



**Western Washington University Associated Students
AS Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes**

September 27, 2022, 4:00 PM

Attendees:

Committee Members: Jillian Trinkaus, James Detke, Bob Putich

Guests:

Staff and Assistants: Jennifer Black, Jesus Resendiz-Eyler, Seb Genge

Motions:

James Detke, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

I. CONSENT ITEMS

Approval of the Minutes

None currently

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

- a. Financial Report** – Jillian Trinkaus
- b. Program Report** – Jillian Trinkaus & James Detke

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. Introductions - James Detke**
 - a. James Detke He/Him Co-Chair
 - b. Jillian Trinkaus – She/her – Program Manager
 - c. Bob Putich – Director of Student Business Office
 - d. Jesus Resendiz-Eyler - VP for Governmental Affairs & Vice Chair
 - e. Seb Genge – He/Him – Vice President for Sustainability
 - f. Jen Black – She/Her – SGA Representation of Committees
- b. Financial Report – Jillian Trinkaus**
 - a. Current Fiscal Year started July 1, 2022
 - b. Expenses:
 - i. Telephone Expense - \$44 month
 - ii. Parking Expense – two parking spaces for the late-night shuttle
\$878 annual expense

- iii. WTA expense - \$2,999.00
- iv. Starlight shuttle - \$0, just started running September 18, 2022
- c. We are in the black, about \$1,242,000
- d. Q&A
 - i. Seb Genge - How often does the WTA and Starlight shuttle get paid?
 - 1. Jillian Trinkaus – WTA is paid monthly and is based of ridership, \$.50 per swipe. The Starlight Shuttle is based off hours running.
 - ii. Bob Putich – This year is appearing to have better ridership than last year. I anticipate WTA ridership to be more robust this year. Last year's numbers are not going to be a good representation of what this year will be due to the impact from the Covid Pandemic.

c. Program Report – Jillian Trinkaus & James Detke

- a. Rider ship for WTA and Starlight Shuttle September thru June 21-22
 - i. You can see when students are around in comparison when they are not around due to holidays and vacations. These numbers are based off riders and unique riders. Unique Riders are people who don't ride the bus as frequently in comparison to those who do ride it frequently. I anticipate the number of unique riders will go up along with our payments to WTA, which is great.
- b. Q&A
 - i. James Detke - Does this include employees or are these all-student riders?
 - 1. Jillian Trinkaus - This does include employees. The way that I handled that was I took the number of employees that have bus passes and compared to the number of unique riders, and I transferred, I paid the student fund for the employee riders to reimburse that fund.
 - 2. Seb Genge - What happens during July in August, I see that time wasn't included here?
 - a. During July and August were part of the Covid time, and WTA was not charging during that time. Next year they will be represented.

3. Jen Black - What is the difference between unique riders from the staff and student riders?
 - a. Jillian Trinkaus – They are unique because everyone has a WTA number, and 7,000 individual people that are associated with Western rode the bus 125,000 times in October.
4. Seb Genge – As far as payment goes, what does the conversion look like for the rides and payment?
 - a. Jillian Trinkaus - \$.50 per ride
5. James Detke – Is that what we are sticking to? The \$.50 per ride?
 - a. Jillian Trinkaus – Yes, that is what the contract states for another two years.
6. Seb Genge – What did the numbers look like before covid?
 - a. Jillian Trinkaus – They were a lot higher.
 - b. James Detke – Payments to WTA was almost twice as much.
 - c. Jillian Trinkaus – I also won't have as much of a handle on the numbers because previously we used to pay by FTE or the number of credits a student was taking vs number of rides. It was just based off the number of students there were.
 - d. Seb Genge – How did that transition happen?
 - i. Jillian Trinkaus – It was done through contract negotiations.
7. Jillian Trinkaus – I did a summary for last year, and in the past, it was much higher because we never had an option for classes online. Percent who used the bus was 41.4%. I got this number from the office of institutional effectiveness to get the total number of students to calculate this percentage. Hopefully that will go up this year, if our number of unique riders goes up so will our percent usage.

c. **Starlight Shuttle –**

- i. Jillian Trinkaus - Summary of our shuttle expenses

1. Covid Year – 2019 and 2020 the shuttle did not run for a full year
 - a. Spring quarter we didn't have any rides due to covid.
2. So, this is for really for full years
3. Our shuttle expenses are still quite high
 - a. We are currently about half of what the fixed rate shuttle was doing 2018-2019
 - b. If we get more riders our cost will go down but then we may need an additional shuttle. We don't have enough information that the fixed route is the best way to serve students just yet. I am concerned about the wait time that students are experiencing. That must do partially to the algorithm the app uses to book the rides. The number of guests that is entered into the app. We are working with LAZ who administers the shuttle program and TransLoc who controls the app. The way that it schedules on demand rides could be improved. We are hoping that will happen this quarter. Previously, before covid we had two shuttles that would run a fixed route that would run the same route in opposite directions. They would come through campus every 30 minutes. You would have to go to a bus stop that was on the route to get picked up and you would get dropped off at a bus stop that was on the route. That was run up until we got shut down due to covid. It was previously operated through the Bell-Air Charter which runs the airporter shuttle which is operated here in Bellingham. Last year we moved to a new company that runs on demand. The person opens the app, and the shuttle comes and picks you up and drops you off where you request. It is more door-to-door service. What we discovered was the algorithm in the app was not scheduling rides the most

efficiently as far as adding people on the route or taking guests into account. The consequence of that was long wait times for people when it is busy. We are still working on improving the service through the algorithm.

