

LCTA Public Transit Ridership Forum Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the April 21, 2021 Public Transit Ridership Forum Meeting held at 3:00 PM at the LCTA HQ in Kingston, PA and via Zoom Meeting.

Present: Joe Roselle (LCTA), Kathy Bednarek (LCTA), Frank Knorek (LCTA), Valerie Kepner (LCTA Board), Tom Bindus (LCTA Board), and Joe Fedak (public).

- A LCTA Official welcomed those in attendance, provided an overview of the meeting, and stated, that today's meeting would center on updated progress of what is happening at LCTA.
- A LCTA Official stated, that fixed route bus ridership is 68% of normal and Shared Ride Trips Reserved is about 55% of normal due to COVID. Both an approximate 10% increase from February's meeting.
- A LCTA Official stated that TJ Max in the Centerpoint Industrial Park has asked LCTA to look into coordinating our routes to service the transportation needs of their employees.
- A LCTA Official stated, that LCTA will start promoting the Francis Slocum State Park route next month in preparation for the spring and summer. The Authority anticipates starting the run in June, depending on the weather, COVID-19, and the opening of the pool.
- A member of the public asked, how the bus stop sign project is progressing, and stated there are bus stop signs along Middle Road for Rt 13, but the bus does not go that way. A LCTA Official stated that the first three routes are complete and an audit is being done to confirm accuracy. However, there were some accuracy issues with the sub-contractor on latter routes. Once the weather improves, the project will resume and more field audits will take place. However, this will take some time, as there are currently 740 bus stop signs to manage.
- A LCTA Official stated, that the Presidential Executive Order mandate for the requirement to wear a mask on public transportation was implemented. However, we are seeing an increase in hostile activities and events toward drivers. All Shared ride Drivers recently completed a driver assault awareness and ADA review courses, with fixed route staff scheduled to begin shortly. The training offers de-escalation techniques for drivers to use. Furthermore, if a rider cannot wear a mask and requests a valid reasonable accommodation request, we issue the rider a plastic red and white card to designate them where no mask is needed to ride due to a valid medical condition. All ADA rules still apply during the pandemic. Also, LCTA continues to sanitize and disinfect buses each day. Two members of the Board suggested an increase in Police presence at the intermodal via the use of Cares Act funding...this will be discussed at the Board Meeting next week.
- A member of the public asked, if fare collection will resume? A LCTA Official stated that we are still fare free for the time being, and not at that point yet. However, the public will be notified well in advance of any changes to collecting fares with a phased-in process.
- A member of the public asked for an update on the Murray Complex. A LCTA Official stated, the design phase is about 90% complete, but there are still some environmental and archeological studies that are being wrapped up. Ground breaking may take place later this summer.

- A member of the public asked if in the future LCTA would service the City of Scranton and other areas via a Bus Rapid Transit line that was proposed by the former executive director? This bus route would use the rail road bed, and service commuters using the train from Scranton to NYC. A LCTA official stated that no one has approached LCTA, but we are open to possibly utilizing resources to expand service.
- A LCTA Board Member asked the LCTA Official, since we are no longer consolidating with COLTS, how will that effect the ridership and service coordination? The LCTA Official stated, that we will continue to work together as we have continued to do so in the past and present.
- Both the LCTA Official and Board Members thanked those in attendance.
- The next LCTA Public Transit Ridership Forum meeting will be held at a time and location to be determined, and will be advertised to the public in advance.