

MINUTES
PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD
April 6, 2022
9:00 a.m.
FRED Operations/Training Building (Bowman Center)
11710 Main Street
Fredericksburg, VA. 22408

Effective January 20, 2021, Executive Order 13991 requires a face covering to be worn while inside City of Fredericksburg facilities – even if you have been vaccinated. A face covering is generally a cloth, bandana, or other type of material that covers an individual’s mouth and nose.

Members in Attendance: Rev. Lawrence Davies, Chairman/City of Fredericksburg
Leigh Anderson, George Washington Regional Commission
Jan Erkert, Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce
Kim Lett, disAbility Resource Center
Ian Ollis, Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Alexander Owskiak, Stafford County
*Kathy Sandor, University of Mary Washington (*Participated through electronic communication in accordance with City policy*)
Dr. Roy Weinstock, Community Representative
Rodney White, Spotsylvania County

Staff Present: Jamie Jackson, Director/FRED
Aidan Quirke, Deputy Director/FRED
Glenn Jenkins, Operations Manager/FRED
Craig Reed, Policy, Planning & Compliance Manager/FRED
Sharon Sullivan, Assistant to the Director/FRED
Tammy Schoenhardt, Administrative Support Specialist II/FRED

Others Present: Tamara Banks, Healthy Generations Area Agency on Aging
Jennifer Falknor, Healthy Generations Area Agency on Aging
Becky Golden, Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Deborah Lately, disAbility Resource Center
JoAnna Roberson, George Washington Regional Commission
Nick Ruiz, Virginia Railway Express (VRE)
Colie Touzel, Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Members Absent: Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County
Brandon Brown, Stafford County
Mark Haines, Germanna Community College
Alexander Owskiak, Stafford County

The meeting was called to order by Rev. Davies on April 6, 2022, at 9:04 a.m. from the FRED Operations/Training Building (Bowman Center).

Public Comments: There were no public comments received in advance of today’s meeting nor any presented at meeting.

Adoption of Minutes – February 2,2022: Upon motion by Dr. Weinstock and seconded by Ms. Lett, with all members concurring, the February 2, 2022 PTAB minutes were approved as submitted.

Report of Director of Public Transit:

a.) FRED Transit Projects and Initiatives

Mrs. Jackson advised the Radio Communications and Emergency Management System project is ready for kick-off on April 15th. FRED received allocated funding from GWRC to close out the needed project expenses. Mrs. Jackson stated the implementation of this project will provide instant communication access to drivers in the rural areas serviced by FRED and will have connectivity to the Spotsylvania, Stafford and UMW radio systems.

Mrs. Jackson stated the rebranding project update continues to move forward and FRED staff is working with the consultant on a bi-weekly basis. The draft plan is to be provided from the consultant by end of next week. Mrs. Jackson stated the "Brand Book" is also in draft format and is being edited for reviews. Once the draft process has been completed, information will be provided to PTAB members for review. Mrs. Jackson reported that FRED will be participating in the Soap Box Derby this year which includes the new marketing design and logo.

Mrs. Jackson advised FRED is looking to execute the Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) contract to the selected vendor within a month's time frame. PTAB members will be kept apprised with project updates.

b.) Grants Applications and Future Projects

Mrs. Jackson advised that Mr. Reed is working with localities for the purpose of obtaining project requests and budget estimations. FRED submitted four (4) projects to GWRC for consideration of approval in Round 5 of the Smart Scale application process.

Committee Reports:

1.) Mission, Goals and Objectives

Dr. Weinstock stated he has no report at this time. The sub-committee will meet in June for the purpose of completing the Mission, Goals and Objectives End-of-year report for TY2022 and the Mission, Goals and Objectives Draft report for TY2023. Once this meeting has been held, PTAB members will receive reports for review for further discussion at the upcoming July PTAB meeting.

2.) Services to the Underserved

Ms. Lett advised there is no committee report for the April 6th PTAB meeting.

