



Transit Advisory Committee
3rd Quarter 2022
 October 12th, 10:00am
 Zoom Only

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable, accessible and courteous public transportation services in response to the needs of our communities.

Committee Members:

x	Kirk Kuchera – SMART Transit		Lenore Fries – Albert Lea (passenger)
x	Joanne Brackey – SMART Transit		Joyce Poshusta – Austin City Council
x	Garry Hart – CVS/SMART Transit		Jerry Reinartz – Mower County
x	Shelly Rockman – SMART Transit	x	Kari Hall – Mayo Health Systems
x	Chris Thompson – SMART Transit		Waseca County – Commissioner
x	Julio Zaval Lopez – SMART Transit		Kelly Sutlief – Waseca (passenger)
x	Greg Krueger – Steele County		Matti Gurney – MNDOT OTAT
x	Troy Klecker – City of Owatonna	x	Barbara Schreiber – MNDOT OTAT

Review of scope and mission for TAC

Purpose: The purpose of a TAC is to provide guidance and advise transit staff in issues related to transit services, funding, marketing, service strategies, developing policy, special projects, and capital investments/projects. This committee/council is not a governing board, so do not have a legal authority to oversee the transit program, however, provide as a valuable resource to the transit program in developing and providing for transit services.

Updates

- Stats

SMART Transit-Cedar Valley Services - 2022 Data								
Data for all counties combined						no preschool		
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
PASSENGERS								
Albert Lea	4,245	4,276	4,815	4,899	4,517	3,814	3,375	4,625
Austin	9,402	10,282	10,221	9,867	9,895	6,074	4,353	5,317
Owatonna	3,430	3,413	3,670	3,431	3,671	2,534	2,377	2,806
Blooming Prairie								
Waseca	1,775	1,899	2,207	1,830	1,908	1,535	1,014	1,146
TOTAL	18,852	19,870	20,913	20,027	19,991	13,957	11,119	13,894
HOURS								
Albert Lea	1,189	1,111	1,291	1,130	1,159	1,109	1,021	1,168
Austin	2,012	1,922	2,075	1,937	1,995	1,707	1,561	1,769
Owatonna	1,045	994	1,054	1,007	1,048	988	958	1,036
Blooming Prairie								
Waseca	774	732	837	732	767	802	740	785
TOTAL	5,019	4,759	5,256	4,806	4,968	4,606	4,279	4,758
MILES								
Albert Lea	14,065	14,424	16,258	15,219	15,554	13,391	12,758	15,224
Austin	21,864	21,440	21,976	19,404	21,445	18,311	17,617	19,141
Owatonna	12,233	12,208	13,537	12,560	13,099	11,975	11,535	12,688
Blooming Prairie								
Waseca	5,745	5,282	6,277	5,165	5,302	5,516	4,495	5,298
TOTAL	53,907	53,354	58,048	52,348	55,400	49,193	46,405	52,351

- Ridership – Down 18% from pre-pandemic levels
- Hours – Down approx. 10% from pre-pandemic levels

- Update

- MPTA State Bus Rodeo

- SMART hosted the Rodeo this past July
 - Went very well with better participant count than the previous year
 - SMART brought home the hardware this year –
 - Julio Zavala Lopez (Owatonna Lead Driver) - 1st Place & Driver of the Year award
 - Kevin Hemann (Austin Lead Driver) - 3rd Place Award



Pictured: Julio, T.J. Johnson (2nd Place; Otter Express), Kevin, Ryan Daniels (MPTA President)



Pictured: Cory Shea, Julio, Paula Miller, Kevin



Pictured: Todd Brackey, Joanne, Julio, Cory, Paula Garry Hart, Kevin, Shelly Rockman, Chris Thompson, Kirk Kuchera



Pictured: Todd, Garry, Chris, Paula, Shelly, Joanne Julio, Kevin, Kirk

- More info can be found here - <https://www.mpta-transit.org/event/2022-mpta-bus-rodeo>

- COVID-19

- Update

- No update at this time

- SMART Functional Updates

- Training

- D&A audit with MNDOT – Went very well
 - Also attending a FTA workshop in St. Cloud last month
 - Minor adjustments to D&A policy
 - Working with new hire training starting next Monday
 - Has also been doing a lot of CPR and First Aid training

- Owatonna/Waseca

- Staffing continues to be a concern
 - Waseca is down four positions (PT)
 - Service requires five staff, only have six
 - Owatonna staff have assisted as needed
 - Limiting staff time off (staff have been great)
 - Owatonna has reduced services due to staffing
 - When additional services were added for PreK, it's been more challenging to schedule for all services
 - Have PT staff starting next week which will help
 - Doing a lot of advertising but continue to struggle with getting quality candidates
 - Excited to get in new building
 - Austin/Albert Lea/Dispatch
 - Staffing challenges in Austin – Down two FT staff
 - Not getting many applicants
 - Reduced services
 - Albert Lea staff is assisting with services as well
 - Albert Lea is fully staff and doing well
 - Dispatch is getting busier as we work into our busier season (winter months and school year)
- MNDOT Update
 - Operating (2023 and beyond)
 - Received confirmation from MNDOT regarding our 2023 Operating application – Approved with a 10% increase and a 5% local share
 - MNDOT increased agencies across the state at a 10% increase
 - Increases across all areas so this 10% increase was necessary (SMART asked for slightly more, so minor reductions were required from what was initially requested)
 - SMART will look at doing an additional salary increase for 2023 to help with staff shortage
 - MNDOT is holding a TAC meeting in November – Will know more about 2024 and beyond
 - Possible increase to 15% for local share
 - Capital
 - Vehicles
 - Vehicle Replacement
 - Ordered six replacement buses (from 2020 capital grant; two in Austin, two in Albert Lea, one in Owatonna, and one in Waseca)
 - Received first bus from 2020 order in mid-May, likely another year before we receive any more new buses
 - Ordered five replacement buses (from 2021 capital grant; one in Austin, one in Owatonna, and three in Waseca)
 - Approved for two buses from 2022 Vehicle Replacement grant; one in Austin, one in Albert Lea – Initiated procurement process and currently in holding stage (ordering buses soon?)
 - 2023 Vehicle Replacement application submitted in September
 - Requesting eight replacement buses
 - * *Vehicle manufacturing is currently experiencing an unprecedented crisis – Nationally there is a backlog of thousands of buses due to chassis and chip shortages; CTAA (Community Transportation Association of America) along with scores of other transit partners across the U.S. (including MNDOT) have sent a letter to the Transportation Secretary asking for federal assistance*
 - Low-No Emission Grant – BETTER
 - Worked with MNDOT and three other agencies to apply for an exciting opportunity to bring an electric bus to SMART
 - “Buses Electrified To Travel Efficiently in Rural” MN Communities application was completed the last week of May

