

Meeting of the Ridership Committee
 Meeting Minutes
 February 14, 2019

Minutes of the Ridership Committee Meeting of Thursday, February 14, 2019 held at 4:00 p.m. at 114 Valley St., Portland, ME.

Committee Members Present:	Staff:	Others:
Ed Suslovic, Chair	Greg Jordan	
Pious Ali	Denise Beck	
Jeff Levine	Glenn Fenton	
	Lauren Shaw	

1. The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Ed Suslovic.

2. The meeting was opened to public comment.

No members of the public were present.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Pious Ali to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2018 Ridership Committee Meeting, seconded by Jeff Levine. **Unanimously passed by all present.**

4. Automated Fare Payment/Collection

Greg Jordan reviewed the project to date:

- Comparison of current and proposed fare policy. A peer review showed METRO’s fares are below the average of other New England transit systems.
- Fare Policy goals: ensuring fare revenue exceeds 25% of total operating expenses; improve simplicity/convenience and equity/affordability; speedier boarding process; reduce conflicts; and grow ridership and revenue.
- Option A – fare increase (\$1.75-\$2.00), keep current fare media, add mobile app and smart cards for institutions (try to tap into school and businesses current smart cards, and provide smart cards to Portland Public Schools (PPS). This is low intensity and low cost. No fare capping. At \$1.75 expect a loss of 6-7% ridership, but an 11-17% increase in fare revenue. Introduce a reduced monthly pass. Solid State validator box and replace current fare boxes to take cash and tickets (current fare boxes are breaking down). Vendor to supply mobile app for fare payment (vendor fees unknown at this time). Adoption slow, no equity improvements.
- Option B (E) – fare capping with mobile app and smart cards (more costly than Option A). Base fare \$2.00. Eliminate all paper period passes and transfers. Smart cards for institutional and business programs. Fare capping for smart card/smart phone individual users (load electronically or with cash (retail outlet network very important). Solid State validator box and replace current fare boxes to take cash and tickets (current fare boxes are breaking down). Vendor to supply mobile app for fare payment. Phased implementation.



- No charge for smart cards and no paper passes with fare capping. Fare vending machines are expensive – would like to have card available in the gift card section of various retailers.
- Greg showed a video made for NYC who is implementing this program in the future.
- Survey findings (500 surveys completed) reviewed
- Greg presented to GPCOG today and included possibility of helping sister agencies by using our grant funding (they would need 20% local match). ZOOM enthusiastic. If an agency accepts our offer, it has to be under Metro’s terms, including fare cost, to avoid delays, complexity, implementation, costs, etc.). About 255 of our riders do transfers to South Portland and we are trying to avoid them paying an additional fee between services. Eventually hope to make it a shared media system for all regional transit agencies.
- Propose going to public with either \$1.75/ no cap or \$2.00 with fare capping.
- Consultants want several months of smart phone data for vendor to review and determine the best method towards fare capping (3-4 good vendors are expected for fare capping).
- Emphasize to public that no matter which option – cash will still be accepted.

The Ridership Committee voiced their support of Option B (E) going forward. This will be brought to the Board on 2/28/19 for their “blessing” and approval to go forward to the public with it.

Pious Ali asked that various materials be translated and shared with immigrant leaders. Top languages in the Portland Public Schools are Somali, Portuguese, French, and Arabic.

5. Public Meeting Schedule – Fare Increase/Automated Fare

Meetings are scheduled in each community, with two in Portland, during March. Public Meeting notice must be published 20 days before the first meeting – will be in the Portland Press Herald Sunday, 2/17/19. Is being posted on buses and the Pulse and flyers are going out. After the Board vote, a press release will be done.

Denise Beck is working with GPCOG to create a video about fare capping to help with communicating the plan to the public. The first meeting is 3/12/19 at the Portland Public Library.

Jeff Levine left the meeting at 5:12 p.m. at which time the meeting adjourned due to lack of quorum.

6. Title VI – not discussed in session.

7. Future Agenda Items

8. Upcoming Meetings

- Finance Committee – March 6, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- Executive Committee – March 13, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.
- Ridership Committee – March 21, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.
- Board of Directors – February 28, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment - As above at 5:12 p.m.