

PUBLIC TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

Advisory committee to the Mayor on public transit issues

Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2008

Members present:

Ryan Green
Rochelle Hart
Julie Johnson Dresbach
Thad Mooney

Members absent:

Julie Briggs
Kate Heligas
Bill Sutton

Public in attendance:

Charles Santee
Sheila Clink
Norma M.
Chad Powell
Gary and Nancy Omdahl
Mike Ebbing, StarMark Cabinetry
Jonathan Ellis, SF Argus Leader
Cathy Brechtelsbauer
Jacqueline Poulos
Phyllis Arends, NAMI
Lyla Pederson, Esurance
Joyce Perry
Koni Sims
Ken Ketterling
Vivian Armodt
Jeri Reed
Dave McCoy, Premier Bankcard

Staff present:

Dennis Erckfritz, Financial Coordinator
Dennis Foster, Transit driver*
Debra Gaikowski, Transit Planner
Randy Hartman, DDS & Assistant General Manager
Kent Johnson, Operations Manager
Tierza Lanham, Paratransit Manager
John Nardini, General Manager
Donna Shumate, Transit driver*
*representing Amalgamated Transit Union

Call to order

Ryan Green, Chair, called the Public Transit Advisory Board meeting to order at 3:50 p.m. and read introductory comments.

1. Approval of minutes from June 23, 2008 PTAB meeting.

Two corrections were noted; Item 1. Introduction of new Public Transit Advisory Board member, second sentence should start with He rather than She, Item 3. Paratransit Policy change – no-shows, last sentence should indicate that the Public Hearing closed at 4 p.m., not 5 p.m. Chelle Hart moved to accept the June 23, 2008 meeting minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Julie Johnson Dresbach. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Public Hearing:

a. Semi-annual revisions to routes, schedules, and stops

Ryan Green opened the Public Hearing at 3:55 p.m. John Nardini stepped through each change and described what prompted each change. Route 2 existing and proposed maps were provided to the Board. Several questions were answered for the Board members and clarifications were made. Julie Johnson Dresbach stated that she routinely assists people in locating their home near a bus route and found it disconcerting that we would think about changing the location of service routes. Debra Gaikowski explained that there may be changes from time to time to create more efficiency.

Ryan opened up the discussion for public comments. Many audience members felt the change on Route 2 would be an inconvenience to them and would require a longer walk to the bus stop. This would be especially difficult in snow conditions. Since the bus would only cover some stops on either the inbound or outbound, it would create a longer ride time for some passengers depending on their destination. Ken Ketterling spoke about the inconveniences this change would have on him. In response to an inquiry from Julie Johnson Dresbach about the number of riders from Edison Middle School, Dennis Foster, transit driver, told about his experiences on Route 2 while driving during peak afternoon times and the few number of riders that he has picked up near the school. Julie Johnson Dresbach questioned whether that is relevant information since school is over earlier in the day. Randy Hartman talked about the many safety concerns in the Edison loop area. He said there is severe congestion in front of Edison Middle School at the school's start and stop times. Transit diverts service to Lake Street on this loop at times because of the congestion in that area. He said routes are taking longer because of more traffic congestion throughout the city, more people in wheelchairs which take longer to load, and a lot of people using the bike rack. Randy also stated that a good majority of Transit's accidents occur on the Edison Loop. Additional comments were taken from Donna Shumate, Jackie Poulos, Cathy Brechtelsbauer, and Koni Sims. Julie Johnson Dresbach made a motion to approve all changes except the modification of the Edison Loop on Route 2. Chelle Hart seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Public input on non-agenda items

Mike Ebbing, StarMark Cabinetry, requested a shelter at 48th and N. 4th Ave. Debra Gaikowski stated there is money in the budget to add some concrete pads for shelters each year and that Transit does have shelters in its inventory. Transit staff will review the site for ADA compliance issues. Transit may also survey the stop to justify the placement of a shelter at this location.

Charles Santee quoted a Federal Regulation about having the option to back onto a ramp or drive onto a ramp. Sioux Falls Transit requires everyone to back on. John said this policy was implemented for safety reasons. The feet of the person in the wheelchair can get caught between the ramp and the underside of the bus. Ryan stated that safety always takes precedence over regulation. A board member and a member in the audience also stated, in their many years of experience working with the disabled in nursing homes and human service agencies, it was always required that the person back onto the lift.

Jackie Poulos, who is blind and a paratransit user, requested some options to get her to Sioux Falls Christian school one day a week to work using paratransit service. This is outside the paratransit service area boundary. Discussion concluded with John requesting she give him a call the next day to get something worked out to drop her as close as possible to that location.

Phyllis Arends with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill stated that a group of people got together to facilitate communication on how to remove the stigma of riding the bus. They would like to see the ridership numbers drive the need to expand the fixed route service.

Gary Omdahl stated, if fares are to increase, he thinks they should increase for everyone. He receives a discount on fixed route but his wife, who rides paratransit, would be affected by a fare increase. He feels this is not fair and those people with the least should not have to carry the burden of the increase.

Lyla Pederson stated that Esurance, Premier Bankcard, and Midcontinent Communications have surveyed their employees to see how many would be interested in using the bus if the transit system were to serve those locations. The interest was very high so, on behalf of all three businesses, she is requesting bus service, to their geographic area in the city.

4. New Business:

a. June Monthly Report

John Nardini reviewed Sioux Falls Transit's June Monthly Report. He discussed the ridership, operating costs, costs per trip, and no reportable accidents for several months.

b. Paratransit policy – Incentive Plan

Debra read the current policy regarding incentives from the Rider's Guide. Under late cancels, door cancels, and no-shows, policy states: *For those riders that have zero violations within a one-year period, Sioux Falls Transit will provide them with two free-fares when using paratransit service.* Debra proposed to eliminate this incentive. The Board felt, since the end of the first year for this policy is close at hand (September 30), those that have been working toward receiving this incentive by not having any door cancels, late cancels, or no-shows should receive the two free fares. Julie Johnson Dresbach made a motion to remove this incentive after the date of the first year of implementation. Chelle Hart seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Thad Mooney exited the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

c. Marketing committee

Debra suggested forming a subcommittee to elicit more ideas on how to market the transit system. Since there was no longer a quorum, no action was taken on this item.

5. Other Business:

No items discussed

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.