



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Public Transit Advisory Commission

Tuesday, October 21, 2025
6:00 PM

City Hall
Conference Room 1/C
701 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Matt Wright called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Present: 10 - Matt Wright, Gabi Jacobs, Sarah Johnson, Katharine Meagher, Adam Thorp, Randal Meyer, Joan Ferguson, Bryan Mink, William Brumbaugh and Hannah Carrico

Absent: 1 - Tammy Teel

Unexcused: 2 - Joy Rushing and Christine Schneider

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motioned by Sarah, seconded by Katherine, approved at 6:08 p.m.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motioned by Bryan, seconded by Katherine, approved at 6:09 p.m.

September 16 Minutes

Attachments: [Sept. 16 Minutes](#)

V. City Council & Other Commission Updates: Vision Zero, Disability, Bike/Ped, CATSO

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Bus Stop Evaluation Matrix

Attachments: [Bus Stop Evaluation Draft](#)

Matt asked Mike if they had reliable stop data for the past three months. Mike stated that they have good data for the fixed routes but not as much for the Tiger Line. Matt suggested reviewing the highest ridership stops at the next meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Fares Discussion

Matt suggested a book called *Human Transit* by Jarrett Walker to the commission and noted that the author does not have a strong recommendation regarding fares. Adam discussed the concept of fare-free service versus charging fares and mentioned that PTAC should have a recommendation for City Council. Sarah agreed, noting that she has opinions on the topic but emphasized the importance of educating themselves on the implications if fares were to return.

Matt mentioned that Olsson reported that increasing fares could result in a 3% decrease in ridership. Mike stated that if City Council decided to reinstate fares, it would cost approximately \$300,000 to implement fare boxes and take at least a year to install them on all buses. He added that charging fares places a tangible value on the system and that he supports fares to show the system's worth, but the implementation process would take about a year and a half.

Gabi stated that she did not disagree with the idea of people paying for transit and agreed with Mike's points. However, she noted that given the current state of the system, many riders would not perceive value in the service. She emphasized that both the City and federal government should prioritize contributing more to transit funding and expressed concern that charging fares now would create barriers for many riders.

Matt reviewed fare history and how much revenue transit generated when fares were previously charged. Sarah asked what kind of funding would be required to install fare boxes on the buses. Mike replied that he was unsure and that there could be multiple funding options. Matt asked if there would be ongoing costs in addition to the initial installation. Mike confirmed that there would likely be annual fees and physical maintenance costs for the fare boxes.

Mike then posed a question to the group, asking if reinstating fares would make more sense once the system was back to baseline service. The group agreed that it would. Joan mentioned that free fares are a major incentive for students to ride the Tiger Line. Randal asked if students currently pay a fare for the Tiger Line, and Mike confirmed that they do pay a fee.

William commented that charging fares could help improve the public perception of the bus system, which some people view as unsafe. Randal asked if there was data on the number of accidents involving buses, and Mike confirmed that those records are maintained. Sarah emphasized that policy decisions should be based on facts, not perceptions.

Joan asked why the city stopped charging fares. Mike explained that COVID-19 was the primary reason and that the old fare box technology had become outdated. Matt added that paratransit fares must be based on fixed-route fares, and Mike noted that paratransit fares can be up to double those of fixed routes.

Bryan expressed concern that reintroducing fares could significantly reduce ridership and asked if there were alternative ways to recover those funds. Mike said they are waiting on the results of the Olsson study to have a complete picture. Adam added that if fares were reinstated, service should be restored to full levels beforehand.

Matt stated that the group should develop recommendations to present to City Council. He asked how they wanted to proceed and suggested bringing the discussion back under old business. Randal said no recommendation should be made until service is back to baseline. Adam proposed revisiting the topic at the November meeting and encouraged

members to start considering questions and ideas so PTAC can develop recommendations at that time.

VIII. RIDERSHIP

September Ridership

Attachments: [Sept. Ridership](#)

Sarah noted that Tiger Line ridership has been decreasing significantly. Mike stated that the current ridership numbers are likely about 80% inaccurate. He explained that they are working with the company responsible for the passenger counting system to get it back online. Mike also mentioned that Adnan has been working with the drivers to implement a temporary physical counting system in the meantime.

IX. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

Mike announced that this would be his last PTAC meeting, as he will be retiring on November 7. He shared that Shannon Hemenway will be taking his place at future PTAC meetings.

Adam stated that PTAC should provide a recommendation to City Council regarding all matters related to the Tiger Line and that further discussion on the topic is needed.

Matt Wright mentioned that the Board and Commission meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. He also shared that Waymo has a microtransit program in Arizona in partnership with a city, resulting in a fully operational microtransit system.

Joan asked if private apartment shuttles could be discussed at the next meeting, and Matt confirmed that they could. Gabi added that she would like to review ridership trends over the past few years, noting that the Tiger Line used to be very busy, and she wants to better understand why ridership has declined. Mike responded that the Tiger Line is still busy, but there are now more buses in service than before. Sarah asked if ridership data is available for specific times of day, such as morning and afternoon.

Zoom Link

Attachments: [Zoom](#)

X. NEXT MEETING DATE - 11/18/25

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Matt Wright adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

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