



## Customer Advisory Committee Minutes August 14, 2024: 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm Mott Branch Library ~ 1010 Dorr Street, Toledo

Committee Members Present: Becky Opperman, Brandon Brown, Jennifer Seibel, Jodie Summers, Joyce Allen, Ken Schumaker, Loren Sengstock, Rebecca Blair, Sara Soper

Committee Members Absent: Angie Goodnight, Cindy Kerr, Katie Wilson

TARTA Staff Present: Susan Gettum - *Chief of Staff*, Rick Bailey - *Chief Customer Experience & Mobility Officer*, Fran Miller - *Transportation Manager*, Frank Duffy - *Lead Transportation Supervisor*, Jessica Rood - *Customer Care Manager*, Mary Morrison - *Board of Trustees President*, Lou Thomson, *Board of Trustee member and Governance Committee Chair*

- **Welcome / Introduction of new Committee members and TARTA Staff**
- **One-Word Check-In (ice breaker)** - Some of the words shared included tired, productive, great, ready, excited, holden, happy, energetic, accomplished, relieved, grateful, thankful, mosaic
- **Team TARTA's Roadmap to Success** - Susan handed out document created for TARTA staff focusing on our Values and Success Outcomes
- **Focus on Flex and Services** - Sara led the conversation. Here are some notes:

Led by Sara Soper - discussion meant to be kind but constructive. She takes about 10 Flex rides a week and sees areas we could grow.

Ken - mostly takes Fixed Route (90% of the time) but has taken about three Flex rides

- Flex connection at end of fixed route - he had to wait about 30 minutes for the Flex - not efficient
- Walmart in Oregon - had to walk across the parking lot (end of fixed route) and walk across the parking lot to get Flex pick up
- Timing is hard to coordinate with pick up and arrival

Rebecca Blair - Gave specific example of taking Flex with her mom to a vet appointment via Flex - there was no fixed route that serviced there. Had to walk a long distance to grab something to eat with no sidewalks. Service (on Flex and fixed) needs to be extended.

Loren doesn't use Flex because his experience with Flex is not good due to his disability (wheelchair). No easy solution to apply variables - how do you prioritize - can we prioritize rides for people going to jobs or appointments VS recreational trips (movies, going out to eat)? Code the rides somehow.? The answer is NO we can't do that - ADA issue - equal access for all.

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Basically...

1. Too much demand
2. Not enough supply

Sara prefers Flex - feels more comfortable with TARTA drivers BUT the negative is that she can only call one day prior for Flex. She calls the Customer Service Reps to book but they are only open 9 am - 5 pm which are basically her work hours. So it's hard to order rides early enough to get the times she wants. Sara loves a lot about Flex but doesn't love not getting rides when she needs them.

Loren - if the driver knows the people would miss appointments or be late to work, can they pivot and change order of dropping off? (No - it all has to go through the app and the algorithms) Prioritizing of time. Flex is variable and not set in stone. Key issue: timing and lack of ability to pivot - we lose control.

We can't "make" a ride

Sundays on Flex always seem full

Sara mentioned that morning drivers on Flex have been added and this has improved the service.

It was mentioned that Flex vehicles are clean and the rides are safe!

Not being able to get a ride on time was mentioned a lot.

Joyce takes Flex several times a week and always books the day prior and builds in extra time. She can't get the app to book the day prior so she calls in to the CSRs.

Rebecca asked how to educate someone who doesn't understand technical devices?!

Do a presentation to CAC how the app works - also CAC is interested in having a demo of scheduling a fixed route - how we figure out new routes etc. Do video on how the app works on YouTube? How to read a bus schedule? (also post these on the website.)

Sara: drivers feel the pressure of getting riders where they need to be on time

The question came up about who can Flex riders call after hours when they are in need of speaking to someone about a ride not showing. Sara reported that she has Central Dispatch's number. Others call TARPS Dispatch and ask to be transferred to Fixed Dispatch. Frank suggested calling the TARTA Lost & Found number.

Key Concerns: What do you want from the service?

- Ability to schedule work week in advance - more than one day prior
- More availability for rides aka more drivers

Flex Wish list - dreams for the next 5-10 years

- wishes TARTA used WAYMO - transit that is accessible
- Have enough transportation
- Service in Northwood
- Go to Bowling Green
- Look at regionally - not just Toledo - more like Europe or Asia
- See other cities connected

Also mentioned - but not Flex focused - Ken spoke about Route #31 in Maumee doing a reverse circle now and no longer going down the Anthony Wayne Trail and Conant Street. There used to be a bus going to downtown Maumee but now it's a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile walk.

- **SAVE THE DATE** - TARTA's community update event Transforming The Region Through Transit will be held at the Glass City Center on Thursday November 14, 2024 at 9 am. This event is free and you are urged to attend but registration is required.
- Next Meeting Date - mark your calendars:
  - **Wednesday, October 9, 2024** at 5:30 pm at Mott Library
  - The agenda will include time set aside to have the same type of conversation and feedback about Fixed Route service led by Ken Schumaker.

#### Follow-Up:

- Provide text from the Roadmap to Success handout to the committee
- QR Code and/or link to register for the November 14 TARTA event