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>> OPERATOR: Recording in progress.

>> PATTY TALBOTT: Apologize, hi, everyone I'm going to start over.

I apologize I was muted still.

I want to welcome everyone to our second public outreach meeting of 2021 for our service changes in 2022.

My name is Patty Talbott.

I am the Director of paratransit for TARTA.

So today we are going to be talking about winter and spring changes that will be effective in January and March of 2022.

We had a Virtual Public Meeting last week from 6 to 7 p.m.

Today is our 28th meeting, our first noon meeting that we've had, public meeting that we've had.

So we're kind of excited about that.

Next Monday, January 3rd we will have an in-person Open House at our Transit Hub.

Wednesday on January 5th we will have an in-person meeting at our TARPS location.

And again, then on Tuesday, January 11th we will have an in-person meeting at our TARPS location, as well.

So for today's meeting, we are going to just talk a little bit about our recent developments.

We want to thank everyone for the support with Issue 12.

This is going to be an opportunity for us to make some solid changes to improve our service here in the Toledo regional area.

And we're really excited about that.

We are committed to our increased customer engagement, talking to people about what we're planning on doing.

And that particularly includes our TARTA Next program.

Today is not about TARTA Next.

But it is something that we're using as part of -- as our abilities to communicate with everyone about what they are looking for in the future for their public transportation.

So I'm going to turn you over to Neil Greenberg the Director of Service Development and Planning. And he'll give us more detail about TARTA Next.

>> NEIL GREENBERG: Thank you, Patty I'm Neil.

TARTA Next is a longer-term project we are currently underway with.

What you're going to see today in the presentation is not related to TARTA Next but we want to make sure you're aware that this is going on.

TARTA Next will be our chance to really look at some new destinations, some longer-term improvements, and things that are responses to a lot of the requests we get.

New places.

Extended hours, things along those lines.

So stay tuned for more events related to TARTA Next in 2022 in just a couple of days.

And know that the entire transit system, including the proposals we're going over today, are subject to change as part of TARTA Next.

So that's not what we're here to talk about today.

Any changes from TARTA Next would occur later next year or even into 2023.

We want to put this on your radar.

We invite you to participate.

And we expect a lot of exciting things to come from it and that's down the road.

That's the long term.

So for today we're going to talk more about short term and for that I'm going to turn you over to Gary, who can give you some information about our Winter service change, which begins in January.

Take it away, Gary.

>> GARY DORAN: Thank you, Neil my name is Gary and I am part of the scheduling and Planning Team.

And I want to thank you all for taking the time to attend this Virtual Public Meeting.

Like Neil says, the Winter schedule will begin Monday January 10th.

There are only some minor changes that we're making.

All routing will remain the same except for the Route 3.

As it will be routed to service the new count at 3737 West Sylvania across the Franklin Park Mall near Harvest Lane the Route 3 the northbound will still circle the mall and the southbound when it leaves the mall, it will go to the Lucas County building just after leaving and the departure times will shift slightly to reflect the new routing especially during afternoon and evening.

Then Route 10L we added an early morning trip from Amazon to Meijer's and made some minor time revisions and aligned times and such to improve recovery time for the route which helps to improve on-time performance.

And then with the Route 19, again, we just made some minor time adjustments, Monday through Friday.

And it was just on trips between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

And this, again, will improve on-time performance.

And will also improve customer connections at the Hub for those needing transfers.

Then last would be the Routes 20 and 31.

Again, based on driver information, customer input and some tracking data, we decided to make some minor adjustments to improve on-time performance.

Again, by shifting the -- some trips 3 to 5 minutes at certain time points.

Again, just to improve on-time performance so customers can make their transfers.

So with that, that's the end of the Winter changes.

I'll pass it back to Neil for talking more about the upcoming Spring assignment and those changes.

Thanks again.

>> NEIL GREENBERG: All right, thank you, Gary.

So after that service, we're already looking ahead to Spring.

Think spring.

We are proposing a number of changes to take effect in March 2022.

We don't know the exact date yet.

But we'll let you know as soon as we get closer.

For Spring service in March, we're not proposing any major changes to anything.

Monday to Friday.

We may find there's a route that needs a minute here, a minute there, some very minor items.

But nothing major is proposed for Monday to Friday service in spring.

Saturday.

On Saturday we are proposing to start all Saturday routes earlier in the morning.

So service is proposed to start earlier.

Right now, the first trips on Saturday are 8 a.m., 9 a.m., in that timeframe.

And we are proposing to offer first inbound trips starting at about 6:30 a.m.

