



**DES MOINES AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY
TRANSIT RIDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 9, 2015 – NOON
DART Central Station, Multimodal Room
620 Cherry Street, Des Moines, Iowa**

TRAC Members Present:

Randy Anderson, Pam Goehring, Mark Hutchens, Randy Henriksen (arrived 12:17), Jay Peterson, Richard Sadler, Brenda Gill, Teresa Volcheck

TRAC Members Absent:

Mary Walter, Michael Barber, Tonia Crawford, Denise Jones, Michele Meadors

TRAC Staff Present:

Barbara Finch, Kirstin Baer-Harding, Jamie Schug, Ethan Standard, Jim Tishim, Jennifer Long, Steve Hansen

Others Present:

None

A. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Jay Peterson at 12:05 PM.

Roll call was taken and quorum was not met. Introduced new member Teresa Volcheck, who was appointed to fill the only vacancy on TRAC. It was announced that Dina Ricketts has retired from her position on TRAC due to the acceptance of a new job and a geographical move.

Notice of the meeting was duly posted.

B. APPROVAL OF JULY 8, 2015 MINUTES

The motion to approve the July 8, 2015 minutes was not immediately heard due to a short quorum at the time of the agenda reading. Approval of the minutes was postponed until a quorum was reached with the arrival of Randy Henriksen at 12:17. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

C. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. DART Reasonable Modification Policy – Jim Tishim, Planning Director

Jim gave an overview of the new Reasonable Modification Policy that DART has put into place due to the new regulations.

Information

- ▶ The DOT implemented amendments to the ADA regulations (49CFR, Parts 27 and 37) to clarify that public transportation entities are required to modify policies, practices, procedures that are needed to ensure access to programs, benefits, and services.
- ▶ **Key Requirement:** Implement our own process for making decisions on and providing reasonable modification to our policies and practices.

Requirements

- ▶ Designate at least one person to coordinate its efforts
- ▶ Procedures that incorporate due process standards
 - ▷ Procedure requirements:
 - Process for filing a complaint
 - Procedures must be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities
 - Prompt and equitable resolution

Basic Criteria

- ▶ Make information about the process, and how to use it, readily available
- ▶ Provide an accessible means to request a reasonable modification:
 - ▷ Whenever feasible, the request should be made in advance
 - ▷ It should be specific as possible
 - ▷ Include information on why the request is needed in order to use the service
- ▶ Provide for situations in which an advanced request and determination is not feasible

Grounds to Deny a Request

- ▶ The request would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity
- ▶ The request would create a direct threat to the health and safety of others
- ▶ The request would not be necessary to permit the use of the service for their intended purpose

DART Reasonable Modification Policy

- ▶ Managed by Customer Service Manager
- ▶ Process for filing a request:
 - ▷ Paratransit eligibility process
 - ▷ Contact the departments directly
 - ▷ DART Website in two locations
 - ▷ Request and submit a request form at DART Central Station Customer Service
 - ▷ Current customer comment process

DART Reasonable Modification Departmental Policy & Procedures

- ▶ Internal process and procedures finalized
- ▶ Definition of a Reasonable Modification Request
- ▶ How to determine if approved or denied
- ▶ Coordinated documentation
- ▶ Tracked by Customer Service through COM
- ▶ Procedures cover receiving:
 - ▷ An Initial Paratransit Applications
 - ▷ A customer comment (COM)
 - ▷ Direct customer contact
 - ▷ A Request Form direct from a customer, online or from Transportation
 - ▷ A TransitMaster Incident Report from Transportation

Program Additions

- ▶ Reasonable Modification category in COM
- ▶ TransitMaster Incident Report
 - ▷ Bus Operator MDT Reasonable Modification Category
 - ▷ TransitMaster Incident Report developed
 - ▷ Auto send to Customer Service and Department Manager when finalized
 - ▷ All documents are sent to Customer Service for the master file

Additional Processes

- ▶ Department Policy and Procedure Manuals

- ▶ Updated training manuals
- ▶ Marketing the policy and process

Questions

Mark Hutchens asked how many requests per month are received. Jim Tishim stated that Paratransit gets a lot of minor requests on a daily basis that won't be tracked this way, but it is hard to know how many requests we will get because now, we just handle them. Jim believes Paratransit will get a lot more than Fixed Route will get.

Randy Anderson asked if DART will be adding a new sign as part of this policy. Jim Tishim answered, we might get requests from a persons with disabilities requesting a different location for better access. We have to look at every request that comes and if there are request for modifications we will look at the guidance for the regulations. Special signs similar to the new SMS signs will not be added to the bus stops as part of this.

Teresa Volcheck asked how customers will know when their request will be accommodated. Jim Tishim said one of the requirements was to follow the guidelines and they state contact within 48 hours. A lot of these will come directly into the department and they will address immediately for that department. For Fixed Route, it takes time in the process and some internal communication to handle.

