

Date:

November 09, 2021

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MEETING OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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2021 MEETING OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: November 9, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: KIM TINDALL & ASSOCIATES REMOTE
16414 San Pedro Avenue, Suite 900
San Antonio, Texas 78232

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Reported By: REBECCA K. QUINN, CSR #5720
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PTAC members participating virtually:

- John McBeth
- Jim Cline
- Detrich M. Von Biedenfeld
- Ken Fickes
- J.R. Salazar

TXDOT participating virtually:

- Eric Gleason, Director, Public Transportation
Division
- Josh Ribakove, Communications Manager, Public
Transportation Division

Also participating virtually Fred Fravel, KFH
Group, Inc.

P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 MR. CLINE: This is the 2021 meeting of the
4 Public Transportation Advisory Committee. We'll call
5 this meeting to order.

6 Josh, could you please review the -- all
7 right. Let's first of all start off with a roll --
8 Josh, if you could do a roll call for the PTAC members.

9 MR. RIBAKOVE: Happy to. That was Jim Cline.
10 John McBeth, are you with us? If you can't talk, just
11 type in the Chat.

12 MR. MC BETH: Here.

13 MR. RIBAKOVE: Okay. Detrich Von Biedenfeld?

14 MR. VON BIEDENFELD: I am here.

15 MR. RIBAKOVE: Ken Fickes?

16 MR. FICKES: Present.

17 MR. RIBAKOVE: And J.R. Salazar?

18 MR. SALAZAR: Here as well.

19 MR. RIBAKOVE: That is who we've got at this
20 moment, Jim. And that is enough for a quorum.

21 MR. CLINE: Very good. Item number 2 is
22 Guidance on the Virtual Meeting Participation.

23 Josh, could you give us a briefing on that,
24 please?

25 MR. RIBAKOVE: Sure. Hi everyone. Your line

1 has been muted when you joined the meeting. If you want
2 to comment during our public comment period, just let me
3 know through the meeting's Chat or Q&A, and I can unmute
4 your mic so you can comment.

5 It's important to add to your name when you
6 joined the meeting, and as far as I can see, everyone
7 has. But if you haven't, then please exit the meeting
8 and rejoin. Because seeing your name is how I'll know
9 it's you and be able to unmute.

10 Again, to comment on an agenda item, use the
11 Chat feature. Let me know, I will respond to unmute
12 your line, and use the Q&A as well. Don't place the
13 meeting on hold, please, because we will all hear your
14 hold tone or music, whatever that happens to be.

15 I'm going to talk a little bit about committee
16 motions. For standard motions, the Chair will request a
17 motion from a specific member and then ask another for a
18 second. And our standard questions today will be the
19 Minutes and the meeting adjournment will end.

20 So there are no other action items in this
21 meeting.

22 MR. CLINE: Thank you. Thank you, Josh. Item
23 number 3 is that first action item which is the Approval
24 of Minutes from the September 9th, 2021 meeting. Those
25 were included with the packet of information, and if

1 you -- are there any questions from members of PTAC?

2 If there -- and when we get to the point, I
3 will ask for a motion from J.R. and a second from Ken.
4 Hearing no questions?

5 MR. SALAZAR: Yes, this is J.R. I move to
6 approve.

7 MR. FICKES: This is Ken Fickes. I move to
8 second.

9 MR. CLINE: All members of PTAC in favor of
10 this motion signify by saying aye.

11 PTAC MEMBERS: Aye, aye, aye, aye.

12 MR. CLINE: All oppose, same sign.

13 The motion carries unanimously. Thank you for
14 your help on that.

15 Item number 4 is the TXDOT Public
16 Transportation Director's Report, and so Eric, I'll call
17 on you to make that report.

18 MR. GLEASON: All right. This is Eric
19 Gleason, TXDOT Division, Director of Public
20 Transportation. Thanks, Jim, for that.

21 One more point of clarification to add to
22 Josh's meeting protocols and that has to do with public
23 comment. And I think Mr. Chair if it's all right with
24 you, or Mr. Vice Chair, when we get through the
25 presentation around Item 5, which is the next item in

1 the discussion of the Intercity Bus Program, that that
2 would be an appropriate time either immediately
3 following committee discussion or prior to that to
4 invite any public comment on that topic as opposed to
5 waiting toward the end of the meeting.

6 I want to make sure everyone is clear on that,
7 and that way the committee will have the benefit of
8 those comments in the context of that discussion. And I
9 also want to emphasize to everyone listening that that
10 discussion today -- we are not requesting any action on
11 the part of the committee, and I will probably
12 re-emphasize that when we get to it.

13 So for today this is all sort of, you know,
14 I -- if I had my report ready next Thursday, I'd throw
15 it out, and we're going to work with, you know, the
16 breaking news portion of what's going on. And it's
17 really two things that I want to identify for the
18 committee. Obviously the first one has to do with the
19 passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act by
20 the House. Now awaiting signature by the President.

21 This is a long awaited and, you know, seemed
22 to be on life support in any particular point along the
23 way, but bottom line on this for Transit from a funding
24 standpoint is a significant increase across the board, a
25 30 percent increase for the programs we administer as a

1 department. Just to give you a sense of what that means
2 over the life of the authorization because the
3 Investment Act also is an Authorization Act through
4 2026.

5 So our current level of funding the FY21
6 amounts that we manage as a department is about 66.7
7 million dollars. And at the end of authorization in
8 fiscal year '26 that amount is going to be 94.1 million.
9 So that's a 27.4 million increase, and it's comprised of
10 two -- two chunks, if you will. The 30 percent across
11 the board increase in program funding occurs in FY22,
12 and then each year after that through the authorization
13 there's a baseline percentage growth to each program.
14 That varies anywhere from 2 to just over 3 percent
15 depending on the year. And so when we add up the
16 initial FY22 amount and then add in the gross each year
17 in authorization, that actually results in a 41 percent
18 increase, across the board increase in all of our
19 programs over the lifetime of the authorization.

