

TRAC MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2013 - Noon
DART CENTRAL STATION – MULTIMODAL ROOM

TRAC Members Present:

Randy Anderson, Jay Peterson, Rod Van Genderen, Peggy Chong, Greg Boeschen, Lisa Ryan, Cyrilla Gregory, Tonia Crawford, Alexander Grgurich, Dina Ricketts

TRAC Members Absent:

Laura Friest, Joan Bolin, Patrick Karnes

TRAC Staff Present:

Gunnar Olson, Kirstin Baer-Harding, Jennifer Long, Katie Dale, Tony Filippini, Suzanne Robinson

Others Present:

Alexis Baker

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Rod Van Genderen at 12:05 pm. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Notice of the meeting was duly posted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair called for corrections to the March 27, 2012 meeting minutes.

The minutes from the January 9 meeting were adopted by unanimous vote.

ACTION ITEMS

2013 Performance Goals

Gunnar listed the goals set for DART staff by the Transit Riders Advisory Committee (attached).

It was moved by Alexander Grgurich and seconded by Randy Anderson that the 2013 Performance Goals be approved. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Public Participation Plan - Gunnar Olson

Alexander asked if there could be a discussion by the DART Commission about the starting time of Commission monthly meetings. He stated that a later start time might allow for more public participation. Greg pointed out that a later start time might limit participation since buses don't run late enough on some routes.

Greg mentioned fare equity and asked if DART collected data on who buys passes in terms of the demographics of bus riders. Tony said that in the DART 2035 study a survey was completed on fares, and thought DART should do one every 5 years.

A member of the public, Alexis Baker, said she moved back to Des Moines from a bigger city and is passionate about the use of public transit, in particular its importance for low-income populations.

Jim Tishim said that the FTA's Title VI rules require that DART do a ridership count and fare analysis.

There was concurrence that low income groups be measured, but also demographics collected on others such as students and young professionals.

Peggy thought DART outreach could inspire more use of service to the pools and other summer venues.

Gunnar stated that we have all kinds of outreach to various groups through DART's marketing efforts, and that ideas to increase outreach are always welcome.

The Chair stated that this is just part of larger plans that make sure that first of all the disadvantaged have access to transportation. Greg agreed that extra attention should be given to those who don't have a voice, and also don't have access to smart phones and computers.

Baker asked why there was not more frequency on the DART routes.

Lisa asked that DART should find ways to reach out to others rather than the same old groups. She said that at Wells Fargo there was a meeting regarding the bus service options but that it was not publicized and so not well-attended. Gunnar agreed that this might be a good future agenda item.

Kirstin stated that she wants the Marketing Department to update TRAC at every meeting.

The Chair thanked the TRAC members for all their good feedback on this discussion item.

2. 2013 Service Improvements – Jim Tishim

Lisa asked why Merle Hay Mall is not a part-and-ride site. Jim explained that DART has been trying for years to get the mall to agree. He said that the mall owners have been resistant to the idea, but that DART continues to address the issue on a regular basis.

Jay asked about Night Service on the Fairgrounds route. Jim said that the #17 and #1 routes were looking to expand into Night Service by one hour every weekday.

Greg said that he would like to see a mid-day route for #91. He would also like a loop between Merle Hay Mall and Valley West Mall. Jim said that it would require adding a bus or eliminating the city of Windsor Heights from the service. He said that the Paratransit Department was gathering ridership data so that a decision could be made.

Baker asked about increased trips on holidays and for big downtown events. Jim said that changing service for special occasion days was extremely difficult, since it takes many hours by DART staff to set up the timing and scheduling. He said that DART does increase service for very special events. Greg asked about FTA rules as they apply to special events, and Jim responded that DART is not allowed to do charter service, so this makes any special event service difficult. Kirstin added that DART doesn't have funds for these high-cost extras in its budget, either. She also stated that many groups when planning special events forget to include DART in their planning, only letting us know at the last minute. She said this happened just recently with the RAGBRAI announcement.

3. Trip Planner – Kirstin

She announced that DART finally has a possible start date, that almost probably will begin somewhere in April unless it doesn't.

She also announced that Route 60 will offer free rides for one month along with extending hours of service.

Greg asked if the planner would be accessible to Google users, and Kirstin responded that our information on the trip planner will also be available to be used by Google on their platform.

Baker asked if there would be a DART app for the smart phones. Kirstin said not yet, it would be accessible just from the DART website. (New bus rider person) also asked about real-time information availability and Kirstin said not yet, but later we hope to add this. Greg asked if the program would be open for others to build on top of it. Jim said that there are pros and cons to doing this and that decision is deferred until later. Randy asked if it will apply to different platforms, and Kirstin said there will be a desktop version and a mobile version. Jay asked when it would be available and Jim answered that there were a few editing changes left, plus testing in both English and Spanish. Lisa asked if there will be a trip planner at the site, and Kirstin replied affirmatively.

TRAC COMMUNICATIONS

Dina said some riders on her route were disgruntled this week because of the change in drivers. It was discussed about how riders can be informed, because people don't realize that drivers regularly have to bid three times a year for the routes. Gunnar added that union seniority determines the bid results. Dina said that all DART drivers are great, but regular riders don't have much patience while a new driver is on the learning curve for that route. She thinks more information for riders ahead of time would help alleviate this.

Lisa stated that another problem occurs because people aren't aware of what "time points" on the bus schedules means. She said that in the afternoon Wells Fargo people are missing the bus because it's Aviva's time point that is listed on the schedule.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

May 8, 2013 – DART Multimodal Room

MOTION TO ADJOURN – 1:13 PM

It was moved and seconded that the TRAC adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.