3.) Partnerships and Marketing

Mrs. Erkert advised there is no committee report for the April 6th PTAB meeting; however, the Partnerships and Marketing sub-committee will continue to work with FRED staff on the finalization of the re-branding and marketing plan. Colie Touzel was introduced by Mr. Ollis as the newly hired Title VI Coordinator. Mrs. Erkert asked if Colie would be willing to serve as a member to the Partnership and Marketing sub-committee as FOIA regulations and ensuring all populations are being reached through the marketing endeavors are important issues for FRED and its partners. Colie agreed to serve on the Partnership and Marketing sub-committee.

Mrs. Jackson also advised that she interviewed "live" with Mr. Ted Schubel on NewsTalk with local radio station WFVA on March 10th. The purpose of the interview was to talk about FRED's new services and the importance of public transportation options for the region.

4.) Operations and Oversight

Mr. White advised there is no committee report for the April 6th PTAB meeting. Mr. Jenkins advised the fare free service for FRED has been in place for thirty (30) days and FRED has received good data collection to date. The transition from paid fares to the existing fare-free program went smoothly and the overall objective of the fare free service goal has been achieved. Since February 28th, the beginning of fare free services, FRED has seen an increase in ridership by over 43%. Mr. Jenkins stated FRED is still not at pre-covid ridership levels; however, FRED had a very successful month of ridership participation.

Mrs. Erkert asked Mr. Jenkins if there is any way data obtained could indicate the purpose of a rider's travels – i.e., riding to work, appointments, shopping, etc. Ms. Lett also relayed that if data is available, it would be interesting to determine what mode of transit the population was utilizing prior to FRED going fare free. Mr. Ruiz asked if FRED's VRE bus service would be reinstated in the near future. Mrs. Jackson advised that at the present time and foreseeable future, FRED will not be re-implementing the VRE bus service. Mr. Ruiz stated that VRE has seen a 30 – 35% increase in ridership since COVID and inquired if this increase would be significant for the bus service to be reinstated. Mrs. Jackson stated that FRED continues to have a shortage of bus operators and data before the pandemic showed very limited usage on the FRED's VRE bus routes. Mr. Jenkins concurred and also added that the opening of the Spotsylvania VRE station also decreased ridership for the VRE bus service.

Mrs. Jackson advised that FRED is working on internal updates for making FRED's website more user friendly for the public. Mrs. Jackson reports that FRED has six (6) open full-time operators' positions to fill. FRED staff continues to work close with the City's Human Resource department to ensure current open job vacancies are advertised on the City's website and with the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), including FRED's website. FRED's Maintenance Facility is now fully staffed.

Mr. Jenkins advised that FRED's ridership has increased since the fare free service options were implemented on February 28th. FRED's ridership has shown a 10% increase from the first quarter of 2022 compared to 4th quarter of 2021.

Mr. Jenkins advised that FRED has replaced two service vehicles that have reached their useful service life.

Healthy Generations Area Agency on Aging (HGAAA) Trainer Report:

Ms. Banks advised that she received a request to coordinate a seven-year old's birthday request by riding on a FRED bus. The event took place on March 25, 2022 that included a bus scavenger hunt and a special birthday lunch at the conclusion of the bus ride. Ms. Banks expressed gratitude to JoAnna Roberson for requesting the special event, FRED staff for providing a "FRED goodie bag" with gifts and Courtyard Marriott for making the event a huge success. Ms. Banks stated that she plans to develop a "Read and Ride" program for senior citizens that are looking for local programs to help spend quality time with their grandchildren. HGAAA is seeking for local businesses that would like to be involved with the "Read and Ride" program. Ms. Banks suggested to have "FXBGO! Bingo Cards" printed as another way to help with travel training and encourage riders to utilize FRED bus service. These programs are still in the developmental phase and will focus first on routes with the lowest ridership. Ms. Banks advised she is planning to ride both Spotsylvania and Stafford counties bus routes to determine what improvements are needed in these areas. Travel Talk continues to run on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 2:00 p.m. Ms. Banks stated the community response to FRED's fare free bus service has been well received. Ms. Banks reported that she is still participating in "First Friday" activities and continues to educate the public while she conducts travel training. FRED bus service information is being planned to be distributed at the local farmer markets and asked for PTAB members help with forwarding any available contact information. Mrs. Erkert noted that she would provide an email address to Ms. Banks to contact the Marketing Manager for the Gordon Road Commuter Lot. Ms. Banks asked FRED staff to investigate the bus stop at Target Marketplace on Route 610 in Stafford County to address potential safety concerns for pedestrians and FRED bus operators.