20 So this is an enormous opportunity for us as a
21 state to I think make a significant and enduring impact
22 on our programs. And as you might imagine, 75 percent
23 of that increase is associated with the 5311 program.
24 And so not only it's big, but the majority of it is
25 around the 5311 program, which -- you know, I think at

1 this point the funding implications are pretty clear. I
2 think what remains to be seen is what else from a what I
3 call a programmatic level what other kinds of changes in
4 our programs might be in the authorization legislation,
5 and we've just simply not had time to go through and
6 sort those out. And I hope to have more on that ready
7 for the committee in January.

8 The other thing that -- that's at work here is
9 our formula efforts and the schedule for that. And we
10 have identified all along one of the -- one of the key
11 milestones for us in this around the formula is the
12 timing of the Census Bureau's (audio unintelligible)
13 determinations. And typically that would be occurring
14 in the spring of '22 and impacting FY23 programs.

15 We learned yesterday that the Bureau is now
16 targeting a summer release for those determinations,
17 and, you know, the general feeling is that that will be
18 later in the summer rather than earlier. And, you know,
19 I would remind everyone that the summer actually extends
20 through September 20th, the solstice.

21 So I think we're looking at an end of year,
22 end of federal fiscal year announcement of those
23 determinations, which we need to complete our work
24 around any changes to the formula. And so that's kind
25 of -- we're going to take another look at our schedule

1 and again have that ready for you in January, but it's
2 going to push us back, the whole process back around
3 rule making four, five months.

4 So, you know, that's kind of a wrench in our
5 plans. We've talked about that being a possibility and
6 now we'll have to program that in more specifically. So
7 stay tuned for that.

8 So I'm thinking that's probably all I want to
9 say on that right now. So we'll have a more complete
10 interpretation of what's in authorization and then the
11 impact that will have on our current rule making
12 process.

13 The final thing I will mention, some of you
14 may recall that early on when we were talking about why
15 do we need to make changes to the rules, clearly we felt
16 the formula changes were important, but we identified at
17 that time that if we were to get authorization in the
18 midst of our process, that we would consider expanding
19 the scope of the rule making to bring in those other
20 programs we managed, such as the 5310 program, for
21 example, bring that into our rule change discussions.
22 And so here we are, we have that situation.

23 And so the other thing we'll be doing between
24 now and your meeting in January, we'll be trying to
25 assess how we do that from a scheduling standpoint. You

1 know, how we'll get information in front of you as the
2 committee and when to expand that scope to include the
3 full extent of authorization. So lots to figure out,
4 more to do and more information on that at your meeting
5 in January.

6 So I think that's probably the extent of my
7 report. I will tell the committee that we have
8 scheduled a statewide conference call with Rural and
9 Urban Transit Districts for next Thursday where I'll say
10 at least as much as I have this morning and perhaps some
11 more depending on what more we may know.

12 So in the context of today's report, I'm
13 willing -- let's see if there aren't some questions that
14 committee members may have that we can write down. I
15 would remind you that we can't go so far in that
16 discussion under this item to actually reach conclusions
17 or discuss too much more beyond just identifying what
18 your questions might be at this point.

19 So I'll -- I'll open it up. I know that Ken
20 has already identified some possible changes in the
21 Transportation Development Credit Program where the --
22 you know, there is the ability to entertain a pilot that
23 might look at exchanging development credits with other
24 states in return for some -- some -- I imagine some
25 monetary value for them for state, that it can take

1 advantage of a development credit.

2 So all that remains to be seen, but if you
3 have had a chance to look through and identify other
4 things you're interested in hearing about, we can take
5 those down now if you have them or we can assemble those
6 over the time frame between now and our January meeting.

7 So I'll open it up for any comments on
8 anything I just said.

9 MR. CLINE: Any comments from PTAC members?

10 PTAC MEMBER: No, that made sense.

11 MR. GLEASON: So feel free in the ensuing time
12 frame to send to -- want it sent to Josh or Karen?

13 MR. RIBAKOVE: To Karen.

14 MR. GLEASON: Send to Karen Burkhardt
15 (phonetic) any issues you may identify as you learn more
16 about what's in the legislation or questions you have,
17 and we'll try and accumulate those over the next time
18 frame and get answers for you if we can by the January
19 meeting.

20 MR. CLINE: Very good, Eric.

21 MR. GLEASON: And I think that concludes my
22 report.

23 MR. CLINE: One request I would make, this is
24 Jim, Eric, if you could, please send Karen's contact
25 info to the PTAC members after the meeting. Just to

1 make sure we got good contact info for her.

2 MR. GLEASON: We'll do. Josh will send that
3 out immediately following the meeting, if not now.

4 MR. CLINE: Very good. Okay. Eric, I think
5 we've got Item Number 5, which is up next which is
6 presentation and discussion on Intercity Bus Study
7 Results. And one thing that I think I'm going just
8 before you kick that off and introduce our guest, I --
9 in your thoughts that you had earlier about taking
10 public comment, and I liked feedback from the PTAC
11 members, if we could at the conclusion of the
12 presentation take any feedback from members outside --
13 or members of the public that may have questions and
14 then we can have our discussion, or if you prefer to put
15 the order differently, but I do think bringing the
16 public comment in at this point as Eric suggested would
17 be very positive.

18 Any thoughts on that about opening it up first
19 before we have a committee discussion?

20 Hearing none, Eric, I'll turn the floor over
21 to you and then we'll open it up for some public
22 discussion as soon as Fred finishes his presentation.

23 MR. GLEASON: All right. Well, thank you. So
24 I'm going to -- let's see, Josh, can we get
25 the presentation up?

1 The way this will roll today is I'll open it
2 with a couple of slides, and then I'll close it and
3 everything in between will be Fred and his team from KFH
4 talking and sharing with us their conclusions from the
5 study.

6 So let's see, Josh, let's go back to the cover
7 slide if there is one. If there's not one. Okay.
8 There it is. Okay.

9 So just to kind of remind the committee of
10 where we've been on this over the last number of months,
11 the committee concluded its work on a Strategic
12 Direction Report back I believe in the fall of 2019.
13 And one of the recommendations coming from that was that
14 we engage the services of a consultant team, an expert
15 team to help advise us and inform us how best to move to
16 the new -- the new direction we wanted to accomplish
17 with the program. You know, going from a program today,
18 which is largely based on whatever we get from a
19 proposal standpoint, to one where we know enough about
20 what we want to accomplish with the program so that we
21 can identify what in our minds are the priority
22 connections for this program to help us make. And we
23 engaged KFH, specifically Fred Fravel and his team, to
24 help us with -- with identifying what we might need to
25 know and know more about to allow us to become more

1 strategic in our approach to the program.

