anything else before we move
17 on? All right. Josh, next slide. So, my slides not
18 changing. Has others changed? Or is it -- is it just
19 me?

20 MR. SALAZAR: No, it's still the same.

21 ERIC GLEASON: So -- there we go. Okay. So,
22 John mentioned this, let's take a step back and
23 understand some history behind the current formula.
24 And, you know, not to under estimate the impact of this
25 change but (indiscernible) it's been 15 years, give a

1 take a year or two, and, you know, there was a
2 (indiscernible) change in the formula, I'm calling it
3 the New World Order here, back in 2004 and 2005 when
4 the Commission at the time approved changes to the
5 Administrative Code which basically shifted the way
6 allocations to rural and urban transit districts in the
7 state (indiscernible). And they shifted from a -- from
8 allocations based on history, if I can put it that way,
9 to allocations which are based on population, land area
10 and performance. And it was a Commission driven
11 reallocation of baseline funding amounts, and, you
12 know, I can tell you that John remembers that well. It
13 was a very challenging time for a number of transit
14 districts that they're historic funding levels of both
15 state funding and federal rural funding declined over a
16 period of five or six years because of this change
17 driven by the Commission. And so -- but that action
18 back then is what put the general framework for the
19 current formula in place. It was somewhat off that
20 (indiscernible) growth in the federal rural program
21 back at the time the state funding was static, and it
22 continued to be static, and it was on the state funding
23 side, the local match side of everyone's overall
24 budget, that continued to decline for I want to say 10
25 or 12 of the -- some of the more established transit

1 districts in the state. It was a very challenging
2 time.

3 Now since then there have been a number of --
4 there have been couple sort of key changes but for the
5 most part only minor fixes and adjustment to that
6 structure. We did in, gosh I want to say it was maybe
7 2013 or '14, we did formalize what we now call the
8 Vehicle Mile Award, this was probably 2010, the Vehicle
9 Mile Award portion of the annual formula for the rural
10 side and then 2017 when the Committee and the
11 Commission created this third category of transit
12 district -- recognizing those transit districts with
13 over 200,000 in population that were still receiving
14 state funds as a separate group. So -- and we
15 currently have six -- six transit systems in the state
16 fit that larger category. It's gonna be Laredo,
17 Brownsville, McAllen, The Woodlands, Lubbock and
18 Killeen. I think I got them all. And the list, it's
19 this group of six that currently have 3 and half
20 million dollars of state funding every year and they
21 (indiscernible) to which we're thinking about three
22 more. We think three more will be added. So that goes
23 back to Jim's question just a moment ago.

24 So that's, you know, obviously glossing over
25 a lot of a history but that is the history of the -- of

1 the formula. And I don't know if John or J.R. want to
2 add anything at this point having been impacted by this
3 over the years.

4 So, let's go on.

5 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Eric, this is Josh. Just a
6 little bit of housekeeping before we go to the next
7 slide. I want to let everyone know that our sixth
8 PTAC, Marc Whyte, has joined us and is part of the
9 meeting now. And also, for the Committee members we
10 are getting a little bit of audio noise. If you're not
11 speaking, please put your phone on mute. And we'll
12 continue. All right. Next slide, Eric.

13 ERIC GLEASON: Okay, welcome Marc. All
14 right. Understanding --

15 MARC WHYTE: Thank you. It's good to be
16 here.

17 ERIC GLEASON: -- the current formula. So
18 how did the -- how does the state side work with the
19 current formula. Let's focus first on first state
20 funding. So, the state provides funding to rural,
21 small urban and large urban transit districts in the
22 State of Texas. And that is a -- transit districts
23 formed under Chapter 458 of the Transportation Code and
24 as long as you were -- you formed yourself as a transit
25 district when you were under 200,000 even if you go

1 over 200,000 but you remain a transit district unless
2 you make the choice and take the option of forming a
3 transit authority. So, the key on the state side and
4 this is unique to the state funding is that the TAC
5 language and we will look at this as an example in just
6 a moment. So, the language in the Administrative Code
7 includes specific amounts funding to be allocated based
8 on a need and performance allocation. The legislature
9 appropriated a biennium total and the Administrative
10 Code hard wires in amounts, biennium amounts for rural,
11 small urban and large urban allocations. Those entire
12 amounts are then run through a formula based on need
13 and performance. Need on the rural side is a
14 combination of population and land area and represents
15 65% of the overall amount. And then performance on the
16 rural side is 35% and is three equally weighted factors
17 contributed to performance. On the urban side for both
18 large and small urban transit districts, need is only
19 population and the reason for that is that at the time
20 this was developed back in 2005, the conversation
21 discussion recognized that land area was not as much of
22 a factor in urbanized area operations as it is on the
23 rural side. And therefore, need was only a population-
24 based criterion. And then 50% performance, looking at
25 four factors, not three, four and each of those factors

1 having a different weight. Again, based on the
2 conversations at the time. And when we get into this
3 discussion in July and October, we can revisit some of
4 the more specific assumptions made for these. But --
5 so one of the key differences is the rural has a 65/35
6 split. The urban is a 50/50 split. Again,
7 acknowledging at the time that the performance
8 challenges on the rural side were more heavily impacted
9 by the specific operating environments and all the
10 diversity of the operating environments across the
11 state that the rural program encounters versus the
12 urban side and not as much variation there. So that
13 was the key -- the key reason for that difference. Now
14 on the same side because the -- there are specific
15 amounts that are hard wired in any funding in excess of
16 those amounts are distributed on a discretionary basis.
17 No transit system can have more than a 10% decrease of
18 overall funding from year to the next. So that means
19 that even though your raw number might suggest you
20 should go down 15% from one year to the next, the most
21 you could go down is 10%. And that you could expect
22 the following year to see an additional decrease to
23 pick up the remainder of that decrease. And then the
24 other unique part of the state side of things is in the
25 Transportation Code there are certain areas which are

1 statutory defined urban areas that get a certain amount
2 of funding every year from our allocation.

3 And let's go to the next slide Josh and this
4 will give -- this is the picture then of how the state
5 funds break down in the Administrative Code and what I
6 just said and perhaps a more visually descriptive way.
7 But if you start at the top, you can see the very -- so
8 any of the kind of the -- the salmon or flesh-colored
9 boxes here are areas of Administrative Code where you
10 will see an actual number hard-wired into the Code.
11 And you can see then the biennial state transit fund
12 amount comes from the Appropriations Bill. Then that
13 amount then is split into the large urban biennial
14 amount, small urban biennial amount and rural biennial
15 amount. And then off the small urban comes this
16 statutory urban area fixed amount. And then as I
17 described in the blue boxes that talks about how
18 allocation decisions are made amongst the various
19 transit districts in each group.