Ms. Banks conducted nine (9) informational/RouteShout tutorial sessions with 25 participants; 290 individuals were given information on FRED bus service at a recent Chamber event, two First Friday events, and at both Lee Hill Transfer Station and Leeland VRE lot. Travel training is still available and encouraged; Ms. Banks will gladly come to any office or agency to provide training.

Ms. Lett also relayed that Ms. Banks is planning to speak to the disAbility Resource Center in regard to educating the youth with disabilities in the region on utilizing FRED bus services.

New Business:

As there were new PTAB participants at the April 6th meeting, Mrs. Jackson requested that introductions be made around the table. Among the new members were: Ms. Lately from disAbility Resource Center; Ms. Golden and Colie Touzel from FAMPO; and Mr. Ruiz from VRE. Mrs. Jackson thanked the new participants for their attendance and invited each to attend future PTAB meetings. Mrs. Jackson noted that as a prior request from board members, Mr. Ruiz will now represent VRE on PTAB.

Mr. Ruiz reported that VRE ridership has increased; however, still well under the pre-COVID numbers. VRE ridership is very much dependent on access to federal work sites and many of these locations still have not re-opened offices. Prior to COVID, VRE had 18,000 passengers daily and now only has 4,500 – 5,000 riders. Mr. Ruiz stated that as many government office buildings may re-open in July, VRE is hopeful ridership numbers will continue to increase. Mr. Ruiz added that VRE ridership has continued to increase consistently over the past two months. VRE is currently operating on full-service capacity with six (6) car trains in place and plan to add an additional two more. Mr. Ollis asked what the status of VRE implementing evening service, weekend service, and reverse commuting services. Mr. Ruiz stated this is still incorporated into VRE's strategic plan; however, these services will not begin until 2026. Mrs. Erkert asked Mr. Ruiz to provide copies of VRE's strategic plan to PTAB members for review as the plan continues to be developed. Mr. Ruiz stated both the old and new plans will be forwarded to FRED for member distribution and that the plan is a 3-phase process.

Announcements:

Rev. Davies thanked PTAB members for their attendance at today's meeting and for their continued participation to support FRED Transit. The next PTAB meeting will occur on June 1, 2022 at 9 a.m. at FRED's Operations/Training Building located in the Bowman Center.

Adjournment – The April 6th PTAB meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m.

Approved by the Public Transit Advisory Board

 06-14-22
JoAnna M. Roberson Date

FREDERICKSBURG REGIONAL TRANSIT

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

APRIL 6, 2022



AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Introductions for New Attendees
3. Public Comment
4. Adoption of Minutes
5. Report of the Director of Public Transit
6. Committee Reports
7. HGAAA Trainer Report
8. New Business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment



REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

FRED Transit Projects & Initiatives

- Transit Projects and Initiatives
 - Facility Improvements & Enhancements
 - Staffing
 - Radio Communications and Emergency Management System
 - Project Kick Off April 12th
- Grants Applications and Future Projects



COMMITTEE REPORTS

- MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES
- SERVICES TO THE UNDERSERVED
- PARTNERSHIPS AND MARKETING
- OPERATIONS AND OVERSIGHT