2 So -- and the committee has been going along
3 with that -- the progress on that study all along. And
4 you may recall that the last presentation in July we
5 presented information that had identified all the
6 potential connections to examine, but did not at that
7 point in time have for you conclusions as around which
8 of those represented priorities for us to pursue under
9 the -- under the current program.

10 So -- so Fred is going to take you through
11 that last sort of step in their work today, and then
12 they're going to also give us their thoughts on
13 conclusions, findings and outcomes. And I just want to
14 remind the committee of two things from the Strategic
15 Direction Report. Let's go to the next slide, Josh.

16 The first -- the first thing I wanted to
17 remind folks of was, you know, this is where we ended up
18 in a description of what -- what characteristics would
19 comprise intercity bus service in the rural areas of our
20 state. And these are completely consistent with the
21 definition of the program from a federal level.

22 And then the next slide then is I mentioned
23 briefly a strategic decision to move from an approach to
24 the program that is described in the left-hand white
25 column, the first left-hand white column. And then the

1 green shaded program is where we -- is where we want
2 to move to. And so those are -- in my mind those are
3 the two of the more significant conclusions from the
4 Strategic Direction Report. Have been informed the work
5 that Fred is going to conclude for you with his
6 comments.

7 So at this point I'm going to turn it over to
8 Fred. He's going to remind everyone of where we ended
9 up in our discussions in July, then take us through the
10 remainder of their work getting us to a picture of what
11 a set of priority connections can look like for us based
12 on that work. And then a general reminder again as we
13 get into this for both the committee and the listening
14 public. The committee is not taking action on this
15 today. We are -- and won't take action on the findings
16 from the study.

17 And I will conclude then with sort of a so
18 what do we do now and provide the committee with a brief
19 overview of how we are moving forward with the results
20 from the study to move us in a direction more consistent
21 with the green shaded column.

22 So now I'll turn it over to Fred, and Fred,
23 why don't you take us through the rest of your work.

24 MR. FRAVEL: Okay. Thank you, Eric, and good
25 to hear everybody online this morning. Can you all hear

1 me? Am I good?

2 MR. GLEASON: You're good.

3 MR. FRAVEL: You're good.

4 Okay. Let's go to the next slide. This slide
5 kind of is a summary of what we have been looking at and
6 thinking about over the past, well, I want to say a
7 couple of months or whatever.

8 As you may recall, in our last meeting we had
9 been through a process of looking at a good inventory of
10 the existing network, and that included both the
11 unsubsidized service and the section 5311F service.

12 We had been -- sort of applied that network to
13 the demographics of this state to see if there were
14 areas that really were distant from service,
15 particularly focusing on rural areas that were a long
16 way from the nearest intercity bus stop and looking for
17 those.

18 We had gathered input from surveys of regional
19 planning agencies, transit operators. We had regional
20 stakeholder meetings, they were virtual by that time,
21 but we got a lot of good input. And sort of based on
22 all of that, we had developed a number of potential
23 connections.

24 So on this map basically if you're looking at
25 it, the blue routes are the existing section 5311F

1 funded routes and the green routes were a number of the
2 potential connections that were developed. Now, it's a
3 little hard to see on the screen, but there are also
4 the red routes underlining are the -- what was the
5 unsubsidized network in 2019.

6 So you got your Strategic Direction Report and
7 we got our scope of work and then the pandemic hit. And
8 it has made both gathering data and our unknowns even
9 more unknown as we've gone through this process. So the
10 subsidized network that you -- the unsubsidized network
11 that you see there basically is the network as it was in
12 2019.

13 The carriers, I don't know if you recall, but
14 the intercity bus carriers, the ridership dropped to
15 about 20 percent of its pre-pandemic levels, and since
16 that unsubsidized network relies completely on fare box
17 revenue, you know, that obviously put the carriers in a
18 real bind. Their strategy was to reduce frequency where
19 they had multiple frequencies. In some cases if they
20 were already down to one round trip a day and the
21 ridership was light, they either suspended service or
22 reduced it to two or three days a week.

23 So as ridership has come back, they've been
24 filling that back in. But in the meantime, there was a
25 substantial amount of federal money that flowed through

1 the state through the CARES Act and subsequent relief
2 acts, although most of it for intercity bus in Texas
3 came through the CARES Act to try and maintain that
4 network.

5 So we've gone ahead and evaluated everything
6 as if that network has come back, but I just want to
7 caution everybody there's a lot of uncertainty there.
8 So next slide.

9 Part of our input process included surveys of
10 the intercity bus carriers, and the purple lines on here
11 were a couple of routes that intercity carriers said
12 these may not be -- you know, we may need ongoing help
13 to keep these services.

14 So in our next steps of analysis we looked at
15 basically all of the blue routes, existing 5311F, we put
16 them in the same mix with the green routes, which were
17 all of the proposed connections, and with the purple
18 routes. And so we had a list of -- trying to think --
19 38 routes that we wanted to analyze and compare. And as
20 you can imagine, there are a lot of -- a lot of
21 dimensions to that. So let me just kind of walk you
22 through what we did and where we got to.

23 So if you want to do the next slide, Josh.
24 Josh?

25 Okay. So we wanted to look at what we've been

1 funding, what we potentially could fund, a couple of
2 routes that the carrier said might need funding, and we
3 wanted to use basically the same set of metrics on all
4 of them.

5 We wanted to look at do they cover more of the
6 state, are there more rural areas that would have access
7 to the -- the national network. How cost effective
8 would they be, what kind of performance standards should
9 we propose, and -- and what -- what network do we have
10 if we apply those.

11 So to do that we had to develop a lot of data
12 for each group. Once we had all of that data, we ranked
13 all of the routes on each of the measures that we had,
14 and then the rankings were used to develop a score. So
15 there was a ranking, you know, 1 to 38 or whatever,
16 which is the best, which is the worst, but we didn't
17 just sum the rankings, we kind of scored them. So
18 the -- the top -- and it varied by measure. The top 20
19 percent or something maybe got a higher score number and
20 the very bottom ones got a lower score. Because we, you
21 know, these things are all a bit imprecise. So
22 what we're -- what we're really doing here is
23 constructing a set of measures that are in effect kind
24 of rounded off to basically identify pretty much a group
25 of routes that are higher and a group of routes that are

1 lower on these different measures.