20 Now, if we shift gears to the federal side,
21 let's go to the next slide Josh. Well, yeah, so key
22 differences on the federal side from what we just
23 talked about on the state side. First of all, only
24 rural program funding is impacted -- only federal rural
25 program funding is impacted by the formula in the

1 Administrative Code. The urbans receive their specific
2 allocations, those amounts for the urbanized areas are
3 calculated at the federal level. We will verify those
4 amounts for small urban areas between 50 and 200,000,
5 TxDOT verifies those amounts but those areas apply for
6 those -- that funding directly to -- to FTA and not
7 through the Department. And the Commission does not
8 have a role in rule making around the allocation of
9 those funds. That's done at the federal level.

10 So, understanding the current formula, on the
11 federal side it's a combination in Administrative Code,
12 a predetermined amounts and variable (indiscernible).
13 So, on the state side, they're all predetermined. On
14 the federal side, it's a combination. And we'll see
15 that in just a moment. The federal program also
16 includes optional and required set-asides. So, there's
17 an optional set-aside of up to 10% for administration.
18 We currently take closer to 3 or 4. And then on the
19 intercity bus side there's a required set-aside of 15%.
20 There is a predetermined amount of \$20.1 million which
21 is to be distributed based on need and performance and
22 those -- in this area here, for this third bullet that
23 you see here, this exactly mirrors what we just talked
24 about on the state rural program side. So, 65% based
25 on need, which is population and land area, 35% on

1 performance and under the performance three equally
2 weighted factors that contribute to the overall total
3 there. The -- on the federal side we are allowed,
4 under the Administrative Code, the Commission can take
5 up -- can use 10% or can award 10% of the total
6 available after the set-asides, can award up to 10% on
7 a pro rata, a competitive or in response to an anomaly
8 or unanticipated situation. The Commission does have
9 the ability to use up to 10% of the funding on what we
10 call as a discretionary basis. It's not completely
11 discretionary. There are some guidelines in the
12 Administrative Code that lend a certain amount of
13 structure to what it can and can't be used for, but we
14 have called it discretionary. And then anything in
15 between the 20.1 million and whatever is used for
16 discretionary, but any available prior year funding
17 goes out based on total vehicle miles.

18 So, the next slide is a little hard to follow
19 and I'm not gonna walk you through the details of it
20 but it shows -- it takes the formula and it shows the
21 Committee what -- how the funding we got in 2018, I
22 believe, flowed through this formula. So, Josh, let's
23 go to the next slide.

24 So, I'm not seeing yet. I don't know if
25 other members are seeing it.

1 MR. FRAVEL: No, I don't -- I don't see it.

2 ERIC GLEASON: Okay. So, it's just a delay
3 in -- in (indiscernible) advance. There we go. So,
4 this is a strict accounting using FY'18 federal rural
5 apportionments to Texas of what I just described. And
6 you can see how each of those elements of the rural
7 formula that I talked about are addressed. And the --
8 so we get under the lighter blue box is the total
9 apportionment. The dark blue box is our sort of --
10 there's one on the left is the set-asides, which are
11 for either Intercity Bus and State Program Oversight.
12 The needs and performance portion which is fixed at
13 20.1 million. And then a combination of a competitive
14 or service levels. Competitive being discretionary and
15 service levels being represented by vehicle miles. You
16 can see how that all flows through the current formula.

17 And let's go Josh to the next slide. So, in
18 summary, the formula is largely a proportional share-
19 driven allocation. Which means that everyone gets
20 whatever their share of the overall total is depending
21 on what's being calculated. So, if it's population, if
22 it's land area, if it's performance, if it's vehicle
23 miles, it's all based on what your reported
24 proportional share is of those totals. The need
25 information, the population and land area information

1 is based on the decennial census so it remains constant
2 from one year to the next and only changes once every
3 10 years. And you know that's kind of (indiscernible)
4 growing state like Texas where we know that -- that,
5 you know, particularly around growing metropolitan
6 areas a lot of the (indiscernible) or density and the
7 population increase is happening in the rural areas but
8 there's really no way to accommodate for that growth
9 outside of the next census from a formula standpoint.

10 The urban transit district need amounts are
11 census driven, urbanized area based and calculated
12 separately even if combined in practice. So, what does
13 that mean? So, the example we have is here is
14 Midland/Odessa. So those are two separate urbanized
15 areas according to the census. So, they are treated as
16 two separate urbanized areas in our calculations. And
17 it's only at the end that they get added together for
18 Easy Rider. Easy rider runs the service in both of
19 those. So, we don't treat -- we don't add those two
20 populations together just because the same service
21 provider. They get calculated separately and then
22 awarded to Easy Rider.

23 What drives change every year from one year
24 to the next? What drives the changes and the amounts
25 that everyone gets? So, the performance side of things

1 is annually updated and does trigger changes in the
2 overall annual allocations among districts. You can
3 have district boundary changes, this is largely a rural
4 side situation, where rural transit districts change
5 their boundaries, either new ones are formed, or
6 counties decide to opt out of one and go in another.
7 That obviously will impact the formula. And then from
8 time to time we have to make corrections to data
9 collection methods and that too will trigger changes to
10 allocation from one year to the next. So, it's
11 relatively stable (indiscernible) census driven but
12 there are elements to it that can impact from one year
13 to the next what folks get. And the reason that's
14 important is if you went back to our first slide around
15 principles, there's a -- there's kind of a push and a
16 pull between stability and wanting the formula to
17 communicate stability and a constant amount that people
18 can plan for. So, you know, once every 10 years
19 objectively calculated is pretty stable. You also want
20 it to be up-to-date and to recognize change when it
21 can. And so that tends to, you know, lead to the
22 annual -- lean towards looking at ways to keep it up to
23 date to change it more often.

24 So, let's go to the slide then Josh. So,
25 what are some of the key areas we think that we will

1 end up looking at as a part of this update? And this
2 is just a brainstorm list. There may be others. We
3 think we probably need to talk about whether specific
4 amounts or what we want in the allocation formula,
5 these hard-wired amounts or are we better off working
6 with percentages of whatever, you know, whatever we --
7 we get.

8 Definition of "need". Are there additional
9 criteria that we ought to be looking at to determine
10 need?

11 Performance, does the overall approach work?
12 Are these the right measures? And J.R., this may be
13 where we have to factor in the conversation around
14 Covid and the impacts of that on performance.

15 With the discretionary funding, you know, how
16 is it used? How is it distributed?

17 What's the appropriate split between need,
18 performance and discretionary in the overall formula?

19 Right now, our formula funds are available
20 for general use. Do we want to be more targeted about
21 some of them? For example, do we want to target a
22 portion of the overall funds for capital purposes? Or
23 not.

24 And discretionary funds, do we want to build
25 it some sort of a higher threshold that's different

1 than formula funding, you know. Discretionary funds
2 are discretionary. Is there -- does it make sense?
3 Can we require more of applicants if they want to be
4 eligible for discretionary funds?

