



AGENDA
Transit Advisory Commission
REGULAR MEETING
September 17, 2025 ~ 12:00 pm

1. ROLL CALL

2. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Minutes of the May 28, 2025, meeting

TAP Review 1- Ronald McDonald House

TAP Review 2- Comprehensive Juvenile Services

TAP Review 3- Antioch for Youth and Family

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Update on access road project

Update on CNG time fill project

Update on fare access system procurement process

Discuss 2026 budget goals

4. COMMISSIONERS FORUM

5. CITIZENS FORUM

6. ADJOURN



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Minutes of the May 28, 2025, meeting

SUMMARY

To address follow-up from the May 28 meeting, Chairperson Woodall spoke of concerns of timeliness for the bus stop near Market Trace. Staff adjusted the bus stop to receive routine service. Also, the following is information to answer questions of potential concerns noted during the citizens forum regarding the smell of natural gas and utilization of the large buses. Staff reached out to the MPO to capture a sneak peak of similar questions on the recent survey and identified two related comments, 1) big buses – good, 2) would like to see two more big buses for other routes.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [MINUTES OF MEETING.pdf](#)

MINUTES OF MEETING

Transit Advisory Commission

REGULAR MEETING

May 28, 2025~ 12:00 pm

The Blue Lion

101 N. 2nd Street

Fort Smith, AR

ROLL CALL: The Transit Commission meeting of Wednesday, May 28, 2025, was called to order by Chairperson Melissa Woodall. Other commissioners in attendance included Dr. Ann-Gee Lee and Jo Elsken, Bradley Martin and Marian Azab. Staff in attendance included Ken Savage, Nancy Kain, Lori Carr, Jason Haley and Greg Carthon. The public in attendance included Laura VanHook, Ashlie Ross, Melinda Fields and Keley Simpson.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

1. Review Minutes of February 12th Meeting: There were no questions or comments regarding the minutes and Commissioner Elsken made a motion for approval of the minutes as drafted, Commissioner Martin seconded the motion, the minutes were approved with all in favor and none opposed.

2. TAP Review: Lotus Recovery House: Ms. Laura Vanhook returned to present a request for additional TAP tickets. The original twenty-six (26) previously allocated were helpful, although, not enough for their needs. Lotus Recovery House provides recovery assistance for women following completion of detox and rehabilitation. The agency is requesting TAP tickets to access medical treatments, job access, court and basic needs. After a brief discussion Commissioner Martin made the motion to approve fifty (50) TAP tickets per month. Commissioner Elsken seconded the motion, and all were in favor, and none opposed.

3. Updates:

CNG Station:

Transit staff, in concert with the project architect, have completed the bid packet and scheduled the Bid Opening for June 26, 2025, at 2:00 PM in the second-floor conference room at 6821 Jenny Lind Road.

Two separate public postings are scheduled for June 1st and June 8th to provide information on accessing the bid documents so bids can be prepared for consideration. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2025.

The plan is to receive bids in hopes they fall within budget range. Construction will be performed to expand the station to include ten (10) slow fill ports that will permit drivers to connect to the fuel source and go home. Efficiencies gained in reducing fueling times can be applied to added services for the public.

Access Road:

Currently the Federal Transit Administration has requested to see Federal Railroad Administration requirements in connection with the access road project that would require the addition of a rail spur to ensure the safe crossing of vehicles on the planned roadway. An attorney for the A&M Railroad provided these regulations on May 27, 2025, and staff forwarded the information to FTA for further review and guidance.

If FTA is satisfied with the information and request, the next steps involve obtaining an agreement with the A&M on operating procedures that ensure satisfactory continuing control of the transit department. Upon further approvals, a segment of rail can be constructed, and the roadway can be completed.

Route Modifications:

At an April 22nd Study Session, the Fort Smith Board of Directors reviewed proposed budget cuts involving the transit department for \$446,000. At their May 6, 2025, meeting, the Board elected not to seek cuts from the transit department due to the total impact it would have in lost revenues from grant proceeds.

While the department remains in need of two driver positions to implement the planned fixed route expansions, having the funds slated for operations can help the department acquire some of the equipment needed to support a future expansion. Currently the department is seeking to acquire a new van along with two replacement vans in the fleet. Remaining funds slated for expansion expenses can be applied towards making small additions to improve public services.