2 So it's a really big, messy spreadsheet to
3 some, you know, to do the ranking and then do the
4 scores, and then we summed the scores, and then we did
5 another process where we put weights on it. So that if
6 we thought that the coverage aspects were more
7 important, we could, you know, add more weight to those
8 just to see how the difference came out.

9 So kind of a -- I'm not showing you the
10 sausage making because it's just ugly. You know, it's
11 best to see the product. So anyway, so there are a lot
12 of aspects to that. So next slide, Josh.

13 So you might ask where we got the data for
14 everything. Whoops, did we go past? Wait a minute. I
15 think we're past one of those slides.

16 MR. RIBAKOVE: Right. This is the next slide
17 in the deck that we have.

18 MR. FRAVEL: This is the next slide, right.

19 Okay. So this is how we put the coverage
20 aspect of it together. We looked at the population of
21 each of the routes and how much of that population that
22 is served by that route would be added by having that
23 route. So if it's an existing 5311F route, it's really
24 how many people would lose service if we quit funding
25 it. And we were focusing on the nonurbanized

1 population. So we're looking at how much nonurbanized
2 population is really served as a result of 5311F
3 funding.

4 We looked at each of the potential stops on
5 these routes and looked up information about what we
6 called key destinations. Colleges and universities,
7 military bases, major medical facilities, and if a
8 route, you know, served one or two or three of those, we
9 wanted to include that because, you know, it affected --
10 the population is the origins and the destinations are
11 part of the destination aspect of looking at
12 transportation need.

13 We also had information from the demographic
14 analysis on the census block groups, and we had a score,
15 a transit dependence index score for every block. We've
16 been a state that focused on whether that block group
17 was basically higher than the state averages in terms of
18 senior population, low-income population, autoless
19 households, young adults, persons with mobility
20 limitations. So those were all kind of wrapped into a
21 score, and what we counted was if a route served towns
22 that had a number of high transit dependent scores, that
23 was part of the coverage as well.

24 And then finally we added a measure, we called
25 it connectivity benefits, but in some cases a route --

1 one of the things that it does is it really allows
2 people to make connections between two places that are
3 already served, but that to get between them, you know,
4 currently you'd have to make multiple transfers and
5 would have a very long travel time. So that if our
6 potential route is a direct connection, we gave it some
7 points for that.

8 On the cost effectiveness side, we looked at
9 measures coming out of the -- you know, kind of out of
10 your Strategic Direction Report, fare box recovery,
11 boardings per trip, subsidy per passenger trip. And
12 we've developed some performance standards by looking at
13 your existing 5311F, and then we applied those to see if
14 any of these potential routes fell below those
15 standards, and we'll get to the standards later, but
16 we'll come back to that.

17 Ridership of course is an issue and talk about
18 that a little bit. I think the next slide is the one
19 that talks about ridership. Josh, if you've got that
20 one. No? Yes.

21 Obviously we had an issue in -- with the data.
22 One is we used 2019 ridership for the existing 5311F
23 funded routes. So those routes were all affected in
24 2020 by the pandemic. You know, we were looking at, you
25 know, really what the full ridership potential was so we

1 used the 2019 numbers also to line up. Because for the
2 new routes we didn't have 2019 data, but we have a
3 transit cooperative research program demand model that
4 we could use to estimate potential ridership. And that
5 model basically has a regression equation, it has a trip
6 rate model, and it uses the population for each stop,
7 the one-way route length, and a couple of factors
8 about -- that were found to be significant when the
9 model was calibrated. One is whether the service is
10 being operated by a national network company, which
11 seems to have higher ridership, and oddly enough another
12 one is if it serves a major correctional facility. That
13 seemed to be significant when they built the model, at
14 least in the regression equation.

15 So we basically estimated ridership for all
16 the potential routes. We used existing ridership for
17 all of the existing 5311F routes. We did not have data
18 for the two routes that the carrier said might need help
19 because they have been previously unsubsidized so it
20 hadn't been reported to the state. And by that point
21 the carriers weren't sure what the ridership would be
22 going forward after the pandemic. So what we did was
23 apply the model to that to estimate the ridership in the
24 same way as the potential routes. Next slide.

25 So as you could see, we're building this big

1 spreadsheet where we're going to score everything and
2 now we're looking at cost effectiveness. That side of
3 it. So among all the states I've worked on, TXDOT
4 actually has great data on their 5311F program. I don't
5 know about the other programs, but we had really good
6 information to work with, and a couple of places where
7 we found little holes or something, they came up with it
8 right away. So we were able to really get to the fare
9 box recovery by route, the subsidy per passenger trip by
10 route and the boardings per vehicle trip by route for
11 2019. And so we used that as a basis, and then for the
12 routes that were potential routes that we didn't have
13 that existing data, I want to -- I shouldn't say this,
14 we had to make it up. No. We used the route length, we
15 estimated the annual number of trips that would be on
16 the route to come up with the annual revenue miles. We
17 applied a cost per mile for similar services that we got
18 by looking at the existing 5311F. We used the estimated
19 ridership from the demand model, and then we estimated
20 revenue based on a revenue per passenger mile that is
21 typical for intercity bus fares.

22 So, you know, for the potential routes,
23 basically we had to do some -- some preplanning. We
24 tried to be consistent across all of the routes. If
25 somebody were to develop one of these routes as a

1 project, it's entirely possible they might decide that
2 they want lower fares and that could increase the
3 deficit, or they might do something that, you know,
4 changed the route length or whatever. But we applied
5 these same metrics to all of these routes because we
6 were trying to get to an overall comparison. Next
7 slide.

8 Okay. So if you think back to the process I
9 described for each of those measures I just mentioned,
10 the coverage and the cost effectiveness, we ranked each
11 group, then we scored it, and then we summed the scores,
12 and then we applied weighting. And we basically in one
13 set of weights we multiplied all of the coverage factors
14 by three and left cost effectiveness at one. The other
15 way around, we left coverage of one and we measured, we
16 multiplied the cost effectiveness scores by three and
17 then we summed them. So each route had a summation of
18 the scoring under each of these scenarios.