- Notice was received mid-August that MNDOT's grant was approved
 - Media blitz took place in late August into September
 - Tentative time for bus arrival is 2025
- Facilities
 - Owatonna facility
 - Facility is wrapping up – Original plan of 10/11 for move-in day was postponed due to scheduling issues with final inspections
 - Rescheduled for Thursday, 10/27
 - Will schedule an open house sometime in November



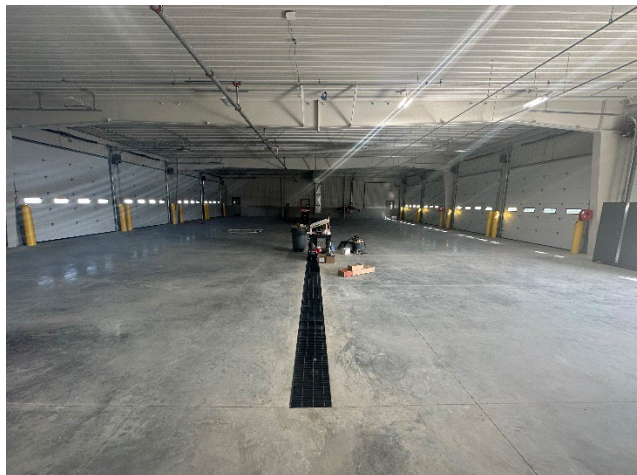
Outside of SMART office



Front Office Area / Lobby



Conference / Training Room



Bus Garage

- Austin and Waseca facility approved through MNDOT grant – Future projects
 - Austin scheduled for 2025; Waseca scheduled for 2026
- Other
 - Vehicle Maintenance Software
 - Requested vehicle maintenance software as part of the 2019 grant and was approved
 - Working through process – hopefully implemented in coming weeks
- Big Picture – Down the Road
 - Shared Mobility Opportunity
 - Mobile app would allow users to arrange transportation with SMART
 - Schedule the trip and pay for it all at once
 - Continue to participate in meetings with the implementation team
 - Looking to launch late this year to early next year

- Region 10 Local Human Services – Transit Coordination Plan 2022
 - Shelly and Kirk are part of committee with other agencies in SE MN assisting towards updating the regional coordination plan between MNDOT and transit agencies
 - Public comment period has been ongoing – final draft coming soon
- Cedar Valley Services Update
 - Owatonna facility update
 - Few signatures yet to come in for final approval
 - Everything else is good to go
 - Move in date of 10/27 will be good to go
 - Looking forward to showing it off during an open house in the near future
 - Continue to look forward to grant opportunities to expand and better our program and our services
 - CVS continues to expand services and hours as staff and workers become available
 - Staffing challenges exist like everywhere else – continue to work to fill open positions

2022 Program Goals (carried over from 2021)

- Continue to keep staff and passengers safe
- Continue to streamline and simplify processes and policies
- Work to grow ridership out of COVID Pandemic
 - Gain rider trust
- Any new goals/ideas?

TAC Members/Community Feedback from Last Meeting to Re-visit:

- N/A

NEW items from TAC Members/Community Feedback?

- Kari/Mayo – Working on organizational plan regarding passenger mobility issues (use of lifts, help getting up and down, etc.)
 - Discussed issues surrounding some passengers limited mobility and how this can be challenging for SMART and/or Mayo at times; can work with patient/passenger, families, and care facilities and remind them that 'Personal Care Attendants' ride for free on public transit (SMART) and can be used to assist when mobility challenges present themselves
 - Will continue to discuss and team up on this as needed

2022 Meeting Dates:

Quarterly on 4th Wednesday ... 10:00 am rotating city (Zoom option available for all meetings)

~~Q1 = March 23rd, 2022 ... 905 E 16th St, Albert Lea, MN (Zoom only)~~

~~Q2 = June 22nd, 2022 ... 2803 W Oakland Ave, Austin, MN (Zoom only)~~

~~Q3 = October 12th, 2022 ... 140 32nd Ave. NW, Owatonna, MN (Zoom only)~~

Q4 = December 14th, 2022 ... 303 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093 *

* Changed to 3rd Wednesday due to Christmas holiday, held at Emergency Services Building

** In person opportunities for all meetings subject to change based on current guidelines, etc.

**Thank you all so much for your continued support and advocacy on
behalf of public transportation in our region!**