4. Commissioners Forum: With a full commission in attendance, the commissioners voted for the position of Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Martin nominated Commissioner Elsken for Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Lee seconded the motion. All were in favor and none opposed.

Chairperson Woodall asked where the department was with the Google integration. Staff is working with the national Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) coordinator to integrate the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) system into the new software the department is seeking through the 2026 budget process. This new software will enable trip planning using Google and Apple mapping applications.

Chairperson Woodall expressed concern with the buses running behind schedule more than usual this month. The first of the month always affects the scheduling and there is a 40% increase in ridership on the free ride days which causes the buses to run behind schedules as well.

Chairperson Woodall stated a passenger notified her, the bus stop by the post office on Market Trace which is by request only has not been timely. Staff assured her they would look into what could be causing the delays. The bus stop has been adjusted to routine service.

Commissioner Elsken asked if staff was in contact with Michael Mings regarding the narrowing streets. Greg Carthon, attends various mobility meetings with Michael Mings to coordinate alternative transportation.

5. Citizens Forum: Ms. Keley Simpson, Missions Facilitator for First Presbyterian Church informed the commission she attended the Board of Directors Meeting the night before and was concerned with the budget cuts they were making to the non-profits. She is concerned with Transit being cut back when they have been trying to solve transportation needs for their community. First Presbyterian Church has a car loan program called Changing Lanes. Another issue the community has been struggling with is food insecurity. She urged Transit staff to continue with the Uber request.

Ms. Keley Simpson asked if passengers have noticed a difference with the large Gillig CNG buses. Chairperson Woodall replied they smell much better than the old gas buses.

Ms. Simpson noted there are not as many bike riders because of the danger from the other cars and drivers.

Commissioner Elsken asked Ms. Simpson if there was an increase in the requests for assistance from First Presbyterian Church. Ms. Simpson stated there has been a large increase.

ADJOURN: After a brief discussion, the next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 27th at noon at the Blue Lion. (This meeting date was later postponed to September 17th).

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Woodall.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Tap Review 1- Ronald McDonald House

SUMMARY

Daleana Vaughn, a representative from the **Ronald McDonald House** is prepared to share information to the Transit Advisory Commission during the September 17 meeting. Guest service managers at the RMHC periodically experience families seeking service that have no access to a vehicle or transportation in any way. They indicate some families have to walk to the hospital for NICU care or pediatrics for various reasons. If considered, program tickets will help serve access to basic needs.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Tap Review 2- Comprehensive Juvenile Services

SUMMARY

Transit staff has been invited to speak routinely at various meetings hosted by the **Comprehensive Juvenile Services** to orient participating youth and families on the benefits and privileges of public transportation. To foster participation and address access to basic needs, staff is proposing to add Comprehensive Juvenile Services to the list of eligible recipients in the Transportation Assistance Program. Staff recommend 26 tickets per month as a starting point for program orientation.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Tap Review 3- Antioch for Youth and Family

SUMMARY

Representatives from Antioch Youth and Family commonly acquire tickets in bulk to assist local residents with accessing transportation. While unable to fulfill their request for discounted tickets beyond the usual rate, staff desires to request providing a limited quantity of tickets through the Transportation Assistance Program. Staff recommend 26 tickets per month as a starting point for program orientation.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Update on access road project

SUMMARY

Staff is meeting with representatives from FTA on August 26, to discuss their project concerns with the access road relating to satisfactory continuing control. We feel confident the information and justification we previously provided defines the department's need; however, we are anxious to learn their pending concerns.

The project, if approved, will include a new access road to South 28th Street, rail crossing and new run-around rail track. The purpose of the rail track is to mitigate safety concerns for deliveries to the neighboring warehouse. The project will also include a re-routing of the department's sewer system and repairs to perimeter drainage system.