5 And there may be others. You know, one of
6 the things that came up the other day was with all
7 these emergency relief funding we've gotten, you know,
8 our only choice was to put it through the formula. Do
9 we want to have language in the Administrative Code
10 that recognizes this kind of a situation as somehow
11 different than that? So, we have some ability to look
12 at allocating these kinds of funds differently than
13 just as the formula would.

14 So, lots of questions. I think John
15 mentioned it's time to go back and, you know, kind of
16 check the -- tear it all down and check it out and make
17 sure it's still doing what -- what we want it to do.
18 And I think these issues here tend to get to allowing
19 us to do that.

20 So, looking -- looking ahead as to what's
21 next, Josh let's go to the last slide. The next steps,
22 and I'm only going to go 90 days here. I'm not gonna
23 try and project 6 months or 12 months out. Internally,
24 I need to do my homework around bringing Commissioners
25 and Administration folks along with this effort. I

1 think in the past I will say we've had a fair degree of
2 freedom to conduct this effort and get pretty far along
3 with it before needing to loop particularly the
4 Commission in. I will say this Commission is more
5 interested in getting engaged sooner on these kinds of
6 topics than previous Commissions. So, I will be
7 looking at opportunities in this time frame to bring
8 them along on what our discussions are to make sure
9 that we are including any of their interests upfront so
10 that we don't get caught at the end with something we
11 didn't expect. We will be looking to prepare white
12 papers on some of these initial policy discussion
13 topics that I outlined in the previous slide. And as I
14 said earlier, we have a semiannual meeting with the
15 Operators on the 21st. And then PTAC the next day and
16 we will provide the operators with a combination of
17 what I think you heard today and then a glimpse at the
18 white papers and issues that we prepared for your July
19 meeting. And that concludes my presentation. Any
20 questions?

21 JOHN MCBETH: This John. Great --

22 ERIC GLEASON: Well, John I don't hear any.

23 JOHN MCBETH: -- great presentation, Eric.

24 It pretty well does it in a nutshell.

25 ERIC GLEASON: Well, I appreciate that. It's

1 a lot to cover and before we're through we'll probably
2 go over this stuff two or three times more. But at the
3 risk of over communicating, our experience with this
4 topic is the more inclusive, the more we go back and
5 forth on this stuff before we actually look at rule
6 language the better off we will be.

7 JOHN MCBETH: I would agree with that about a
8 thousand, billion percent. It's much more logical and
9 planned than it was in 2004 and 2005.

10 ERIC GLEASON: All right. Well, Mr. Chair
11 I'll turn it back over to you.

12 JOHN MCBETH: Okay.

13 JIM CLINE: Hey Eric, this is Jim. I'm real
14 interested to hear what the operators have to say in
15 terms of if there's an imbalance to this scene from
16 their viewpoint. You know, is it corrected or is it,
17 you know, there's value in keeping the formula stable
18 so that a lot of this does stay stable but sometimes it
19 -- over time it -- it gets out of kilter if you're not
20 careful. So that's one thing I'd like to talk about on
21 the 22nd. If you hear anything at the operators
22 meeting on, you know --

23 ERIC GLEASON: That -- and Jim, that --

24 JIM CLINE: -- is there -- to solve --

25 ERIC GLEASON: -- would bring back to what

1 criteria we might use to make the calculation.

2 JIM CLINE: Uh-huh.

3 ERIC GLEASON: Yeah.

4 JIM CLINE: Yeah.

5 ERIC GLEASON: Okay.

6 JOHN MCBETH: Okay. That being said, we'll
7 go to Item Number 6 which is an update on the Intercity
8 Bus study. And Eric, you have this one also.

9 ERIC GLEASON: Sure. We'll I'm gonna turn it
10 over real quickly Fred Favel from KFH, our consultant
11 team who is doing this study for us. But by way of
12 introduction to Fred, the Committee may recall that
13 back in 2019 the Committee worked through a process to
14 come up with a strategic direction report for the
15 Intercity Bus program. Where we identified the desire
16 to shift from a largely, I think hands off approach to
17 the program allowing proposals to come in and to guide
18 our discussions around those -- will guide our
19 investments around those proposals. We concluded at
20 the time there was interest in moving toward a more
21 strategic and deliberate approach to the program, that
22 while not being so prescriptive as to publish schedules
23 and all those kinds of things, that we wanted to be in
24 a position of knowing more about where intercity bus
25 program investments make the most sense. And this is

1 the rural program. So, we have hired KFH to help us
2 work through that and what you're gonna hear today will
3 be -- they started their work in earnest in January.
4 And it's gonna be an overview of what they've learned
5 to date about to Texas. And the process they've gone
6 through to date to get to that point. And to, I think
7 where we're at with this is we've kind of come to --
8 coming to a close on the outreach effort -- the initial
9 outreach effort and we are beginning to turn our focus
10 toward outcomes for the study and, you know, what are
11 the strategic priorities for this program. And so,
12 this is a good point to engage the Committee. I can
13 see us coming back in July and possibly again in
14 October with the final results from the studies. So,
15 with that, I'm gonna turn it over to Fred. Fred's been
16 doing this work; gosh it seems like forever. Sorry,
17 Fred.

18 MR. FRAVEL: You're gonna make me sound
19 historic.

20 ERIC GLEASON: Well, you are historic. I --
21 I will say -- I'll tell the Committee that I met Fred
22 when I was in graduate school in North Carolina and he
23 was a graduate assistant and going after his doctorate,
24 I believe.

25 MR. FRAVEL: Yeah.

1 ERIC GLEASON: And he was into intercity bus
2 then. So, you know, without divulging anything about
3 the timeframe associated with that --

4 MR. FRAVEL: Yeah, don't.

5 ERIC GLEASON: -- I certainly am glad to have
6 a chance to work with him again. So, Fred, I'm gonna
7 turn it over to you.

8 MR. FRAVEL: Okay. Well, thanks Eric. I
9 appreciate it. Let me just add to the PTAC comment
10 that I thought the explanation of overall transit
11 funding in Texas was excellent. I learned so much
12 listening to the first part of this, so that was useful
13 for me.

14 Josh, do you want to put the next slide up?
15 I think when we look at it, we'll see that Eric
16 actually got through much of it. The introductions and
17 where this study came from. I think the PTAC members
18 know that because they were around in the prehistory of
19 this before I got engaged in it. At any rate, as Eric
20 said we've been working away and what we're trying to
21 get to on the project schedule is to make sure that if
22 we need to make changes in the next Coordinated Call or
23 in the forms that are related to that or anything like
24 that that we have the information to make some of those
25 changes on a solid ground and in line with the

1 assessment that PTAC and TxDOT wanted. So that's --
2 that's kind of what we're going.

