



Transit Advisory Committee
3rd Quarter 2024
 September 11th, 10:00am
 Owatonna; Zoom

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

Committee Members:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> x Kirk Kuchera – SMART x Joanne Brackey – SMART v Garry Hart – CVS/SMART x Chris Thompson – SMART x Don White – SMART x Julio Zavala Lopez – SMART x Greg Krueger – Steele County Troy Klecker – City of Owatonna | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larry Baker – Albert Lea City Council Joyce Poshusta – Austin City Council v Dan Sparks – Mower County v Kari Hall – Mayo Health Systems x Bonnie Buchanan – Jefferson Lines Waseca County – Commissioner Kelly Sutlief – Waseca (passenger) v Jim Wolter – MNDOT OTAT |
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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.

- Introductions
- Updates
 - Stats

SMART Transit-Cedar Valley Services - 2024 Data

Data for all counties combined													no preschool											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	YTD											
PASSENGERS																								
Albert Lea	5,568	5,452	4,861	5,891	5,118	3,585	3,728	4,511	0	0	0	0	38,714											
Austin	11,028	10,348	9,060	11,049	9,754	4,164	4,472	4,991	0	0	0	0	64,866											
Owatonna	4,097	4,018	3,483	4,118	3,844	2,305	2,341	2,403	0	0	0	0	26,609											
Blooming Prairie													0											
Waseca	1,387	1,318	1,271	1,372	1,281	1,155	983	825	0	0	0	0	9,592											
TOTAL	22,080	21,136	18,675	22,430	19,997	11,209	11,524	12,730	0	0	0	0	139,781											
HOURS																								
Albert Lea	1,325	1,269	1,183	1,353	1,286	1,030	1,135	1,183	0	0	0	0	9,763											
Austin	2,164	2,052	1,912	2,196	2,203	1,715	1,747	1,815	0	0	0	0	15,803											
Owatonna	1,274	1,219	1,132	1,300	1,299	994	1,036	1,042	0	0	0	0	9,296											
Blooming Prairie													0											
Waseca	516	493	475	516	516	480	678	718	0	0	0	0	4,391											
TOTAL	5,279	5,032	4,701	5,365	5,303	4,218	4,596	4,758	0	0	0	0	39,252											
MILES																								
Albert Lea	15,366	14,967	13,725	16,332	14,905	11,943	12,725	13,591	0	0	0	0	113,554											
Austin	22,813	22,195	19,851	22,533	21,884	17,738	19,351	19,187	0	0	0	0	165,552											
Owatonna	14,052	13,552	12,266	14,370	13,958	10,879	11,880	11,567	0	0	0	0	102,524											
Blooming Prairie													0											
Waseca	4,280	3,854	3,634	3,869	3,820	3,478	3,801	3,806	0	0	0	0	30,542											
TOTAL	56,511	54,568	49,476	57,104	54,567	44,038	47,757	48,151	0	0	0	0	412,172											

- Summer is a bit slower than last year
 - Still dealing with effects of staffing in some areas (reduced services)
- What's New
 - FTA Lo-No Grant for Facilities
 - SMART worked with MNDOT on federal Lo-No grant this past spring and it was selected as one of three Minnesota projects
 - \$6.2M grant will help fund both Austin and Waseca facilities (MNDOT will cover remainder of cost)
 - Announced on July 9th, the 60th Anniversary of the Federal Transit Program
 - SMART Facebook page has a lot of info on FTA and the 60th Anniversary
 - 10th Anniversary
 - SMART continues to celebrate our 10 Year Anniversary
 - Will be providing free rides to all passengers on Monday, September 23rd as a special thank you to all of them, and to continue our celebration of our 10th Anniversary
 - Continue to highlight the work of SMART and public transportation via social media
 - Will likely do one more activity towards the end of the year (give-away)
- SMART Functional Updates
 - Training
 - Working through a lot of training this past summer – driver refreshers, CPR, etc.
 - Working on completing some new driver training for new staff – one more driver will complete his road exam in a few weeks
 - Preparing for the all agency staff meeting in November (annual event held in Austin)
 - Usually have a specific training during the meeting – will be doing fire training this year with member of the Austin Fire Dept.
 - With drug and alcohol have been dealing with some challenges but new methods are working out great
 - Austin/Albert Lea/Dispatch
 - All services are operating in Albert Lea – fully staffed and no issues (have been consistently staffed for years)
 - Ribbon cutting in Albert Lea next week to celebrate our 10th Anniversary (Wednesday, 9/18)
 - Preschool has started in Austin which is a large service for SMART
 - Have one opening in Austin – cannot seem to get this last position filled
 - Updating route designs due to increased bridge construction – new brochures and press releases will be sent out
 - Dispatch is seeing an increase in call volume
 - Owatonna/Waseca
 - Owatonna has seen an increase in staffing which has led to an expansion of service very recently
 - Still have a couple openings in Owatonna but better
 - Preschool has started and is going well
 - Waseca service is expanding some as well with staffing assistance from other cities
 - Staffing levels continue to struggle with little luck from advertising – will continue
 - New bus coming into play this week
- MNDOT Update
 - Capital
 - Vehicles
 - Vehicle Replacement
 - 2020-21 Bus Grants/Contracts
 - 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 May, 2022