19 And the above 30 is kind of the sum of scores.
20 If you could see the whole ranking, you'd see 30 was
21 kind of a break point, and then, you know, above that
22 there's a group of routes that kind of either way they
23 looked pretty good, and then there's kind of a mid-pack
24 of routes that seemed to go up or down depending on
25 whether it was cost effectiveness or coverage. And then

1 there were several routes that really just -- they
2 didn't score highly under either scenario, and I'll come
3 back to those. It's not that they're bad routes, but
4 they don't -- they didn't score very well here.

5 So a lot of the longer intercity bus routes,
6 West Texas routes scored pretty well because they
7 provide coverage that wouldn't exist otherwise and
8 they -- kind of the ridership and revenue factors were
9 fairly high. Some of those Greyhound routes have very
10 high -- relatively high fare box recovery rates and
11 lower subsidy per passenger. And so a number of those
12 sort of longer distance intercity bus routes scored
13 pretty well.

14 The more regional shorter routes, they were
15 the ones that are more mid-pack. If we looked at
16 coverage, some of them kind of moved up in the rankings,
17 and if we looked at cost effectiveness, they went down.
18 And, you know, we could talk about it, but in a sense
19 they're really doing some things different in a way.

20 One of the existing 5311F routes is the El
21 Paso to Las Cruces Gold Route Service, which is really
22 if you look at the schedules, if you'll look at the
23 route, look at the stops, it's really a commuter bus
24 service. And so, you know, I've looked at commuter bus
25 services, I think it does pretty well as that, but I

1 don't -- it didn't score well as intercity bus partly
2 because it didn't provide new coverage. El Paso has
3 intercity bus service, Las Cruces has intercity bus
4 service, and there isn't a lot of rural population in
5 between that's served by this. So if we're scoring it
6 on those program requirements, it didn't score really
7 well.

8 You know, to some extent our issues are kind
9 of constrained by the nature of this program and its
10 focus on intercity bus access for rural areas, which is
11 a set of criteria that may be different from some of the
12 other transit programs that you might have.

13 One of the other routes that seemed to really
14 go up and down, depending on whether we looked at cost
15 effectiveness or coverage, is the Presidio, Fort
16 Stockton, Midland, Odessa route that's operated by All
17 American Bus Lines. Its ridership performance measures
18 had been kind of declining in the three years up to
19 2019, and we used the 2019 numbers. And it kind of met
20 the criteria if we looked at coverage, but if we
21 weighted cost effectiveness highly, it fell down because
22 its -- its -- by 2019 its subsidy per passenger had
23 climbed up quite a bit. It's a fairly long route, which
24 is one of those things that brings the cost up, and it's
25 in a lightly populated area so the ridership is not

1 high. So, you know, it's an existing route, you have
2 real riders who have been using it, it's part of the
3 national intercity bus network, but that's -- it's kind
4 of an issue around that one as well. Next slide.

5 So this is a map of kind of the network if we
6 put all of the potential routes in and the 5311F routes
7 where we weight coverage and access high. And, you
8 know, you could see the blue routes or the existing
9 5311, the purple again is -- are the routes that some of
10 the carriers said might need help, and then the green
11 routes are routes that are, you know, highly ranked
12 connections when you really look at that. And you'll
13 see that the Presidio, Midland, Odessa service is on
14 this map, and there are a number of other connections.

15 Now, there are a few of the potential routes
16 that fell off the map in this case because of the cost
17 effectiveness issues. So if you want to show the next
18 slide, Josh.

19 Okay. This is what happens when we -- whoop,
20 whoop, back one. This is the map that we get to if we
21 weight cost effectiveness at three times. And you'll
22 see that there's a number of changes, and certainly we
23 lose the Presidio, Fort Stockton route. The overall
24 coverage declines a fair amount.

25 So, you know, there's really -- if we're

1 looking at a statewide program, you kind of have to
2 consider both aspects of that and include that.

3 Now, I mentioned performance standards. Josh,
4 if you want to bring up the next slide. And we had -- I
5 would say our team with TXDOT we had some discussions
6 about these. The subsidy per passenger, the max \$150,
7 the initial reaction was, whoa, that's way high, and it
8 is a high number. They're -- typically intercity bus
9 subsidies per trip are much higher than you'd experience
10 for some kind of local or regional transit because the
11 trip lengths are long. If you figure out the subsidy
12 per passenger mile for a lot of your public, urban
13 public transit systems, and then apply that to a trip
14 that's 120 or a 150 miles long, you get numbers that are
15 like a hundred dollars per trip or 100 -- up to 150.

16 Now, the \$150 level does eliminate a few of
17 your existing 5311F routes. A \$100 level would
18 eliminate more of them, and it might be something that
19 the program moves to in a future year, but for this
20 initial round. The other thing is we're dealing now
21 with a period, and we'll get to this in the strategy,
22 there's a lot of uncertainty and things are very
23 dynamic. And by that I mean, you know, as Eric pointed
24 out in his earlier discussion, two weeks ago when we
25 were putting these slides together we didn't have an

1 infrastructure bill and Greyhound was still owned by the
2 first group who were trying to sell it. And now Flixbus
3 has purchased Greyhound, we have an infrastructure bill,
4 the world keeps changing at a very rapid pace. So part
5 of our thought here also was to allow some performance
6 standards and a structure that deals with the
7 uncertainties that we do not know really what the demand
8 curve will be and how many of those previously
9 unsubsidized route carriers may need to apply for to
10 keep that basic network intact going forward.

11 The minimum fare box recovery, four percent
12 for rural feeder service. Four percent is a number we
13 see some -- you know, fairly often looking at rural
14 public transit services, you know, in terms of if
15 they're general public services. At 15 percent for
16 intercity, I think your intercity routes all clear that
17 at the moment. Minimum passengers per vehicle trip of
18 three. Again, that's not very many people, but some of
19 our forecasted routes and a couple of your existing ones
20 didn't quite make that.

