

**MINUTES**  
**STARTRAN ADVISORY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING & MEETING**  
**StarTran Conference Room 2**  
**March 27, 2014**

Members Present: Don Herz, Jenni Lesoing-Lucs, Linda Carter, Stephen Speicher, Janet Goodman-Banks, Mike DeKalb, Jason Hellbusch

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Mike Davis, Mike Weston, Brian Praeuner, Scott Tharnish, Glenn Knust, Kitty Elliott, Connie Thoreson

**I. PUBLIC HEARING**

*Notation of the open meetings law and patron conduct notice.*

StarTran Advisory Board Chair, Mike DeKalb opened the Public Hearing, noting the ground rules, in which speakers are to comment on the advertised public hearing proposals, and adhere to the three minute time limit for speaking.

Mr. DeKalb noted the proposals for the Public Hearing which are explained more thoroughly in the handouts.

- Weekday #54 Veterans Hospital Route – Time Point changes in order for the route to keep on time with the schedule.
- Saturday #54 Veterans Hospital Route – Schedule changes in order to provide better coverage of “O” Street with a bus to run every ½ hour instead of two buses ever hour.
- #55 Star Shuttle Route – Route and schedule changes to make the route more efficient and effective, with better headways.

The Advisory Board Members and StarTran staff introduced themselves and the following persons provided input for the Boards consideration of above proposals.

- Molly Mayhew – Ms. Mayhew stated opposition to the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ and 11<sup>th</sup> & ‘G’ portions of the #55 being eliminated, however she was in favor of the Haymarket portion being eliminated. Ms. Mayhew felt the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ and 11<sup>th</sup> & ‘G’ stops are both higher utilized stops.
- Robert Dreiger – Mr. Dreiger was opposed to the elimination of the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ stop on the #55 route.
- Jim Welch – Mr. Welch was against the elimination of the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ and 11<sup>th</sup> & ‘G’ portions of the #55 route.
- Kathy Johnston – Ms. Johnston was opposed to the elimination of the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ portion of the #55 route.
- Robin McClanahan – Ms. McClanahan stated opposition to the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ and 11<sup>th</sup> & ‘G’ portions of the #55 route being eliminated.
- Jon Jensen – Opposed to the elimination of the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ and 11<sup>th</sup> & ‘G’ on the #55 route.
- Jamie Taylor – Mr. Taylor felt that the proposed eliminated portions on the #55 route would hinder riders to the businesses along those portions. He is against the 18<sup>th</sup> & ‘J’ and 14<sup>th</sup> & ‘R’ stops being eliminated.

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- Jeff Altman – Mr. Altman stated he represents the Commission for the Blind and is in favor of the proposed changes to the #55 route. He feels that 24 minute headways are not efficient and reducing them to 15 minutes would benefit riders. Mr. Altman felt that there are other ways to serve the proposed eliminated portions of the #55 route.
- Denise Matulka – Ms. Matulka stated she understands the need for less headway time, but indicated she feels the eliminated portions of the #55 are the more popular stops.

Some of those speaking to the 18<sup>th</sup> & J stop being eliminated from the #55 route, noted the high-rise senior housing and parking lots at this location and the impact the elimination would have on their ability to catch the bus right in front of their building/lot, and would have to instead catch it at 17<sup>th</sup> & J.

Chairman DeKalb thanked all for attending the Public Hearing and for their input. The Public Hearing was closed.