And first outbound trips proposed to start at 7:30 or 8 a.m.

Depending on the route.

So the Saturday Service is proposed to begin about 90 minutes earlier in the morning than it does currently.

On Saturday, specifically Route 31, we are proposing to discontinue Route 31C trips.

Only Route 31C.

Trips on Route 31G and 31H stay the same as they will be in January.

So no changes proposed there.

It's only those trips on Route 31C that operate between downtown and UT Medical Center that we are proposing to discontinue on Saturday.

31C will remain on weekday.

We're proposing to discontinue 31C only on Saturday.

Also on Saturday, Route 26 and Route 34, if you use those routes, you notice that service right now ends at about 3 in the afternoon, which is kind of weird.

So we are proposing to add afternoon and evening service to Route 26 and Route 34.

To take them until approximately 8:00 o'clock at night.

And that will take the form of three additional inbound trips for each route.

And three additional outbound trips for each route, 26 and 34.

Sunday and holiday.

We are proposing to add service on Sunday and holiday.

Any route that runs on Saturday is proposed to also operate on Sunday and holiday.

The schedules are proposed to be very similar to the Saturday Service.

The morning start times are proposed to be the same as Saturday.

So about 6:30 or 7 a.m. depending on the route and the evening service is proposed to end about an hour and a half earlier than Saturday.

So Sunday and Holiday Service is proposed to end at 6 or 7:30 p.m. depending on the route.

Those are proposed as the last outbound trip times for Sunday and holiday.

That's from the Fixed Route side of the world.

There are some minor changes or impacts on our TARPS paratransit services.

Well, for that, I turn you over to Patty.

>> PATTY TALBOTT: Thanks, Neil.

Just briefly as paratransit is a mirror service of Fixed Route, the changes to Fixed Route will impact the paratransit service.

So on Saturdays we're actually going to be extending the service earlier in the morning for the Fixed Route so we'll be starting at 6:30 and currently it's 7:51 so there's some positive in that way.

On Sunday our service will be reduced in the evening to match Fixed Route as well.

Depending on when the service ends, if it's at 7:30 and the last pickup -- yeah, the last pickup could be around 7:40 to 8, some time at 8:00 o'clock, we will end at that time.

Once we know the exact end times of the Fixed Route, we'll know the exact end times of the paratransit.

TARPS Holiday Service will be increased significantly.

Actually when I first did this I said by over three hours but it's actually five hours.

So that's a very positive for the changes for the TARPS passengers and we're really excited about that.

I'm now going to turn this over to Sean Smith who is going to go over the impacts as reviewed for Title VI.

Thanks, Sean.

>> SEAN SMITH: Thank you, Patty.

Hi everyone my name is Sean Smith I work as the Development and Equity Officer with TARTA.

I will be briefly going over the Title VI analysis of the proposed changes for the March assignment.

The Title VI analysis including all of the data used will be available on the TARTA website.

The complete report will be finalized after the public comment period and the January Board Meeting.

The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority is required to ensure its transit service is available equally within the service area to minorities, non-minority residents and individuals with low income.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.

It also requires transit agencies to analyze the potential effects of major service changes.

Equity analyses are required regardless of whether proposed changes would be detrimental or beneficial to riders.

The proposed -- proposal for expanded Saturday morning service overall is an increase of less than 10% so it does not qualify as a major service change.

So I won't go over the details of it here.

And the additional Sunday Service is a major change but it will be proportional to what is provided on Saturday so the addition will occur equitably for the service area.

I won't go over the numbers here but they can be read in the Title VI report.

In the next few slides, I will talk about the other two changes in a little bit more detail.

The first -- first, the proposed extension for Routes 26 and 34 add eight trips on Saturday, which is an 80% increase.

The combined service area for Routes 26 and 34 touches 34 census tracts.

The poverty rate and minority rate are only about 2 to 3% above those for the entire service area.

So these changes do not represent a disparate impact or disproportionate burden.

The proposed changes to Route 31 will bring the service quality overall more in line with the rest of the Saturday Service.

Route 31 will end up having 29 total trips, which will be similar to the other routes with high Saturday ridership like Routes 2, 5 and 19.

Due to the short length of 31C, the elimination only means a 22.1% decrease in revenue hours.

And a 19.2% decrease in revenue miles.

Neither of these two categories reaches the 25% level -- 25% level of a major service change.

The minority rate and poverty rate for just the census tracts served by 31C are 38.7% and 29.4% respectively.

Both rates are above the average for the entire service area but they are under the threshold for disparate impact and disproportionate burden.

