

MINUTES
STARTRAN PUBLIC HEARING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JUNE 16, 2007 / 9:30a.m.

Members Present: Beatty Brasch, Nye Bond, Susan Epps, Kim Phelps, Jill Flagel

Members Absent: Tami Wellman, Rod Griess

Staff Present: Larry Worth, Brian Praeuner, Glenn Knust, Scott Tharnish, Kitty Miller, Connie Thoreson, David Cary

Susan Epps, Chairman of the StarTran Advisory Board opened the Public Hearing by welcoming everyone. Ms. Epps stated that the Public Hearing is for the public to give testimony regarding the Transit Development Plan (TDP) proposed routes.

The StarTran Advisory Board introduced themselves and David Cary reviewed the TDP process and the general content of the TDP. Mr. Cary noted the near-term TDP proposals are revenue neutral, which means the same number of service hours are proposed as there are today. The majority of public concerns/issues from the TDP Open Houses in March, have been addressed within the proposals presented today (to include service to Eastridge & Colonial Hills neighborhoods, 70th & Pioneers area, 70th & Van Dorn area and 40th St area, from Old Cheney to Pine Lake Rd). Current service that will remain the same in the proposals are, LPS boosters, HandiVan, and UNL services. Special event services will also continue as in the past. The long-term proposals are not included in the near-term proposals since additional funding would be needed to implement them. Mr. Cary noted that if the proposals are approved, the target implementation date will be June 1, 2008, in order to have enough time for reprinting schedules, public outreach, etc. The proposals are in the F.Y. 2007-08 budget process which will not be finalized until August, 2007.

Chairperson Epps reminded the public to address the subject proposals and limit comments to three minutes giving everyone a chance to speak. The Public Hearing was opened.

The following citizens were heard:

Coby Mach – Mr. Mach, representing LIBA, opposed the TDP proposals. Mr Mach suggested, with current budget shortfalls, to cut service to low ridership areas and maintain core service area, centered on the downtown. Transit dependent persons outside of the core area could relocate into that area.

Julie Banks – Requested evening service be extended to 9:00 p.m.

Doug Roach – Disable Veteran lives 1.5 blocks from current route and with new proposals will have to walk 4-5 blocks which is a hardship due to disability. Opposes the downtown evening shuttle due to risk of intoxicated passengers and bus driver's safety.

Jeff Altman – Representing the National Federation of the Blind. Thought the Study was done well but would like the routes to stay as is – concerned with being told where to live. Felt he would be losing options for service.

Sharon Johnson – Felt there was too much change to the routes, would rather they be fine tuned instead or stay the same.

Mary Jane Bergan – Routes should go further out and service should run to 9:00 p.m.

Rebekah Greenwalt – Concerned with loss of Star Shuttle service at 17th -18th & J Sts.

Marge Mazuch – Concerned with loss of Star Shuttle service at 17th - 18th & J Sts.

Wendy Nielsen – Concerned with loss of service at 18th & J St.

Richard Voeltz – Maintain the Bethany route on “Y” Street which is very convenient for him.

Nicholette Smith – Maintain the Bethany route on “Y” Street and needs better connections when transferring downtown to get home – misses the last bus (later service).

Mike Reinmiller – Eastridge Neighborhood Assn & teacher at Lincoln HS. Acknowledges adjustments to proposal as a result of comments from the Eastridge neighborhood and appreciates that, but opposes changes because of possible impact on current loyal riders.

Les Helms – ATU President, the bus union opposes the changes, would like to improve the current routes, by making small revisions.

Marlene Pyatt – Expressed appreciation for TDP taking into account her concerns and having made changes accordingly. Keep outlying service and make sure the bus operators are kept informed of meetings, etc.

Diane Kimble – Keep outlying services weekdays and Saturdays.

Greg Gabel – Opposed to changes. Wants service to NW 12th, national bus stop area, Epply Express and the airport.

Deb Dahlke – Gas prices should be taken into consideration for more service in all of Lincoln.

Karen Davis – Thought the TDP had some good ideas but wanted new areas to be served. Opposed TDP proposals.

Grace Turner – Opposed to changes and money spent to study. Wants to tweak the existing routes. Concerns about 44th & Vine area losing service. Maintain Eastridge service.

Mike Floyd – Suggested downtown bars and UNL help fund the evening downtown service. Continue to serve the outlying areas of Lincoln.

Marion Casburn – 25-year rider with no complaints on existing service. Concerns on proposed stop at 44th

& Superior. Put bus on 44th St from Cornhusker to Superior instead of 48th. Need a traffic light at 44th & Superior.

Deb Lenter – Vet’s route rider – wants service to interstate bus service and more Saturday service for shopping.

Linda Schreier – Wants service to Burke Plaza – wants door-to-door service.

Laura Tegtmeier – Wants more service with the Irving route to include peak time service in the Briarhurst area.

Colby Collura – UNL student – Centralized service can be more efficient.

Joselyn VanCleave – Environmental plus to get people out of cars and in the bus. Keep routes the same (stable). Feels the evening shuttle is not conducive to having a “dry” campus and is a safety hazard.

Willie Roland – Maintain the Gaslight route and bus operators should not allow cussing on the bus by patrons.

Mary Diehl – Wants service to the Trade Center at 56th & Old Cheney/Hwy 2 area. Doesn’t want to cross Hwy 2 to get to the Trade Center.

Mike Hansen – In favor of neighborhood routes. Limit transfers and more Saturday service. Thanks for adjusting running times.

Nancy Coffman – More outlying service not just to downtown.

Diana Miller – Wants evening service to all routes.

Karen Buell – Maintain the 27th St Shuttle route.

Nancy Carpenter – Felt the proposals were too extreme changes from the current - concerned that there would be loss in ridership. Keep the same for the ARC patrons. Use input from the bus operators. Expressed thanks for the Ride-4-5.

Wes ?? – Does LIBA ride the bus? Keep current routes but expand coverage to the new Verizon area, Haymarket, Airport, Greyhound Bus Depot and have sport shuttles, i.e. Hockey games.

Mr. Cary noted that the passenger counts utilized in the TDP Study was data collected from StarTran’s Automatic Passenger Counter system and from actual counts taken on the buses. It was also pointed out that the evening Downtown Shuttle proposal is intended to serve the evening entertainment and business activity in downtown.

Mr. Cary also noted that the intent of the TDP Study is to provide the most efficient and effective service for patrons. The proposed routes were determined by public input, ridership data, stakeholders, and

keeping in mind the City is growing, so identifying activity and employment centers needing service. In the future it may be necessary to look at a second transfer hub outside of downtown. The Study is proposing 30-minute service during peak time, and 60-minute service off peak time on the majority of the routes on weekdays. The proposal now includes running the neighborhood routes during the morning and afternoon rush hours to be sure people can get to and from work while still having only 10 hours a day for service on these routes.

Mr. Cary noted that in order to stay within budgetary guidelines, the TDP could not serve everywhere and these same limitations hindered the proposed neighborhood routes from running on Saturdays. It was pointed out that extending service to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays on a Saturday routes and service level would cost approximately an additional \$750,000 a year.

Ms. Epps thanked everyone in attendance assuring them the StarTran Advisory Board understands the frustrations expressed. The Advisory Board expressed appreciation for patrons, StarTran staff, and all those involved with the TDP Study. Ms. Epps reminded the public that additional input will be accepted in writing and reviewed before the vote is taken at the June 21, 2007 StarTran Advisory Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15a.m.

Prepared by Connie Thoreson, StarTran

06-16-07 PH on TDP