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Public Participation Process

Fare Increases/ Service Reductions
and Route Modifications



Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency

Public Participation Process

General Purpose

Public participation is a necessary and integral part of transit's planning process. The public participation process will provide early and continuing involvement; clear, accurate, and timely information; full public access to citizens, public agencies, and segments of the community affected by transportation plans.

The public participation process will actively seek public input through a variety of techniques; which include media relations (newspaper, television, radio etc.), public notices, public informational meetings, appropriate comment periods, surveys, workshops, public hearings, and input from local member governments and their appointed committees.

This document contains the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency's (FHATA's) public participation process that will be followed.

Definitions

1. A ***Fare Increase*** is defined as an increase in the basic fare structure. Fare decreases are specifically excluded.
2. ***Major Service Reductions*** are defined as decreases in service that represent a net loss of fifteen (15%) percent of total service miles or hours.
3. ***Route Modifications*** are defined as a change in any fixed-route transit service that exceeds fifteen (15%) percent of the total inbound and outbound trip mileage of a route.

Implementing Procedures

Calculation of Service Miles/Hours Reductions

In determining whether this procedure applies to a specific service reduction, the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency shall calculate and compare the total current service miles or hours to the proposed estimated total service miles or hours to be provided after reduced service would be implemented.

Fare Increase

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (FHATA) shall receive public comment on any proposed fare increase prior to implementation. Any increase in fares proposal shall be submitted by the FHATA Executive Director to the FHATA Board of Directors for final approval. If the fare increase is approved, FHATA will then begin the process of conducting public meetings and soliciting public comments regarding the proposed fare increase.

Service Reductions

A major service reduction shall be any reduction in service miles or hours exceeding fifteen (15%) percent of the total service miles or hours provided. Any major service reduction proposal shall be submitted by the FHATA Executive Director to the FHATA Board of Directors for final approval. If the service reductions are approved, FHATA will then begin the process of conducting public meetings and soliciting public comments regarding the proposed service reductions.

Route Modifications

A route modification shall be changed in any fixed-route transit service that exceeds fifteen (15%) percent of the total inbound and outbound trip mileage of a route.

Route and/or schedule modifications occur primarily for several reasons:

- Public complaints
- Employee/operator complaints
- On-time performance
- Overcrowding of the bus

Route modifications are reviewed by FHATA's Route and Schedule Committee; which is comprised of the Executive Director, Finance Director, Director of Operations, Staff member from the Flint Hills MPO, the Fixed Route Manager, Maintenance Manager, Mobility Manager Director, a Lead Bus Operator, and the Lead Dispatcher. If the Route and Schedule Committee decide to move forward with the route modifications, the recommendations are presented to the FHATA Board of Directors for approval.

After approval from the FHATA Board of Directors, FHATA will begin the process of conducting public meetings and soliciting public comments regarding the proposed route modifications.

Notice

A public hearing for fare increases and major reductions shall be advertised in a daily publication of general circulation at least thirty (30) days prior to conducting such hearing and shall be held at a locations that is accessible to all interested persons including persons with disabilities and easily accessed by public transportation. In addition to the advertisements, the use of "*rider alerts*" and notices will be posted on-board fixed-route and paratransit vehicles when and where the meeting will take place at least thirty (30) days in advance of the scheduled public meeting date.

An explanation of the content; along with the date, time, and location of the meetings will be published along with the instructions for submitting comments; contact information for questions or additional information; the due date for the comments, and a note regarding where to find additional information on the website, www.flinthillsatabus.com

The public meeting notice will be published in the legal section of at least one major newspaper;

Notices will also be made on local radio stations. Such notices will also be included on FHATA's website, www.flinthillsatabus.com. Comment cards will also be provided at the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency offices when FHATA proposes changes related to routes and scheduling on the fixed-route system.

Plans, Maps, or Programs

FHATA staff will make efforts to include maps, photos, or other visual tools to aid in the assisting passengers in understanding the proposed changes. When transit plans, maps, or programs are proposed to change, copies of the existing document and proposed changes will be made available at least thirty (30) days in advance of the scheduled public meeting date at the FHATA facility, as well as on FHATA's website, www.flinthillsatabus.com

Outreach Efforts

In addition to receiving public comments from and educating those already interested and involved, FHATA A will provide outreach to the community. Innovative and creative strategies will be implemented by FHATA to reasonably assess the general public sentiment; as well as to solicit helpful public input and educate those individuals unaware of the services provided by the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency. Some examples of outreach efforts are interaction with neighborhood associations, schools, social service agencies, and presentations to community civic groups.

Public Meetings

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (FHATA) makes efforts to ensure that scheduling and locations are accessible to the public (this includes a location near public transportation, a time when public transportation is available; as well as an accessible building/room for individuals with disabilities).

Public information meetings will be held at various locations to inform the public of the planning process, solicit ideas, input, and feedback. At least one meeting would take place in the evening and/or on a weekend to accommodate those with traditional work schedules to attend. At least one meeting will be held during a traditional work day to allow those who work in the evenings or weekends to attend. The intent of holding public informational meetings at diversifies locations is to solicit broad public comments.

Special services should be available when practical, and subject to the availability of services and resources. These services may include interpreters for those who do not speak English, materials for individuals with visual impairments, and sign language interpreters. The availability of these services would be mentioned in public notices.

Surveys

FHATA conducts periodic route surveys on the fixed-route system. Passengers are encouraged to provide comments about the service.

Opportunities for Participation

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency will take a proactive approach to providing the opportunity for the public to be involved early with a continuing involvement in phases of the planning process. Prior to the public participation process, a list of contact information for citizens and organizations will be developed that will be contacted on a continuous basis to serve as a base of interested citizens for input and comment. This list will be expanded as additional citizens attend the informational public meetings and make comments.

Documentation of Public Comment and Responses

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency shall document comments received during the course of the public input process. FHATA shall also document how they responded to the public comments.

Comments received: Documentation of comments may be accomplished in a manner appropriate to the project and the nature of the comments. Documentation may consist of meeting minutes, files of letters, transcripts, PowerPoint presentations, and/or a special memo that summarizes the comments. A written summary of comments and responses shall be prepared to provide the feedback to the public. A recordings and transcripts of the major points of public meetings will be made written record. When applicable, the comments will be presented to the FHATA Board of Directors for action.

Response to comments: FHATA will respond to questions or comments from the public concerning the public participation process in a timely manner. A summary analysis and report on disposition of comments may be made a part of the final plan. Rationale for policy decisions will be available to the public in writing, if requested.

Additional Procedures

- If implementation of changes are to take place one (1) week prior to the change, new route schedules are made available to the public via FHATA's website (www.flinthillsatabus.com) in the event passengers would like to download copies. They would also be available at the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency offices.
- When the changes take place, FHATA staff is made available to provide travel assistance to passengers who may not be aware of the modifications.
- Information regarding the changes remains available to the public for a 30-day period beyond the implementation of the changes.

Separate Document

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (FHATA) follows the Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process for all other transportation plans and programs.