3 The next slide, Josh, if you can -- is
4 basically kind of our -- our timeline and where we are.
5 And I think Eric kind of talked through this a little
6 bit but we've -- we've done some work on the policy
7 context and how TxDOT runs the program. We've looked
8 at a number of other states to see how they run the
9 program and those were all combined in a draft
10 technical memorandum. We've done an inventory of the
11 existing intercity bus services and we'll show you some
12 maps for that in a couple of minutes. Those are all in
13 a technical memorandum that we've tried to put a lot of
14 information into to give us the context. We've done a
15 technical memorandum on a needs assessment that looks
16 at population and transit need factors and how that
17 relates to the Intercity Bus Network. And we've just
18 finished a series of efforts to get input from
19 stakeholders and that is all summarized in a technical
20 memorandum. We'll talk a little bit about what we
21 heard. So anyway, we're kind of at the halfway mark in
22 terms of that. A lot of the inventory existing
23 conditions work is done and now we're gonna be
24 exploring where do we go with this. And so, the
25 comment about coming back in July and October is

1 probably a good one. I think we'll want to show you
2 kind of where we think we're going that and get your
3 input on that.

4 Next slide, maybe. So, one of the things
5 that we were asked to look at kind of on the early side
6 is if we wanted to change the program and there's an
7 underlying assumption that we do, so that TxDOT is
8 providing more strategic direction to the program. Do
9 we need to change any of the language in the Texas
10 Administrative Code? And we looked at that and I, you
11 know, we didn't see anything that particularly says the
12 program has to be open ended or hands off. It does
13 have a requirement in it that says that TxDOT has to
14 consider the outstanding request from intercity
15 operators and rural transit districts. So, I don't
16 think that language prevents TxDOT from saying in this
17 Call we want to -- our priority projects are A to B and
18 C to D and we want it this often. But we probably need
19 to include an option in there so that if -- if there's
20 something that TxDOT has not perceived as a need that
21 has arisen either because it's, you know, become
22 unprofitable for one reason or another but it still
23 serving people, or some regional need has developed
24 that there's a way to consider that as part of the
25 application process. So, it could be included. Some

1 of the states that have -- take up strategic direction
2 in their application do that, they include language
3 that says, you know, here's our priorities. Here's
4 what we want. We want to see applications for if you
5 have something else that you want to apply for and make
6 the case, here's, you know, here's what you need to put
7 in and how to justify that and we'll consider that
8 against the other things. Or you could have a separate
9 request for information process prior to the
10 Coordinated Call but that kind of creates a, you know,
11 a double process. So, our assessment was you don't
12 need to change the Administrative Code to provide some
13 strategic direction in the program going forward.

14 Next slide. In the inventory that we looked
15 at, the inventory of services, we -- we're including
16 the entire Intercity Bus Network, both the subsidized
17 and the unsubsidized. And you can really kind of slice
18 it up into four main categories. And if you're really
19 into bus services you could probably spend some time
20 arguing about which is which. But there's what we
21 think of traditional intercity bus service. There's
22 Greyhound and Greyhound is also a key player in a
23 national interlaying network that is actually called
24 the National Bus Traffic Association, NBTA, where
25 carriers have their ticketing system coordinated so

1 that there's interlaying tickets. And that enterprise
2 together is -- is basically traditional intercity bus
3 service.

4 There are a number of specialized carriers
5 in, particularly in Texas, but all over the country and
6 sometimes there -- have a different orientation. But
7 in Texas we're looking at a bunch of carriers that
8 basically take folks sort of to and from Mexico across
9 the border and they -- they compete with the
10 traditional intercity bus service to some extent but
11 they're also a different market segment and have a
12 different operating model. They have their own
13 stations, for the most part. They market to a
14 different market and so they're another segment here.
15 There's short distance or regional services, some of
16 these are 5311(f) and we have a couple of private
17 intercity carriers in the state that do that. And we
18 have the CARTS program that does some regional
19 intercity routes. Some of those are tied in to that
20 national interlaying network. I think All Aboard
21 America and CARTS both are.

22 And then we've had over the past decade a
23 number of express curbside services develop. And these
24 services tend to run between big metro areas and big
25 university towns. And they don't usually have any non-

1 urbanized stops. So, they're competing with the
2 traditional intercity bus service and to some extent
3 the cross border express services. But they're not
4 likely to provide rural or city to city service in the
5 state except between the largest cities. And we're
6 thinking here of Megabus and Flixbus. Vonlane is a
7 particular market segment where they're selling an
8 express service that's got a higher level of amenities
9 and -- so we kind of divided up the service into those
10 four categories. Basically, the rural areas are not
11 served by the express curbside services. I just want
12 to make that point. So, we don't see applications from
13 them. We've given them an opportunity to participate,
14 haven't heard back. They're kind of in a different
15 setting.

16 You had a lot of coverage earlier about the
17 Covid, the pandemic impacts on the public transit
18 operators. There were significant impacts on the
19 private carriers as well. And because most of the
20 service they provide is completely funded out of their
21 fare box, when the fares -- ridership fell, the fares
22 went away, and they were really left in a very
23 difficult situation to try and keep service up. The
24 traditional carriers like Greyhound basically went
25 through and did a lot of frequency reduction. They

1 suspended some very low ridership routes, but they try
2 to maintain the network connections because for a lot
3 of the remaining riders, this service was pretty
4 essential. You know whether that was healthcare
5 workers moving to where they were needed or truck
6 operators who needed to get to the distribution points,
7 whatever. And depending on which carrier you talked to
8 and which region of the country, the ridership was
9 about 20% of normal. And of course, the revenue was
10 way down as well. So that was a reason that those
11 carriers were so interested in and had such a need for
12 that CARES funding was to maintain service.

13 Express carriers, a lot of them just simply
14 suspended their services and those probably will be
15 coming back, you know, as they perceive that travel is
16 picking up again. The traditional carriers like
17 Greyhound, we had a meeting with Greyhound a week or so
18 ago, and they are cautiously optimistic and they're
19 bringing back some schedules on a very dynamic kind of
20 a thing. Monitoring ridership and putting service back
21 in where it looks like they'll be enough riders.
22 They're still limiting capacity on vehicles, so even if
23 a vehicle is running it's not generating the revenue it
24 would have before. But they're seeing some beginnings
25 of an upturn in the ridership. I'm kind of optimistic

1 because a lot of intercity bus ridership is really
2 driven by family trips, social networks and I think
3 there's a lot of people in this country that have put
4 off connecting with other people for a year and a half
5 and that once there's a perception that it's safe,
6 people will be out there trying to connect up with
7 their families and catch up on events and things like
8 that that they've foregone. So, you know, in addition
9 to kind of recreation related trips as well. We're
10 seeing that with the airlines as well.

