



New Route Task Force Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2020, 10:00AM

Via Zoom Conference Call

Attending:

Trevor Vannett

Helen Baumgartner

Elton Lassiter

Jeannie Pedersen

Randee Sailer

Sarah Erble

Susan Dingle

Tom Schiwal

Craig Thomas

Tom Reisenauer

Marion Guenther

Danae Thiery

Staff:

Glenn Lauinger

Deidre Hughes

Taylor Kitzan

Meeting called to order at 10:00 A.M.

- 1. Purpose of Task Force:** Deidre Hughes discussed that the purpose of the Task Force is to reevaluate the current fixed routes to increase ridership, but still keeping them safe, easily accessible, and on time. Tom Schiwal asked if Deidre could explain more about route frequency. Deidre explained that the Red Route is currently a two-hour route and it has been discussed to split it into two one-hour routes. Elton asked Deidre how far the routes travel due to city and county lines. Deidre answered that the routes will stay inside city limits and that the furthest a current route goes outside of city limits is to the University of Mary. Deidre discussed that Transit is wanting to get individuals from downtown to the businesses in North Bismarck due to growth.

Lacey Long discussed the lack of a transit hub and asked Deidre to explain more. Deidre explained that main transfer points are north of Front Street, BSC, and Mapleton Avenue. Deidre also explained that currently there is lack of funding for a new transit hub; however, there is opportunity for a “Park and Ride” service at the Transit facility. Tom Schiwal asked how many fixed route buses currently operate in Bismarck/Mandan. Deidre discussed that there are currently six fixed route buses that operate with the opportunity for seventh, as a shuttle opportunity.

- 2. Timeline:** Deidre discussed that the ultimate goal is to have the new routes finalized in four or five months and what the steps are with the Public, Transit Board, City Commission, and Riders to accomplish that goal. Deidre proposed creating a survey for current and future riders. This survey would help better understand what riders would like to see change or stay the same on the routes. Deidre also asked the Task Force how often they would like to meet. The Task Force agreed to meet on a bi-weekly basis.

Tom Schiwal asked what the timeline would be on actions discussed in the meetings. Deidre responded that she will first construct the survey and will rely heavily on the task force for feedback on it. Tom then asked how the survey would get out to individuals that don't ride the fixed route currently. He suggested trying to use radio and different social media platforms. Sarah Erble offered to get the survey out to University of Mary students. Sarah also offered to get the survey to the appropriate contacts at United Tribes Technical College and Bismarck State College.

Lacey Long asked how long these new routes will be in effect for. Deidre responded that major changes to fixed routes come up for re-evaluation every 2 – 2 ½ years.

- 3. Construction of Survey:** Deidre discussed what the Task Force would like to see out of a survey for the new routes for potential riders. Suggestions from the Task Force included the following questions:
 - For University of Mary students, where would they like to see the bus stop? Movies and north Bismarck are favorable areas.

- Why aren't potential riders utilizing the fixed route bus system?
 - How long do potential riders want to ride the bus? Current time tables might be deterring people from riding.
 - How far are the stops for riders or potential riders from their homes or workplaces?
 - What kind of routes do riders want to see? Are there areas that the bus doesn't stop currently, that riders would like to stop?
 - What riders do or don't like about the current fixed routes?
 - What is the reason riders are using the fixed route system? (I.e. for recreation, work, etc.)
 - What days and hours of operations should the fixed route operate?
4. **Existing/Past Routes:** Deidre discussed the information of where our current fixed routes are operating and how the routes were previously operating before. She explained that ridership has gone down after the last route change. Deidre asked the Task Force if they were able to read and understand the current fixed route map or if there was anyone who had any questions. No comments.
5. **Ridership:** Deidre discussed how ridership has changed from the previous fixed routes to the current fixed routes. She explained which previous routes had the most ridership and why. Time is a factor as the previous routes with the most ridership had thirty minute routes throughout the day at peak hours. Deidre discussed that there is an opportunity for consistency with time and functionality of the new routes to increase ridership. Susan Dingle made the suggestion of having videos on social media on how and why to ride the fixed route system. Deidre commented that Transit does need to be involved in video production of some sort that includes how to put bikes on the bike rack of the bus, how to board the bus, and how to wave down drivers. Marion Guenther made the suggestion of changing the names of the pick-up/drop-off locations, so riders and potential riders better understand where they are located. Deidre discussed how it will be very important to be clear with locations and times when it comes to redesigning the new routes.
6. **Other Business:** The Task Force suggested taking advantage of local radio and television stations to get the word out to the public on the new routes and to receive questions and comments through that line of communication. Deidre answered that we will definitely be looking into all forms of social media and communication that we are able to that is free because Transit is a non-profit organization.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 A.M.