21 So these were really based on looking at your
22 existing 5311F, looking at information from some other
23 services around the country. Some of the smaller states
24 have performance criteria that, you know, the maximum
25 subsidy per trip is a smaller number. You look at

1 Vermont, and that has a lot to do with the fact that
2 they have higher population densities and shorter bus
3 routes. So they've set their thresholds differently.

4 So basically these are the -- we applied this
5 to the list of potential routes and existing routes, and
6 we didn't include any routes in the list that didn't
7 meet those performance criteria, nor did we include any
8 of the existing or potential routes that didn't meet the
9 criteria.

10 So these would be applied going forward. If
11 somebody started a route and it didn't meet these
12 criteria, our thinking is that TXDOT would be monitoring
13 this, and basically if they didn't achieve this in a
14 year, they would be told they've got a limited period of
15 time to either increase the performance or the program,
16 the route would be discontinued, the funding for it. So
17 that's kind of our thinking on that going forward. So
18 anyway, that's kind of what we got to on the performance
19 standards. So Josh, next slide.

20 So as I mentioned, we included the existing
21 subsidized services that meet those performance
22 standards. We included the existing subsidized services
23 that scored well on the high coverage and the high cost
24 effectiveness scores, and then there were a couple that
25 were kind of in that marginal zone which we included,

1 you know, basically in part because they are services
2 that had existing ridership. And I think, you know, a
3 route that has people that are already on the bus is
4 probably worth giving a little bit of a favor to over a
5 potential route with potential riders that we don't
6 really know whether they'll come up or not.

7 Now, an issue that we have going forward is
8 intercity bus service. There are federal -- the Federal
9 Circular, the FTA Circular for 5311, includes Chapter 8
10 which says this is what 5311F service is about, you guys
11 have developed a nice definition for what that means in
12 Texas, which we saw earlier, but as I mentioned, not all
13 of the things in the existing program maybe meet that.

14 Certainly the El Paso-Las Cruces route really
15 doesn't have a meaningful connection with the national
16 intercity bus network. It doesn't really serve rural
17 areas very much. It's a good service that people use.
18 If you had another way to fund it, I would say move it
19 out of the ICB program and fund it that way. But there
20 are real riders riding it, so there's kind of a policy
21 issue there, what do we do with that.

22 And then some of the rural feeder routes I
23 think are also kind of a concern. They've been designed
24 to provide the meaningful connection because CARTS, the
25 provider was using 5311F and Greyhound in kind matched

1 so they needed to make the connection. But there's --
2 there's an impediment issue with -- with those services
3 I think going forward and we'll come back to that is to
4 -- in a sense they need to serve multiple markets to be
5 more feasible in a cost-effective sense.

6 The people in -- close in and rural areas are
7 -- you know, they need to get into town to go to the
8 doctor or the bank or whatever and then come back the
9 same day, and their service, that's really designed to
10 connect them to a bus that takes them out of state.
11 They're not a lot of people coming from each of those
12 rural areas who need that every day. So it's a combined
13 market issue.

14 Let's look at the map just so everybody could
15 see what we're talking about what this priority network
16 is, Josh, if you want to pull that up.

17 So the other map we had all of the green
18 routes in one column, and in this one we've kind of
19 pulled them out and given our map of priority
20 connections. I think this is the map we want to put in
21 the coordinated call and say, you know, we'd like you
22 to -- you know, these are our priority connections, you
23 propose on these, or if you have something that's not on
24 this map, if you're running an existing unsubsidized
25 service and it's -- you know, you need money to keep it

1 going or there's something that you're aware of in your
2 local area, the coordinated call would still be open to
3 that. You'd have to provide the rationale and the
4 figures that would support that, but basically this is
5 the coordinated call instead of corridors that would be
6 included.

7 And you can see it's a lot of the existing
8 5311F. It's a couple of the previously unsubsidized
9 routes and some of those priority corridors that we've
10 identified. If you've ran all of this, you would have a
11 very high level of coverage of intercity bus service
12 across the state in relation to your population. It's
13 kind of hard to see on this map, but we have those grade
14 outlines where the existing unsubsidized network is as
15 well.

16 So I know, you know, there's a temptation to
17 think we should take our money and put it into the
18 routes that have high ridership, but those are the
19 routes that the private sector can run without our
20 funding. You know, the Texas Triangle, the Laredo to
21 San Antonio, Austin-Dallas, those corridors are -- you
22 know, we're hoping that the demand comes back and that
23 those will be services that can be operated without any
24 subsidy. That long corridor from Dallas-Fort Worth over
25 to El Paso, which has -- had multiple -- still has

1 multiple frequencies on it, is a real key route. We
2 don't -- you know, we don't need to fund that, I don't
3 think. We need to fund the stuff that connects to it.
4 So this is -- this is our map with priority connections.

5 Josh, you want to pull up the next slide. I
6 know I'm kind of racing through this, but there's a lot
7 of content and I know we don't want to spend all day
8 here.

9 I mentioned before a couple of the issues with
10 different routes. Many of the existing 5311F routes are
11 on that map because they were highly ranked, and those
12 currently unsubsidized routes identified by the carriers
13 is potentially needing subsidy. They both scored well
14 and they're on the map as well. We don't know if the
15 demand is back for those, whether to apply for funding
16 for those or not. Potentially I could imagine that
17 those if they did need funding that they might be
18 something that could become profitable over the two-year
19 cycle.

20 The regionally focused routes I mentioned
21 before they really didn't -- they were kind of at the
22 bottom of that overall ranking either way, and what this
23 suggests to me maybe is that a couple of directions we
24 could go. And there -- there's a little bit of
25 foreshadowing in your previous study on the strategic

1 direction about categories of service that -- and this
2 may be something that, you know, today is more feasible
3 because we are looking at potentially some more funding,
4 is to carve out a piece of this program and make that
5 into something that focuses on services that meet the
6 5311F requirements, but maybe have a different set of
7 performance criteria reflecting that they're really
8 rural feeders. You know, that those -- the performance
9 measures we put in that are low numbers of riders per
10 trip and high subsidy per passenger, those are really
11 stretched out in effect to allow some of these regional
12 services to fit into this program. But we -- we could
13 do a -- kind of a two-part program. I think that's a
14 policy discussion going forward. We haven't really
15 settled what that might be.