11 Anyway, next slide. This is a map of the
12 Texas Intercity Bus Network. And it's, you know,
13 you'll have to print it out and study it really, but
14 the point of it is that there is a significant network
15 statewide, most of it is operated by private carriers
16 with fare box revenue as the main source to support it.
17 And on this map, we've tried to code by carrier to show
18 how the different carriers operate. But you can
19 certainly see the number of carriers that focus on the
20 Texas triangle and the kind of the main services going
21 out of the state and how -- how there are fewer
22 carriers in some of the more rural areas as you get
23 into central and west Texas and into the Panhandle.

24 Next slide. Now the previous map kind of
25 showed the coverage and this is one where we've tried

1 to show the frequency. And again, you see really that
2 some of the Greyhound service and some of the service
3 provided by other carriers in the rural areas is really
4 basically one round trip a day. It's kind of lifeline
5 service, you know. If you're in, oh I don't know, pick
6 a town. If you're in San Angelo or something like and
7 you need to get somewhere out of town and you're not a
8 Medicaid client going to a medically approved service,
9 this is your option and that's, you know, there's a bus
10 a day in each direction. So it's not -- not a level of
11 service that's trying to drive people out of cars or
12 attract them out of other alternatives. This is --
13 this is for folks that need it and don't have an
14 alternative basically in much of the state. That's a
15 little different when you get into the triangle where
16 you see the frequency in the express buses and you can,
17 you know, if you got multiple trips per day, it becomes
18 a better alternative. And that's also in the region in
19 the state where the traffic congestion and the parking
20 might lead you to say, I think I'd rather take the bus.
21 And so -- but that's largely the part of it that we're
22 -- we're relying on the private market to decide how
23 much service and where it goes.

24 Now there's an inset on this map that is an
25 effort to depict the CARTS interurban network. Which

1 is basically a network of regional routes that connect
2 with Greyhound in Austin that CARTS as a rural
3 transportation provider has developed. And it's
4 interlined with Greyhound so it's part of that process
5 as well.

6 Next slide. Now this kind of shows you what
7 the 5311(f) program funding is focused on. The -- the
8 pink lines are depicting the unsubsidized route network
9 and the blue lines jump right out as the subsidized
10 routes that are -- that are currently funded. In the
11 past there have been some other subsidized routes.
12 Some of them were discontinued and others actually the
13 ridership improved to a point that they were graduated
14 from the program, of course all prior to Covid. But
15 you can see that, you know, the focus of the subsidy
16 routes is pretty much been in the western --
17 central/western Panhandle region where the costs are
18 high because the miles are long and the ridership is
19 thin because the populations are lower. And that is,
20 you know, there's a certain sense to that that we see
21 on the map.

22 Next slide. If we look at what percentage of
23 people in Texas live within 10 miles of an intercity
24 bus stop, about 2/3 of the state has that level of --
25 of access, in terms of population. Now that includes

1 your urban populations as well. We find that in the
2 really rural areas, that a lot of people think well 10
3 miles is just, you know, we drive that to get a quart
4 of milk or something. And people are willing to drive
5 25 miles to pick up grandma at a bus stop or access a
6 bus to get out of town. And if you take that broader
7 definition of the service area, 94% of the population
8 lives within 25 miles. Now this includes both the
9 subsidized and the 5311(f) routes. So, we've got about
10 5.8% of the population that's more than 25 miles from
11 an intercity bus stop. Which is -- these are looking
12 across the county and states, these are pretty good
13 coverage levels of the combined total Statewide
14 Intercity Bus Network. I should say that that network
15 is -- the coverage of the network is based on the pre-
16 Covid and if we looked at what was discontinued during
17 -- during Covid, the coverage actually stayed pretty
18 much the same. Greyhound, I think stopped service to,
19 oh I can't remember what it was, six -- six points or
20 something in the state during Covid and they're
21 anticipating bringing back most of that. But most of
22 the points that were served continued to have some
23 level of service. Frequencies went down and sometimes
24 routings became more indirect.

25 Next slide. We also did some work trying to

1 see does that network serve areas with high needs. And
2 this is based on the percentage of the population. We
3 have an index that we call a Transit Dependent Index
4 that's a combined index based on low-income folks, auto
5 less households, seniors, persons with disabilities.
6 For intercity bus we also include young adults. And
7 what this index has developed and then it's ranked to
8 the level of the index across the entire state. So,
9 the darker shaded areas have a higher transit
10 dependents index compared to the mean level for the
11 state. And this is on a percentage basis, so we see
12 that some of the more rural areas, there's a high
13 percentage of the population that fits into the high
14 transit needs category. It may not be a large number
15 of people. So, you can sometimes see that there's --
16 there's high needs as a percentage of the population in
17 some of your really rural areas. And here you can see
18 the -- some of the Panhandle and the Valley areas crop
19 up and some areas over in the far eastern part of the
20 state as well. One of the aspects of using the Census
21 data to do this though is that the size of the block
22 groups varies with whether you're rural or urban. So,
23 on a percentage basis we might find in an urban area
24 that there's -- we're not seeing a large area that's
25 got a high needs percentage but there may be more

1 people in an urban area with -- with the high needs
2 characteristics.

3 Next slide. One of the factors that I saw
4 that you're using in determining needs for the overall
5 public transit program is -- is overall population.
6 We're trying to drill down to find out if there's areas
7 that have some level of population that are potentially
8 in need of additional intercity bus routes or services.
9 That they're more than 25 miles from an existing stop
10 and that they have some level of population that might
11 contribute to ridership. So, this is a step in getting
12 to the identifying priority areas. This is the largest
13 urban clusters -- now the census definition of urban
14 clusters is 2500 and above and so these are folks that
15 are more than 25 miles from a stop. And you can see
16 the little -- if you study map, you see numbers that
17 are key to the top urban areas that are more than 25
18 miles from a stop. And, you know, they're distributed
19 around the state but interestingly there are a number,
20 kind of along the Gulf Coast that open area between the
21 metroplex and oh, San Angelo, Big Spring, south of
22 Abilene, there's some dots in that area. And then as
23 you're going along the kind of between Gainesville,
24 Wichita Falls up to Amarillo you see some -- some dots
25 as well. There are some in east Texas and across the

1 northern part of the state as well. So, this is based
2 on kind of the numbers. Are there people there? And
3 are there -- are they lacking service is where we're
4 kind of starting with that.

5 Next slide. So, in addition to looking at
6 the numbers we wanted to give people a chance to weigh
7 in. we had six regional meetings and we tried to get
8 invitations out to transit operators, you know, a wide
9 variety of people. Transit operators, regional
10 planners, centers for independent living, community
11 action agencies, veteran's organizations, tribal
12 entities, higher education, the private intercity
13 operators and typically it's difficult to get public
14 input or even stakeholder input for intercity bus
15 because the immediate stakeholders, the companies that
16 run the buses, are a fairly small finite group. And
17 the people that ride the buses are folks that don't
18 typically have a lot of time or focus or knowledge
19 about how to participate in public transit, you know,
20 in the planning process. You know, we find it's very
21 different from local or regional types of transit
22 planning services because at any given route or
23 whatever the people on the bus are from all over the
24 country. They're not all from that region or that
25 town. So, it's hard to get information out of them.