Staff provided information pertaining to the risk of continuing access using the existing roadway, as well as risk associated with the current rail delivery method without the addition of a run-around track. The information provided to FTA included a brief video, pictures, drawings, as well as a proposed budget to construct the runaround track. More information will be available at the upcoming meeting.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Update on CNG time fill project

SUMMARY

Staff received bids on June 26th, for the installation of a time fill system component to enhance the current CNG station. The Fort Smith Board of Director's upon receipt of a signed contract and related documents will review the item for consideration. Staff is eager to complete this project to aid in logistics and efficiencies that can enhance passenger service. More information will be provided at the upcoming meeting.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Update on fare access system procurement process

SUMMARY

Staff is working towards procurement of the fare access system. Currently staff is waiting on a formal quote from UMO and have meeting scheduled for review of a similar fare collection system on September 4th. Coordination efforts are underway with the purchasing manager to obtain information on a joint RFP process with the Jonesboro transit system, as they are seeking a new fare access system with similar features. More information will be provided at the meeting.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Transit Advisory Commission
FROM: Ken Savage, Transit Director
DATE: 8/26/25
SUBJECT: Discuss 2026 budget goals

SUMMARY

Attached are the 2026 Service Objectives, Key Performance Indicators and 2025 Service Objectives and Outcomes. Staff will be available to answer questions relating to each of these items at the meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [2026 Service Objectives Board Review.pdf](#)

Transit 2026 Service Objectives

1. Replace outdated scheduling software with an industry-leading platform that features route planning in real time information. Work with the national Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) coordinator to integrate the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) system into the new software to enable trip planning using Google and Apple mapping applications. **TI-3.1 Promote and maintain a public transit system that is safe, efficient, cost-effective and responsive to the needs of residents.**
2. Work with the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce to facilitate public transportation for residents participating in the pilot training program. **ED-4.2.2 Support Chamber and AEDC in their efforts to increase jobs in the area.**
3. Adjust the fixed route starting time approximately 30 minutes earlier upon the completion of the CNG time fill installation project. Utilize efficiencies gained through staff time saved by connecting the fleet to a fuel line for overnight fueling as opposed to manually fueling the large buses. **TI-4.2.1 Expand fixed-route system to ensure access to a majority of shopping/service areas.**

Key Performance Indicators					
Program	Performance Indicators	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Target	FY 2025 Actual (as of 06/30/24)	FY 2026 Target
6550	Total Ridership (Unlinked Passenger Trips)	235,239	280,000	122,292	280,000
6550	Cost Per Passenger	\$12.47	\$12.50	\$12.99	\$12.75
6550	Cost Per Revenue Hour	\$94.93	\$90.00	\$110.85	\$100.00
6550	Demand Response on Time - Performance	94%	100%	95%	100%

Transit 2025 Service Objectives and Outcomes

1. **Objective:** Adjust fixed routes and demand response services to accommodate additional points of interest and growth in ridership. **Service Objective and Comprehensive Plan Goal #FLU-3.2.1 TI-4.2.1**

Outcome: Staff presented service adjustments to the Transit Advisory Commission during three (3) separate meetings to gain public input for future consideration. Funding was made available for operations; however, the personnel request needed to facilitate the service changes recommended were not approved. Staff utilized the operations funds to order an additional demand response van and associated equipment in preparation for future expansion.

2. **Objective:** Research and obtain design for the construction of five bus stop pull-offs in select areas along transit fixed routes. **Service Objective and Comprehensive Plan Goal #TI-1.4.2**

Outcome: Staff will continue to work on the placement of pull-offs in the later part of 2026. Also, in an effort to provide a smooth and safe transition for the implementation of pull offs, staff coordinated with other transit agencies in Arkansas to introduce HB 1838, A Bill to require that a driver of a vehicle yield the right of way to a public transit bus. The Bill was recommended for study by the Joint Interim Committee on Public Transportation but was suspended at that level. Staff will continue to work with our peers to establish safety measures for negotiating traffic in pull-off areas.

3. **Objective:** Perform a recertification process of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applicants. **Service Objective and Comprehensive Plan Goal #PFS-2 PFS04**

Outcome: This effort is slated to take place in the second half of the year. Staff will work closely with passengers and the Transit Advisory Commission to perform a recertification of clients through the Americans with Disabilities Act process. This process is necessary to ensure each client is receiving the proper level of service regarding any accessibility limitations. The recertification process also involves a reorganization of records to keep the system operating at an optimum level and to ensure system messaging captures an effective audience.