We're happy to accept comments and suggestions.

You can email us at customer-relations@TARTA.com.

You can also send a written letter addressed to me Sean Smith to the TARTA central office at 1127 West Central.

You can leave a message by phone to 419-243-7433.

TARTA will be accepting public comments for the proposed March assignment change until January 18th.

The comments and a summary will be included in the final Title VI report and it will be presented to the Board for approval.

Next I'll hand off to Krystal and she will be facilitating the question portion.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Thank you, Sean and good afternoon, everyone, thank you so much for joining us.

My name is Krystal Freye and I am the Communication and Marketing Specialist at TARTA.

I will be facilitating the Q&A portion of today's meeting.

And joining me for this section of the meeting will be Patty Talbott Director of paratransit, Neil Greenberg Director of Service Development and Planning, Sean Smith TARTA's Development and Equity Officer, and Gary Doran, TARTA's Scheduling and Operations Planner.

At this time, we will answer the questions that were submitted prior to this afternoon's meeting and if time allows, we will answer some that were submitted during our previous meeting on December 20th.

The deadline to submit questions ahead of time for today's meeting was at noon on December 23rd.

So let's jump right in.

The first question we received was, why is there a different service frequency and span for the weekend?

Why not always the same?

And will this change?

So that's a really great question.

I'm going to go ahead and hand that off to Sean on our service Development Team.

>> SEAN SMITH: Typically there's much less ridership on the weekends. For TARTA Saturday ridership it's about half of what occurs on a weekday. Adjusting the frequency and span of service allows the transit agency to maximize limited funds in order to make a more efficient impact when and where service is needed most. A review of frequency and span will be a part of TARTA Next.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great, thank you, Sean, I think that's a great answer. And to add onto it, we've alluded a little bit to TARTA Next. And we encourage our community to submit their feedback on it. Just for context, the TARTA Next project is a broad and detailed look at TARTA's network. It has goals of improving the existing service. And its systems. So if you would like to know about that we encourage you to visit www.TARTAnext.com. Great, the second question that was submitted, will there be special event service like the Muddy shuttle in the future? So I am going to hand this one off again to Sean.

>> SEAN SMITH: TARTA is interested in connecting people to Muddy and events such as the balloon festivals. Our goal is to improve all services and an ideal scenario will the transit service will be just as useful for those events.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Thank you Sean yes we're eager to bring back those services to our community so we are looking forward to that. The next question that was submitted was will TARTA and TARPS continue to partner with taxis? I think this is an excellent question for our Director of paratransit, Patty, to answer.

>> PATTY TALBOTT: The simple answer is yes. For the TARPS side we will continue our partnerships. And additionally we may look to additional -- more partners for all of our services, not just our TARPS. There may be plenty of opportunities as we're looking forward and changing the services.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great, thank you, Patty, lots to look forward to in the future. The next question that was submitted was, will there be new TARTA routes in the future?

I think this is a great question for our service Development Team so I'm going to hand this one off to Neil and Sean and Gary to jump in and answer.

>> NEIL GREENBERG: Yeah, again, it's a TARTA Next question.

Part of what we're looking at in TARTA Next is some beta points where are jobs, where are residents, where are new destinations.

And of course with Issue 12, we can now go places that we weren't able to go to before. So we don't know exactly what this is all going to look like yet.

But we do expect with the way things are coming together, it will result in some new routes.

And before anything gets on the road of course, we'll do extensive outreach to present some sketches and you'll let us know how we did.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great, thank you, Neil.

Again, there's more about that at TARTAnext.com.

We really do encourage your feedback.

The best way we can make service better in Northwest Ohio in our particular region is by hearing your feedback so please visit that website.

We do encourage all suggestions, as well.

So you can reach us at our information line at 419-243-7433 (RIDE) or you can also submit some feedback through the TARPS information line 419-382-9901.

The next question that was submitted was how long will TARTA be free?

This is a great question that we receive a lot.

I will have our -- I'll have Sean jump in and maybe take on this one.

>> SEAN SMITH: TARTA will continue to be fare free for at least the Winter and Spring assignment.

There will be ample customer outreach before any fares do go into effect.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great thank you, Sean, yes lots of communication will happen prior to any fares being collected so please stay tuned at www.TARTA.com for updates regarding fare you can also sign up for rider text alerts through our website and you can also stay up to date through our social media channels.

But we will communicate that ahead of time.

Right now we will continue to be fare free.

Another question that was submitted was what kind of schedule will Sunday Service run?