1 But we wanted to pick the brains of as many people as
2 we could. The regional meetings actually were a kind
3 of a pleasant surprise to me. I really -- I didn't
4 expect a lot of attendance. They were small groups,
5 but we had everybody participate and we ended up having
6 almost a focus group, I would say at each of the
7 meetings, and we got a lot of good input.

8 Next slide. We have a tech memo that has a
9 lot more information, but this is kind of some of the
10 preliminary observations that we got out of the
11 meetings. Certainly, people remember intercity bus
12 services that used to exist and have been discontinued.
13 If you go back far enough there have been sort of waves
14 of -- of service being discontinued. Once upon a time
15 up 'til 1982 there was a federal regulatory structure
16 that kept a lot of rural service in place because
17 carriers had to run that if they wanted to provide
18 service on the high traffic routes or to provide
19 charter service. After the federal deregulation, a
20 huge amount of rural service was lost. And then
21 subsequently there was a Greyhound bankruptcy strike
22 and bankruptcy in the early 90's, more rural service
23 was lost. Greyhound went through a restructuring in
24 the mid 2000's and I think that restructuring finally
25 sort of touched a nerve in a lot of states and they

1 began to take advantage of 5311(f) because folks were
2 starting to put their hands up and say, we can't get
3 from, you know, rural America to connect with anything.
4 So, there's been a lot of service lost. There are gaps
5 in the connectivity of the existing service, and we
6 heard this kind of in two areas. One is getting to the
7 intercity bus stops from rural areas. And sometimes
8 that has indirect routing but we also heard from the
9 rural transit operators who basically said, well we
10 provide some long distance routes but we get to the
11 edge of our service district and people need to go
12 beyond that to medical services or family or personal
13 businesses -- and personal business and we -- we, you
14 know, can't cross our jurisdictional boundaries and we
15 have to try to and line up things for some other
16 transit operator to take them and, you know, we would
17 need intercity connections to address some of that.

18 People also identified unserved areas and
19 examples of corridors that they thought needed service.
20 Many folks were surprised to see how much of a network
21 there was all together and were not aware that -- of
22 this network and how to get information about it. I
23 think there's a clear need for that.

24 A number of comments about the bus stops.
25 That in rural areas, you know, once upon a time we had

1 bus stations for Commission Agents in a lot of areas
2 and now in a lot of places the bus kind of stops in
3 front of a gas station that may or may not be marked.
4 And there's no shelters and that's an issue that was
5 remarked on and perceived.

6 Some folks also brought up the cost of
7 intercity bus fares. That for low-income people it's -
8 - it's prohibitive to take those longer trips. And
9 that was particularly brought up in the Valley/South
10 Texas region.

11 In thinking about how to get regional rural
12 transit customers to get into needed services in the
13 big cities, there's a concern about the intercity bus
14 might take them from the rural town into the bigger
15 city but particularly for elderly folks or those with
16 mobility issues or something like that, that navigating
17 the first mile/last mile to get to their destination is
18 really a challenge and an issue. And that's one reason
19 that a lot of the rural transit operators, you know,
20 there's very limited use of intercity bus for putting
21 like non-emergency medical trips on intercity bus.
22 They have to deal with those issues at both ends of the
23 trip.

24 Next slide. We -- like I mentioned, there
25 were particular corridors and areas that -- areas were

1 identified as needing some service. East/far western
2 part of the state between El Paso going east toward
3 Midland/Odessa, some of those counties were mentioned.
4 That Brownwood area between San Angelo and the
5 metroplex was brought up. A number of areas in the
6 rural south Texas, in the Valley area and also, we
7 heard some comments about really along the Gulf Coast
8 and a lot of the small towns there as well.

9 There were also some comments about even the
10 area that's more than 25 miles from the Houston
11 Greyhound station includes a number of areas that
12 there's a perceived need for some kind of intercity
13 service or transit service and some of those areas are
14 inside the urbanized area and a few of them are outside
15 and might be on the inside in future years. That's an
16 issue to look at. Galveston, in particular.

17 Station conditions were brought up again as
18 well. And in the tech memo we have a lot more
19 information and what we're -- and as we're developing.
20 It's kind of priority areas or themes, we'll be
21 bringing that information together with the
22 demographics in this next technical memorandum that's
23 coming out.

24 So that's kind of where we are with the
25 identifying needs. So, there's -- there's really sort

1 of two sides to your -- your overall mission. Can
2 Texas provide or include strategic direction? We think
3 that's feasible and doable. And then the other part of
4 it is what is that strategic direction? And that's --
5 that's kind of what we're working here. And then as we
6 see what that is we'll be focusing more on how do we
7 translate that into the program.

8 Next slide. So, anyway, this kind of -- I
9 think we've kind of talked through this but we've
10 really gotten through a number of those preliminary
11 steps as Eric said in the introduction. The input has
12 helped a lot and we're, you know, we're still open to
13 input. There is a project website through the TxDOT
14 website and of course if you want to reach out to me,
15 to the team with anything that comes to your mind,
16 we're -- we're interested and open on that. We're
17 still aiming to have everything wrapped up by the end
18 of October, but we want to get our input in for the
19 application process and so on before that. And so,
20 we'll be wanting to get you more information and build
21 on this knowledge base in the near future actually as
22 we move toward that.

23 So, I think the next slide is kind of the
24 next steps, one that we always have at the end of one
25 of these. So Technical Memorandum Four, our editorial

1 staff is cleaning it up as we speak and I think that'll
2 be in TxDOT's hands by Friday, the documents that
3 outreach process. And we're working on that priority
4 areas, bringing all of that together. One of the
5 interesting tasks that I now see a little bit more
6 interest about is really the evaluation of existing and
7 proposed services and calculating performance measures.
8 TxDOT has actually done -- compared to most of the
9 states that I work in, has done a much better job
10 collecting data from the grant recipients under this
11 intercity program to be able to look at performance
12 measure. So, we'll be looking at the existing 5311(f)
13 projects and then when we look at potential areas for
14 additional projects or new projects, what we try to do
15 is develop estimates of what the performance would be
16 based on ridership estimates. We have to use demand
17 models which are particularly in the wake of Covid
18 really fraught with some issues but -- and then kind of
19 look at performance standards and say would it, you
20 know, do we want to fund this new service if it's gonna
21 cost \$300 a trip? Do we want to fund this new service
22 if we think we can do it for \$50 a trip? And we'll
23 come back to you with that -- kind of with that
24 perspective in Technical Memorandum Number 6. So, the
25 performance end of things is -- is I think gonna be an

1 interesting -- an interesting aspect of it. It relates
2 back to a lot of the program issues though. If you
3 looked at the funding, one of the things you didn't see
4 that there was state funding for match or state funding
5 for this program is that we're using in-kind match from
6 Greyhound miles, the value of that as the match for all
7 of these services. And how this all pans out in the
8 future depends on Greyhound having enough unsubsidized
9 service to provide miles and to be able to use that in
10 a connected network. So, we're all watching and hoping
11 for that to come back. Texas may have some advantages
12 in being able to use transportation development credits
13 in some ways for that. And we're looking at that as a
14 program option as well. So, that's where we're going
15 and that's kind of where we are. And thank you very
16 much. Is there another slide? I don't think so. Yes,
17 for more information.

