

TARTA Service Change Virtual Meeting Q&As

The Q&A script comes directly from the transcribed meetings, minor edits were made to clarify statements.

Planned questions from TARTA staff were excluded from this document.

December 20, 2021:

Expand Call-A-Ride span of service or return the old 34K route inbound or start a share a ride service that would be set up by TARTA.

TARTA Next does include a review of TARTA's on demand service, the Call-A-Ride. We are looking at the existing Call-A-Ride service areas and how and when they are used. TARTA Next may also result in crosstown service, for example, a true Reynolds Rd route so customers will not need to go miles out of their way to make a trip that's really just a straight shot.

May we request a copy of the slides?

Absolutely, yes. A recording of the entire presentation as well as the presentation slides will be made available at www.TARTA.com. We will make those available so you may review them and then if you have extra questions you would like to submit feel free to reach out to us at any time. Our information line for TARTA fixed line services can -- we can be reached by phone at 419-243-7433. Or to ask questions about TARPS, the information line can be reached at 419-382-9901.

Walmart at Meyer and Glendale needs a better bus stop.

We will record that and make a note of that.

Will the weekend TARPS service go back to using TARPS' drivers and/or vehicles or will it remain with third party black and white?

We have no plans to change how we are doing our weekend service in 2022. When we start to expand into the full Lucas County area, we will learn what our ridership is and we will have a better feeling in 2023 to see if we can do that. Right now I think that everyone is quite aware that we are shorthanded for drivers. We are hiring if anyone is interested. This would not be a good time for us right now to expand as we just really don't have the drivers. We are working on it, but no plans for 2022.

What is the reason for shortening hours for paratransit on Sunday it seems to have functioned well despite not mirroring fixed routes?

So paratransit is always meant to mirror fixed route. We had a situation where we didn't offer that service with our fixed route, but because of the community and some support, we did offer the service for various hours, but we will be bringing it back to the norm of paratransit which is to mirror fixed route. I know it's a little frustrating because we will lose about an hour, but I am happy to see that we are extending hours on Saturdays and holidays.

(Additional Response) The change to Sunday TARPS service includes an additional hour in the morning as well, so overall there is not a reduction to the span of service, it is just shifting to align with the Sunday fixed route span of service.

How else can I make suggestions?

An easy way to do it is to e-mail us at customer-relations @TARTA.com. You can always call in for TARPS to the CSRs, to our information officers for fixed route. We have social media where you can provide feedback. So we have many ways you can do that and you can always e-mail or contact us on the website. There are many ways to do it and we welcome and actually enjoy getting it because it does help us as we are moving forward in trying to improve service.

Will TARTA upgrade its bus fleet in the coming months?

Short answer is yes. There are new vehicles on order as we speak for both the TARPS fleet, that's a paratransit service, as well as the fixed route fleet. So it's not a great quantity of vehicles. We have little over 100 vehicles total. It's going to be a multi-year effort to upgrade everything little by little, but there are some new vehicles that should be heading our way in the next -- in the next couple of months really. Expect to see some new stuff soon.

(Patricia Talbot) I'm particularly excited that we have new vehicles for paratransit. They are actually in Indiana right now. They are on their way here. We may get them next week. They won't go out on the road until early to mid-January.

How soon will the bus stop be replaced at Oak and Earl inbound?

If anything goes missing or is taken down, we work with the city to have them replace that. That request has been sent to the city. I will follow-up tomorrow. Also, I know the information operators are aware that stop is still there and customers should still go there. And I will get with dispatch again in the morning to make sure that they announce again to the drivers to still service that stop because it is still an active stop and it will be replaced sometime soon. Like I said, the city does have the information and I will follow up tomorrow to make sure that they are still on track with getting that replaced as soon as possible.

December 28, 2021:

Why is there a different service frequency and span for the weekend, why not always the same? Will this change?

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

Will there be special event service like the Muddy shuttle?

TARTA is interested in connecting area residents to those big events like the Mud Hen and Walleye games, Jeep Fest, and the Balloon Festival. Our goal is to improve service for all travel purposes. In an ideal scenario, regular transit service will be just as useful for those events.

Will TARTA/TARPS continue to partner with taxis?

For the TARPS side we will continue our partnerships. And additionally, we may look to 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.

Will there be new routes?

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.

How long will TARTA be free?

TARTA will continue to be fare free at least through the Winter and Spring assignments. There will be ample customer outreach before any fares go into effect.

What kind of schedule will Sunday service run?

As discussed for the March assignment, Sunday service will be fairly similar to the Saturday service, with the same frequency and will end around 7 PM depending on the route.

With extended hours of service, will that impact the weekend schedule for longer service hours equivalent to weekdays?

Weekday service starts around 5am and the last outbound trip is at 10pm; Saturday and Sunday inbound service will start at approximately 6:30; Saturday's last outbound is 9:30 and Sunday's is at 7pm.

Can you implement a limited stop service connecting the S. McCord Walmart and Oregon Walmart?

The endpoints are definitely areas of interest. For those that don't know the South McCord Walmart, in Holland the area, and Oregon Walmart, 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.

Can you clarify how the changes discussed today are different from TARTA Next? Where do you go on the website to make comments?

What we're discussing today are some short-term changes to the system you know and use today. 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.

You can go to the website TARTAnext.com where you can add in your name and your email address and make a comment about what you think would be best for the future TARTA system and that redesign.

January 5, 2022:

Any increase in service length for Call-A-Rides?

The short answer is, right now, with this particular package of changes, there's nothing proposed for Call-A-Ride, so no reductions, no increases, it will stay the same for the time being. Stay tuned to TARTA Next, because as part of that project, we're trying to find a way to get more out of Call-A-Ride.

January 11, 2022:

Will service be returning to Spencer Township, and if so, when?

Spencer Township is western Lucas County, I believe, so this is looking at TARTA Next and how we're going to provide service to Lucas County as a whole, so keep an eye on the next upcoming public engagement opportunities. TARTA Next is still taking comments and getting feedback on that. You will see news on that coming ahead.

Do you have more information on plans to integrate technology with scheduling, way finding, and other services?

There are a lot of tools out there to help plan trips, some we make available now, like the Passio-Go app and the other tools we have. We do expect as we get through TARTA Next and some other service improvement opportunities, we'll have additional cases to make technology available, whether that means improving modernizing access to Call-A-Ride services and in terms of way finding, we know the service can be a little tricky to navigate if you don't already know it. If you do already know the service, if you're going to a new part of town or using a route you don't normally use, it can be a little hard to use, so that is certainly on our priority list to improve the usability and approachability and accessibility of the system using both high-tech and low-tech methods.