

LCTA Public Transit Ridership Forum Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the August 20, 2021 Public Transit Ridership Forum Meeting held at 3:00 PM at the LCTA HQ in Kingston, PA and via Go To Meeting.

Present: Joe Roselle (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 the Francis Slocum State Park route ends on 9/4/21, and ridership was down due to less promotions and weather of the previous year.
- A LCTA Official stated, that fixed route bus ridership is 58% of normal (pre-Covid) and Shared Ride Trips Reserved is about 65% of normal (pre-Covid) currently due to summer camps. Ridership has been level for bus service. We continue to disinfect vehicles on a daily basis due to COVID, and the Federal Mask Mandate for public transportation which was in effect until 9/13/2021 has been extended until 1/18/2022.
- A LCTA Official stated, there are some opportunities to increase ridership by providing additional service to TJ Maxx, the Airport, and the new Chewy location in the Centerpoint industrial park.
- A LCTA Official stated, that some time points were altered on the helper bus schedule to better service the new Wilkes-Barre Area High School on the route.
- A LCTA Official stated, that Shared Ride will be moving to a pre-pay reservation system, and a new online eligibility system. Both are still in the testing phase and not fully implemented. LCTA is looking to get away from paper tickets for the Shared Ride Program.
- A member of the LCTA Board asked: How/When will the Intermodal customer service office be opening. A LCTA Official stated, the office will be open on Monday 8/23/21, and will be open from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM on weekdays.
- A member of the public asked: Will there be seating inside the Intermodal? A LCTA Official stated, it is not up to LCTA, that is a decision made by Martz Trailways. As of right now, there is no seating available until further notice.
- A member of the LCTA Board asked: Are there any updates on the increased Police presence at the Intermodal? A LCTA Official stated, there are no updates at this time.
- A member of the LCTA Board asked? What exit off the Cross Valley Expressway will the bus use to service the new Wilkes-Barre Area High School? A LCTA Official stated, we met with the administration of the Wilkes-Barre Area School District, and the bus will be using both River and Maffet Street to service the route.

- A member of the LCTA Board asked: Are there any updates on the ground breaking for the Murray Complex? A LCTA Official stated, there are no updates at this time. Our Executive Director has more information on the time-line, but he is out of the office this week.
- A member of the LCTA Board asked: If there were any updates on the bus servicing the local industrial parks in coordination with the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce? A LCTA Official stated, that LCTA met with the Chamber and we are investigating the costs, locations, schedules, and times. Microtransit may be an option, and we may be able to use the existing Park-and-Ride lots as a stop staging area.
- A member of the public asked: The state MATP coordinator will be holding a meeting, would anyone from LCTA be interested in attending? A LCTA Official stated, yes, please send the information to me after the meeting, and we will have someone attend.
- A member of the public stated: In passing, I have seen several bus drivers not wearing masks while driving. A LCTA Official stated, once our director returns, this will be addressed further, but if no passengers are onboard, the driver is not required to wear a mask.
- A member of the public asked: Do all the buses have the Plexiglas barriers around the drivers? A LCTA Official stated, all the buses in the fleet have some type of barrier around the driver.
- A member of the public stated: I know someone that refuses to ride the route 18 bus due to overcrowding, can we get a helper bus to reduce overcrowding? A LCTA Official stated, yes, we can get a helper bus if the route shows overcrowding is a regular occurrence. Drivers are instructed to ask for a helper bus if any of the buses are crowded. I will check the data.
- A member of the LCTA Board asked: How many current bus driver openings are there, and have we hired anyone? A LCTA Official stated, we hired four part-time bus drivers a month ago, and they are currently in training. We are looking to hire at least 2-3 more.
- A member of the public asked: Will LCTA be providing transportation to the Luzerne County Fair? A LCTA Official stated, at this time, I do not have an answer, and a decision will be made at a later time. It depends on the COVID situation and operational constraints.
- 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.