16 Again, we also -- just a caveat again, we used
17 2019 data. We're not sure exactly what the demand curve
18 for either of the intercity services or for the more
19 regional feeders is, you know, at the moment and what it
20 will be over the next couple of years.

21 And I mentioned a little bit about my bias for
22 doing some grandfathering of routes. You've got people
23 that are using the route now. You know, you need to
24 kind of take that into account rather than ditching them
25 for something that's speculative. So that's just a

1 consideration that I have looking at some of these
2 things. So with all those unknowns, Josh, next slide.

3 MR. GLEASON: Fred?

4 MR. FRAVEL: Yeah.

5 MR. GLEASON: Fred, this is mine.

6 MR. FRAVEL: Okay. Okay. I have a stickie on
7 the wrong page then, Eric. You run with this.

8 MR. GLEASON: Thank you. I appreciate
9 everything, Fred. I want to remind the committee that,
10 you know, we've encouraged KFH in their work and in what
11 you've heard today to -- we want them as experts to give
12 us their best thinking. And all of that will help us
13 independent of that, using it. But independent of that,
14 develop, you know, where we think we need to go with
15 this program. And so using the information and the
16 recommendations as informing that direction, I want to
17 try and boil it down both for the committee and for
18 those on the line listening where we see this program
19 headed in both sort of a, you know, overall standpoint
20 and then some near-term and longer-term strategic
21 direction for it.

22 So the most immediate impact that this work
23 from KFH has, and we've talked about this, wanting to
24 inform the now current call for projects for the
25 coordinated call. The -- that will be published -- the

1 call will be published on Friday of this week, the 12th.
2 And in that call, what we have done with the information
3 that Fred and his team has provided for us is that --
4 that last map that you saw, which was basically the --
5 the priority connection network comprised of as Fred
6 described, routes that exist today and perform above the
7 performance thresholds or performance standards
8 recommended. And those routes that exist today that
9 provide both high coverage and high cost-effectiveness
10 along with new connection proposals with desirable
11 ridership estimation traits that contribute
12 significantly to coverage and cost effectiveness as
13 well.

14 And so all of those connections on that map,
15 that last map that you saw are identified in the
16 coordinated call as connections we are interested in
17 receiving proposals for. And assuming we get a
18 combination of applications at the end of the process,
19 both for new coverage and -- or new connections versus
20 existing connections, we are going to look at
21 prioritizing those applications to make sure that we are
22 maintaining existing service. You know, any previously
23 unsubsidized service. So that's a group that, you know,
24 may be emerging from the pandemic that we didn't
25 subsidize before but post-pandemic may need assistance.

1 Service expansion consistent with priority
2 connections and then starting to maintain any existing
3 service that meets or exceeds the performance criteria.
4 And so, you know, that's how we're going to look at the
5 applications we get. We are going to -- you know, this
6 in general I think for those of you who have been
7 following this entire discussion, we are elevating the
8 role of performance in our decision-making, both in
9 terms of anticipated performance with an initial
10 decision to fund the connection, as well as sustaining
11 ongoing subsidies in routes that may not be performing
12 up to standard. Next slide, Josh.

13 So from a strategic direction program
14 standpoint, near-term strategic direction we're going to
15 balance our existing program commitments with proposals
16 for new connections consistent with the study
17 recommendation, we'll account for the impact of the
18 pandemic on previously unsubsidized services, and we
19 will significantly track performance of new connections
20 to evaluate the potential success of the new direction.

21 The longer term we're going to, you know, move
22 toward aligning all subsidized service connections more
23 closely with the desired ICB service characteristics. I
24 can imagine us creating sort of a sustainable core
25 network of services and then allowing for continuous

1 improvement with new service proposals. And then we're
2 going to position the program so that we can seek and
3 effectively use potential expansion in federal programs.

4 So that is, you know, in a wrap up sense this
5 is where we see us moving. We are clearly committed to
6 the notion of a transition time frame associated with
7 any services that may not fall under the categories that
8 we've discussed.

9 Special note on the El Paso to Las Cruces
10 connection. Agreeing with everything Fred commented on
11 with respect to that and its relevance to intercity bus.
12 What I would add to the general conversation though,
13 that model is -- first of all, we do that service in
14 conjunction with the Mexico DOT. It's a partnership and
15 we share the financing on it. And it is a model that is
16 completely consistent with the way the -- Mexico
17 approaches its intercity bus program. So yes, it's done
18 exactly in line with, you know, the general definition
19 of the program, but it also is consistent with approach
20 into Mexico that has been generally accepted by the FTA.
21 So that remains to be sorted out over time.

22 So with that, I believe we've completed the
23 presentation around this. A lot of information to
24 absorb. Looking to use the coordinated call, this
25 coordinated call to make progress towards this goal that

1 we have, and -- but making sure that as we move forward
2 we -- we transition out of and into new investments in a
3 way that is -- that recognizes the importance that a
4 current investment might play with any given service
5 provider and the people that use it.

6 And I believe that concludes our presentation
7 around topic 5, Mr. Vice Chair.

8 MR. CLINE: Yeah. And Eric, I think at this
9 point, and Josh, if we could -- if there -- before we
10 begin committee discussion, I'll have a few questions.
11 But I think it will be really valuable to see if anyone
12 else who's online has comments and questions regarding
13 this presentation, if that's all right with you.

14 MR. RIBAKOVE: If anyone would like to make a
15 comment or has a question, please let me know in Chat or
16 Q&A and I can unmute the microphone.

17 So far nothing, Jim, but I should let you know
18 that our Chair, John McBeth, had a dental appointment
19 and had leave at 11:00 o'clock.

20 MR. CLINE: Okay.

21 All right. Hearing nothing from the public,
22 are there any questions from members of PTAC regarding
23 this?

24 Okay. Let me if I could, Eric, just a couple
25 of questions that I have. I noticed something to maybe

1 we want to consider is it seems there's a route between
2 San Marcos and San Antonio that had not been -- had been
3 completed in previous versions. So maybe something to
4 think about there.

5 I don't -- and then on the same kind of
6 numbers in increased funding that are going to happen in
7 some of the other categories are going to happen here
8 too, isn't this a percentage of the 5311?

