

MINUTES
STARTRAN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
StarTran Conference Room 2
January 28, 2010

Members Present: Beatty Brasch, Kim Phelps, Karen Moritz, John Baylor

Members Absent: Kory George

Staff Present: Larry Worth, Mike Weston, Scott Tharnish, Kitty Miller, Brian Praeuner, Connie Thoreson

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

A. Review/Accept Minutes of December 17, 2009 Board Meeting

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

B. Patrons to be Heard

Ms. Nancy Clelland, a HandiVan patron, expressed her concerns with lack of HandiVan guideline information availability. It was noted that upon becoming HandiVan eligible, all new patrons are given the guidelines brochure with all rules and pertinent information. It was agreed that some guidelines would be highlighted and placed on a sign for posting on all HandiVans. Also agreed that patrons need more information in other formats than the brochure, in order to be better informed.

Ms. Clelland voiced concerns with not being able to call in cancellations after hours, as well as the difficulty she has calling in between 8:00-11:00a.m. to make reservations. StarTran staff agreed to research available software and explore other ways that could address these two issues and will report on findings at the next Advisory Board meeting.

Mike Weston summarized the HandiVan registration procedures noting there are 300 HandiVan passengers daily, with 100 contracted to Transport Plus.

Larry Worth clarified the ADA regulation which states there cannot be a “pattern of” turn downs and noted that a maximum of 50% of HandiVan capacity can be subscription reservations. It was noted that HandiVan turn downs are tracked and will be reported in the next Advisory Board Report.

Garrett Mardock, representing UNL students affiliated with ASUN, expressed how important StarTran transit services are to UNL students especially foreign students that likely have no access to any other personal transportation.

Mr. Mardock mentioned a shelter has been requested of UNL Transit for the 16th & “S” bus stop and had been advised that their request will be accommodated. It was noted that on sunny days, 120 patrons per hour utilize this bus stop and on days of inclement weather approximately ½ or 60 utilize the bus stop.

Mr. Mardock inquired about information circulating with regard to a change in service routes for UNL students. Kim Phelps noted there has been a consultant study of the UNL route situation, however, it is still in the preliminary stages, with StarTran review currently underway. Mr. Phelps noted that Dan Carpenter has made presentations to ASUN to keep everyone updated, and encouraged UNL students to contact Mr. Carpenter or himself with issues/concerns.

G. Old Business - Thought District Presentation

Dan Gibson and Christina Bakewell, of Thought District, presented their campaign for the February 25¢ fare promotion. The premise utilized is that it makes sense to ride StarTran, playing on the sense/cents verbage. There are radio spots, direct mail pieces, web ads, and theater slides. It was noted that half of this campaign budget was utilized on the direct-mail piece and most of the remaining budget to signs. Ms. Miller used in-place marketing agreements for ads. Posters were placed in store windows and were well received by downtown merchants. Facebook is also being utilized and has had some positive feedback. Ms. Miller reported that StarTran, being a government agency, is blocked from Facebook. Mr. Baylor indicated he would propose to the Mayor's office staff that StarTran personnel be granted access to Facebook for the promotion of StarTran transit services.

C. Marketing Report - Kitty Miller

Kitty Miller reported on the following Marketing issues:

- Noted patrons will need to have JAVA access in order to receive bus alerts or notifications on their cell phones or PDA's.
- The free fare promotion (and free prizes) on the Neighborhood routes from November 27 through December 31, 2009, did not increase ridership on the South route and only resulted in a slight improvement on the North route.
- The StarTran RSS feed/email notification has been promoted on 5CityTV, signs have been placed on all buses, and a new image is on the front page of the StarTran website. There are currently 29 registrants.
- An ad for the February 25¢ fare promotion is playing on the City's on-hold message, and all Low Income outlets have signs to post.
- Service to Technology Park will begin on February 1st. This is also the first day of the 25¢ fare promotion, so hoping to increase ridership in the Technology Park area in combination with the promotional fare.

D. Operations & Planning Report

Larry Worth reported LPS will lengthen school days for 2 weeks to make up for extra snow days, but StarTran booster service will not be revising service schedules to accommodate as it would be too costly (\$14,000). LPS will work with students so that they may utilize the current boosters with current schedules.

HandiVan's being purchased with stimulus funds are now scheduled for delivery the end of May.

The elevator replacement also being purchased with stimulus funds is on hold until further notice.

StarTran staff are working with FTA on charter notification for the 2010 Big Red Shuttle Service.

F. New Business - Advisory Board /StarTran Operators Interaction (Kim Phelps)

Mr. Phelps made a proposal that would invite StarTran Bus Operators to attend Advisory Board meetings possibly quarterly for constructive discussion. It was noted that a bus operator representative regularly attends meetings for information sharing purposes.

After discussion, it was decided that the Advisory Board and staff would be mindful of the expense of having a driver in attendance.

E. **Ridership Report**

Scott Tharnish clarified a report that there are no more stimulus funds available to StarTran - there were two parts to the original stimulus funds grants, so the second half of the funds have been received.

December ridership is 6% lower YTD.

Three out of four riders using paid fare devices, use the pre-paid passes, predominantly 31-day passes..

G. **Miscellaneous Information**

John Baylor reported that the Mayor has approved the bus wrap advertising proposal. Meetings are underway, in order to determine the best way to proceed. StarTran staff will update the Advisory Board at the next meeting on the process and time line.

Mr. Baylor advised that radio call-ins would like StarTran to implement Thursday, Friday, & Saturday evening service, integrated with the new arena project. Mr. Worth noted that such extended evening service was proposed in the TDP as a means of addressing Hay Market parking issues, with such service funded by downtown interests. StarTran staff agreed to report on costs for such service as well as feasibility.

The next StarTran Advisory Board meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m., February 25, 2010, in the StarTran Conference Room 2.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.