

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2023 Interim

July 19, 2023

Call to Order and Roll Call

The second meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Transportation of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue was held on July 19, 2023, at 10:30 AM in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Jimmy Higdon, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Jimmy Higdon, Co-Chair; Representative Ken Upchurch, Co-Chair; Representative John Blanton, Senator Johnnie Turner, Senator David Yates, Representative Josh Branscum, Representative Thomas Huff, Representative Shawn McPherson, Representative Tom Smith, and Representative Ashley Tackett Laferty.

Guests: Vickie Bourne, Executive Director, Office of Transportation Delivery, KYTC; Kenny Bishop, Legislative Director, Office of the Secretary, KYTC; Andy Rush, Director of Transportation, Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA); Jarrett Haley, Executive Director, KIPDA; Bob Koehler, Deputy Executive Director, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI); and, Christopher Evilia, Transportation Planning Engineer, Lexington Area MPO.

LRC Staff: Justin Perry, David Talley, and Spring Emerson.

Approval of Minutes

Co-Chair Upchurch moved to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Senator Thomas, and the minutes were approved without objection.

Public Transportation

Ms. Bourne provided information on the Office of Transportation Delivery, Department of Public Transportation.

In response to questions from Chair Higdon, Ms. Bourne said only a few counties in south central Kentucky have no service, due to no applications being received for them; however, they have expressed interest. Public Transit is used by employees for rides to work, as well as by veterans, even though there is no formal veterans program in place at this time.

Representative Blanton commented that one of his former constituents who was disabled utilized the Public Transport service in the Sandy Valley area and enjoyed the ability to ride to work. When the service began charging fares, he had to quit his job. Ms. Bourne said that the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet may be involved with special cases.

In response to questions from Senator Yates, Ms. Bourne said usage is increasing as people reenter the workplace following the pandemic. Public input and coordination with the local governments will be considered before removing any routes.

Representative Smith commented that if a decrease in federal funding is anticipated, we should be working with them now, as it takes time for the long process involved. Increased activity plus a decrease in funds equals a problem.

Representative McPherson commented that there is a public-private partnership opportunity for local entities to assist in the fares, as is being done in his district of Scottsville.

In response to a question from Senator Turner regarding electric vehicles, Mr. Bishop said they are currently in the information gathering stage, and discussions are taking place. The committee will be kept informed on their progress.

In response to a question from Chair Higdon regarding the non-public school funding, Ms. Bourne said the fiscal courts did not request the full amount for their budgets.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

Mr. Koehler with OKI provided information on the MPOs, along with Mr. Rush with KIPDA and Mr. Evilia with the Lexington Area MPO.

In response to a question from Chair Higdon regarding working with the KYTC, Mr. Rush said they work with the cabinet regularly on the Strategic Highway Investment for Tomorrow (SHIFT) process.

In response to a question from Chair Higdon regarding communication about SHIFT projects, Mr. Evilia said the MPOs do a lot before the SHIFT process begins. The need must be identified, then the sponsorship process begins, followed by setting priorities. Mr. Rush added that they are able to turbo boost certain projects, depending on necessity.

Chair Higdon commented that an issue with the SHIFT process is that it begins during the Session of the General Assembly. He requested that they share priority projects with legislators for their districts, as they want to work more closely together. Mr. Rush replied that they would be happy to provide the information.

Chair Higdon commented that the KYTC Road Plan within the agency budget request does not include SHIFT scores. If the SHIFT process is going to be used as a tool, it would benefit the legislature to have those scores at the time of the request.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:43 AM.