- Ordered five replacement buses (from 2021 capital grant; one in Austin, one in Owatonna, and three in Waseca)
 - 2020-21 Bus Contracts received amendments due to pricing increases
 - Received two of the four buses remaining – last two buses from 2021 contract will be inspected by MNDOT tomorrow; should see delivery next week
 - 2022 Bus Grant/Contract
 - Approved for two buses from 2022 Vehicle Replacement grant; one in Austin, one in Albert Lea
 - Two buses have been ordered through North Central
 - Hoping to see these buses sometime this fall/winter
 - 2023 Vehicle Replacement
 - Requested eight buses for replacement, was approved for four (award letter)
 - Two buses in Austin, two buses in Owatonna
 - Significant price increase:
 - Nearly 40% over 2022 ordering price
 - Increase of 101% from 2021 ordering price
 - Recently received notice of yet another increase – Now approx. 115% increase over original 2020 price
 - Ordered four buses in early November – two with I State and two with North Central
 - I State buses likely to be delivered late this month to early next month
 - North Central buses will likely be delivered late 2024 to early 2025
 - 2024 Vehicle Replacement
 - Requested eight replacement vehicles, was approved for three
 - One Albert Lea, two Austin
 - Predicted price per MnDOT is \$204,300
 - 2025 Vehicle Replacement
 - Grant application submitted – requesting six buses
 - Should hear something very soon on this (state is announcing awards for projects now)
 - Vehicle Disposition
 - Starting to dispose of older buses as new ones arrive
- 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, 2022, that MNDOT’s grant was approved
 - Tentative time for bus arrival is 2025
 - Working with MNDOT consultant on the project – regular meetings scheduled
- Facilities
 - Austin and Waseca facility approved through MNDOT grant – Future projects
 - As noted earlier – Received federal grant for these projects
 - Will work with MNDOT in coming weeks and months to determine timelines and requirements for project(s)
- Other
 - Received funding through a 2024 Technology Grant for additional camera hardware that will assist managers with accessing video footage
 - Working through procurement of this now

- Submitted 2025 Technology Grant application for new routing software
 - Awaiting announcement of awards (like vehicle grant above)
 - 2025 Operating Grant application award arrived on Monday
 - Approved by MNDOT for 2025
- Big Picture – Down the Road
 - Resume normal service hours
 - As SMART continues to hire more staff, we will evaluate our services and resume previously suspended services as we are able
 - Cedar Valley Services Update
 - Cedar Valley Services is very excited to work with MNDOT and the FTA on our two facility projects – this will help immensely with retaining a solid reserve fund to help with vehicles, etc.
 - Continue to work with merger in Faribault (KCQ)
 - Continue to work with communities that we serve in the Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna, and Faribault
 - Continue to work to bring back more and more workers

2024 Program Goals – Ideas?

- Continue to streamline and simplify process and policies
- Fill open staffing positions throughout agency and resume suspended services
- Any other goals/ideas?

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

- N/A

NEW items from TAC Members/Community Feedback?

- Send Press Releases to TAC in the future

2024 Meeting Dates:

Quarterly on **3rd Wednesday** ... 10:00 am rotating city (Zoom option available for all meetings)

Q1 = March 20th, 2024 ... 905 E 16th St, Albert Lea, MN (In Person/Zoom)

Q2 = June 19th, 2024 ... 2803 W Oakland Ave, Austin, MN (In Person/Zoom)

Q3 = September 18th September 11th, 2024 ... 140 32nd Ave. NW, Owatonna, MN (In Person/Zoom)

*Q4 = December 18th, 2024 ... 303 South State Street, Waseca, MN 56093 (In Person/Zoom)

* Held at Emergency Services Building – Waseca Community Room

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

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