COMMITTEE REPORT

MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

- **GOAL B** - PROVIDE AFFORDABLE PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE TO THE REGION THROUGH THE UTILIZATION OF FUNDING, GRANTS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING ENTITIES AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.
 - B.2 – NICK RUIZ, PLANNING PROGRAM MANAGER FOR VIRGINIA RAILWAY EXPRESS (VRE) WILL BE REPRESENTING VRE AS A NON-VOTING MEMBER ON PTAB.
 - B.7 – FRED BEGAN “FARE FREE” SERVICE ON FEBRUARY 28, 2022.
- **GOAL C** – PROVIDE RELIABLE TRANSIT SERVICE WITHIN THE REGION.
 - C.9 – FRED RECEIVED TWO NEW SUPPORT VEHICLES ON MARCH 9, 2022.



COMMITTEE REPORT

SERVICES TO THE UNDERSERVED

- Update
 - 5 major bus stop locations were to be evaluated for accessibility within the region for TY2022 per Goal D in Mission, Goals & Objectives.



COMMITTEE REPORT PARTNERSHIP AND MARKETING

Radio Interview:

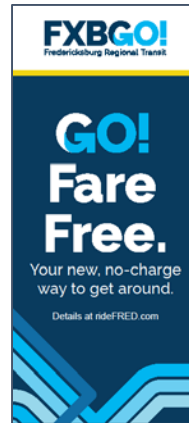
- Jamie Jackson interviewed “live” with Mr. Ted Schubel from WFVA-AM Radio on Thursday, March 10th to talk about FRED’s new services and the importance of public transportation.



COMMITTEE REPORT

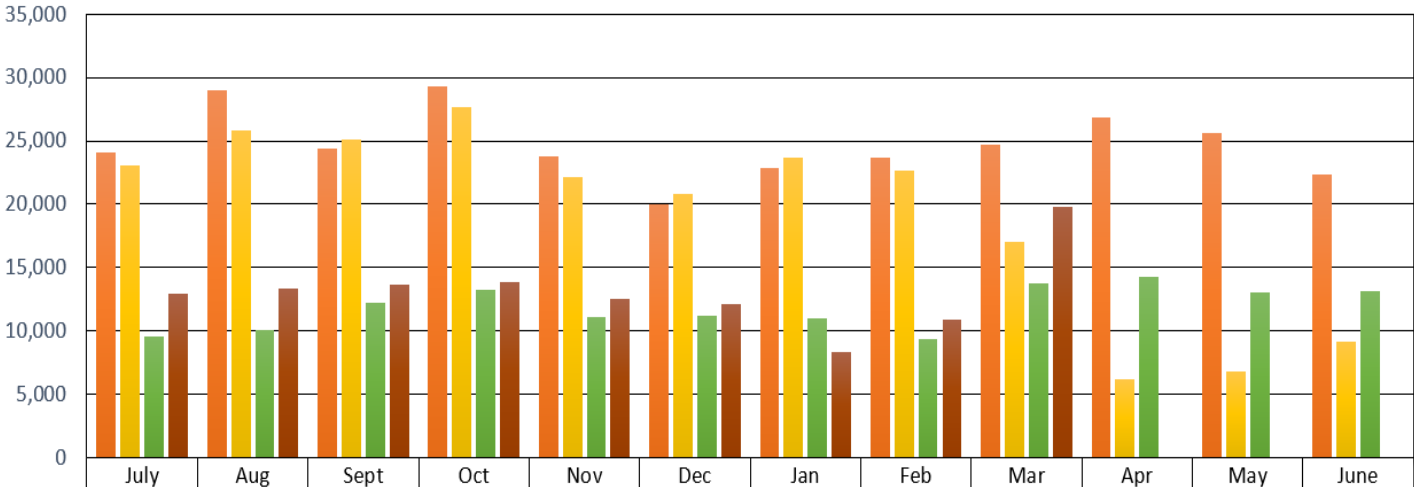
OPERATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