So I will also let this up to our service Development Team, Neil, Sean, Gary, if you would like to jump in on this.

>> SEAN SMITH: As discussed for the March assignment, Sunday Service will be fairly similar to that of Saturday Service with the same frequency.

And it will end around 7 p.m., depending on the route.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great, thank you, Sean, really looking forward to that Sunday Service.

The next question that was submitted was, with extended hours of service, will that impact the weekend schedule for longer service hours equivalent to weekdays? Again I think Sean, you seem the best person to answer this question.

>> SEAN SMITH: Yeah, weekday service starts -- will start around 5 a.m. and the last outbound trip is around -- will be around 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday inbound service will start at approximately 6:30. Saturday's last outbound will be 9:30 and Sundays will be around 7 so there's a little bit of a difference between Saturday and Sunday.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great, thank you, Sean. And our final presubmitted question was, can you implement a limited stop service connecting the South McCord Walmart and Oregon Walmart? So I will also have our service Development Team jump in to answer this one. As it relates to that particularly.

>> SEAN SMITH: Thanks Krystal and this question is a summarized version of the one that was submitted so I just want to say it was a really well thoughtout comment and question, the endpoints are definitely areas of interest for those that don't know South McCord Walmart is in Holland area and Oregon Walmart, they were outside of TARTA's jurisdiction and since Issue 12 passed, they will now be a part of it. So now as part of TARTA Next we'll be able to look at those areas with a little bit more interest and potentially be able to serve them.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Thank you, Sean. So I do want to let everyone know at this point we do have quite a bit of time left in our meeting so we will open the floor to public comments regarding this afternoon's presentation.

So any comments may be submitted in the Q&A box that are made available through this platform.

And we will give a few minutes for those to kind of come in.

But while we wait, we will answer some of the questions that we did address in our December 20th meeting.

One of them that we addressed in our last meeting was, why are you removing bus stops?

So this is a really great question about our Bus Stop Optimization Project and I think Gary Doran would be excellent to answer and cover.

>> GARY DORAN: Yeah, thank you, Krystal.

The bus stops, what we're doing is we're looking to find a balance for bus stops on every route.

And we currently have some routes with five bus stops within three blocks.

And that's -- I mean, that's causing the route to run a little bit slower.

It makes the ride a little bit more uncomfortable because the bus is starting and stopping more often.

So by following an industry standard for bus stop optimization, we will be providing better on-time performance for our routes and improving the ride quality for our customers.

By reducing the number of starts and stops and pulling in and pulling out and such. We do want your input.

We are -- we take a lot into consideration of which stops we want to keep, which ones we want to pull.

When we do -- we would like your input.

You can send us your input at busstops@TARTA.com that's b-u-s-s-t-o-p-s@TARTA.com.

We will take that into consideration.

So that's the reason for the pulling of the bus stops is to improve our service, thank you.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Thank you, Gary that's really helpful information to have and as he mentioned the Bus Stop Optimization Project is designed to increase the efficiency of public transit in Northwest Ohio.

And it should be -- it should be noted that if a stop is being removed, a notice will be placed on that bus stop sign and remain up for 30 days prior to that stop becoming inactive.

So information about stops being added or removed is also available at www.TARTA.com/routes.

Those updates will be placed on the website and through TARTA social media channels as Gary mentioned and thank you for clarifying, all suggestions can be submitted to busstops@TARTA.com.

So if there are any questions, this would be the time to submit them into the Q&A box. We are -- the floor is open.

Any questions that you have for our team, we are here to answer them.

We'll give it another minute or so.

Another question that we had answered in our previous meeting that I think would be helpful is why doesn't Call-A-Ride go later in the evening on weekends?

Which actually Gary would be a perfect person to answer this one, as well.

>> GARY DORAN: Okay.

Yeah, just like Sean said earlier as far as we are trying to do as much as we can with our assets.

And we're looking at the timespan of the service.

And for weekend ridership, we typically drop 50% of the weekday ridership.
And then as the hours get later, ridership decline even more.
So we take that information and that's how we make our determination of what time we should stop the service.
With TARTA Next coming on, that may provide more information for us to make other determinations.
Again, you know look at TARTA Next.
Go to the website and provide some input on your end, also, and that will also help.
So thank you.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great, thank you.

There is a question that was just submitted.
It says, you have said that a lot of questions today were TARTA Next questions.
Can you clarify how the changes discussed today are different from TARTA Next?
Where do you go on the website to make comments?
Is it under the former Get Involved?
So that's a great question, thank you so much for submitting that.
I will actually hand that off to Neil and Patty, if they -- if you could tag team that question as to how are the changes today discussed different from TARTA Next.