18 ERIC GLEASON: Thank you, Fred. So, John at
19 this point we'll open -- open up the Committee for
20 questions, comments, anything that comes to mind. This
21 is not an action item today. It is just an update. We
22 did feel it was a good time to check in with the
23 Committee though on this work to see if there were any
24 thoughts.

25 JOHN MCBETH: Well, this is John. I like the

1 direction this is going. I would make a couple of
2 comments. One in regard to the -- any changes in the
3 TAC, I've read everything I can read at the federal/
4 state level on intercity bus set-asides. I would like
5 to see the TAC state that the 15% that is set aside for
6 intercity bus is distributed by the rural formula to
7 every rural transit system in the state. And they will
8 be required to spend it on intercity bus, but the
9 intercity bus carriers will have to come to them.
10 Provide their plan of what they're going to do. And
11 then and only then would the rural transit system fund
12 them. And if the rural transit system doesn't want to
13 do intercity bus, then that money would be remitted
14 back to TxDOT to distribute however they wish to
15 distribute it. I think that's the only way to make the
16 program serve the whole state as opposed to the very
17 small portion of the state it is currently serving.
18 So, that -- that -- that's my comment and as everybody
19 knows I've vehemently against this program. I don't
20 understand how it was ever funded out of the rural
21 program at the national level other than we were a
22 really easy target. When I President of CTAA, I
23 lobbied hard against this program. It belongs with
24 Amtrak. It doesn't belong at rural transit. Period.
25 Now, that's -- that's just my -- that's my opinion and

1 I'll have that opinion til the day I die. And now that
2 Amtrak has \$80 billion more this is a perfect time to
3 move them. So, I'll get off that soapbox. Does
4 anybody else have any comments?

5 JIM CLINE: Yeah, I'd like -- this is Jim.
6 I'd like to put something in if I could.

7 JOHN MCBETH: Sure.

8 JIM CLINE: I'm really interested in -- in
9 with due deference to John and your feelings on that,
10 if we have to -- if we are -- and we are mandated to do
11 this, how is the best -- the best strategic way for us
12 to do this? I mean, how can we, you know,
13 (indiscernible) and address if you -- for the folks
14 that don't have access. And I think that would be, you
15 know, particularly important in what we do. And I'm
16 not sure if that's -- do we fund trips? Or do we fund
17 service? Wow, that's an interesting question but I'd
18 like y'all -- I'd like to see that, you know, just --
19 I'm just curious what y'all thoughts are on that.

20 MR. FRAVEL: If I could just -- could you
21 just repeat that because you broke up in there, but you
22 were saying do we fund blank or do we fund blank? And
23 I just want to hear what you were saying.

24 JIM CLINE: Oh, I'm sorry. Would it be
25 possible to actually fund the trip, I mean like tickets

1 and funding that sort of thing? Or is it funding the
2 service to make the trips available?

3 MR. FRAVEL: Okay.

4 JIM CLINE: And it -- you know, is it -- so
5 that kind of different perspe -- I don't know if that's
6 legit or not but that's something that might be a way
7 to address the need in some ways also.

8 MR. FRAVEL: Okay. There have -- many years
9 ago when there was more privately provided intercity
10 bus service in rural America, there were some states
11 that tried to do, you know, a user side subsidy. And,
12 you know, basically write down the fares and one of the
13 problems that arose was that if you don't provide some
14 minimum level of service there's nothing for those
15 people to ride. And that -- that's kind of a just a
16 comment now. We'll be glad to look into it more but
17 that -- that's kind of where -- where the program
18 evolved at a national sense. Was that the number of
19 riders, even giving them -- if you gave the rider \$75
20 toward their trip, there aren't -- that isn't gonna be
21 enough to get an operator to operate that service and
22 you just won't have anything for them to use that on.
23 And it's, you know, maybe at these days they could go
24 to an Uber and I don't know what an Uber trip from
25 Brownwood to the metroplex cost but, you know, that --

1 that, you know, that might -- you know, if we can at
2 least I would say speculate on that in the study if
3 you're interested in looking at that.

4 MR. SALAZAR: Hey Fred, this is J.R. and I'm
5 in Brownwood right now as we speak. And --

6 MR. FRAVEL: Oh boy, okay. I'm sorry to be
7 using your example. I don't know nothing about
8 Brownwood to be doing that.

9 MR. SALAZAR: No, no, no by no means do I
10 mean it that way. But I think the community here is
11 frustrated that they don't have trips to Austin or
12 trips to Dallas/Fort Worth and, you know, and -- but I
13 think its specific trips. I mean, so if we opened up a
14 route from Brownwood to Dallas or Brownwood to Austin,
15 I don't think we'd fill up a bus and I think it's, you
16 know, just people here need it individually and so they
17 speak out and say we don't have service but -- and
18 that's just my quick thoughts on, you know, Brownwood,
19 Texas to Dallas. And I'll tell you, there is no
20 individual providers. There are no Uber's or Lyft's in
21 Brownwood, Texas.

22 MR. FRAVEL: Which is generally the case in
23 rural America. I mean, we're just -- we don't have a
24 lot of options, you know, so. But I don't know, you're
25 correct. I don't think -- based on the demand models

1 we've got and things like that, I don't think it would
2 fill a bus in that sense. The way intercity bus has
3 survived as a mode, and this is very for true for
4 Amtrak as well, is by -- is from the network. That
5 every one of these little dots produces a few trips of
6 people that are going to, you know, along the range of
7 other dots. And when you accumulate them on a long
8 route that's between two major endpoints and the bus
9 has a few people between the endpoints and then has a
10 few people getting on and off at each place, it's
11 enough to sustain the service. And that's one reason
12 the model of saying, oh we're gonna fund the intercity
13 bus from Brownwood to Austin. My guess is that when we
14 looked at that we would find a very high cost per trip
15 --

16 MR. SALAZAR: Yep.

17 MR. FRAVEL: -- for that limited number of
18 people that really want to make that trip every day.
19 But if we have a bus going through there that's already
20 got 10 or 12 people on it, you know, the downside of
21 that is the bus going through there is not going to be
22 scheduled to be the most convenient for people in
23 Brownwood. They want to go in the morning and come
24 back in the evening.