- New Vehicles in Fleet
- Transit Service Levels
- Ridership Update
- Fare Free Service Update



COMMITTEE REPORT OPERATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

FY 2022 Ridership Information



	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Total Ridership
FY 2019 Ridership	24,054	28,982	24,445	29,324	23,766	19,977	22,888	23,704	24,682	26,841	25,612	22,357	296,632
FY 2020 Ridership	23,063	25,825	25,068	27,701	22,126	20,779	23,676	22,692	17,012	6,211	6,840	9,188	230,181
FY 2021 Ridership	9,533	10,073	12,202	13,278	11,107	11,240	10,989	9,313	13,787	14,305	13,080	13,131	142,038
FY 2022 Ridership	12,932	13,359	13,676	13,880	12,496	12,109	8,366	10,935	19,802				117,555

- Due to staffing shortages and low VRE ridership stats, FRED continues with its temporary suspension of service to its VRE route connections.
- Due to icy weather conditions, FRED operated AM transit service late on February 14, 2022. In observance of President’s Day, FRED did not operate bus service on February 21, 2022.
- FRED began “Fare Free” bus service on Monday, February 28, 2022.



COMMITTEE REPORT
OPERATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

Fare Free Ridership Comparison

	2021	2022	% Change
January	10,989	9,313	-15.25%
February	9,313	10,935	17.42%
March	13,787	19,802	43.63%



COMMITTEE REPORT OPERATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

CY2022 – First Quarter Ridership Report

1ST QUARTER (JAN - MAR)

	FRED Total	Fredericksburg		Spotsylvania		Stafford	
Quarter	Ridership	Ridership	VRE	Ridership	VRE	Ridership	VRE
1 st Quarter 2022	39,103	23,566	0	5,536	0	8,598	0
4 th Quarter 2021	35,625	19,654	0	5,727	0	8,587	0
<i>Quarterly Percent Difference</i>	<i>+ 10%</i>	<i>+ 20%</i>		<i>- 3%</i>		<i>+ 0%</i>	
1 st Quarter 2021	34,089	19,163	0	5,475	0	8,350	0
<i>Annual Percent Difference</i>	<i>+ 15%</i>	<i>+ 23%</i>		<i>+ 1%</i>		<i>+ 3%</i>	



HEALTHY GENERATIONS AREA AGENCY ON AGING TRAVEL TRAINER REPORT



❖ Travel Training

- ❖ Birthday Scavenger Hunt, Friday, March 25, 2022
- ❖ Special Thanks to JoAnna Roberson & her family, Fredericksburg Regional Transit, and the Courtyard by Marriott Fredericksburg for making it a success!



❖ Info Sessions/RouteShout 2.0 Tutorials

- ❖ Nine (9) Sessions/ 25 participants

❖ Outreach/Special Events

- ❖ 290 Individuals (Chamber Event, First Fridays x2, Lee Hill Transfer Station, Leeland VRE)

❖ Travel Talk Facebook Live

- ❖ Five (5) Videos/ 501 Views (Re. Transit Planning & Funding, RouteShout2.0)
- ❖ Special thanks to Ken Pollock from Bay Transit, Neil Sherman & Brittany Voll from DRPT, and Aidan Quirke from Fredericksburg Regional Transit for participating.
- ❖ Currently developing creative new outreach activities meant to increase community participation (larger scale travel training scavenger hunts, travel training bingo, and “read and ride” activities). Would like to get input and assistance from FXBGO! staff and the Partnerships & Marketing subcommittee.

Does PTAB have any suggestions for Travel Talk? Ready for your own Travel Training Class?

Contact TaMara Banks: tbanks@healthygenerations.org or 540-371-3375



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next PTAB Meeting – June 1, 2022 (In-Person)