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**A. Patrons to be Heard**

None

**B. Review/Action Items**

- **January 30, 2014 StarTran Advisory Board Meeting Minutes** - A motion for approval was made by Ms. Lesoing-Lucs and seconded by Ms. Carter to approve the 1/30/14 minutes as submitted. The 1/30/14 StarTran Advisory Board Minutes were approved 6-0 (Lesoing-Lucs, Carter, DeKalb, Goodman-Banks, Hellbusch, and Herz all voted "aye")
- **Route #54 Vets Hospital (Weekday)** – Mike Weston reviewed the proposed change in the spacing of the time points, in order to keep the weekday #54 Vets Hospital route on time, per the Board Report. Don Herz made a motion for approval of the proposed changes to the #54, Vets Hospital weekday schedule, which was seconded by Jenni Lesoing-Lucs. The vote was 7-0 unanimously in favor of the proposed change to #54 Vets Hospital weekday schedule. (Hellbusch, Carter, DeKalb, Speicher, Lesoing-Lucs, Goodman-Banks, and Herz all voted "aye")
- **Route #54 Vets Hospital (Saturday)** – Mike Weston reviewed the proposed change to the Saturday #54 Vets Hospital schedule, which will allow for more efficient service on 'O' Street, per the Board Report. After discussion, a motion was made by Stephen Speicher to approve the proposed schedule change to the #54 Vets Hospital Saturday service, and seconded by Linda Carter. The vote was 7-0 unanimously in favor of the proposed change to #54 Vets Hospital Saturday service. (DeKalb, Hellbusch, Carter, Speicher, Lesoing-Lucs, Goodman-Banks, and Herz all voted "aye")
- **Route #55 Star Shuttle** – Mike Weston reviewed the proposed changes to the Star Shuttle route and schedule, which eliminates portions of the route in order to have 15 minute headways instead of the current 24 minute headways. Changes are detailed in the Board Report, with elimination of the 18<sup>th</sup> & 'J', 11<sup>th</sup> & 'G', 14<sup>th</sup> & 'R', and Arena Drive area stops.

It was established in the Public Hearing that some patrons would be affected by the eliminated portions in this proposed change, but would still be within a block or two of existing services. Some may have to transfer if going further out.

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After further discussion, it was noted that ridership on the Star Shuttle is decreasing and proposed changes are trying to reverse that, as this service is a vital service to the downtown area. StarTran staff noted the original Star Shuttle route was designed for two buses and fifteen minute headways, but due to budget cuts only one bus is now being used on this route. In answer to the inquiry of putting an additional bus on this route, it was noted that an additional bus would be a budgetary consideration that would need to go before the City Council and Mayor.

Chair DeKalb asked the Board to consider delaying the vote and have staff revisit the proposal, eliminating all the proposed stops except for 18<sup>th</sup> & 'J' and then shorten the route for the lunch hour time frame. Ms. Lesoing-Lucs stated that while she appreciated patron input, staff had utilized their expertise in preparing proposals presented at this meeting and she was in favor of moving forward with a vote on them. Ms. Goodman-Banks stated her concern was with the patrons that would be most affected by this proposal and would not be in favor of the change.

It was noted that route changes are on a six-month trial basis to begin after a minimum 45 day waiting period for the process and notification/publication of new service.

Chair DeKalb concluded that there would be no vote on the #55 Star Shuttle proposal, asking staff to look at adding the 18<sup>th</sup> & 'J' stop back into the route. Staff will also track and report time gained by those eliminated portions. This proposal will be reworked and presented at the April 24<sup>th</sup> Advisory Board Meeting.

### **C. Operations Report**

**Mike Davis reviewed ridership per the Board Report.**

### **D. Other Business**

#### **Marketing Sub-Committee Meeting Update**

- Mike Davis noted that the Marketing Sub-Committee met and discussed the proposed shuttle service for the 2014 Ribfest, to be held in August, 2014. More to come on this item in which the Board will review and take action on at a later Board meeting.
- John Baylor and Roy Christensen made a presentation at the sub-committee meeting in which they proposed a quarter fare, outsourcing StarTran marketing, and changes on the bus advertising contract. They felt implementing a quarter fare could be funded by the State subsidy; however, the subsidy is used to continue existing services, and has decreased every year. Without the subsidy, services would likely need to be reduced.
- Discussion also took place with regard to the marketing of Routes 24 & 25 with the delivery of five new CNG buses, a new paint scheme, and designated bus stops. June 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. is the tentative date for this event and the Board is invited to attend.

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The CNG buses will be fueled at Sapp Brothers on Cornhusker which is approximately eight miles round trip. Mr. DeKalb asked if the StarTran garages could accommodate the height of the new CNG buses. Mr. Davis stated that the new CNG buses will be housed in the north garage, but other garages would need to be modified, if the entire fleet were eventually converted to CNG.

Besides the environmental benefits of these CNG buses, cost savings will be tracked, recorded, and reported in the monthly Board reports.

### **E. Patrons to be Heard**

None

### **G. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2014, 8:00 a.m. in the StarTran Conference Room #2.