

TRAC Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2012, at 12 p.m.
Greater Des Moines Partnership – 1st Floor

TRAC members present: Crystal Estabrook, Jinsong Chen, Helen Boles, Eileen Bradley, Kelly Henry, Rod Van Genderen, Greg Boesch, Matthew Ott, Al Root, Peggy Chong, and Alexander Grgurich.

TRAC members absent: Cyrilla Gregory.

DART staff present: PJ Sass, Tom Reynolds, Claire Celsi, Gunnar Olson.

Others present: None

A. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

B. INTRODUCE NEW TRAC MEMBER

Public Information Officer Gunnar Olson introduced the newest TRAC member, Peggy Chong.

C. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 9, 2011, MINUTES

The minutes were approved unanimously.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. New Reduced-Fare Programs – PJ Sass, Customer Service Manager
Customer Service Manager PJ Sass gave an overview of two new reduced-fare programs at DART. The first program is for students of any middle school or high school in the Greater Des Moines metropolitan area. Students need only to show their school ID at a DART pass sales outlet to receive a discount. The second program is for refugees, who can obtain a DART ID card through a participating refugee agency and, with it, receive a discount on bus passes.

Eileen Bradley asked if there were a limit on how long refugees could receive a discount.

Sass said yes, there is; the ID card for refugees is good for five years, after which it can be renewed if it is still needed. The idea behind the program is to give refugees time to assimilate.

Crystal Estabrook asked if the refugees received help filling out their “travel cards.” These are cards that refugees can carry with them that include the basic information about their trips for DART operators’ reference. PJ answered that the agencies help the refugees fill them out.

Kelly Henry said she knows students who would qualify.

Rod Van Genderen asked how this new program was being communicated.

Sass said she and her staff worked with the schools to get the word out. She noted several efforts, including school newsletters, emails to students’ parents, and a TV spot on Channel 12. In addition, posters about the program were provided to refugee agencies.

Helen Boles inquired about the possibility of reducing the eligibility age for seniors’ discount on bus passes. She suggested 62, rather than the current 65.

Sass said she hadn’t heard of such discussion. Tom Reynolds said DART may need to consult federal regulations.

Sass said that 65 years old is the standard minimum age to received discounts from most transit agencies.

Jinsong Chen suggested a reduced-fare program for college students.

Claire Celsi said many college students, including those at Drake University and Grand View University, ride at no cost to them because the universities are Unlimited Access partners of DART's. Jinsong said his son attends AIB College of Business and does not receive a discount.

2. 2012 Service Change Schedule and Public Meetings – Gunnar Olson, Public Information Officer, and Tom Reynolds, Chief Operating Officer

Claire Celsi presented the schedule of 2012 service changes and preceding public meetings.

Matt Ott asked if DART would evaluate the changes after their implementation.

Celsi said DART would be conducting annual customer-satisfaction surveys.

Reynolds added that DART will be monitoring the performance of the routes, as well. He said DART will establish performance standards. If those standards are being met, DART's first step would be to try to improve the performance on that route.

Al Root questioned the recommendation to maintain the current alignment of Route 1, particularly the deviation to Pleasant Hill. He said the deviation is confusing, causing some riders to board the wrong bus downtown.

Henry supported this sentiment, saying that confusing deviations should be eliminated.

Olson said these comments would be shared with the planning staff for their consideration.

Reynolds said that input from the public has affected the proposed changes to the system.

E. ACTION ITEMS

1. 2012 TRAC Goals – Gunnar Olson, Public Information Officer

Olson briefly outlined the goals proposed by staff. The committee then voted unanimously to approve the 2012 goals.

F. TRAC MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Boles expressed concern for the viability of the proposed new flex routes in the western suburbs.

G. PUBLIC COMMENT

H. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Bus GPS
2. Customer Service Database
3. Customer-Satisfaction Survey
4. RideShare Update

I. OTHER – Communications

1. Participants needed for test group for online trip planner
2. Brief DART Central Station update

J. Next DART Commission Meeting: 5 p.m. Wednesday, February 1, 2012

K. Next TRAC Meeting: Wednesday, March 14, 2012