25 MR. SALAZAR: Sure.

1 MR. FRAVEL: And a bus that starts in Del Rio
2 and goes to Dallas, you know, it's not gonna go through
3 Brownwood at the most convenient time. But it's --
4 it's really in many ways about a lifeline alternative
5 service for people that are not clients of a particular
6 agency. In other words, the rest of the public, so.

7 But I hear John's comment and I believe me I
8 was around in 1991 when that whole issue was -- was
9 fought at the national level and at CTAA and all of
10 that and I -- I know -- I know where he's coming from
11 and I know people that will have that belief 'til their
12 dying day. And if it had been up to me, I would've
13 made this program -- at one time it was -- there were
14 drafts that would've called this Section 17 instead of
15 Section 18. It would've been its own program. For
16 whatever reason, Congress decided to go ahead and put
17 the -- put it into a rural and I -- I don't -- I don't
18 know all of the behind that but that's where we are
19 with it, so. In effect, it's a separate subsection and
20 funding was added to the -- what became the 5311
21 program at the time that was supposed to accommodate
22 the expansion of this 15%. But we can -- we can -- we
23 can meet over a beverage and discuss that history at
24 some point.

25 JIM CLINE: Eric, this is Jim. Naivety on my

1 part regarding the -- you know the trips -- the routes.
2 I'm not suggesting that that has to be part of -- by
3 any means that that has to be something that's
4 addressed. Other than -- at the end of the day if
5 we're gonna spend some money on this, it needs to be --
6 it needs to make a difference where it does. And that
7 may be part of the -- well, it may come across as
8 unfair when we don't have it all over the state, we
9 could get some results. Where we could actually some -
10 - answer a need and answer demand and provide the
11 lifeline service for a specific area or areas that
12 might make the most sense. And so, anyway I'll throw
13 that out there.

14 ERIC GLEASON: Yeah, it's an interesting --
15 interesting challenge, I think, to take what is largely
16 a lifeline basic mobility coverage objective to make
17 sure you maintain connections even if the private
18 carriers cannot. It's almost by definition you're not
19 into the high-performance end of things anyways but
20 given that charge, how do you be as highly performing
21 as you can be? What is the best way and the best use
22 of funds with that basic. I think what is basically a
23 coverage of access with this program. That's just, you
24 know -- it's always more fun and exciting when you're
25 talking the high performers and what to do with that

1 but almost by definition we're working with the other
2 end of the spectrum and trying to make the best use of
3 the funds we have for that purpose.

4 I want to do a time check. It's 11:57, we
5 are scheduled to go until noon, I believe. So, I do
6 want to wrap this up. I want to thank Fred for your
7 time and the work you all have done so far. We look
8 forward to having you come back and reveal more of what
9 your conclusions are as you get closer to wrapping up.
10 So --

11 MR. FRAVEL: Okay.

12 ERIC GLEASON: -- thanks for that.

13 MR. FRAVEL: I'll look forward to continuing.

14 JOHN MCBETH: Great report.

15 ERIC GLEASON: Mr. Chair, I will turn it back
16 to you.

17 JOHN MCBETH: We'll go to Agenda Item Number
18 7. Josh, do we have any public comments? I hear no
19 public comments.

20 ERIC GLEASON: We don't hear Josh either.

21 JOHN MCBETH: Josh -- or Josh, yeah.

22 ERIC GLEASON: Okay, let's just --

23 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Sorry, I must've muted myself
24 accidentally. John, there are no public comments at
25 this time.

1 JOHN MCBETH: Okay.

2 JOSH RIBAKOVE: I'm monitoring that and the
3 Q&A.

4 JOHN MCBETH: There being no public comments,
5 we'll go to Agenda Item 8, which is discuss future
6 agenda items. Which I think we've already discussed
7 those, but we also need to establish date and time for
8 the next meeting.

9 ERIC GLEASON: Yes, sir and right now we are
10 looking at July 22nd. Which would be the day after the
11 semiannual meeting with all the transit districts that
12 we have.

13 JOHN MCBETH: And I guess it's at 10 o'clock?

14 ERIC GLEASON: Yes, sir.

15 JOSH RIBAKOVE: (Indiscernible) convenient,
16 sir.

17 JIM CLINE: Yeah, that works for me John.

18 JOHN MCBETH: Okay. Works for me. Anybody
19 have any problem with that?

20 MARC WHYTE: Nope.

21 JOHN MCBETH: Okay.

22 MR. SALAZAR: Hey John, this -- John, this is
23 J.R. I just have one question real quick for Eric,
24 does PTN -- do y'all have an idea of when PTN is gonna
25 go back to the work setting as opposed to being

1 virtual?

2 ERIC GLEASON: So, where we -- we are able to
3 return anytime we wish. But in terms of the semiannual
4 conference, July will be virtual.

5 MR. SALAZAR: Okay.

6 ERIC GLEASON: And I anticipate January will
7 be our first opportunity back.

8 MR. SALAZAR: Okay.

9 JOHN MCBETH: I was about to ask the same
10 question. Great. Okay.

11 JOSH RIBAKOVE: This is Josh. I'd like to
12 propose dates for our October and January's meeting as
13 well. If we can discuss those. And in October we're
14 thinking of Tuesday, October 26th, it's the last
15 Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. And then January we
16 were thinking about Thursday January 27th or Friday
17 January 28th. And those follow the operators meeting
18 in January.

19 ERIC GLEASON: Josh, why don't we just send
20 an e-mail out to members and throw out all three dates,
21 July, October and January and ask for feedback on that.

22 JOSH RIBAKOVE: Will do.

23 ERIC GLEASON: Thank you.

24 JOHN MCBETH: Okay. Then that brings us to
25 Item Number 9, which is adjournment. Which is an

1 action item. If I could get a motion from ken Fickes
2 and a second from J.R. Salazar, we can adjourn. Hello?

3 ERIC GLEASON: Maybe we've already adjourned,
4 and we just don't know it.

5 JOSH RIBAKOVE: We haven't. I see Ken's
6 still on the line and J.R. is still on the line.

7 MR. SALAZAR: This is J.R. I'll move that we
8 adjourn. If we can get another second somewhere.

9 JIM CLINE: I'll second it. This is Jim.

10 JOHN MCBETH: All in favor signify by saying
11 aye.

12 (Aye stated in unison.)

13 MR. SALAZAR: Y'all take care.

14 JOHN MCBETH: Okay. Thank y'all.

15 JOSH RIBAKOVE: And our meeting is adjourned.
16 Thanks everyone.

17 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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6 the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing
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8 the same for the purposes and consideration therein
9 expressed.

10 Given under my hand and seal of office this
11 _____ day of _____, 2021.

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