

MINUTES  
STARTRAN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
StarTran Conference Room 2  
April 28, 2011

Members Present: Beatty Brasch, Mitch Paine, Debby Brehm, Steve Speicher, Kim Phelps, John Baylor

Members Absent: Kory George

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

**I. REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Chairman Kim Phelps, noted the Open Meetings Law and Patron Conduct Notice posted on the north wall.

**A. Patrons to be Heard**

- Jeff Mitchell, a bus patron, expressed concerns about an on-site SouthPointe stop being moved. Mr. Mitchell also expressed concerns with regard to possible StarTran service cuts due to City FY 2011-12 budget shortfalls.
- Pat Schreurs, a bus patron, distributed copies of a letter to the editor submitted by her that stated concerns about possible StarTran service cuts, due to City FY 2011-12 budget shortfalls.
- Kathy Johnston, a bus patron, expressed concerns about possible Saturday StarTran service cuts. Saturday service is important to her as that is the only time she is able to do her errands. In answer to a question Ms. Johnston confirmed that she could possibly get her errands done if Saturday service was available for 8 hours instead of the current 12 hours availability.
- Marilyn Kruger, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Vice President and StarTran bus operator, noted that StarTran has the least available service when compared to peer cities, which include but are not limited to Davenport, Des Moines, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Ms. Kruger is opposed to making any future StarTran service cuts in the next City budget process, especially Saturday service, as many current Saturday patrons utilize the service to travel to/from work.
- Tom Danahy, a StarTran bus operator for 17 years, discussed concerns with the HandiVan service. StarTran staff noted that HandiVan services are governed by ADA requirements, and noted that StarTran's ridership efficiency is higher than federal standards. After much discussion and clarification of the HandiVan reservation/cancellation policies and ADA regulations, it was agreed that HandiVan operations are as effective and efficient as possible.

Mr. Speicher suggested that a public meeting for HandiVan patrons be held in order to discuss HandiVan services and to make patrons aware of problems. Mr. Worth noted that StarTran is in contractual partnership with the League of Human Dignity, and they address these issues with HandiVan patrons at monthly membership meetings and at other occasions. Mr. Worth also reviewed the process utilized for patrons who abuse the reservation systems, pointing out that ADA regulations preclude the use of effective responses to these issues.

Ms. Brasch thanked Pat Schreurs and Kathy Johnston for their letter to the editor efforts.

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- Karen Overturf, a StarTran bus operator, offered a suggestion to schedule HandiVan patrons every 20 minutes instead of the current ½ hour scheduling, although it was acknowledged that trip lengths do vary, with many greater than 20 minutes.

Chairman Kim Phelps thanked the patrons and bus operators for their input.

**B. Review & Action Items**

- The Board voted unanimously to approve the March 31, 2011 StarTran Advisory Board meeting minutes with the addition of “via phone” inserted next to Mitch Paine’s name in the “Members Present” section of these minutes.
- The Taste of Home Cooking Event shuttle services were summarized by Kitty Elliott, noting that the FTA-required service notification was sent out. If there are no responses, StarTran will operate the service on May 17, 2011 from 3:30-9:00 p.m. in cooperation with Three Eagles. Three Eagles will compensate StarTran with \$2,000 in trade for advertising.

The StarTran Advisory Board voted unanimously in favor of StarTran operating the Taste of Home Cooking event shuttle service pending completion of the FTA-required charter notification response process.

**C. Topics for Discussion/Presentation**

- Mr. Worth noted that he spoke to the Mayor’s office staff as to the potential of initiating a water/wastewater billing “check off” program to supplement StarTran capital/operations costs. He was advised that StarTran is unable to be included in this program as there are already two other entities being considered for the program. The other entities also have foundations that will match proceeds collected.

*Mr. Worth agreed to re-contact the Mayor’s office staff to inquire as to any other opportunities or suggestions to solicit donations to supplement StarTran.*

- Beatty Brasch distributed and summarized a packet of survey and statistic information compiled by the Center for People in Need. Ms. Brasch voiced concerns if the StarTran Low Income Pass costs were to increase, noting that the low income patrons struggle to pay the current \$7.50 for a 31-consecutive day pass.

After much discussion about alternate fare programs for low-income patrons, *Mr. Speicher suggested Ms. Brasch survey the low income patrons with the question of, “Can you pay more to avoid StarTran service cuts?”*

Mr. Worth noted that all the budget concerns raised today by the public and Board members may be premature as the Mayor’s proposed F.Y. 2011-12 budget will not be available until June. There will be at least two public hearings and several opportunities for Board input on any route, schedule, and fare changes before budget adoption at the end of August. In answer to a question, Mr. Worth reminded that the Lincoln Municipal Code (LMC) states the purpose of the StarTran Advisory Board is to address and recommend regarding StarTran fares, routes, and schedules.

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- Mr. Phelps reported that the City Audit Advisory Board scope of work had been provided to the StarTran Advisory Board members for comment, and had been requested to delay to afford further review of the scope. It was understood that no delay was agreed upon, and the scope was moving forward to Purchasing for appropriate actions..

**D. Operations & Planning Report**

- It was noted that all of the 30' buses are in operation, with fuel efficiencies to be monitored.
- Mr. Worth noted UNL ridership is up 24% from March 2010 to March 2011.
- Larry Worth & Kitty Elliott attended a meeting with the Active Network (City's marketing program). Staff will update the Advisory Board as meetings progress on how StarTran advertising will be addressed within this program, with the Houck contract extended until such is decided.
- Bike rack usage from the start of April to date has been approximately 500, with the only complaint being that the rack can accommodate only 2 bikes at one time.

**E. Patrons to be Heard**

- Dan Sis, a StarTran bus operator thanked StarTran staff for obtaining the bike racks, as he has had numerous patrons let him know that they are happy to be able to utilize them.
- Toni Kent, a 4-year StarTran bus operator wanted to bring attention to the fact that StarTran is more than just a bus service, i.e. eyes for the police, help for people in need, etc.
- Colin Clark was a 25 year bus patron and has been a 10 year bus operator. Mr. Clark believes in transit service and would oppose any cuts to service if proposed in the FY 2011-12 budget.

Mitch Paine congratulated Bus Operators, Toni Kent and Colin Clark on receiving the Mayor's Award of Excellence, along with the annual Mayor's "honorable mention". The remaining StarTran Advisory Board members concurred.

- Jeff Mitchell, bus patron, distributed materials and stated that he will be an active observer of the budget process and will be voicing concerns as necessary.

**F. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned. The next StarTran Advisory Board meeting will be May 26, 2011.