

TRAC MEETING MINUTES
JULY 9, 2014 - Noon
DART CENTRAL STATION – MULTIMODAL ROOM

TRAC Members Present:

Randy Anderson, Greg Boeschen, Daniel Rittel , Tonia Crawford, Dina Ricketts, Jay Peterson, Cyrilla Gregory, Alexander Grgurich, Michael Barber

TRAC Members Absent:

Laura Friest, Patrick Karnes, Rod Van Genderen

TRAC Staff Present:

Gunnar Olson, Kirstin Baer-Harding, Jennifer Long, Ethan Standard, Jim Tishim, Jamie Schug, Todd Struthers, Jennifer Greiner, Tony Lafata, Amber Dakan, Suzanne Robinson

Others Present:

Michael Barber's Associate

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Greg Boeschen at 12:05 p.m. 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 May 14, 2014 meeting minutes.

The minutes were amended to reflect the Chair's suggested change in the "Staff Updates" in Jim's section titled *Approved Service Enhancements* from Bus #91 to Bus #51. It was moved by Randy Anderson and seconded by Alexander Grgurich that the minutes be approved as amended.

The minutes from the meeting were approved as amended by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. RideShare Expansion – Jennifer Long, RideShare Program Coordinator

Jennifer gave an overview of the RideShare program and its goals. She said that the program has suffered some setbacks due to:

- Employer discontinuing subsidy
- Reduction in fringe benefits
- Trend of people moving closer to their jobs

She stated that a new marketing strategy has been developed that includes “trial ride” coupons for prospective riders, and also a number of strategies have been developed and implemented, including:

- Visiting Employers
- Flyers and Coupons in Vans
- Emails to Ridematching Database
- Social Media Posts
- Facebook Ads
- Gas Pump Toppers
- Newspaper Ads

In the coming months, RideShare will also roll out the following:

- New Flyers
- Return Rider Special
- Referral Competition
- Fall Promotion

Jennifer said that challenges will still be faced, including:

- Lower Commute Costs
- Shift Work – no flexibility
- Language Barriers

Finally, she closed with some good news regarding the “hot spots” for recruitment, including Williamsburg and its Kinzer manufacturing plant, the Reverse Commute to Ames, the Newton/Grinnell area and in Pella.

Michael Barber asked if the reduction in the tax credit by the IRS will have an effect, and Gunnar answered that the American Public Transportation Association is working hard with other transit groups to get the credit back. Amber explained that RideShare is reducing the entry fee in order to entice new riders to join. Jamie added that vanpools have to be self-supporting which limits RideShare’s ability to launch new vanpools. Alex asked how DART finds interested prospects, and Jennifer Greiner explained besides word of mouth, there is a ride-matching program online. She said that DART’s new website is set up to better show the process to prospective users, and that data collection can now be done as well. Dan asked if RideShare could display signs on the roadway like the DOT does, and Jennifer said she would look into it. Michael asked if DART’s dispatcher’s daily appearance on WHO television could add a blurb about RideShare and Gunnar explained that the dispatcher’s television spot was strictly informational and that an attempt to market RideShare might not be allowed.

2. Capital Improvement Plan – Amber Dakan, Finance Manager

Amber explained that the new Capital Improvement Plan has been adopted by the DART Commission, and shared the presentation developed for the Commission with TRAC. She started with a chart showing that about one-third of DART's revenue comes from FTA funds, and those funds are currently allocated approximately as follows:

- 63% - operations
- 20% - revenue vehicles
- 5% - facilities
- 3% - support equipment
- 9% - tech support

The new plan will apportion projects over a 10-year framework as follows:

- Fleet – 51%
- Facilities – 7%
- Support Equipment – 2%
- Technology – 1%
- Passenger Amenities – 1%
- Development (large-scale capital projects such as Bus Rapid Transit) – 20%
- Operations Expense 18%

She explained that DART wants to use more of these federal funds for capital projects such as DART buildings and fleet purchases. She said the new Capital Plan provides a 10-year framework for doing this as follows:

- **Tier I**
Highest priority items with funding allocated in 2015 & 2016
- **Tier II**
These projects are medium priority with funding allocated in 2017 to 2019
- **Tier III**
Lower priority projects with funding allocated in 2020 to 2024

She stated that the 10-year plan would be implemented in 2015, but will be reviewed every year.

Alexander asked why TRAC wasn't able to review the plan prior to passage by the Commission, and why there wasn't more funding allocated to passenger amenities. Amber said that amenities are required by the FTA at the 1% amount, and that new buses were a higher priority at this time. Gunnar said that staff will do better with introducing plans to TRAC prior to implementation by the Commission. Amber added that the Capital Plan is on the DART website and features the dollar amounts in addition to the percentages shown in her presentation. Alexander added that he believes some cities are doing streetscape improvements with federal funds, and Gunnar said he would check with commission members regarding this.

3. Open Data Update – Todd Struthers, IT Manager

Todd gave a presentation updating TRAC membership on the status of the Open Data project. He first highlighted the elements of the project. Project goals are:

- To improve customer access to information.
- Reduce customer service calls and queue hold/wait times.
- Drive DART loyalty.
- Show innovative leadership in the transit industry.
- Grow ridership.

He gave TRAC members the recommendations for use of open data:

- Provide DART's schedule and real-time data via GTFS and GTFS-R data feeds to the public.
- Free of charge.
- Publish and maintain the GTFS feed on the Open Data Exchange Board

Reasons for the policy:

- Keeps DART branding separate from apps developed by those who are not DART supported.
- Provides a framework for interfacing our data that does not guarantee availability.
- Establishes termination of access rules and procedures at DART's discretion.
- Clearly defines ownership of the data.
- Ensures data will be used legally. States that utilizing the data implies agreement with the policy and rules.

Todd stated that the next steps in the process will be for the schedule data to go live in September, and the Real Time data to go live sometime in the winter of 2015.

Alexander asked if someone could use DART information for their own commercial use and charge money for it and advertise it. Todd said he would check the fine print and report back.

TRAC COMMUNICATIONS

Gunnar provided an article from "Mother Jones" magazine about the "Adopt a Hydrant" program in Boston, where local residents claim a fire hydrant to shovel out when it snows, and said it might be a possibility to look into for the DART bus stops in the winter. Gunnar added that DART has been reluctant to do or authorize snow removal because of liability issues. There was discussion about the motivation of residents to do snow removal, and that fear of liability might mean they will need to have permission by authorities to take on the task. There was speculation about what different groups might take on the task, and how long it was taking to find some solution.

STAFF UPDATES

Gunnar

Announced that Sheldahl has withdrawn from DART, but that since they were such a small community it wouldn't have much affect on DART's operations.

Jennifer Greiner – DART Website

She announced that the new website is up and running and asked for any feedback that TRAC members can give, or relay if they hear comments from others. Greg mentioned that he likes the trip planner's prominence on the front page of the website. Jennifer said it works on all devices and also contains a language translator. Alex stated that he realized how difficult it is to plan a website that must contain so much detail, and he congratulated the DART team for doing a great job.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, September 10 at Noon
DART MultiModal Room

MOTION TO ADJOURN – 1:00 PM

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