ii. **Q&A**

1. Seb Genge – The app itself is that a contract we deal with?
 - a. Jillian Trinkaus – No, we work with LAZ, and they work with TransLoc to provide the app with LAZ. We only don't pay them separately. We just deal with TransLoc.
2. Seb Genge – Any issues with the app is dealt with LAZ and not TransLoc?
 - a. Jillian Trinkaus – Yes, we only deal with the one company. The LAZ parking folks, hire the drivers, make sure all the equipment is working, and the app is working.
3. Bob Putich – We are not the only company that does uses TransLoc for LAZ. There is more opportunity for them to improve the app then if it was just Western using the app.
4. Bob Putich – At what point would it make sense to look at our shuttle service and discuss expanding our hours, or number of vehicles?
 - a. Jillian Trinkaus – It depends on when our ridership starts to go up and our wait times. I don't think it is necessary for our hours to necessarily increase because the city busses are still running during that time. I do see that we may need to expand vehicles or larger vehicles. It will become apparent when people are not able to get rides. I'm hoping this year we can really evaluate that.
 - b. Bob Putich – I want the demand to be more than we can handle, but the reason for my question is, I've had other members ask me if the shuttle

service could potentially solve some other problems that are being seen on campus, with students that have some mobility issues that aren't able to get around campus. There was just a handful of things that people were just wondering about. The thought is that students need this shuttle outside of the hours that are offered.

- c. Jillian Trinkaus – That is something that has always been discussed. We own the shuttles we would just have to pay LAZ for the hourly rate. My hesitation with using the shuttle instead of renting a shuttle for certain events is that the shuttle would need to be available at 10:00 PM for that evening run. But using the shuttle for some of those mobility issues for students during the day would be a great use for them. I also think this would be a great thing for the committee to explore.
- d. Bob Putich – Golf carts would also be something that we could consider for students with mobility issues.
- e. Jillian Trinkaus – The funding would be the biggest concern for that, the staff who would run it, the vehicles, would it be exclusive for students, are staff and guests using them. These are things that we should think about. I am not saying no, I am saying that is something this committee would need to explore that and see if it were something that it would want to utilize student dollars for.
- f. Seb Genge – From a feasibility standpoint, how much excess dollars are just sitting around waiting to be used for something like that?
 - i. Bob Putich – A surplus of dollars could be a moment in time. To run something like that really takes a detailed analysis. Jillian has been great at that over the years.

- ii. Jillian Trinkaus – If we had an idea of what other programs cost then it would give us a better idea and how other campuses run this program.
 - g. Jillian Trinkaus – There is a scooter share and bike share that may also be coming down the pike.
 - d. James Detke – Information fair and Bike Fest
 - i. We partnered with the outdoor center to get bikes for anyone who needed one to learn how to ride or for any of the rides that were offered. We got lots of students on bikes that may not have been on them before. We made Western appear more of a bike friendly committee.
 - ii. Information Fair
 - 1. We tabled at the information fair with WTA and Skagit Transit. Both brought their busses on Monday and just WTA on Tuesday. We also had the Starlight Shuttle there along with some of the managers from LAZ who operate the LAZ business. We got lots of chances to talk to new students and returning students about using the busses and the Starlight shuttle and getting them the resources that they need to use Active Transportation.
 - iii. Bike Fest
 - 1. We offered two learn to ride classes and two confident cities riding to students.
 - a. Learn to ride classes – Two students per class out of 10 open slots. In the future we will adjust this because it was easier to learn in smaller groups.
 - b. Confident City Riding – 14 students the first time we offered it and 12 the second time we offered it, out of max of 15 for each of those.
 - c. We had purchased \$3,000 in bike lights. There were about 90 lights. They were about \$30 for each light and students were great about only taking them if they needed them. We do have some extra lights left over. We gave about 30-45 lights out that way.
 - iv. Town Ride

1. We offered a town ride last Saturday and 18 students joined, including Seb. It was a great time. We had freshmen students, returning students, and international students. It is a great way to get students to connect and show them how great Bellingham is to ride in.

v. **Q&A**

1. Jen Black – Is there any social media for the Advisory Committee and if there is who oversees that?
 - a. James Detke – There is social media and I run it. You can find it at @wwutranspo on Instagram. I post information about the shuttle, the busses, and events. When we have larger events, we share through Western Communications and WIN. We don't have a lot of social media with students sharing their experiences.
2. Jen Black – Perhaps some of us can take selfies or photos of surroundings when riding the bus or biking that could help promote the use of alternative transportation. Looking at it from an algorithm standpoint, if you post on social media one time a day that means about 10% of your viewers will see it. If you post 4 times a day, it goes up but 15-20% but that goes up with stories and reels as well. If we just send them to James that would help or tag in your own social media that would be good.

d. **James Detke – How do we want our meetings to continue moving forward?**

- a. Seb Genge – How did you operate last year?
 - i. We operated every other week and that seemed to be enough, this way we had enough to talk about when we met.
- b. Seb Genge – How does parking enforcement fall under this committee is it part of this committee?
 - i. Jillian Trinkaus – Falls under transportation services but not part of this committee.
 - ii. Bob Putich – I think that is a funding concern. Unless that this committee wants to fund something related to parking or expand its coverage. Right now, funding is directed in the language of the fee.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Next Meeting October 11, 2022, at 4:00 PM in VU 460**

James Detke, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 5:05 PM