2. DART Employee Management – Steve Hansen, Human Resources Manager

Steve Hansen talked about management and driver selection, recruitment, and retention. For the past 1 ½ years we have been continually in need of drivers. DART has been looking at some issues we have. DART has rather unique services and not a lot of work that last 8 hours straight during the day. Our shifts are mostly in mornings and evenings and the employees end up with split shifts. Most applicants are wanting set or straight hours. DART works with 2 unions: Teamsters for Paratransit and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) for Fixed Route. Typically, drivers start out in the part time ranks, so it is a challenge of recruiting part time people that eventually want to become full time people. We have a unique labor pool to attract as well. Part time is defined as less than 35 hours a week. We were advertising for part time drivers and that limits the labor pool. Part time did not receive benefits in the past. We are also selective on hiring as far as driving record, ability to obtain a CDL, etc, so that further limits our labor pool. We have been trying to look at making that labor pool bigger and easier to apply by applying online, attracting a younger crowd. We are also now able to offer part time employees medical and dental benefits, which should help expand the labor pool. We also quit advertising as "part time" and hope to start attracting better quality applicants as a result. We are in the process of installing an electronic applicant tracking system, which allows people to apply online. We are also looking at people who have customer service skills and training them to drive, rather than focusing on people who already know how to drive and training them customer service skills. Part-time benefits have been in place since July 1st. Before we lost about 54% of newly hired drivers, and now it is down to 24% during the training process. We are now down to a need for drivers in the single digits rather than double digits.

Questions

Brenda Gill asked what is the average tenure of drivers? Steve said he didn't have the exact number off the top of his head, but if we got drivers to the 5 year mark, then they pretty much stayed until retirement. We've lost very few drivers after the 5 year mark, but getting them there has been difficult. It takes about 2 years to get to full time status, where they get a more robust benefit package and have a better selection of runs they can take.

3. Upcoming Events & Promotions – Kirstin Baer-Harding, Marketing Director

Kirstin Baer-Harding gave an update on events coming up in September and October. Sept. 13th is the DSM Move event on SW 9th from noon to 4:00. October 4th through 10th is Try Transit Week. All routes will be free. Trying to get new riders on board and get new riders to give us a try. The following week is the 20th Anniversary for Rideshare, so on Oct. 14th there will be an event at the Temple of Performing Arts 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Questions

Jay Peterson asked if the DSMove event was when they shut down the street and Kirstin answered yes. There are some in other communities and neighborhoods as well.

4. RideShare Program Update – Jennifer Long, RideShare Program Coordinator

Jennifer Long said that last month RideShare put magnetic signs on the back of vans to generate more riders and have already gotten several calls. She announced that to celebrate the 20th anniversary they are giving everyone 20% off October's fare. We've been sending out emails counting down to our 20th anniversary and these include contests, fun facts and spot lights on the riders who have ridden the past 20 years. There are 15 people who have been with us since we started and those riders will get a special gift basket. There will be an event on October 14th at the Temple of Performing Arts.

Questions

Jay Anderson stated the he really liked the idea of the magnets. Jennifer said it has been successful in getting calls from people driving next to the van, traveling the same time and route.

Randy Henriksen said he likes the 20% discount as a nice gesture to help people out.

5. 2015 TRAC Leadership Elections

Ethan Standard announced the upcoming Elections for chair and vice chair in November. Ethan said Jay Peterson has been chair for 1 year and he is eligible for 1 additional year. Members can nominate themselves or nominate someone else. In November we will have paper ballots and vote. The member with the highest number of votes will become the Chair, and the second highest will become the Vice Chair. Ethan also announced that Dina Ricketts has accepted a job position in Ankeny and is no longer able to serve on the committee. He thanked her for her service on TRAC for the past 3 years. Jay described the duties of the Chair would be attend the bi-monthly TRAC meetings, and other planning meetings working on agenda. The chair would also report to the commission board with a quick speech on what we talk about in the TRAC meetings. Vice chair fills in for the chair if he or she is not available to provide the Commission report. Jay Anderson opened the floor for nominations. Mark Hutchens nominated Jay Anderson. Randy Henriksen seconded. Jay Anderson nominated Mark Hutchens. Brenda Gill seconded. No other nominations were recorded. Nominations will remain open until voting commences at the next TRAC meeting in November. Ethan stated that if you are interested in nominating yourself or another member before the November meeting, to please email him anytime.

D. TRAC COMMUNICATOINS

Jay Anderson wanted to complement DART and the Iowa State Fair and was impressed that staff did such a great job with the buses and passengers. They got people right through the line and to the fair fast.

Brenda Gill commented on a situation in Altoona where she and some other passengers were waiting at a stop when a supervisor came by and let them know that the bus had some mechanical problems but another one was on the way and would arrive shortly. She thought this was a very nice service.

E. UPCOMING MEETINGS

1. DART Commission – Noon Tuesday, September 29, 2015. DART Central Station
2. TRAC – Noon Wednesday, November 11, 2015, DART Central Station

F. ADJOURN

Randy Anderson motioned, Brenda Gill seconded. Voted and hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 12:43 pm.