9 MR. GLEASON: Yes, yes. There will be -- so
10 the way the 5311 funding works for intercity buses,
11 it's a required set aside that it's 50 percent of the
12 overall apportionment to the state. So as that overall
13 apportionment goes up, so does the intercity share of
14 it.

15 MR. CLINE: In our discretion as we go
16 forward, it's not the amount, it is -- I mean from
17 TXDOT's perspective, the discretion is how it's
18 prioritized, and thus -- and so when we move it to more
19 space, that's what you're looking at there; is that
20 correct?

21 MR. GLEASON: Still -- I didn't quite catch
22 all that, Jim. It didn't --

23 MR. CLINE: Oh, I'm sorry.

24 MR. GLEASON: It seemed to be interrupted,
25 yeah.

1 MR. CLINE: No, no, no. When we -- so 50
2 percent of the money comes out, I think this is general
3 discussion, right, I mean in terms that I can understand
4 it.

5 MR. GLEASON: Yeah.

6 MR. CLINE: And so our discretion is not about
7 how -- it's a 50 percent direct number, that is out --
8 that's laid out by federal law?

9 MR. GLEASON: That's correct. That's
10 correct.

11 MR. CLINE: And so -- but the discretion we do
12 have is how do we prioritize that. And so, you know, in
13 very informative to me. Again, I think that just the
14 question that I have is to please take a look at that,
15 that gap.

16 MR. GLEASON: Will do. Yeah, we'll look at
17 that.

18 MR. CLINE: That seems to be an area in my
19 (audio unintelligible).

20 Any other questions that may come up? Any
21 other comments from PTAC members?

22 And Eric, as we go forward, not an action item
23 today, is there an action item that will be
24 forthcoming?

25 MR. GLEASON: No.

1 MR. CLINE: In future years?

2 MR. GLEASON: What I would offer the -- what I
3 would offer the committee is a discussion as we meet in
4 the spring as we have -- as we complete our evaluation
5 of proposals received, either your April or for sure
6 your July meeting, we would be able to come back to you
7 with the results and how well that reflected some of the
8 information or the information we've got for us now that
9 move toward our new direction.

10 So I think that would be a reasonable check-in
11 opportunity. And at that point in time, you know, the
12 results seem to indicate we ought to revisit the
13 Strategic Direction Reports, and that would be an
14 appropriate task for the committee to decide to do.

15 MR. CLINE: Very good. I would suggest that
16 next we've got Item 6, which although we've offered the
17 opportunity for public comment on the ICB program, if
18 there is public comment on any other items that may be
19 out there. Josh?

20 MR. RIBAKOVE: Jim, currently I've got nothing
21 else. We have heard briefly from someone, but he just
22 said that he didn't have much to say today.

23 MR. CLINE: Okay. So with no public comments
24 under Item 7, let's move to Item 7 which -- no, no, Item
25 6.

1 So Item 7, which is an action item, to discuss
2 agenda items for the next meeting and confirm the date
3 of our next meeting, we are -- our scheduled meeting on
4 January 25th of 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

5 Are there any specific items for discussion
6 from members, recommended items for discussion from
7 members of PTAC?

8 MR. GLEASON: So Mr. Chair, this is Eric
9 again, just to remind the committee that we intend to
10 wrap up the committee's discussion around areas of
11 potential change in the state rural and urban formula
12 discussion and the federal 5311 formula discussion we've
13 been having.

14 So it would be our intent to devote as much
15 time as we needed to -- to that wrap up, and then in
16 addition to that, we would entertain other topics.

17 One of the items we could have as a separate
18 item or I could just make it the topic of my Director's
19 Report would be, you know, a more detailed discussion of
20 the Investment Act, the Infrastructure Investment Act
21 and what it means for Texas. And our -- I think the
22 information of the rule making -- of the schedule and
23 the rule making can be covered under that topic, but
24 just a further deeper dive into the Investment Act.

25 MR. CLINE: All right. I certainly think that

1 that's important. Any other items that are out there
2 from the PTAC committee members?

3 Okay. If that's -- hearing none, we do need
4 to -- an action item is listed to confirm the date of
5 our next meeting. I would entertain a position from
6 Detrich and a second from J.R.

7 MR. VON BIEDENFELD: Oh, I make a motion that
8 we confirm the November -- well --

9 MR. CLINE: January 25th.

10 MR. VON BIEDENFELD: January. I'm looking at
11 the bottom that said that. We confirm January 25th,
12 2022 as our next meeting date.

13 MR. SALAZAR: This is J.R. I second that.

14 MR. CLINE: All right. With a motion and a
15 second, all in favor say aye.

16 PTAC MEMBERS: Aye.

17 MR. CLINE: (Audio unintelligible) The motion
18 carries unanimously. So we will meet on January 25th,
19 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

20 Item 8 is adjournment, and I would, you know,
21 barring any discussion of other items, I would entertain
22 a motion from Ken and a second from J.R. for
23 adjournment.

24 MR. FICKES: I move that we adjourn.

25 MR. SALAZAR: I'll second that.

1 MR. CLINE: Very good. With the motion and a
2 second, all in favor say aye.

3 PTAC MEMBERS: Aye.

4 MR. GLEASON: I just want to say a very happy
5 and safe holiday season.

6 MR. CLINE: Yes, and Eric, thank you and the
7 staff for all you do to make this happen. We look
8 forward to seeing you online on the 25th of January.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. GLEASON: All right, guys, take care.

11 MR. CLINE: Yep.

12 MR. JOSH: Thanks everyone. That concludes
13 our PTAC meeting for today. As you know, the next
14 meeting will be on Tuesday, January 25 at 10:00 a.m.
15 Thanks everyone.

16 (Proceedings concluded at 11:17 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
2 COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA)

3
4 I, Rebecca K. Quinn, CSR No. 5720, in and for
5 the County of Santa Clara, State of California, hereby
6 certify that the witness in the foregoing deposition was
7 duly sworn or affirmed by me to tell the truth, the
8 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in the
9 within-entitled case; that the testimony of said witness
10 was reported by me, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and a
11 disinterested person, to the best of my ability, and was
12 thereafter transcribed into typewriting under my
13 direction and supervision.

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
15 hand.

16
17
18 Date: November 24th, 2021.

19
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21
22 

23 _____
24 REBECCA K. QUINN, CSR #5720
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