

TRAC Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2013, at 12 p.m.
DART Central Station – Multimodal Room

TRAC members present: Randy Anderson, Laura Friest, Jay Peterson, Rod Van Genderen, Patrick Karnes, Peggy Chong, Greg Boeschen, Joan Bolin, Lisa Ryan, Cyrilla Gregory, and Tonia Crawford.

TRAC members absent: Alexander Grgurich and Dina Ricketts.

DART staff present: Gunnar Olson, Jamie Schug, Jennifer Long, and Katie Dale.

Others present: Dave, Brian, and Cindy

A. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

B. APPROVAL OF November 14, 2012, MINUTES

The minutes from the November 14, 2012, meeting were adopted by unanimous vote.

C. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Introduction of new TRAC Members. All attendees introduced themselves by name, occupation, and DART services utilized.
2. An agenda amendment was proposed by Gunnar to discuss new fare boxes. This motion was so moved by Joan Bolin and seconded by Greg Boeschen and was approved unanimously.
3. DART Initiatives – Gunnar Olson, TRAC Liason
Technology- DART plans to have the Trip Planner implemented within the next six months.

Expand Services- DART plans to expand service hours earlier in the morning and later at night.

Bus Rapid Transit- This would be a train like service with rubber wheels. It is a \$25 million project and is focused on Route 60. \$1.8 million has been raised with local dollars. Our goal is to raise \$5 million locally which will qualify DART for a \$20 million match of federal funds.

4. Gunnar introduced Dave, Brian and Cindy from CH2M HILL, a vendor currently conducting research into the replacement of DART's 25 year old fare boxes. They are currently working on a requirement analysis.

Jay Peterson said it would be nice to not go to the store every week, to have the card be reloadable online.

Dave said DWOLLA is another option, or a card can be registered and auto load can be set up to load the card automatically.

Peggy Chong asked if they would be proximity or swipe cards.

Dave answered that we currently use swipe cards and they are pushing for tap cards with an audio and visual cue. Swipe cards can be difficult for those with disabilities and the mechanisms tend to need a lot of repair.

Lisa Ryan said it is nice to show the card to the operators.

Dave said when this is done a code is hand keyed by the driver, and there can be human error.

Cindy asked how important is it to just have an employee id card and not an additional card.

Greg Boeschen said it is nice to have just one card, and it would be nice to use debit or credit.

Jay Peterson said he is using cash this week, but using a debit card and entering a PIN may take too long.

Dave gave an example of Nashville, who used debit/credit cards.

There was a 2-3 second delay. They used them for a few years, but there was not enough usage to continue using them.

Peggy Chong said that adding money to the card from the farebox could take a long time and asked if this process has been sped up.

Brian answered typically when you add value on the bus there isn't a code, and that debit cards act as credit cards. This has streamlined the process some.

Patrick Karnes asked how this works with a bus pass.

Brian answered it can be done online; the bus pass could be set up to do online.

Cindy added that it could be done online, at a machine, or at a vendor.

Joan Bolin asked if this could be set up to use in another city.

Brian said APTA had a work group that looked at forming standards.

All agencies need to do the same thing, so standards are not likely.

He added that you can use a credit card in most cities.

Joan Bolin said that slide cards cause problems, and asked if most cards will be proximity.

Dave said that he doesn't even want a swipe on the new box- all boxes will have an audio and visual cue.

Lisa Ryan asked how far we are from using QR codes on phones.

Dave answered that the technology is on the market but it is very expensive, but the option has not been discounted.

Brian said there are pilot programs in Boston, New York, and Dallas, but the technology is still slow.

Gunnar said that a common card and a partnership between Ames and Des Moines would be beneficial.

Gunnar asked if this would do away with tokens.

Dave answered possibly.

Gunnar asked if it is necessary to maintain tokens. Human Services uses them- could they do smart cards?

Dave said there is a limited use smart card made of paper instead of plastic.

Cindy said they are not as inexpensive as tokens so they are not as cost effective if they will only be used for one trip.

Peggy Chong said there would be more accountability with cards than tokens, cards can be tracked to make sure they are being used properly.

Joan Bolin asked if the passes are connected to a bank card and there isn't a code if there could be fraud.

Brian said we cannot read/write to a card- we create an id number to link to the account. There is the same level of risk as shopping. The pass does not contain as much info as a credit card.