>> NEIL GREENBERG: Yeah, thanks for asking about TARTA Next.

What we're discussing today are some short-term changes to the system you know and use today.
So for instance, when we go through proposed changes for Route 19 or Route 3 or Route 31, let's get some even numbers in there, 20.

(Chuckles).

>> NEIL GREENBERG: We're talking about quick changes that will happen in the next few months on familiar routes.
That's different from TARTA Next as TARTA Next takes a look at the routes themselves.
And asks, well, wait a minute, what is Route 19 doing as a route?
Never mind the schedule.
Never mind the trips.
Are we actually serving useful up-to-date places with our routes.
Or are there any places we're not serving that we need to be?
So TARTA Next takes a closer look at the routes themselves.
Whereas what we're getting ready to do in January and March are more schedule-related changes for the existing routes.
I hope that helps.

>> SEAN SMITH: And I can add onto that too you can go to the website TARTAnext.com it looks like you mentioned Get Involved there is a tab for Get Involved and that's where you can add in your name and your email address and make a comment about what you think would be best for future -- for the future TARTA system and that redesign.

>> PATTY TALBOTT: And then just to close this out, anything that's not TARTA Next related if you wanted us to know some feedback you can easily go to customer-relations@TARTA.com.

And then you can also contact our IOs, Information Officers, excuse me, and they can log that comment for you our CSRs, as well.

So all of the normal places that you can make -- provide feedback to us, you can use that and we're using TARTA Next to kind of keep the future comments and suggestions for the service itself to TARTA Next.

And then any other comments can be done in this -- in our normal fashion.

>> KRISTAL FREYE: Great, thank you, Neil, Patty and Sean for clarifying that and kind of taking it piece by piece.

We hope that was helpful.

As always, suggestions are always welcome through our regular channels, whether that be our website, our social media, or through our phone lines and any submissions about the future of TARTA may be submitted to TARTAnext.com under that Get Involved page.

So great question.

Thank you for answering that.

We hope that was helpful.

There are no other Q&As coming in.

So we will be closing out the meeting at this point.

However, the questions and answers from this afternoon's meeting and TARTA's full Title VI report will be available on the -- the following week online at www.TARTA.com.

We will be announcing some more updates soon.

So please stay tuned online through our rider text alert system for more updates regarding service and these TARTA initiatives like TARTA Next.

So as we wrap up this afternoon's program, please be sure to take our post event survey that will be available once you leave the meeting.

And for any of you that are calling in, you're going to receive that survey by email.

And actually there is one last question to answer that just came in and I will answer it really quickly here.

There will be some more virtual meetings.

And I will actually address those here in a second.

So -- or I'm sorry there will not be any more virtual meetings, there will only be in-person.

But if you have accommodations that are needed, we can absolutely make those.

So there is information on our website.

That we can reach out to you after this meeting.

If you would like to submit your email address or some way that we can connect with you, we can absolutely put you in contact with the correct people to make those accommodations happen for those in-person meetings.

>> NEIL GREENBERG: It's worth saying, Krystal, if I can add to that, there's nothing that will happen at the in-person meetings that we're not addressing here. In fact, we'll be using the exact same presentation, reviewing the exact same questions. So there won't be anything you miss from not attending one in person. This is meant to be the same content in different formats for all people.

>> KRYSTAL FREYE: Great, thank you, thank you so much, Neil, for that. And we will be posting a recording of this, as well. So it will be able to be rebroadcasted. So we hope that's helpful. But your feedback is the most important thing. And it's super important to us. It helps us to continue providing valuable events and programs so that our communities can get to know more about TARTA and public transit in Northwest Ohio. So please stay tuned online for that rebroadcast. And we do encourage our community to attend our upcoming in-person meetings as we continue to gather that community feedback and upcoming proposed service changes. So that would provide an opportunity if you would like to meet with our team in person or have questions, you're more than welcome to visit us in person. So our next in-person meeting we will have an Open House. At the TARTA Transit Hub located at 612 North Huron Street that will be on Monday January 3rd from 11:30 to 3 p.m. We will also have two in-person meetings at our paratransit facility TARPS located at 130 Knapp Street on Wednesday, January 5th and Tuesday, January 11th both from 5 to 6 p.m. So finally, we want to thank all of our meeting attendees and speakers for joining us this afternoon. With your involvement and support, we are building the future of public transportation and mobility in Northwest Ohio. So we thank you again. And we hope you have a great rest of your day.