Joan Bolin asked if there is a way to limit the amount of times the card is used.

Brian said the cards can have velocity caps- this is an agency decision.

Gunnar said that other agencies limited transfers for cash paying customers. There are limits for cash paying customers to increase pass usage. This reduces “dwell” time.

Peggy Chong asked for clarification.

Brian said the pass would recognize a transfer so it doesn't charge again.

Cyrilla Gregory said that this would be ideal, but she would be apprehensive to do away with cash transfers.

Brian said we would never eliminate cash. Other cities provide passes free at first. Then sometimes peer pressure to increase loading speed forces adoption of the cards.

Cindy said that from a policy perspective other agencies have a day pass which is 2-3 times the regular fair. This allows for unlimited access throughout the day.

Laura Friest said that if you force people to pay for each transfer you will lose riders.

Jay Peterson said that some people don't have bank accounts, making it difficult to register a card.

Lisa Ryan said that it could be confusing between local and express fairs.

Patrick Karnes said he would be hesitant because money can be very tight.

Gunnar said the transfers would be free for smart cards, no transfers for cash, and the day pass is an alternative option for cash.

Rod Van Genderen said unless you have 80% of people using smart cards the system probably won't be much faster.

Gunnar read from the customer survey done recently- 28% of local route riders use cash.

Laura Friest said that it is extremely important to have just one id.

Dave said stickers on IDs are an option.

Gunnar summarized that there are three options- a separate card as a bus pass, and integrated card with employers, and a sticker.

Dave said there could also be a combination of all three options.

Employers could manage their own cards.

Jay Peterson asked if we are certain that pre loaded debit cards will work.

Brian said that from a tech point most are the same. Auto reload can happen from any card.

Dave said that we may be able to add DART fair cards to gift card racks.

Jennifer long asked if we can track activity on the cards.

Dave answered that you can get a card and not register it. But if you lose it you are stuck. When you register it you can have visibility and it can be shut off by DART.

Peggy Chong asked for day pass clarification.

Brian and Dave said you can register a card and load it as a day pass.

Greg Boeschen asked if the bus meter will give a balance.

Dave said yes.

Laura asked if these would be used on Paratransit.

Dave said possibly.

Rod Van Genderen said it was time for one last round of questions.

Cindy said people would either love or hate the system.

Greg Boeschen said he likes having just one company pass.

Peggy Chong said she likes not having rush hour fares.

Jay Peterson likes the proximity idea.

5. Gunnar said that his is the 5th year of the committee and every year the committee sets performance goals for DART. He asked for ideas for goals this year.

i. Greater social media presense

1. Why do you ride?

ii. GPS on buses

iii. Snow removal

1. Policy from DART

2. Written agreement with properties

3. Accountability

4. Develop Action plans on things we can do- including stop placement.

5. Talk to neighborhood associations.

iv. Expansion/relocation of shelters- especially in Altoona, Ankeny, and the Capital.

v. Improve Safety.

vi. Service expansion- follow through with year two of 2035.

vii. Increase ridership on new routes.

viii. PR- Comparison of cost perception of bus riders.

An idea was put forth to have a DART mascot, like a penguin. It's better to travel in packs.

Gunnar said the new DART tagline is "Ride for a Reason."

Another idea was put forth to have the public view new technology at DART Central Station. Demonstrations to give previews and comments.

This would encourage people to visit Central Station.

D. ACTION ITEMS

1. Elect 2013 Chair and Vice Chair

- i. Those running included- Rod Van Genderen for Chair; Greg Boeschon for Chair or Vice Chair; Cyrilla Gregory for Vice Chair; and Lisa Ryan for Vice Chair.
- ii. Ballots were completed by each member present and collected and counted by Katie Dale.
- iii. Rod Van Genderen was elected Chair and Greg Boeschon was elected Vice Chair.

E. TRAC MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

The member's frustration with incorrect bus stop signs was mentioned.

The website, customer service, and schedule times have not been consistent.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present.

G. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Adopt 2013 Goals
2. 2013 Improvements
3. Shelter locations

4. Snow removal
5. Technology upgrades

H. UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. DART Commission – 4 p.m. Tuesday, February 5, 2013, DART Central Station
2. TRAC – Noon Wednesday, March 13, 2013, DART Central Station

I. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned.